



Laois Public Participation Network



Disability Federation of Ireland

## ACCESS FOR ALL



**DISABILITY AWARENESS WORKSHOP**  
Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise,  
Wednesday 13th February , 2019

# WORKSHOP REPORT

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 13 2019 Laois Public Participation Network (PPN), in collaboration with the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), hosted a public consultation workshop to highlight, document and raise awareness of the challenges faced by people with disability in Laois.

Laois PPN is co-ordinated by a secretariat of eight people including Donal O'Shea, Michael Cobbe, Paddy Buggy, Michael Dowling, Bolaji Adeyanju, Robbie Quinn, Brian Maher and PJ Campbell. The PPN co-ordinator is Suzanne O'Connor.

Representative groups and individuals from across the disability sector in Laois were invited to attend and on the night over 60 individuals attended and over 20 groups were represented.

The aim of the consultation was to highlight the needs of people with disabilities in Laois and propose responses to these needs through the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) structure of Laois County Council (LCC). The outcomes of the consultation will feed into the new Corporate Plan being developed by Laois County Council for the period 2019 to 2024.

The gathering, which included people with physical, intellectual, sensory and mental health disabilities, was also asked to look at developing a representative structure for people with disabilities in the county. This part of the workshop was postponed due to time constraints

Jim O'Brien and Storm Powell were engaged by Laois PPN to be overall facilitators of the gathering and to write this report based on the discussions at the workshop.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP) 2016 TO 2021

The current policy context for the workshop and its outcomes is to be found in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016 to 2021. Under the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016 to 2021 Laois PPN was recognised as a lead agency with a number of high level goals including:

### HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6 - RECOGNISE AND SUPPORT THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF PEOPLE.

#### IN THIS REGARD LAOIS PPN IS TO:

**“WORK WITH KEY ORGANISATIONS TO BUILD A REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURE WITHIN THE DISABILITY SECTOR IN LAOIS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES WHICH INFORM SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES AND PRACTICE IMPACTING ON THE SECTOR.”**



## THE PROCESS

The gathering was divided into eight groups at eight round tables where the discussions were facilitated and recorded by members of the secretariat of Laois PPN, the PPN co-ordinator and three members of Laois County Council staff.

There were four rounds of discussion. During each round the groups concentrated on the work of a specific SPC looking at how that SPC is relevant to the lives of people with disabilities. The groups then explored how people with disabilities can have an impact on the work of that SPC and suggested recommended actions that should be taken.

At the beginning of each round of discussion the group was given an outline of the work or themes of the relevant SPC. Where the functions of the SPC were too numerous, these functions were divided between two groups.

## THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED:

- WHAT ARE THE ISSUES UNDER THIS THEME THAT PREVENT OR LIMIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FULLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN SOCIETY?
- WHAT EFFECT DOES THAT HAVE ON PEOPLE?
- WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN AND BY WHOM?

## KEY ISSUES AND RESPONSES:

Key issues identified across all the discussions included lack of information, recognition, access, representation and action. People with disabilities feel they and their needs do not get sufficient recognition across the range of responsibilities that makes up the remit of Laois County Council (LCC).

## ROUND 1 TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC

### ISSUES AND EFFECTS

The needs of people with disabilities are not sufficiently recognised in relation to infrastructure, transportation, services provision.

## ALL THE FOLLOWING ARE PROBLEMATIC FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

- THE DESIGN OF ROADS, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ROADWORKS
- THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING
- PUBLIC LIGHTING PROVISION
- ACCESS TO BURIAL GROUNDS
- WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES AND COSTS ASSOCIATED
- ANIMAL CONTROL
- ACCESS TO FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Getting around is challenging for people with disabilities, especially those with visual and hearing impairment and with ambulatory disabilities. Problems arise from the design of traffic calming measures, the ubiquity of dog-fouling and the obstacle course created by signage and dustbins.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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It is recommended that LCC engage in a programme of education and awareness-raising on disability issues within its own structures and with the public at large.

LCC to consult with people with disabilities around construction, design and management of public thoroughfares. It needs to take an audit of all its public spaces with a view to disability-proofing them.

LCC to attend more assiduously to the implementation its own bye-laws in relation to traffic and parking, dog control and signage erection, working closely with the Gardai where appropriate.

Noise can also be an issue for people with disabilities, especially people with autism. Therefore acceptable decibel levels need to be established for the installation and use of equipment such as public hand dryers.

Action on access to environmental services in terms of price, location and design needs to be a priority for LCC. Likewise physical access to public spaces such as burial grounds needs to be attended to along with a menu of methods to access the emergency services.

Grant aid and supports need to be put in place for people with disabilities who need to improve the quality of their water provision. Energy conservation can be a challenge for people with disabilities given their reliance on appliances. Energy use can be higher than for many others. A programme of efficient energy use for people with disabilities is needed.

## ROUND 2 HOUSING

### ISSUES AND EFFECTS

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The suitability of the current housing provision for people with disabilities is an issue. There is not enough social housing. The needs of people with disabilities are not adequately taken into account in the design and construction stages. Also the progression of disabilities, the fact that disabilities are not static, is not taken into consideration. People with disabilities are often not invited to engage with estate management.

The bureaucracy associated with applying for housing, housing loans and grants is extremely complex.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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People with disabilities need to be consulted on the design and provision of housing. The range and progression of disabilities needs to be taken into consideration.

It is recommended that LCC look at examples of good practice elsewhere where there are comprehensive guidelines. People with disabilities need to be involved in estate management. LCC needs to be more prompt in responding to issues of anti-social behaviour and texting needs to be used more widely in the practice of estate management, this is particularly appropriate for people with a hearing impairment.

Applying for housing loans and grants needs to be simplified and means testing should be person-based rather than family-based. The HSE needs to be more involved in the housing of people

with disabilities and the levels of grant aid for modification/adapting needs to be increased. There needs to be clusters of social housing for people with disabilities - this could be incorporated into the policy of revitalising Town Centres.

