

# North West Forum of People with Disabilities

Northern Ireland · Charity number 103382

## Details

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**Known as** NWFOPWDS

**Status** Received

**Registered** 2016-01-29

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register](#)

## Contact

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**Address** Disability Action  
Gortfoyle House  
20 Gleneagles  
Londonderry  
Bt48 7tf  
BT48 7TF

**Phone** 07777656821

**Email** [tony@nwdisabilityforum.com](mailto:tony@nwdisabilityforum.com)

**Website** <http://nwdisabilityforum.org>

## Activities

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**Purposes:** The object of the Forum shall be the relief of people with a physical, sensory or mental impairment, with learning difficulties or hidden disability who are inhabitants of the Western area of Northern Ireland and its environs without distinction or political, religious or other opinions, by associating the statutory, voluntary and other organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to advance education and to ensure the full and equal participation of the said inhabitants in all walks of life; and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

**What the charity does:** The advancement of health or the saving of lives, The advancement of citizenship or community development, The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity, The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, Other charitable purposes

**How the charity works:** Advice/advocacy/information, Community development, Community transport, Cross-border/cross-community, Disability, Human rights/equality

**Who the charity helps:** Carers, Learning disabilities, Men, Mental health, Older people, Parents, Physical disabilities, Sensory disabilities, Sexual orientation, Tenants, Travellers, Women, Youth (14-25 year olds)

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees	
2025-04-05		£0	£0	£0	0

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Amber Huey		
Eileen Drumm		
Gerry Maguire		
Mr Brian Murray		
Mr Sean Murphy		
Mrs Patricia Bray Ba (Hons)		
Paul Gormley		
Paul Mccloskey		
Tommy		
Tony O'reilly		

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Accounts

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This is a draft PDF of the online Annual Monitoring Return and may not contain all questions if you have not reached the end.  
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## Introduction

This form applies to registered charities with financial periods beginning on or after 1 January 2020.

The annual monitoring return is divided into three sections (A, B and C).

Part A: All registered charities must complete this part. This is irrespective of gross annual income.

Part B: All registered charities with an income over £10,000 must complete this part of the annual monitoring return.

Part C: All registered charities with an income over £250,000 must complete this part of the annual monitoring return.

All charities must:

- Attach and submit the relevant charity accounts
- Attach and submit the Trustee Annual Report
- Attach and submit the Audit Report or Independent Examiners Report

Denotes information which will be published to the online register of charities

### Annual Return for charity:

Organisation name

North West Forum of People with Disabilities

Any other names you are known by

NWFOPWDS

Registered charity number

103382

### Confirm/update charity details: Contact details

Please check your charity information below is correct. If it is not, please update these details.

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## Charity contact

Title	Mrs
Personal names	Patricia
Family name (Surname)	Bray
Suffixes	BA (hons)
Preferred name	MRS PATRICIA BRAY BA (HONS)
Date of birth	26/03/1952
Address line 1	Disability Action
Address line 2	Gortfoyle House
Address line 3	20 Gleneagles
Address line 4	Londonderry
Address line 5	
Postcode	BT48 7TF
Telephone number	07777656821
Mobile number	

## Charity emails/website

Email for Charity Commission use	prbray20@gmail.com
Email for public display	tony@nwdisabilityforum.com
Charity website	<a href="http://nwdisabilityforum.org">http://nwdisabilityforum.org</a>

## Confirm/update charity details: Trustees

Please check your charity information below is correct. This section will update your charity's entry on the register. If your trustee details have changed you must use the add/delete or edit function to update your records. The details must include all current trustees and should be amended if this has changed from your financial year end date.

