

Thursday 5th December 2019

FAO: Minister Charlie Flanagan

CC: Minister Finian McGrath

Urgent call for support for the National Platform of Self Advocates

Dear Minister Flanagan,

We are contacting you in regard to the forthcoming closure of Ireland's only self-advocacy organisation run by and for people with intellectual disabilities due to a lack of secure and sustainable funding being made available. We call on the Department of Justice to recognise and respect and resource the human rights of persons with intellectual disabilities by providing core funding to secure the future of this valuable and unique organisation. We draw your attention to the fact that Ireland is a signatory and has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (CRPD) which at article 29 includes strong obligations on the State as follows:

'b) To promote actively an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the conduct of public affairs, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and encourage their participation in public affairs, including:

i. Participation in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country, and in the activities and administration of political parties;

ii. Forming and joining organizations of persons with disabilities to represent persons with disabilities at international, national, regional and local levels.

Clare Public Participation Network considers the funding of an organisation such as the National Platform to be a human rights issue and one which falls firmly within the remit of the Department of Justice. The National Platform has taken time, commitment and energy to build to its current status as a respected organisation led and run by people with intellectual disabilities. Clare PPN considers that allowing it to close now would be short sighted and a failure on the part of the Irish state to take a ready made opportunity to progressively realise the rights of persons with disabilities as is the responsibility of the state under the Convention.

We call on the Minister to take action to secure funding for the National Platform to ensure it continues its invaluable work. This work is necessary to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities can have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of public life including the Public Participation Networks which we are concerned with. We draw it to your further attention that this communication relates to attaining Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 16.

We appreciate your attention and request that this communication be acknowledged.

Yours Sincerely
Sarah Clancy,
Clare PPN Coordinator
087 1617375

