



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais  
National Disability Authority

## Annual Conference 2023: Public and political participation of disabled people

### Conference Programme

Thursday, 26 October 2023, Aviva Stadium and online.

#### Welcome and registration

9.30 Tea and Coffee

#### Introduction to Annual Conference 2023

**10:00** Dr Aileen Hartney, Director, National Disability Authority.

**10:05** **Welcome Address**  
Kathryn O'Donoghue, Chairperson, National Disability Authority.

**10:10** **Ministerial Address**  
Anne Rabbitte T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

#### Session 1: International innovations for accessible voting

**10.20** **Chair:** Annette Costello, Member, Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG).

- Armin Rabitsch, Election Watch EU,

- Nellika Valder, Deputy Head of the State Electoral Office of Estonia,
- Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland.

**10.55 Q&A**

**11:05 Break**

## **Session 2: Accessibility of voting in Ireland**

- 11.20 Chair:** Christabelle Feeney, Director of Employers for Change, at the Open Doors Initiative
- Dr Robert Sinnott, Coordinator of Voice of Vision Impairment,
  - Dr Vivian Rath, Disability Equality & Human Rights Advocate,
  - Art O’Leary, Chief Executive, An Coimisiún Toghcháin (The Electoral Commission).

**12.05 Q&A**

## **Session 3: Participation in public life**

- 12.15 Chair:** Siobhán McKenna, Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at the Public Appointments Service (publicjobs.ie).
- Suzy Byrne, Regional Manager, National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities,
  - Majella O’Keefe, County Kildare Access Network,
  - Sinéad Friel, Chairperson, National Advisory Council of Down Syndrome Ireland.

**12:50 Q&A**

**13:00 Lunch**

## **Session 4: Political participation of disabled people in Ireland**

- 13.40 Chair:** Senator Dr Tom Clonan, Independent
- John Dolan, CEO, Disability Federation Ireland (DFI),

- Dr James Casey, Policy Officer, Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI),
- Brian Sheehan, CEO, Women for Election
- Lorraine Lally, Barrister at Law

**14:25** Q&A

**14.35** **Break**

## **Session 5: Political representation of disabled people: International context and initiatives**

**14.40** **Chair:** Noelle O’Connell, CEO, European Movement Ireland.

- Alejandro Moledo, Deputy Director & Head of Policy, European Disability Forum (EDF),
- Ethan Young, Access to Elected Office Fund, Inclusion Scotland,
- Florian Sanden, Policy Coordinator, European Network on Independent Living.

**15:25** **Q&A**

## **Wrap-up: Reflections from elected representatives**

**15.35** **Chair:** Dr James Casey, Policy Officer, Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI)

- Ivana Bacik, TD, Labour Party,
- Pauline Tully, TD, Sinn Féin,
- Senator Martin Conway, Fine Gael.

**16:05** **Conference Close and video message from Roderic O’Gorman, TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth**

Dr Aideen Hartney, Director, National Disability Authority.