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## Trustees

EILEEN DRUMM	4 Floraville ENNISKILLEN County Fermanagh BT74 6AP	Title: MISS Personal Name: Eileen Family Name: Drumm Preferred Name: EILEEN DRUMM Suffix: Date of Birth: 30 May 1955 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org
MRS PATRICIA BRAY BA (HONS) Chairperson	20 Gleneagles LONDONDERRY BT48 7TF	Title: MRS Personal Name: Patricia Family Name: Bray Preferred Name: MRS PATRICIA BRAY BA (HONS) Suffix: BA (hons) Date of Birth: 26 Mar 1952 Telephone: 028 71 390191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org
PAUL GORMLEY	98 Knockwellan Park LONDONDERRY BT47 2JE	Title: MR Personal Name: Paul Family Name: Gormley Preferred Name: PAUL GORMLEY Suffix: Date of Birth: 4 Feb 1973 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org
MR SEAN MURPHY	55 Teeavin Road Dungiven BT47 45L	Title: MR Personal Name: Sean Family Name: Murphy Preferred Name: MR SEAN MURPHY Suffix: Date of Birth: 10 Jun 1953 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org

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TONY O'REILLY	89 Marianus Park LONDONDERRY BT48 OQT	Title: MR Personal Name: Tony Family Name: O'Reilly Preferred Name: TONY O'REILLY Suffix: BA (hons) PG Dip Date of Birth: 26 Jun 1968 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org
GERRY MAGUIRE	29 Drumanure Road Lisdoodan Derrygonnelly ENNISKILLEN County Fermanagh BT93 6BH	Title: MR Personal Name: Gerry Family Name: Maguire Preferred Name: GERRY MAGUIRE Suffix: MBE Date of Birth: 29 May 1959 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org
MR BRIAN MURRAY	10 Bramhall Crescent Waterside Derry BT47 5HE	Title: MR Personal Name: Brian Family Name: Murray Preferred Name: MR BRIAN MURRAY Suffix: Date of Birth: 28 Jun 1964 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@nwfopwd.org
PAUL MCCLOSKEY	10 Ard Na Smoll Dungiven LONDONDERRY BT47 4NF	Title: MR Personal Name: Paul Family Name: McCloskey Preferred Name: PAUL MCCLOSKEY Suffix: Date of Birth: 11 Dec 1969 Telephone: 028 71 309191 Email: info@newopwd.org
Amber Huey	18 Parklands Limavady Road Londonderry BT47 6YS	Title: Ms Personal Name: AMBER HUEY Family Name: Burns Preferred Name: Amber Huey Suffix: Bsc Nursing Studies and Master of E Date of Birth: 3 Feb 1955 Telephone: 028 71 343954 Email: amberhuey2016@gmail.com

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All details shown under 'Name'.

Number of trustees serving with the charity

9

What is the number of charity trustees (quorum) that must attend a meeting to make a legally valid decision? - You will usually find details of your charity's quorum in its governing document.

not specified

Number of trustees resident in Northern Ireland

Please state the number of trustees that normally reside in Northern Ireland.

9

## Confirm/update charity details: Area of benefit

Please check your charity information below is correct. If it is not, please update these details.

### Area of benefit

Organisation operates:

- Internationally
- In the UK
- In Northern Ireland
- In Ireland
- Specific local council areas

## Confirm details: Operation outside the UK & Ireland

### Areas of benefit outside the UK & Ireland

If your charity has one or more areas of benefit outside the UK & Ireland, please provide details of your spending in each area of benefit by country below.

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Countries	Spending

Total spend outside the UK and Ireland during the year

## Confirm/update charity details: Other

Please check your charity information below is correct. If it is not, please update these details.

### Charity classification

Which descriptions of charitable purpose do your organisation's purposes fit under?

- The advancement of education
- The advancement of health or the saving of lives
- The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage
- The prevention or relief of poverty
- The advancement of religion
- The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science
- The advancement of amateur sport
- The advancement of animal welfare

- The advancement of environmental protection or improvement
- The advancement of citizenship or community development
- The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity
- Other charitable purposes (including recreational/leisure facilities)

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## How (does your charity operate)?

- |                                                                           |                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation/housing                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant making                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advice/advocacy/information           | <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage/historical              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal welfare                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human rights/equality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical/health/sickness          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community development                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas aid/famine relief       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community enterprise                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgroup/after schools          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community transport                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Relief of poverty                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling/support                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious activities             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal justice                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Research/evaluation              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cross-border/cross-community          | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Search and rescue                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport/recreation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban development                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education/training                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer development            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment/sustainable development/conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare/benevolent               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth development                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General charitable purposes                      |                                                           |

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## Who (does your charity help)?

