

Ask Me

Guidelines for Effective Consultation
with People with Disabilities



NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY
ÚDARÁS NÁISIÚNTA MÍCHUMAIS

Ask Me

Guidelines for Effective Consultation
with People with Disabilities



NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY
ÚDARÁS Náisiúnta Míchumais

National Disability Authority
25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Tel/Minicom: 01 608 0400
Fax: 01 660 9935
Web: www.nda.ie
Email: nda@nda.ie

2002

These guidelines are available in alternative formats including audio, diskette, large print and braille on request by contacting the NDA on 01 608 0400

Preface

I am very pleased that the National Disability Authority is launching this publication, *Ask Me – Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities*.

The publication is timely and relevant. People with disabilities are rightly calling for a say in developments in the services they use and the society in which they live.

Even today in the year 2002 barriers still hinder the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities. These barriers relate to physical access, the dissemination of information and negative and stereotypical attitudes towards people with disabilities. The good news is that we are moving to a situation where these barriers are removed so that each and every member of this country can participate and have an equal voice in how things are done. However, more work needs to be done if this is to become a reality. Much progress has already been achieved. These guidelines are another step in the right direction.

The guidelines provide straightforward advice and set out the steps that organisations should take when undertaking a consultation process. Practical information on who and how to make contact for support and assistance are also included.

I am confident that these guidelines will lead to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the planning, evaluation and decision-making processes about the products and services they use.



Mary Wallace T.D.

Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

February 2002

Acknowledgements

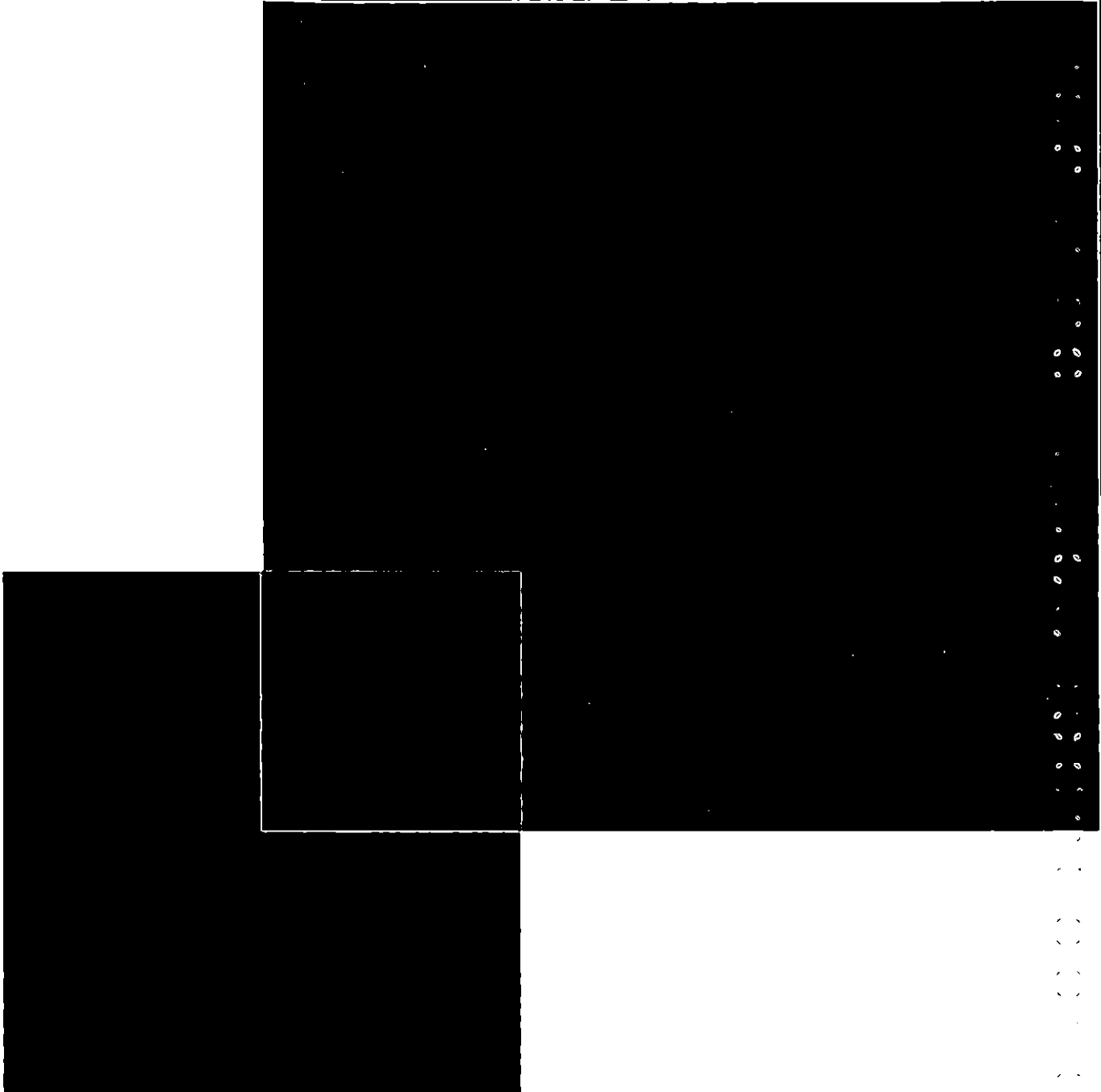
These guidelines were developed by the National Disability Authority (NDA) with the assistance of Jacqui Browne, external consultant. The NDA would like to thank Jacqui for her valuable work, feedback and guidance during the planning, drafting, consultation and piloting stages.

