



# Explainer:



## The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## What is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights treaty, which was adopted by the United Nations in 2006. The Convention sets out what countries need to do to ensure that Disabled people can exercise their human rights on a full and equal basis as everyone else.

It is the first international human rights treaty of the 21st century, and Disabled people were engaged and actively took part in its drafting, consultation and negotiation.

To date, over 182 countries have ratified the Convention, along with the European Union in 2010. This means that they have signed onto the Treaty and agreed to make it part of their laws. It was officially ratified by Ireland in 2018.

However, one part that Ireland has not yet ratified is the **Optional Protocol**. This is a way for Disabled people to go directly to the UN to hold States like Ireland accountable for specific violations of their rights.

The Convention makes sure that Disabled people, who comprise over 20% of the world's population and 13.5% of the population in Ireland, have access to the same rights as their non-Disabled peers. It covers a wide range of areas where Disabled people believe that they experience barriers on a daily basis.

These range from access to justice, civic and political participation, education, employment, freedom of movement, the right to live independently in your community, healthcare, freedom from exploitation and abuse, access to the arts, sport and recreation, as well as freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Countries that have ratified the Convention can use it as a framework to develop both disability-specific laws and policies, as well as bring disability-specific concerns into laws which impact everybody in society, including Disabled people and Autistic people.

To this effect, the Convention emphasises that every issue is a disability rights issue, and that disability rights issues are issues that impact everybody in society in some way.

The UN Convention does not create any new rights, but it is a very important treaty for Disabled people as it promotes the active, engagement and equal participation of Disabled people in all aspects of society. It also affirms that people with disabilities can equally enjoy the full range of human rights. It also recasts these rights within a model of disability which better reflects Disabled people's lived experiences, including Autistic people, by considering how environmental and social factors can also shape how a person feels accepted and included in society. It also sets out what

Governments need to do to ensure that Disabled people can realise the full range of economic, social, political, civil and cultural rights set out in the Convention, to proactively address discrimination, and promote Disabled peoples' full and active participation in society.

Countries who have signed onto the Convention must consult with Disabled people and their representative organisations when developing laws and policies that impact the lives of Disabled people.

The CRPD also marks a “paradigm shift” towards the Social Model of Disability. This is a more holistic approach to disability which places a bigger responsibility on society to ensure equality for Disabled people, and less so on the individual to fit into norms or environments that would otherwise be inaccessible, or which may not always support their inclusion or participation.

Under Article 1, the Convention's purpose is to: “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

Article 1 also provides a definition of disability that reflects this attitudinal shift - it marks a departure from the **Medical Model of Disability**, which has been the prevailing view of disability for many years.

The Medical Model perceives the person's disability as something wrong with the person's body or the way they think about or perceive the world - it sees the person's disability, difference or impairment as the cause of why they find it more difficult to participate in society. Many Disabled people, including Autistic people find issue It frames the Disabled person as 'broken' for having a disability or difference, places the burden on the person to use therapeutic or medical treatments or interventions to 'fix' themselves or to have special services provided for their needs.

The concept of disability that frames the Convention is **the Social Model of Disability**.

The Social Model states that people with disabilities are disabled by barriers to accessibility and participation within society, as opposed to just the person's difference or disability itself. These barriers can range from physical, communication, attitudinal or social barriers, which can make it harder for Disabled people, including Autistic people, to be fully accepted and included in society. The Social Model states that it is all of society's responsibility, including policymakers, to proactively address barriers that exclude or discriminate against Disabled people. By removing these barriers, through reasonable accommodation, positive action or other measures aimed at reducing or eliminating barriers to participation, society can support people with disabilities and Autistic people to fully and equally participate in society.