- |                                                                  |                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addictions (drug/solvent/alcohol abuse) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Older people            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult training                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas/developing countries      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers/refugees                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carers                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physical disabilities   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children (5-13 year olds)               | <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool (0-5 year olds)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community safety/crime prevention       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sensory disabilities    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic minorities                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ex-offenders and prisoners              | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific areas of deprivation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General public                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tenants                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/Aids                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Travellers              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed/low income              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interface communities                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Victim support                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language community                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary and community sector     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning disabilities        | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Men                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental health                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth (14-25 year olds) |

## Charity's main bank account/building society account

Sort code

Bank/building society name

Santander

Account/roll number

72836937

Account name

North West Forum of People with Disabilities, Business Account

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## Safeguarding

Does the charity work with children, young people and/or adults at risk of harm

NO - we DO NOT work with children, young people and/or adults at risk of harm

## Part A: Finance

### Financial period

Financial period start

06/04/2023

Financial period end

05/04/2024

Reporting year is first financial year

Previous financial period end

05/04/2023

Basis of financial statements

Please select the accounting basis on which the financial statements for this financial year were prepared.

Receipts and payments (cash) accounts

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## Income and expenditure

Enter below your charity's income and expenditure for the financial period shown above.

Current financial period

Income

Expenditure

£1,990

Previous financial period

Income

Expenditure

£250

Are the figures provided from consolidated accounts?

No

## Part A: Assets & Liabilities

Have you included a 'Statement of Assets and Liabilities' in the accounts you are submitting?

No

You have selected that you have no assets or liabilities you must still report in your accounts that your charity has no assets and liabilities.

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## Part A: Auditing

What person or organisation reviewed the charity accounts for the financial period that applies to this form?

Independent examination

Please provide details for the person or organisation below

Title

First name

Surname or organisation name

Address

Postcode

### Issues raised in your charity's audit/independent examiner's report

Note: If the independent examiner or auditor that reviewed your charity accounts highlighted specific concerns in their report you must let us know. This does not include issues raised by the auditor or independent examiner that were resolved by the charity trustees and were not then included in the report.

Did the auditor or independent examiner that reviewed your charity accounts raise any issues of concern in their report?

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## Part A: Data breach

Has your charity reported a data breach to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within the last 12 months?

No

## Part A: Charity details

Is your charity registered with another charity regulator?

No

## Declaration

You may be committing an offence if you give an answer you know to be untrue or misleading.

Public benefit guidance declaration

I confirm that all the trustees have complied with their duty under charity law to have regard to the Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Yes

Serious Incident Reporting

If a serious incident has occurred in your charity you should contact the Commission immediately.

I confirm that there are no serious incidents or other matters that trustees should have brought to the Commission's attention and have not done so already.

Yes

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#### Final declaration

I certify that the information entered in this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that the information shown in the 'Online Services' for this charity is complete and accurate.

I confirm that the information entered has been approved by the charity trustees and I am authorised to submit this information.



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## Charity accounts

All charities must attach and submit the charity accounts and reports as PDF.

- Charity accounts
- Trustee Annual Report
- Audit Report or Independent Examiners Report

Completed on behalf of all the charity trustees by:

Title	<input type="text" value="Mrs"/>
Name	<input type="text" value="Bridget Patricia Rose Bray"/>
Job role or capacity	<input type="text" value="trustee"/>
Telephone number	<input type="text" value="07777656821"/>
Email	<input type="text" value="prbray20@gmail.com"/>

On submission, your Annual Monitoring Return and attached files will be sent to the Charity Commission Northern Ireland for processing. Your charity contact will be emailed a copy of this form for your records.

Disclaimer: Please note the information and documentation you submit will automatically be published to the Commission's online public register. The Commission may not review the material submitted immediately and we have no control over the actions of anyone who obtains or uses data from the public register so you should ensure you only provide the information requested by the Commission.

By clicking 'submit' you are certifying that you have understood what the Commission has asked you to provide and that the trustees have individually verified the content of the material intended to be submitted and consented to its submission.

You must not attach bank statements to the documents submitted to the Commission.

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I confirm I have read   
and agree to the  
above.