The NDA would like to also acknowledge and thank the following representatives from a number of voluntary, community and statutory organisations who provided input and feedback during the consultation and piloting stages of developing the guidelines:

Sinead Murtagh	ADM
Grainne McGettrick	Bray Partnership
Aoife McCormack	County Development Board (Kerry)
Phil Cox	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Tony Kemple	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Heather Ritchie	Enable Ireland (Cavan)
Mary Fox	Enable Ireland
Kate Raymond	Enable Ireland (Sandymount)
Carol Sullivan and Greg Heylin	Equality Authority
Donal Toolan	Forum of People with Disabilities
Margaret O Shea	Kerry Network of People with Disabilities
Cliona Ni Chualain	NAMHI
Keith Hayes	People in Action
Maurice O' Kane	People With Disabilities Ireland
Andrew Farrelly and Pat Seagar	Schizophrenia Ireland
Ben Murray	Tallaght Partnership
Sharon Browne	Tralee Community Development Project

Ten Essential Elements for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities

- 1 **Plan** all consultations to **include** people with disabilities (*page 8*)
- 2 Decide the **who, what and why** of your consultation process (*pages 12 and 13*)
- 3 **Choose** the **most appropriate method** for consulting with particular groups (*pages 16 and 17*)
- 4 **Train staff** and facilitators in disability awareness training (*page 22*)
- 5 **Identify** the **groups** you want to consult with (*page 23*)
- 6 **Ask** people with disabilities **what** their **needs are** so that the consultation works for them as well as you (*page 25*)
- 7 **Check** that **all elements** of the consultation process **are accessible** (*page 26*)
- 8 **Allow time** for those consulted to consider the issues fully (*page 29*)
- 9 **Review** your practices and policies (*page 33*)
- 10 **Contact representative organisations** for advice and assistance if needed (*page 36*)



Contents

Preface	1
Acknowledgements	2
Ten essential elements for effective consultation with people with disabilities	3
Contents	5
1 How these guidelines can help you	7
2 Planning a consultation – thinking it through from start to finish	11
2.1 Why are we consulting?	12
2.2 Getting started	14
2.3 Thinking it through	15
2.4 Choosing which methods to use	16
2.5 Agreeing the ground rules	18
3 Including people with disabilities	21
3.1 Understanding disability	22
3.2 Getting people with disabilities into the picture	23
3.3 Making contact	24
3.4 Supporting people with disabilities to participate	25
4 The practicalities – getting it right on the day	29
4.1 Facilitating the consultation meeting	30
4.2 Choosing a facilitator	31
4.3 Recording and documenting the consultation process	31
4.4 Follow up	32
4.5 Evaluation	33
Appendices	35
Appendix 1 – Useful Contacts	36
Appendix 2 – Disability Etiquette Checklist	42
Appendix 3 – Access Checklist	43
Appendix 4 – Sample Expenses Policy	46
Appendix 5 – Checklist for Facilitators	47
Appendix 6 – Feedback	50

1



How these guidelines can help you

1. How these guidelines can help you

Consultation is about putting the people who are affected by certain issues or particular decisions clearly in the picture, asking them about their needs, listening to their views and making sure the outcomes are communicated to those involved.

Consultation will assist in the planning, delivery and monitoring of better services and products. If your organisation is committed to ensuring your services are user-focussed then consultation needs to become part of best practice and an ongoing organisational process, not just a once-off event.

Reflecting this trend, both private and public sector Strategic Plans are committing organisations to user-led services underpinned by genuine consumer involvement and participation in the design, planning, delivery and review of services. These guidelines are aimed at assisting you include a particular group of consumers, people with disabilities, in your consultation processes.

People with disabilities represent at least 10% of the population, yet many still experience barriers in accessing the built environment and information and communications systems. Underlying these barriers are community attitudes that are often based on prejudice and lack of knowledge.

Consultation is an ongoing process not a once-off event


The essential message in these guidelines is that whatever the purpose of the consultation, be it to identify needs, develop policy, strategies or plans, new products or services, there are simple ways and means of ensuring the consultation process is accessible for people with disabilities. Getting the consultation process right for people with disabilities means getting it right for everyone.

The results gained will justify the effort. You will get a more rounded picture of customer needs and thereby be in a position to deliver a more effective and efficient service that serves the complete spectrum of the population.

Getting it right for people with disabilities results in getting it right for everyone

EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION WILL:

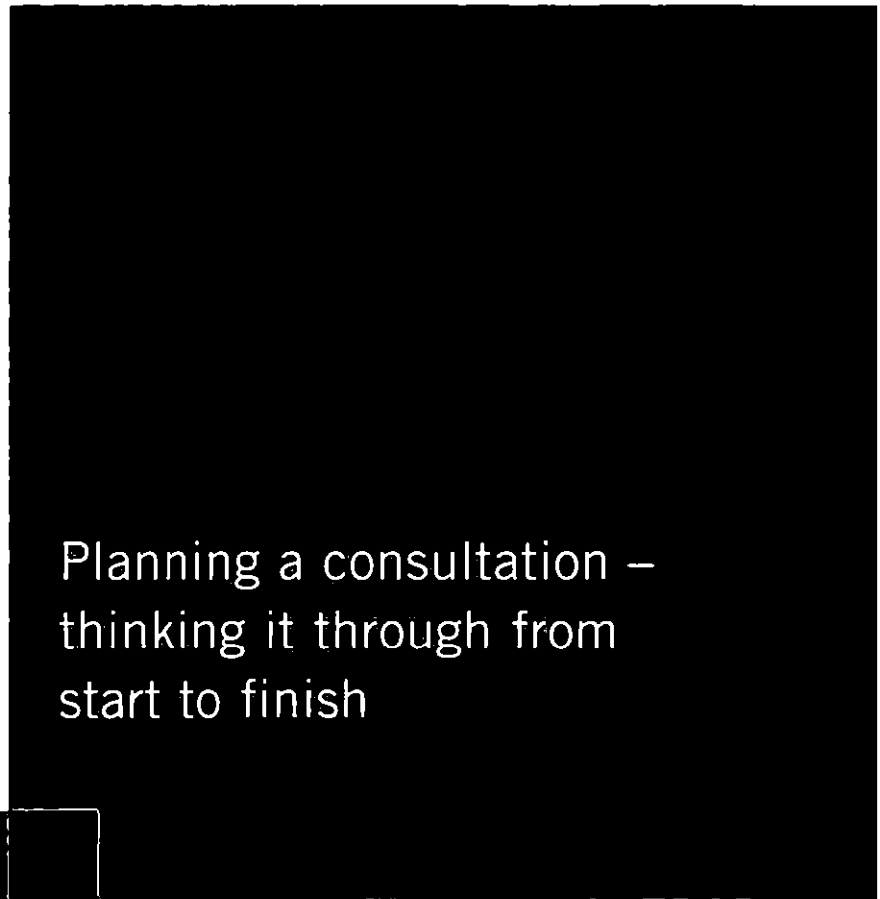
- Facilitate the creation of a partnership based on trust.
- Facilitate the provision of information on the opinions, needs and thoughts of consumers and their families.
- Promote a real understanding of how actions taken by organisations on behalf of people with disabilities affects people with disabilities.
- Provide the consulting organisation with a comprehensive approach to better planning, better policy and better service and product development.



2



Planning a consultation –
thinking it through from
start to finish



2. Planning a consultation – thinking it through from start to finish

2.1 Why are we consulting?

When embarking on a consultation process it is important to be clear about the purpose of the consultation and to spend some time thinking about the outcomes expected. This can be achieved by asking the following questions:

- ☐ **Why are you consulting – what is the purpose?**
- ☐ **What is driving the process behind the consultation?**
- ☐ **Is the consultation about:**
 - improving a specific service
 - developing a new product or service
 - involving marginalised groups
 - general policy development
 - raising issues and setting agendas
 - future plans
 - setting up an ongoing consultative forum
 - resolving conflicts
 - educating and informing the community
 - demonstrating a commitment to democracy and inclusion?

- ☐ **Are you ready to consult in terms of skills, resources, time, budget and commitment from senior management?**
- ☐ **What information should be prepared and circulated in advance?**
- ☐ **What are the anticipated outcomes**
 - An agreed plan
 - Information on services
 - New services/improved services
 - Organisational policy
 - Organisational strategy?
- ☐ **Who are the key stakeholders and who do you need to consult with**
 - People with disabilities, their families, carers, advocates
 - Representative organisations, service providers
 - Funders?
- ☐ **Are the topics and themes chosen for consultation relevant to those with whom you plan to consult?**
- ☐ **What previous consultation has taken place on this issue?**

2.2 Getting started

Before you invite individuals to participate in the consultation, check out your own organisation's readiness. Here's the checklist:

- Make sure this initiative is supported at the highest level of the organisation.
- Have clear criteria for selecting those who should be a part of the consultation process.
- Ensure those whom you involve in your organisation are committed to the process.
- Ensure the organisation understands why it is involved in the consultation and what realistically it can expect to get out of it.
- Appoint a specific staff member to be the liaison person with the groups/individuals you consult.
- Consider disability awareness/equality training for staff who will be involved.

Some of the people you are targeting may already be familiar with and know about the services of your organisation. Others may not be so familiar and will need information before they can respond and make a contribution to the consultation process. It is helpful to make information on appropriate roles and responsibilities of relevant staff members available to participants. This information should be updated regularly.

2.3 Thinking it through

Preplanning is an essential part of any consultation process and its importance cannot be overestimated. Getting this part right means the rest of the process will be right.

People with disabilities should be canvassed before any proposed consultative process begins in order to ascertain their ideas and suggestions about how best the planned consultation should happen or be facilitated. This part of the process could occur by inviting people with disabilities to a preplanning meeting or through informal phone contact with the people you want to consult.

Involving people with disabilities in the preplanning stage is an essential component of effective consultation

2.4 Choosing which methods to use

How you choose to consult will depend on both the purpose and people you are targeting. Knowing the groups or communities you want to consult will assist in your decision on which consultation method to use. There is a range of methods to choose from such as:

- user comments and feedback mechanisms (e.g. written comments, surveys)
- questionnaires
- open public meetings
- using representative groups and organisations
- face-to-face interviews
- focus groups
- workshops
- customer panels
- submissions
- presentations
- teleconferences

Different purposes and different target groups will require different approaches and methods

Using only written means of consulting excludes some people with disabilities, as well as others who experience literacy difficulties. If using a survey or questionnaire you may wish to provide a telephone or freefone number so that individuals can contact you directly for assistance.

The chosen method/s will have implications for different groups within the community. For example:

- Face-to-face interviews or postal surveys may be the most suitable method to use if the group you are targeting are frequent and regular users of your service.
- Open public meetings may be the appropriate method to use if the group you are targeting are infrequent users of your service.
- Public meetings may prove a difficult process for those who are not comfortable in large groups or used to speaking in public. The needs of this group should be accommodated by another method of consultation, such as one-to-one interviews or small focus groups.
- Focus group discussions facilitated by an independent facilitator work well with marginalised groups with little experience of involvement in consultation processes.