More social housing and emergency accommodation is needed and immediate access to information is necessary if someone's housing situation changes and they are in danger of homelessness. There should be an audit of all vacant houses in Laois.

Housing issues for Travellers with disabilities should be a priority for Traveller accommodation policy and practice.

## **ROUND 3 COMMUNITY, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HERITAGE SPC**

### **ISSUES AND EFFECTS**

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There is a need to include people with disabilities in more community organisations. Some organisations do not have the required knowledge or ability and should consider appointing a disability officer.

There is a need to create a greater awareness of the importance of social inclusion for people with disabilities, in particular for those with hidden disabilities in order to change attitudes, improve facilities and create opportunities.

The use of libraries, arts facilities, heritage facilities and tourist facilities by people with disabilities can be restrictive because of poor design. Access and the use of sports and leisure facilities can be similarly restrictive.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

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LCC to be proactive about encouraging people with disabilities to engage in community activities. It could set up disability networks in communities and appoint people with disabilities to organisations such as the PPN and the SPCs.

Libraries, arts centres, sports centres and heritage facilities need to be disability proofed and their events need to be proofed for their inclusive nature. The appointment of a disability officer(s) to attend to the perspective of people with disabilities in the community, cultural and sports sectors of LCC would help in this.

While Music Generation is to be commended for its inclusion of people with disabilities, more grant-aid is needed to encourage people with disabilities to engage in sports, artistic and cultural activities.

A concentrated initiative to make all the tourism facilities in Laois disability friendly could showcase the county as a leader in this area.

## ROUND 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING SPC

### ISSUES AND EFFECTS

The inclusion of people with disabilities in the economic life of the county is vital and an input by them in planning within this sector is also most important. There is a lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities and a lack of good information for employers on the advantages of hiring people with disabilities. Training opportunities are limited. People with disabilities have a huge amount to offer in terms of contributing to sustainable development.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

There is a need to raise awareness among employers about the advantages of employing people with a disability. Increased incentives need to be provided to employers to employ people with disabilities including grant aid towards facilities, technology and education.

Provision of training and supports for people with disabilities is also needed in their search for work. Develop a collaboration between Rehab Care, Laois LEO, the business support unit of LCC and other relevant bodies to provide information on enterprise supports for people with disabilities.

A Disability Employment Coordinator could be employed through Laois LEO.

People with disabilities should be engaged in the new technologies associated with sustainable development and conservation. LCC should be proactive in creating opportunities in these areas where there are lots of opportunity for innovation.



# “ACCESS FOR ALL” DISABILITY AWARENESS WORKSHOP REPORT 2019

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Laois PPN is co-ordinated by a secretariat of eight people including Donal O’Shea, Michael Cobbe, Paddy Buggy, Michael Dowling, Bolaji Adeyanju, Robbie Quinn, Brian Maher and PJ Campbell. The PPN co-ordinator is Suzanne O’Connor.

Representative groups and individuals from across the disability sector in Laois were invited to attend and on the night over 60 individuals attended and over 20 groups were represented.

The ultimate aim of the consultation was to highlight the needs of people with disabilities in Laois and propose responses to these needs through the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) structure of Laois County Council (LCC). Using this structure it is hoped that the issues and responses articulated at the workshop will feed into the new Corporate Plan being developed by LCC for the period 2019 to 2024.

The gathering was also asked to look at developing a representative structure for people with disabilities in the county to facilitate their participation in decision making structures.

Jim O’Brien and Storm Powell were engaged by Laois PPN to facilitate the gathering and write this report based on the discussions at the workshop. It should be noted that all views expressed in this document are those of the participants in the workshop.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)2016 TO 2021

The current policy context for the workshop and its outcomes is to be found in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)2016 to 2021 . This plan sets out a number of high level goals, objectives and actions designed to promote and support local economic and community development.

**HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6 -RECOGNISE AND SUPPORT THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF PEOPLE.**

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A further aim of the workshop was to begin the process of establishing a local structure for people with disabilities to feed into the local decision-making structures. On the night there was insufficient time to progress this and it was agreed to hold another gathering to look at developing the representative structure.

## THE WORKSHOP

Member of the PPN secretariat, Donal O'Shea welcomed everybody and outlined the broad national and international context in which the disability sector is trying to make its presence felt and its voice heard.

He said "We are concerned that, without a formal mechanism of engagement with people who are directly affected by disability, the government is failing in its responsibility of direct and committed engagement with this sector. Currently there are no formal bodies at a local or national level comprising people with disabilities serving as a mechanism for consultation, It is our view that the mechanism for such consultation could be via the PPN's."

## STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

The PPN co-ordinator Suzanne O'Connor introduced the process by which it is intended to progress the outcomes of the workshop. This will be done through the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) structure.

The SPCs assist in the formulation, development and review of policy. They harness the experience and expertise of relevant external bodies, which in turn enhances the overall role of Councillors by providing a platform for input into policy formulation at an early stage.

### **SPCS ALSO HAVE A FUNCTION IN OTHER NON-STATUTORY POLICY FIELDS SUCH AS:**

- POLICY RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORK PROGRAMMES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES FOR PARTICULAR SERVICES
- CONSIDERATION OF THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT POLICIES
- INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES OF PARTICULAR SERVICES
- THE STRATEGIC MONITORING OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES

The SPCs do not have the power to decide or determine council policy but the council must take full cognisance of the work of the SPC's when deciding policy.

### **THERE ARE FOUR SPC'S IN LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL. THESE DEAL WITH:**

- TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
- HOUSING
- SOCIAL, COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND HERITAGE
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING



The gathering was divided into eight groups at eight round tables where the discussions were facilitated and recorded by members of the secretariat of the PPN, the PPN co-ordinator and three members of Laois County Council staff.

There were four rounds of discussion. During each round the groups concentrated on the work of a specific SPC looking at how that SPC is relevant to the lives of people with disabilities. The groups then explored how people with disabilities can have an impact on the work of that SPC and suggested actions that should be taken.

