>>: Welcome to this webinar on emerging opportunities in design standards for our built environment: well‑being, inclusion and universal design.

I am Elizabeth O'Ferrall and I work here at NSAI as a project manager for standards in the area of universal design, accessibility, and usability.

On this slide, I give an overview of how we are going to run our webinar. The webinar will run until 12 noon. This webinar will be recorded and will be available later at www.NSAI.ie. Please use the Q&A function if you would like to pose a question to the speakers. And there will be a Q&A after all the presentations.

The chat function is being monitored by our team this morning. Please note your camera and microphone have been disabled, please use the raise hand function if you prefer to ask your question verbally during the Q&A.

The webinar is live captioned, please use the CC function in Zoom. And ISL interpretation is provided.

On this slide, we give an overview of the agenda, our programme for our webinar. We have the opening of the webinar by myself this morning, Elizabeth O'Ferrall. A welcome by Dr Ger Craddock from CEUD at the NDA. Opening remarks by Geraldine Larkin, the CEO of NSAI. An opening keynote by Selina Bonnie. Then presentation one on introduction and background to these standards. Presentation two is standard ISEN17210 in the Irish regulatory context. Presentation three, using the standards in daily practice. And then we will have reflections on these standards by Minister Anne Rabbitte after we have our Q&A session, and then we will have closing remarks by Dr Ger Craddock.

I would like to welcome now Dr Ger Craddock, chief officer of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the NDA, and also chair of the NSAI universal design standards consultative committee. NSAI TC23. He is the achieve officer at the centre for excellence in universal design, a statutory body established by the Irish government in 2007. It is part of the National Disability Authority. Which is the lead estate agency on disability in Ireland. The centre's key domain areas are the built environment, products and services, and information and communication technologies, ICT.

The centre's focus is on infusing universal design into education curricula at all levels, developing standards in professional and industrial services and creating awareness of the benefits of universal design within Ireland as well as at European and international level.

As already said, Ger is the chair of NSAI TC23, where he and the experts of the committee's participates in the development of national, European and international standards development.

Welcome Ger.

>>: Thank you very much Elizabeth. Delighted to be part of this this morning, and welcome everyone. I think we have over 300 registered for this event this morning, so without further ado, I will progress the slides here. Just to give an idea of the work we are involved in, and the collaboration we have in place with the national standards authority going back from about 2005, 2006, this working collaboration. And part the standard ‑‑ the work that we are involved in, we have a number of subcommittees and the one that is heavily involved in this work this morning is subcommittee one, chaired by Tom Grey, and on the slide you will see here the participants and the hard‑working individuals bringing their expertise, both knowledge and expertise, but also voluntary time and energy over the last four to five years on bringing this national and European standard to life. So we are delighted with the group here this morning as I said Tom Grey, Ruth O'Reilly, Paidi Healy, and Gary Carney who are in the background this morning. We will hear from Catriona Shaffrey, Fionnula Rogerson and Eoin O'Dowd. So just (sound gone)

Sorry there, I think I just went on mute. So just briefly what a standard is, it's a document established by consensus, very important that it is about consensus, and it is approved by a recognised body, so the national standards authority in Ireland, but also then the European standards bodies, at a European level, and also work that we have done at international level by the international standards organisations.

That provides for common and repeated use. So it has rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results. So aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context. So very much what we are talking about here, the optimum degree on looking at the accessibility of the built environment.

So again standards are voluntary agreement, and they're developed with an open process that gives all stakeholders, including consumers the opportunity to express their views, and have those views considered. This contributes to their fairness and market relates and promotes confidence in their use.

So not only had we experts at a national level, but we had 15 other national standards bodies across Europe involved in developing this standard. And with that, there was over ten user bodies, such as the European Disability Forum, age platform, age platform Europe, also involved as examples of user involvement in development of this standard.

So why are standards important and particularly for persons with disabilities? They harmonise approaches to accessibility requirements at European level. This means the same rights and access level across Europe, such as freedom of movement as part of that. Sorry, the slides are moving on here, I am not sure what is happening there. Have I lost control there? Just going back a slide there. Not at the moment, someone is requesting the control, no Blue.

So thank you for that. That means same rights a‑‑ level access across Europe. So freedom of movement being a critical aspiration and right for persons with disabilities right across Europe.

They facilitate compliance with existing laws, such as the new Web Accessibility Directive. They improve service and product quality and safety, which is very important. They increase consumer choice and reduce uncertainty. And again a key part of that in consumer choice is that with a common standard across Europe, and also the cost can be considerably reduced being a key aspect of having a common European standard.

Also the whole interoperability of responsibilities made by different companies possible.

So they're some and you will hear more throughout this morning. So without further ado, I am delighted to have the CEO, Geraldine Larkin, who will now formally address the opening of this webinar this morning. Over to you Geraldine.

>>: And thank you very much Ger. And can I echo Ger's welcome to everybody online this morning, and I think it's testament to the importance of this standard that we have so many people here together this morning, and I also look forward to the recording of this afterwards, which of course will broaden the application of the standard, and our discussion today even more so. So thank you to the committee for all the hard work that they've done and gone into getting us where we are today.

This is a really, really important block of work, and it's really great that so many of you have gathered here together today, because the webinar, and indeed the standard, illustrates that we are living in a time of change, and I don't need to mention that, that's almost the obvious. But for me, the importance of this standard is the opportunities it brings for those who are willing to embrace it, and take it on as a tool for innovation. Because the standard highlights that well‑being inclusion and universal design are not only important to build an equitable society, but they're also opportunities that we really must grasp and take forward. And Ger talked about standards being best practice, repeated order, and I think that's the huge part about this. This work is the culmination debate and discussion, not just in Ireland, but right across Europe, and it's from that that we are learning from the best minds across Europe. And the opportunities presented today are supported by standardised products and processes, in all the areas of the NSAI activity. These are products and processes that help global economies run smoothly and efficiently and as I said promote best practice. But standards don't just stop and finish as ‑‑ from a business perspective. Standards are also really, really important in improving the health and well‑being of billions of people around the world, and indeed have a critical role to play as well in the sustainable development goals and ensuring a much more sustainable world for everyone going forward. So when you step back from standards, standards are a very important both for our economy and for our society, and indeed that reflects the core message and the core intention of the NSAI over the next coming years, and that is that we are supporting innovation to ensure a safer, better, and sustainable future for everyone, for business and citizens alike.

