

CLIMATE NEWS



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Dublin City Council Climate Action Team Official
Newsletter

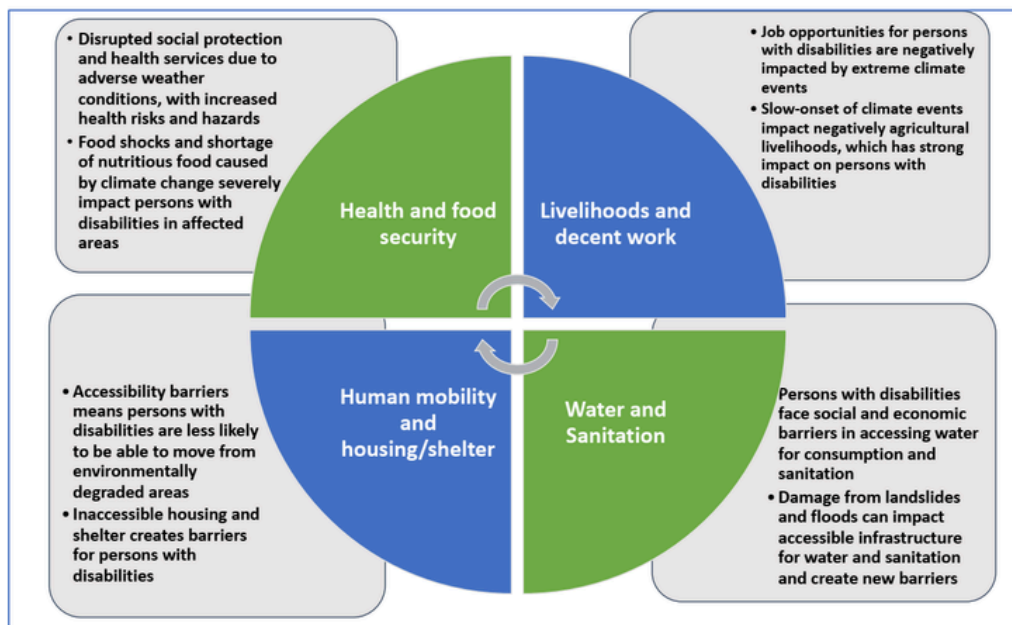
CLIMATE AND DISABILITY: THE IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

What have climate and disability to do with each other? Quite a lot, as it happens. Approximately 16% of the global population 'experience significant disability'. This amounts to an 'estimated 1.3 billion people ([World Health Organisation](#))'.

'People with disabilities are at disparately high risk from worsening climate hazards as the biophysical effects of global warming, ableism, systematic oppression, and histories of colonialism intersect, increasing disability human rights harms in many spaces, such as within minoritised communities' (Stein et al., 2024).

Below is a graphic indicating some of the ways in which disabled people may be affected by climate change.

Graphic 1 Impact of climate change on persons with disabilities



(Source: [European Disability Framework](#)).

Incorporating disability inclusion as a standard in policy making and adaptation measures ensures that policy makers meet obligations under the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities). Using a ‘Universal Design’ approach, planning for climate impacts can have a broader and more inclusive framework.

"Universal design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. (Source: [UNCRPD](#)).

Table 3. Key principles of Universal Design

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Equitable Use	The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
Flexibility in Use	The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
Simple and Intuitive Use	Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
Perceptible Information	The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
Tolerance for Error	The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidents or unintended actions.
Low Physical Effort	The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
Size and Space for Approach and Use	Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Embedding Universal Design into planning and adaptation measures ensures that not only does this offer protection to the most vulnerable, it also benefits everyone. Climate resilient spaces require a holistic approach which should include all sectors of the population. This is also true of disaster response management. One of the principles of the [Sendai Framework](#) is that ‘women and persons with disabilities should publicly lead and promote gender-equitable and universally accessible approaches during the response and reconstruction phases.’

In Ireland, Storm Éowyn demonstrated the extreme vulnerability of elderly people and those with medical needs or disabilities that required access to electricity, when power was lost for a considerable length of time.

