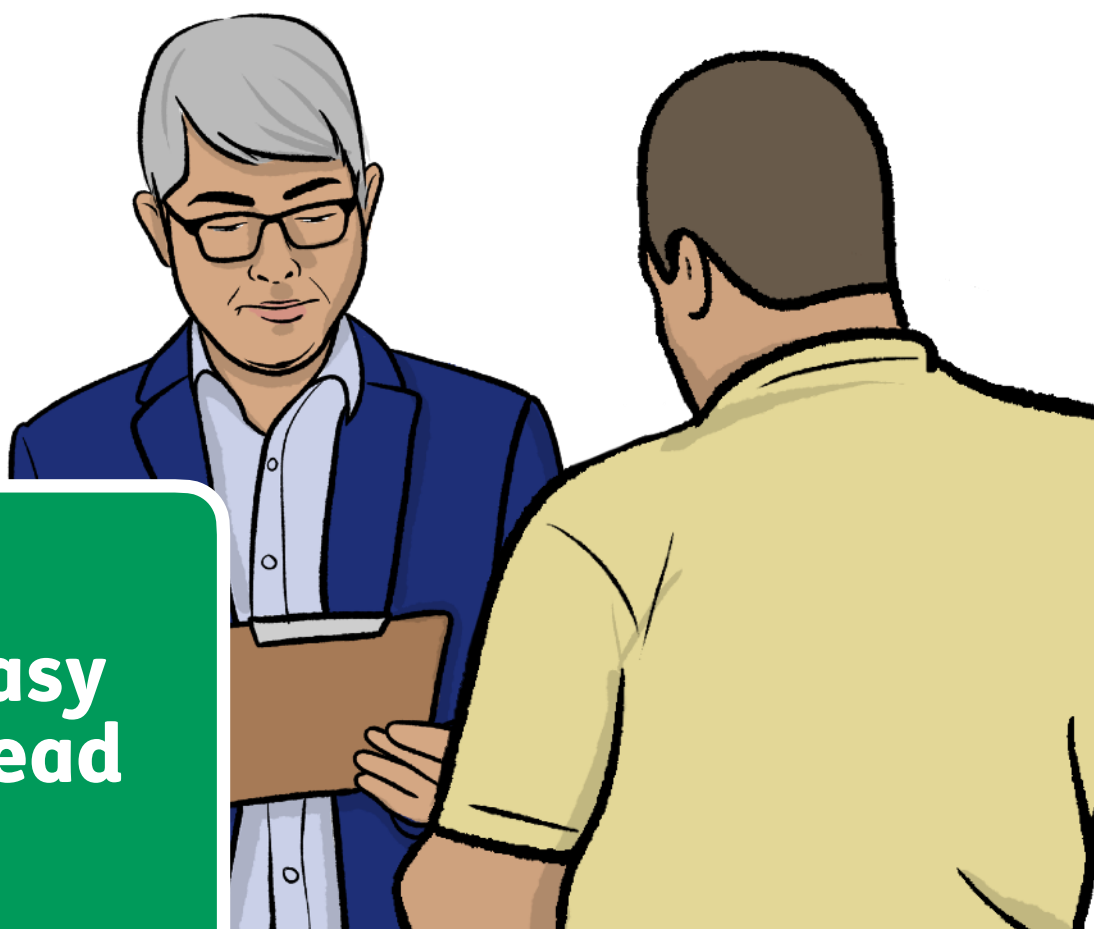


Looking into why disabled people are not treated fairly and supported to afford the things they need

- What we found out
- What the Government should do



Easy
Read

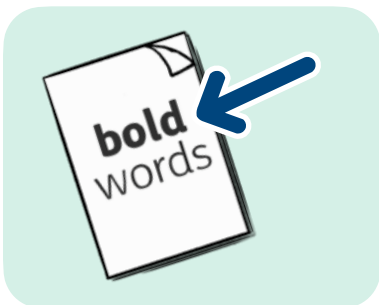
Easy Read



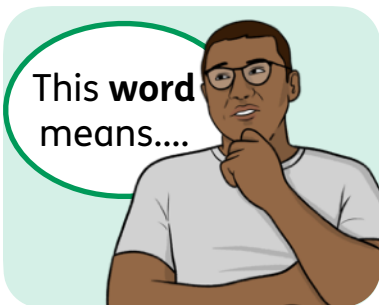
This is an Easy Read version of a report. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



