



Let's Talk About Disability Event Report

for

Meeting of 8th May 2019

Oylegate Community Centre, Oylegate

Wexford PPN - Report for Meeting dated 8th May 2019

Meeting Overview

Under a new initiative by Wexford Public Participation Network (PPN) more than forty people from across the county attended its "Let's talk about Disability" event in Oylegate Community Centre on Wednesday the 8th May. The event was designed to hear the experiences that people with disabilities face in their daily lives.

The new Oylegate Community Centre was chosen for its accessibility and a sign language and hearing loop were provided by Wexford PPN to ensure everyone was able to participate in the event.

Mr. Pat Rath, community and voluntary representative for Wexford PPN and MC on the night said, that there are up to 23,000 people in Co. Wexford with a disability and that all they want is the same rights as everyone else enjoys. They want and need to be involved at the planning stage for all services and decisions affecting them.

Pat went on to say, that most importantly, people with disabilities want the full implementation of the recently ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Guest speaker on the night former T.D and Minister of State, Sean Connick, outlined his work in drawing attention to the restrictions for wheelchairs users both locally and in Dáil Éireann. This resulted in the Chamber in Dáil Éireann becoming more accessible. He went on to note the personal challenges inaccessible environments such as pubs, churches, and other public buildings have created for him. He suggested that as part of their training, architects and others should spend some time in a wheelchair to see the challenges users face on a daily basis.

Caroline Horan, Access Officer, Wexford County Council, said that she was the point of contact for accessibility issues in the county. Anyone can contact her and she will record the complaint, have it examined and revert with a response.

Attendees engaged in a lively discussion on the barriers facing people with disabilities in Wexford with many identifying the need to have the voice of people with disabilities heard in the decision-making process. Barriers identified included lack of public transport, access to housing, employment and education among many other items.

Pat Rath assured the attendees that Wexford PPN will forward all comments and concerns made to the relevant sections of Wexford County Council and will follow up to ensure a response is received. He went to say that he hopes that this event is just the beginning of ensuring that the voice of people with disabilities will be heard in Wexford.

Wexford PPN - Report for Meeting dated 8th May 2019

Sean Connick complimented the Wexford PPN for organising this event, and highlighted that through community activism we can make changes and he looks forward to continuing improvements for people with disabilities.

Overarching Themes

Based on the issues and concerns raised the following overarching themes were apparent at the meeting:

- A need for awareness of the abilities of those with disability – not just defining through disability
- Issues with access to transport and other basic services means those with a disability cannot engage to the same degree as others
- Focus on ‘walk in my shoes’ or increased understanding of how much the little things are big things if you have a disability

Wexford PPN - Report for Meeting dated 8th May 2019

Specific Areas of Concern Identified and Committee, Agency or Area where they are to be raised

Below are the issues raised and the proposed Committee, Agency or Area where they should be addressed

Transportation & Water SPC

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
Proposal for an increase in the penalty for parking in a disability area/space and to strictly penalise those parking on pavements making them inaccessible - Need for more patrolling of both	PPN Reps on this Committee
Lack of public transport in rural areas for those with disability – suggestion that where this is the case taxi/hackney be allowed to take travel pass	PPN Reps on this Committee
More wheelchair taxis in Wexford	PPN Reps on this Committee

Sport Active Wexford

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
More sports options for those with Disability - Encourage existing facilities to offer services for those with disability e.g. swimming pools to offer classes for all ages with disability	PPN Reps on this Committee
Highlight to clubs and activities that they can include people with disabilities - Remove the fear for clubs – reassure, support - Highlight that no additional insurance required (perception) - Suggest to clubs– help make the connections	PPN Reps on this Committee

Joint Policing Committee

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
Need for emergency Sign Language service at Garda Stations (e.g. remote SLIS – Sign Language Interpretative Service in emergency)	PPN Reps on this Committee
Greater tenancy support for those living in areas with anti-social behaviour	PPN Reps on this Committee