Because we recognise that standards are enablers for business to meet obligations laid out in legislation. But they also ‑‑ and I suppose this is the really fundamental part, standards drive innovation, they drive best practice and a much more inclusive environment. And in this case, looking at the particular standards we are talking about today, a much more inclusive built environment, and that is of benefit to all of us, regardless of our age, our ‑‑ where we are at, or anything else from our backgrounds.

The standards that will be discussed today provide designers, procurers and organisations a means to understand the diverse needs of our population, and they will help set goals to achieve a much mover inclusive built environment. And the great advantage of the suite of standards being considered today is that they're applicable to buildings in both the public and private sector. So there are learnings for those of you who are involved in designing and procuring commercial buildings, but that equally applies in the area of private housing, and indeed public spaces. So that all of the outputs and all of the areas that you are engaged in will have longevity and accessible and usable for the widest range of users. And that's users who might be younger, or older, it may be parents, or guardians with young children, or indeed persons with disabilities. So it covers ‑‑ and it is broad and completely inclusive.

And from that, there is a huge marketing and business opportunity as well as an inclusivity opportunity here, in that adherence to the standards, and utilisation of the standards to support innovation will increase footfall for retail and increase market share, while also strengthening our economy, but building a better society for us all to be ‑‑ to live in and to be proud of.

And Ger mentioned the work of the NSAI consultative committee, TC23, on universal design. And I suppose I want to make a special call out and shout out to SE1 who have focused on the built environment and whose work we are really seeing today. And for those of you who are not as closely involved in standards, to draw to your attention, and to recognise that the work of these people who as Ger said, is done on a voluntary basis, has really heavily influenced the final document that is the output of this from a European perspective. And this is one of the key advantages of standards, is that Ireland has ‑‑ and our Irish experts in every area have a direct role and a direct opportunity to influence on the European stage and indeed on the international stage. So it's hugely important, and I really do want to acknowledge the time and expertise that the committee members have given, because it is of huge enormous benefit, both to the country and to European citizens alike. And it really epitomises public service, and what ‑‑ the true meaning of delivery in that space.

So on my behalf, and I want to acknowledge all the contributions that you are making, to make Ireland a far better place for us all to live and to work. I hope today that the debate and discussion is illumative, informative and advances this agenda.

Before I close, I want to acknowledge and thank in advance Minister Anne Rabbitte who will be closing the event later today. So thank you very much. Back to you.

>>: Thank you very much Geraldine and for the insight there on the impact standards can have, but also I think as you mentioned there, the public service, that particularly the committee involved in this standard, we are going back here four or five years work, to actually bring it to this stage here this morning.

So thank you very much for that Geraldine.

Moving on to our keynote, and I am delighted to have Selina Bonny with us here this morning. Solely that is south Dublin County Council's disability liaison access and equality officer. This involves assisting the council to meet its responsibilities under disability, equality and human rights legislation, and to support the provision of accessible, inclusive facilities and services across the organisation.

She is an Indian Irish disabled woman who holds a masters degree in disability studies from the University of Leeds, and a professional diploma in human rights and equality from the institute of public administration and the Irish human rights Equality Commission.

Selina has been an activist and an academic on the international disabled persons movement for more than 25 years. She is regional Ambassador for NUIG Centre for Disability Law and Policy, justice research project. She is also a busy wife, mother and passionate home chef. So delighted to have you here this morning, Selina, so it's all yours.

>>: Thank you Ger, it's great to be here this morning. Do you have my slides or will I just get working ahead?

I will get talking and we can catch up slides wise. Thank you for the opportunity today to share my experience and observations regarding universal design and in particular, the new European standard. My observations are based on my experience as a disabled person, public servant, mother, academic and activist, and as you say, I have worked for Dublin County Council since 2002 and I have also been active in the international disabled peoples movement for well over 25 years. I have a deep understanding of how essential it is to approach equality and human rights and accessibility in intersectional way. With this presentation, I am going to explore the importance of universal design by accessibility in the built environment. Sorry, I am just getting the slides working there.

As a foundation of sustainable, vibrant communities, I am going to use personal and professional experience as a disabled person and an access officer, and real life examples, rather than quoting statistics, regulations and legislation.

I am also going to share a selection of photographs to illustrate aspects of my presentation. And I will also be able to share these afterwards if anybody would like them to give to much more detailed explanation than what I will give this morning.

Accessibility to the built environment significantly impacts on a person's everyday life. Good access or design empowers, enables and facilitates dignity. Inaccessible environments create disabling bar injuries which have significant impacts on the lives and choices of people, and indeed the wider network of family and friends.

This slide you will see here is a cartoon that the person says excuse me can you tell me the way to the disabled toilets. The barman says not only will I tell you the way but I will call you a taxi to get there. I sincerely hope as we emerge from two years of lockdowns, wider society may have gained a greater understanding of the impact of social interaction and freedom of access has on our mental and physical health and well‑being. As a wheelchair user who often has to plan activities around accessible toilets, it was quite interesting, to use one word, to hear people on the radio complaining about temporary restrictions to access and public toilets being closed. I will come back to the issue of accessible toilets later in my presentation.

We are here today to launch a new European standard on accessibility and usability of the built environment. I think it's worth acknowledging the historical societal benefits of universal design. For example, voice to text software was originally create today facilitate the access needs of those who are unable to physically type, or those who have literacy difficulties. However, these days, voice to text is a widely used communication method in business and general society. Automated doors make access easier for most people, and lower counters facilitate children and people who are of short stature.

An example of the wide benefit of accessibility from my recent work would be the button box. This touches pedestrian crossing control system has been piloted in two locations within south Dublin county. With button, you can use your mobile phone to virtually press the pedestrian crossing button. This is a great benefit to people with mobility or manual dexterity difficulties. It is interesting however that this system will develop ‑‑ was developed as an access solution pre‑pandemic, but in a more touchless world has the potential to benefit wider society.

A council's core function is to provide essential services and infrastructure to the diverse communities we serve and supporting the sustainable communities where all the people of the county feel valued, welcomed and included. In order to fulfil this function, we must take universal design, diversity, inter‑generational families and intersectionality into account. If we look back into history, we will see traditionally families were inter‑generational. Then as social norms changed and the economy grew, families became smaller and more insular. In recent decades largely influenced by economic considerations, families have once again become inter‑generational as adult children remain in the family home and working parents rely on older family members for child minding and other caring duties.

Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how a social identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability and gender identity overlap with one another. Understanding intersectionality with regard disability is essential for the creation of appropriate laws and policies and design and delivery of accessible, inclusive facilities and services.

What makes disability unique is that anyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or social status can become disabled at any person in their life. I believe the importance of intersectionality is recognised in the UN sustainable development goals and targets where they state that the goals are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable.

Focusing on universal design, we can move away from the often now presumptions that access only benefits disabled people and that access is mainly focused on provision of toilets, ramps and parking, and I just include here a T‑shirt I happen to love. It has the wheelchair symbol on it. I spend a lot of time talking about toilets!

When focusing on universal design, the access needs of deaf or blind people, children, older people and those with learning or literacy difficulties are not acknowledged. It was interesting when we were developing the south Dublin (indiscernible) by far the greatest number of conversations were actually in relation to children with autism. This new European standard is the first of its kind from universal design. I welcome the fact that it's a standard rather than guidelines, and moving from minimum to good practice.

For example, wheelchairs come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but in my experience, the minimum only facilitates a basic manual wheelchair. I am also pleased that the standard emphasises good, rather than best practice. Because no matter what we do, we can always do better.

The COVID‑19 pandemic has had an immeasurable inspect on communities and access to services. A lot of (indiscernible) for access was eroded during the pandemic. Disabled people have found felt this impact quite profoundly from our personal assistants not being allowed to accompany us to the removal of accessible parking spaces to facilitate outdoor dining and social distancing. I am glad to say that we did not sacrifice any of our public accessible council provided parking spaces as I believe this is a clear example of the council's commitment to accessibility.

This new standard will provide opportunities for shaping the post COVID world. Our experience of the pandemic and emergence from it have re‑inforced the importance of dining inclusive environments, workplaces and communities that satisfy the needs of any person, without compromising those of another.

My role involves assisting the council to meet its responsibilities under disability, equality and human rights legislation. One aspect of my role is carrying out traditional access officer duties, such as proofing plans and drawings, and participating in multi disciplinary teams when various plans are being developed. I developed a strong rapport with many of our planners and architects. I find this part of my work fascinating and I have learned a lot over the years, such as how to speak the language of planners, architects and various trades. As a disabled person, I get great personal satisfaction from being able to effect positive change and contribute to our vibrant and diverse communities.

The legislative environment for accessibility in Ireland over the past 25 years has slowly evolved towards one that understands and values the universal design, and I have just given a slight snapshot here of the emergence of the various pieces of access and equality related legislation since 1996.

We have come a long way since the strategy for equality in 1996, and its 402 recommendations of actions required to provide access. One of those 402 recommendations referred to the need for law and regulations to bring about the universal rights of access. Gradually we have moved towards a society where disabled people will have the right to expect universal access, 25 years after as policy, we finally have European standard 17210. I look forward to using this standard within my work.

According to the 2016 census, the total number of disabled persons in Ireland reach 13.5 per cent of the population. It's also recorded that there were 468,000 households with at least one disabled person. However when you take intersectionality and inter‑generational communities into account, universal design clearly has a much wider reach than 25 per cent of the population.

Here are a couple of slides showing various access related works and initiatives across south Dublin county: south Dublin County Council provides and funds a broad range of services including housing, roads and public lighting, walking and cycling routes, parks and playgrounds, libraries, litter control, attar centres and community infrastructure. It serves as a platform for local democracy. Local authorities have to comply with a variety of laws and regulations with the various core services that we deliver. You will see here a mobile library and our purpose built frame football pitch being enjoyed by some of our frame football team in Lucan.

These laws and regulations are applied at local level through documents such as county Development Plans, local air plans, housing strategies and so on.

Sand this slide shows you the step and ramped entrance to County Hall and one of our pedestrian facilities in Tallaght.

Section 4.5 of the European standards states that accessibility should be integrated at all stages of procurement, design, construction and conformity assessment. This way of working is not a new concept in south Dublin County Council. A core value of our corporate plan is inclusiveness, equality and accessibility and an overarching consideration with our current Development Plan includes a reference to creating socially and physically inclusive neighbourhoods. I would like to take a little moment to tell you about some of our inclusive play spaces programme. The slide on screen now is an aerial shot of one of our accessible play spaces in Lucan.

We build playgrounds and play spaces with the assumption they're places for everyone to play together. We see inclusiveness as essentially important to all of our play spaces and aim to create places that meet the diverse needs of children, their parents, grandparents and their caregivers. Universal design were included in the tern documents during the procurement process. And this is a selection of some of the accessible features within our parks.

We avoided plastics and used natural materials where possible. In addition to environmental and sustainable benefits, using natural materials provides significant sensory benefits and we have now decide today focus on the design installation of communication boards to further enhance the accessibility of the spaces.

The image here on screen is a mud play area, pig sty, with large wooden carved pigs, and this was actually designed in collaboration with students and teachers in St Joseph's which is a school for children with additional educational support needs.

As a disabled person, and disability access officer, I spend a lot of time discussing toilets with colleagues. Inspecting plans, measuring and photographing toilets and my family find this so amusing, I have even been gifted with a mini toilet pencil holder for my desk. Lack of access to appropriate sanitary facilities has a significant impact on dignity, families and family life. For example, the absence of changing places accessible toilet facilities has resulted in families not being able to go out together with family members who have access needs, or in many cases disabled people being laid on the floor of a public toilet to have their sanitary needs met. Changing place facilities are finally starting to emerge across the country and for example south Dublin in 2021, we installed two, and we have got two more underway.

Changing places facilities are not required under current regulation, but I am aware that EN17210 was used as a reference by the working group development in new regulations and TGDM, so I am hopeful for the future.

When my daughter was a baby, I could not find any accessible baby changing facilities. Even though most were located within the accessible toilet, I was also limited to about four places that I could go shopping with her, because most accessible toilets are not big enough to accommodate a wheelchair user, an assistant and a child in a pram all together. And there were no accessible toilets within the parent and child facilities.

Changing places toilets will help alleviate this problem for disabled parents and caregivers in the future, and when I am advising on access works within the council, I always specific the height the baby changing shelf should be installed at to provide universal access for parents and caregivers and this slide shows the signage, and a family crossing the road and a wheelchair user pushing a pram ‑‑ something I did many times in the past when my daughter was a baby!