At the beginning of each round of discussion each group was given an outline of the work or themes of the SPC. Where the functions of the SPC were too numerous, these functions were divided between two groups.

### THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED:

- WHAT ARE THE ISSUES UNDER THIS THEME THAT PREVENT OR LIMIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FULLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN SOCIETY?
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- WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN AND BY WHOM?

The facilitator/notetaker recorded the deliberations of the group. Oral feedback on one point from the discussion was taken from each group at the end of the discussion and all the written feedback was collected to be collated for this report.



# DISCUSSION ROUND 1 TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC

## PURPOSE

To ensure people with a disability are taken into consideration during the planning and delivery of these services

## THE TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC COVERS:

- ROADS: DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE / PUBLIC LIGHTING
- TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT & SAFETY / SPEED CONTROL
- WASTE MANAGEMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION& LITTER MANAGEMENT
- BURIAL GROUNDS
- FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES
- WATER PROVISION (RURAL) / AIR, WATER QUALITY, NOISE
- ENERGY CONSERVATION
- ANIMAL CONTROL / FOOD HYGIENE

## DISCUSSION:

- WHAT ARE THE ISSUES UNDER THIS THEME THAT PREVENT OR LIMIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FULLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN SOCIETY?
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## ISSUES & EFFECTS: ROADS - DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE / PUBLIC LIGHTING

The design, maintenance and upkeep of roads and pathways are crucial issues for people with disabilities. People with sensory, physical, intellectual and mental health disabilities can be severely restricted trying to negotiate their way in public places due to poor road/path design, obstacles, damaged surfaces or repair works.

Such obstacles can include council litter bins, rubbish bins left out for collection , bad parking practices, poor ramps, no ramps and un-negotiable temporary ramps that are used when road works are in progress. Problems are also caused by unauthorised signage and some authorised signage. Speed ramps can also involve difficulties for people with disabilities.

Road works are often undertaken with little notice to the public. When footpaths are closed, people with disabilities can be forced to use the unprotected public road or make circuitous journeys. There are also issues with the width of parking spaces. People with disabilities often find the height of footpaths to be a particular difficulty.

Poor public lighting can be a huge issue for people with disabilities especially in rural villages.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ROADS - DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE/PUBLIC LIGHTING**

It is recommended that LCC engage in an on-going programme of consultation with people with disabilities in relation to the planning, design and implementation stages of works to public roads or pathways. This should apply to new schemes or the renovation of older

It is recommended that LCC undertake an audit of all its public thoroughfares, subjecting them to disability proofing. The authority should cost what needs to be done and build this cost into the budgets for a planned programme of remedial actions and maintenance

The public needs to be given adequate notice of proposed works and an audit of the potential impact of such works on people with disabilities needs to be undertaken and measures taken to ameliorate any negative impacts.

In conjunction with LCC and the relevant energy supplier, public lighting should be reviewed across the county and a programme initiated to improve it, especially in rural villages

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY/SPEED CONTROL**

Poor road and traffic behaviour by motorists is the major issue. This includes; not obeying speed limits especially in towns and villages, not driving with due care at pedestrian crossings, the disregard for disabled driver parking places and the pervasive practice of parking on kerbs.

The length of time allowed for crossing and the pacing of lights at pedestrian crossings are often not appropriate for people with disabilities.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY/SPEED CONTROL**

LCC to review its bye-laws in relation to speed limits in towns, parking in disabled parking spaces, parking on kerbs and footpaths and placing obstacles such as signage and refuse bins on footpaths.

LCC, in conjunction with the Gardai, become pro-active in relation to the enforcement of these bye-laws with heavy fines and pursuit of offenders through the courts if necessary.

In relation to speed controls LCC should enforce greater driver respect for pedestrian crossings and should change the calibration of pedestrian lights to leave sufficient time for people with disabilities to cross safely. It should look at alternatives to speed ramps to slow traffic.

Good behaviour in terms of traffic and parking should be reinforced by the Gardai in visits to schools by the Community Garda.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: WASTE MANAGEMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & LITTER MANAGEMENT**

In regard to waste management street litter can cause a problem for people with a range of disabilities trying to get around. The cost of waste disposal can be higher for people with disabilities, especially in the case of people using incontinence pads and generating other medical refuse.

The height and the location of litter bins and waste bins can be an issue, accessibility is a problem at refuse and recycling centres and people with mobility disabilities can have a real challenge managing waste. Putting out the bins can also be a challenge. Illegal dumping is a constant problem.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: WASTE MANAGEMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & LITTER MANAGEMENT**

Bin/waste charges should be reduced for people with disabilities, especially people with a disability that causes them to have increased weight in their refuse.

Bottle banks, public litter bins along with recycling and waste disposal sites should be made more accessible in terms of height, positioning and location.

There needs to be clearer guidelines in relation to putting out bins for collection and removing them post-collection.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: BURIAL GROUNDS**

Accessing public spaces like burial grounds can be especially difficult with uneven surfaces, narrow gateways and narrow paths between graves. People with disabilities have difficulties attending funerals or visiting the graves of loved ones.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: BURIAL GROUNDS**

LCC should work with local voluntary committees and parish communities to ensure that graveyards are accessible for people with disabilities. Access, parking and the quality of footpaths should be a priority.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

For people with disabilities contacting the fire and emergency services can be a challenge, especially when the only option for making contact is to dial 999 or 112. This is particularly difficult for people with visual impairment.

People with a hearing impairment may not have access to a phone for emergency services and this causes anxiety and worry. A texting service would be far more appropriate.

First responders need specific training for dealing with people with disabilities.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Fire and emergency personnel should have training for dealing with people with disabilities.

A system of alerting the emergency services by text or voice activation needs to be put in place along with universal panic buttons for people with disabilities.