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Accounts

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**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 5 April 2024**

	£	
<b>Money in Bank 4 April 2023</b>	<b>6324,36</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>	0.00	
<b>WITHDRAWALS</b>	1800.00	
<b>FEES</b>	<u>48.05</u>	
<b>Money in Bank 3 April 2024</b>	<b>4476.31</b>	
<b>CASH IN HAND FOR YEAR</b>	<b>1800.00</b>	
<b>PETTY CASH</b>	<b>190.00</b>	
	-----	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1990.00</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Website	485,00	
Postage, stationary, printing	65.00	
Accountancy	-	
Volunteer expenses	946.20	
Volunteer expenses UNCRPD Geneva	415.00	
Sundry expenses	34.04	
Depreciation	-	
	<u>(1945.24)</u>	
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>44.76</b>	Petty Cash
<b>End of 2024 total in bank</b>	<b>4476.31</b>	

I Edyth Dunlop have examined the accounts of the North West Forum of People with Disabilities, have found them to be an accurate reflection of the Froum's financial year 5 April 2023 to 5 April 2024.

*Edyth Dunlop*

Signed

*27/01/2025*

Date

Edyth Dunlop, MBE, NI Union of Supported Employment, Gortfoyle House, 104 Spencer Road, Waterside, Derry, BT47 6AG

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Annual report

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# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NORTH WEST FORUM OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HELD 27 JANUARY 2025 IN DISABILITY ACTION, GORTFOYLE HOUSE**

## **CHAIRPERSON ADDRESS**

I am delighted to welcome everyone today. The past year has been a very busy one for the Forum as we were all out and about again following our isolation during COVID. I know by the number of groups and organisations that we are part of and meetings etc attended that again we have worked continuously to achieve Human Rights and Equality for disabled people living in Northern Ireland and beyond. I know that the Forum has made its mark (including UNCRPD Geneva) and encouraged and attained changes for disabled people as one of the few Disabled People Led Organisations (DPLO) in NI.

It was with sadness but understanding that we accepted the resignation of Sean Murphy as Chairperson. However we were delighted that he has remained a founding and valued member of the Forum.

I was delighted and happily accepted the position of Chairperson. I hope to continue in this position for the allotted term.

We have kept up to date with all the committee meetings, networks and organisations that we work with and are represented on. We have worked tirelessly to provide information, advice and support to people with disabilities who come to us for much needed help and advice.

### **Summary of Activities Report Annual Report 2023/24**

UNCRPD Committee Investigation Welfare Reforms and Public Expenditure Cuts against Disabled People

People. Northwest Forum evidence to the UN Committee - Geneva visit August 2023 and March 2024

In 2016 the UK was investigated under the Optional Protocol of the UN CRPD following a formal request from Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) alleging that the welfare reforms proposed by the government were in violation of key human rights of disabled people.

Specifically focusing on:

- changes to disability benefits making it more difficult for disabled people to access Social Security protections, the introduction of the personal independence payment, reducing housing benefit, the closure of the independent living fund.
- Article 13: Access to Justice, Article 19: Independent Living, Article 27: Employment, Article 28: Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection.

Evidence gathered from disabled people's organisations across the UK including Northern Ireland according to the conclusions of the UN committee that the UK government was guilty of grave and systemic human rights violations against disabled people with regard to the above articles.

The committee agreed to do a follow-up review of this investigation which took place from August 2023 until March 2024. Disabled people's organisations including the Northwest Forum of People with Disabilities, met with the UN committee in Geneva to give evidence including case studies around the operation of work capability assessments and entitlement to the severe disability premium within Universal Credit; cut to discretionary support; higher threshold limit for access to direct payments and access to supported living assistance for disabled people in the community.

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published a report, after looking at the UK government's progress since 2016. This was when the same committee found that austerity and welfare policies were leading to grave and systematic violations of Disabled People's Human Rights. The UN Committee did not see any progress in addressing those violations, moreover, it documented evidence of retrogression.

### **Key quotes from the report**

- *"The Committee concludes that **no significant progress** has been made ... The Committee also notes that while some measures have been taken to address its recommendations ... there are also signs of regression"*
- *"The Committee found that the State party had **failed to take all appropriate measures to address grave and systematic violations** of the human rights of persons with disabilities".*

The Committee concluded the government did not consult with Disabled people and our organisations as it is obliged to (73) and uses a "**rhetoric that devalues disabled people and undermines their human dignity**" (74).