An independent facilitator could be used in situations where you want to avoid any perception that your organisation is driving the agenda, which may arise when one of your own staff facilitates an event. Contact representative bodies listed in Appendix 1 for assistance in locating a suitable person.

2.5. Agreeing the ground rules

When planning your consultation it is necessary to develop appropriate terms of reference, that is, guiding statements or ground rules for participation. Identify from the beginning:

- ☐ What the participants in the process expect to get out of it.
- ☐ What is expected from all sides during the consultation process.
- ☐ What time commitments are required or expected of participants.
- ☐ What are the implications of the consultation for the stakeholders.
- ☐ When, where and at what times will meetings be held.
- ☐ Is the process and are the discussions confidential.
- ☐ How will the outcome(s) of the process be finalised.
- ☐ How will agreement be reached.
- ☐ How will information and the outcomes be conveyed back to participants.

Clarify the extent to which participants will be involved in implementing the outcome of the consultation process. This is the difference between 'being consulted' and 'being part of the decision making process'.

Bear in mind that at the end of the day you may not get consensus on the issues you have consulted about. There may be different and divergent views and expectations. You will have to make the final decision yourself about the outcomes from the consultation process but at the very least you will be doing so on the basis of a more informed understanding of the issues and how they impact on the lives of the people you have consulted with.

Having clarified your goals and prepared your own organisation, the next step is to prepare for the consultation meeting. There are some fundamental and important issues to consider in order to make the consultation accessible for people with disabilities, taking into account their individual and support needs.

3



Including people with disabilities

3. Including people with disabilities

3.1 Understanding disability

A person with a disability may refer to a person with a physical, mental health, intellectual, or sensory impairment.

The disability sector or community is a term used to describe collectively people with disabilities and their families, carers and advocates as well as those organisations providing services for people with disabilities.

When referring to people with disabilities it is important to be aware of using appropriate language. Sometimes it is easy to offend people with disability by using words such as 'handicapped' or 'wheelchair bound' or medical terms such as 'epileptic.'

The phrases 'people with disabilities' or 'disabled people' are more acceptable phrases to use. A disability etiquette checklist is provided in Appendix 2. Using positive language empowers people.

Disability awareness is about raising awareness of the issues or concerns of people with disabilities in relation to their economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights.

It is essential that organisations consulting with people with disabilities understand the issues facing people with disabilities. There are organisations which provide disability awareness/equality training. This promotes an understanding of disability by looking at historical and contemporary approaches to explaining and interpreting disability issues and the experience of disability. Contact representative bodies listed in Appendix 1 for further information on disability awareness/equality training.

3.2 Getting people with disabilities into the picture

Plan all consultation exercises to include people with disabilities.

Involving people with disabilities is best practice

Sometimes you may need to consult specifically with people with disabilities, depending on how much the subject of the consultation process impacts upon them as people with disabilities and as members of the community. Here are a few examples:

- **Direct Impact:** Consultation about a service which is targeted at people with disabilities, such as a personal assistance programme, should involve direct consultation with people with disabilities.
- **Parallel Impact:** Consultation about transport infrastructure plans for an area which will affect and impact on all the community, should include people with disabilities. The specific targeting of people with disabilities is necessary because people with disabilities are transport users too.
- **Indirect Impact:** Consultation about an environmental campaign which will impact on all members of the community should be an inclusive consultation process for everyone.

For a consultative process to work properly it must include people with different kinds of disabilities.

As part of the consultation process, you need to ensure that the people with disabilities you target reflect the diversity in the disability sector. You need to be mindful that some issues will be more relevant to people with particular disabilities.

3.3 Making contact

Setting up meetings and 'expecting' people with disabilities to come may not always work. You have to go out and meet with them first. This builds confidence and trust.

Some people with disabilities may already be involved in consultation processes as general service users, as parents and as members of the community. However, you need to be aware that some people with disabilities experience exclusion from everyday life experiences and may therefore be difficult to reach. Historically, people with disabilities have not been included in consultation processes, so it is necessary to employ a range of innovative methods to reach them such as:

- advertising (e.g. using newsletters of representative bodies)
- networking (e.g. through representative bodies)
- using a mailshot to contact local representative groups of people with disabilities
- using radio or disability-specific print media
- outreach work, (e.g. meeting in a person's home)
- using the internet
- contacting specialised services for people with disabilities.

Some people with disabilities may be members of disability specific organisations or representative bodies (see Appendix 1). These national organisations are formal networks that facilitate communication between members, co-ordinate campaigns, provide support and share information and, as such, may be able to assist in a consultation process.

3.4 Supporting people with disabilities to participate

SUPPORTS

To ensure the equal participation of people with disabilities it is imperative to ask people individually what their support requirements are. The fact that a person has a disability does not mean that help is automatically needed.

Some people with disabilities may need assistance with everyday activities, such as personal care, eating meals or taking notes. If this support is required usually the person's PA (personal assistant) will accompany the individual with a disability to the consultation.

Ask people with disabilities what their support needs are so that you can plan for this

Some people with disabilities may require support from an advocate or facilitator to assist them to participate in the consultation.

To support the meaningful participation of people with disabilities it may also be necessary to offer opportunities for skills development in a range of areas such as communication, committee work skills or leadership/assertiveness training.