Emergency provision in public buildings should include sensory alarms and emergency flashing lights for evacuation appropriate for those with a hearing impairment.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Energy conservation can be a challenge for people with disabilities as they often need extra heating or need access to equipment that involves heavy energy use. For example, people with visual impairment need more lights and stronger lights. It can also be difficult for people with disabilities to operate energy systems such as boilers.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ENERGY CONSERVATION**

There needs to be a special energy rate/discount from energy suppliers for people with disabilities when charging the batteries for their equipment.

Disability and social inclusion groups could harmonise and work in conjunction with environmental groups to get grants for energy conservation.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: WATER PROVISION (RURAL) AIR & WATER QUALITY, NOISE**

Many areas in Laos have a problem with lime in the water therefore a scheme for the provision of water softeners is needed.

Noise can be an acute problem for people with disabilities who find themselves living at street level where much of the noise happens after pubs close etc. For people with autism the noise of high powered hand dryers in public toilets can be very upsetting. People with a hearing impairment using hearing aids can get noise distortion from loud and intrusive noise.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: WATER PROVISION (RURAL) AIR & WATER QUALITY, NOISE**

A scheme for the installation of water softeners is needed to tackle the problem of lime.

The bye-laws in relation to noise levels need to be reviewed and a system of sanction introduced for offenders.

The use of noisy equipment such as hand dryers in public buildings needs to be reviewed and acceptable decibel levels established for the installation and use of such appliances.

## ISSUES & EFFECTS: ANIMAL CONTROL

Uncontrolled dogs pose a range of problems for people with disabilities including dog fouling and wandering dogs interfering with guide dogs. Barking dogs can alarm people with intellectual disabilities and people with autism. Dog fouling can have disgusting outcomes and damaging health implications for wheelchair users and for people with visual and intellectual disabilities.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ANIMAL CONTROL

Byelaws are in existence for the control of animals and most of the issues mentioned by participants are covered by the bye-laws and dog wardens are employed to enforce them. However, the Dog Warden Service needs to be more visible and there needs to be a public campaign about the importance of dog control.

## ISSUES & EFFECTS: FOOD HYGIENE

Some people with a visual impairment and with intellectual disabilities can have problems with food labelling, especially in relation to reading 'best-before' dates and ingredient information.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: FOOD HYGIENE

Food labelling in terms of ingredients, allergens and best-before date needs to be presented in a way that makes it accessible to people with disabilities. While it is not clear what the local authority can do in this area nevertheless, Laois could be a first in tackling this and other issues that arose in the consultation.

## DISCUSSION ROUND 2

### HOUSING SPC

#### PURPOSE

To ensure that all our citizens enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs, and as far as possible, in a location and tenure of their choice and to provide a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance.

#### THE HOUSING SPC COVERS:

- HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE
- ESTATE MANAGEMENT AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
- LOANS AND GRANTS, LEASING, RAS, HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS
- VOLUNTARY HOUSING
- TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION
- HOMELESSNESS.

## **DISCUSSION:**

- **WHAT ARE THE ISSUES UNDER THIS THEME THAT PREVENT OR LIMIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FULLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN SOCIETY?**
- **WHAT EFFECT DOES THAT HAVE ON PEOPLE?**
- **WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE UNDERTAKEN AND BY WHOM?**

## **ISSUES AND EFFECTS: HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

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The suitability of the current housing provision for people with disabilities is an issue. There is not enough social housing. The needs of people with disabilities is not adequately taken into account at design and construction stages. Also the progression of disabilities, the fact that disabilities are not static, is not taken into consideration.

There are considerable financial implications in housing provision for people with disabilities. People are afraid of the red tape involved in making applications for grant aid and applying for construction/design assistance for people with disabilities.

When children with disabilities become adults they often live with their parents. What happens these people when the parents fall into poor health?

There is a critical need for accommodation for people with hearing difficulties but when they get such housing they are often isolated. Bodies such as LCC can be difficult to deal with as they don't have an adequate signing service. Issues like boiler maintenance are critical.

The locations where houses are built or sourced for people with disabilities can be crucial. For instance it is pointless building or adapting a house in an area where there is no access to public transport.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

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- There needs to be a review of regulations and the grant system in relation to housing for people with disabilities to take into account the range of disabilities and the progression of disabilities.
- There is a need to educate planners and decision makers in LCC in relation to the housing issues and needs of people with disabilities.
- There is a need for a new national strategy for independent living led by the government.
- Building regulations need to be designed by people with disabilities, not just by architects and engineers. It should be function first followed by design.
- A ground floor bedroom should be specified as a prerequisite in all planning permissions and consideration should be given to providing a sensory garden with every development.
- There is a need to look at good practice elsewhere in relation to housing people with disabilities.
- Guidelines for housing people with disabilities should suggest that such housing should not be far from the family home. This should be organised in conjunction with the HSE. A specific amount of social housing should be dedicated to people with a disability.
- A good LCC texting service is essential for people with hearing difficulties in terms of housing maintenance.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: ESTATE MANAGEMENT AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Anti-social behaviour is on the increase, people with disabilities feel particularly vulnerable in this regard, as do older people who are often targeted by vandals. People with disabilities and older people feel confined to their homes in parts of estates that are regularly used for drinking and drug taking.

There is often a long delay by the authorities in responding to complaints. People don't want to intervene because they are afraid. There is a lack of legislation for tackling anti-social behaviour.

Often young people are involved in anti-social behaviour because they are bored with nothing to do and no recreational facilities.

Poor public lighting creates a visibility problem. There is uncertainty about who is responsible for some public/green areas. People with disabilities feel confined to their homes.

People with hearing difficulties might not be aware of anti-social behaviour until they physically see it happening, then they have problems contacting the emergency services as there is no texting service available.

Many estates are dirty and in poor environmental condition. Who is responsible for this? Does LCC clean the estates it has responsibility for? Likewise the rivers aren't clean. Is the sewerage being treated properly?

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

- More policing is needed.
- LCC to liaise more closely with residents and developers especially through schemes like Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert.
- There should be clusters of independent living units for people with disabilities rather than one-off houses. In this way people with disability will not feel isolated.
- Building clusters of housing for people with disabilities should be incorporated into a policy of revitalising Town Centres.
- More facilities are needed for young people.
- The authorities need to be more prompt about responding to complaints.
- LCC should take charge of cleaning estates and keeping them in order.
- LCC should develop a texting service that is accessible to all.





