



Coimisiún na hÉireann
um Chearta an Duine
agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and
Equality Commission



IHREC
Monitoring Mechanism
Independent Monitoring Mechanism
under the United Nations Convention on
the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Guidance for civil society on the reporting process under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - the 'List of Issues' stage

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

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The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission was established under statute on 1 November 2014 to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland, to promote a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding, to promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality, and to work towards the elimination of human rights abuses and discrimination.

Introduction

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is Ireland's independent National Human Rights Institution and National Equality Body. We protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland. Our [Strategy Statement 2025-2027](#) commits us to monitor and report on the State's compliance with the full range of human rights and equality treaties to which it is bound, and to work to support the conditions that enable a vibrant civil society that has the space, supports and resources to advocate and take action to protect and promote human rights and equality, and hold the State to account. We are also Ireland's 'Independent Monitoring Mechanism' under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UNCRPD).

This guidance note gives a brief introduction to the reporting process under the UNCRPD. International and regional treaty monitoring bodies, such as the UN Committee on the UNCRPD are an important avenue for keeping under review Ireland's human rights and equality record. IHREC has had extensive engagement with such bodies in previous years.

Ireland ratified the UNCRPD in 2018 and therefore has an obligation to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Committee) on a regular basis. The first Irish State report¹ was submitted in 2021, and Ireland is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the UNCRPD Committee in 2028.

In advance of this, the Committee will develop a '**List of Issues**' to raise with the State in advance of, and during, the review process. The adoption of the List of Issues will take place at a meeting of the Committee in Geneva in September 2025. Civil Society organisations, along with National Human Rights Mechanisms ('NHRIs') and UNCRPD Independent

¹ [Initial State Report under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2021)

Monitoring Mechanisms ('IMMs') have an opportunity to influence and shape this list of issues.

Part 1 of this guidance note provides an overview of the reporting cycle under the UNCRPD. Part 2 then focuses on the 'List of Issues' stage and provides some guidance for civil society organisations that would like to engage with this stage over the coming months.² This guidance is intended for organisations, groups or individuals that would like to engage with the UNCRPD reporting process.

A 'glossary of terms' is provided at the end of this document, to explain some of the terms/phrases used in this document.

² IHREC will produce and disseminate further guidance for subsequent stages of the reporting cycle, including to support civil society to contribute to the state review and production of parallel or shadow report.

Part 1 – Overview of the reporting cycle under the UNCRPD

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) is a human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations in 2006 which exists to protect and reaffirm the human rights of disabled people. The UNCRPD clarifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and the obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil those rights. The convention covers rights to equal treatment in civil, political, social, economic and public life, including freedom from discrimination in areas such as: education, health, care, employment and transport.

The Irish Government signed the Convention in 2007 and in March 2018 the Convention was ratified. This means that the State has committed to protecting, respecting and upholding the rights of disabled people.

The Optional Protocol to the UNCRPD was ratified by the Irish government in 2024. The Optional Protocol establishes a process that allows the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to receive and examine communications from individuals or groups regarding their rights, and to undertake enquiries in cases where they believe there is evidence of a grave or systemic violations of people's rights.

You will find more information on the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at this '[CRPD Explained](#)' document or by [viewing the short videos here](#).

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The implementation of the UNCRPD is monitored by a Committee of 18 [independent experts](#). All States that have ratified the UNCRPD must submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights enshrined in the Convention are being implemented. The Committee examines these reports and makes recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in that State. It forwards these recommendations, in the form of concluding

observations, to the State party concerned.³ The Committee holds two sessions each year at the United Nations Office in Geneva. Information about the Committee and how it works can be found [here](#).

Overview of reporting cycle and processes

Initial state report

Under article 35(1) CRPD, the State is required to submit to the Committee a report on measures taken to give effect to the Convention within two years after its entry into force, and thereafter at least every four years.⁴ There are two elements to this report, the common core document and the treaty-specific document.

