**Overview of UNCRPD Article 21 in Ireland**

**Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion, and Access to Information**

October 2022



**Contents**

[Background to the UNCRPD Article review papers 1](#_Toc104557006)

[Introduction 2](#_Toc104557007)

[Convention text 2](#_Toc104557008)

[Type of Right 3](#_Toc104557009)

[Legislation and Codes of Practice 4](#_Toc104557010)

[Irish Legislation 4](#_Toc104557011)

[European Union Directives, Charters and Convention 6](#_Toc104557012)

[International Covenants and Conventions 9](#_Toc104557013)

[National Strategies, Guidelines, Standards and Reports 9](#_Toc104557014)

[National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 10](#_Toc104557015)

[Health Information and Quality Authority Standards and Guidance 10](#_Toc104557016)

[Standards 11](#_Toc104557017)

[Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service 12](#_Toc104557018)

[Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Strategy Statement 13](#_Toc104557019)

[Harnessing Digital: The Digital Ireland Framework 13](#_Toc104557020)

[Mind the Gap: Barriers to the realisation of the rights of children with disabilities in Ireland 13](#_Toc104557021)

[Services 14](#_Toc104557022)

[Citizen’s Information Board 14](#_Toc104557023)

[Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters 15](#_Toc104557024)

[Irish Text Relay Service 15](#_Toc104557025)

[Braille Documents 16](#_Toc104557026)

[Easy to Read Documents 16](#_Toc104557027)

[Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme 16](#_Toc104557028)

[National Adult Literacy Agency 17](#_Toc104557029)

[Impact of Covid-19 17](#_Toc104557030)

[Summary & Conclusion 18](#_Toc104557031)

[Appendix 1: Ombudsman 2020 Annual Report: Case Study 19](#_Toc104557032)

[Appendix 2: Access Broadcasting targets 21](#_Toc104557033)

[Subtitling timeframes and targets 2019-2023 21](#_Toc104557034)

[Irish Sign Language timeframes and targets 2019-2023 22](#_Toc104557035)

[Audio description timeframes and targets 2019-2023 22](#_Toc104557036)

# Background to the UNCRPD Article review papers

This paper is one in a series which he National Disability Authority (NDA) are developing on individual United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) articles. These papers detail the main data available relevant to specific Articles and provide an overview of key policies, programmes, services, supports and data that exist in the Irish context. They are not a critique of what is currently in place but rather a record of what exists. Nevertheless, there are instances where certain gaps or concerns are highlighted, including those advised by the NDA or other stakeholders.

These papers were primarily developed through desk research. However, the papers were also informed by the NDA’s own work, updates and discussions at Departmental Disability Consultative Committees, the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group, and other relevant committees. They were also informed by interactions with the Disability Stakeholders Group and with persons with disabilities, particularly through participation on a range of working and advisory groups across Government Departments on areas related to NDIS actions. Given their factual nature a more direct consultation process with persons with disabilities was not conducted. However, the NDA conducts periodic consultations on issues related to articles of the UNCRPD and seeks to include the lived experience of persons with disabilities individually and through their representative bodies in our work.

The purpose of the papers are multiple. They were developed initially to support the development of the State Party report to the UNCRPD Committee. In line with the NDA’s anticipated new statutory function under the UNCRPD, they are also intended to be useful to support the development by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) of the State’s parallel report to the UNCRPD Committee. They will also be used internally as reference papers within the NDA. The NDA has published these documents on our website to make them available to a wider audience to support any work underway to develop shadow reports on implementation of UNCRPD in Ireland.

Due to the changing nature of policies, programmes, services, supports and data these reports will date and we will endeavour to update them periodically to reflect any changes. The papers are not intended to be exhaustive but seek to provide a broad overview of the main issues of relevance to each article.

# Introduction

Ireland ratified the UNCRPD in 2018. Article 21, on the right to freedom of expression and opinion and access to information, provides an impetus to focus on the rights of people with disabilities to access information.

Following the Convention see text below, this paper examines the legislation, policies and services in place for people with disabilities in relation to freedom of expression and opinion and access to information in an accessible format, including in official interactions.

There is some overlap of content between Article 9 on accessibility and Article 21 on freedom of expression and access to information. This paper focuses on the specific elements listed in Article 21, such as freedom of expression, information provided by public bodies and in official interactions, the media, encouragement of private entities to provide accessible information and recognition of sign language. Article 9 also notes the need for accessible communications and information, however instead addresses equal access to information in general, to the internet, transportation, and to communications needed to access public buildings and facilities.

# Convention text

Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, including by:

1. Providing information intended for the general public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost;
2. Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions;
3. Urging private entities that provide services to the general public, including through the Internet, to provide information and services in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities;
4. Encouraging the mass media, including providers of information through the Internet, to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities;
5. Recognizing and promoting the use of sign languages.

Article 21 refers to all forms of communication “as defined in article 2.” Article 2, which outlines several definitions, states that:

Communication” includes languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology

NDA reviewed the comments by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in respect of Article 21 of the UNCRPD for a number of different states. The common issues focused on were the lack of information in accessible formats such as easy-to-read, Braille and Audio Description; lack of recognition for national sign languages; and the absence of sufficient funding in the provision of accessible information and to the availability of information and communication in sign language. The Committee made a number of recommendations related to these for the relevant member states.