## **ISSUES AND EFFECTS: LOANS AND GRANTS, LEASING, RAS, HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS**

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The housing needs of people with disabilities, in many cases, change as people get older or as their health situation changes. Different grant-aid/support might be needed at different stages. These changes are not taken into account. For example, a person with a disability can get to a stage where he or she can no longer stay in the family home as it may not be suitable or appropriate.

People do not know where to turn to when grants are available and are not sure what they are entitled to.

There is far too much bureaucracy and paperwork associated with applying for grants. People are put off by the paperwork finding it pressurising and stressful. There is too much red tape for insignificant amounts of money and the spending is very restricted.

Housing loans are irrelevant to people with disabilities if they are unemployed and don't have an income base sufficient for securing a loan offer.

Grants to adapt and upgrade houses are generally not sufficient so people have to get money from their families to complete the works. LCC should give assistance in sourcing reputable tradespeople to carry out such works.

People with hearing difficulties have problems accessing advice on grants and getting involved in negotiations for grants as signers are not readily available in LCC.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: LOANS AND GRANTS, LEASING, RAS, HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS**

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- An audit or a regular review of housing needs should be done on an individual basis and should be means tested on the means of the person with the disability/disabilities and not on the family.
- There needs to be a one-stop-shop where all the information on available grants is available and accessible.
- People need to be appointed to assist people with grant applications.
- Information sessions for each specific group should be set up to make them aware of what they are entitled to.
- The LCC to engage the HSE more comprehensively in the housing situation of people with disabilities.
- LCC should give assistance to people with disabilities in sourcing reputable tradespeople to carry out adaptive works and oversee such works to ensure they are completed within budget and in accordance with guidelines and building regulations.
- The grant amounts for adaptation/modification should be increased by LCC.
- LCC to engage sign language practitioners.
- There needs to be an alert system for new grants and deadlines, this needs to be done by text.

## **ISSUES AND EFFECTS: VOLUNTARY HOUSING**

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There is a lack of voluntary houses. It means that many people with disabilities cannot get access to housing and this leads to stress. Their human needs and their rights are not respected. Current voluntary housing models complexes can be expensive.

People with disabilities need an input into the whole area of voluntary housing and available grants need to be researched from across all potential sources.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: VOLUNTARY HOUSING**

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- More social housing and emergency accommodation is needed, appropriate and accessible with usable facilities.
- There should be clusters of housing for people with disabilities developed by LCC.
- Raising awareness of possible grant-aid from Europe is necessary.

## **ISSUES AND EFFECTS: TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION**

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Travellers may want to be housed together, this may not be ideal for the integration of any group.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION**

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Consult with all relevant bodies re the composition and location of Traveller accommodation.

## **ISSUES AND EFFECTS: HOMELESSNESS**

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There is a lack of awareness as to what to do when people are in danger of homelessness, particularly in cases of domestic violence.

There are plenty of vacant houses in the county that could be used for homeless people.

For people with hearing difficulties accessing homelessness services can be difficult. Negotiating the language and jargon of LCC can be confusing and lead to misunderstandings.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: HOMELESSNESS**

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- Homelessness requires a national response but there is also a need for local information in relation to homelessness.
- In the case of emergencies where there is an immediate change in someone's housing circumstances and where information is instantly required, then something like a fridge magnet with all the relevant numbers and eircodes would be of help.
- A comprehensive audit needs to be taken of all the vacant houses in the county asking how long each one has been vacant and if LCC is in a position to take them over.

## DISCUSSION ROUND 3

### COMMUNITY, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HERITAGE SPC

#### PURPOSE

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To ensure people with disabilities can participate fully in the community, social, cultural and heritage aspects of life in Laois.

#### THE COMMUNITY, SOCIAL, CULTURE AND HERITAGE SPC COVERS:

- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- SOCIAL INCLUSION
- LIBRARIES
- ARTS
- HERITAGE
- RECREATION AND SPORT
- USÁID NA NGAEILGE
- MUSIC GENERATION AND LAOIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC
- TOURISM AND COUNTY PROMOTION

#### DISCUSSION:

- WHAT ARE THE ISSUES UNDER THIS THEME THAT PREVENT OR LIMIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FULLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN SOCIETY?
- WHAT EFFECT DOES THAT HAVE ON PEOPLE?
- WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE UNDERTAKEN AND BY WHOM?



## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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There is a need to include people with disabilities in more community organisations. Some organisations do not have the required knowledge or ability and should consider appointing a disability officer. This will encourage people, especially younger people, with disabilities to join local groups. There is a shortage of funding to include people with disabilities into mainstream activities. Awareness and information of local activities is vital.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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- Identify available resources or provide additional funding to assist community groups to provide adequate facilities for people with disabilities.
- Encourage parents to involve their children with local events.
- LCC could create a community based committee to encourage participation of people with disabilities in the community and to capacity-build local organisations in this respect.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: SOCIAL INCLUSION

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There is a need to create a greater awareness of the importance of social inclusion for people with disabilities, in particular for those with hidden disabilities and to ensure that people with disabilities are not isolated from the wider community.

There is also a need to educate the public on the needs of people with disabilities in order to change attitudes, improve facilities and create appropriate and friendly spaces.

Disability networks, similar to youth cafes, could be established and befriending services should be utilised especially for those who are unable to leave their homes.

To insure inclusion, transport services need to be adapted. Carers need to be considered.

Social Inclusion representation on SPC's and the PPN is vital and a person with a disability should be appointed to ensure views from the disability sector are articulated.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: SOCIAL INCLUSION

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- Provide social inclusion and disability training workshops for relevant organisations such as ETB and LCC and also the wider community.
- Provide befriending service for those who are housebound.
- Subsidise the cost of carers.
- Adapt public facilities to cater for the needs of people with special needs.
- Set up disability networks in communities.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: LIBRARIES

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The library service is welcomed by people with disabilities but it is important to ensure access to materials. Books are often placed on high shelves and are not accessible.

