

CHAPTER FIVE

Working with young people with a physical disability, young people who have sight loss, or young people who have hearing difficulties

Introduction

This chapter focuses on young people with a physical disability, young people who have sight loss, or young people who have hearing difficulties. It explains the needs and issues these young people may face and offers practical advice on actions you can take to work with them. It concludes by directing you to the people and resources that can support you in your inclusive youth work.



It is important to stress that young people with a physical disability, or who have sight loss, or have hearing difficulties, all have the same interests, desires and ambitions as any other young person. They are all individuals who place their mark on the world in their own way. Youth work organisations are ideally placed to provide environments without barriers for all young people to become involved and express themselves freely. Young people with access needs should have a range of opportunities to be included and supported in mainstream community-based youth groups in their area.

This chapter was developed by Daragh Kennedy, Laura Leeson, David Barry and Rachel Creevey (Irish Wheelchair Association); Fiona Kelty and Niamh Connolly (National Council for the Blind of Ireland), Nigel Connor (Irish Deaf Youth Association) and Caroline Carswell (Sound Advice) for 'Access All Areas – a Diversity Toolkit for the Youth Work Sector' published by NYCI and Youthnet 2012 – updated in 2021

Under the **Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004**, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability in the provision of goods and services, education, sports, access to public facilities and accommodation.



In Northern Ireland the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** and the **Equality (Disability) (Northern Ireland) Order 2000** gives disabled people rights in the areas of the provision of goods and services, education, sports, access to public facilities and accommodation and also in employment. Disability discrimination in education is covered by the **Special Education Needs and Disability (NI) order 2005 (SENDO)**, as amended. SENDO applies to schools, education and library boards, amongst other further education bodies.

Demographics

According to census 2016, 9% of young people in the Republic of Ireland aged 10-25 is identified as living with a disability of some typeⁱ. CSO give a breakdown of 0.5% of young people aged 10-24 experiencing deafness, 0.6% of young people aged 10-24 experiencing blindness or sight loss, and 1%, 1 in 100, young people aged 10-24 having a physical disability.ⁱⁱ This indicates a potential figure of more than 18,000 young people with physical or sensory disabilities who could be involved in youth work opportunities.ⁱⁱⁱ

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Research shows that a person with a disability is almost twice as likely to be unemployed as someone without a disability.^{iv} They are also less likely to attend third level with just 7.3% of the student population recoded as having a disability. Amongst this cohort, people who are blind or vision impaired and those who are deaf or hard of hearing represent the smallest numbers of persons with a disability attending third level education.^v

Demographics, however, do not convey the lived experience of young people with a disability. If you look beyond a young person's disability you will see an individual with feelings, emotions, hopes, dreams and abilities and who has many things in common with their peers. This chapter is aimed at supporting the inclusion and full participation of each individual young person with a disability that joins your youth group.



Terminology

This resource has been developed for youth workers on the island of Ireland. At times it is necessary to make distinctions between our two jurisdictions and we have had to choose a terminology to reflect this. We have chosen for the most part to use Northern Ireland (NI) and Republic of Ireland (ROI). At times we also use North and South. Additionally, for clarity, where information is significantly different we have used coloured boxes:

Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

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Language is critical in shaping and reflecting our thoughts, beliefs, feelings and concepts. Some words by their very nature can degrade and diminish people with a disability. The term “disabled young person” may convey a message to someone that the main thing worth mentioning about a person is their disability. Many prefer the term “young person with a disability” as this emphasises the person first without denying the reality of the disability.

However, some people prefer the term “disabled person” interpreting it as meaning that the person is disabled by society because they are denied the conditions needed to ensure that they can participate on an equal basis with everyone else – such as having physical access, relevant supports, assistive technologies etc.



It is important therefore to ask the young people you are working with which terms they are most comfortable with, or listen to them and model the terminology they use. In general, young people will always prefer to be referred to by their name with ‘disability’ only being used when absolutely necessary.

A disability is any physical, mental or sensory impairment which makes it necessary for a person to significantly change the methods they use to perform life activities.