# Type of Right

The UNCRPD includes economic, social, cultural and civil and political rights. States which ratify the Convention commit themselves to immediate delivery of civil and political rights to people with disabilities, and to progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights. Article 21 contains both types of rights. The right to freedom of expression and opinion is a civil and political right whereas other elements of Article 21 are social and cultural rights.

# Legislation and Codes of Practice

## Irish Legislation

### Bunreacht Na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland)

The right of all Irish citizens to free expression, assembly and association is established under the constitution in Article 40. The right to free expression is limited in the case of publication or utterance of seditious or indecent matter, and that ‘organs of public opinion’ such as the radio, press or cinema shall not be used to undermine public order or the authority of the State.

Restrictions on freedom of expression are further elaborated in the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, which criminalises the publication, display or distribution of materials that are either intended to, or likely to, stir up hatred. In line with NDIS Action 15 and the Programme for Government commitment to introduce new legislation on hate crime, the General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Hate Crime) Bill 2021 was approved at Cabinet and published on 16 April 2021. The Pre-Legislative Report of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice was published on 8 April 2022, its findings were considered by the Department of Justice, and the Bill was referred to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for drafting. It is intended that disability will be a protected characteristic under this proposed legislation.

### Disability Act 2005

The Disability Act 2005[[1]](#footnote-1) places obligations on public bodies to provide information in accessible formats to the general public. Part 3, Section 28 requires public bodies to:

* Ensure communications with one or more persons are in an accessible form if requested by persons with visual or hearing impairments
* Ensure electronic communications with one or more persons are accessible to those with visual impairments using adaptive technology
* Ensure that published information relevant to persons with intellectual disabilities is in clear language that is easily understood by those persons.

Part 3 of the Disability Act also establishes a comprehensive mechanism for complaints in relation to failure of a public body to comply with the above requirements. It sets out the establishment of ‘Inquiry officers’ whose role is to independently investigate complaints, the requirement to publish complaints procedures, and the required content of complaints reports in determining whether there has been a failure of compliance, and if so the steps the public body will take to comply. Complaints reports are required to be provided to both the complainant and the head of the public body concerned.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Disability Act also provides specifically for the ability of the Ombudsman to review the decisions of Inquiry officers. The powers of the Ombudsman then apply in investigating a matter and making recommendations to the head of a public body, and requesting a response within a specified time. The Ombudsman’s 2020 Annual Report includes a case study in which a complaint about lack of access to information in Irish Sign Language was upheld in relation to a County Council.[[3]](#footnote-3)

### Disability Act: Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies

The Disability Act also provides for the creation of a ‘Code of Practice’ for Section 28 by the National Disability Authority (NDA), which is subject to the approval of the relevant Minister. Once approved, compliance by public bodies with the Code of Practice is deemed to be compliance with the Act.

The National Disability Authority has published an approved Code of Practice in relation to the Disability Act Part 3, Sections 26, 27 and 28.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Code of Practice sets out practical actions which public bodies can take to achieve compliance with the Act, as well as a range of actions to consider in order to enhance implementation. The development of a monitoring system for the Code is being undertaken by the NDA, who are also developing a revised Code of Practice to update terminology and references, and highlight linkages to other legislation.

### Broadcasting Act 2009

The Broadcasting Act 2009 Section 43 requires the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) to prepare broadcasting rules outlining the specific steps each broadcaster within the jurisdiction of Ireland must take to promote understanding and enjoyment of programmes by:

* persons who are deaf or hard of hearing,
* persons who are blind or partially sighted, and
* persons who are hard of hearing and partially sighted.

The Broadcasting Act sets out things that the rules (the BAI ‘Access Rules’) must address in relation to audio-visual broadcasting, such as targets for the provision of sign language, teletext services, subtitling and audio description in broadcast content. It notes that the rules must also have regard to whether such material is being provided daily or at other regular intervals; at popular viewing times as well as other times; and for news and news-related matters as well as for other matters. [[5]](#footnote-5)

The Rules are published in written, audio and ISL format. The Access Rules Targets for access programming from the 2019 Access Rules are at Appendix 2. These rules are currently (October 2022) under review.

Note that the functions of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland are expected to be transferred to a new organisation called the Media Commission following the passage into law of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill.

### Irish Sign Language Act 2017

The Irish Sign Language Act 2017 recognises Irish Sign Language (ISL), and provides for its use in official interactions. It establishes a duty for public bodies to provide ISL interpretation free of charge for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and who cannot hear or understand English, when they are seeking to access statutory entitlements or services provided under statute by the public body. This Act was commenced in December 2020. A report on the operation of the Act was developed by the NDA in 2021 and is due to be published by the Minister of State with responsibility for Disabilities in 2022.

### Equal Status Acts 2000-2018

The Equal Status Acts prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability when providing goods or services.[[6]](#footnote-6) There are some exemptions in relation to the prohibition on discrimination, such as where differences in treatment are reasonably necessary for example in relation to age for fostering or adoption or in relation to age and gender for sport (i.e. separate male and female competitions) [[7]](#footnote-7)

Providers of services are also required to do all this is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities if it would be unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service otherwise. This requirement does not apply if there would be more than a nominal cost to the service provider. There are also other exemptions for situations where different treatment is reasonably required such as preventing harm to the person or others.

A review of the Equal Status Acts commenced in 2021.

## European Union Directives, Charters and Convention

As a member of the European Union (EU), Ireland also affirms the right of everyone to freedom of expression through EU-level mechanisms.