Suggestions include pre-booked times for people with disabilities and specialised IT equipment. Ensure that interactive aids are quiet and be aware of unseen disabilities. For the hearing impaired, text messages from libraries would keep them informed of what's going on.

If libraries become automated, there is a concern that there will be no staff to assist people.

It is also important that disability parking is adjacent to libraries.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: LIBRARIES

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- Ensure people with disabilities and their carers can access public facilities. Plan at initial stages to ensure adequate access is in place.
- Make libraries more adaptable; include more sensory rooms and other spaces to suit people with disabilities.
- Use a text message service to notify people about what's happening.
- Alleviate fears of people with disabilities around using automated library services.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: ARTS

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Funding for people with disabilities within the arts section is very limited. Pantomimes should have abbreviated versions for people who cannot sit through a production lasting several hours.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ARTS

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- Increase funding for people with disabilities interested in pursuing the arts.
- Assign a disability officer to the Arts and Heritage sections of LCC.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: HERITAGE

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Poor accessibility to heritage sites in Laois and the lack of suitable interactive experiences at ground level are the main concerns. Available disabled parking is also mentioned.

The creation of special interest heritage projects for people with disabilities is a suggestion.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: HERITAGE

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- Make sure lifts are working in public places.
- Improve accessibility to heritage sites in Laois.
- Assign a disability officer to the Arts and Heritage sections of LCC.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: RECREATION AND SPORT

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A range of issues including the need to improve changing areas and include a hoist, better transport links to sporting venues and more space for people with disabilities are the main concerns.

Organisations should be able to resource additional funding to adapt premises for people with disabilities. Equipment in playgrounds for wheelchair users is also requested. Carers are often charged into sporting events and a system should be set up to ensure carers get in free or for a reduced rate. Voice aids at public facilities would assist people with disabilities.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: RECREATION AND SPORT

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- Provide subsidised driving lessons for people with disabilities.
- Encourage the GAA and other sporting organisations to be more inclusive through all age levels and appoint a disability officer.
- Provide more grants for people to participate in sports – either integrated or disability sports.
- Set up a volunteer database to assist people with disabilities to partake in sports and recreational activities.
- Ensure summer camps run by LCC are disability friendly.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: USÁID NA nGAEILGE

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There was not a lot of discussion on this topic. It was suggested that the Irish language should be on Irish Sign Language (ISL) leaflets.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: USÁID NA nGAEILGE

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Irish language publications should be made available through ISL.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: MUSIC GENERATION AND LAOIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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There was great praise for the work already undertaken by Music Generation and Laois School of Music but it was hoped that music could be provided to an even greater number of people with disability.

It was noted that children with disabilities are sometimes excluded from the mainstream teaching of music which causes a sense of isolation.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: MUSIC GENERATION AND LAOIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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- Broaden out the teaching of music to as many people with disabilities as possible.
- Deliver music teaching to more educational establishments.

## ISSUES AND EFFECTS: TOURISM AND COUNTY PROMOTION

There is a huge opportunity for tourism in Laois if facilities are updated to cater for the needs of people with disabilities. There is an opportunity to promote the county as a tourist destination, which is disability friendly and Laois could become a leader in this area.

At present, however, tourism in Laois does not adequately cater for people with disabilities. Projects such as sensory gardens should be encouraged and it is important to disability proof our tourism sites.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: TOURISM AND COUNTY PROMOTION

- LCC should consider the needs of people with disabilities at planning stage of tourism initiatives.
- Compile a list of wheelchair (disability friendly) recreation activities.
- Adapt country trails and walks for people with disabilities.
- Develop disability focussed facilities such as sensory gardens.
- Flagship and showcase Laois as a leader in this area in conjunction with Laois Tourism, LCC and other relevant organisations.



## DISCUSSION ROUND 4

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING SPC

#### PURPOSE

To ensure people with disabilities play a full role in the economic development, enterprise and planning in Laois

#### THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE & PLANNING SPC COVERS:

- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND MAINTENANCE
- ENTERPRISE SUPPORTS AND OVERSIGHT OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO)
- PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
- SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- CONSERVATION ISSUES
- URBAN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL
- PREPARATION OF THE ECONOMIC ELEMENT OF THE NEW LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN

#### DISCUSSION:

- WHAT ARE THE ISSUES UNDER THIS THEME THAT PREVENT OR LIMIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FULLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN SOCIETY?
- WHAT EFFECT DOES THAT HAVE ON PEOPLE?
- WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE UNDERTAKEN AND BY WHOM?





## ISSUES & EFFECTS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It is vital to involve people with disabilities in all aspects of planning working from the bottom up. It is important to have a voice on the SPC committee and a designated seat for a person with a disability on the social inclusion pillar of the PPN. This should not be tokenism but somebody who will have a strong input.

Lack of information is a concern and it is difficult to find out about services and opportunities for people with disabilities.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create a forum to bring disability groups together to have a stronger voice for inclusion.



## ISSUES & EFFECTS: EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND MAINTENANCE

The lack of employment opportunities is an issue for people with disabilities. It is important that both employers and people with disabilities are made aware of all supports and that existing benefits are made more attractive.

Incentivise local firms to employ people with disabilities and educate them on the practicalities required (ensuring doors are wide enough etc). Provide grants for people who need special equipment to enable them to work.

People with disabilities should not be left behind in terms of employment. More training should be available to reskill people with disabilities who may need to change their skill-set or job following a disability. Firms feel they are not insured to employ a person with a disability and this needs to be examined and accurate information given. Encourage a greater collaboration between organisations to ensure that employment is a focus.

It is important to focus on a person with a disability as a contributor not a drain and to consider how providing disability services could contribute to the community in terms of income and employment.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Provide incentives to firms to employ a ratio of people with disabilities within the area.