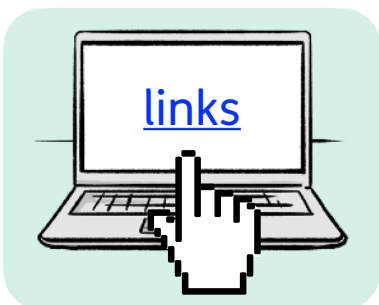
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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About us



We are the **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** and the **Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission**.



The **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** works to make things fair for everyone.



The **Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission** works to make sure everyone gets their **rights**.



Rights are the things that every person should have, by law.

Like the right to be safe, and the right to be treated fairly.

About the report



In 2016, the **United Nations** wrote a report that said disabled people in the UK are not treated fairly.



The **United Nations** is an organisation made up of many countries working together. It works to make the world a safer and better place.



The Equality Commission and Human Rights Commission have been looking into why disabled people in Northern Ireland are:

- Not treated fairly.
- Not getting their rights.



We have written a report about what we found out and what the Government should do.

A Disability Strategy for Northern Ireland



A **strategy** is a plan of things to do over a period of time.

What we found out



At the moment, the Government does not have a strategy to improve the lives of disabled people.

A Disability Strategy for Northern Ireland would set out:



- What the Government will do to make life better for all disabled people.



- What checks will be done to make sure the strategy is working.

What the Government should do



We think the Government should write a Disability Strategy as soon as possible.



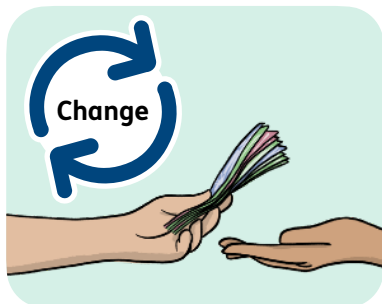
The Government should also look at what other countries in Europe are doing to improve the lives of disabled people.



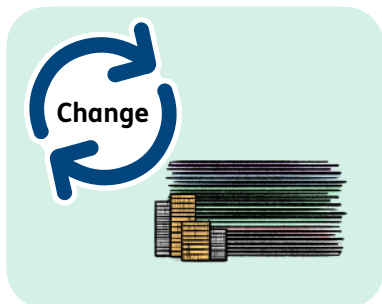
This will help the Government to understand more about what needs to be done in Northern Ireland.

Changes that affect disabled people

Governments often make changes that affect people, like:



- Changes to the way people pay tax.



- Changes to **benefits** - this is money some people get from the Government, to help them pay for the things they need to live.

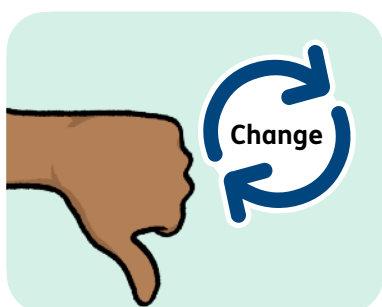


- Changes to services that people use.

What we found out



The Government does not always look into how disabled people are affected when they make changes.



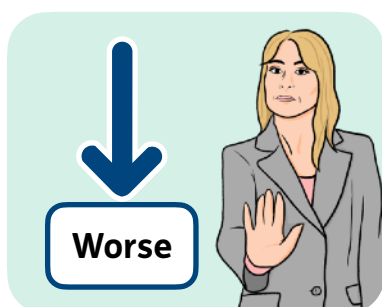
Changes to tax, benefits and services can be unfair to disabled people.

What the Government should do

We think the Government should:

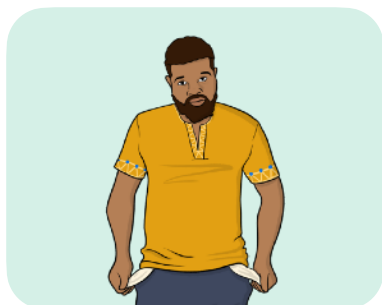


- Look at how the changes to tax, benefits and services are affecting disabled people.