### European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights affirms the right of everyone to freedom of expression in Article 11: “Freedom of expression and information.” This includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authorities.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The Charter was declared in 2000 and came into force in December 2009. It has the status of a Treaty and therefore has direct effect in Irish law and applies when the Irish government is implementing European law. The Charter brings together important EU rights and freedoms into a single legally binding document, such as those found in the European Convention on Human Rights.[[9]](#footnote-9)

### European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights[[10]](#footnote-10) was signed in 1950 and preceded the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights mentioned above. Article 10 of the Convention affirms the right to freedom of expression. However, the Convention does not automatically have direct effect in Irish law. It was transposed into Irish law through the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003.[[11]](#footnote-11) Schedule One of this Act recites the full text of the Convention.

### Directives

There are a number of relevant European Union (EU) Directives which are, or will be, transposed into Irish law through Regulations/ Statutory Instruments (S.I.s). This includes:

EU Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on public procurement, transposed into Irish law by S.I. No. 284/2016 - European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) Regulations 2016)

This directive requires that all public procurement for a product or service intended for use by people must include accessibility as a mandatory requirement in its technical specifications. [[12]](#footnote-12)

EU Directive 2016/2102[[13]](#footnote-13) is given effect through S.I. No 3568/2020 European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020.[[14]](#footnote-14) These regulations require public bodies to ensure that their websites and mobile applications (apps) are accessible by being perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. Also, the EN 301 549 standard (Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services is a technical standard that was developed by the European Standards bodies, CEN, CENELEC and ETSI.) has been used in the Directive (EU) 2016/2102, the ‘Web Accessibility Directive’ or ‘WAD’. Where a standard is referenced in EU regulations such as the WAD, that can be used to define accessibility in the technical specifications with regards a public procurement process. Therefore using EN 301 549 is a mandatory accessibility requirement in public procurement of ICT products and services. This means that they must comply with set European standards on web accessibility, and publish an accessibility statement on the websites/apps.[[15]](#footnote-15) There are a number of exemptions to these requirements such as for public broadcasters, and for live media content and maps that aren’t used for navigation. Complaints are managed through mechanisms in the Disability Act or Equal Status Acts. Most public sector websites were subject to the directive from September 2020, and public sector mobile apps from June 2021. The first report on compliance monitoring in relation to this S.I. was produced in December 2021 by the National Disability Authority, with further reports to be published every three years.

The 2021 report states that “Overall the reviews conducted demonstrate there is a large variance in levels of compliance with the Directive across public sector websites and mobile apps in Ireland.”[[16]](#footnote-16) It notes that, across ‘In-Depth’ reviews (5 websites, 2 mobile apps) and ‘Simplified’ reviews (50 websites), none achieved full compliance with the accessibility standards. However, it is also noted that

…even on websites where obvious care and attention has been given to accessibility, a relatively large number of errors may still exist… A large number of relatively minor errors indicate that most public sector websites are not yet subject to routine accessibility checks and reviews, but that many such errors could be addressed relatively easily.

* **EU Directive 2018/1808 (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)** amends EU Directive 2010/13. Article 7 of this Directive requires media service providers to be continuously and progressively more accessible to persons with disabilities, and requires States to report to the European Commission on this by 19 December 2022 and every three years thereafter.[[17]](#footnote-17) It also requires States to designate a single accessible, publicly available point of contact for information and complaints regarding accessibility of audiovisual media that is covered by the Directive. The Irish Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill was introduced in draft format to the Seanad in January 2022, and proposes to transpose the Audiovisual Media Services Directive upon enactment.[[18]](#footnote-18) In draft format, the Bill requires broadcasting services and audiovisual on-demand services to bear in mind the requirements of people with disabilities for accessibility to those services.
* **EU Directive 2019/882 (the European Accessibility Act)** on the accessibility requirements for products and services.[[19]](#footnote-19) This directive requires providers of products and services in Member States to meet accessibility requirements for the design and/or delivery of a broad range of products and services that are important for people with disabilities. This includes computers, operating systems, smartphones, TV equipment, ticketing machines, ATMs, banking services, access to audio-visual media and services related to air, bus, rail and waterborne transport. Specific technical standards for accessibility in each area have not yet been set. Member States including Ireland were to adopt measures to implement the directive by the 28 June 2022, with those measures/regulations to become effective by 28 June 2025. As of October 2022 this directive has not yet been transposed in Ireland.

## International Covenants and Conventions

The status and reach of the rights outlined in the UNCRPD Article 21 are reinforced in other United Nations covenants and conventions of which Ireland is a signatory.

### International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights outlines the right of everyone to freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds through all forms of communication.[[20]](#footnote-20)

### International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights supports the right of everyone to take part in cultural life under Article 15.[[21]](#footnote-21) This also states that State Parties undertake to respect the freedom that is indispensable to scientific research and creative activity.

### International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination sets out the rights of all people to freedom of opinion and expression, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin.[[22]](#footnote-22)

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) establishes that all children have the rights to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds through all forms of communication.[[23]](#footnote-23) Article 17 also recognises the important function of mass media and the need for State Parties to ensure that children have access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources.

# National Strategies, Guidelines, Standards and Reports

A number of national strategies, guidelines and standards support the rights outlined in the UNCRPD’s Article 21.