The Northern Ireland Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

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Many terms can cause offence. Terms such as handicapped, wheelchair bound, or retard can be derogatory and offensive and should be avoided as they can label people in a negative way. Sometimes people with a disability are compared to what are often described as “normal people” rather than able-bodied people. This is offensive and ignores the fact that everyone has their own unique identity and abilities. One young person epitomises this in her take on disability. She would say that whilst she cannot walk or run, she can sing and she writes poetry. Her point is that everyone is born with different strengths, abilities, talents.

On deafness

There can be many misconceptions about deafness and deaf people. Signing deaf people do not see themselves as a disability group, rather as a linguistic minority with their own culture and norms. The term 'Deaf' is especially meaningful for the signing deaf community. It identifies their community as a group of people who share a perception of the world through an emphasis on visual and kinaesthetic input. This description is used most commonly for people who sign due to being deaf at birth or in very early childhood and who may never have learned to talk. They often capitalise the word 'Deaf' to define themselves as a cultural, social and linguistic group that can include people of all levels of hearing loss. In their case they will use the term Deaf person, not as a descriptor of disability but as an identity description (i.e. I am Deaf, it is part of my identity, I don't **have** deafness, I am not a person **with** deafness). Members of the signing deaf community use sign language as their primary means of communication, as well as those who don't, provided they accept the aims of the community.



Younger people who were born deaf may hear and talk without using sign language thanks to new hearing technologies and infant education approaches based on speech and reading interventions. It is important to ask a person how they prefer to communicate. If they speak to you this is likely their preferred mode but if in doubt just ask. It is better to know than to wrestle with any doubt you have.

Irish Sign Language (ISL) is the first language of the signing deaf community in Ireland. It is a distinct and separate language from both English and Irish (Gaelic). ISL is not just a language of the hands but also the face and body.

British Sign Language (BSL) is the first language of the signing deaf community in the UK. Like ISL it is a distinct and separate language from English. BSL similarly is also a language of the hands, face and body.

In **Northern Ireland** both ISL and BSL are used depending on where the person learns to sign. Regional variations apply to sign language and Northern Ireland also has its own regional variations.



Needs and issues for young people with a physical disability, young people who have sight loss or young people who have hearing difficulties

Young people with disabilities have many things in common with other young people. They like to go out, make friends, be independent and have fun. Your service could offer many things for young people with disabilities.

Some young people with a disability may need extra assistance or adaptations to participate in your service, which is also the case for other young people who use your service, such as young people who are shy or those who are having problems at home. Young people with a disability don't expect you to be an expert or have specialist training. In fact, they may want to use your service because you are not a specialised disability service.



Many young people with a disability may have limited social contact. They may go to a specialist school or workplace where their friends live far away from them, they may have difficulties with transport or their parents may be overprotective. A more general service may be just what they are looking for.

For members of the signing deaf community, low levels of educational attainment is a serious issue, with 80% of signing deaf people over 16 having the reading age of an eight year old. This has resulted in many working in low-level jobs, having problems with public bodies and generally experiencing a significant communication challenges with the hearing world.

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A large number of deaf people use cochlear implants and they may also use a hearing aid. For these young people the provision of a loop system is invaluable. Loop systems are used with hearing devices to give the person clarity in understanding someone who is using a microphone (P.A.) system. These are especially useful in larger public places such as churches, lecture halls, theatres etc. and also when there is a glass partition in place such as at reception areas.

It is also important to remember health and safety issues in relation to disability. Alarm systems need to work for everyone. For example, people with hearing issues may not hear an alarm or someone directing them to leave a building.



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Developing inclusive youth work practice for young people with a physical disability, who have sight loss or who have hearing difficulties

The biggest barrier that faces people with a disability is often the attitudes of other people. It is important to remember to show respect, acceptance and dignity to all young people you work with, including young people with disabilities. Here are some tips to help you to communicate and work with young people with a disability.

Be supportive

Be supportive and welcoming. Remember that the young person may be feeling nervous if it is their first time visiting your youth group. Try and reassure them and get them involved in group or team activities or introduce them to some of the other young people using your service.

Ask before you assist

If you think someone needs help, ask them, and don't assume that they need your help. If they say yes, ask them what they want you to do before you act. If they say no, accept their answer rather than keep asking them. Don't be offended if a person says no as they may just want to be independent.