ACCESS

The key to best practice in any consultation is to make it **ACCESSIBLE** for **ALL** participants. Access will mean different things for different groups of people with disabilities. For example:

- People who are deaf may require sign language interpretation to understand what is going on at the meeting.
- People who use hearing aids may require a loop system. A loop system facilitates hearing at large meetings. For contact details to hire a loop system, see page 38.
- People with learning disabilities may require easy-to-read (which are simplified) versions of documents to enable their comprehension of technical details. Easy-to-read versions of documents will aid people whose first language is not English, as well as those with literacy difficulties.
- People with mental health difficulties may benefit from pre-meeting contact to overcome their fears of being stigmatised within the gathering. Dealing with fears of stigmatisation will assist the inclusion of all marginalised groups in society (e.g. people from the Travelling community).
- People with mobility disabilities using a wheelchair will require a ramp or level access to a building, a lift instead of staircases, sufficient room to move inside the building and accessible toilet facilities.

Checking the meeting place for accessibility is an essential part of planning.

Don't take the venue management's word when they say it is accessible – check it out.

An access checklist (see Appendix 3) will help you to plan a consultation process that is accessible for all. It should be used to ascertain the suitability of your venue in terms of entries and exits, parking, toilet facilities and signage etc.

TRANSPORT

Depending on the situation and the type of consultation, offer to provide transport and/or travel expenses. Remember that the limited availability of accessible transport may restrict some people with disabilities in attending. If possible and appropriate, try to make the venue as close as possible to the groups you are meeting or near public transport.

TIMING

Time meetings to suit people with commitments, such as carers, and workers. Consideration should be given to holding the same meeting more than once if necessary. This should be in more than one location and at different times. Avoid early morning starts where possible because some people with disabilities require more time to carry out daily tasks and may also rely on carers.

As when consulting with groups, committees or representative organisations, ensure the consultation date is not set too close to any deadline you may have. Allow the people and organisations being consulted sufficient time to plan for, consult with and get feedback to their members, users and/or management committee before, during and after the consultative process.

COMMUNICATION

When communicating or providing information for people with disabilities, it is important that any information relevant to the consultation process is available in a range of accessible formats. This involves providing all documents in alternative formats where there is an identified need. So, ask people what they want. For instance, people who are visually impaired and who have a PC may prefer to receive all documentation by email prior to the meeting, and access it with their assistive technology. Others may ask for a large print version at the meeting (this usually means at least 18 point print – but ask what they would be most comfortable with). People who are blind may require braille copies of the material, but many will prefer to receive an audio cassette with the documentation read on to it. An easy-to-read version may be required for people with a learning disability.

BUDGET

Ensuring people with disabilities can participate fully in your consultation need not cost a lot but it may cost something. Make sure this is adequately represented in your consultation budget.

Many people with disabilities live on State benefits. To facilitate their participation, and that of other marginalised groups, you will need to consider how to reimburse them for out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of the consultation process. Your organisation should develop transparent procedures for dealing with this issue. (See Appendix 4 for sample policy.)

4



The practicalities –
Getting it right on the day



4. The practicalities – getting it right on the day

4.1 Facilitating a consultation meeting

On the day the consultation is taking place, there are some issues that need to be addressed so that all those who attend feel included. The following suggestions are simply an example of customer courtesy. You may like to use this as a checklist:

- ☐ Ideally, arrange the seating so that all participants can hear, lip-read (if appropriate) and see each other.
- ☐ Involve a variety of approaches, such as group work (using issues-based, geographically-defined or thematic groups), role play or drama. Breaking a large gathering into small groups for discussions will ensure maximum participation and contribution.
- ☐ Short sessions are preferable. Natural breaks should be given during consultation sessions. Deaf and hearing impaired participants need frequent breaks, as intense concentration on signing and following the interpreters' hand or lip movements can be very tiring.
- ☐ Use appropriate information and communication formats to facilitate participation. This is especially important to ensure that people can both understand and be understood.
- ☐ Allow for a 'warm-up' or introductory period to enable participants to fix in their mind on the purpose of the consultation. For example you could start with tea and coffee to allow for a general discussion before the formal meeting gets underway. Be careful not to let this session drag out.

4.2 Choosing a facilitator

Facilitators play an essential role in the consultation process and should be appropriately skilled to carry out this task.

Facilitators working with people with disabilities should have a good grasp of the issues facing people with disabilities and their participation needs. Facilitators of consultation exercises should undertake disability awareness/equality training in order to achieve an appropriate level of competence. Disability awareness/equality training is provided by a range of individual consultants and organisations. Contact the organisations representing people with disabilities for further information (see Appendix 1).

There are a number of strategies which facilitators should take into consideration when conducting consultations, not only with people with disabilities but also with the community as a whole. A checklist for facilitators is provided in Appendix 5.

4.3 Recording and documenting the consultation process

Ensure that the outcomes of all consultative meetings are recorded. Record accurately the input of participants, making sure that your interpretation of them is clear.

Thank people for their input and participation and let them know how they will be kept informed of the progress of the issues that are the subject of the consultation. This is vital. Equally important is the need to provide that information after the consultation to participants to let them know what is happening and how they can follow-up on it.

4.4 Follow-up

The ongoing participation and involvement of people with disabilities should be actively encouraged and supported to ensure that the outcomes or follow-up actions to any consultation exercise are inclusive. Such a process will help to eliminate the potential for tokenistic involvement.

Some things to remember at this stage are:

- ☐ Depending on what was agreed at the outset in the terms of reference, provide feedback to participants on what has been achieved, resolved and decided – do this regularly and accurately.
- ☐ Use appropriate information and communication formats to facilitate feedback to enable participants to identify how their input has been valued and taken on board.
- ☐ Allow adequate time for people to read and absorb any materials, including evaluation reports. To assist people with disabilities in absorbing information, it would be helpful if they had someone to contact to talk through their understanding of the information.
- ☐ Make sure there is sufficient time for people with disabilities to consult with and give feedback to those they represent (where this is applicable).
- ☐ If appropriate offer an opportunity to make further submissions in a variety of formats after the face-to-face consultation.
- ☐ Keep people up to date with any changes in your services.
- ☐ Include participants in any follow-up evaluations and identify the opportunities to maintain the active involvement of people with disabilities in the future planning of policy, development, delivery and reviews of services.