The committee substantive investigation focused on 3 articles:

### **Article 19: Right to live independently and be included in the community**

Disabled people are offered “**bare subsistence**” instead of “full enjoyment of the right to live independently and in the community” (77).

More and more disabled people are stuck in institutions with **no plans to end “disability-based detention and compulsory treatment”** (78-79).

### **Article 27: Right to work and employment**

The “Work Capability Assessment (WCA) process is complex and onerous” and the “assessors are inexperienced and/or unqualified” (82).

### **Article 28: Right to an adequate standard of living and social protection**

PIP is insufficient and its eligibility criteria are “contrary to the human rights model of disability” (76).

In 2023 **UK was in violation of international law in not providing social protection** which ensured an adequate standard of living, including for disabled people (86).

Evidence provided to the UN committee particularly client case studies over the year supported by the Northwest Forum was used with clients consent no personal data was presented to the UNCRPD Committee.

### **Supported Legal Challenge against the UK Government on Welfare Reforms**

The Northwest Forum alongside 5 other Disabled People’s Organisations(DPO’s) gave evidence to Public Law Project in support of Disabled activist Ellen Clifford, who initiated a successful legal challenge against the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) over proposed reforms to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). We agreed with her core argument that these measures could lead to “cataclysmic” cuts in out-of-work disability benefits. The High Court in London heard the case on 10 and 11 December 2024, focusing on the legitimacy of a consultation process conducted by the previous Conservative government.

The contested reforms, announced in the 2023 autumn budget, aim to tighten the WCA criteria, potentially resulting in over 400,000 Disabled people losing up to £416 per month by 2028-29. Many affected individuals could also face stringent new conditions and the risk of benefit sanctions.

Clifford contended that the consultation preceding these proposals was “rushed and disingenuous,” lacking sufficient information for meaningful engagement with disabled people and their representative organisations and failed to consider the substantial adverse impact of the proposed welfare cuts on disabled people. She

asserted that the primary motive behind the consultation was to reduce spending on disability benefits rather than genuinely support Disabled people into employment.

Supporting Clifford's challenge, the Public Law Project (PLP) argued that the DWP did not conduct necessary employment or disability impact assessments before launching the consultation. PLP lawyer Aoife O'Reilly stated that this oversight suggests the consultation was a "money-saving exercise, disingenuously presented to some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

The current Labour government has indicated plans to achieve similar level has not clarified whether it will implement the specific WCA cuts proposed by its predecessor. The outcome of Ms Clifford's legal challenge could significantly influence the direction of these policies and the future of disability benefits in the UK, the primary reason for the Northwest Forum supporting submission to the PLP.

The High Court has ruled that the DWP acted unlawfully by presenting these reforms as a way to support disabled people into work. It was not clear that the proposals also included "substantial" cuts to disability benefits and that cost savings was a "primary rationale." Mr Justice Calver found that the consultation was misleading rushed and unfair.

### **Cases supported**

The North West Forum undertook to support 17 cases this year, 11 involving Social Security benefits including 2 Work capability assessment interviews, pre-preparation and post preparation activities with clients. Both clients had successful outcomes. One application for Attendance Allowance successful outcome as a client one application for carers allowance successful outcome. Three PIP applications support with claim and attending both PIP assessment interviews. All other cases were taking via consultation on the phone and did not involve site visits.

We have also represented two young children with autism and ADHD at SEN reviews and providing support to the guardian/parent to obtain statements. We are also liaising with two colleges regarding the future educational arrangements for two pupils one unfairly treated and the other not receiving support from the college having received alleged bullying and intimidation from other pupils. We also undertook one housing case and one direct payments case. while we were able to provide financial support to direct payments for six months this relief was only temporary regulations changed and the direct payment for our client was withdrawn. We have been asked not to pursue the case. We were unable obtain a housing transfer for a client on the grounds of care and support required from their carer due to the fact the box room was deemed sufficient for the Carer's needs under the regulations.