And just finally, I will talk a little bit about consultation. I particular value the contribution made by south Dublin county disability advisory consultative panel which is largely comprised of disabled people who live, work or study in the county. I am very appreciative to what I call my youth access officer, he is a young disabled man from the county who really helped us to make sure that the inclusive play spaces were properly inclusive, and you can see him in this image here in the wheelchair, James, and he was testing an accessible trampoline for us and helping us to make it more accessible.

Disabled persons are an untapped potential resource. We go through our days frequently risk assessing, problem solving and lateral thinking. Recognising the value of lived experience is essential as I was very pleased to see accessibility consultation included in the standard. Listening to people with lived experience is essential to creating sustainable, accessible facilities and services. It's also essential for achieving value for money, because listening to lived experience enables the targeting of expenditure in appropriate ways. In south Dublin, (indiscernible) and our disability advisory panel and the housing disability steering group and our online consultation portal provide essential opportunities to consult with the expert by experience.

When the inclusive play spaces were being developed, everyone recognised the benefits of play for children with autism, but a major fear from parents was around how their children's behaviour was perceived by others. They pointed to so many rules of the playground which their children may break and the reaction of other children and parents. These conversations with parents had a big impact on our design considerations and layouts. This experience emphasised the value of learning from lived experience. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the teams in the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design and the national standards authority of Ireland on the launch of the first user standard of accessibility in the built environment. Disabled people are intersectional beings who need and have a right to expect accessible facilities and services. That are delivered with dignity, that are sensitive to diversity of our needs, experiences and backgrounds. Universal design is truly the foundation of sustainable vibrant communities, and I believe that implementation of this standard will make a significant, positive contribution to the quality of life of all members of the community. Thank you.

>>: Thank you very much Selina and I suppose bringing both your lived experience but also your professional background and your day‑to‑day work with Dublin south County Council, inspiring the presentation as I see there coming in on the Q&A feed.

Thank you very much for that Selina.

Next we have an introduction on the context of the standards and the functional and technical requirements publications that are part and parcel of what we are talking about here this morning.

So we have Ruth O'Reilly, and Tom Grey to speak next. So Ruth is a fellow colleague who has worked with me for over ten years at the present moment and time and in the last two years, she has taken on the role as senior built environment design advisor at the centre for universal design as part of the National Disability Authority. And her work very much looking at promoting universal design of the built environments being her central area. But also linking in with our colleagues in the whole area of services and products, and also information communication technologies.

Ruth is an architect with a keen interest in design and how it can have a positive impact on well‑being, diversity and inclusion. So delighted to have Ruth, but also we have Tom Grey, who is actually the chair of the subcommittee, who has a degree in architecture from Dublin Institute of Technology, and a masters in architecture from the University of Auckland in New Zealand. Following ten years in practice, working on projects in Ireland, UK, and Europe, the US and in New Zealand, Tom joined TrinityHaus research centre in Trinity College Dublin as a research fellow in 2009. Since then, he has undertaken a variety of urban design and building design research projects, examining how people friendly design can support human performance, health, well‑being and social participation. Much of this work focuses on age friendly, and dementia inclusive communities, hospitals, long‑term care settings, housing and gardens. The work is underpinned by universal design and participatory design & Co creation processes. So Tom to lead out on this, delighted to have you here this morning and well done on chairing this subcommittee for the last four, five years I think.

>>: Thanks Ger, much appreciated. And welcome to everybody on the call. Okay so there are three standards that we are introducing today and these are the adopted Irish versions of the 2021 European standards covering accessibility and usability of the built environment.

So the three standards are as follows, the main document, which is IS EN17210, you have heard previous speakers talking about it. This introduces common minimal functional requirements and recommendations to achieve an accessible and usable built environment which is underpinned by universal design and a design for all approach.

Then the second document is a supporting document, and this provides technical performance criteria and specification to fulfil the requirements as set out in the previous mentioned 17210.

Then finally the third document covers conformity assessment and this is about providing criteria to assess the conformity of works or a project in line with the main document, 17210. We will explain these a little further as we go along.

Just to say I suppose that it's important that these standards were developed under mandate M/420. That was a 2007 standardisation request by the European Commission and European free trade association in support of European accessibility requirements for procurement in the built environment. Now procurement has been mention add couple of times by Geraldine earlier on and certainly by Selina.

Again this is a really important part of these standards in terms of both public and private procurement. Procurement is seen as a key mechanism or leverage or tool in which to build and create a more accessible universally designed environment.

So we look at why procurement is so important. I have grabbed a couple of examples here. And only looking just at public procurement across the EU. If we look at this, we see that over 250,000 public authorities in the EU spend around 14 per cent of GDP, that's €2 trillion, on the purchase of services, works and supplies. So a huge amount of money that we can be using towards developing a more inclusive environment.

In many sectors, such as energy, transport, waste management and so on, public authorities are the principle buyers. Finally the public sector can really use this procurement to boost jobs, growth and investment, but most importantly from the point of view of standards like this, use it as a mechanism to procure, manage, operate, design an inclusive environment.

So to go back for a moment to the three documents. The first document which is the main document, and the scope of this document as set out is to describe basic minimal functional requirements and recommendations for an accessible usable built environment following design for all/universal design principles, which will facilitate equitable and safe use for a wide range of users, including persons with disabilities. The requirements and recommendations in the document are applicable across the full spectrum of the built environmental, from public spaces through to more detailed elements.

The functional accessibility and usability requirements are also applicable to existing buildings as well as new builds. So they're useful for adaptability and retrofit.

I won't go through all of these, but just to say that the contents again as I said, go across the full spectrum of the built environment. But there is some really useful stuff, some really great material here, section 5 looks at diversities of users and design considerations, a really fantastic piece in the document. Then we move from way finding, access in the outdoor environment, through to very specific criteria for internal spaces, such as sanitary accommodation and so on. It also covers a range of additional building uses and functions that you often don't get in standards like this. So we see recommendations around cultural, leisure, administrative, outdoor leisure areas, transport facilities and so on. So a very comprehensive document.

Here's just a snapshot, I don't expect you to be able to read anything, but I just want to give you a sense of the information that's contained in 17210. It is full of really fantastic illustrations. It's one of the real strong points and these are used in a very powerful way to communicate some of the key messages.

Now to move on to the second document, which is the technical performance requirements, technical performance criteria. So here is where there are specific and detailed criteria given to fulfil the requirements in 17210. And again in that document, you now start to see specific values and an awful lot of detail.