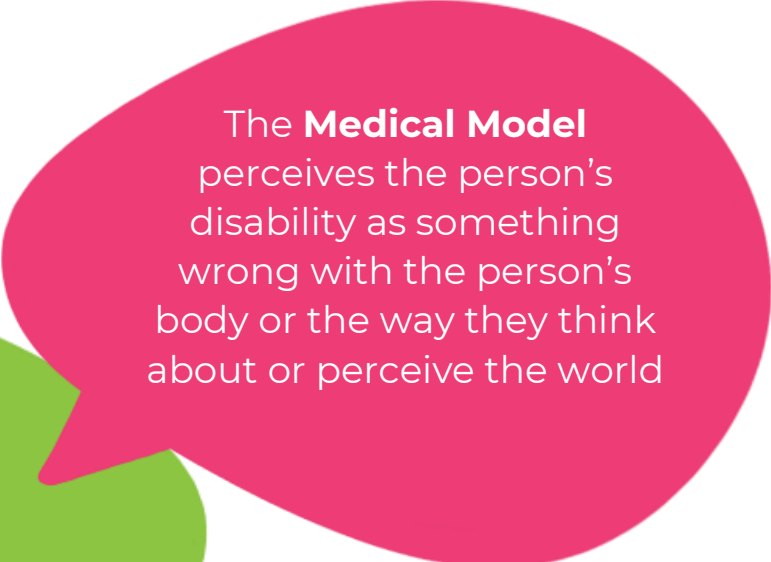
This understanding of disability moves away from considering people with disabilities as objects of pity or charity, welfare or medical treatment, or as just recipients of care or special services, towards having human rights. It also acknowledges that the way that society may be structured and organised can have the effect of disabling Disabled people from fully exercising their rights, and that it is not the Disabled person or Autistic person's fault that they find themselves excluded from society. The CRPD acknowledges that people with disabilities are rights holders who have the agency and capacity to use these rights to make decisions that impact their lives, as well as to actively contribute and participate in society.

This shift away from the Medical Model towards the Social Model is more inclusive of Autistic people, as well as people with other neurodevelopmental differences or disabilities. This is because it widens the lens of how society understands disability to consider the impact of how a person's disability or difference might interact with social and environmental factors that shape their lives, and how they might be included in society.

This is reflected in the definition of disability that is found within the UN Convention. It states: *"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."*



The **Social Model** states that people with disabilities are disabled by barriers to accessibility and participation within society



The **Medical Model** perceives the person's disability as something wrong with the person's body or the way they think about or perceive the world

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<sup>1</sup> Article 1, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## How is the Convention structured and what is contained in the Convention?

The CRPD contains 50 articles, which covers a wide range of economic, political, social and cultural rights, often covering issues or areas where people with disabilities may face discrimination or exclusion. It takes a **cross-disability approach**, meaning that it addresses the barriers faced by all Disabled people and their experiences, rather than just specifically addressing the needs of one specific disability or category of people with disabilities.

The Convention contains a strong emphasis on equality and non-discrimination in its articles - it does not contain or create any new rights but emphasises that Disabled people have the right to access and can equally enjoy the full range of human rights as everyone else.

The Convention also places a focus on the full participation of Disabled people in all levels of society. Article 4 of the Convention, for instance, places an obligation on countries like Ireland to actively consult with and follow the advice of people with disabilities, as well as organisations which are led by Disabled people. It also instructs countries to particularly consult with and follow the advice of **Disabled Peoples' Organisations**, or **DPOs** where a significant number of their membership, usually half or more than half their members, are people with disabilities.

The disability rights mantra of **“nothing about us, without us”**, can be found across every part of the Convention. This means that Disabled people should be directly consulted and involved in the making of laws, policies, services and supports that reflect Disabled people's needs, priorities and lived experiences. It also creates obligations and opportunities for countries like Ireland to actively consult and involve Disabled people in making laws that directly impact their lives.

The Convention also contains a number of mechanisms which people with disabilities, including Autistic people, can directly hold States who have ratified the Convention to account for their progress in implementing the Convention:

- **UN CRPD Committee** - A committee of disability experts, including Disabled people, who are tasked with monitoring how countries who have ratified the Convention are implementing it in their laws and policies. The Committee also drafts **General Comments**, which lets States and the wider public know about how they see particular Articles of the Convention, and provides guidance and advice on what actions States need to do to comply with the specific article of the Convention in question. It also investigates complaints raised by people with disabilities on issues where the State has violated the Convention.