Establish shadowing and work experience programmes for people with disabilities.

Provide information, education, technology, new services and grants to employers and potential employees.

Develop refresher training for people who develop a disability.

Establish quotas to ensure people with disabilities are employed locally.

Make employers aware of grants through a local campaign and make it easier to apply.

Provide counselling and other mental health supports if required to become job ready.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: ENTERPRISE SUPPORTS AND OVERSIGHT OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO)**

People with disabilities may be unaware of the services provided by LEO and are concerned about the red tape involved with these services.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ENTERPRISE SUPPORTS AND OVERSIGHT OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO)**

Develop a collaboration between Rehab Care, the local LEO, the business support unit of LCC and other relevant bodies to provide information on enterprise supports for people with disabilities.

Employ a Disability Employment Coordinator through Laois LEO.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

There were no specific issues identified under this heading.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

There were no specific actions identified under this heading.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

In relation to sustainable development there has been a raft of new initiatives and technology coming on stream to promote sustainable development. People need to be aware of these as there could provide real opportunities for people with disabilities.

There should be help to incentivise groups and networks that wish to source and disseminate information on technology. The use of this technology can improve lives and create independence.

All planning should be sustainable for all people and to be sustainable all developments should be inclusive of people with disabilities.

There should be a place on the PPN secretariat for a disability representative.

Budget constraints are short sighted when the cost of not doing something is measured.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Create common access to new technologies and information around sustainability.

Create bottom-up networks where groups can come together to share information in relation to grants, training and research in the area of sustainability.

Greater consultation is needed between the LCC and government departments and people with disabilities in relation to sustainable development.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: CONSERVATION ISSUES**

There is a tendency to look at the narrow economics of conservation first but a broader perspective needs to be taken on the longer-term implications of conservation issues.

Conservation initiatives such as reduce, recycle, re-use are evident in schools but need to be promoted among the wider community.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: CONSERVATION ISSUES**

Engage people with disabilities and disability groups in conservation programmes.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: URBAN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL**

People with disabilities should have a voice and be involved in all planning aspects in the community working from the bottom up for all urban renewals.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: URBAN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL**

Ensure people with disabilities are included in consultations concerning issues of urban renewal.

## **ISSUES & EFFECTS: PREPARATION OF THE ECONOMIC ELEMENT OF THE NEW LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN**

There were no specific issues identified under this heading.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: PREPARATION OF THE ECONOMIC ELEMENT OF THE NEW LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN**

There were no specific issues identified under this heading.

**IN A RECOMMENDATION ARISING ACROSS ALL THE ABOVE DISCUSSIONS IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER PUBLIC BODIES, MUST BEGIN A PROGRAMME OF EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING AMONG THE PUBLIC IN RELATION TO SHARING PUBLIC SPACES EQUALLY WITH EVERYONE, INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. SUCH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING NEEDS TO CHALLENGE THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR OF THE GENERAL POPULATION.**



# EVALUATION SUMMARY

## 'ACCESS FOR ALL' WORKSHOP EVALUATION 13/02/2019

Thank you very much for attending our workshop.

We would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete our Workshop Evaluation Form.

Given the topic, was this workshop:  Too short  Right length  Too long

In your opinion, was this workshop:  Introductory  Intermediate  Advanced

In your opinion, was this workshop:	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time and location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The program overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly agree		Strongly disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5
The workshop was applicable to my job	1	2	3	4	5
I will recommend this workshop to others	1	2	3	4	5
The program was well paced within the allotted time	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator was a good communicator	1	2	3	4	5
The material was presented in an organised manner	1	2	3	4	5
I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject	1	2	3	4	5

**1. WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP?**

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**2. HOW WELL DID IT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?**

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**3. WHAT COULD WE CHANGE IN THE FUTURE TO IMPROVE THE WORKSHOP?**

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**4. DID THE TIME AND LOCATION SUIT YOU?**

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**5. HAS THE WORKSHOP HELPED TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?**

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**6. WHAT TOPICS OR ASPECTS OF THE WORKSHOP DID YOU FIND THE MOST INTERESTING OR USEFUL?**

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**THANK YOU FOR THE FEEDBACK.**

# EVALUATION SUMMARY: 41 COMPLETED

## 'ACCESS FOR ALL', EVALUATION 13/02/2019

Thank you very much for attending our workshop.  
We would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete our Workshop Evaluation Form.

Given the topic, was this workshop:  Too short  Right length  Too long  
**Too short x8, just right x33, too long 1**

In your opinion, was this workshop:  Introductory  Intermediate  Advanced  
**Too short x8, just right x33, too long 1**

In your opinion, was this workshop:	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time and location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The program overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Mostly excellent/very good**

	Strongly agree			Strongly disagree
The workshop was applicable to my job	1	2	3	4 5
I will recommend this workshop to others	1	2	3	4 5
The program was well paced within the allotted time	1	2	3	4 5
The facilitator was a good communicator	1	2	3	4 5
The material was presented in an organised manner	1	2	3	4 5
I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject	1	2	3	4 5

**Mostly strongly agree 1 and 2**

### 1. WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP?

Positives	Other Comments
<p>Very interesting workshop – Facilitators appointed to each table very helpful. Enjoyed it and found it enlightening. Good overall.</p> <p>Very good/ very informative. Useful to hear ideas from others. Excellent, great points raised by participants.</p> <p>Mostly making the same points, which means difficulties are universal and need to be addressed.</p> <p>Informative as ideas raised are all vital to people with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>Helps to upgrade the needs of service users.</p> <p>Well organised and got all involved. Very detailed/Allowed tables to get valid points and issues across.</p> <p>Lots of interesting solutions to help people with disabilities.</p> <p>Well organised, friendly and inclusive.</p>	<p>Need more about deaf issues. Too fast – not enough time to get points across.</p> <p>Too broad, needs a narrower focus. Hope something comes of it/need follow up.</p>