4.5 Evaluation

Be open to learning from your successes and mistakes. Evaluation is an important step in an effective consultation process and should not be missed. It provides valuable information for future use. The methods and techniques used for consultation can be evaluated by seeking feedback from participants and by self-reflection.

Always seek suggestions on how things can be improved. This can be done by asking participants to complete an open-ended questionnaire after the consultation and/or by providing a rating scale for participants. Remember this information-gathering exercise is a part of the consultation process.

Appendices

1. Useful Contacts

REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Representative Bodies are formal national organisations or networks that represent the interests of various groups of people such as people with disabilities and their families, service providers and carers. Representative organisations can provide assistance with support, information, networking, disability awareness training and other disability related issues.

1. Organisations Representing People With Disabilities and their Families

Centre for Independent Living (CIL)

Address: Carmichael House
North Brunswick St.
Dublin 7

Tel: 01 873 0455/873 0986
Fax: 01 873 0998
Email: cildub@iol.ie
Website: www.dublincil.org
Role: Campaigns for and promotes independent living for people with disabilities in order to attain inclusion.

Forum of People with Disabilities

Address: Flat 2
1st Floor, 21 Hill Street
Dublin 1

Tel: 01 878 6077
Fax: 01 878 6170
Email: inforum@indigo.ie
Website: www.inforum.ie
Role: Organisation of people with disabilities, promoting choice, participation and full consultation.

NAMHI (National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland)

Address: 5 Fitzwilliam Place
Dublin 2

Tel: 01 676 6035
Fax: 01 676 0517
Email: info@namhi.ie
Website: www.namhi.ie
Role: National voluntary association working to improve the welfare of Irish people with an intellectual disability.

People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd

Address: Richmond Square
Morningstar Ave.
Dublin 7

Tel: 01 872 1744

Fax: 01 872 1771

Email: info@pwdi.ie

Role: Representative structure through which people with disabilities can participate in and influence the decision making process on matters of concern to them. The underlying drive and philosophy informing PwDI is a commitment to ensuring the human, social, political and economic rights of people with disabilities.

Mental Health Ireland

Address: Mensana House
6 Adelaide Street
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin

Tel: 01 284 1166

Fax: 01 284 1736

Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Website: www.mentalhealthireland.ie

Role: Promotes positive mental health and support persons with a mental illness, their families and carers.

2. Organisations Representing Disability Service Providers**Disability Federation of Ireland**

Address: 2 Sandyford Office Park
Blackthorn Avenue
Dublin 18

Tel: 01 295 9344/5

Fax: 01 295 9346

Email: info@disability-federation.ie

Website: www.disability-federation.ie

Role: National support mechanism for voluntary organisations covering all areas of disability and disabling conditions. Provides information, training and support, organisation and management development, research and policy Development, advocacy and representation and networking.

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies

Address: Oranmore Business Park
Oranmore
Galway

Tel: 091 792316

Fax: 091 792317

Email: fedvol@indigo.ie

Website: www.fed-vol.com

Role: National umbrella organisation representing voluntary/non-statutory agencies providing services to people with intellectual disabilities.

3. Organisations Providing Assistance with Accessible Communication, Transport and Personal Support

National Council for the Blind in Ireland

Address: P V Doyle House
45 Whitworth Road
Drumcondra
Dublin 9
Tel: 01 830 7033
Fax: 01 830 7787
Email: ncbi@iol.ie
Website: www.ncbi.ie
Service: Braille, tactile and computer aids, adaptive technology.

Irish Deaf Society

The National Association of the Deaf
Address: 30 Blessington Street
Dublin 7
Minicom: 01 860 1910
Tel: 01 860 1878
Fax: 01 860 1960
Email: ids@indigo.ie
Website: www.irishdeafsociety.org
Service: The National representative organisation of the deaf which advocates for local development; provides information on deafness, and specialises in technology development for the deaf.

National Association for Deaf People

Address: 35 North Frederick Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 872 3800
Fax: 01 872 3816
Email: nad@iol.ie
Website: www.nadp.ie
Service: Deaftech service provides advice and specialised equipment, including loop system.

Irish Wheelchair Association

Address: Aras Cuchulain
Blackheath Drive
Clontarf, Dublin 3
Tel: 01 818 6400
Fax: 01 833 3873
Email: info@iwa.ie
Website: www.iwa.ie
Service: Advocating for equal rights for people with disabilities; provides transport fleet, driving assessment and tuition, personal assistance and home care attendants.

Arbour Hill Prison Braille Unit

Address: Arbour Hill
Dublin 7
Tel: 01 671 9333
Fax: 01 679 9518
Service: Braille.

Irish Sign Link

Address: 25 Clyde Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4
Tel/minicom: 01 608 0437
Fax: 01 668 5029
Email: signlink@indigo.ie
Service: National agency for the
provision of sign language
interpreters.

Bus Eireann

Disability Consultative Committee
Address: Broadstone
Dublin 7
Tel: 01 830 2222
Fax: 01 703 3421
Website: www.buseireann.ie

Iarnrod Eireann (Irish Rail)

Access and Liaison Officer
Tel: 01 703 2634
Fax: 01 703 2515
Email: melanie.mcdonagh@irishrail.ie
Website: www.iarnrodeireann.ie

Vantastic

Address: 196 Howth Road
Killester
Dublin 3
Tel: 01 833 0014
Fax: 01 833 0663
Email: info@vantastic.ie
Website: www.vantastic.ie
Service: Provides door-to-door accessible
transport service for people with
disabilities in Dublin.