- **Annual Conference of State Parties** - This is where all countries and institutions who have ratified the Convention gather to discuss their progress in implementation of the Convention and share their expertise in implementing different facets of the Convention.

## How is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities structured?

**Preamble** - This is the Convention's Introductory Statement and sets out some of the Convention's principles. It includes statements on the following:

- the dignity and worth of people with disabilities,
- the universal and interconnected nature of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- that Disabled people can enjoy the full range of protections set out by UN treaties,
- that disability is an evolving concept,
- including the perspectives of gender identity and children,
- addressing the cumulative disadvantage that people with more than one disability or who also belong to other disadvantaged groups experience.

It also includes statements recognising the full diversity of Disabled people, supporting the active participation of Disabled people, the barriers to participation Disabled people face, protecting the rights of Disabled people who need more specific support and the contribution people with disabilities already make to society.

### Article 1 and 2

This sets out the **purpose of the Convention**, which includes defining who we mean by Disabled people, as defined earlier. Article 2 sets out specific definitions around communication, Reasonable Accommodation, universal design, and discrimination on disability grounds.

### Article 3

This sets out the **General Principles** which underpin all the Articles contained within the Convention. It provides guidance to States on how to interpret and implement the Convention - These include:

1. Respect for the person's dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence;
2. Non-discrimination;
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of Disabled people as part of human diversity and humanity;
5. Equality of opportunity;

6. Accessibility;
7. Equality between men and women;
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to affirm their identities

#### Article 4

This sets out the **General obligations** that countries like Ireland must follow when they are making laws about Disabled people or which impact their lives. These obligations include making the necessary legal and policy changes to implement the Convention, abolish laws and policies that discriminate against Disabled people, protect and promote Disabled peoples' human rights in all laws and policies, ensure that public sector and private sector companies and organisations conform with the Convention's principles, promote the availability of universally designed goods and services and supports, train professionals on the understanding and acceptance of Disabled people, and ensure the progressive realisation of rights contained within the Convention.

#### Article 4(3)

This is particularly important, as it states that States like Ireland must directly consult with and involve people with disabilities and their representative organisations (or DPOs), as distinct from organisations that provide services for people with disabilities, or organisations that involve Disabled people, but are not necessarily led by people with disabilities, and ask for their input when they make decisions, laws and policies that impact Disabled people.

#### Article 5

**Equality and Non-discrimination** - This sets out that all people with disabilities are equal before the law and are entitled to its full protections. It also prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities from discrimination on disability grounds. It also ensures that reasonable accommodations can be provided where appropriate. Positive measures which address barriers or achieve equality are not considered to be discrimination.

#### Article 6

**Women with disabilities** - This article recognises that Disabled women and girls face multiple grounds of discrimination and sets out that States must take measures aimed at ensuring that Disabled women and girls can fully and equally enjoy their human rights.

**Article 7**

**Children with disabilities** - This Article sets out that States should ensure that Disabled children have full access to their human rights. States must also take their best interests into account and ensure that Disabled children have a say on matters affecting them in an age-appropriate manner.

**Article 8**

**Awareness-raising** - This article obliges States to raise awareness around the rights of people with disabilities and to promote positive depictions and portrayals of disability. This includes combatting stereotypes and prejudices against Disabled people, recognising the talents and skills of Disabled people, promoting positive media portrayals of disability and educating the public on the rights of Disabled people.

**Article 9**

**Accessibility** - This Article obliges States to ensure that the built environment such as schools, workplaces, roads and footpaths, transport, information, communication, technology, and public services, including emergency services, are fully accessible to Disabled people, and to identify and eliminate barriers to accessibility when they happen. It also obliges States, such as Ireland, to set minimum guidelines for making their public and private services and facilities accessible to Disabled people, provide accessibility training, and provide more specific supports to people with disabilities like using Braille, easy-to-read information, Social Stories, and sign-language interpreters, when they need these supports.