Focus on the person

When speaking with a young person with a disability who is accompanied by a parent, carer or friend speak directly to the young person with the disability. If you have a conversation for more than a few moments with someone in a wheelchair, someone who is sitting down or someone of short stature, pull up a chair to ensure you are eye level. Do not squat or kneel as this can feel patronising.

Don't bombard

Just like any young person if you overload them with too much information or questions you may lose them. Pace yourself according to their level of comprehension and confidence.

Respect personal space and property

Never lean on a wheelchair as it is the personal space of the owner. Never move personal property such as a wheelchair, walking aid, microphone, guide dog or long cane away from a person with a disability without asking first, as they may feel more comfortable if it remains within their reach.

Blindness and impaired vision

Ensure your promotional material is printed in such a way that it is easy to read and is clear for everyone. Avoid using very small print and cluttering too much information together. Colour schemes and designs are important so seek advice from the National Council for the Blind of Ireland or the Royal National Institute for the Blind before starting to design your material. A clear print design checklist is included at the end of this chapter.



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Don't presume that someone with vision impairment is completely blind. Ask the person if they can see a particular landmark or object. For example, they might not be able to recognise someone across a room but can see printed material when held very close.

To guide someone in a particular direction always offer your arm, rather than grabbing their arm or pushing them in the direction. When meeting someone, identify yourself and others who are in the room. Address the person with sight loss by name when directing conversation to them in a group situation.

For a first-time visitor, describe your venue setting and the equipment and facilities that are available and their location in the room. For example, "the kitchen is on your left hand side".

Don't leave someone in an open space, bring them to some reference point that they can feel, like a wall, table or chair. To be left in open space can be disorientating for a person with no vision. Ask them where they would like to go before leaving them.

When purchasing computers or other equipment seek advice or link the person to the National Council for the Blind of Ireland or the Royal National Institute of the Blind as they have expertise in aids for people with vision impairments and individual needs can be met such as the need for voice activated software.

Never feed a guide dog. If everyone who met the dog each day fed it a titbit, the dog would have no appetite for meals and could become ill and unable to work. Never pat or distract a guide dog when it is wearing a harness.

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Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people

Ensuring access for hard of hearing young people involves making provisions so that they can access spoken and written communication. You will need to determine how the young person you are working with can best do this and what communication methods they are most comfortable with. If they use a hearing aid installing a loop system may be helpful. These systems vary considerably and you would need to work closely with members who could benefit from it to decide which one might be suitable.



When you are communicating directly with a young person who has hearing difficulties try and minimise noisy surroundings and distractions such as loud music. To get their attention you may be able to tap the person lightly on the shoulder or wave your hand.

Face the person and speak slowly. Eating, smoking or putting your hands near your mouth can cause difficulty when talking with people who lip read. Make sure you are in a well-lit area so that your face isn't in shadow. Shouting can make it harder to lip read and can interfere with the sound through a hearing aid. Remember though that not all deaf people can lip read. You can always write something on paper or via SMS text if you are unable to communicate.

Ideally you should have a mobile number available that young people can text that is consistently monitored and/or an email address that can be used for contact purposes. Also, social networking sites are an excellent way to keep in touch and they can also be used as a platform to contact your service.

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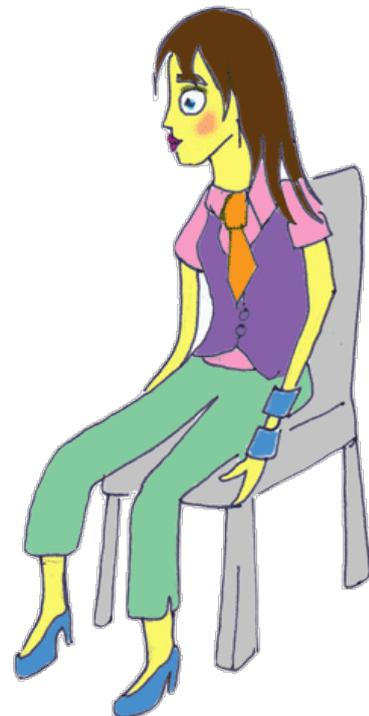
However, do remember that for signing deaf people sign language may be their first language and it does not follow the same structure as spoken English. Written text can be difficult to read for some people so any website, email or text messages should use plain English to avoid confusion.