- › The **common core document** contains general information about the State, its framework for the protection and promotion of human rights, data disaggregated according to sex, age, main population groups and disability, as well as information on non-discrimination and equality and effective remedies. [Ireland's common core document](#) applies for all UN treaty bodies and was submitted in 2019.
- › The **treaty-specific document** contains specific information relating to the implementation, in law and in practice, of articles 1 to 33 of the CRPD. The Committee has developed guidelines for States to inform the contents of their treaty-specific document, outlining what should be addressed under each article of the convention.⁵

Together these two documents constitute the State's report in the initial reporting cycle. The Irish state submitted its [first state report to the UNCRPD Committee in November 2021](#).

³ OHCHR, [Introduction to the Committee: Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

⁴ [Article 35 CRPD](#).

⁵ See the [Initial State Report under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2021).

List of issues

Following the submission of the initial report by the State Party, the Committee will meet in Geneva and will formulate a ‘list of issues’ in relation to the report. This takes place at a ‘pre-sessional working group’ meeting of the Committee, at which five or less members of the Committee meet to formulate **a list of issues** arising from reports submitted by States parties. The Committee will then produce a list of issues, which will pose a limited number of questions to the State Party focusing on areas that the Committee considers to be priority issues. States parties are then requested to provide a formal reply to the questions posed in the list of issues.⁶ Therefore, the list of issues adopted by the Committee will shape the dialogue with the state, and the concluding observations that follow from the States’ review.

National Human Rights Institutes (NHRIs), Independent Monitoring Mechanisms (IMMs) and Civil Society can engage in this process in a number of ways, with the aim of advancing the Committee’s analysis or to highlight specific issues of concern. More information on how to engage with this process is included in part 2, below.

Response to list of issues

Once the Committee completes the list of issues, the State must respond to the questions posed by the Committee. The response from the State will provide supplementary information to the initial report. As Ireland’s initial State report was in 2021, the State can provide the Committee with up-to-date information.

Examination and constructive dialogue

At the examination stage, the State is reviewed over two days by the Committee. During this review, the State is given time to respond fully to questions which are proposed by the committee. The State under Review will usually have time allotted for their introductory and

⁶ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Rules of procedure](#), CRPD/C/1/Rev.1, Rule 48.

concluding remarks. Committee members will pose questions to the State delegation, and the delegation will be provided with an opportunity to respond.⁷

In advance of the State review, NHRIs, IMM and CSOs have an opportunity to submit material to the Committee to inform their analysis. These submissions are known as parallel or shadow reports.

IHREC will produce and disseminate guidance on how civil society can engage with this stage of the process in advance of the State review.

Concluding observations

Following the examination, the Committee publishes its ‘Concluding Observations’ on the State’s record under the Convention, making recommendations as to how the State can best improve implementation of the Convention. The Committee member leading the review, known as the Country-Rapporteur, will usually be responsible for producing a first draft of the Concluding Observations which is then discussed among the Committee in a private meeting. Before the Concluding Observations are published, they are also sent to the State under Review. The Concluding Observations are usually issued a few weeks from the last day of the examination, depending on the workload of the Committee. The document is first sent to the State authorities before being made public.

Follow-up procedure

The Committee has adopted a follow-up procedure whereby it identifies a number of specific recommendations of concern in its Concluding Observations and requests the State party to

⁷ The State under review usually allotted between 15-30 minutes for introductory remarks, and a further 10 minutes for their concluding remarks. The Articles are usually addressed in blocks in numerical order with Committee members taking the floor to ask questions on different blocks of Articles. The Chair will then hand the floor back to the State under Review to respond to questions. The time keeping is generally quite strict and the Chair usually does not allow the time allocated to overrun, even by a few minutes. There is usually a 15-30 minute break during the three hour sessions at which the State under Review can co-ordinate its responses. See Mental Health Europe’s ‘Toolkit on the Review Process of the UN CRPD’ at: <https://mhe-sme.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Toolkit-on-the-review-process-of-the-UN-CRPD.pdf>

provide additional information, within a period of up of one year, on implementation of those recommendations.⁸ The Committee may appoint one of its Members to serve as Rapporteur to follow-up, who will then submit a follow-up report to the Committee within two months of receiving the information from the State party.