4. Other Useful Contacts

Comhairle

Address: Hume House
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 605 9000
Fax: 01 605 9099
Email: comhairle@comhairle.ie
Website: www.comhairle.ie
Role: Provides information, advice
and advocacy on a broad
range of social services.

Equality Authority

Address: Clonmel Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 417 3333
Fax: 01 417 3366
Email: info@equality.ie
Website: www.equality.ie
Role: Works to promote equality
and to eliminate
discrimination in employment
and in the provision of goods
and services under nine
grounds, including disability.

National Disability Authority

Address: 25 Clyde Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4
Tel/Minicom: 01 608 0400
Fax: 01 660 9935
Email: library@nda.ie
Website: www.nda.ie
Role: Works to ensure equal status
of people with disabilities,
influence public policy and
legislation and ensure best
practice in service provision.

5. Other Useful Resources

- NDA Library, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Email: library@nda.ie
- ACCESS ISSUES
Building for Everyone. Second edition (to be published April 2002).
For further information and price, contact the National Disability Authority,
25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 Tel: 01 608 0400.
- INCLUSIVE PRACTICES
Welcoming Customers with Disabilities (1996). Available from Kerry Network of
People with Disabilities in Ireland Tel: 066 718 0611.
- **Involving Excluded People and their Organisations in Anti-Poverty and Social
Inclusion Policies** (2000). This is a resource pack available from the Combat
Poverty Agency Tel: 01 478 3355.
- **Support Pack on the Equality/Diversity Aspects of Quality Customer Service
for the Civil and Public Service.** Available from the Equality Authority
Tel: 01 417 3333.

2. Disability Etiquette Checklist

When writing or speaking about people with disabilities it is important to put the person first. Terms like 'blind' or 'deaf' are favoured by some people, while others prefer 'visually impaired' and 'hearing impaired'. Catch-all phrases such as 'the blind', 'the deaf' or 'the disabled', do not reflect the individuality, equality or dignity of people with disabilities. The following are some recommendations for use when describing, speaking or writing about people with disabilities:

Terms No Longer in Use

Preferred Terms:

The disabled

people with disabilities
disabled people

Wheelchair-bound,
confined to a wheelchair

persons who uses a wheelchair
wheelchair user

Cripple, spastic, victim

disabled person
person with a disability

The handicapped

disabled person
person with a disability

Mental handicap

learning disability

Mentally handicapped

learning disabled

Normal

non-disabled
able-bodied

Schizo, mad

person with a mental health disability

Suffers from (e.g. asthma)

has (e.g. asthma)

Source: Making Progress Together, 2000 – People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd.

3. Access Checklist

This checklist is designed to act as a self-assessment tool for your organisation to ensure that the physical environment is accessible for all. It is intended to be a general guide, rather than a template to be followed rigidly.

Approach to the Building

Yes No

Footpath surfaces and gradients approaching the building should:

have smooth surfaces

☐ ☐

be well lit

☐ ☐

be free of obstructions such as bollards

☐ ☐

have dished kerbs

☐ ☐

be flat or gently sloping

☐ ☐

Is there a level or ramped entrance?

☐ ☐

Are there parking bays near to the building entrance designated for people with disabilities?

☐ ☐

Is there a drop-off point near building entrance?

☐ ☐

Can a wheelchair user negotiate the route from the car park to the building with ease?

☐ ☐

Are there clear directional signs towards entrance?

☐ ☐

Interior

Is there clear signage within the building?

☐ ☐

Is there easy access to facilities such as meeting rooms, restaurants etc?

☐ ☐

Are corridors generously sized and well lit, preferably without changes in level?

☐ ☐

Do floors have non-slip finishes and/or short-pile carpet?

☐ ☐

Access Checklist

	Yes	No
Are all spaces roomy enough for everybody to use and move around in comfortably and free from obstruction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a good level of lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are escape routes usable by people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are circulation spaces, waiting areas, stairs and ramps free from obstruction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there visual and tactile warnings at the tops and bottoms of flights of steps and ramps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is seating provided at strategic points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there auditory and visual fire alarms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are doorways readily identifiable, with doors which are easy to open and adequate in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are switches and controls placed in locations which are accessible to all and are easy to operate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can people with mobility disabilities access any stage areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication		
Are signs legible by both sight and touch where appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are public telephones at a height suitable for all users?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do telephones have volume control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a hearing loop available in meeting rooms for people who use hearing aids? (see page 38 for details on hiring equipment).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Access Checklist

	Yes	No
Lifts		
Is there adequate space for independent access and use by a wheelchair user?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there audible signals to let a person know the lift doors are opening/closing and that the lift has arrived at a particular floor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets		
Are toilets sited near the rooms being used for the consultation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a toilet which can accommodate both wheelchair user and assistant if necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there sufficient room, free from obstructions, to allow a wheelchair user to transfer onto the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are washbasins, toilet paper holders and hand driers within easy reach and at appropriate height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are floors slip-resistant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are taps, doors and locks lever-operated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there grab rails in appropriate positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff Training and Awareness		
Are staff aware of how best to facilitate disabled users of the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source and further information: **Building for Everyone**. Second edition (to be published April 2002). Contact the National Disability Authority, 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 Tel 01 608 0400 for further information and price.

