



INDEPENDENT LIVING  
MOVEMENT IRELAND  
FREEDOM · RIGHTS · EMPOWERMENT

[www.ilmi.ie](http://www.ilmi.ie)

(Image shows ILMI logo with Text: Independent Living Movement Ireland.  
Freedom, rights, empowerment and website address [www.ilmi.ie](http://www.ilmi.ie))

## **Independent Living Movement Ireland submission on the Housing Commissions Public Consultation on a Referendum on Housing in Ireland**

**September 2022**

Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) supports the call for a referendum on housing. In order for housing to be seen as a fundamental right for all citizens we feel it is important that all housing is accessible, culturally appropriate and incorporates genuine inclusion.

This can be achieved by making sure that in the development of housing policy going forward that each stage of the process is fully accessible, inclusive and reflects the full diversity of society.

### **Introduction to Independent Living Movement Ireland**

Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) is a campaigning, national Disabled Person's Organisation (DPO) that promotes the philosophy of independent living and seeks to build an inclusive society. ILMI works with disabled people on a cross-impairment basis. Central to the way we work is to ensure that policy and legislative discourse and decisions that impact on the lives of disabled people have to be directly influenced by those whose lives are directly affected.

Our philosophy can be summed up as: 'Nothing about us without us!' and 'Rights Not Charity'. Our vision is an Ireland where disabled persons have freedom, choice and control over

all aspects of their lives and can fully participate in an inclusive society as equals.

### **Social model of disability, language and representation**

The social model of disability looks at how society is structured and how it disables people. It is not based on a person's impairment, it is focussed on the barriers that exist in terms of attitudes, policy development, access or lack of supports that prevent people from participating in society as equals, with choice and control over their own lives. In this model it is society that disables people from achieving their hopes and dreams, not a person's impairment. The social model informs all aspects of the work of Independent Living Movement Ireland. Independent Living Movement Ireland recognises that language is a very powerful and evocative tool. Therefore, the language and terminology used in this submission has been carefully chosen to reflect the values of equality and empowerment which is at the core of this organisation. The term 'disabled people' has been used throughout the submission in accordance with the UPIAS classification of disability and impairment which has been developed by disabled people themselves (UPIAS 1976). Where disabled people are referred to in the submission this should be understood to include all disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, people experiencing emotional distress and physical and sensory impairments.

### **Context**

ILMI has a strong policy position on housing for disabled people. ILMI has consulted our members on various aspects of housing related issues. As a National Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) which is led by and for Disabled people housing is one of our strategic priorities.

ILMI has analysed the National housing strategy for people with a disability 2016 to 2020 (and the strategy rolled over to 2021) and has been involved with the advisory group in the

development of the New National Housing Strategy for Disabled people 2022 to 2027. In addition last year ILMI consulted its members in relation to article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which included housing and living independently. In July last year ILMI collaborated with Inclusion Ireland and launched a joint housing campaign entitled "Our Housing Rights: The Housing crisis Disabled people face". This involved both organisations consulting their members over the course of six consultation spaces made up of disabled people, supporters of disabled people, families and allies. The findings of these consultative spaces were published as a report last September. Please see our report "Our Housing Rights: The Housing crisis Disabled people face" [here](#)

ILMI led a project in conjunction with South Dublin county council called "[Making inclusion a reality](#)" which worked on a model of best practice in facilitating the establishment of disabled people to inform the development of housing policy through the housing disability steering groups (HDSGs). Please see our "Making an Inclusion a reality" report [here](#)

ILMI also developed the "ILMI Housing Network" which was a training programme to support disabled people to build their capacity on housing policy and to become active members of their local Housing Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs). ILMI has been successful in getting people of lived experience onto their HDSGs as ILMI representatives.

ILMI is rolling out this programme on an ongoing basis to support more representatives to join their HDSGs as per articles 4.3, general comment 7 and 29 B of the UNCRPD.

ILMI is in support of a referendum on the introduction of a constitutional amendment regarding housing.

In order to have a potential referendum on housing in Ireland ILMI recommends that:

- Disabled people and Disabled Persons Organisations are involved in all communications in progressing to the introduction of a constitutional amendment regarding housing.
- Information and communication needs to be accessible as per our obligation as a state under public sector duty. All citizens need access to accessible information about all the different ways they can access housing. This information should be in one centralised place and should be accessible to all who are accessing the information. Communication and information should be available in a variety of formats such as easy to read, alt text and accessible for screen reading software and other various access requirements which Disabled people and DPOs can assist with.
- Housing needs to include all accommodation types that is culturally appropriate and represents our intersectionality as citizens. Many people in society have different identities and this should be reflected in how accommodation is delivered for example for Disabled Travellers. Accommodation needs to be adequate and appropriate for all disabled people's needs
- Housing is not just about "the house", it is about building genuine inclusive communities. One which is linked to local amenities, access to education, employment and transport opportunities.
- Disabled people are represented in all conversations about housing. ILMI through its [Making inclusion a reality](#) and our ILMI housing Network have meaningful built Disabled people's capacity to participate effectively on decision making structures about our lives. These models could be reflected in other conversations in relation to accommodation.

- ILMI believes Disabled people should be involved more in “mainstream” policies such as “Housing for all”. Disabled people should not be segregated in policy making. There is a designated policy in relation to housing disabled people such as the National Housing Strategy for Disabled 2022 to 2027. This policy aims to house all disabled people but in reality is currently housing those who access social housing only. More needs to be done to support those disabled people trying to access private rented accommodation and the purchasing market.
- There is a need for Disability equality training. Disability equality training needs to be a fundamental requirement for all stakeholders involved in housing and independent living. This needs to be conducted by Disabled people or DPOs not disability service providers.
- There is a need for Disabled people to be paid for their time (including expenses). ILMI Members felt that disabled people have the expertise of lived experience and thus their experience, expertise and time should be valued if required to give of their time in relation to this matter. This will make sure disabled peoples inputs are valued and that “we are not just the token disabled person” around the table. In addition, in order for a disabled person to fulfil their role and contribute effectively in housing conversations, provision should be made to provide adequate support such as Personal Assistance Services (PAS), Irish Sign Language (ISL), taxis to and from the venue and other supports as outlined under the public sector duty.
- ILMI recommends that all meeting agendas and materials need to be circulated at least a week in advance of any meetings. This is for accessibility purposes but also allows all people involved the adequate time to review and contribute to the agenda effectively.