



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority



NDA

Communications and Engagement Strategy

2025-2027



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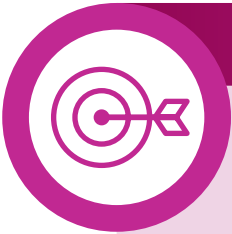
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NDA Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025–2027



Our Vision

An Irish society in which persons with disabilities across their life course experience full inclusion, and where their rights are recognised and realised.



Our Goal

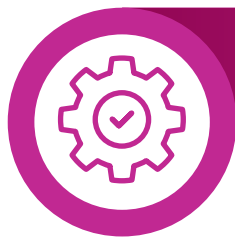
To continuously strengthen the effectiveness of our engagement and information sharing with our key stakeholders, targeted audiences and the wider public to help advance the vision of an Irish society where disabled people are fully included.



Our Communications Objectives

To effectively use a range of communications platforms, channels and tools to achieve maximum reach and impact in order to promote:

- our research and evidence-informed policy advice and guidance
- our activity relating to the development, monitoring and implementation of standards and codes of practice
- implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- the adoption and application of Universal Design
- compliance with the EU Web Accessibility Directive and the European Accessibility Act
- national strategies that advance the rights of disabled people
- accessible inclusive communications



Our Tools

Stakeholder engagement

Public consultations

Conferences, awards, exhibitions

Educational events, training seminars

Research reports, guidance documents, standards and monitoring publications

Web and social media

Email, telephone, newsletter

Media engagement

Branding and marketing



Our Audiences

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality

Minister of State with responsibility for Disability

Public and civil servants and local government officials

Market surveillance and compliance authorities

Disabled Persons Organisations

Persons with disabilities

Parents and carers of disabled people

Disability advocacy organisations

Umbrella organisations representing service providers

Industry, professional bodies

Educational institutes, researchers, students

General public

Overview of the NDA and our functions

This Communications and Engagement Strategy considers the primary functions of the National Disability Authority (NDA), as set out in legislation. The NDA was established in 2000, and we are the independent statutory body that provides evidence-informed advice and guidance to government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. We assist the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality in the co-ordination of disability policy. We also promote Universal Design and its application through our statutory Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD), whose remit is to promote the design of physical and digital environments and services so that they can be accessed, understood, and used independently to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Our mandate is set out in the National Disability Authority Act 1999, with additional functions assigned under the Disability Act 2005. We also have functions assigned under S.I. 358/20 (EU Web Accessibility Directive), the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022 and the European Union (Accessibility Requirements of Products and Services) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 636/2023). In addition, we have been given responsibility to report to government on the operation of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.

Purpose of this strategy

This Communications and Engagement Strategy sets out our over-arching high-level external and internal communications objectives for the next three years. It aligns our communications objectives and principles with the NDA Strategic Plan 2025-2027, to ensure all our external and internal communications are effective in furthering the organisation's strategic priorities (SP):

- SP1: Advise on and support implementation of UNCRPD and national strategies through provision of robust, objective and evidence-informed advice and guidance
- SP2: Monitor, evaluate and guide performance across government on commitments and obligations to achieve inclusion for all
- SP3: Continue to promote adoption and application of a Universal Design approach across all sectors
- SP4: Engage strategically with our wide range of stakeholders, including disabled people through their representative organisations, to inform and enhance our advice and guidance
- SP5: Clearly communicate the value of our work, while maintaining and enhancing organisational effectiveness

This Communications and Engagement Strategy is informed by findings and recommendations from a review of the NDA Communications Strategy 2020, completed in Q4 2024.

This high-level strategy will be supported by a range of operational documents which contain specific communications objectives, actions and outputs, and the tactics and pathways proposed to reach target audiences. A number of these documents already exist and will be revised as necessary in light of this strategy. Others will be created and advanced during the lifetime of this strategy. These include:

1. The NDA Annual Communications Action Plan
2. The individual annual workplans of each business unit within the organisation
3. The NDA Social Media Policy
4. The NDA Style Guide
5. The NDA Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines
6. The NDA Business Continuity Plan which covers natural threats, technical hazards and human threats, and contains a section on communications
7. The NDA Crisis Communication Plan

Our communications objectives

Our overarching communications goal is to continuously strengthen the effectiveness of our engagement and information sharing with our key stakeholders, targeted audiences and the wider public to help advance the vision of an Irish society where disabled people are fully included.

