



**What
Disabled
Women Want
For 2022**



nwc

National Women's Council

As we come to the end of 2021 and mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we look ahead to what disabled women need to live in an accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.

[“One thing that would make a huge difference to disabled women in Ireland in 2022”](#)

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- The states obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities cannot be forgotten about or eroded during a pandemic. Disabled women with no access to transport or technology have been very isolated and have missed connecting with their friends and community.
- The state must ratify the optional protocol to provide a mechanism to issue complaints.

Personal Assistants as a Statutory Right

- The state must recognise the key role personal assistance services play in independent living and legislate in Ireland to ensure person centered financial supports.
- Provision of a stand-alone fund for assistive technology
- Provision of wrap around person centred services on a needs basis if you acquire a disability, with every service having at least one person with disability awareness training.
- We want inclusion not awareness. “Don’t ask me to prove, explain or repeat my disability.”

Disabled Women in Leadership

- Disabled women can feel absent or invisible from the spaces and places where decisions are made about their lives. Disabled women should be supported to engage in participatory democracy and this is a matter for civil society organisations, political parties, and government. Positive action measures are required to ensure disabled women are on State boards, at senior levels of the Civil Service, in national delegations abroad, in local elections, and their participation in regional and local public decision-making forums.
- The state must seek the input of Disabled People’s Organisations, including disabled women’s organisations, in all policies that impact disabled women.

- An end to perpetually telling our stories as part of activism. Enshrining the right to NOT disclose the intimate nature of conditions/lives in order to have people empathise and award us basic access to services and society.

End Poverty

- Disabled people experience unacceptably high levels of poverty, even before the additional costs of disability are considered.
- Universal basic income that provides dignity for all
- My wish is a house designed for my physical needs, which would automatically reduce my pain and stress levels and spark joy.
- Change the criteria of the Archaic Primary Medical Certificate to include my permanent Disability of having one hand.

End Violence Against Women

- Disabled women and girls face greater risk of violence, with disability being the second most common risk factor for rape, after gender. We need full implementation of the Istanbul Convention including services that can support disabled women and data disaggregated by disability and ethnicity.

Access to Universal Public Services

- Universal public Healthcare services to ensure access to timely care in the community before you reach crisis point which includes accessible and accurate information and clear pathways. Proper examination chairs do not exist in all hospitals, GP offices in Ireland. For disabled women who are experiencing dual discrimination due to their race and ethnicity, these barriers are even more profound. For disabled women in direct provision there are significant challenges especially for those who do not have a medical card or who are moved from city to city and centre to centre. These women need support and coordination of health services when they are being moved from place to place.
- Access to maternity and women's healthcare without fear of encountering anti-abortion protests.
- Trauma-informed healthcare providers and service and an end to paternalistic models of decision-making
- The sexual and reproductive health needs of disabled women recognised and met in an equal, dignified and rights-based way.

- Disabled women should have access to professionals trained in their disability in the HSE in order to gain easier access to diagnosis and subsequent therapies. So many women have slipped through the cracks in the autism and neurodiverse community as children and now they struggle with not only a late diagnosis but gaining access to those professionals at all.
- **Transport** – A public transport system that works for all, whether you live in Dublin or the rest of the country. A public transport system that doesn't leave you waiting on the side of the road or drives past you because its full and no other service for 24 hrs. Disabled women are hugely impacted by the lack of transport and lack of accessible information related to transport. Disabled women experience a lack of spontaneity in being able to make last minute journeys on the transport system in Ireland. Currently you have to give 24 hour minimum notice for trains and even then there are no guarantee that there will be portable ramps available, No guarantee that all lifts at all stations are working 24/7 and no guarantee that despite ringing ahead or scouting the venue, concert, cinema or restaurant in advance that it really is!
- **Employment** – Ireland has one of the lowest unemployment rates for disabled people in the EU. Flexible working conditions are particularly important for disabled women, who are more likely to have care responsibilities for children or other family members. We need job coaches and a government strategy that reflects our needs.
- Invest in a public, not for profit childcare model. This is the best way to ensure access to affordable, quality childcare for families and decent pay and working conditions for childcare workers.
- Access is not just about the physical environment. We need information provided that is accessible and communication that is inclusive.
- For marginalised women, who already have higher mortality and morbidity rates, the collection of data and monitoring within a human rights framework is essential to protect lives and ensure equality of opportunity and outcomes in accessing public services.

NWC has supported disabled women to come together online to help shape the women's equality movement in Ireland and to support disabled women's leadership.