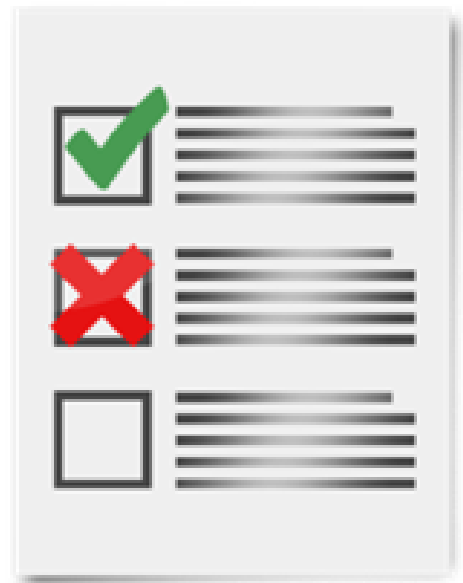


Independent Evaluation of the Disability Participation and Consultation Network



This is a version of the report with easy words and sentences.



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

Words in this report

In this report, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is called the DCEDIY.

In this report, the National Disability Authority is called the NDA.

In this report, the Disability Participation and Consultation Network is called the DPCN.

In this report, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is called the UNCRPD.

The Disability Participation and Consultation Network

The Government set up the DPCN in 2020.

It was set up to support people with disabilities to have their say on policies.

In 2022, the DCEDIY asked the NDA to carry out an independent evaluation.

An evaluation is a check to find out if something is working.

An independent evaluation means that people from outside the DCEDIY do the evaluation.

This evaluation tried to find out if the DPCN is working.

The evaluation checked if Ireland was putting the UNCRPD into action.

The UNCRPD says that the Government must work with Disabled Persons' Organisations.

It must get the views of people with disabilities. This is called consultation.

The evaluation looked at how other countries work with and get the views of people with disabilities.

At the end of the evaluation, the NDA said what should happen to make things better. This is called making recommendations.

Who was in the DPCN?

The DPCN was made up of:

- An Organising Member –this Member was in charge or setting up the DPCN meetings and other activities
- Some members that were given money, called a grant, to be part of the DPCN
- Individuals and organisations that did not get money to be members of the DPCN.

The DPCN was managed by a Steering Group.

The Steering Group was made up of:

- Disabled Persons' Organisations or DPOs
- Organisations who are not DPOs.

DPOs speak up for people with disabilities.

Members of DPOs are people with disabilities.

People with disabilities lead and manage these organisations too.

How did the NDA do the evaluation?

We checked what the UNCRPD and UNCRPD Committee say about supporting people with disabilities to take part in policy making.

We interviewed members of the DPCN Steering Group.

Other members of the DPCN were asked if they wanted to take part in the evaluation. Most did not want to take part.

We interviewed people from government departments in Ireland and in two other countries.

What did the NDA find out?

The Steering Group believed that the DPCN was not in line with the UNCRPD.

They said it is not the way the UNCRPD says that countries should work with DPOs.

People from government departments thought that the DPCN was in line with the UNCRPD.

The NDA found that the DPCN was not working well. This is mainly because there is no agreement on how the DPCN should work.

The DPCN worked as a way to share information between organisations and government departments, for example, about consultations.

Many members of the Steering Group liked that the DPCN helped organisations to share information and learn from each other.

Some people from government departments said that the DPCN organised good information sessions to help with their consultations.

People from government departments thought the DPCN would work together on consultations. They thought that the DPCN would put forward one set of ideas or views.

The DPCN held talks and workshops to help people learn how to take part in policy making and consultations.

The way the DPCN is funded is not right. It does not follow advice from the UNCRPD Committee. Funded means how money is given to run the DPCN.

The NDA wanted to find out if the DPCN had the voice of hard-to-reach people with disabilities, such as Travellers with disabilities. Steering Group members tried to reach these groups but were not able to.

The NDA wanted to know if the voice of children and young people with disabilities was part of the DPCN. However, there are no DPOs made up of children and young people with disabilities in Ireland.

Recommendation 1: Consultation and Engagement

Set up a new a group for DPOs in Ireland.

This should be set up with DPOs.

Give money to this group so they can do their work.

Say how DPOs would work in this new group.

Find ways that DPOs can work with other groups in Ireland, such as service providers or advocacy groups.

Think about how to consult with disabled people that are not usually heard. For example, people with intellectual disabilities, dementia, or children with disabilities.

Check if the DPCN could help organisations to work together and learn about policy making and consultations.

Recommendation 2: Raise awareness about consulting with people with disabilities

Make sure government departments and agencies know that they must consult with people with disabilities. This is part of the UNCRPD.

Make sure that the Government are clear about what different groups should do in consultations.

Follow advice from the NDA called Participation Matters.

Participation Matters says how to work with DPOs, organisations that are not DPOs, and individuals.

Recommendation 3: Capacity Building and Funding

Capacity-building means giving people the information and skills they need to do something. For example, to give their views in a consultation or to help write a policy.

Funding is about giving organisations the money they need to take part.

Capacity-building and funding are an important part of good consultation and of working together.

Think about ways to give money to DPOs so they can build their skills and take part.

Recommendation 4: Funding

Support DPOs to get the money they need to:

- run and manage their organisations well
- get more members
- speak up for disability rights

- take part in consultations.

Have a plan to support DPOs to get funding while they work to manage their organisations in the right way.

Recommendation 5: Other things to think about

The NDA also recommended other actions that the Government could think about:

Keep a list of all national and local DPOs. This will help people from government departments to know who to contact when they are organising consultations.

Find ways to measure how the Government is doing in consulting with people with disabilities.

Check if Ireland needs new laws which say that people with disabilities and DPOs must be consulted.

Find ways to tell people about consulting and working with DPOs at the Local Government level.

Find ways for children and young people with disabilities to take part in consultations

Look at how DPOs for children and young people could be supported in the future.



This Report is by the National Disability Authority.



ACE Communication helped with this Report.

Experts by Experience helped to put this information together.