

## National Platform of Self-advocates (NPSA)



### Improving Access to Paid Employment for People with Intellectual Disability

#### Report

October 2020

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**Coimisiún na hÉireann  
um Chearta an Duine  
agus Comhionannas**  
Irish Human Rights and  
Equality Commission

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Rights and Equality  
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## About the National Platform of Self Advocates

The National Platform of Self Advocates (NPSA) is an independent organisation run by people with intellectual disability for people with intellectual disability. It is a membership organisation with an elected steering committee working on its strategic plan.

The group is founded on the right of people with intellectual disability to be included as equal citizens with rights as outlines in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Platform aims to be the nationally recognised organisation on policy and issues affecting the lives of people with intellectual disability. It aims to be involved through representation by its members in local and national policy making groups.



Contact: Brian Hayes Chairperson

Email:

Website: <http://thenationalplatform.ie/>

### Message from the National Platform of Self Advocates Research Team



Thank you to all the people and their supporters who came to our group meetings in Limerick, Waterford, Mayo and Dublin and sharing your experiences.

Thank you to Martina for your expertise and organisation of the group meetings and all your ongoing support and guidance.

Thank you to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) for supporting our research by giving us funding and support in carrying out the research.

*NPSA Research Team*

*Brian, David, Màiread, Joe and Dermot.*

## Introduction

Welcome to our report on what stops people with intellectual disability from choosing, finding and staying in paid work or exploring a business ideas and working for themselves.

The information given by people who took part in our group meetings and by employers in a survey and interviews is very important. We hope that it will help support services and policy makers in our government to better understand what people with intellectual disability need to be equal participants in the paid work force.

### What is this report about?

In this report, **people with intellectual disability** talk about:

- What stops them finding paid work.
- What stops them staying in paid work.
- What stops them working for themselves, if they have a business idea.

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**Employers** talk about:

- What stops them including people with intellectual disability in their workplace.
- What helps them to include people with intellectual disability in their workplace?

In the report, people with intellectual disability and employers talk about how to change things to make it better to find and stay in paid work or start a business.

## Who did the research?



The National Platform of Self Advocates (NSPA) asked for the research to be done.



The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) gave the funding and support to do the research.



The NSPA set up a research team to work with a researcher to do the study.

The research team took part 'how to do' research training.

The NSPA Co-ordinator supported the research team in organising meetings with people.

The research team decided on the questions used in the research.

## Who took part?



111 People took part in the research.

- 86 people with intellectual disability from around Ireland.
- 25 employers from different kinds of workplaces.

## How did they take part?

There were two ways people took part:

### Talking in Groups



We worked with disability services and our members to bring together people who were in paid work and people who did not work but would like to work.

We held the groups talks in Ballinrobe, Dublin (2), Limerick and Waterford. The research team led the group talks and the research supporter took notes.

We asked people at the group talks:



- What stops them from looking for paid work?
- What makes it hard to stay in paid work?
- What supports they needed to get and stay in paid work.
- What supports did they need to become self-employed (work for themselves) if they had a business idea.

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The group talks were really successful because people told us their problems finding and staying in work but also the ways to change what is not helping them to find and stay in paid employment.

We looked at the findings as a research group just before Covid-19 stopped us meeting face to face.

## We talked to employers to find out what they thought stopped people with intellectual disability from finding and staying in paid work

We put the questions on a survey and talked to some of them by phone.

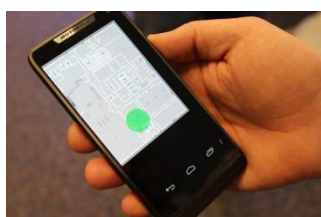


16 different kinds of employers answered our questions.

We wanted to talk directly to employers but Covid-19 stopped us from doing this face to face.

Our research supporter also talked to 10 employers using our questions.

### We asked them



- What stops them giving paid work to people with intellectual disability.
- What supports they need to give people paid work and support them to stay in paid work.

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Our research supporter put all the findings together and presented them back to us.

We agreed the findings and what information to give to the government to let them know what is most important to help people with intellectual disability in finding and staying in paid work.

## What the Study Found

Based in their experiences people told us that it was important to work for the following reasons:

*"If I was paid I could reach my goals like going on holiday, buy nice things, and have independence..."*

*Study Participant*

- Better independence and make own decisions.
- Getting paid for doing their work.
- Having something to do every day or every week.
- Doing something that made them feel good about themselves.
- Doing something that they decided to do.
- Making friends.
- Getting to know people at work.
- Sometimes it is nice to work with people who do not have a disability.
- Being part of a community.
- Having the right to work.