And then finally, the third document as I said earlier on, this is about conformity, and assessing whether works, built environment works, can form ‑‑ conform with the standard 17210. This is the third and supporting document as part of the standard suite. In this document, you will find a number of templates and tools, such as the one I have illustrated there in front of you, which starts to give you essentially checklists and so on.

So later on in the webinar, we will have Eoin, Catriona and Fionnula, and they'll talk in a little more detail about applying the standards and also looking at this in a little bit more detail. They'll put a bit of flesh on the bones so to speak. But in the meantime I am going to hand you over to Ruth who will give you a little bit of background and context. Thank you.

>>: Thank you very much Tom for that introduction and background to the standards. So now I am going to step back a level and I am going to talk about the context in terms of policy and legislation, so I suppose the context in which we will be using the standard.

Selina spoke to us about the impact that the design of the built environment had on her everyday life, and at the centre in universal design, we work to promote universal design as good design that works well for everyone. So that's across the built environment which is our focus here today, but also across products and services and ICT. And we know in practice that the design of built environment, product and services and ICT all need to come together for an overall design to be inclusive for everyone.

So first of all, I want to talk about sustainability and I want to firmly position universal design at the centre of statement. The image on Venn is a venue diagram social the three pillars of sustainability, often referred to as people, profit and planet. And while universal design clearly has a link and is closely aligned with the social pillar of sustainability, we also like to make the point that if you adopt universal design at the start of a project, it avoids retrofit at a later stage, which we know that retrofits can be very costly, and if we avoid retrofits, we are also avoiding waste which is a key element of the circular economy.

My next slide then is an image of the UN sustainable development goals under the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and I just wanted to highlight to you three of the goals that are clearly aligned with universal design. So there is goal three, which is health and well‑being for all, at all ages. Goal ten, which is to reduce inequality, and goal 11 which is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

I also wanted to highlight that inclusion is a key element of the new European Bauhaus, I have the logo of that on screen, it contains three words: beautiful, sustainable and together. The new European Bauhaus is an initiative about connecting the European green deal to our daily lives and living spaces and it sets out three values which it says are inseparable values and they are sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion.

So again inclusion as a key value of the new European Bauhaus at European level.

Another important reference for us in using the standard is the UN on venetian on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which re‑inforces that universal design is not just a nice to have, because this is coming from a rights based approach. And it's key to our work at the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. And with regard to design of the built environment, I wanted to draw your attention to a number of sections in the UNCRPD. First of all, something that Selina mentioned in her consultation, there is a general obligation in the UN convention to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities through disabled persons organisations in the development and implementation of legislation and policies, and in other decision‑making processes concerning issues which relate to persons with disabilities.

So that's clearly setting out the need to include people with disabilities and disabled persons organisations in the design process, and Selina gave us some good examples of that there in south Dublin County Council's work on playgrounds.

I would also draw your attention to Article 4 in the convention, under that the State commits to undertake to promote research and the development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities. And the lastly, two other articles, Article 9 on accessibility, and Article 19, living independently, and being included in the community, and again I think Selina's presentation clearly linked how a person's independence and participation in the community can be dependent on the design of their environment. So the decisions we make when we are procuring or designing the built environment can have a huge impact on a person's everyday life.

I also want to briefly refer to the European accessibility act, which refers to the achievement of accessibility by the systematic removal and prevention of barriers, preferably through a universal design, or a design for all approach. Now the scope of the European accessibility act mainly applies to specified products and services and it has been criticised for its weakness in relation to the built environment in particular, because the accessibility requirements for the built environment have been devolved to Member States, essentially with an optional clause. So unfortunately it does allow for a possible scenario where an ATM is required to be made accessible, but it could be rendered useless to someone with a disability if the built environment in which it's located is not accessible.

But it appears that the act is going to have an impact on standards. There is a draft standardisation request has been issued by the European Commission, seeking to harmonise a number of standards for the purposes of the act and I have three of those standards on screen. One of them is the standard that we are talking about today, ISEN17210. That's the standard for the built environment, and also the standard 17161. That's a design for all process standard for products, goods and services. And then the third one on screen is 301549 which is accessibility requirements for ICT products and services. So harmonising a standard has the effect of making it mandatory rather than voluntary. So for example, the standard 17210 could become mandatory in relation to transport and banking services, which are within the scope of the European accessibility act, if Ireland decides to take up that optional clause that I mentioned.

I wanted then to move from a European level to a national level and to talk a little bit about our own Disability Act, 2005, and on screen I have a slide that highlights the different areas of the Disability Act that have implications for the design of the built environment and the obligations for public bodies in relation to that. So there is obligations for accessible public buildings under section 25, for accessible services under 26, which I want to go into a little bit more detail on, for heritage sites in section 29 and for employment and accessible workplaces in section 47.

And I know Fionnula and Catriona are going to talk about the range of guidance that's in this standard we are talking about today, 17210. In particular guidance that goes beyond what's in our technical guidance document M. And I think it has the potential to be very useful to public bodies in relation to their obligations under the Disability Act in this regard. So it's not just for beings, but also for services.

So section 26 says that when a service is provided by a public body, where it's practicable and appropriate, it should ensure that the provision of access to that service by persons with and without disability have integrated. In practical terms means that persons with disabilities can avail of a service provided by a public body at the same access point or location and at the same time as everyone else. Where that's practical and appropriate.

And we get a lot of queries from people asking us is there any legislative requirement in relation to items like playgrounds, or footpaths or bus stops or parks to be accessible. So I just wanted to highlight to you the definition of a service in the Disability Act, because it's very broad, and I think it's very relevant to the new standard we are talking about here today.

I try not to have too much text on my slides generally but I thought in this case seeing the definition of a service in it's entirety is useful. A service means ‑‑ a service or facility of any kind provided by a public body, which is available to or accessible by the public generally or a section of the public, and it includes ‑‑ and there is four clauses for what's included in the definition of a service. In relation to the built environment, it's very important, it says the use of any place, amenity owned, managed or controlled by a public body.

The second clause is the provision of information, or an information resource or scheme or allowance or benefit administered by a public body. The third is cultural or heritage services, and the fourth is any services provided by a court or any other tribunal.

The first clause, the use of any please, or amenity owned, managed or controlled by a public body has very large scope in relation to the built environment and you I think ISEN17210 can be a very useful resource to public bodies because it includes guidance on many areas that are not covered in our building regulations.