Speech challenges

It is normal to feel embarrassed or guilty if you can't understand a person you are speaking to. Try to avoid feeling this way and focus your attention on trying to understand them. Don't pretend to understand them if you do not. The person with a disability has, most likely, experienced this before and won't be surprised if they are sometimes not understood.

Be patient and repeat what you have understood, their response will provide some guidance as to whether you were correct in your understanding. Be patient and wait for the person to finish what they are saying rather than interrupting and trying to guess what they are saying.

If a young person cannot speak, you should assume that they will have some other way to communicate with you. They may have a communication device, such as a speech board, speech synthesiser, letterboards, etc. Alternative ways to communicate would be typing out messages on mobile phones or you could try yes/no questions.



Challenging myths about young people with a physical disability, young people who have sight loss or young people who have hearing difficulties

One very practical way of challenging attitudes is to be aware of common myths about young people with a disability and have the facts that debunk them. You can use the following myths to challenge assumptions as part of your youth work activities and amongst the people you work with.

Myth 1 People with disabilities are helpless

Don't assume that someone with a disability needs your help. A young person who doesn't need help may (understandably) feel very frustrated that other people are constantly trying to take over tasks that they can do themselves. If you think someone needs help, ask them first. If they say yes, ask them what to do before you act. Most young people with a disability want to be independent and have control over their own life. They want to be able to look after themselves rather than be looked after.

"I know that a lot of people feel they should do everything for people because they feel sorry for them ... but I would rather do things for myself than have other people do them for me and then be expected to be grateful even if I do not like the way they were done"

Stephen, a young person with a disability.



“Some people can be patronising, even condescending or are too helpful. I’ve been referred to in the past as a poor handicapped boy. Some go out of their way to aid me and often embarrass me in the process”

Paul, a young person with a disability.

“I hate it when people treat me specially because I look different. I don’t want to be treated specially. I just want the same deal as everybody else. I do not want people to fuss over me, only do what I ask and leave it at that. Fussing just makes me feel either useless or angry, and getting the message across without being rude isn’t easy”

Peter, a young person with a disability.

Just because someone has a disability doesn’t mean they don’t have abilities. They may have talents and abilities that other people do not have. Don’t assume that someone with a disability cannot get involved or is not interested in getting involved with your programme.

Myth 2 People with disabilities need sympathy

People with disabilities would rather you felt empathy with them. Empathy is putting yourself in their shoes (or wheels) and seeing the world through their eyes. When we begin to see things that way, we will notice the obstacles in the environment that people with disabilities face e.g., inaccessible transport; physical obstacles, etc. and will work to change them. What people with a disability need are opportunities to maximise their independence. Disability is never a sickness.



Myth 3 People with a physical disability or deafness also have a learning disability

Having a physical disability or deafness does not mean having a learning disability as well. Less than one third of people with a physical disability have a learning disability as well. Just because someone has difficulty speaking to you does not mean that they have difficulty understanding what you say. It can be frustrating for someone with a physical disability to be spoken down to.

An example of someone who had both a physical and communication disability was theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking. Stephen had Motor Neuron disease and used a wheelchair and to communicate he used a computerised voice system mounted on his chair. He could not talk but in his lifetime, he received thirteen honorary degrees and was regarded as one of the most brilliant theoretical physicists since Einstein.

Myth 4 People with disabilities have trouble hearing

Some people yell or raise their voices when talking to someone who is blind, in a wheelchair or have some other sort of physical disability. When communicating with someone with a disability speak in a normal tone of voice unless they ask you to speak louder.

Myth 5 All disabilities are obvious

Not all disabilities are obvious. In fact, it is likely that some young people attending your youth group/s have a disability that you don't know about. Don't assume that you always need to know if someone has a disability.



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Myth 6 People with disabilities only want to hang out with each other

The reason most of us make friends with particular people is because we get along well with each other and have common interests. People with disabilities are no different. Most like to have a range of friends including those with and without a disability.

Myth 7 People with disabilities aren't interested in or cannot have sex

Adolescence is a time when young people develop an interest in sex and become more aware of their sexuality. This is normal for all young people, including young people with a disability. Many people (and some parents) treat young people with a disability like children and are shocked when they are interested in or have a girlfriend or boyfriend. There is no reason why having a disability means that someone does not have an interest in relationships or sex!