At a high level, all communications activity is focused on promoting our value and reputation as a skilled independent body with extensive expertise in the provision of evidence-informed advice and guidance, who is effectively guiding policymaking at national level and continuously adding to the public knowledge base in relation to disability.

Specifically, our communications activity aims to:

- ensure our research and evidence-informed policy advice to government is disseminated effectively so that it achieves maximum reach and impact
- promote access to, and understanding of, our high-quality research, in-depth policy analysis and advice, and our focus on data and statistics
- promote compliance with our codes of practice and implementation of standards to ensure public services, information and buildings are accessible to all
- promote compliance with the minimum target for the number of persons with disabilities employed in the public sector
- promote our advice and events related to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to increase awareness of, and support for, the Convention amongst a diverse audience
- use our online communications platforms, events, and awards (internal and external) to increase awareness of, and support for, national strategies that advance the rights of disabled people
- promote compliance with the EU Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) and raise awareness of the need for all public sector websites and mobile apps to be accessible to all users
- promote our European Accessibility Act (EAA) related training seminars, guidance and advice to increase implementation of accessibility requirements

- increase implementation of Universal Design (UD) so that products, services and buildings meet the needs of all people who wish to use them through:
 - promotion of our guidance documents
 - hosting NDA competitions and awards that increase awareness of disability and UD
 - promotion of UD in Education (UDE) across all sectors including courses and curriculum within educational institutions and amongst standards bodies, industry and professional bodies
- use our online communications platforms to promote adherence to our [Customer Communications Toolkit for Services to the Public – A Universal Design Approach](#) so that all interested audiences have equal access to information
- promote excellent internal communications so all NDA staff are fully engaged in helping realise the organisation's strategic communications goals and ambitions

Our communications and engagement principles

Engagement with stakeholders is a fundamental aspect of our day-to-day work. Employees play a key role in promoting the seven core principles that underpin all our communications activity externally to our stakeholders and our wide-ranging audiences. Our employees also represent and promote our organisational values externally, which are equality, engagement, respect, excellence, effectiveness and independence.

Our core principles inform the strategic communications approach taken when communicating with all our external stakeholders, targeted audiences and the public. These approaches are then supported by strategic communications actions. Some of these actions are listed below but this list is non-exhaustive. Our communications actions are elaborated on in greater detail in our annual communications action plan and in the individual annual action plans of each business unit:

Principle 1: Accessible Communications

Strategic communications approach:

NDA communications will aim to be as accessible to persons with disabilities as possible.

Strategic communications actions:

- Staff will provide accessible content in a variety of formats where relevant, or when requested where possible
- Staff will promote adherence to our communications toolkits and guides, including our Customer Communications Toolkit for Services to the Public – A Universal Design Approach, amongst stakeholders
- NDA websites will comply with the EU WAD, and accessibility statements on each website will be kept updated
- Events and training will continue to be offered in a blend of in-person, hybrid and online modes as appropriate

Principle 2: Effective Communications

Strategic communications approach:

The tools and channels of communication used are the most effective and accessible ones as appropriate to the specific circumstances, output and target audience.

Strategic communications actions:

- A yearly review will be undertaken monitoring the performance, accessibility, relevance and effectiveness of communications platforms, channels and tools used
- Changes will be made to the tools/approaches used based on the findings of these reviews or other developments as appropriate

Principle 3: Timely and Appropriate Communications

Strategic communications approach:

All messages and information communicated are delivered in a timely and planned way to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Strategic communications action:

- All internal annual work plans will consider how, when and to whom, project stages, actions and/or outputs will be communicated

Principle 4: Tailored Communications

Strategic communications approach:

Communications will be tailored to stakeholders, targeted audiences and the general public as appropriate.