## Articles 10 - 30 contain more specific rights

**Article 10**

**Right to life** - This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities have the same right to life as everyone else, and to take steps to ensure that all Disabled people can enjoy the right to life.

**Article 11**

**Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies** - This obliges States to ensure that Disabled people are properly protected when there are situations like armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, in line with humanitarian and human rights law.



## Article 12

**Equal recognition before the law** - This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities are treated equally before the law. This includes the right to enjoy the legal capacity to make decisions about their lives, including being supported to making these decisions, and that these supports should respect the person's will and preferences. Any safeguards from abuse should be tailored to the Disabled person's circumstances and should only be there for as long as they need it. It also ensures that Disabled people are supported to manage their financial affairs, including owning property and accessing bank accounts, and loans.

## Article 13

**Access to justice** - This obliges States to ensure that Disabled people have equal and effective access to justice. This includes providing accommodations that support their participation in investigations, court cases and other kinds of legal proceedings such as litigation, and for police, courts, legal professionals such as barristers and solicitors, probation and prison staff to receive awareness training which supports people with disabilities to participate in legal proceedings in the same ways as non-Disabled people.

## Article 14

**Liberty and security of the person** - This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities have the right to be free and to be safe and secure and that they do not unjustly deprived of their freedom just because they have a disability. If any Disabled person is deprived of their liberty for any reason, they must be treated humanely and in accordance with the standards set out by international human rights standards (such as [the Mandela Rules](#)), including access to reasonable accommodations.

## Article 15

**Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment** - This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities are not subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. People with disabilities should not be subjected to medical or scientific experimentation or treatment without their free and informed consent.

## Article 16

**Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse** - This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse, including domestic and gender-based violence. This includes supporting people to recognise and report instances of violence and abuse, provide disability and gender-sensitive protections, and provide services for survivors which respect their dignity, health and wellbeing. Finally, States must also enact laws and policies which ensure in cases where people with

disabilities experience exploitation, violence and abuse, that cases are investigated and the people who commit these acts are held accountable.

### Article 17

**Integrity of the person** - This ensures that people with disabilities have an equal right to respect for their physical and mental integrity (the right to have freedom over their body and mind, and the right to make their own decisions over their body and mind, and not to be unjustly interfered with by others).

### Article 18

**Liberty of movement and nationality** - This ensures that people with disabilities have a nationality, can choose where they want to live, can get relevant documents such as a passport, immigration papers or other forms of identification, can move between countries, and can live in different countries. It also ensures that people with disabilities are not stopped from moving countries because of their disability.

### Article 19

**Living independently and being included in the community** - This states that people with disabilities have the right to live independently and be a part of the community, including having the same choices as everyone else on where they want to live, how they want to live, who they want to live with and what services or supports, if any, they wish to use. This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities can receive in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance, which supports them to live independently and be included in the community.



### Article 20

**Personal mobility** - This is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the right to move around and be as independent as possible, including access to affordable mobility aids, assistive devices, and training to use these aid and devices.

### Article 21

**Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information** - This is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the same right to express their opinions and ideas, and to access information as everyone else in the formats they choose. This includes making sure that public bodies and private organisations, including the media, make their information and services accessible to people with disabilities in their preferred formats, including braille, sign language, AAC or other formats, which can include Social Stories or Easy-to-Read.

### Article 22

**Respect for privacy** - This is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the same right to privacy as non-Disabled people, and that this right is respected and protected by the State and other parties, and not interfered with. This includes respecting privacy within a person's family life, in communication, and with the handling of sensitive personal information such as medical records.