4. Sample Expenses Policy

DETAILS OF EXPENSES PAYABLE

The following are details of expenses that will be reimbursed to attendees/delegates who operate in a voluntary capacity.

Travel Rate:

- Public transport costs are payable in all cases. Where public transport is not accessible, mileage rates or taxi fares will be payable.
- Where no public transport exists, or where it may be more cost effective, mileage rates will be paid.

Miscellaneous Expenses:

- An attendance cost will be paid to unwaged delegates to help meet the cost of vouched childcare, elder care or other expenses.

Application forms for expenses will be available on the day.

5. Checklist for Facilitators

CHECKLIST FOR FACILITATORS

- ☐ Speak clearly and at a reasonable pace.
- ☐ Use clear, easy-to-understand terms without being patronising.
- ☐ Avoid jargon and technical words or phrases.
- ☐ Ensure that all key concepts, terms, acronyms and ideas are fully explained.
- ☐ Use practical examples to explain the points.
- ☐ Break down information into stages and statements, being brief and to the point.
- ☐ Before starting or changing a topic clearly indicate the theme or title.
- ☐ Try not to constantly move around (e.g. across or up and down the room) when you are talking.
- ☐ State your assumptions, e.g. if you are presuming that participants know the difference between the Constitution and legislation.
- ☐ Check in with people frequently to make sure there is no ambiguity of understanding.
- ☐ When you are speaking to notes, drawings, graphs, overheads or other such visuals, inform the group and explain the content clearly so as to include all participants, including any who may have a visual impairment.
- ☐ Present information in a clear order using clear, easy-to-follow headings.
- ☐ Don't speak when writing on flip charts as lip readers will miss what you say.
- ☐ Use a selection of visual aids to explain the points.

Checklist for Facilitators

- ☐ Regularly pause a video presentation so that the visual content can be explained to people who are blind and visually impaired.
- ☐ Ensure video material used is subtitled.
- ☐ The rule for the use of overheads is simple: think before you speak!
- ☐ Turn off electrical equipment (e.g. overhead projector) when not using it, in order to minimise background noise for people with a hearing impairment.
- ☐ If you are using overhead transparencies, use colour and contrast that enable easy access for readers with low vision e.g. black on white, yellow on black.
- ☐ Allow participants time to read what is written on the overhead or slide.
- ☐ When using slides or overheads in a darkened room leave a curtain open or a spotlight on the speaker (and sign language interpreter if appropriate) or turn up the lights before speaking again.
- ☐ Be prepared to listen and take participants seriously. Patience builds confidence and improves communication.
- ☐ Allow time for each person to make their contribution, and participate fully in the consultation.
- ☐ Allow time for participants with speech difficulties to express themselves. If some of the group have difficulty understanding or hearing what they have said, the facilitator or the person's PA (personal assistant), should be asked to repeat it for the benefit of the whole group.
- ☐ Do not pretend to understand what a person has said. If you need to ask them to repeat or clarify, do so. It can be helpful to paraphrase what you understand them to have said and then ask for any clarification.
- ☐ Do not jump in and speak for a participant.

Checklist for Facilitators

- ☐ When sessions are being interpreted into sign language, speak at a pace at which the interpreters can translate comfortably, and never position yourself between the interpreter and the participants.
- ☐ Ensure that the more able participants don't exclude others from the opportunity to contribute (something valuable could be lost if this is allowed to happen).
- ☐ Allow time for agreement or disagreement as the case may be.
- ☐ Ensure people who are attending are involved voluntarily and not under pressure to be there.
- ☐ Look out for unwillingness to express contrary views. Some participants may fear victimisation from family or service providers if they don't tow what is seen as 'the line'.
- ☐ Have a conflict management strategy. For instance, be ready to use something like a role reversal technique when conflict arises.
- ☐ Have a plentiful supply of water for people who may require it.
- ☐ Build in breaks in consultation with participants
- ☐ Acknowledge the varying experiences of people with similar and different disabilities and people without disabilities.
- ☐ Always finish on time and thank people for their involvement.

6. Feedback

The National Disability Authority seeks to promote best practice in all its activities. We would appreciate if you, the user of these guidelines, would take some time to tell us your experience of using the booklet by answering the questions below. Please photocopy.

1. How often have you used this booklet in the last year?

_____ times

2. Please could you briefly describe the situation in which the booklet was used?

3. What did you find most helpful about the booklet and its contents?

4. Please could you give us any suggestions you may have for improving future editions of the guidelines?

5. What other resources would be useful to include in this document?

6. Please could you also give the following information

Name _____
Organisation _____
Position _____
Date _____

THANK YOU

Please copy and return this page to:

National Disability Authority

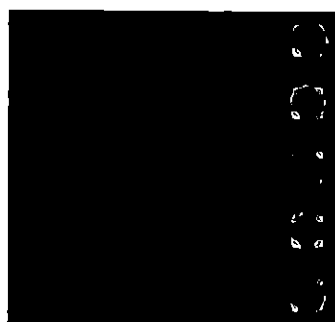
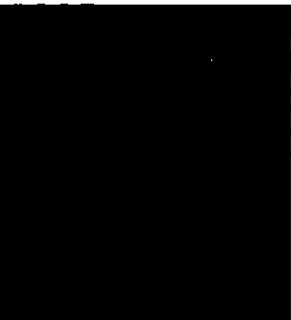
25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Tel/Minicom: 01 608 0400

Fax: 01 660 9935

Web: www.nda.ie

email: nda@nda.ie



National Disability Authority

25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4.

Tel/Minicom: 01 608 0400 Fax: 01 660 9935

Email: nda@nda.ie Web: www.nda.ie

2002