## National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022(NDIS) is a whole-of-government strategy for improving the lives of people with disabilities, incorporating 114 actions under eight themes in its initial form.[[24]](#footnote-24) Following a mid-term review in 2019, a revised Strategy was adopted in 2020, and now contains 125 actions. Several actions under the theme ‘Equality and Choice’ support Article 21 through elements such as ensuring public sector information is available in accessible formats that are easy to understand, and that public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens, including through sign language.

The National Disability Authority conducts an independent assessment of progress on the NDIS at regular intervals. The 2021 assessment indicates that there has been progress on some structural and process actions in this area, including the enactment and commencement of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 and publication of the first report under the Web Accessibility Directive,. However, there is still work to be done to improve compliance with these instruments.

## Health Information and Quality Authority Standards and Guidance

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) sets standards for health and social care services, and inspects facilities to ensure standards are being met.

### National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities

These standards are separated into standards for children and for adults. Both the Adult and Children’s Standards 1.1 requires that the rights of the UNCRPD are promoted and protected. The Children’s Standard in addition requires that the rights of the UNCRC are also promoted and protected. Both the Adult and Children’s Standards 1.5 states that each person should have access to information, provided in a format appropriate to their communication needs. It notes that one feature to meet this standard includes that assistance and supports are provided to access information, to communicate with others through a variety of media, and to make contact with family, friends and other services.

### National Standards for Children’s Residential Centres

Services for children with disabilities must also meet the HIQA National Standards for Children’s Residential Centres. Standard 1.1 is that each child experiences care and support which respects their diversity and protects their rights in line with the UNCRC. Each standard also includes a list of features that residential centres meeting the standard are likely to include. Feature 1.1.3 for Standard 1.1 is that there is a culture of respect for each child in the residential centre, specifically in terms of their diversity, their right to participate in decision making and freedom of expression. Standard 1.4 requires each child to have access to information, provided in an accessible format that takes account of their communication needs.

### National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland

Standard 1.1 is that the rights and diversity of each resident are respected and safeguarded. Feature 1.1.1 that meets this standard is that the rights of each resident are protected and promoted in line with national and international legislation. Feature 1.4.5 under Standard 1.4 is that telecommunications and information technology devices are made available to residents, and they are facilitated to use them. Standard 1.5 is that each resident has access to information, provided in a format appropriate to their communication needs and preferences. It notes that one feature to meet this standard includes that assistance and support are provided to access information, to communicate with others through a variety of media, and to make contact with family, friends and other services.

### Guidance on a Human Rights-based Approach in Health and Social Care Services

This HIQA guidance is designed to support health and social care staff and organisations in understanding a human rights-based approach to care and support, and implementing the principles of human rights in their work. The guidance identifies five guiding principles. For each principle it provides an explanation, linkage to relevant UNCRPD and European Convention on Human rights articles, examples of how to support and promote the principle in health and social care work, and case studies. Article 21 of the UNCRPD is identified as part of two of the principles, Fairness, and Respect.

## Standards

Standards are technical documents that set out design requirements on an agreed way of delivering a service, managing a process, or making a product. Compliance with Standards is voluntary, however in some cases, Standards are harmonised as part of legislation which can make them a requirement. The existence of a Standard sets a benchmark to guide producers, providers and procurers on a consistent understanding of what quality looks like.

Irish Standards (I.S.’s) are produced and published by the National Standards Authority Ireland (NSAI) through a consensus among a committee of experts. Some I.S’s are adopted versions of International Standards or European Standards which are abbreviated as “ISO” for International Organization for Standardisation and ‘E.N.’ for Europäische Norm, or ‘European Norm.’

The NSAI and NDA collaborate through a technical committee (TC) called Universal Design Standards Consultative Committee (UDSCC) which has been in place since 2007. This TC is made up of a number of sub committees covering areas such as the accessibility of the built environment, ICT products and services standards and where these committees review and comment on European and International standards being developed or develop relevant national standards in the area of universal design covering utility services, tourism etc.

Examples of Standards and related publications that support Article 21 are listed below.

### E.N. 17478

This standard is subtitled “Transport Services - Customer communications for passenger transport services - A Universal Design approach”.[[25]](#footnote-25) This standard has been established at the European level and is expected to be adopted into Irish Standards in due course. It specifies requirements and recommendations for the planning, design, development and provision of user communications related to passenger transport (including visual displays, audio announcements etc.). The intent is that these communications can be accessed, understood and used by the widest range of users, including persons with disabilities and older persons. The requirements specified in this standard are applicable, but not limited to, passenger transport service providers including air, bus, rail, and waterborne passenger transport services.

### Universal Design for Customer Engagement Toolkits: Tourism and Energy Sectors

Government guidance about providing information and services in accessible formats has been published by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, for the tourism sector and the energy sector respectively. Both toolkits consist of four documents that give guidance on the business case for accessible services, and best practice approaches to design and delivery of written communication, electronic/web communication and face-to-face, telephone and video communication.

The toolkit for tourism services provides best practice guidance to help business that provide services to tourism customers to implement the Irish Standard on universal design for customer engagement in tourism services. This standard (IS 373:2013) is set by the National Standards Authority of Ireland.[[26]](#footnote-26)

The toolkit for energy services provides best practice guidance to help energy businesses implement the recommendations of the National Standards Authority of Ireland regarding universal design for energy suppliers (SWiFT 9:2021).[[27]](#footnote-27)

## Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service

The government’s ‘Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service – A Universal Design Approach’ provides practical guidance to public service staff to help ensure universal design and accessibility is incorporated in the design and procurement of customer communications. It addresses written, digital, spoken and signed communications. It was published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the National Disability Authority in 2017 and updated in 2019.[[28]](#footnote-28) A supplement to the toolkit was produced in 2020 to give guidance on organising and running accessible online meetings prompted by the move to online meetings resulting from Covid-19. This is now in the process of being revised and updated and to be published in the first quarter 2023.

## Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Strategy Statement

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) is the regulator of broadcasting in Ireland. The BAI Strategy Statement 2021-2023 identifies the organisation’s strategic objectives, outcomes and key performance indicators.[[29]](#footnote-29) One of the thirteen strategic objectives of the BAI is to foster a media landscape that is representative of, and accessible to, the diversity of Irish society. The related outcome for this objective is that Irish audio and audiovisual media are more diverse in terms of content, those involved in its production, and in on air presentation.

## Harnessing Digital: The Digital Ireland Framework

The Framework highlights the importance of appropriate digital skills for everyone, to enable all cohorts regardless of age or background to engage with and benefit from digitalisation.[[30]](#footnote-30) Deliverables in this workstream include supporting digital literacy skills through the national ‘Adult Literacy for Life’ Strategy, and promoting media literacy to empower people to interrogate the accuracy of information. This framework was published by the Department of the Taoiseach.

### ‘Adult Literacy for Life’ Strategy

The 10-year ‘Adult Literacy for Life’ Strategy, launched in 2021, lists people with disabilities as one of several vulnerable cohorts and recommends prioritisation of funding for literacy, numeracy and digital literacy development for these groups in the first two years of the strategy.[[31]](#footnote-31)

## Mind the Gap: Barriers to the realisation of the rights of children with disabilities in Ireland

The Ombudsman for Children’s Office published a research report in 2021 outlining barriers to the realisation of the rights of children with disabilities, and measures to address these.[[32]](#footnote-32) In relation to freedom of information and expression, the report notes that despite recognition that children with disabilities may require support to express their opinions there is no guidance or resources available on how to achieve this in line with international best practice. It also notes there is a lack of information on the experiences of children with disabilities in Ireland accessing information online, highlighting that many services and information are now solely available online and therefore may not be accessible to children with disabilities. The report suggests that resources to support children with disabilities to express their views and opinions must be made available, including guidance and training for people who support children with disabilities in their work.

# Services

## Citizens Information Board

The Citizens Information Board (CIB)’s role includes assisting and supporting individuals, in particular those with disabilities, in identifying and understanding their needs and options, as well as ensuring that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services. It provides information directly to the public through the Citizens Information website ([www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)).

CIB also fund and support several independent ‘service delivery companies’ that support elements of Article 21, some of which are listed below:

### Citizens Information Service

This a nationwide network of centres where anyone can get free, impartial and confidential information on social and public services face-to-face from local staff at Citizens Information Centres.

### Citizens Information Phone Service

This service provides advice and information over the telephone or by webchat

### Sign Language Interpreting Service

The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) is an independent body, funded and supported by the Citizens Information board to develop, promote and deliver quality sign language interpreting services to Deaf community in Ireland, including face to face and remote services. It aims to ensure that deaf people have easy access to services, particularly public services. SLIS’s services include:

* Referral Services: A free referral service that links organisations/ public bodies that would like to book a sign language interpreter to freelance interpreters available at the time required.
* Irish Remote Interpreting Service: A paid service to book a video link to a remote sign language interpreter, booked in 22-minute blocks. This services help organisations to communicate with deaf clients. Remote interpreting is not appropriate for all situations but can be useful in some contexts.
* Information: SLIS is often the first point of contact for the deaf community, deaf organisations and services in resolving difficulties in accessing rights to interpretation.
* Other Services: SLIS also helps organisations with their communication strategies and policies on how to use interpreting and sign language in their customer relations.

Information about SLIS can be found in CIB annual reports. The 2020 Annual Report notes that in 2020:[[33]](#footnote-33)

* The Irish Remote Interpreting Service supported 7,049 appointments
* SLIS received 1,975 requests for support, comprised of 1,034 GP/Primary Care access scheme requests, 634 referral requests including emergency referral, and 307 access support service requests.[[34]](#footnote-34)

### Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters

The Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters was established in December 2020 to provide an accreditation mechanism for Irish Sign Language interpreters, as required under the Irish Sign Language Act.[[35]](#footnote-35) The Register is also funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board and aims to set and ensure adherence to standards for the provision of Irish Sign Language interpretation by public bodies. Members must meet set standards of qualifications and professional development to become and remain registered. The list of currently registered interpreters is publicly available.

The current number of registered Irish Sign Language (ISL)/ English interpreters can be found in the corporate reports of the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI).The quarterly report for April to June 2021 indicates that at that time there were a total of 91 interpreters, including five deaf interpreters registered with RISLI.[[36]](#footnote-36)

## Irish Text Relay Service

The Irish Text Relay Service (ITRS) enables people with speech difficulties, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, to make and receive calls independently.[[37]](#footnote-37) It is funded by telecommunications companies Three, eir, Sky, Tesco Mobile, Virgin Media and Vodafone and serves customers of these companies. ITRS can be used on mobile phones, laptops, tablets and personal computers. The ITRS service is operated by eir. The ITRS service allows people to:

* Type and Read: the caller types their message, ITRS converts this to speech. Speech at the other end is converted by ITRS to appear as text on the caller’s screen.
* Type and Listen: the caller types their message, ITRS converts this to speech. Speech at the other end is received both as speech and as text converted by ITRS, which can supplement hearing similarly to subtitles.
* Speak and Read: the caller speaks their message. Speech at the other end is converted by ITRS to appear as text on the caller’s screen.