Myth 8 All people with disabilities are the same

People with disabilities are individuals. Not all individuals are the same. Not all disabilities are the same. For example, two people with vision impairment may have different needs and abilities. This will be due to the cause of the disability, their particular impairment, upbringing, experience and ability. The effects of disability differ from person to person. Even if you know someone else with the same disability don't assume that you know how a person thinks, feels or acts. This is the same when helping people with a disability, not every person has the same needs.

Myth 9 Deaf people cannot use the telephone

Some hard-of-hearing people have enough residual hearing to talk on the phone. Many cochlear implant users also use the phone thanks to modern technology.

Myth 10 Deaf people are dumb or mute

Many young people with hearing devices can hear and talk just like any other person thanks to modern technologies and education approaches. Similarly, deaf people who use Sign Language are not dumb: most signing deaf people are congenitally deaf and never learnt to speak for different reasons. Signing deaf people are capable of making vocal sounds but some will choose not to speak as they are aware they may not be understood. Some may think they will be difficult to understand or have inappropriate pitch or volume. In any case, terms like "deaf and dumb" or "deaf-mute" are outdated and considered offensive.

Myth 11 Unusual sounding speech means the person has a learning disability

Speech development depends greatly on one's ability to hear him or herself talk and whether hearing devices are worn. For some deaf people, sound, the foundation for learning speech, which hearing people take for granted, is not accessible. The situation has nothing to do with a person's intelligence.



Myth 12 Deaf people can read lips

Lip-reading is a skill that some deaf or hard of hearing people have; others do not. Even with the best lip-readers, it is important to remember that only about 25% of speech is visible on the lips. Some words look almost exactly the same - for instance, the words "paddle" and "battle."

Myth 13 Hearing devices completely correct hearing loss

Hearing aids are assistive devices which improve hearing for some individuals. Hearing devices do not "correct" hearing. A hearing device may enable a person to hear someone's voice, even though she or he may not be able to understand distinct words. Just because someone wears a hearing device does not mean the person hears normally, particularly in group settings.

Myth 14 Deaf people are not very bright or educated because they have not learned to talk or do not use proper English grammar

Most young people who are deaf hear and talk thanks to hearing devices while for signing deaf people their primary language, or first language, is Sign Language; English is a second language. Most people who are deaf or hard of hearing learn English usage and have speech training, but some may find it easier to use their primary language when possible.



Myth 15 Sign Language is universal

Sign Language is not a singular universal language used by deaf people. Just as hearing people in different countries speak different languages; deaf people around the world employ different sign languages. For example, Irish Sign Language (ISL) is different from British Sign Language (BSL), American Sign Language (ASL) and French Sign Language (FSL).

Myth 16 Sign Language is spoken language conveyed through signs

Sign Language is not a manual code for the spoken language. This means signing deaf people do not sign word-for-word to form grammatically correct sentences. It would be unnatural to do so.

However, with the advent of Total Communication, Signed Exact English is taught to students. Total Communication (TC) is an approach to deaf education that aims to make use of a number of modes of communication such as signed, oral, auditory, written and visual aids, depending on the particular needs and abilities of the child. Many students who learn Signed English do not realise it is Signed Exact English they are learning and not SL.



Checklist 5 - How accessible is your organisation to young people with a physical disability, young people who have sight loss or young people who have hearing difficulties?

This checklist can help you to identify how you can improve your service for young people with a physical disability, young people who have sight loss or young people who have hearing difficulties.

If in answering the questions you realise that physical access is an issue at your service there are links to guiding documents in our Reference section at the end of this chapter. Advice and training on accessibility and disability awareness is signposted in our Useful Contacts section.

Please note that many of the questions cover minimum requirements that a young person with a disability may need. Individual young people may have particular requirements and it is important to ask what these are and assess your building with their needs in mind. For those in a position to put in fully accessible services that meet all requirements we recommend the IWA Guidelines as promoting best practice.

Note: Making your service more accessible will also make it safer and more accessible for other people who visit your service such as parents with prams, or people who do not speak English. It could also help you meet your public liability and workplace safety responsibilities.