The Committee's *Rules of Procedure*⁹ provide for IMMs to contribute to the Committee's follow-up procedure by disseminating information on the procedure among a broad range of stakeholders at the national level, organising follow-up consultations, supporting DPOs/DPROs to contribute to procedure, and submitting written contributions that contain an assessment of whether the Committee's recommendations have been properly addressed and implemented by the State party.

Subsequent periodic reports

Following the initial reporting cycle, Ireland will be expected to submit a periodic report to the Committee every four years. Periodic reports are expected to outline measures that the State has taken to implement the recommendations issued to it by the Committee in its concluding observations arising from the prior reporting cycle.

⁸ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Rules of procedure](#), CRPD/C/1/Rev.1: Rule 75(1): Within six months of the Committee's transmittal of its views on a communication, the State party concerned shall submit to the Committee a written response, including any information on any action taken in the light of the views and recommendations of the Committee.

⁹ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Rules of procedure](#), CRPD/C/1/Rev.1.

Part 2- The ‘List of Issues’ stage and how civil society can engage with it

Why engage with the list of issues stage?

Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs), civil society actors, IMM and NHRIs have a key role to play in assisting the Committee to fulfil its mandate effectively. Their participation in the Committee’s activities is essential to provide a complete and accurate picture of the way States are implementing the rights and obligations enshrined in the Convention. While the review stage of the process is a key moment for engagement, the list of issues stage provides an opportunity for organisations to become familiar with the Committee and the reporting process, to build rapport and gain experience of the UN processes for those new to treaty monitoring.

The list of issues submission provided by NHRIs, IMM and civil society can draw attention to information that was omitted or outdated in the State report and can provide the Committee with any additional information considered necessary to assess the implementation of a Convention right.

In addition, as the Irish State is not anticipated to be reviewed by the Committee until 2028, the list of issues process presents an opportunity to put on record what has changed, improved, or deteriorated since the state submitted its report in 2021.

How to contribute to the list of issues

Civil society organisations can contribute to the list of issues preliminary discussion and report in a number of ways, such as by developing or contributing to a written submission, by providing a verbal intervention, and/or by informing or shaping the analysis and submission of the NHRI/IMM.

Written submissions to the Committee

Written submission can provide “updated and reliable information on progress made in the implementation of the Convention by the State party and by identifying and analysing the main implementation gaps and proposing concrete questions and issues that the Committee could take up with a view to improving the quality of the dialogue with the State party.”¹⁰ These submissions can include a list of specific questions which the Committee can put directly to the State.

In developing a submission, CSOs are advised to review the 2021 State report, and to propose a list of questions for the State review. Areas to highlight in a written submission include:

- › Areas of deficit where implementation is low or non-existent.
- › Challenges, barriers and opposition to full implementation.
- › New and emerging issues, barriers and developments.
- › Broader contextual issues that may impact disabled people, that are not specific to disability.
- › Areas that you would like the state review to focus on, for example there may be specific issues related to accessibility, or participation in public life, or gender equality.

The committee strongly emphasises the importance of the participation of persons with disabilities in submissions and encourages structural engagement with disabled people and disabled persons’ organisation in the preparation of submissions.

Written submissions should include:

1. A short introduction to your organisation/coalition: its history and who it represents. The aim is to establish your credibility.
2. An executive summary of the most relevant issues: it should reflect what you think requires particular attention of the Committee when reviewing the State report.

¹⁰ Ibid.