- Make sure that changes to local services do not make things worse for disabled people.

Changes to benefits

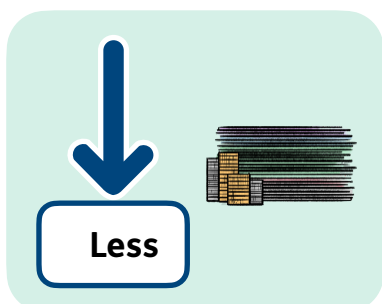


Most disabled people in Northern Ireland do not have a lot of money.



Many disabled people need benefits to help them pay for the things they need to live.

What we found out



The UK Government made changes to benefits that meant many disabled people got less money.



In 2021, a group of disabled people helping the Government asked for:

- More money for the people who got less because of changes to benefits.
- More money to support disabled people to make the most of their lives.

But these things have not happened.

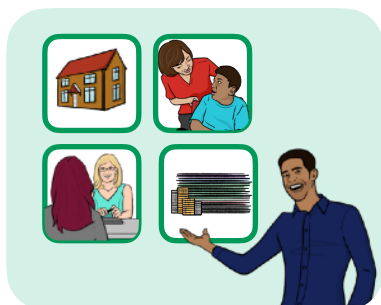


What the Government should do



We think the Government should make sure disabled people are not losing money because of the changes to benefits.

Living independently



We looked into housing, support, jobs and money for disabled people.

What we found out



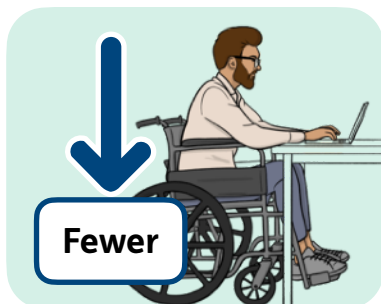
There is not enough housing for disabled people in local areas.



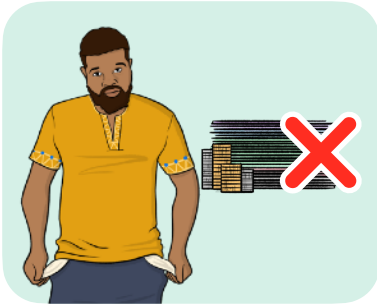
Housing is either too expensive or not suitable for a disabled person to use and move around.



The Government is not spending enough money to support disabled people to live independently.



Fewer disabled people have a job in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK.



Many disabled people cannot afford the extra money they need to pay to live with their disability.



Many disabled people have to use food banks to get enough food to eat.

What the Government should do

We think the Government should make sure that there is enough housing that:



- Is not too expensive.



- Disabled people can use and move around.



The Government should spend more money to support disabled people to live independently in their local community.



The Government should work with disabled people to write a new plan that will help more disabled people get a job.



They should also give money to projects that help disabled people to get jobs.

We think the Government should change benefits for disabled people, to make sure they can get:



- All the money they need to pay for the things they need to live.



- Any extra money they need to pay to live with their disability.



The Government should also make changes to the law to protect disabled people from being treated unfairly because of their disability.

Accessible communication



Accessible communication means making sure everyone can get information in a way they can understand.

What we found out

Many disabled people do not get the information they need to find out about:

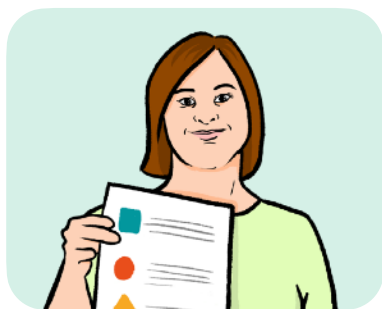


- What benefits they can get.



- What they can do to manage their own support.

What the Government should do



We think the Government should give clearer information to disabled people about the benefits they can get.



The Government should make it easier for everyone to get the benefits they need.

Getting advice about benefits



What we found out

Disabled people find it hard to get advice about benefits.



Many disabled people are not getting any advice at all.



This means they are missing out on benefits that they could be getting to help them live.

What the Government should do

We think that the Government should make sure all disabled people can get advice about:



- What benefits they can get.