## **Human Rights Awareness**

The Northwest Forum continues to advocate for the incorporation of international law into domestic law in Northern Ireland, not just the UNCRPD but other international treaties, including the international Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). We have met with MLA's from various political parties, including Sinn Fein, the Ulster Unionists and the Alliance Party regarding a private members bill on the incorporation of the UNCRPD into domestic law. This work remains ongoing and a public consultation is ongoing until the 11th of March 2025. We are supported in this effort by IMTAC, DPAC, and Prof Bronagh Byrne Queen's University Belfast. The Northwest Forum alongside other members of the DFC Disability Strategy Co-design Group has ultimate representation on the issue of incorporation to the Department for Communities assembly committee as well as outlining the status and case for human rights and equality reform for disabled people.

We continued to support the case for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland consistent with a Good Friday Agreement we continue to work with the Northern Human Rights Consortium to pursue this goal.

## **The Forum is represented on the following Committees and Fora:-**

- Disability Action – Board of Directors,
- Disability Action - Strategic Advisory Board
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Disability Housing Forum and Central Housing Forum
- Regional Health and Social Services Committee
- IMTAC
- Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC)
- Disabled People Coalition for NI
- NI Consortium on Human Rights (Chairperson)
- Equality Coalition
- North West Community Network
- NI Union of Supported Employment
- UNCRPD Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland – Disability Advisory Forum
- Disability Employment Network
- Disabled Peoples Coalition NI

We hope in this incoming year to meet again regularly and continue the work and representation that is required to ensure disabled people achieve their human rights in all aspects of their lives.

Thank each and every one of you for your continued support and work.

Tony O'Reilly

Chairperson

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Annual return

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# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NORTH WEST FORUM OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HELD 27 JANUARY 2025 IN DISABILITY ACTION, GORTFOYLE HOUSE**

## **CHAIRPERSON ADDRESS**

I am delighted to welcome everyone today. The past year has been a very busy one for the Forum as we were all out and about again following our isolation during COVID. I know by the number of groups and organisations that we are part of and meetings etc attended that again we have worked continuously to achieve Human Rights and Equality for disabled people living in Northern Ireland and beyond. I know that the Forum has made its mark (including UNCRPD Geneva) and encouraged and attained changes for disabled people as one of the few Disabled People Led Organisations (DPLO) in NI.

It was with sadness but understanding that we accepted the resignation of Sean Murphy as Chairperson. However we were delighted that he has remained a founding and valued member of the Forum.

I was delighted and happily accepted the position of Chairperson. I hope to continue in this position for the allotted term.

We have kept up to date with all the committee meetings, networks and organisations that we work with and are represented on. We have worked tirelessly to provide information, advice and support to people with disabilities who come to us for much needed help and advice.

### **Summary of Activities Report Annual Report 2023/24**

UNCRPD Committee Investigation Welfare Reforms and Public Expenditure Cuts against Disabled People

People. Northwest Forum evidence to the UN Committee - Geneva visit August 2023 and March 2024

In 2016 the UK was investigated under the Optional Protocol of the UN CRPD following a formal request from Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) alleging that the welfare reforms proposed by the government were in violation of key human rights of disabled people.

Specifically focusing on:

- changes to disability benefits making it more difficult for disabled people to access Social Security protections, the introduction of the personal independence payment, reducing housing benefit, the closure of the independent living fund.
- Article 13: Access to Justice, Article 19: Independent Living, Article 27: Employment, Article 28: Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection.

Evidence gathered from disabled people's organisations across the UK including Northern Ireland according to the conclusions of the UN committee that the UK government was guilty of grave and systemic human rights violations against disabled people with regard to the above articles.

The committee agreed to do a follow-up review of this investigation which took place from August 2023 until March 2024. Disabled people's organisations including the Northwest Forum of People with Disabilities, met with the UN committee in Geneva to give evidence including case studies around the operation of work capability assessments and entitlement to the severe disability premium within Universal Credit; cut to discretionary support; higher threshold limit for access to direct payments and access to supported living assistance for disabled people in the community.

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published a report, after looking at the UK government's progress since 2016. This was when the same committee found that austerity and welfare policies were leading to grave and systematic violations of Disabled People's Human Rights. The UN Committee did not see any progress in addressing those violations, moreover, it documented evidence of retrogression.

### Key quotes from the report

- *"The Committee concludes that **no significant progress** has been made ... The Committee also notes that while some measures have been taken to address its recommendations ... there are also signs of regression"*
- *"The Committee found that the State party had **failed to take all appropriate measures to address grave and systematic violations** of the human rights of persons with disabilities".*

The Committee concluded the government did not consult with Disabled people and our organisations as it is obliged to (73) and uses a "**rhetoric that devalues disabled people and undermines their human dignity**" (74).