Professional development

Our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to deliver an inclusive youth service

Staff and volunteer awareness

- | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Our staff and volunteers are trained in basic disability awareness | YES | PARTLY | NO |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|

Our staff and volunteers know how to communicate with the following:

- | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| ➤ a person with reduced mobility | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ a person who has hearing difficulties | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ a person with impaired vision | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ a person with a speech impairment | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ a person with a brain injury | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our staff and volunteers have strategies in place for promoting friendships among young people attending programs, such as group and team activities | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We employ an inclusion worker, or a staff member/volunteer has responsibility for inclusion in their role description | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Programme planning and delivery

Our programmes are designed and delivered to include the diverse needs and identities of young people

Programmes

- Our programmes and activities are designed with all young people in mind and seek to be fully inclusive **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- We plan and adapt activities with different mobility and sensory considerations in mind **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Ensuring access and inclusion

Physical access to our venue

- Our service considers that young people with disabilities may have transport difficulties in getting to our service and is committed to working to accommodate suitable transport arrangements **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Car parking

- There are designated accessible car spaces located close to the entrance of our venue **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- People can be dropped off and picked up close to the entrance of our venue **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Venue approach

- | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • There is a clear and level pathway, from the car park or the street approach, to our venue, which is well maintained, free of hazards, and lit at night | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • There are no overhead hazards such as low awnings, low signs or overhanging branches | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Where the approach to the venue is not level, ramps and stairs are provided | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Ramps are built according to Part M Building Standards (as a minimum) i.e., not too steep | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Steps on stairs are slip resistant and handrails are provided on stairs | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Step edges are highlighted | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Entrance

- | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • The main entrance of our venue has level access | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • The main entrance or the accessible entrance is obvious or clearly signposted | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • All doorways are a minimum of 800mm in width, and ideally 900mm for internal doors and 1000mm for entrance doors | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Moving around the venue

- | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|----|
| • Our venue and venue entrance are free of hazards that block pathways (such as bikes, school bags, brochure stands, pot plants) | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Floor surfaces are even and slip resistant | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our venue uses tonal contrast between walls and doors, doors and door handles, walls and floors | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Lifts are sufficiently large to accommodate a wheelchair user with one other person, are able to take the weight of heavier wheelchairs, and are in working order | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Fixtures and fittings such as door handles, door bells, brochures and promotional material are at the right height to be reached by wheelchair users i.e. 900 mm – 1000 mm | YES | PARTLY | NO |

WC facilities

- | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|----|
| • There are designated wheelchair accessible toilets: | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ Toilet doors open out rather than in towards the bathroom (where possible) and especially in smaller toilets | YES | PARTLY | NO |

- | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| ➤ Accessible toilets have grab rails next to the toilet on both sides | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ There is sufficient room for a person to position their wheelchair beside the toilet and manoeuvre themselves from the wheelchair to the toilet and from either side of toilet.
NB (Minimum toilet size is 1500 mm x 2000 mm. The IWA preferred size is 1800 x 2500 mm with door opening out) | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| ➤ The wash basin has free space underneath | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Public image

How we present our service to our community

Promoting our service

- | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Our promotional flyers use a text and background that contrast in colour and use a plain font such as Arial. Font size is large enough to accommodate the needs of people with low vision (14 point is recommended) | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • All promotional material can be printed in Braille or large text | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We use warning signs for entertainment events where there will be strobe lighting or smoke machines | YES | PARTLY | NO |

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- | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Promotional flyers are easy to read, use basic English and avoid jargon | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Photos and drawings of young people we use in promotional material feature a range of young people, including young people with disabilities | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We involve young people in the production of our promotional material including young people with a disability | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our promotional flyers state if we have wheelchair access | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We network with and provide promotional material to a wide range of services, including disability services | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Young people can phone, SMS (text), email or fax our service | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Young people can keep in contact with our service using Facebook or Twitter | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our website meets disability standards i.e., they are compatible with voice activated software. (This software audibly reads out text on websites. NCBI's Centre for inclusive Technology www.cfit.ie or RNIB's Web Access Centre can assist with user testing of your website webaccess@rnib.org.uk) | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We use clear print in our printed material (see clear print guidelines below) | YES | PARTLY | NO |

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- We use a loop system in situations where we have P.A systems (reception areas and at presentations etc) **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Partnerships and networks

- We have a referral list of disability services for young people and their families **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- Our service works in partnership with disability services to make our service accessible **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- We provide information about our service to disability services **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Participation

