

**Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Deaf and Disabled People to tell the United Nations how the UK Government has treated them**

A Call for Evidence[[1]](#endnote-1) has today been issued by an England-wide partnership of Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisations (DPPOs).[[2]](#endnote-2) They are asking what information Deaf and Disabled People think should be included in the next report for the United Nations Disability Committee. The Committee will be looking at how far the UK Government has followed its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Svetlana Kotova, Director of Campaigns and Justice at the DDPO Inclusion London said:

“Hearing from Deaf and Disabled people from a range of backgrounds and different experiences is an important part of the Committee’s examination process. The Committee encourages organisations led and controlled by Deaf and Disabled people ourselves to lead on compiling a shadow report – one that presents the views of Deaf and Disabled people to sit alongside what the Government will tell them in their report they have to send in. Too often non-disabled people are talking on our behalf - whether it’s non-user led charities giving comments to the media or people being denied choice and control in their own lives. This is an internationally important exercise and we should lead it.”

The project to develop the shadow report will involve a network of DDPOs across England delivering over 20 events aimed at building an understanding of the Convention and hosting workshops for Deaf and Disabled people to discuss which issues are the priority for inclusion in the report.[[4]](#endnote-4) There will also be targeted work to capture views among seldom heard groups and the call for evidence which is open to individuals as well as organisations to respond to.

Kotova explained: “The project has been designed to be inclusive of Deaf and Disabled people across different impairment groups and equalities strands. We have adopted an intersectional approach. Disabled refugees, sex workers, and members of the Gypsy and Traveller Community are just a few of the groups we are actively taking steps to include.”

Michelle Daley, Director of the Alliance for Education and representative of the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance said:

“It is important that we hear from Disabled children, young people and adults from a range of backgrounds about their different experiences within the education system. Education plays an important part in helping to tackle inequality, shapes and also influences our lives. We need the Committee to better understand the overlapping and compounding experiences of Disabled people within the UK education system and also impact on other areas of our lives.

Although some funding has been obtained for the project, many of the DDPOs involved are contributing their own resources.

Ellen Clifford who will be the lead author for the report said:

“At a time when DDPOs are still over-stretched from the pandemic and have enough to contend with trying to guarantee their own survival, the fact that so many organisations unhesitatingly offered time and resources to get involved shows how important the Convention is to Deaf and Disabled people. We’re hoping that the end result will be a report that Deaf and Disabled people across the country feel genuine ownership over. It’s a steep task, given that the world limit for the report is just 5350 words and we know people will have a lot to say, but collectively Deaf and Disabled people can do great things when come together in a spirit of unity.”

There is close collaboration not only between DDPOs in England but also with DDPOS leading on shadow reports in the devolved administrations. Disability Wales, Inclusion Scotland and Disability Action (Northern Ireland) have funding to deliver similar work for their respective nations.[[5]](#endnote-5)

Involvement from non-disabled allies is also welcome. The England Project Steering Group will be making use of expertise from the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the University of York and Dr Kate Summers, Associate Professor of Methodology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Written submissions have been pledged by a number of national disability charities and human rights organisations before the call for evidence has even opened.

The Call for Evidence will be launched at an online event on Wednesday 20 October 6 – 7.30pm. Speakers will include Tara Flood, a disabled campaigner who was involved in work between international DDPOs drafting the wording of the Convention that was adopted in 2006. The event will also hear from Catherinne Puentes Pedreros who has worked for the UN Disability Committee Secretariat for the past nine years, and Gertrude Fefuome who is a serving member of the Committee as well as President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, and a Board Member of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations.[[6]](#endnote-6)

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**Notes for Editors**

1. The Call for evidence could be found here: <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/uncrdp/call-for-evidence/call-for-evidence-now-open/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The partnership is led by [Inclusion London](mailto:https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/) on behalf of the [Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance](mailto:https://www.rofa.org.uk/), a network of grassroots Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisations across England. Other partners include the DPO Forum, Disability Rights UK Our Voices, and Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. [The Convention in the Rights of Disabled People was adopted on 13 December 2006.](mailto:https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Events are being held by the Alliance for Inclusive Education, Disability Resource Centre Birmingham, Disability Rights UK, Disability Sheffield, DPAC, Equal Lives Norfolk, Equality Together Bradford, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Inclusion London, Independent Living East Sussex, People First (Self Advocacy), West of England centre for Independent Living, York Disability Rights Forum/York Human Rights City Network. For the full schedule see: <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/training-and-support/powerup/view/un-disability-treaty-online-event/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance, Disability Wales, Inclusion Scotland and Disability Action (Northern Ireland) have been working together as the UK DDPO CRDP Monitoring Coalition since 2017. In 2018 and 2019 they produced shadow reports for the UN Disability Committee who has been monitoring the UK on an annual basis since it found evidence of grave and systematic violations of disabled people’s rights due to welfare reform and austerity in 2016.

   For the 2018 report see: <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/facts-and-information/equality-and-human-rights/uk-ddpos-publish-latest-report-to-the-un/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. For more information about the launch event see: https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/training-and-support/powerup/view/un-disability-treaty-online-event/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)