## Braille Documents

There are two types of English Braille, Standard English Braille (SEB) and Unified English Braille (UEB). UEB was developed to make a standardised Braille code for the English-speaking world. It was adopted in Ireland in 2013. There are some people who learned to read Braille prior to 2013, who prefer to use SEB format. SEB is no longer produced in Ireland but may be sourced from Northern Ireland or Britain.[[38]](#footnote-38)

The National Council for the Blind Ireland (NCBI) and Arbor Hill Braille Unit provide UEB braille translations in Ireland. National Braille Production for children is provided by Childvision and gives access to education materials through transcription into a range of formats accessible for children with a visual impairment. This includes UEB Braille, tactile diagrams and large print.[[39]](#footnote-39)

## Easy to Read Documents

Easy to Read documents is one form of accessible information. They make written information easier to understand by using short simple sentences with pictures. Production of documents in ‘Easy to Read’ format is available from a number of providers including Easy to Read Ireland, Ace Communication, and from Inclusion Ireland. Best practice is that a person with an intellectual disability is involved in the production of these documents, particularly checking clarity.

## Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme

The government Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme offers 10 hours of basic digital skills training to people that have never used the internet.[[40]](#footnote-40) This training is targeted at several groups including people with disabilities, people over 45, farming communities, small business owners, disadvantaged groups and the unemployed. From when the scheme began until November 2021, it is reported that €5.5million has been spent to train almost 60,000 participants.[[41]](#footnote-41) It is unclear what proportion of programme delivery has been to people with disabilities.

## National Adult Literacy Agency

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a publicly funded charity that provide adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills supports.[[42]](#footnote-42) NALA’s vision affirms literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills as essential to enabling individuals to fully take part in society. NALA’s services include:

* Editing documents and web content into plain English
* Awarding a plain English Mark to documents or websites that meet international plain English standards
* Free public courses in literacy, numeracy and digital skills, online or with a tutor

NALA has produced policy guidelines for adult literacy providers, regarding adult literacy learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Asperger’s Syndrome.

# Impact of COVID-19

Restrictions on personal interactions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 resulted in changes to the way that many people sought or received information and expressed opinions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to information for the Deaf community was maintained through the inclusion of sign language interpreters in all televised government COVID-19 media briefings.

As part of COVID-19 restrictions there was a short period in which children were not attending school. In this context, the state broadcaster, RTÉ, provided a regular ‘Home School Hub’ programme to assist children to learn from home. The Home School Hub service was also provided in sign language.

In late 2021, Vodafone Ireland launched a five-year digital skills training programme for people over the age of 65 to cover skills including researching interests and hobbies and keeping in touch through apps and social media.[[43]](#footnote-43) Vodafone notes that the drivers of the programme include low digital literacy levels among over 65 year-olds in Ireland compared to the European Union average, as well as the increased the risk of isolation for this group due to the widespread move to online services during the pandemic.

Independent Living Movement Ireland noted that one of the positives of the COVID-19 period was that many disabled people found the use of video conferencing technology liberating. Online spaces included platforms to discuss policy, activism, to provide creative spaces and to facilitate workshops on different topics such as health and art. It was noted that online spaces gave disabled people a voice to feed into ILMI policy development including communications to government on disabled people’s supports.[[44]](#footnote-44) Similar feedback was raised at the National Disability Authority event regarding COVID-19, in which some noted that disabled people’s awareness of disability activism increased when everything moved online, and disabled people’s organisations reached more people by making resources available online.[[45]](#footnote-45)

# Summary & Conclusion

This paper highlights the range of provisions that support realisation of Article 21. Several laws, such as those on disability, broadcasting and equality, precede the 2018 ratification of the UNCRPD by many years. While there has been significant progress over time, further work remains to enable comprehensive access to information for all. Progress so far has placed Ireland in an excellent position to enable the UNCRPD to bring a renewed focus and reinvigoration to the thorough implementation of existing provisions.

There is very limited data available to enable us to track progress in relation to access to information, or expression of opinion for people with disabilities. However, mechanisms for collecting data regarding access to information are being enhanced through a number of channels for example, monitoring of Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005, monitoring of the Web Accessibility Directive and reporting on implementation of the Irish Sign Language Act. Over time this monitoring data will allow improvements to be tracked. In terms of expression of opinion in a review of the legal advice, legal representation and Amicus Curiae cases taken by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission there were no cases relating to expression of opinion.

# Appendix 1: Ombudsman 2020 Annual Report: Case Study

The following complaint relevant to UNCRPD Article 21 appears in the Ombudsman’s 2020 Annual Report:[[46]](#footnote-46)

**Woman complains under Disability Act after being refused sign-language interpreter**

Under the Disability Act, the Ombudsman has the powers to examine complaints about equal access to public services, access to public buildings and access to information.

**Background**

Julie, who has a hearing impairment, was invited by a candidate to attend the 2019 local election count. However, she complained to the Ombudsman under the Disability Act as Clare County Council refused her request for a sign-language interpreter to be present on the day of the count.

