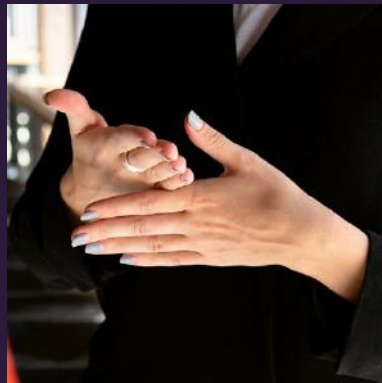


# What is a DPO?

A brief overview



**A DPO is a  
Disabled Persons  
Organisation.**

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## A brief overview

**A DPO is a Disabled Persons Organisation.**

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), DPOs must be prioritised in consultations and the monitoring and implementation of the Convention.

There are different terms that you might come across in relation to DPOs, but which mean the same thing.

The terms **DPO** and **DPRO** are the most commonly used in Ireland.

Some other terms include:

- \* **DPO** - Disabled Persons Organisation
- \* **DPRO** - Disabled Persons Representative Organisation
- \* **OPDs and Representative Organisations** - Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (Terms used in the UNCRPD)
- \* **DDPO - Deaf and Disabled Persons Organisation** (term used more commonly in the United Kingdom). [Click here to find out more.](#)



It is important to respect and value the diversity of language used.

It is equally important to distinguish DPOs from other disability groups and organisations so that they are prioritised.



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### What is **General Comment No.7** and why is it so important?

General Comment No.7 is important because it was developed by the United Nations Committee to explain:

- \* Article 4 (3) of the UNCRPD, which is about consultation, and
- \* Article 33 (3), which is about monitoring of the implementation of the UNCRPD.

After the UNCRPD was adopted, the United Nations Committee monitored its implementation and observed “an important gap between the goals and the spirit of articles 4(3) and 33(3).”

The Committee noted that this gap includes a lack of meaningful consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations (DPOs).



**General Comment No.7** explains that the only representative organisations regarding disability are DPOs.



**General Comment No.7** explains that in all matters relating to disability, the views, and opinions of DPOs should be prioritised.



### **General comment No.7 sets out that DPOs:**

- \* Are governed, led, and directed by disabled people.
- \* Have a clear majority of their membership made up by disabled people.
- \* Are established with the aim of collectively acting, expressing, promoting, pursuing and/ or defending the rights of disabled people.
- \* Are not disability service providers.
- \* Can be local, national, regional, or international
- \* Are not connected to a political party, public authority, or non-governmental organisation.

**Some types of DPOs include:**

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- \* DPOs for one or more types of impairment or diverse condition.
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- \* Coalition or umbrella groups.
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- \* Organisations of disabled women, children, ethnic minorities.
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- \* Self-Advocacy organisations, especially for people with intellectual disabilities
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- \* Organisations including relatives of people with intellectual disabilities, dementia, or children with disabilities.
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**Other DPO Rights under the UNCRPD**

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- \* States are required to prioritise the views of DPOs as the representative organisations of disabled people.
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- \* Article 4(3) of the UNCRPD requires States to consult and actively involve disabled persons through DPOs in all stages of consultation and decision-making processes to make sure that all policies, decisions, and legislation are disability proofed.
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- \* The UNCRPD makes it a pre-condition that engagement with DPOs takes place at all stages of decision making in relation to legislation, policies and programmes that affect disabled people.
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- \* Article 33(3) requires states to prioritise DPOs in the monitoring process of the UNCRPD in that State.
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- \* Article 4(3) is a “cross cutting” issue and applies to all other parts of the UNCRPD.
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## Why Join a DPO?

Up until now, public bodies have gone to organisations such as

disability service-providers or Organisations for Persons with Disabilities when wanting to know more about disability-proofing policy and legislation.

As the UNCRPD is implemented in Ireland, DPOs will be taking up that consultative space.

Collective voices are stronger than individual voices. They are more consistent and draw on a much wider range of expertise in lived or living experience.

By joining a DPO, you will strengthen your voice and direct it to securing Human Rights.

## Some challenges facing DPOs

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\* **A DPO register in Ireland.**

There is currently no register of DPOs in Ireland.

A register is important so that it sets our clear criteria for DPOs and means that they can be easily found by disabled people who may want to join them, and public bodies who need to consult them.

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\* **DPO core funding.**

DPOs currently do not have specific core funding in Ireland.

Core funding is needed so that DPOs can collectively advocate, build the capacity of their members, and undertake important human rights-based work.

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\* **Being prioritised, involved, and distinguished.**

DPOs must be prioritised in all matters that affect disabled people. DPOs must be actively involved and consulted in the development of policy and legislation that affect disabled people.

DPOs must be distinguished from service providers and Organisations for Persons with a Disability in these processes to ensure their collective voice is prioritised as the UNCRPD requires.

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## Consulting with a DPO - The Basics

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- \* Do your homework and check to ensure that the organisation you are contacting is a DPO.

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- \* Remember that acronyms vary, and language should be respected.

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- \* Become familiar with a DPO's work, some may have useful resources and information you can read before contacting them.

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- \* Create DPO only spaces where possible to meet, this is in line with the prioritisation of DPOs under the UNCRPD.

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- \* Contact DPOs bilaterally to meet and consult so that appropriate time and accommodations can be made.

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- \* Respect the capacity of a DPO and allow for reasonable notice when inviting a DPO to a meeting, consultation or to prepare a submission.

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- \* Cover costs of participation and travel where possible.

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- \* Clearly prioritising and distinguishing DPO voices in consultations ensures that public bodies and decision makers are meeting the minimum requirements under the UNCRPD. Other voices may be captured in broad, general, public consultations.

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- \* Support the work of DPOs and include their prioritisation in consultation and inclusion in policies within your organisation.

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- \* Prioritise and distinguish DPOs throughout the whole process. Provide feedback and transparency on how their consultation was used and prioritised.

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