### 2. HOW WELL DID IT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

Positives	Other Comments
<p>More than met expectations. Met expectations very well. 10 out of 10.</p> <p>Felt opinions were listened to and appreciated.</p> <p>Solid foundation from which to work.</p>	<p>Did not know what to expect. Did not meet expectations – PPN needs to meet deaf community alone.</p> <p>More time needed to talk about challenges facing sector.</p> <p>Fairly well – created awareness.</p>

### 3. WHAT COULD WE CHANGE IN THE FUTURE TO IMPROVE THE WORKSHOP?

Time Frame	Other
<p>Start earlier – finished late for those not living locally.</p> <p>Need more time.</p> <p>Longer and more representation from people with disabilities.</p> <p>Make it shorter.</p>	<p>Nothing.</p> <p>More people getting involved.</p> <p>More topics.</p> <p>Person from health board to speak on HSE plans for the future.</p> <p>Invite HSE/other bodies/transport.</p>



More time – more specific topics. All good.	sector, Irish Rural Link, business etc ISL to make it easier to understand for people with hearing impairment. Rather than SPC focus, “top down”, let group determine topics and feed back to SPCs. More advertising on purpose, content, timetable and programme. Disability sub-committee to engage with organisers on regular basis. Sound not good. Communications in all formats.
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#### 4. DID THE TIME AND LOCATION SUIT YOU?

Suitable	Other Comments
Yes x 29.	A little early x 2. Mornings would suit better. Great parking. Parking a problem. Time too late.

#### 5. HAS THE WORKSHOP HELPED TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

Positives	Other Comments
Yes x 27. Learnt from others at the workshop – highly informative and educational.	Yes x 27. Learnt from others at the workshop – highly informative and educational.

#### 6. WHAT TOPICS OR ASPECTS OF THE WORKSHOP DID YOU FIND THE MOST INTERESTING OR USEFUL

Positives	Other Comments
All topics x 8. Feedback positive. Housing grants x 3. Employment creation x 5. Transport issues. Social inclusion x 2. Libraries. Needs of younger people going forward x 2. Sharing of information and networking x 5. Practical elements of day to day living x 2. Finding out working of LA.	More information on topic needed. More focus on employment opportunities. Gym facilities needed.



**WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE REGISTRATION TEAM, TABLE FACILITATORS/NOTE-TAKERS AND THE OVERALL FACILITATORS JIM O'BRIEN AND STORM POWELL. IT WAS A DEMANDING EVENING WITH A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT COVERED IN A FOCUSED FORMAT. THE FACILITATORS AND NOTE-TAKERS HAD TO WORK HARD AND REPORTED BEING SOMEWHAT EXHAUSTED AT THE END – BUT PLEASANTLY SO.**

**REGISTRATION:**

Michael J Cobbe	Laois PPN Secretariat
Mick Dowling	Laois PPN Secretariat

**TABLE FACILITATORS / NOTE TAKERS:**

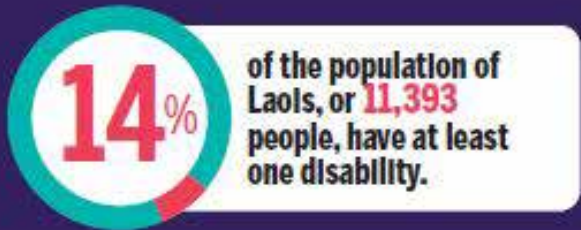
Suzanne O'Connor	Laois PPN Co-ordinator
Bolaji Adeyanju	Laois PPN Secretariat
Donal O'Shea	Laois PPN Secretariat
PJ Campbell	Laois PPN Secretariat
Paddy Buggy	Laois PPN Secretariat
Emma O'Connor	Laois County Council
Lauren Heffernan	Laois County Council
Naomi Scully	Laois County Council

**WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING OUR DISABILITY COMMUNITY IN LAOIS, BE THEY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY OR SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR TAKING THE TIME OUT OF THEIR BUSY SCHEDULE TO ATTEND OUR WORKSHOP. WITHOUT THEIR INPUT THIS WORKSHOP WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. YOUR VIEWS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE NIGHT WERE INVALUABLE.**



DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

# DISABILITY PROFILE: COUNTY LAOIS<sup>1</sup>



## Type of Disability

People in Laois reported having the following types of disabilities and conditions:



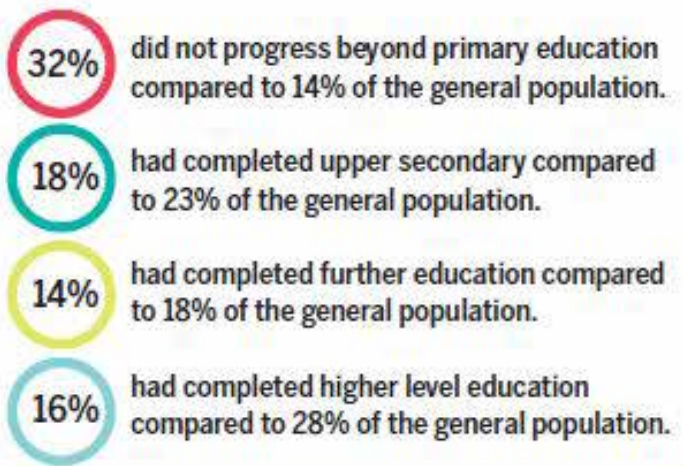
## AGE Their age profile is:

<b>0-14</b>	1325	
<b>15-24</b>	881	
<b>25-44</b>	2356	
<b>45-64</b>	3335	
<b>65+</b>	3496	



## EDUCATION<sup>2</sup>

In 2016, only 12% of people who have a disability were in education compared to 17% of the general population in Laois.<sup>3</sup> For those whose education had finished:<sup>4</sup>



## EMPLOYMENT

22% of people who have a disability were at work compared to 53% of the general population.

## TRANSPORT

19% of people who have a disability did not have access to a car or van compared to 8% of the general population.

## HOUSING

14% of people who have a disability lived in social housing compared to 11% of the general population.<sup>5</sup>