That brings us to the end of my presentation, I hope it's useful to set the scene to you before our next speakers will bring you into more further detail. Thank you very much.

>>: Great stuff, thank you very much Ruth, and Tom for that, setting the context, but also giving an outline of the significant amount of detail that are in the three documents that were published and we are launching here today.

Moving on to looking at the regulatory connection we are delighted to have Eoin O'Dowd here this morning and Catriona Shaffrey. Catriona is a Royal institute of the architects of Ireland registered architect. Also a fellow and past president of the institute of designers, and an RAI conservation architect grade three. Her practice CPA architects is based in Dublin and covers interior architecture, and architecture with particular interest in design for all universal design, in every aspect of the lived environment. She lectures extensively in interior design and continues to work in this sphere. She has worked as a consultant to other architects and worked on many numerous disability access reports. I am delighted to have Catriona.

Also Eoin O'Dowd is chartered built control surveyor and buildings standards advisor at the department of the housing, Local Government and heritage. He holds a diploma in law and is a chartered building control surveyor, and a registered building surveyor. He joined Carlow fire and rescue service in 2008, working primarily in the air of fire prevention and building control. He was seconded to the building control management project in 2015, and joined Dublin Fire Brigade in 2016 as senior executive fire prevention officer. Eoin joined the department in 2018 where we has been working primarily in the area of accessibility and fire safety.

Eoin also lectures part‑time in fire safety practice, postgraduate diploma in Trinity College Dublin in the area of building control, legislation and technical guidance document B.

So over to you Eoin and thank you very much for presenting here this morning.

>>: Thank you very much Ger, good morning everyone. For the next part of this webinar, I will be looking at the system of building control in Ireland. The regulatory context for the design of buildings, including and most importantly from this point of view, the minimum standards of accessing and using buildings.

I will be looking at how a standard like EN17210 may interface with that system.

It is a system, a structure of regulation of the design of buildings, providing our minimum standards. At the head of it, the building control act, providing the enabling legislation, giving rise to the building regulations and the building control regulations.

Under the building regulations, we have a system of application, when do we have to apply our standards? We have the functional requirements, what do we have to do? What are our minimum performances? We have our technical guidance documents, how do we do it? We have a small number of exemptions for buildings which I will go into in a short amount of detail. Beside all of that, we have the building control regulations, a system of administration under which you have a system of notices, or commencement notices, or applications, fire safety certificates, and our disability access certificates. And our certs of compliance or completion for certification of compliance on the conclusion of works.

But ultimately those building control regulations are there as a system of administration to ensure compliance with our building regulations to provide those minimum performances of health and safety in our self buildings.

When we think about the building regulations, we are drawn almost often to the technical guidance document. The our technical guidance document M, access and use is currently out for consultation for update which I will come bang to later on.

Before we go into the requirements, it's important to understand the structures of when and how to apply the regulations under Article 8. We have exemptions, there are a small number of buildings exempted from the requirements, temporary buildings, ancillary accommodation to dwellings, like sheds or glass houses. Mobile conveyances or lighthouses. When we do have to apply them, we must apply the work in accordance of the regulations and can't make an existing building worse. New buildings and extensions have to comply with the requirements. Certain material alterations have to comply with requirements where they have a structure of fire safety or an access and use requirement. But it's only the works.

On certain material changes of use, moving a building from one use to another have to comply with our requirements, including the requirements of part M.

What it leads to is a progressive improvement in our requirements of access and use and of health and safety.in and around our buildings.

What are minimum performances? They're set out in a high level function requirements, adequate provision is made that people have access and use a building, to approach an access extension, that sanitary facilities should be provided for people for access and use within an extension.

Supporting those requirements, those high level functional statements are the technical guidance documents, that they ‑‑ where they are followed, they are in compliance with the building regulation, but there still are minimum standards to be met.

In the context of EN17210, we may publish technical guidance, they are prima facie compliance, but they don't prohibit the use of any other suitable standard or specification for compliance with the building regulations. That's where a standard like EN7210 may come in. This is highlighted in our TTDs, that the relevant requirements must be complied with. They set out our requirements, minimum performances that can be built upon using a standard like 17210. But in using them, evidence may be required to establish that the minimum performances are being met. So it falls to the designer to make sure that our minimum requirements are being met in a proper way.

In looking at EN17210 as I said, we have a suite of technical guidance documents, 12 documents delivering the compliance or requirements of the building regulation. Part M is most relatable to EN17210. But when you do a deep dive into 17210, it also has requirements in respect of fire safety, in respect of ventilation, in preventing falls across a void or an edge, falls out windows or fall through a window. It has requirements in respect of energy control in buildings. All of which are covered by a many great number of building regulation and technical guidance documents.

So it's important to understand the context in which the standard has been applied and the requirements which it may be attempting to comply with.

In applying a standard like EN17210, it is a comprehensive document, and there is an awful lot of detail in it. Many components of which are complimentary to technical guidance document M. Care needs to be taken in the use and application of any alternative whole document approach. We have a few examples of differences and variations between TGDM and 17210. In TGDM, a minimum performances for the rise of a flight in buildings, generally we would have a requirement for a landing, a of 1.8 metres, to provide an adequate place of rest for someone ascending a stairs. When we look at E17210, it has a functional requirement that regular landings are provided at regular intervals to provide a user with rest. And under the supporting standard, it specifics 16 risers between flights, or spaces limited, no more than 20 risers. Which could give to a construction solution that has landings at every 2.4 metres which is different from that of TGDM, so in designing buildings, care needs to be taken to ensure that the minimum standards are being met.

Similarly, at the moment technical guidance document M is out for draft for public consultation to enhance its provisions to include for changing places facilities in the built environment, to facilitate the greater use of the built environment by individuals irrespective of ability.

Under 17210, the requirements of changing places facilities as specified for large transport facilities, road side petrol and service facilities, retail and leisure complexes, without going into detail of what constitutes a large transport or large service facility.

When we look at the proposed list of requirements in TGDM, there is a far broader scope of application of the CP facilities. Hospitals, care centres, assembly buildings, schools, offices, shops, shopping centres, hotels, et cetera. With minimum floor areas or area capacities that are specified in the TGD. So EN17210 can be a different approach, but care needs to be use in the direct application of the provisions to make sure that the minimum performances in the TGD are still being met and that the policies set out and through the TGDs are being obtained.

