

Report Launch Presentation  
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# Disability, Diversity and Identity in Ireland's Local and European Elections 2024

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# Research Team



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# Research Context

Disabled  
people make  
up 22% of  
population

Consequences  
of lack of  
representation



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# Research Context

No research in  
the Irish context

Focus on The  
Equal Status  
Acts 2000-2018

Article 29 CRPD  
through an  
intersectional  
lens.

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# Examining the international literature

To contextualise the experiences in Ireland:

- We undertook a review to establish what the general trends are globally for this group.
- We sought out research that reflected the experiences of disabled people with intersecting identities.



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# Data Collection

7 disabled candidates with intersecting identities.

8 representative organisations.



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# Participants: Candidates

Participant	Pseudonym	Intersecting identity with disability	Election contested	Elected or not	Political affiliation (e.g. Party A, B, C, independent)
1.	Aine	Woman	Local	Not elected	Party A
2.	Caoimhe	Woman	Local	Not elected	Party B
3.	Jane	Woman	Local	Elected	Independent
4.	Sarah	Woman	Local	Not elected	Party C
5.	Maeve	Woman	Local	Not elected	Party D
6.	Patrick	LGBTQ+	Local	Not elected	Party A
7.	Mark	LGBTQ+	Local	Elected	Party B



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# Participants: Representative Organisations

Participant	Organisation type represented
1.	Representative organisation A1 – women
2.	Representative organisation A2 – women
3.	Representative organisation B – migrants
4.	Representative organisation C – LGBTQ+ people
5.	Representative organisation D – Traveller women
6.	Political education and training organisation E – women
7.	Political education and training organisation F – women
8.	Disabled Persons Organisation G – general
9.	Disabled Persons Organisation H – women



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# Findings: Entry into politics

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**Catalyst for entering politics  
≠  
disability or other intersecting identities**



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# Findings: Privilege

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“

“One of the reasons why I decided to run and to make disability a part of the debate, is because I acknowledge that I do have that background... I have the ability and the education and the funding behind me to be able to do something so I felt like there was an onus on me to be a voice for people with disability.”

”

(Áine)

# Findings: Inaccessibility

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BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT



INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATION



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# Findings: Inaccessibility

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“

“When you’re campaigning on a disability platform a lot of the people that support you also can’t come out and canvass with you, you know?”

(Sarah)

”

# Findings: Inaccessibility

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“

“When you’re campaigning on a disability platform a lot of the people that support you also can’t come out and canvass with you, you know?”

(Sarah)

”

# Findings: Attitudinal

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NEGATIVE ATTITUDES



FEAR OF VIOLENCE

# Findings: Attitudinal

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“

“Ah, well, sure, these are all your votes anyway?”

(Sarah)

”

# Findings: Attitudinal

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“

“I did have people that were very aggressive and when you physically can't remove yourself from that quickly because of your mobility, that's also a very different kettle of fish, you know, because normally you can just say 'Oh well, okay, thanks for your time' and walk on, but when you can't, you have to endure that tirade of abuse.”

(Sarah)

”



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# Findings: Attitudinal

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“We’ve seen generally is a rise in hate crimes, rise in assaults on people because of their identities, and that does create a fear for people. And people may be targeted because they’ve got a disability, or they may be targeted because they’re queer. But then there’s an additional fear of, particularly if you’ve got a mobility issue of not being able to get away from a situation that might turn violent or might be aggressive.” (Representative organisation C – LGBTQ+) ”



# Findings: Available resources

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FINANCIAL  
RESOURCES



BALANCING PERSONAL  
AND WORK COMMITMENTS

# Findings: Available resources

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“

“The cost of being disabled was all personal... I kind of bore those myself... I would be canvassing and I'd need the odd taxi back to my car or, you know, I have to get special food, for example. So that's always an additional cost.” (Maeve)

”

# Findings: Available resources

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“

“I worked full time and really had to protect my job because I have all my benefits through that. I had to protect my job in a way that other people don't have to.” (Áine)

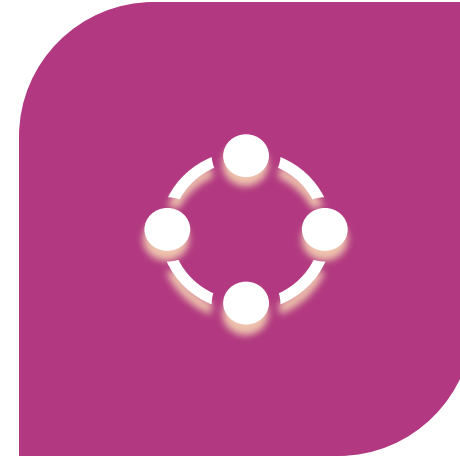
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# Findings: Support

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POLITICAL  
SUPPORT



SUPPORT FROM  
CIVIL SOCIETY



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# Findings: Support

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“

“My party had a special kind of officer in place for female candidates... a special group... always somebody else you could reach out to along with the other staff in head office... for just general kind of questions... but there were no specific disability supports.”

(Caoimhe)

”



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# Findings: Support

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“I mentioned pretty publicly that I had [medical conditions] to do with that, and I mentioned really openly that I was bisexual. I was kind of half hoping that there would be like some kind of like, do you know, support for LGBT plus people groups or support for people with disabilities that would basically give me an extra platform to counteract the kind of disadvantages I’ve been at by not being able to do as much public speaking and stuff, but I didn’t really get any of that.”

(Patrick)



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# Recommendations: State

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Collect self reported data

Support including financial

Communication alternatives

Support civil society

Fund further research



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# Recommendations: Political Parties

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Dismantle structural barriers

Build intersectionality into existing support structures

Co-opting of candidates into vacant seats



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# Recommendations: Civil Society

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## Education and training organisations

- Provide training and mentoring sessions.

## Disabled people's organisations

- Support members to contest elections.

## Wider civil society

- Develop strategies for candidate development: disability-inclusive, intersectional, culturally sensitive.



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Thank you.  
We welcome  
any questions.



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