We make sure we include the voices of young people at all levels of our youth service

- Young people with a disability are involved in decision making, e.g. have input about how services are run, are involved in informal consultations, attend a youth or management committee **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Policies and procedures

We have a written commitment to deliver an equal and inclusive service

- Our organisation has a written commitment to equality and inclusion that includes people with a disability **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

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Useful contacts – Republic of Ireland

<p>Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Phone: 01 - 818 6400 Web: www.iwa.ie National organisation for people with physical disabilities</p>	<p>Muscular Dystrophy Ireland Phone: 01 - 872 1501 Web: www.mdi.ie National organisation for people with Neuromuscular conditions</p>
<p>The Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Phone: 01 - 457 2329 Web: www.iasbah.ie</p>	<p>National Council for the Blind of Ireland Local phone: 1850 33 43 53 Web: www.ncbi.ie</p>
<p>Sound Advice Email: hello@soundadvice.pro Web: https://sound-advice.ie</p>	<p>Organisation promoting technology-supported mainstream education and living for deaf children and students</p>
<p>Irish Deaf Youth Association (IDYA) Phone: 085 198 4166 Email: info@irishdeafyouth.com Web: The Irish Deaf Youth Association (IDYA) – Deaf Village Ireland National organisation representing young Deaf people. It is affiliated to the Irish Deaf Society. They have a youth group that meets in Cabra, Dublin</p>	<p>DeafHear Web: www.DeafHear.ie Phone: 01 - 817 5700 Offers services to people who are deaf and hard of hearing and advocates and campaigns for equal access and opportunities</p>

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<p>Enable Ireland Phone: 01 - 261 5900 Web: www.enableireland.ie</p>	<p>Enable Ireland supports children and adults with disabilities and their families and provides services in local communities throughout Ireland</p>
<p>Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) Phone: 01 - 873 0455 Web: ILMI – Independent Living Movement Ireland</p>	<p>National disability led organisation promoting a rights-based social model of disability, that challenges a charity/medical view of disability. They work towards the removal of societal barriers that prevent active equal participation of disabled people, challenging the denial of people’s rights and the promotion of the philosophy of Independent living.</p>
<p>NALA Freephone: 1800 20 2065 Web: www.nala.ie</p>	<p>Gives supports to people with literacy problems. NALA also supports organisations to develop clear English</p>
<p>National Disability Authority Phone: 01 - 608 0400 Web: www.nda.ie</p>	<p>The National Disability Authority is the lead state agency on disability issues, providing independent expert advice to Government on policy and practice</p>

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Useful contacts – Northern Ireland

<p>Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Phone: 028 - 9032 9373 Web: www.rnib.org.uk</p>	<p>RNIB Northern Ireland supports children and adults with sight loss to live full and independent lives</p>
<p>Learning SPACE Phone: 028 - 90319360 Email: info@learningspaceni.co.uk Web: www.learningspaceni.co.uk</p>	<p>Learning SPACE is an award winning store specialising in educational resources for all children</p>
<p>Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association (NIDYA) Phone: 028 - 9043 8566 Web: www.nidya.org.uk</p>	<p>NIDYA provides help, support, encouragement & fun for Young Deaf and hard of hearing people in Northern Ireland</p>
<p>Contact a Family NI Phone: 028 - 92627552 Email: nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk Web: www.cafamily.org.uk</p>	<p>Contact a Family provides advice, information and support to families with disabled children</p>

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RNIB Web Access Centre Phone: 020 - 73912178 Email: webaccess@rnib.org.uk	National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Web: www.ndcs.org.uk
Disability Action Phone: 028 - 9029 7880 Textphone: 028 - 9029 7882 Email: hq@disabilityaction.org	

Resources

Make It Clear Guidelines

www.ncbi.ie/services/services-for-organisations/making-print-and-multimedia-accessible-mcs

[Disability Access & Awareness - NCBI](#)

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Disability Awareness Training

