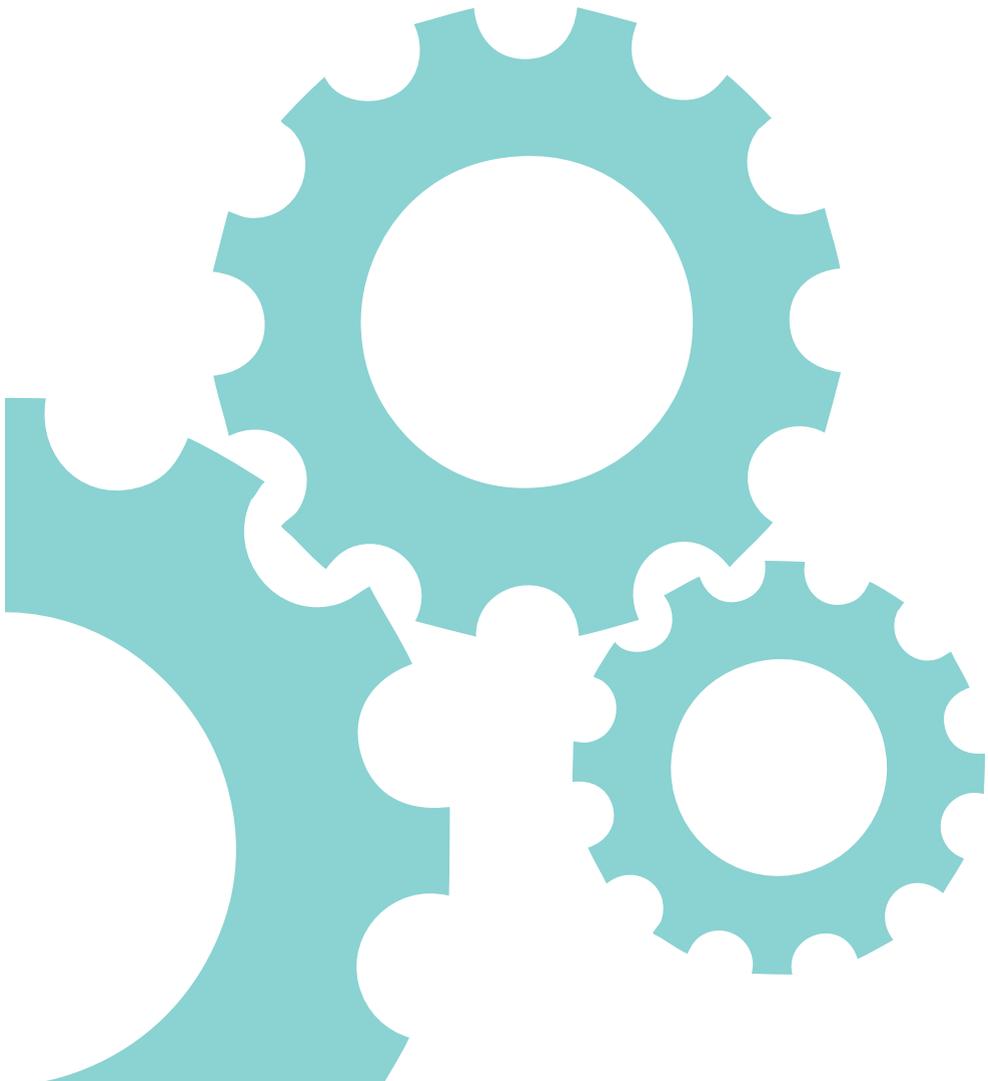


The role of disabled people and their organisations



CRPD
Independent Mechanism
for Northern Ireland
Promote | Protect | Monitor



What is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention or CRPD for short) is an international agreement which reaffirms that people with disabilities have the same human rights as everyone else. The United Kingdom (UK) ratified the Convention on 8 June 2009. It agreed to promote and ensure the full realisation of all human rights for all disabled people, without discrimination of any kind.

The Convention aims to ensure that disabled people enjoy the same human rights as everyone else and that they can participate fully in society by receiving the same opportunities as others.

What does the Convention cover?