### Article 23

**Respect for home and family** - This obliges States to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships as non-Disabled people. This includes having the right to marry, to start a family, to make family planning decisions, and information on their reproductive rights. This also obliges States to consider the child's best interests when making decisions that affect their lives (such as guardianship, adoption, separation, etc.) and to provide child-friendly information, services and support around their family rights. It also states that no child should be separated from their parents just because of their disability.

### Article 24

**Education** - This is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the same right to inclusive education as every other person, that allows Disabled people to:

(a) Develop their human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and their respect for human rights and diversity;

(b) Fully develop their personality, talents, creativity, and their mental and physical abilities;

(c) Participate effectively in a free society.

2) To ensure equal access to education, States must ensure that people with disabilities:

- Are not excluded from the education system, particularly from primary or secondary schools, on the basis of disability;
- Have equal access an the same inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education in their community;
- Have access to reasonable accommodations for their support needs;
- receive effective and individualized support measures in environments that maximize their academic and social development.

Article 24 also ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to learning different communication modes including Braille, sign language and AAC, as well as any mobility or other skills they might need. The State should also provide qualified teachers, including Disabled teachers, across the education system.

Article 24 also ensures that people with disabilities have full and equal access to higher education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning opportunities as their non-Disabled peers, and to receive reasonable accommodations that support them to access higher and further education.

### Article 25

**Healthcare** - This ensures that people with disabilities have the same right to access the highest standard of healthcare possible, as everyone else. States need to ensure Disabled people can access health services that are gender-sensitive, including rehabilitation, and access to therapies and other supports. In particular, States need to:



- (a) Provide Disabled people with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable healthcare as non-Disabled people, including sexual and reproductive health and public health programmes;
- (b) Provide disability-specific healthcare services, including early identification and intervention as appropriate, for Disabled children and older persons, needed to maintain their health and support their growth and development;
- (c) Provide healthcare services in or near Disabled people's own communities;
- (d) Require health professionals to provide an equal standard of care to people with disabilities, with their free and informed consent. Professional healthcare training should be inclusive of Disabled people's human rights, dignity, autonomy and needs;
- (e) Ensure Disabled people are not discriminated against in the provision of health insurance, and life insurance;
- (f) Prevent discriminatory denial of healthcare on the grounds of disability.

### Article 26

**Habitation and rehabilitation** - This obliges States to provide effective and appropriate habitation and rehabilitation services. These services should support people with disabilities to maintain their autonomy, maintain their full physical, mental, social abilities, and support their full inclusion and participation in society.

These services and programmes, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and social services, should:

- (a) Begin at the earliest stage possible, and are based on the multidisciplinary assessment of the person's strengths and support needs;

(b) Support people with disabilities' participation and inclusion in the community and all aspects of society, and ensure these supports are available in or near their local community, including in rural areas.

Article 26 also has provisions for States to continually train habitation and rehabilitation professionals and staff, and to promote assistive technology to Disabled people.

## Article 27

**Work and Employment** - This article states that people with disabilities have the same right to work as everyone else, including the right to find work in an open, inclusive and accessible labour market.

This obliges States to protect and promote the right to work for people with disabilities by:

- (a) Prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of disability in all forms of employment, including recruitment, hiring, career advancement and working conditions;
- (b) Ensure that Disabled people are entitled to equal working conditions, including equal opportunities, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, safe working conditions, protection from bullying and harassment, and to have their workplace issues or grievances heard;
- (c) Ensure Disabled people can exercise their labour rights, including joining a trade union and other representative organisations if they wish;
- (d) Enable Disabled people to have equal access to training;
- (e) Promote employment and career advancement opportunities for Disabled people, as well as support in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;
- (f) Promote self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities;
- (g) Employ people with disabilities in the public sector;
- (h) Encourage private sector employers to recruit people with disabilities, including through positive action, and other measures;
- (i) Ensure Disabled employees can access reasonable accommodations at work;
- (j) Promote accessible work experience opportunities to Disabled people;
- (k) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work supports for Disabled people.