If we move on for a moment from the technical ‑‑ the guidance document and the building regulations, we also have a system of administration of our building control in Ireland. A number of building uses and types require a disability access certificate to be lodged and granted by the local authority before the building can be used. When the application is made, the requirements and particulars of the application have to relate to part M, our access and use requirements. Where a local authority is making a decision on that application, it is limited in its extent in terms of making a decision in respect of part M. So again in the use of 17210, which is a fantastic document, when you look at all of the depth and detail for the use of the built environment both inside and outside buildings, it does go further than what we envisage in the technical guidance document, matters of fire safety or of prevention of falls. Matters of management in buildings, which is again important when we move from the design and build phase through to the operation and use phase. But it's only the matters of the building regulation which should be captured as part of a disability access certificate.

So we do have our system of building control and our building regulations. We have a part M requirements, our minimum performance supported by TGDM. We allow the use of alternative approaches, they're enshrined in the legislation, but care needs to be taken. 17210 is a useful document with a lot of detail in it, but the minimum performances that we would set out do still need to be met. And diligence needs to be taken in applying the criteria prescriptive, is it worse than TGM, has enough proof been provide that had the minimum performances required have been met.

Thank you very much for your time. I will pass you over to my colleague Catriona.

>>: I would just like to talk about the beyond part M aspect of it, and one of the key areas that was mentioned earlier in the introduction by Tom was the aspect of diversity. So many of the areas like way finding and that have very big implication for diversity, when you look at seeing, hearing, touch, taste, allergies and hypersensitivity, immunology, physical abilities and cognitive abilities.

And these all come into play very much in the areas, the main areas I am going to speak about, which are way finding, particularly in the urban environment where a visual contrast, tactile info, audible info, signage and pick toe grams all come into play and sometimes conflict with and cause confusion. Access in the outdoor environment, where you have accessible routes, junctions, street furniture, graphics and planting and shared spaces which is both a positive and a difficult thing to do very well.

And then you have outdoor and urban areas which again during the pandemic, this area became so much more important to all of us, playgrounds, parks and nature parks, and access to green spaces.

Now in the next slide, you will see in terms of way finding in the urban environment. One of the issues that I think new document covers very well is the problem we have with modern buildings, particularly in large estates, where you have buildings that are very similar that are done possibly to let and therefore they are flexible. But because they are flexible, they lack an awful lot of character and indicative marks. So you find, say for example here in the right‑hand side, you have got a building halfway down a street, or nearly halfway, and it's called number 1 park place. And it's indicated by this red/outside, you couldn't really find it very easily without that. So this is where graphics has to be applied to a building, and the diagram that's shown in the document shows very clearly clues that you can give as to where an entrance might be and how you would highlight it.

So again on the top left there, you can see a building where the only clue you have as to where the entrance might be is because there is a projecting bay that goes all the way down to the ground. So we are looking all the time for these visual clues. The bottom left group of slides is talking about images which are in everyday use such as bus stops. And again speaking with somebody who has a 90 per cent blind definition, she has advised me that the new graphics for Dublin Bus where there is a green and yellow are not giving enough contrast for her to see very clearly. The original image for Dublin Bus, which is clear, you know that that's a symbol for Dublin. It's very easily recognisable. There is a very good colour contrast.

Also when you have signage, that you have good contrast, black on white or white on black, or light colour against a dark colour is very clear. You could also use this to highlight things like doorways or steps so that you know when or where the hazard is going to be.

One of the things that I think is very interesting about this is when you go to a country where the language is totally different, this is an image from Ngoia, where I didn't understand the language when I was there, so I was looking for visual clues the whole time to see where I was in relation to where I was going or where I was staying. On the left‑hand side there, it just gives awe couple of things about accessible routes. Things like visual controls, lighting on accessible routes and tactile objects to help you find your way.

Next slide please. Again, one of the really difficult things that I have come across is where things like pattern and people not fully understanding it, you can see an image on the bottom of somebody wearing clothes the same colour as the background. And you can see how hard it is to discern the object. So ‑‑ then on the top right, you have got manifestations on the window which appear almost like little holes in the surface. This can be difficult for people with dementia, they think there is little openings in the surface. Likewise one of our Dublin bridges casting very, very big shadows, which could read like an obstacle on the surface below, that's just sunlight.

The bottom left illustration is when there is a plethora of signs, it's really difficult to focus in and read them very clearly.

Again so this again is looking at ‑‑ this is a very good diagram from the document, 17210, where it shows you very clearly the type of information, the scale of information. On the right hand side, the first slide illustrates where you have so many signs, you don't see any, it's really difficult to focus in on them. Whereas at the bottom, this is a photo from the new national rehabilitation hospital, where they did a lot of research and Daisy Ward for example just became daisy. It's very clear, very quick and easy to recognise. And on the top right then, there is a changing places sign which incorporates braille and raised lettering.

So in the outdoor environment, one of the things that is really, really improved and this document will help to pull it along further I believe, the top left photograph there is a lovely example of sheltered housing out in Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown. Very connectible, very easy to follow. The planting indicates the way finding. The top right is a recently completed car park at the Cashel palace, very level surfaces, very good drainage that is shallow and not a trip hazard. Then on the bottom left, where we have these Bogland walkways which have made our natural environment so much more accessible to buggies and wheelchairs, and the general public.

Then you have areas like the top right where there is a serious conflict of signage, just so much going on, it's really quite difficult to know exactly when and where you should cross. Clear signage then, this is actually inside in a building, but it's just very clear, very simple, very obvious, you are going to level 5. And then within the document, it also shows, for example, the toilet symbol, on the bottom left there, symbol three there is a little indicator that tells you where the braille will be, the raised lettering. So it's again very clear what's going on, where.

Again street furniture and planting, the top right slide is a situation I want to describe to you, I was with somebody who was visually impaired, and there was a large truck parked on top of the pavement, illegally. And the space between those sign boards and the truck was about 600 million roughly. And ‑‑ mill roughly. I had to grab her arm to stop her walking into the projecting sign which was projecting around 150 mill. You are allowed 100 mill. Normally she wouldn't walk that close, but because the truck was there, she was walking closer to the boundary wall.

Again level surfaces, we have a lot of our parks et cetera very accessible. On the bottom slides there, the top one is Clonakilty, which is a wonderful example of a street where older people can sit and rest, and it makes for a very convivial environment.

And just two other illustrations just showing break‑ups of areas which make it much more accessible.