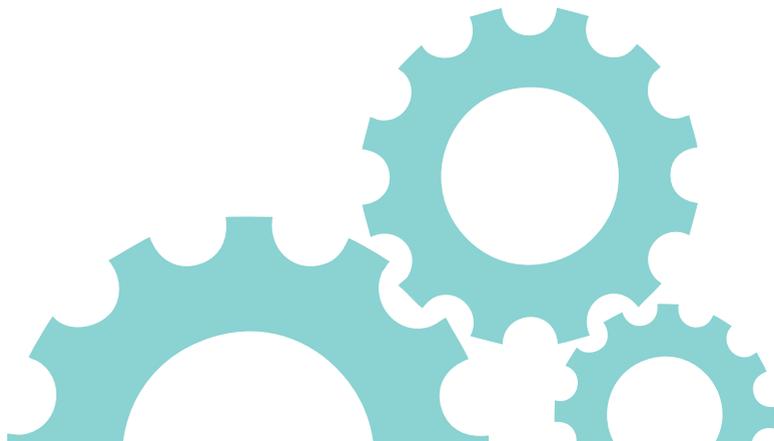
The Convention promotes and protects the human rights of disabled people in economic, social, political, legal and cultural life. This includes rights to accessibility, personal mobility, health, education, employment, habilitation and rehabilitation, participation in political life, equality and non-discrimination.



Who makes sure that the UK is implementing the Convention?

Under Article 33(2) of the Convention, government has decided that the four equality and human rights commissions will make up the UK's Independent Mechanism to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the Convention. Here, the Independent Mechanism is made up of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (the Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland).

The Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland is monitoring progress in implementing the Convention here and will report on that to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (**the UN Disability Committee**). As part of its monitoring work, the Independent Mechanism will engage with disabled people and their representative organisations to seek their views.



What role do disabled people and their organisations have?

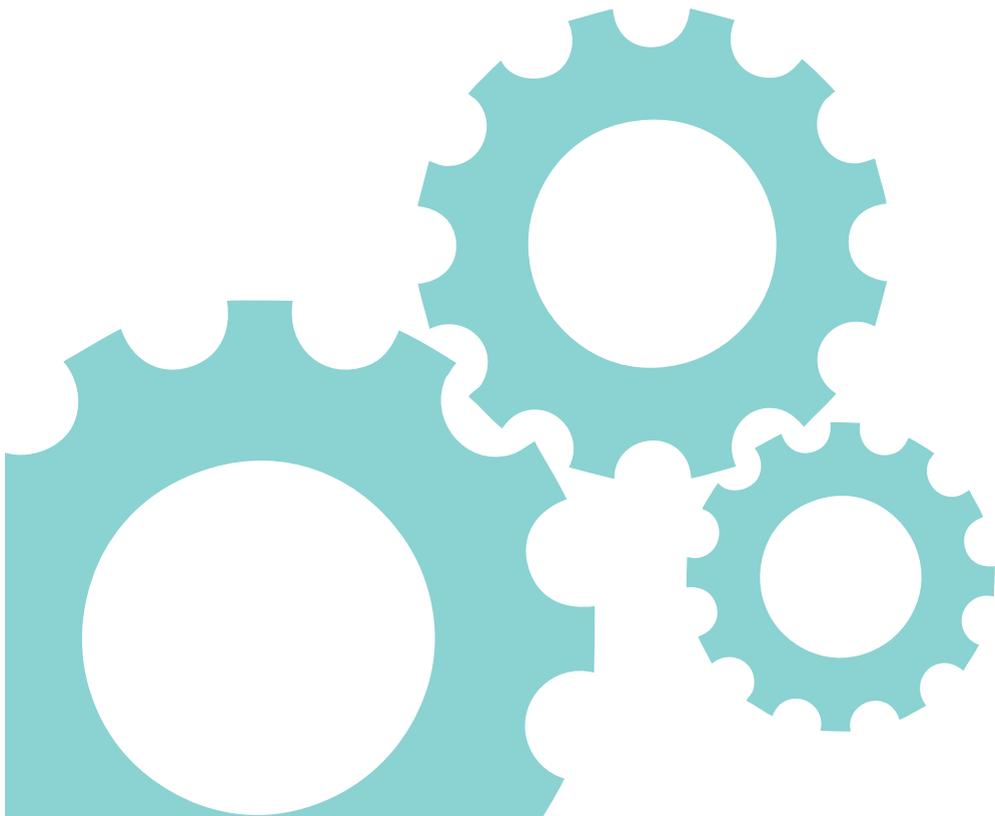
The Convention recognises the important role of disabled people and their organisations in the monitoring process. Under Article 33(3), the Convention says 'civil society' and disabled people and their organisations shall be involved and participate fully in the monitoring process. The Convention also obliges the State under Article 4(3) to talk to and involve disabled people in the development of laws and policies that will affect their lives. In Northern Ireland disabled people and their representative organisations must have opportunities to engage with both government and the Independent Mechanism.

