



Waterford Children and Young People's Services Committee

Disability Inclusion Framework

A Guidance Document for CYPSC Members

A blueprint for equality

This framework document sets out the vision and commitment of Waterford Children & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) to provide inclusive, equitable services and opportunities for the full participation and inclusion of disabled children and young people ages 0 to 24.

It will improve practice by informing Waterford CYPSC and its members of the principles and guidance to address and respond to the particular needs of disabled children and young people.

It is underpinned by the organisation's belief that disabled people have a right to the same opportunities on an equal basis with everyone else.

This reflects a commitment to creating the same quality life outcomes for disabled children and young people as those without disabilities.

About us

Waterford CYPSC was established in 2013. Our membership is drawn from statutory, community and voluntary organisations across Co. Waterford.

In working together, our focus is to ensure that agencies secure better outcomes for children and young people of all abilities across the county through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level.

We understand disability to be the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal basis with all others due to social, attitudinal and environmental barriers. In adopting this framework, we seek to improve quality of life outcomes for all children and young people.

Waterford CYPSC's rights-based approach to inclusion means that children and young people experiencing disability

- Have the same rights and responsibilities as all citizens
- Have the same inherent worth and dignity as all citizens
- Are recognised and valued for their skills and talents
- Have opportunities to participate fully in their community

A Word about Language

There is a lot of confusion and debate in relation to definitions and terms that are used to identify disability and how this reflects our understanding.

For some, the term 'disabled people' is a source of pride and identity and recognises that disabling barriers exist within society and not among individuals. For others, the term 'people with disability' argues for recognition of the person before their disability.

This Framework uses the term 'disabled person' in acknowledgement of society's role in disabling people. In other words, disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society; it is society that disables, not an individual's impairment.

This is the preferred term used by disability activists and disabled people's organisations worldwide.

The Framework Principles

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, which was ratified by Ireland in March, 2018, informs the principles embodied in the framework.

These principles underpin Waterford CYPSC's commitment to interagency partnership and collaboration and the acknowledgement that inclusion is everyone's business.

Rights and responsibilities: Disabled children and young people have the same rights and responsibilities as others in Irish society. They are entitled, as everyone is, to the equal protection and the equal benefit of the law and require measures for achieving equality.

Empowerment: Disabled children and young people require the means to maximise their independence and enhance their well-being.

Participation: Disabled children and young people require full access to the social, economic and physical infrastructure that underpins our society to allow full and equal participation in their communities. Such participation is essential for genuine empowerment.

Making an impact

Waterford CYPSC's approach to inclusion considers the **impact** disability has on a person's ability to achieve independence - to participate and to be included. It is our ambition that disabled children and young people:

- have the same opportunities as other people to access services and supports
- are encouraged to develop their potential and to contribute to their communities, in whatever ways they choose to do so
- actively engage and participate in the development of Waterford CYPSC policies and services that affect them
- receive information in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people
- actively participate in any Waterford CYPSC consultation process

Towards inclusion

A strategic approach to inclusion requires a written, costed, time-specific strategy. Sustaining inclusive practice also requires an ongoing commitment from senior management regarding funding, staffing, training & development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and updating.

Elements to consider in making inclusion happen include:

1. Awareness and Mapping

Awareness of disability and its implications are the crucial first steps in making services inclusive. To plan well, it is vital to know the current situation, including the numbers of disabled children and young people, their requirements and the range of services genuinely available to them.

2. Key policy development

All policies affecting children and young people should be inclusive. Integrated working with partners within Waterford CYPSC such as leisure, education, transport, health and all children's services is essential to policy development.

3. Communication

All communication should be inclusive. Consultation and engagement with disabled children and young people and their families is essential in building trust and getting services right.

4. Mainstreaming access

Mainstreaming aims to make the concerns and experiences of disabled people an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

The ultimate goal is to achieve equality, to promote inclusion and to address the barriers that exclude disabled people from the equal enjoyment of their human rights.

5. Workforce development

All staff should receive equality training to encourage attitudinal change. Inclusive practice should be at the core of all training, irrespective of whether staff work directly with disabled children and young people.

6. Partnership and Collaboration

It is important for Waterford CYPSC to play a key role in making links at local, regional and national levels. All key players in inclusive services will profit from continuing contact and sharing ideas with others, both internally and externally.

A twin-track approach to Inclusion and Equality

Waterford CYPSC is committed to equality of opportunity for all children and young people. However, the committee recognises that certain individuals may experience greater levels of exclusion than others and will require specific supports. While many organisations operate services deemed to be 'open to all', this does not necessarily mean they have specific strategies for disabled people.

We do not promote special treatment of disabled people but we do recognise the need for specialised services for disabled children and young people within the generic framework for the delivery of services and supports.

Full inclusion means that the needs of disabled children and young people are met through generic programmes, while additional essential supports are provided to those individuals whose needs cannot be met through generic programmes and services.

Specific targeting is needed, so that the services and supports:

- Make children and young people who experience disability feel welcome
- Address the barriers that prevent the participation of disabled children and young people, including:
 - inaccessible physical environment
 - lack of accessible information and equipment
 - negative attitudes, prejudice and stereotyping
 - lack of staff understanding, competency and confidence
 - assumptions that inclusion is someone else's responsibility
- Are proactive and competent in consulting with children and young people and their families in the planning and delivery of services and in decision-making processes.

'Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone.'

Diane Richler, President, Inclusion International

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