Dublin City Council utilises the principles of Universal Design in planning and policy making across all sectors of responsibility. Dublin City Council Culture Company has a Universal Design and Accessibility Policy. Universal design is referenced in the Dublin City Centre Transport Plan, where one of the aims of the College Green/Dame Street Project are 'to use the principles of universal design to provide an accessible space for all to enjoy.' The 'Heart of Dublin' City Centre Public Realm Masterplan cites Universal as one of the key principles as below:

'Universal Design

- Application of Universal Design Principles.
- Developing and expanding the legible pedestrian network.
- Providing increased space for rest and seating.
- Space for all regardless of mobility'

Using Universal Design, we can create spaces that are accessible to all across a lifetime, as well as incorporating climate adaptation measures, whilst considering how people interact with their physical environment.



Image courtesy of the Irish Wheelchair Association.

This article is the first in a series on disability and climate.

LAUNCH OF ABHAINN

Abhainn is a new artwork by Rosie O'Reilly that will be hosted on the Dublin Discovery Trails app. Abhainn takes the form of a walking tour through Dublin's city centre, with seven distinct episodes that create a love letter to Dublin's rivers, to the life they hold and make possible and the people who care for them. Abhainn is available as a digital version and also as an analogue version with episodes on cassette and encased with a newly imagined city crest and city motto that has been led by the artists's research.

As the origin of all life, water provides us (humans and more than human) with everything we need, without it there would be nothing. In Dublin, this couldn't be more true. A coastal city and a port, it grew around dozens of rivers with many miles sent underground so human settlement could spread. Abhainn is an embedded research project by Rosie O'Reilly and curated by Ruth Carroll that views Dublin through its inseparable relationship to water and its rivers.



As the first biodiversity artist in residence in Dublin City Council, Abhainn grew slowly within the Council through a series of conversations, findings and encounters, research within the city in the areas of flood defence, river maintenance, biodiversity and parks, the city archive and a public call out for wider community stories. Through interviews, field recording, texts and sound responses, this series of water-walks have been composed with musician Colm O'Cíosóig to tell Dublin's hydro story. Photography for Abhainn was by Sean Breithaupt.

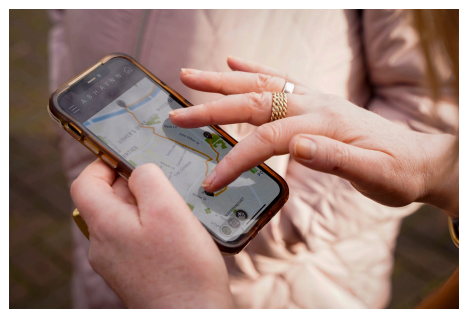
This project is funded by Creative Ireland, through the Creative Climate Action Fund and Dublin City Council.

Abhainn is free to download through the [Dublin Discovery Trails](#) app and is a walking trail of 9km with 7 distinct episodes.



Deputy Lord Mayor Donna Cooney along with staff from the Norwegian Embassy, Council staff and the climate action team joined Rosie O'Reilly to experience her new artwork Abhainn that was recently launched.

The group walked three of the episodes from Abhainn journeying through the city and its hidden and visible water systems, from the culverted Poddle, the Bardogue and the Liffey.



THE CULTIVATE PROJECT

Update on 'Cultivate' EU Food Project

Dublin City Council is part of CULTIVATE, an EU-funded project to increase public awareness and knowledge of Food Sharing initiatives (FSIs). Dublin is a Spoke City which entails replicating and testing practical tools such as the Menu of Good Governance and that process will begin this year.

There are multiple benefits of food sharing initiatives within the social, economic and environmental spheres. They also link closely to many of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Cultivate is now in its 3rd year and Dublin City Council had the opportunity last year to visit Utrecht and the Rijnvliet Edible Neighborhood and its urban food forest.

You can read about all the project progress and partner initiatives on the CULTIVATE website.



Photo credit: Leonardo Improta

IN OTHER NEWS..

There will be a **Food Waste Workshop** in Cabra Library on Tuesday 25th March:

‘Join Áine, Community Food and Nutrition Worker with Dublin Northwest Partnership, for an interactive workshop on tackling food waste!

Discover practical tips to reduce waste at home, creative ways to repurpose leftovers, and how small changes can make a big impact on the environment. You'll learn how to save money, reduce waste, and make more sustainable food choices.

Whether you're a foodie, an eco-conscious consumer, or just curious, this workshop at Cabra Library on Tuesday 25th March at 11am is for you!’

Click [HERE](#) for booking.



Save the Date!

Climate Action Week and Bike week will be taking place this year from 10th-18th May. Full details will be available [HERE](#) in due course.

DUBLIN
CLIMATE
ACTION
WEEK