'Civil society' means individuals and organisations that are not part of government. This includes:

- people directly affected by human rights violations
- voluntary organisations that work with them, including the Centre for Independent Living, self-advocacy groups, access groups, local disability associations
- other voluntary organisations such as faith groups, youth groups, older people's groups, women's groups and groups for lesbians, gay and bisexual people
- parents of disabled children and families of disabled people
- human rights organisations
- trade unions and professional groups.



Disability groups should use the Convention as a negotiation tool, for advocacy, and to inform arguments in legal cases. A powerful way to influence the monitoring and implementation process is to write 'shadow' reports to the UN Committee, through which disabled people and their organisations can set out their views on what the government is doing (or not) to respect, protect and fulfil the rights under the Convention. Anyone can do this. Information on how to do these reports is available from the ECNI or the NIHRC. See the contact details at the end of this factsheet.



Where can I get more information on the Convention?

The Convention text and a short guide to the Convention are available in booklets produced by the Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland. The text is also available in plain language, Braille and audio, from these websites:

www.equalityni.org/uncrpd

www.nihrc.org

For more information on the Convention, you can visit UN Enable, the UN website dedicated to CRPD:

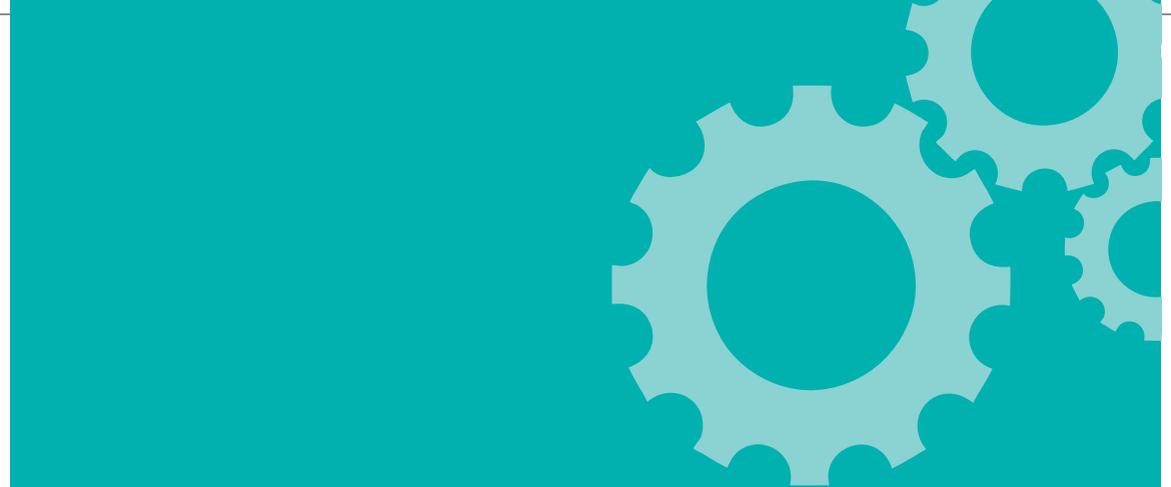
<http://www.un.org/disabilities>.

For useful CRPD publications, visit the website of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx>.

You can also access information on disability and the Convention from the OFMdfM website:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/>



For further information about the work of the Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland, please contact the ECNI or the NIHRC or e-mail: CRPDEnquiries@equalityni.org

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