

DISABILITY RIGHTS AND SERVICES



More than one in five people in Ireland have a disability.

In 2025, it will be seven years since Ireland ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Ireland has now signed up to the optional protocol of the UNCRPD.



Even with this, a lot of work needs to be done to make sure our communities are inclusive.

Labour wants to take away the barriers for disabled people so that they are included and treated equally.



This means:

- Having a good enough income.
- Dealing with the extra cost of disability,
- Making sure the State provides the public services and supports that disabled people need.



Labour thinks that the next government must make a plan to deal with these issues.

In the Labour manifesto, we have shared our ideas around transport, housing, education, and social protection to ensure Ireland is in line with the UNCRPD.

POLITICAL CHANGE



Labour wants to put an end to disability being seen as a separate thing by government.

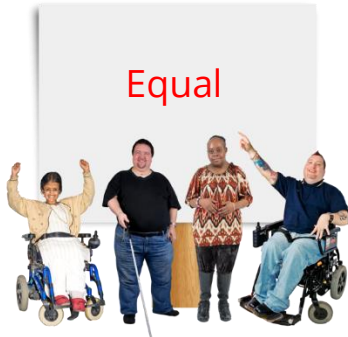
We will place the responsibility for overseeing disability matters in the Department of the Taoiseach.

We will appoint a Minister of State for Disability who sits at the Cabinet table.

Our aim is to make sure that all public services are inclusive and treat people equally.

Labour will:

- Produce a new National Disability Strategy.
- Strengthen the National Disability Authority.
- Set up a new office called the Disability Ombudsman to make complaints about breaches of rights.
- Make sure that all legislation and budgets are disability and equality proofed.
- Strengthen and fund the National Advocacy Service, with a right to advocacy.
- Make sure that disability services get multi-year funding.
- Improve the pay and conditions of staff working in disability services.
- Fund Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) to build capacity and self-advocacy.



LAW REFORMS

Labour will make sure that the Disability Act is in line with the UNCRPD and that the Equality Acts deal with disability.

We will review the way that HIQA carries out its work to make sure that the person is always at the centre.

Labour will improve mental health laws and strengthen the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act.

We will bring in safeguards to protect the liberty of disabled people.

The Education Act for people with special educational needs will need to be strengthened and then finally brought into law.



LIVING STANDARDS AND COSTS

The government proposals in the Green Paper on Disability Reform have failed.

Labour will work with DPOs on a new rights-based approach to reforming disability payments.

We will replace existing schemes and gradually bring in a permanent Cost of Disability payment.

Medical Cards based on need not income.

We will encourage more disabled people to work through:

- The Wage Subsidy Scheme.
- Increased funding for assistive technology.
- New Reasonable Accommodation Funds and Disability Awareness Support Schemes.





HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Our population is growing and getting older.

Disability services in our health and social care system must be funded to meet existing and future needs.

We know that there are many disabled people who need a disability service but are not getting one.

There is a Disability Services Action Plan and Labour will fund it.

Labour will also increase funding for mental health to 10% of the overall health budget.

Labour will make sure that children with mental health difficulties have the support that they need.

DISABILITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Labour will:

- Address the understaffing of Children's Disability Teams.
- Train more therapists to work with children.
- In the short term, fund assessments for the children who have been waiting longest.
- Ask the HSE to publish waiting lists for assessment of needs and therapies every month.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Labour will:

- Hold a new National Convention on Education with young people and children at the heart.
- Look at how children can access local schools and the right to education for children with additional needs.
- Introduce an Autism Guarantee to make sure that every child has a school place suited to their needs.
- Undertake an Autism Audit of all schools.
- Plan for schools by identifying future need.
- Strengthen the Education Act for people with special educational needs.
- Fund special school places and classes integrated in mainstream schools.
- Make sure that children with complex needs have access to the special education teachers that they need.
- Support SNAs in their working conditions and in training.
- Increase funding for the Summer Programme.
- Give more time in exams to students with dyslexia and other learning challenges.
- Include Irish Sign Language as a Leaving Cert subject and ensure the ISL Act is fully implemented.





EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CARE

Labour will:

Make sure that children with disabilities are supported in both early years and school age.

Place new childcare facilities with schools to improve planning and improve access for children with additional needs.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Labour will:

Introduce new ways into education and work for people with disabilities.

Fund paths to further and higher education and apprenticeships.

Fund services for school leavers with additional needs.

ACCESS AND ROUTES TO EMPLOYMENT

Ireland has the lowest employment rate for people with disabilities in the EU.

Labour will:

Publish a new plan for people with disabilities to get the employment rate to the EU average.

Bring in a cost of disability payment.





Fund assistive technology.

Improve the Wage Subsidy Scheme and other programmes.

Give a real right to flexible work.

Research the barriers to employment for people with disabilities



Make sure that the public sector target that 6% of employees have a disability is met and extended.

Provide access to job coaches.

Build on the Ability and WorkAbility programmes.



INDEPENDENT LIVING

Labour will

- Ensure a right to independent living and put funding in place.
- Review the personalised budget project and look to expand the scheme.
- Provide a right to home support and personal assistant services.



LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY AND HOUSING

Labour will

- Make sure that 10% of social and affordable housing is available for people with disabilities and are fully wheelchair accessible.





- Increase the Housing Adaptation Grant
- Fund transport and assistive technology.
- Fund the move from institutions to community.
- Make sure that people under 65 years old are moved out of nursing homes.

TRANSPORT - IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

Labour will;



- Make sure that public transport is accessible to all.
- Improve rural and urban routes.
- Expand the Dublin Bus Travel Assistance Scheme
- Maintain and expand the free travel scheme.

REMOVING BARRIERS AND REALISING RIGHTS

Labour will:



- Seek to protect persons with disabilities in parts of the world where there is conflict.
- Remove barriers to Arts, Sport and Recreation
- Provide funding for disability sporting organisations like IWA Sport, Special Olympics Ireland, and the Paralympics,
- Deliver improved changing facilities at all public sporting grounds and facilities.

