

Draft Minutes of IHREC's Disability Advisory Committee

17 October 2022

Committee members present:

- Chair: Dr. Rosaleen McDonagh, Commission Member, IHREC (RMcD)
- Sinéad Gibney, Chief Commissioner, IHREC (SG)
- Éimear Fisher, Director, IHREC (EF)
- Gary Allen (GA)
- Fiona Anderson (FA)
- Adrian Carroll (AC)
- James Cawley
- Brian Hayes (BH)
- Peadar O'Dea (POD)
- Aoife Price (AP)

Apologies

- Vice Chair: Adam Harris, Commission Member (AH);
- Dr. Frank Conaty, Commission member, IHREC (FC)
- Jacqui Browne (JB)
- Dr. John Bosco Conama (JBC)
- Michelle Gaynor (MG)
- Dr. Vivian Rath (VR)
- Michael Seifu (MS)
- Eliona Gjecaj (EG)

In attendance:

- Dr. Iris Elliott, IHREC (IE)
- Neža Šubic, IHREC (minute taker) (NŠ)
- One supporter
- Michael O'Neill (MON)
- Jean O'Mahony (JOM)
- Dr. Nusha Yonkova (NY)

This meeting of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's Disability Advisory Committee took place between 11.00 and 13.00 on 17 October 2022. The meeting was held in person. JC and one supporter joined online. SG was not present at the start of the meeting, but joined later. MON, JOM and NY all joined only during their presentations.

The following papers were circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

- Agenda
- Overview of IHREC disability work 2019-2021
- Overview of IHREC disability work 2022

1.1 Greetings, Apologies, Quorum and Declaration of Interest

RMcD greeted members and welcomed new members, as well as the Acting Director.

Apologies were noted from AH, JB, JBC, MG, VR, MS, EG and FC.

RMcD noted that the meeting was not quorate, but that as it is an induction meeting, rather than a business meeting, it can proceed.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1.2 Welcome from Chair, Dr Rosaleen McDonagh

RMcD welcomed members to the meeting. RMcD talked about the role of the DAC and its remit of including disabled people and feeding into the work of the Commission in all issues related to disability. IE also spoke of the DAC mandate and the recognition of the DAC model worldwide.

RMcD emphasised that the DAC is more diverse than the Commission. RMcD spoke of the DAC's disability-centred approach and about the DAC's way of working, and described her approach to chairing DAC. RMcD asked everyone to respect the DAC and the Commission's work, as well as the work of IHREC staff.

1.3 Welcome from Head of Policy and Research, Dr Iris Elliott

IE noted that although DAC has met only once this year, the Commission has been doing a lot of work on disability rights. IE described the Strategy Statement, which reflects the continuing focus on disability and also the Commission's plans for its work to be more inclusive. IE described the five strategic priorities set out in the Strategy Statement, and emphasised in particular the focus on ableism under the strategic priority of respect and recognition.

IE invited remarks on the strategy statement. Members raised the following issues as issues of importance to them: ableism and individual's agency; climate emergency measures; accessible public transport; inclusion of disabled people in discussions on climate change measures; the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the CRPD; Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act; mental health; violence against women; social movements and participation; employment; adequate standard of living; independent living; inclusive education.

RMcD and IE also explained to members in more detail how DAC works in terms of its meetings, the number of the meetings, and preparation for the meetings. EF added that the input of DAC is most valuable in terms of principles to guide Commission's work.

1.4. Capacity Building for DAC Members

IE asked the members what their needs are in terms of capacity building to support their participation in DAC.

[SG joined the meeting.]

2.1 Welcome from Chief Commissioner, Ms Sinéad Gibney

SG welcomed everyone. SG explained about the Commission, how it operates and its relationship to DAC. It was emphasised how the DAC allows the Commission to bring in expertise on disability and how important the work of DAC is to the work of the Commission.

2.2 IHREC Disability Work, Dr Iris Elliott, Head of Policy and Research

IE presented the work of IHREC's Policy and Research Team on disability issues. IE pointed out that the Policy and Research Team discusses disability issues across its public policy, international reporting, international engagement, legislative reform, research and data work. IE provided concrete examples of this work.

RMcD thanked IE for her work.

[JC left the meeting.]

2.3 IHREC Disability Work, Mr Michael O'Neill, Head of Legal

[MON joined the meeting.]

MON presented the work of the IHREC's Legal Team on disability issues. MON emphasised that disability-related issues are one of the most common issues in terms of people seeking information from the Commission. MON described Commission's legal powers on legal assistance, legal representation, to act as amicus curiae and to develop codes of practice. Examples of Commission's legal work on disability rights were given.

RMcD thanked MON for his work.

[MON left the meeting.]

2.4 IHREC Disability Work, Ms Jean O'Mahony, Head of Strategic Engagement

[JOM joined the meeting.]

JOM presented the work of the IHREC's Strategic Engagement Team on disability issues. JOM spoke of public awareness on disability rights campaign, recent media highlights, key upcoming media and public affairs activity, civil society engagement, and public sector human rights and equality duty.

RMcD thanked JOM for her work.

[JOM left the meeting.]

2.5 IHREC Disability Work, Dr Nusha Yonkova, Head of Anti-Human Trafficking

[NY joined the meeting.]

NY presented the work of the IHREC's Anti-Human Trafficking Team, in particular the first Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, which the Commission produced as an

independent rapporteur on trafficking. NY spoke of the priorities of the Anti-Human Trafficking Team, the forms of trafficking in Ireland, and statistics. NY noted that disability is not mentioned often in Ireland in the human trafficking context, but the Anti-Human Trafficking Team is interested in the linkage between disability and human trafficking, in particular on consent, vulnerability and special needs.

RMcD thanked NY for her presentation.

[NY left the meeting.]

2.6 Any Other Business

None.