Strategic communications action:

- All staff will be cognisant of language and style used, and their appropriateness, for the receiver of the communication, noting the primary function of the organisation is to advise government and public bodies

Principle 5: Consistent Communications

Strategic communications approach:

- All staff understand what to communicate, when to communicate, who to communicate with, and how to communicate, so that NDA outputs are clear and consistent
- Staff ensure all messages and information communicated are consistent with the position of the NDA and represent the organisation accurately

Strategic communications actions:

- Annual work plans will be clear and consistent on 'why' content is being created
- Staff will ensure external outputs are in line with the mission of the NDA and its statutory role
- Staff will comply with the NDA Style Guide, the NDA Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines and the NDA Social Media Policy
- Staff will liaise with the NDA communications team for advice and support as appropriate

Principle 6: Shared Understanding

Strategic communications approach:

Staff have a shared understanding of the role, mission and values of the NDA, its key audiences, what it is trying to achieve and how it does its work.

Strategic communications actions:

- Annual business unit workplans and the annual communications action plan will include actions relating to internal communications
- Annual work plans and project documentation will clearly identify the targeted audiences for communication with, and will state the communication channels and tools that will be used

Principle 7: Courteous and Professional Communications

Strategic communications approach:

Staff communicate externally in a professional, courteous and respectful way.

Strategic communications action:

- Any complaints relating to NDA staff communications will be monitored and addressed

Our audiences

Given the landscape within which we currently operate, our communications are received by a wide-ranging audience.

Since our last Communications Strategy, we have new stakeholders in line with our expanding remits. In addition to our primary audience of government officials and public bodies, our audience has expanded as a result of our increased online activity, increased involvement in national consultations and the emergence of new voices including Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) in the disability landscape.

Our audience now includes:

- Minister for Children, Disability and Equality
- Minister of State with responsibility for Disability
- Public and civil servants and local government officials
- Market surveillance authority and compliance authorities for the EAA
- Disabled Persons Organisations
- Persons with disabilities
- Parents and carers of disabled people
- Disability advocacy organisations
- Umbrella organisations representing service providers
- Industry and professional bodies
- Educational institutes, researchers and students
- Members of the general public

Some of our communications outputs and activities may not be relevant to all our audiences. Outputs will be tailored dependent on audience need/ interest and the availability of resources.

Communicating and engaging with our audiences

We use a blend of platforms, channels and tools to communicate externally, including:

- One-on-one stakeholder meetings
- Participation in working groups and advisory groups
- Public consultations
- Presentations and public speaking
- Conferences, awards and exhibitions
- Information sharing events – in-person, hybrid, online
- Training seminars - in-person, hybrid, online
- Research reports, guidance documents, standards and monitoring publications
- Social media profiles – NDA X, LinkedIn, YouTube; CEUD X, LinkedIn, YouTube
- Websites
- E-newsletter
- Email and telephone
- Media engagement - National, regional and local print and radio, including trade/ specialist journals
- Print and/ or radio advertising
- Branding and marketing

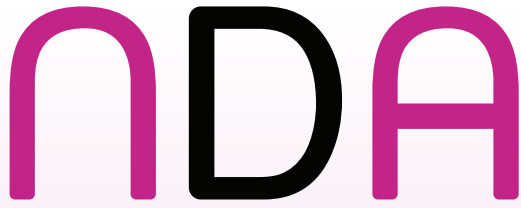
Each of the above is used to varying amounts and we frequently use a combination of them together. In addition, we approach communications with our various stakeholders and audiences differently. For example, we use a wide range of accessible measures to listen and engage with our stakeholders including in-person, hybrid and online meetings, events and training sessions. When trying to reach and communicate with the general public, we primarily use online platforms.

We also tailor our written and spoken communications to the target audience in question. For example, technical language is used in guidance/standards documents as appropriate; formal language is often used in documents aimed at government officials; and, on official NDA social media platforms the language used is less formal and simpler because the audience is wide and diverse.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will monitor the management, performance and relevance of each communications platform, channel and tool used by the organisation on an annual basis. Specifically, we will use analytics and external and internal feedback surveys to measure effectiveness.

In addition, commissioned consultations and/ or external consultants may be used during the life of this strategy to gather information and feedback on the performance, operations and/ or relevance of the NDA's work programme.



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

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