## What Stops People Finding and Getting Paid Work

Based in their experiences people told us what stops them finding and getting paid work:



- Hard to find paid work.
- Do not always have a choice of what job to do, just what was available.
- They do not have a lot of options to choose from.
- Do not always have chances to find out about and try different jobs to see what they would like.
- Not having enough support / help to look for a job.
- Not having the correct training and qualification.
- Being told that they are too old.
- Getting to work can be hard especially if there are poor bus or train services.



## What Makes It Hard to Stay in Paid Work

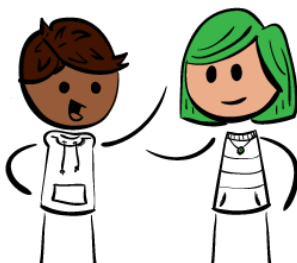
Based in their experiences people told us what makes it hard to stay in paid work:



- Hard to keep a job – *“there were lots of short jobs and then finished”*.
- Do not always get paid for the work they do.
- Do not always get paid the right amount for the work they do.
- Do not always know how much they are paid.
- Not feeling confident in doing the work.
- Doing the same work for long time *“never let me try something else...promises but doesn't let me...”*



- Fear of losing supports like travel and medical supports.
- Very hard to change to another job in the same workplace or change to another workplace.
- Do not have help with tasks at work.
- Not making friends at work.
- Not having long term support / on-going support.



## What Employers Said

### Based in their experiences employers told us



- Not really understanding intellectual disability.
- Other workers not “being comfortable” with people with intellectual disability.
- People in charge not sure how to manage people with intellectual disability.
- Being afraid to employ people with intellectual disability because it might cost money.
- Not having support to employ a person with disability.
- Not knowing where to get support to employ someone with a disability.
- People with intellectual disability may not have the skills and experience to do the job.

## What Supports Do People Need to Find and Stay in Paid Work

Based in their experiences people told us what makes it hard to stay in paid work:



- People to help them to choose paid work the right paid work for them.
- People to help support them in finding a paid work.
- Getting paid for the work.
- Being paid a fair wage for the work they do.
- Being included in the team and feeling part of the team in work.
- Told when they are doing a good or bad job.
- Have long term work and not changing to other jobs so often.
- Have better understanding about what supports they can keep like the medical card.
- Training and education before getting the work and during doing the work.
- Help in changing jobs is that is their choice.
- Help and support in progressing in the job – *“I don’t want to be doing the same work forever...it gets boring!”*



## What Supports Do People Need to Become Self-employment / Own Their Own Business

Based in their experiences people told us what they need to have their own business when they have a business idea



- Someone to talk to about their idea.
- Need to be taken seriously - *“it’s not really seen as something I could do”*.
- Help in building confidence to start own business.
- Have the money to start the business.
- Understand that it might take a bit longer to set up a business.
- Being part of a network.
- Needs to be a focus on self-employment for people with intellectual disability.

## How to Change the Things That Do Not Work

Based in their experiences people told us what needs to change to make it better for people with intellectual disability to find and stay in paid work



- Right support by a person who knows how to help.
- Job coach / people who are trained to help and “*listen to what we want*”.
- Information about paid work that is easy to understand.
- Support to change jobs.
- Support to change tasks when in paid work.
- Being able to get different types of jobs.
- Know how much wages is received and when.
- Learn new skills even when in paid work.
- Clear information about keeping disability supports.

## Employers

**Based in their experiences employers told us what needs to change to make it better for people with intellectual disability to find and stay in paid work**



- Focus on *'Recruit-ability'* – Have different ways of recruiting people with intellectual disability.
- Training for employers and staff to respect and include people with intellectual disability.
- Training for employers and staff on how to support people with intellectual disability.
- Show how having a diverse workplace can really make a difference to the work place.

## Self-employed/ Own your own business

**Based in their experiences employers told us what needs to change to make it better for people with intellectual disability to become self- employed / own their own business**



- Information on starting your own business that is easy to read and understand.
- Information should be given to business support organisations, banks and credit unions on the rights of people with intellectual disability.
- Starting your own business should always be included as a choice when looking for paid work.
- Information and Promotion Campaign for people with intellectual disability on starting your own business for people with intellectual disability.

