



**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**  
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1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Prospective Contractor

**UNCRPD: An expert research report on shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the Articles of the UNCRPD**

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, on behalf of the Independent Mechanism (see below), seeks a contractor to research and draft an expert research report to inform it on shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland in respect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the "Convention").

The expert research report should provide evidence on public policy and programme delivery against the articles contained within the Convention to allow the Commission, and others, to submit evidence prior to the development of a List of Issues by the United Nations Committee in 2022 for its examination of state party implementation by the United Kingdom.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (the "Commission") have been jointly designated, along with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), as the Independent Mechanism in Northern Ireland (hereafter the "Independent Mechanism") to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the "Convention") by the State Party in Northern Ireland.

In 2010, the Commission contracted research to develop an expert paper to set out robust evidence of any substantive shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the key requirements of the Convention; highlighting any key issues / barriers to full implementation. In 2014, the Commission contracted an update paper to inform public debate in Northern Ireland and assist the Independent Mechanism, in monitoring the implementation of the Convention prior to an examination by the UN Committee of UK state party implementation of the Convention.

It is intended that the expert research report, alongside other information, will assist the Commission, and the Independent Mechanism, in the development of:

- Potential topics to be raised to the attention of the UN Committee and subsequently the UK State Party in a 2014 'List of Issues' paper.
- Submissions to the UN Committee, by the UK Independent Mechanism, to assist in its examination of the UK State Party.

- Engagement with the Executive, Departments and Stakeholders in Northern Ireland regarding the advancement of Convention rights and equality for disabled people in Northern Ireland

The aforementioned reports, along with other resources, can be located at:

<https://www.equalityni.org/uncrpd>

Full details are contained in the attached Terms of Reference. If you need any further information, please contact me at [PNoonan@equalityni.org](mailto:PNoonan@equalityni.org). If you need further information regarding the tendering and submission process please contact Simon Hookham (Senior Research Officer) at [SHookham@equalityni.org](mailto:SHookham@equalityni.org).

If you are interested, please submit expressions of interest by 4pm on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to Cynthia Rice ([CRice@equalityni.org](mailto:CRice@equalityni.org)).

The closing date for the submission of proposals, to Cynthia Rice, is 4pm on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, and the contract will be awarded shortly thereafter.

It is expected that the final expert research report will be delivered by Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 following award of contract.

It is anticipated that this project can be delivered for a contract in the region of £25,000. The potential contractor should outline their proposed cost to undertake this project.

I hope you will be able to submit a proposal for this work and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully

**PAUL NOONAN**  
**Senior Policy Officer**

# **UNCRPD: An update report on shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the Articles of the UNCRPD**

## **Terms of Reference**

### Requirement

An 'expert research report', supplementing the 'Programmes and Policies' work commissioned in 2010 and the update paper contracted in 2013, that takes account of socio-economic, policy and programme developments since then, to present robust evidence of any substantive shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the key requirements of the UNCRPD; highlighting any key issues / barriers to full implementation.

### Objectives:

Implicit in the Convention are three distinct obligations on all State Parties, namely the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities. Adopting the three obligations as an overarching framework, the project should address the following:

- 1) Building on the 'Programmes and Policies' research published in 2012 and the update report published in 2014, an analysis of the socio-economic, policy and programme developments since that work was undertaken, including work currently being undertaken by the Department for Communities to produce a new Disability Strategy.
- 2) An analysis of the evidence and arguments presented in Department for Communities authored jurisdictional report and the subsequent UK State Party report as submitted to the UN Committee for examination and the Committee's subsequent concluding observations and recommendations.
- 3) Full involvement of those with disabilities, their representative organisations and key stakeholders in initially informing and subsequently refining the above analysis and subsequent recommendations
- 4) Taking account of the work commissioned in 2010 and 2013, the UNCRPD Committee's concluding observations and General Comments, the human rights indicators for the UNCRPD published by the UNOHCHR and this work, provide a distillation of any current substantive shortfalls between public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the articles of the UNCRPD; along with recommendations on a sub-set of key themes to be raised to the attention of the UN Committee and/or the Northern Ireland Executive for prompt action.

### Anticipated Methodology

The work is intended to supplement, rather than replace the research initiated in 2010 and updates in 2013/14. It should thus distil the persistent or emergent issues of importance in 2021, based on an assessment of that previous research and developments since then. The

works respectively commissioned in 2010 and 2013, and published in 2012 and 2014, should thus be taken as a starting points for further consideration.