The Council refused Julie’s request as it said there would be sufficient signage and screens at the count centre to enable her to view the count on the day.

However, Julie said that the signage and screens were inadequate as the lighting was poor, the screens were too far away and appeared blank, and that there was no signage available. Julie complained to the Council under the Disability Act. The Act provides that public bodies such as local authorities should, where practicable and appropriate, provide integrated access to services and, if requested, provide assistance to access the service. When the Council investigated Julie’s complaint, it said that a sign-language interpreter was not required as the provision of the election count announcement is not a statutory entitlement and service.

**Examination**

Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 defines a “service” but does not specify that a service must be a statutory entitlement before assistance is provided. Instead, it says that a service is “of any kind provided by a public body”.

Compliance with the National Disability Authority’s ‘Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information’ is considered compliance with the Act. The Code says that, where practicable and appropriate, people with disabilities should be able to avail of a service provided by a public body at the same level of access and at the same time as everyone else.

The Code identifies ways in which a public body can achieve this, for example by contacting the National Disability Authority for advice on possible approaches. The Code also outlines how a public body can provide assistance in accessing its services, for example through sign language interpretation, developing procedures to respond to requests, and providing for a dialogue with the customer. In relation to access to information, the Code considers that the public body should determine the practicability of providing the form of support requested within particular communication contexts and timeframes.

It appeared to the Ombudsman that the Council failed to comply with the Code, and therefore failed to comply with two provisions of Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005, as amended, namely access to services and access to information.

**Outcome**

The Council accepted that it should have arrangements in place for the provision of an Irish Sign Language interpreter in the future, if one is requested. The Council said the design and layout of any future count venue would need to take this into consideration at the planning and design stage. The Council said it would also seek to improve on the quality and visibility of screens for future count events.

# Appendix 2: Access Broadcasting targets

## Subtitling timeframes and targets 2019-2023

Targets are based on the percentage of programmes broadcast between 7am and 1am (18-hour day). Peak time targets are based on the percentage of programmes between 6pm-11.30pm. Targets apply to live broadcasting only.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Channel** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| **RTÉ 1** | 87%  (95% Peak Time) | 88%  (95% Peak Time) | 90%  (96% Peak Time) | 91%  (96% Peak Time) | 92%  (96% Peak Time) |
| **RTÉ 2** | 73%  (85% Peak Time) | 74%  (86% Peak Time) | 76%  (87% Peak Time) | 77%  (87% Peak Time) | 78%  (88% Peak Time) |
| **RTÉjr** | 48% | 49% | 51% | 52% | 53% |
| **RTÉ News Now** | 24% | 25% | 27% | 29% | 30% |
| **Virgin Media 1** | 51%  (51% Peak Time) | 53%  (52% Peak Time) | 54%  (54% Peak Time) | 55%  (55% Peak Time) | 56%  (57% Peak Time) |
| **Other Virgin Media Services[[47]](#footnote-47)** | 50% of combined output | 52% of combined output | 53% of combined output | 54% of combined output | 55% of combined output |
| **TG4** | 57%  (60% Peak Time) | 57%  (60% Peak Time) | 58%  (60% Peak Time) | 58%  (60% Peak Time) | 59%  (60% Peak Time) |
| **Eir Sport 1** | 12% | 12% | 13% | 13% | 14% |
| **+ 1 & HD**  **Channels** | Any subtitling carried on the main television service shall be made available through +1 and HD Channels | | | | | |
| **Oireachtas TV[[48]](#footnote-48)** | 16% | 16% | 17% | 17% | 18% |
| **CCTV** | 11% | 11% | 11% | 12% | 13% |
| **DCTV** | 11% | 11% | 11% | 12% | 13% |

## Irish Sign Language timeframes and targets 2019-2023

Targets are based on the percentage of programmes broadcast at any time (24-hour day). Targets apply to live broadcasting only.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Channel** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| **RTÉ 1 & 2** | 3% | 3.5% | 4% | 4.5% | 5% |
| **RTÉ Jnr** | 2% | 2.5% | 3% | 3.5% | 4% |
| **Virgin Media 1** | 0% | 0.5% | 1% | 1.5% | 2% |
| **+1 and HD Channels** | Any audio description carried on the main television service will be made available on +1/HD channels. | | | | |
| **Oireachtas TV** | 4% | 5% | 5.5% | 5.5% | 6% |

## Audio description timeframes and targets 2019-2023

Targets are based on the percentage of programmes broadcast between 7am and 1am (18-hour day). Targets apply to live broadcasting only.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Channel** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| **RTÉ 1 & 2** | 5% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 10% |
| **RTÉ Jnr** | 6% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 10% |
| **Virgin Media 1** | 0% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 5% |
| **+ 1 and HD Channels** | Any audio description carried on the main television service will be made available on +1/HD channels. | | | | |