Wexford PPN - Report for Meeting dated 8th May 2019

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
Looking at services available to support people with disabilities and policy to encourage and support employers in taking on those who have a disability Could be supported with initiatives such as Deaf Awareness Training for employers (see https://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/deaf-awareness-training-workplace/)	PPN Reps on this Committee
Policy of increasing awareness and understanding of ability of those with disability – not focusing on the disability (e.g. of success – London Calling documentary)	PPN Reps on this Committee

Housing, Community, & Environment SPC

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
Raise query and concern on policy regarding housing for people with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited adapted housing available - Sensory issues for those with disability esp deaf - access consideration to and from housing also - involvement and consultation pre-build - Accessible housing waiting lists for rental - Location considerations – not just the house but the area also 	PPN Reps on this Committee
Maintenance policy for housing should prioritise those with a disability	PPN Reps on this Committee
Policy of providing compost bins in all areas - pay by weight can be very costly if people are incontinent so offer alternatives	PPN Reps on this Committee

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
Raising the issue of the need for an emergency sign language service availability across a range of services – HSE, Garda etc	PPN Reps on this Committee
Providing Deaf Awareness training across the county and to employers	PPN Reps on this Committee
Focus on training initiatives for those with disabilities aged over 18	PPN Reps on this Committee
Need for accessible application forms from all agencies	PPN Reps on this Committee
Consider the additional costs incurred by those with disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guide dog insurance - Travel costs for transport e.g. to hospital appointments in centres of excellence locations e.g. Dublin/Cork 	PPN Reps on this Committee

Wexford PPN - Report for Meeting dated 8th May 2019

Access Office at Wexford County Council

Concern/Issue/Comment	Owner
Facilities for visual impaired to notify of schedules at transport e.g. speaking notification boards	Access Officer
Disability car park space size increased – currently not enough space for driver with disability. Also if minibus need two spaces.	Access Officer
Shelter in Oylegate for buses	Access Officer
Crossing at bus stop shop in Enniscorthy	Access Officer
Suggestion to look at the possibility of offering/developing an app in Wexford for translation to sign language and vice versa	Access Officer
Concern raised among deaf of ability to communicate with services and staff – answered at the meeting with provision of Remote SLIS service – however, perhaps need to promote that this is available	Access Officer
Concern raised over the footpath outside GAA ground near CWCW	Access Officer
No footpaths on Esmond Road from Pat Donolon to town	Access Officer
Gullies in footpath (e.g. main street Wexford) an issue for visually impaired when using guide dog rather than stick	Access Officer
Discussion on availability of information surrounding facilities and services for those with disability e.g. toilet facilities. Answered at the meeting with availability of Wheel Map App which identifies same. Access Officer also indicated availability on IMaps – need to highlight this facility	Access Officer
Call for an information officer for disability at Wexford County Council	Access Officer
Consideration of those with disability at river and forest walks – wheelchair accessibility and braille signing	Access Officer
Gorey main street does not have accessible crossings for those with visual impairment – consider increasing level of audible signals for more independent navigation of the town	Access Officer
Dun Mhuire (Wexford) Disabled space – has a bollard behind it	Access Officer
Crescent (Wexford) - can't get over medieval footpath	Access Officer
Redmond Square to Quay footpath – too difficult for wheelchair or rollator	Access Officer
Consider introducing Experiential Learning for those in key roles in Wexford CoCo such as designers, engineers etc to help in understanding the issues experienced	Access Officer
Ensure all application forms are accessible	Access Officer
Increasing support for Changing Places by Wexford County Council and other agencies and suggested locations are at hospital & swimming pool	Access Officer
Support a policy for including and consulting those with lived experience to improve design and provide suggestions	Access Officer
Highlight and promote need for emergency considerations for those with disability generally e.g. visual alarms	Access Officer

Other Considerations

– to be address Nationally to Department of Social Protection and Minister for Health

Concern/Issue/Comment
Instead of giving disability allowance to child of 16 maintain carers allowance and DPA with parent
Consider the additional costs incurred by those with disability and increase pensions/allowances to for same