2. States should also ensure that people with disabilities are protected from slavery and forced labour.

## Article 28

### Adequate standard of living and social protection

1. This obliges States to ensure people with disabilities can obtain a standard of living that is adequate to support themselves and their families, including food, clothing, housing, and living conditions.

2. States are obliged to ensure that Disabled people have the right to access social protection, including ensuring that people with disabilities:

(a) have the equal right to access clean water, and to disability-specific supports;

(b) have equal access to social protection and other supports aimed at addressing or reducing poverty;

(c) have the right to receive assistance with any disability-related expenses, including financial assistance and respite care, aimed at reducing poverty, for themselves and their families;

(d) Can access public housing;

(e) have equal access to retirement benefits.

## Article 29

### Participation in political and public life

This is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the right to participate in politics and public life:

(a) Ensure that Disabled people can effectively, fully and equally participate in political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for elections, by:

(i) Providing accessible, easy-to-use voting processes, facilities & materials, including campaign materials;

(ii) Ensuring Disabled people can vote in elections and referendums, can stand for elections, and can hold public office or be public representatives;

(iii) To guarantee that people with disabilities can vote for their preferred party or candidate;

(b) Ensure Disabled people can fully and equally participate in public life including in political parties, in Disabled Peoples' Organisations and in civil society.

## Article 30

**Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport** - This is about ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to take part in activities such as sports, the arts and recreation. This includes:



- (a) Access to accessible cultural materials;
- (b) access to television programmes, films, theatre and cultural activities, in accessible formats;
- (c) access to cultural spaces, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries, tourist attractions, and sites of national cultural importance.

- Ensure that the State supports people with disabilities to develop their creative, artistic talents.
- States must ensure that intellectual property laws do not unnecessarily stop Disabled people from accessing cultural materials.
- States should support disabled people's specific cultural and linguistic identity. This includes the use of sign languages and promoting Deaf culture across society.
- States should facilitate people with disabilities to participate in recreational, leisure and sporting activities.

They should:

- (a) Encourage Disabled people to participate in sport;
- (b) To ensure that Disabled people can organise, develop and participate in disability-specific sports, cultural and recreational activities;
- (c) Ensure Disabled people can access sporting, artistic, recreational & tourism venues;
- (d) To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to play, recreation and sports, including at school;
- (e) To ensure that Disabled people have access to services provided by recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting bodies.

Articles 31-50 cover some of the more procedural aspects of the Convention, which ranges from collecting data and statistics in Article 31, International Co-operation in Article 32, to countries giving permission to be bound by the Convention in Article 43, to reservations and amendments in Articles 46 and 47 respectively, to how the Convention is entered in force in Article 45. Article 49 ensures that the Convention is published in accessible formats.

## Monitoring how the Convention is implemented

Articles 33-40 set out how States who implement the Convention will be monitored by the UN and other parties. The Convention sets out that people with disabilities and their representative organisations are active participants and partners in any action the State takes around disability, particularly with respect to monitoring how the Convention is implemented. Article 33 makes it clear that independent monitoring of how the Convention is implemented must directly involve Disabled people. Article 35 states that the preparation of the State Party Report should be done in an open and transparent process and that people with disabilities, including children, should be actively consulted and directly involved in the Reporting process, and their preparation, through themselves or their representative bodies. It gives Disabled Person's Organisation a proactive role in the State Report.

This gives a practical effect to the mantra **“nothing about us, without us”**, and is deeply embedded in all the Convention's Articles.

With respect to the Reporting process, all States must produce regular reports on the extent to which the rights contained within the Convention are being realised. In Ireland, this role is being carried out by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, who are currently undergoing the reporting process for Ireland's first Report to the CRPD Committee, which is due to come before the Committee. The first report must be submitted within two years of ratifying the Convention, and following the first Report, Ireland will submit a report every four years.

However, this is subject to change in light of the delays in the UN CRPD Committee session brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other bodies, like Disabled Persons Organisations, organisations representing people with disabilities, civil society and people with disabilities, can produce Alternative Reports as a way to hold countries like Ireland accountable for its compliance with the Convention's Articles, as well as informing the CRPD Committee what the situation is like for Disabled people in Ireland, particularly on certain aspects of the Convention.

