



20th June 2024

**Statement from Minister of State for Disabilities Anne Rabbitte to the members of the
Disability Participation and Consultation Network**

As Minister of State for Disabilities at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all DPCN members for your work and dedication since the formation of the Network in 2020. The DPCN has been an important platform for disability stakeholders and for public bodies to engage in consultation activity and for capacity building for all parties. It has been an important step in Ireland's post-CRPD ratification landscape and has supported Ireland in working towards the progressive realisation of its obligations under the Convention by providing a platform to support engagement and input into policy making. I am very grateful for the time, the commitment, the energy and the insight that members gave to the process and to the shared goal of improving outcomes for disabled people in Ireland.

As you may be aware, funding for the operation of the DPCN was continued this year on an interim basis to 30th June 2024. This decision was made after engagement with Steering Group Members, to allow for consideration of the evaluation report on the operation of the DPCN, conducted by the National Disability Authority (NDA). That evaluation noted the strong contributions of members of the DPCN and the breadth of work carried out by the Network, whilst ultimately recommending that the existing DPCN model requires evolution as part of Ireland's journey to closer UNCRPD compliance.

I can confirm that grant funding of the DPCN will therefore not continue beyond 30th June 2024, however, funding will be available for successor structures based on an evolution of the DPCN model, to be co-created in the coming period and within the overall framework of the National Disability Strategy (NDS). Under the next NDS, successor structures to the DPCN will be developed in partnership with disability stakeholders and in a manner that is informed and framed by our UNCRPD obligations.

It is important that work is continued in the structures to come and my Department looks forward to the co-creation of purposive, effective, collaborative and meaningful partnership structures under the forthcoming National Disability Strategy. I remain conscious of the importance and requirement for collaboration and engagement with disabled persons as part of policy development and, in that regard, my Department will continue to engage and work with disabled people, their representative organisations, wider disability stakeholders, families, carers and supporters, in the powerful spirit of "nothing about us without us".

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