1. [Disability Act 2005 (irishstatutebook.ie)](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/enacted/en/html) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There is no data on the level of practical implementation of the Disability Act complaints processes or appointment of Inquiry Officers in public bodies. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The case study extracted from the Ombusdman’s 2020 Annual Report is at Appendix 1. The full 2020 Annual Report can be found at: <https://www.ombudsman.ie/publications/annual-reports/Ombudsman-AR-2020-English-Final-Web.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://nda.ie/Good-practice/Codes-of-Practice/Code-of-Practice-on-Accessibility-of-Public-Services-and-Information-Provided-by-Public-Bodies-/Code-of-Practice-on-Accessibility-of-Public-Services-and-Information-Provided-by-Public-Bodies.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.bai.ie/en/?attachment_id=133610> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [Revised Acts (lawreform.ie)](https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2000/act/8/revised/en/html) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Exemptions under the Equal Status Acts - IHREC - Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-in-the-provision-of-good-and-services/what-does-the-law-say/exceptions/#:~:text=Under%20the%20Equal%20Status%20Acts%20there%20are%20certain,may%20relate%20to%20specific%20grounds%2C%20e.g.%20gender%3B%20and.) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights | European Commission (europa.eu)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights_en) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/european_government/eu_law/charter_of_fundamental_rights.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [European Convention on Human Rights - Official texts, Convention and Protocols (coe.int)](https://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=basictexts) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. I.S 284 States: For all procurement which is intended for use by natural persons, whether the general public or staff of the contracting authority, the technical specifications shall, except in duly justified cases, be drawn up so as to take into account accessibility criteria for persons with disabilities or design for all users. Where mandatory accessibility requirements are adopted by a legal act of the European Union, technical specifications shall, as far as accessibility criteria for persons with disabilities or design for all users are concerned, be defined by reference thereto. <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/284/made/en/pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://directive2102.eu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2020/si/358/made/en/print> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <https://nda.ie/publications/communications/eu-web-accessibility-directive/> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <https://www.nda.ie/publications/communications/eu-web-accessibility-directive/monitoring%20reports/monitoring-report-eu-wad-ireland-2021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [EUR-Lex - 32018L1808 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/1808/oj) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/88404-publication-of-the-online-safety-and-media-regulation-bill/> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. [EUR-Lex - 32019L0882 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019L0882) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. [Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8072c0-national-disability-inclusion-strategy-2017-2021/> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. [BS EN 17478:2021 Transport Services. Customer communications for passenger transport services. A Universal Design approach - European Standards (en-standard.eu)](https://www.en-standard.eu/bs-en-17478-2021-transport-services-customer-communications-for-passenger-transport-services-a-universal-design-approach/) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. <https://universaldesign.ie/products-services/customer-engagement-in-tourism-services/> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. <https://universaldesign.ie/products-services/customer-engagement-in-energy-services/> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. <https://universaldesign.ie/products-services/customer-communications-toolkit-for-the-public-service-a-universal-design-approach/customer-communications-toolkit-for-the-public-services-a-universal-design-approach.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. [Strategy Statement - Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (bai.ie)](https://www.bai.ie/en/about-us/our-strategic-goals/) [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. [Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework | Media Literacy Ireland](https://www.medialiteracyireland.ie/news/harnessing-digital-the-digital-ireland-framework#:~:text=The%20Digital%20Ireland%20Framework%20sets%20out%20a%20high,by%20strong%20governance%20and%20a%20well-resourced%20regulatory%20framework.) [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. [15607\_all\_strategy\_web.pdf (solas.ie)](https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/b78324692b/15607_all_strategy_web.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. [Mind The Gap: Research on barriers to the realisation of rights of children with disabilities in Ireland. | Ombudsman for Children (oco.ie)](https://www.oco.ie/library/mind-the-gap-research-on-barriers-to-the-realisation-of-rights-of-children-with-disabilities-in-ireland/) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. <https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/en/about/annual_report/> [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. ‘Referral requests’ relate to a request for SLIS to refer someone to an available ISL interpreter for a specific booking. ‘Access support services’ relate to SLIS providing information, advocacy etc to support ISL access to services for ISL users, for example reassuring providers that data protection requirements do not prohibit use of interpreters, or explaining the requirements of the ISL Act or Disability Act. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. [Home - Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (risli.ie)](https://risli.ie/) [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. <https://risli.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Quarterly-Report-April-to-June-2021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. <https://www.itrs.ie/> [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. SEB is available from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Visual Access (Belfast) [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The sources of Braille referenced here are those outlined on the [FAQs PAGE – Irish National Braille and Alternative Formats Association (inbaf.ie)](http://inbaf.ie/faq/#Provision%20of%20Braille%20in%20Ireland) We acknowledge that there may be other providers. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. [77804\_a9aa4305-5b5a-4e4a-9cc3-1999e8b6ec20.pdf](file:///H:\Downloads\77804_a9aa4305-5b5a-4e4a-9cc3-1999e8b6ec20.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2021-11-09a.306> [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. [Home - Nala](https://www.nala.ie/) [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. <https://alone.ie/vodafone-ireland-foundation-launches-new-five-year-dedicated-digital-skills-learning-programme-for-older-people/#:~:text=29%20September%202021%3A%20Vodafone%20Ireland,over%20the%20age%20of%2065> [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. <https://ilmi.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ILMI-submission-to-the-Committee-on-Covid19.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. <https://nda.ie/publications/communications/building-back-better-consultation.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. <https://www.ombudsman.ie/publications/annual-reports/Ombudsman-AR-2020-English-Final-Web.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Virgin Media 2 and Virgin Media 3. The BAI may review this target if news services are introduced by Virgin Media. It will be a matter for Virgin Media as to how the access provision will be divided across the Virgin Media 2 and 3 but no service should have less than 10% subtitling. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Oireachtas TV is provided as an RTÉ public service channel via Saorview and as a separate public service available on cable and satellite.. Access commitments in respect of both services are the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)