3. A critical analysis of the situation of people with disabilities in your country: You can provide information on access to education, employment, justice, discrimination, violence, legal capacity, institutionalisation, etc.¹¹

Key details:

- › Deadline for submissions: mid-July, to be confirmed by the Secretariat of the Committee
- › Word count: 10,700 words
- › Format: Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format
- › Email: crpd-ohchr@un.org

Useful tips for preparing your submission

- › Your submission does not have to be as detailed/comprehensive as would be expected at the State review stage but should support the Committee to identify specific areas of concern.
- › Submissions that provide information on multiple articles should follow the order of the articles of the Convention.
- › Include your sources and cross-reference to the State's report where appropriate (e.g. "para. X of the State report").
- › Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- › Each suggested question or recommendation should be linked to information provided in your report.
- › Do not expect the Committee to know anything about the issues faced by disabled people in Ireland. Your submission should be self-explanatory.¹²

¹¹ EDF, [The United Nations CRPD Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Guide for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities](#)

¹² EDF, [The United Nations CRPD Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Guide for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities](#)

- › Consult the Convention, General Comments (which clarify the intended meaning of particular rights) and Concluding Observations previously made by the Committee.¹³
- › Consider reliable sources of evidence to support your submission, for example: commentary from public bodies and agencies, commentary from key civil society actors and community groups, commentary by other international human rights bodies, academic studies, Central Statistics Office data, Oireachtas Commentary and Committee Reports, Progress reports and commentary on the implementation of Government commitments (mid-term reviews of policy strategies, frameworks etc.)

The deadline for written contributions from IMMs, DPOs, and other parties is approximately six weeks before the session. The submission date will be confirmed by the Committee Secretariat in April 2025. Submissions must be sent to the Committee Secretariat.

Verbal briefings to the Committee

The Committee accepts oral briefings from NHRIs, IMMs and civil society organisations during session or in a pre-session working group, either collectively or individually. This engagement would provide an opportunity to highlight major concerns and provide relevant information to the Committee.

IHREC will circulate information on how civil society organisations can arrange verbal briefings when available.

Contributing to the submissions of the IMM or coalitions through consultations, collaborative working or by pooling resources

Individuals and organisations can participate indirectly in the process by engaging with organisations that are developing submissions, for example by participating in consultation processes, or by combining resources and knowledge and developing joint/collective submissions. For example, as the Independent Monitoring Mechanism, IHREC will be holding

¹³ The International Alliance has [compiled all CRPD Committee concluding observations on all countries](#).

consultation events with Disabled Persons Organisations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to inform its submission for the list of issues. The purpose of these stakeholder consultations is to gather information, knowledge and lived experience to strengthen the submission. Taking part in a consultation to inform IHREC's report can be a positive way of contributing to the list of issues, especially for people who have not engaged with CRPD reporting before.

Further information and contact details

IHREC's CRPD will endeavour to respond to queries or questions about this process. The team can be reached at crpd@ihrec.ie.

The UNCRPD Committee Secretariat can be reached at crpd@ohchr.org.

The International Disability Alliance has produced comprehensive guidance for Disabled Persons Organisations regarding all stages of the reporting cycle, how to engage with it, and questions to consider in the preparation of written submissions. [The guidance is available here.](#)

Glossary of Terms & acronyms

CSO – Civil Society Organisations. These are non-profit, voluntary groups that operate at local, national, or international levels, and can represent diverse groups, interests and issues.

DPO/DPRO – Disabled Persons Organisation / Disabled Persons Representative Organisations. These are non-profit organisations that are led, directed, and governed by disabled people. DPOs/DPROs are different from other disability organisations because they are run by disabled people, for disabled people.

General Comment – General Comments are documents produced by UN treaty bodies (such as the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) that interpret and clarify the provisions of the respective human rights treaty. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has produced eight general comments to date. [These are available here.](#)

IHREC – Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

IMM – Independent Monitoring Mechanism under the UNCRPD. Article 33 of the Convention obligates States to establish a domestic framework for promoting, protecting, and monitoring the implementation of the Convention. In Ireland, IHREC has been designated as the IMM.

LOI – List of issues – this is a set of priority issues and questions that the Committee put to the States party as part of the review process.

NHRI – National Human Rights Institute

Ratified – consenting, in law to be bound by a treaty

The Committee – The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNCRPD – United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, comprised of 18 [independent experts](#) that meet twice per year at the United Nations Office in Geneva, and who are mandated to monitor the implementation of the UNCRPD in countries that have ratified it. Information about the Committee and how it works can be found [here](#).



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