



Meath Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO)

Constitution 2025

Our Aim

Meath DPO aims to make our county fully inclusive to Disabled People. We will do this through jointly creating fully accountable and responsive services, structures and systems that will ensure that Disabled People live full and barrier free lives.

Our Values

Meath DPO has four core values. We use these to communicate who we are and how we conduct our business. Meath DPO will make sure that our values are explicit. This means that people and groups that we will interact with will know what to expect from us and will also know what we expect from them.

These values are:

1. Human Rights and Social Justice

Meath DPO takes a human rights approach to what we do and how we do it. This means that we deeply value diversity and inclusion. Meath DPO believes that we have rights simply because we exist as human beings. Our goal is to see our human rights fulfilled and to be fully and actively included in Meath society. We believe that this means fair and equitable access to opportunities and resources in society, and that all barriers to full participation must be removed. This also means that, where necessary, Disabled People must be provided with the necessary support they need to live full lives. We work towards having our rights meaningfully fulfilled on an equal basis to others.

2. Activism and Empowerment

As a result of Meath DPO's emphasis on inclusion, we believe that Disabled Peoples voices must be heard, and this must influence local policy, and practice. This means working in conjunction with Meath Co. Council, our HSE, the Public Participation Network, Meath Sports Partnership and other civil society groups that will support us to work towards barrier free living. We bring our individual and collective experiences to the table, they inform what we do and how we do it. Through collective activism we work as advocates for ourselves and for each other.

3. Agency, Autonomy, and Choice

Meath DPO as a peer led, working collective will seek to ensure Disabled People live self-determined lives in its county. This is about having choice, having control, having freedom, and having the confidence to want this for all Disabled People in Meath. We want Disabled People who use disability services to expect quality support in the form of Personal Assistance (PA). This is in line with the philosophy of independent living as understood by the Disabled Peoples Movement.

4. Equal and Equitable Access

The social model of disability is at the core of everything that Meath DPO strives to achieve. We understand that Disabled People are disabled by the many man-made structures and systems that prevent us from accessing the same services and amenities as others do. We work to ensure that Disabled People have equal access to the built environment, to transportation, to information, on an equal basis with others. Meath DPO works to ensure equal and fair access for Disabled People in Meath. Equity is about having access to assistive and adaptive devices to enhance our independence. It is important to know that these supports do not replace paid human support.

Our Working Culture

Our values underpin the ways in which we work as a collective. We place an emphasis on decency, mutual respect, and transparency.

Decency and Respect

Meath DPO will treat its members and any individual or group with whom it connects, with decency and respect. In turn, we will expect that those same individuals and groups treat Meath DPO with decency and respect. This includes not making assumptions about any individual's lived experience. Meath DPO is a non-judgemental space for its members and for those it connects with.

However, we also recognise that as individuals and groups we each have our own set of values, and we respect each other's right to hold those values even if we disagree with them. At the same time, we will call each other and other groups out where there is language or treatment that is lacking in respect or which promotes inequality.

Transparency

Meath DPO will work in a transparent way and will expect individuals and groups that it links up with to be equally transparent. We will not accept gas-lighting in any form and will not accept being fobbed off when raising issues and when working for change.

We recognise that speaking up and out about the things that matter to us is not the same as being heard, or being taken seriously. So, we will work as a group to make sure that the voices of Disabled People in Meath will have a seat at the decision making tables, influencing systems and structures that will enhance our lives, at a county and state level.

Our Structure, Membership and Meetings

1. Group Name

The name of the group is Meath Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO), or Meath DPO for short.

2. Membership of Meath DPO

- Any Disabled Person in Meath, over 18 years of age, can be a member of Meath DPO.
- Members of Meath DPO will work in a way that is based on the social model of disability and in a way that is in line with the values and aims of the group, and in line with this constitution.
- Members who do not uphold or act in line with the values and aims of the group will be removed from its membership immediately.

3. Meath DPO Management Committee

- Meath DPO will have a management committee of nine members including elected officers; Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, and Public Relations Officer (PRO). Other roles can be added if needed and if agreed by the members. Election to the above roles will happen at the AGM. Deputies for these roles may also be elected.

Note that you do not have to be part of the management committee to be a member of Meath DPO. The committee will always keep DPO members up to date on its work.

It is recommended that all committee members must complete Disability Equality Training (DET). This must be delivered by an experienced Disabled Person.

- No one can remain in the office of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, for longer than 4 years.
- If an officer resigns or no longer lives in Meath, the committee can co-opt another member to fill that post until the next AGM.
- If an officer or committee member misses three meetings in a row without a valid reason they will be considered to have resigned.