- How to make sure they are getting all the support that is available.



We also think disabled people should get legal advice to help them deal with any problems with not getting benefits.

Listening to disabled people

What we found out



The Government does not do enough to involve disabled people in their decisions and planning.



That means that some decisions and plans are being made in a way that is not right for disabled people.

What the Government should do



We think the Government should set up a group that can speak up for disabled people.



The group can help the Government in their decisions and planning.



The group should be made up of:

- Disabled people.



- People from groups that support disabled people.



The Government should provide money to support the group to work.

Disability discrimination



Disability discrimination is when disabled people are treated badly because of their disability.

What we found out



Lots of people think about disabled people in a negative way.



Many disabled people are treated unfairly, or discriminated against.

What the Government should do



We think the Government should work to stop disability discrimination.

The Government should:



- Make everyone aware of disabled people's rights.



- Let more people know about **hate crimes** against disabled people, and what to do if they see it happen.

Hate crimes are when someone is harassed or attacked because people think they are different.



- Make changes to the law that help to stop hate crimes against disabled people.



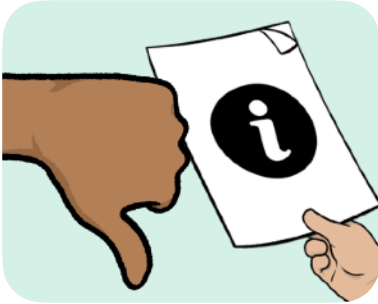
- Listen to disabled victims of hate crime, to understand what support they need.



- Teach more children in schools to be positive about disability.

Making life fairer for disabled people

What we found out



The Government does not have enough information about why disabled people are not getting treated fairly.



That means they don't fully understand what needs to be done to make things better.

What the Government should do



We think the Government needs to collect more information that helps them better understand why disabled people are being treated unfairly.



The Government should use this information to make changes that are right for disabled people.

The Government should look into how disabled people will be affected when they:



- Make changes to the law.



- Plan and set up new services.

Checking improvements

What we found out



We found that not enough is being done to check what improvements are being made for disabled people in Northern Ireland.



This is mainly because there isn't a Disability Strategy that sets out a plan of what needs to be done.

What the Government should do



We think the Government should write a Disability Strategy for Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

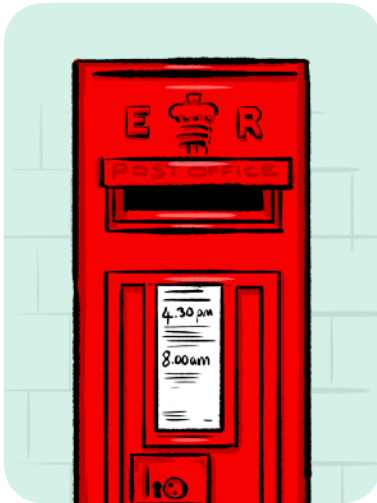


The Government should also show what they are doing to follow the United Nations' rules for making life fairer for disabled people.

Find out more



You can look at our website here:
www.equalityni.org



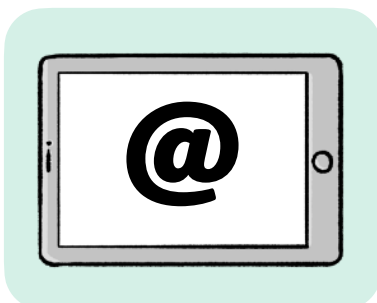
You can contact us by:

- Post:

Equality Commission
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7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast BT2 7DP



- Phone: 028 90 500 600



- Email: information@equalityni.org

You can contact the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) by:

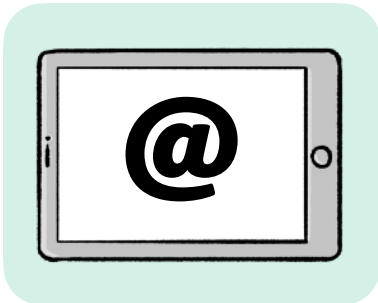


- Post:

4th Floor Alfred House
19-21 Alfred Street
Belfast
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- Phone: 028 9024 3987



- Email: info@nihrc.org



Or visit the NIHRC website at:
www.nihrc.org

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