<p>Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Disability Awareness Training Services Blackheath Drive Clontarf Dublin 3 Phone: 01 - 818 6400 Web: www.iwa.ie</p>	<p>IWA's Disability Awareness Training works with companies to increase employees' understanding of inclusion and diversity in the workplace. It seeks to open people's minds about how easy it is to accommodate people with disabilities in their workforce. The sessions provide interactive and engaging training, with practical activities that provide some understanding of what inclusion, or lack of, might feel like.</p>
<p>Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Disability Awareness Workshops Blackheath Drive Clontarf Dublin 3 Phone: 01 - 818 6400 Web: www.iwa.ie</p>	<p>IWA's Youth Service delivers Disability Awareness Workshops that tackle stereotypical views surrounding disability and people with disabilities. They dispel myths and educate participants about inclusion versus exclusion. The workshops are interactive and involve games and activities that explore a range of issues such as appropriate use of language in relation to disability, and how to involve everyone - no matter what their level of ability.</p>
<p>Irish Sign Language Classes Irish Deaf Society Phone: 01 - 860 1960 Web: www.deaf.ie</p>	<p>QQI Level 3 and 4 classes are available. Students must be over 16 years of age Email: islclasses@irishdeafociety.ie</p>

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National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) Disability Access and Awareness Training

Phone: 01 - 8307033

Email: info@ncbi.ie

Web: [Disability Access & Awareness - NCBI](#)

NCBI offer awareness training on vision impairment. It also does access audits on buildings.

Real-Time Captioning (for deaf and hard of hearing)

PCR Ltd. (Dublin)

Phone: (0)404 - 64355

Web: www.pcr.ie

PCR provide a range of live speech to text services.

Irish Sign Language interpreters

SLIS

Phone: 01 - 413 9670

Web: www.slis.ie

Bridge Interpreting

Phone: 087 904 6594

Web: www.bridgeinterpreting.ie

Using Plain English and no jargon

Refer to NALA for advice. **Freephone:** 1800 20 20 65, **Web:** www.nala.ie

A useful guide for “plain English” writing is also available at

www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf and at

www.dest.gov.au/archive/publications/plain_en/writing.htm

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Clear Print Design Checklist

Font size and formatting

- Is the font size at least 12 point or ideally 14 point?
- Is the font type simple and clear (sans serif)?
- Is the text left aligned (i.e. not justified)?
- Does the text always start on the left most margin of the page?
- Does the text contrast effectively with the background?
- Avoid using upper case in the text and headings
- CAPS should only be used for single words
- Avoid using underlining and italics
- Use colour, bold or a larger font size to highlight keywords or headings
- Avoid splitting words between two lines
- Avoid curved or vertical text
- Only use central alignment for titles
- Leave adequate space between each line
- Do not stretch or cram words
- Leave a space between each paragraph
- Leave an adequate gutter between columns of text and ideally emphasise the column by using a dividing line
- Bullet points should be solid and bold
- Line spacing should be greater than single spacing

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Consistent layout

- Ensure that the layout is consistent and logical
- Use recurring features wherever possible
- Put page numbers in the same place on each page

Images

- Avoid text over images
- Avoid using watermarks behind the text
- Ensure that images are not the only way of providing information
- Images should be described in 'alt text' box for screen readers

Forms

- If the reader needs to write on the page, is there is adequate space to use a big thick marker?
- If using tick boxes or tables, make the border solid and bold

Printing

- The paper should have a matt finish
- Folds on the paper should not obscure any text

Videos and Podcast

- Videos and podcasts should be transcribed for people with ESOL or hearing issues

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Use the checklist above or refer to NCBI (Republic of Ireland) for additional advice - Locall 1850 33 43 53 or see their website [NCBI - Working for people with sight loss](#)

Or contact RNIB (Northern Ireland) for advice on accessible print etc.

www.rnib.org.uk

[Top tips for creating accessible print documents \(rnib.org.uk\)](#)

References

IWA Guidelines (2020) Best practice Access Guidelines – designing accessible environments www.iwa.ie/access-guidelines/best-practice-access-guidelines-4/. Please note: you have to enter your name and email to download the guidelines

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2000) Part M Building Regulations Technical Guidance Document - Access and Use (2010) www.gov.ie/en/publication/78e67-technical-guidance-document-m-access-and-use/

Endnotes

ⁱ [Disability - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#)

ⁱⁱ [Types of Disability - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Types of Disability - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#)

^{iv} The Southern Health and Social Services Board

^v [Numbers of Students with Disabilities Studying in Higher Education in Ireland 2017/18 \(ahead.ie\)](#)

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