

Call for action on International Day of Persons with Disabilities



04/12/2024

The two Commissions have called for immediate action to address human rights and equality failings that are impacting the lives of disabled people in Northern Ireland.

On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, acting together as the Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland (IMNI), have called for immediate action to address human rights and equality failings that are impacting the lives of disabled people in Northern Ireland.

The two Commissions jointly convene the Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland Disability Stakeholder Forum (IMNI Forum).

June Best, MBE, disability activist and new Chair of the IMNI Forum said: "International Day of Persons with Disabilities is a time to promote the rights of disabled people, while raising awareness of the many issues they continue to face.

"This year the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) found the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive have failed to make significant progress and have regressed on addressing human rights and equality violations impacting on disabled people living here.

"This is wholly unacceptable. The IMNI Forum calls for immediate action from the UK Government and the NI Executive. We cannot allow disabled people to be undervalued and continually failed.

"However, we do welcome the announcement from the Minister for Communities that a Disability Strategy will move forward at pace. But, this will only work if disabled people are involved in a meaningful way at every step of the process including the original co-design working-group.

"We also wish to see the establishment of a Regional Disability Forum for Northern by the Department for Communities. This Forum should include people with a range of disabilities to advise our government departments on policy matters. This will ensure the voice and experiences of disabled people are heard and considered as part of the decision-making process.

"Much work remains to be done to improve the lives of disabled people across Northern Ireland and

we can only achieve this by working together”, concluded June Best, MBE.

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

- The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission for NI have a joint role as the Independent Mechanism for NI, which involves promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of the UNCRPD in Northern Ireland.
- In 2021 the NI Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission for NI established the IMNI Disability Stakeholder Forum to further assist both organisations to deliver their joint role to promote, protect and monitor implementation of UNCRPD in Northern Ireland. The Forum also seeks to inform wider engagement to support and challenge government to give effect to the UNCRPD in Northern Ireland. It has members from across the disability sector in Northern Ireland.
- The annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international treaty highlighting that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. You can view it [here](#).
- The UK adopted the UNCRPD in 2006 and ratified it in 2009, meaning it agreed to be bound by the rights and to protect and promote the human rights of disabled people.
- In March 2024, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published their report on the follow-up to the 2016 inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. You can read the report [here](#).
- The 2016 inquiry focused on the cumulative impact of legislation, policies and measures adopted by the UK on social security schemes and on work and employment, directed to or affecting the enjoyment by persons with disabilities of their rights to live independently and to be included in the community (art. 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), to an adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28) and to work and employment (art. 27).
- Prior to the follow up this year, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities last examined the UK in 2017. You can read its report and recommendations [here](#).