## What is the Reporting Process to the UN CRPD Committee like?

The first thing that happens with the Reporting process is that the State, in this case, Ireland, publishes a [Draft Report](#) which sets out how they believe they are complying with the Convention. They then hold [public consultations](#) with interested parties, including Disabled people, which they have to do under the CRPD.

Once the consultation has taken place, they make revisions to the State Report, and send the Report to the UN CRPD Committee. The UN may



decide to clarify anything contained within the Report and seek more information which can help with its findings before the public hearing.

As well as the State Report, the UN Committee will also consider Alternative Reports, which are called **Shadow Reports**. Shadow Reports are Reports which are made by independent parties such as NGOs (non-governmental organisations like charities and advocacy bodies), civil society organisations, including DPOs, bodies representing people with disabilities, human rights bodies or disability rights experts, trade unions, and Disabled people themselves. Each organisation or person can submit their own Shadow Report, although the CRPD Committee prefers that organisations come together to produce one Shadow Report - they find more persuasive when they make their deliberations, and it can help them to provide more focused recommendations. The Shadow Reports recommend actions they believe that the State must do, which can be based on issues the State has mentioned in its Report.

In its current form, Ireland's [Draft Report](#) is 62 pages long, although this will likely change with any revisions to the Report. It contains the relevant policies which apply to Disabled people, the practices Ireland has in place to support Disabled people to exercise their rights, any resources, like grants or facilities which support Disabled people, and any statistics which relate to Disabled people. For instance, these statistics might include how many people are accessing education through mainstream or special schools and classes, or accessing day services or who are in employment. The State Report addresses each of the Convention's Articles as they appear in the Convention, and where any issue crosses over into more than one Article, the State can repeat these issues in each section that the issues apply. Indeed, issues that arise can appear in several sections of the Report.

## Will organisations representing people with disabilities run their own consultations?

Yes. In order to help produce the Shadow Report and to provide a different picture on what the picture is for people with disabilities, organisations representing people with disabilities, will be running their own Consultation events. Details of these events may be posted on their website, through emails or on social media, giving information on how you can get involved.

These events will help these organisations to identify key issues affecting their own community which they want to include into the Shadow Report. These events may include listening events, surveys, focus groups and consultations and will be run in the run-up to our first hearing with the UN CRPD Committee. Based on the feedback they received from their respective communities on the issues that are important to them, they will develop their response to the State Report based on these responses. The Shadow Report will, once completed, be submitted to the CRPD Committee before the public hearing stage.

## What is the UN CRPD Committee's role in the Reporting process?

The UN CRPD Committee is tasked with overseeing the Reporting process and comprises [eighteen independent experts on disability](#) which are elected by countries who have already ratified the Convention. The Committee meets twice every year to review how the CRPD is implemented by examining each country's State Party Report. In this case, the Committee examines the Report submitted by Ireland, and also prepares a list of issues and questions based on concerns raised by the Report, which the State, in this case, Ireland, must respond to.

At the next stage of the Reporting process, called the Public Hearing stage, the Committee will ask specific questions as to how particular Articles of the Convention are being implemented by the Irish Government, and the Government must answer these questions.

Based on the State Report, the list of issues and questions, and the public hearing, and additional information provided by DPOs and people with disabilities, and monitoring bodies like the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, through Shadow Reports, the Committee adopts **Concluding Observations**. Concluding Observations is the Committee's way of assessing whether a country, such as Ireland, has respected or violated the rights of Disabled people as set out in the Convention. The Observations include specific recommendations on what actions a country like Ireland should take to comply with the Convention, which is published on the UN's CRPD Committee's website and sent to the Government. The Government must implement the recommendations set out by the CRPD Committee. DPOs oversee how the Government implements these recommendations and holds the Government accountable to ensure that the recommendations are acted on.