4. How We Make Decisions

Meath DPO will always try to reach decisions through consensus.

Managing the Work of the Meath DPO

- The elected committee will manage the work of Meath DPO in line with the groups aim, goals and values.
- The committee can nominate representatives to carry out work on behalf of the group.
- The committee is always accountable to its members.
- The committee will identify any support its members need to carry out their duties as officers.

- Meath DPO is an independent group, but the staff of the Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) will provide the committee with relevant training and support that will help the committee and members to achieve the groups vision, aim, and objectives.

5. Financial Management of Meath DPO

- Meath DPO will elect a Treasurer.
- Meath DPO makes its own decision on applying for funding, and spending that funding in line with its aim, goals, and values of the group.
- The treasurer will be supported by the committee and by ILMI when applying for any funds available or needed to meet the groups aim.
- Meath DPO operates under the ILMI legal and financial framework but generally has independent control on how its finances are spent and where payments are directed.
- The committee and treasurer will be supported by ILMI to meet any legal and compliance requirements in its financial management.
- The treasurer will link directly with ILMI to report on accounts, and will also report on accounts directly to the DPO membership.

6. Meath DPO Committee Meetings, Annual General Meeting (AGM), and an Extrordinary General Meetings (EGM)

- The Secretary will let people know when the committee or full membership meetings are scheduled.
- For a committee meeting to make decisions there must be 4 management committee members present to make decisions. At least one of those people should be one of the DPO officers.
- The Secretary will take the minutes of the meeting and will send them around afterwards. ILMI will support the Secretary to do this, and the Secretary can contact them before and after meetings for that support.
- **An AGM** will happen each year. Each AGM will be held within 11-15 months of the previous one. Members will be told about the meeting at least 28 days beforehand. Any DPO member can ask for something to be discussed at the AGM. They should let the secretary know about it 14 days before the meeting date. The Officers (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson etc) can be nominated before or at the meeting, and if the person nominated agrees to go forward then an election vote happens at the AGM. A person must be an active DPO member for six months to be nominated.
- An extraordinary General Meeting - **EGM** for short can be requested by 3 DPO members. EGM are usually for unexpected important issues that come up and need to be discussed by more than the management committee. When an extraordinary general meeting is asked for, the Secretary will arrange for a place and time and will give members 14 days' notice and say why the meeting is being held. An EGM can only discuss the specific issue, and no other issues.

7. Voting at Meetings

- Every DPO member can vote at AGMS and at EGMs.
- A vote can only happen at one of these meetings if half or more of the members are present (that might be online or in person). The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson (if there is one),

Secretary, and Treasurer must also be there. Otherwise, the vote cannot happen and will not be valid.

- Meath DPO tries to reach decisions through consensus, but if there is a vote a majority of members must agree for any change to be made final
- If there are not enough people there to have a vote, then the meeting can be rescheduled.

8. Changing Group Rules

Sometimes Meath DPO might need to make a change to the rules about how the group works even though there is not an AGM, or EGM due to happen. This could be about something that is important to discuss, or an action that needs to be taken. When this happens the management committee can make the necessary decision, but they must then bring that decision to the full group of members as soon as possible so that it can be discussed or changed as necessary. If the decision or issue is discussed with the full membership then two thirds of all the members must agree that the change can happen, to ratify the change.

9. Link between Meath DPO and ILMI

ILMI is committed to connecting local DPOs and to working collectively for change at local and national level.

- Meath DPO with the support of ILMI will work together to reach their goals. ILMI takes a social-model and empowerment approach to bringing the collective lived experience of Disabled People to different local and national platforms.
- ILMI will provide Meath DPO with capacity development, supports, and guidance on how and where the collective voice of a local DPO can be used at local level to ensure the Human Rights of disabled people as described in Article 4.3 and Article 29 and General Comment of the UNCRPD are achieved.
- This means that the Irish State must ensure the full and effective participation of Disabled People in all matters relating to their lives. This includes their participation in the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD particularly through their representative organisations – DPOs.
- ILMI will work with the local DPO chairperson to participate in the ILMI DPO Network and to bring back information from this network to this DPO.
- ILMI will ensure that key policy information flows from ILMI at national level to local DPOs. ILMI will work with Meath DPO (and other local DPOs) to ensure that key policy changes emerging locally shape national policy development.

10. Ending of Meath DPO

Meath DPO will continue to exist unless two thirds of all the members decide it should not exist anymore. If the group decides it should end, then the management committee should bring a financial report to the meeting where that decision is made.