The committee substantive investigation focused on 3 articles:

### **Article 19: Right to live independently and be included in the community**

Disabled people are offered “**bare subsistence**” instead of “full enjoyment of the right to live independently and in the community” (77).

More and more disabled people are stuck in institutions with **no plans to end “disability-based detention and compulsory treatment”** (78-79).

### **Article 27: Right to work and employment**

The “Work Capability Assessment (WCA) process is complex and onerous” and the “assessors are inexperienced and/or unqualified” (82).

### **Article 28: Right to an adequate standard of living and social protection**

PIP is insufficient and its eligibility criteria are “contrary to the human rights model of disability” (76).

In 2023 **UK was in violation of international law in not providing social protection** which ensured an adequate standard of living, including for disabled people (86).

Evidence provided to the UN committee particularly client case studies over the year supported by the Northwest Forum was used with clients consent no personal data was presented to the UNCRPD Committee.

### **Supported Legal Challenge against the UK Government on Welfare Reforms**

The Northwest Forum alongside 5 other Disabled People’s Organisations(DPO’s) gave evidence to Public Law Project in support of Disabled activist Ellen Clifford, who initiated a successful legal challenge against the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) over proposed reforms to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). We agreed with her core argument that these measures could lead to “cataclysmic” cuts in out-of-work disability benefits. The High Court in London heard the case on 10 and 11 December 2024, focusing on the legitimacy of a consultation process conducted by the previous Conservative government.

The contested reforms, announced in the 2023 autumn budget, aim to tighten the WCA criteria, potentially resulting in over 400,000 Disabled people losing up to £416 per month by 2028-29. Many affected individuals could also face stringent new conditions and the risk of benefit sanctions.

Clifford contended that the consultation preceding these proposals was “rushed and disingenuous,” lacking sufficient information for meaningful engagement with disabled people and their representative organisations and failed to consider the substantial adverse impact of the proposed welfare cuts on disabled people. She

asserted that the primary motive behind the consultation was to reduce spending on disability benefits rather than genuinely support Disabled people into employment.

Supporting Clifford's challenge, the Public Law Project (PLP) argued that the DWP did not conduct necessary employment or disability impact assessments before launching the consultation. PLP lawyer Aoife O'Reilly stated that this oversight suggests the consultation was a "money-saving exercise, disingenuously presented to some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

The current Labour government has indicated plans to achieve similar level has not clarified whether it will implement the specific WCA cuts proposed by its predecessor. The outcome of Ms Clifford's legal challenge could significantly influence the direction of these policies and the future of disability benefits in the UK, the primary reason for the Northwest Forum supporting submission to the PLP.

The High Court has ruled that the DWP acted unlawfully by presenting these reforms as a way to support disabled people into work. It was not clear that the proposals also included "substantial" cuts to disability benefits and that cost savings was a "primary rationale." Mr Justice Calver found that the consultation was misleading rushed and unfair.

### **Cases supported**

The North West Forum undertook to support 17 cases this year, 11 involving Social Security benefits including 2 Work capability assessment interviews, pre-preparation and post preparation activities with clients. Both clients had successful outcomes. One application for Attendance Allowance successful outcome as a client one application for carers allowance successful outcome. Three PIP applications support with claim and attending both PIP assessment interviews. All other cases were taking via consultation on the phone and did not involve site visits.

We have also represented two young children with autism and ADHD at SEN reviews and providing support to the guardian/parent to obtain statements. We are also liaising with two colleges regarding the future educational arrangements for two pupils one unfairly treated and the other not receiving support from the college having received alleged bullying and intimidation from other pupils. We also undertook one housing case and one direct payments case. while we were able to provide financial support to direct payments for six months this relief was only temporary regulations changed and the direct payment for our client was withdrawn. We have been asked not to pursue the case. We were unable obtain a housing transfer for a client on the grounds of care and support required from their carer due to the fact the box room was deemed sufficient for the Carer's needs under the regulations.