*For objectives 1 & 2 (analysis of developments and evidence)*

The prospective contractor should set out how they will identify key persistent and emergent issues and/or policies or programmes that have had, have, or are likely to have in 2021, a significant impact on the rights of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland and the obligations placed upon the State Party as contained within the Convention.

It is anticipated that this will centre on a desk-based review which will draw on an analysis of academic and government documents; relevant ECNI and NIHRC publications; relevant documentation from other stakeholders; and statistical data.

*For objective 3 (full involvement of people with disabilities and stakeholders)*

Discussions with people with disabilities (including disabled women, children and young people) and their representatives and other relevant stakeholders, including the State Party, will be required for the both the identification and then subsequent refinement of the areas / issues and policies, programmes and processes.

Early engagement with disabled people / stakeholder groups will assist in developing a wider understanding of the specific human rights issues faced by disabled people in Northern Ireland at present. Such engagement should consider any updated positions regarding the lived reality for persons with disabilities, both in the areas identified through objectives 1 & 2 and beyond (e.g. participation in political processes, access to justice, education, independent living etc.)

Contractors should set out in their tender proposal who they intend to engage with and the steps they will take to ensure the participation of disabled people and other relevant stakeholders, and then how they will distil their findings from the engagements into the draft final report.

*For objective 4 and earlier (Distillation of draft and final views on key shortfalls, issues and recommendations).*

Taking account of the above, contractors are required to distil out any substantive shortfalls between public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the key requirements of the UNCRPD; along with recommendations on a sub-set of key points to be raised to the attention of the UN Committee and the Northern Ireland Executive for prompt action.

It is anticipated that this will occur in two main stages: As an 'initial report' following the desk research; and then after engagement with stakeholders (including persons with disabilities) and drafting of 'draft report', supported by an 'engagement report', followed by a 'final report' and a 'summary report'. At each stage, the submitted reports will be reviewed by an advisory group to ensure robust product delivery.

Prospective contractors will need to demonstrate how they propose to identify, distil and prioritise substantive shortfalls, and how they will further refine a subset of key issues which the Independent Mechanism may wish to raise to the attention of the UN and/or Government.

Where persistent and emergent gaps are deemed to exist or where there is deemed to be a regression and / or failure to progressively realise rights, the contractor must present robust evidence illustrating the extent of any gaps and / or regression relative to the requirements of the Convention articles.

As part of this process, contractors will be expected to engage with key officials involved with the delivery of the key strategic policies, programmes and processes. Identifying the nature of any gaps in Northern Ireland would be of help in monitoring future implementation by suggesting which steps (commitments, efforts, outputs) remained to be delivered in moving from acknowledgement of the existence of the Convention to realisation of Convention rights in practice. Prospective contractors should set out how they aim to deliver this objective.

The prospective contractors will also be required to structure and report any issues against the specific articles of the UNCRPD. Prospective contractors should set out how they will achieve this and how they will identify compliance with the cross-cutting articles of the UNCRPD.

### *Exclusions*

The project **is not intended to comprise a legal opinion** and should focus on an assessment of policies and programmes.

The project **will not include a national survey of disabled people**. The project shall however involve and incorporate the views of disabled stakeholders and people.

While the state report may focus on processes in place to achieve compliant outputs, the proposed expert paper **will not focus on the effectiveness of any processes** put in place by government to implement UNCRPD, but rather where policy or programme outputs do not meet with the requirements of the Convention.

The project **will not develop Human Rights indicators**. It may, however, identify areas relevant to or for inclusion in the development of indicators or for further depth analysis.

### **Deliverables**

The successful contractor will be expected to deliver the following:

- A project initiation document
- An initial report for engagement purposes
- Draft final report
- Final report
- Summary report
- A verbal presentation

## Submission of proposals

Please submit expressions of interest by 4pm on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to Cynthia Rice ([CRice@equalityni.org](mailto:CRice@equalityni.org)).

**The closing date for the submission of proposals, to Cynthia Rice, is 4pm on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, and the contract will be awarded shortly thereafter.**

It is expected that the final expert research report will be delivered by Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 following award of contract.

**It is anticipated that this project can be delivered for a contract in the region of £25,000. The potential contractor should outline their proposed cost to undertake this project.**

The contractor when submitting their proposal should clearly outline how they will meet the proposed research methodology and project deliverables. Proposals will be considered against section 1.3: Evaluation Criteria of the attached Tender Evaluation Guidelines: when proposing their research methodology and project deliverables.

- Understanding of requirements and literature;
- Methodology;
- Timetable;
- Expertise;
- Cost

Please email your proposal to Cynthia Rice ([CRice@equalityni.org](mailto:CRice@equalityni.org)).