## **Human Rights Awareness**

The Northwest Forum continues to advocate for the incorporation of international law into domestic law in Northern Ireland, not just the UNCRPD but other international treaties, including the international Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). We have met with MLA's from various political parties, including Sinn Fein, the Ulster Unionists and the Alliance Party regarding a private members bill on the incorporation of the UNCRPD into domestic law. This work remains ongoing and a public consultation is ongoing until the 11th of March 2025. We are supported in this effort by IMTAC, DPAC, and Prof Bronagh Byrne Queen's University Belfast. The Northwest Forum alongside other members of the DFC Disability Strategy Co-design Group has ultimate representation on the issue of incorporation to the Department for Communities assembly committee as well as outlining the status and case for human rights and equality reform for disabled people.

We continued to support the case for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland consistent with a Good Friday Agreement we continue to work with the Northern Human Rights Consortium to pursue this goal.

### **The Forum is represented on the following Committees and Fora:-**

- Disability Action – Board of Directors,
- Disability Action - Strategic Advisory Board
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Disability Housing Forum and Central Housing Forum
- Regional Health and Social Services Committee
- IMTAC
- Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC)
- Disabled People Coalition for NI
- NI Consortium on Human Rights (Chairperson)
- Equality Coalition
- North West Community Network
- NI Union of Supported Employment
- UNCRPD Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland – Disability Advisory Forum
- Disability Employment Network
- Disabled Peoples Coalition NI

We hope in this incoming year to meet again regularly and continue the work and representation that is required to ensure disabled people achieve their human rights in all aspects of their lives.

Thank each and every one of you for your continued support and work.

Tony O'Reilly

Chairperson

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Accounts

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**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 5 April 2023**

	£
<b>Money in Bank 4 April 2022</b>	<b>6574.36</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Website	190.00
Postage, stationary, printing	-
Equipment	-
Accountancy	
-	
Volunteer expenses	60.00
Bank charges	-
Sundry expenses	-
Depreciation	<u>-</u>
	(250.00)
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>6324.36</b>
End of 2023 total in bank	6324.36

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Annual report

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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NORTH WEST FORUM OF  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HELD 12 JANUARY 2023 IN  
DISABILITY ACTION, GORTFOYLE HOUSE**

**CHAIRPERSON ADDRESS**

I am delighted to welcome everyone today both in person and online. This year 2023 was the year we started to emerge from COVID. As a group of people with disabilities we have been further marginalized by COVID however given the commitment of our Committee and by the support of technology (Zoom) we have worked continuously since 2020 to continue to achieve Human Rights and Equality for disabled people living in Northern Ireland.

We have kept up to date with all the committees meetings, networks and organisations that we work with and are represented on. A special thanks to Tony who has worked tirelessly to provide information, advice and support to people with disabilities who come to us for much needed help and advice.

The Forum is represented on the following Committees and Fora:-

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Disability Action - Strategic Advisory Board

Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Disability Housing Forum and  
Central Housing Forum

Regional Health and Social Services Committee

IMTAC

Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC)

Disabled People Coalition for NI

NI Consortium on Human Rights (Chairperson)

Equality Coalition

North West Community Network

NI Union of Supported Employment

UNCRPD Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland – Disability  
Advisory Forum

Disability Employment Network

Disabled Peoples Coalition NI

We hope in this incoming year to meet again regularly and continue the work and representation that is required to ensure disabled peoples achieve their human rights in all aspects of their lives.

Thank each and every one of you for your continued support and work.

Patricia Bray

Chairperson

**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 103382

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# Annual return

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**North West Forum of People with Disabilities**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 5 April 2023**

	£
<b>Money in Bank 4 April 2022</b>	<b>6574.36</b>
 <b>INCOME</b>	 <b>0.00</b>
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Website	190.00
Postage, stationary, printing	-
Equipment	-
Accountancy	-
Volunteer expenses	60.00
Bank charges	-
Sundry expenses	-
Depreciation	-
	(250.00)
 <b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	 <b>6324.36</b>
 End of 2023 total in bank	 6324.36

I Edyth Dunlop having examined the accounts of the North West Forum of People with Disabilities, have found them to be an accurate reflection of the Forum's financial year 5 April 2022 to 6 April 2023.

Signed	
Date	12 Jan 2024

Edyth Dunlop, MBE, Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment, Gortfoyle House, 104 Spencer Road, Waterside, Derry~Londonderry, BT47 6AG