Again these diagrams in the middle here, they're all from the document, and I think they're very clear, and it actually shows some of the instances I am talking about, where you can have problems that are to some degree unforeseen, particularly with things like branches of trees that need to be maintained et cetera.

Again when we are designing our city streets, having places to stop and sit, to break up spaces so that it's not just all about the traffic flow. There are places like this where you have seating, again possibly for older people, giving them space to sit and relax, or just to catch their breath as they move along their day.

One of the areas that's improved hugely, I put in this slide, the bottom left slide is from a lady called Niamh Kent who is an occupational therapist who works with children in the natural environment. Children with troubles. She gets them to hang up side down out of trees. So again our green diverse spaces are becoming more and more useful. The middle illustration is a potential play link area for children for people of all abilities. And on the right‑hand side, you have another park, I wish I had seen the earlier park that Selina had, it looked like a really interesting space.

Again walkways in nature, just talking about parks and nature. This is again where the document really starts pulling things on for us, making us look at things, how we can improve, how we can develop. This is Castlecomer discovery park. I was down there recently and there were people in wheelchairs, it was all very level, it was all very easy, which is I think how it should be. And the other one, the other diagram on the right‑hand side is talking about accessible beaches, which is a really interesting area, and a really good area that should be looked at very closely.

In conclusion ISEN17210 brings more detail to the external environment but there are further developments that are likely to happen. And the next section is problems that I arise in practice will now be illustrated in the next presentation by Fionnula Rogerson.

>>: Thank you very much Catriona and Eoin, I suppose setting the national context and it's not straightforward how standards be integrated not only at a national level, at regulatory level, but also as Catriona highlighted, the practical issues on the ground that we still have to resolve and work through.

We have next Fionnula Rogerson, who is a fellow of the Royal institute of architects in Ireland, practising architect and author of several minuting cases on universal and inclusive design. For over 20 years, she was director of the international union of architects work programme, architects for all, working with architects globally to promote inclusive universal design as a fundamental component of architecture quality and sustainable built environments. She was a member of the SEN research team which completed the first stage of the EU mandate lead to go the development of EN17210. She is currently working with several NSAI and ISO standards committees on accessibility and usability of the built environment, including heritage sites. Delighted to have Fionnula here presenting.

>>: Thank you Ger, I am delighted to be here with you today. I am going to be talking about using these standards in practice, and first of all why we should use them. The suite of standards EN17210 and the technical reports that accompany them are in fact the first European based standard on accessibility and usability to the built environment. And they have been developed based on consensus, not only of all the 15 standards organisations that participated in developing them, but also approximately ten user organisations, including the European Disability Forum, the European voice on standardisation, the European Union, and many others.

So it's a completely up‑to‑date suite of standards published only some months ago. They cover a wide range of users, locations, building types and details. There is a clear distinction made between the requirements and the recommendations which I will explain further on. It's great to have a standard that is illustrated, not only with good examples, but also it does show samples of what not to do. And in the TR, it gives examples of the technical requirements in graphic form.

The diversity of users and design considerations that are not covered by the technical guidance document part M include things such as the immune logical functions, allergies and hypersensitivities, physical abilities, whilst part M includes or is based on an independent use of the built environmental, the EN17210 also includes situations where people may require assistance, voice and speech functions, and also cognitive abilities and characteristics, such as perception, memory, decision‑making, dyslexia, dementia, and autism amongst others.

Basic functional requirements which aren't covered in the technical guidance document include way finding, outdoors, Catriona also mentioned, routes, plazas, shared space, guidance paths, bridges, underpasses and the like.

It covers a lot of external areas such as arrival and departure areas, the variety of vehicles that you would normally meet, not just cars but also coaches, taxis, mini buses with side access, rear access; electric vehicle charging; cycles and non‑cycles ‑‑ non‑standard cycles I mean, which are something that more and more people are beginning to use to mobilise in urban areas, and also parking for non‑standard cycles as well.

The kind of things that aren't covered under M in relation to horizontal and vertical circulation through travelaters and escalators. There is guidance on balconies and this is something we have had recent problems with which have had to be referred to on Bord Pleanala to make a decision on.

Services and equipment, facilities for assistance dogs are covered, lockers, storage, public information screens. And evaluation is also covered, not in great detail, but there is quite a detailed informative annex to the standard, but you will understand the design objectives. You will understand issues such as places of safety and rescue assistance and also covered are environmental conditions such as acoustics and indoor air quality.

Specifically uses is covered in 17210 that aren't covered by the TGD, student accommodation, adaptable housing, libraries, museums, heritage buildings, gyms, swimming pools. Types of administration, banks, courts, police stations, offices, industrial and educational and healthcare facilities as well as religious facilities.

And then outdoor and urban areas, including playgrounds, gardens, parks and beaches. And finally trance fort facilities, train stations, bus stations, coaches, metros, airports, ports, even cable cars are covered.

So when you are using the document, I believe you need the two principle documents, 17210 which is the functional standard, the functional requirements, and 17621 which is the technical report which gives the technical detail which assists in demonstrating that you have actually complied with the functional requirement.

So within 17210, you have the ‑‑ a clear distinction between the things that are requirements in order to comply with the functional standard, and they are illustrated with reference to the word "shall." So for example this example given here functional issues for museum display will be described such as exhibits shall be placed at a height accommodating everyone. Captions shall be positioned at a suitable height. And when it's making a recommendation, it will describe it as a "should." Accessible interactive devices should be available, some exhibits should include tactile items or copies.

When you turn to the technical report 17621, you will have the same illustration with the same details, the same topics, but in this case it will give the technical requirement. So for example standing height, or at least the height of exhibits should be in a range between 121600 for reading. The heights of controls should be at a specific highlight. Lighting, you are then cross‑referenced back to the technical details for the levels of lighting. For acoustics, visual contrast and so on.

So you need always so cross‑reference from the functional standard 17210 to the technical report 17621. Here I have just taken an example of the information provided on changing place facilities. On the left‑hand side, you will see an illustration of what in fact is required as a function of a changing place facility illustrated and on the right‑hand side, the technical details that allow you to check whether you have actually met the functional requirement. And I would just mention here that the draft consultation document out for the revision to part M of the building regulation to include data on changing place facilities is out for consultation at the moment, and I believe it has been based very much on what's in this European standard, there may be some differences and I would encourage you all to refer to the consultation document and make submissions as you see fit. I believe they're open for submissions until early in May.

The third document or technical report that comes with this standard is one on conformity assessment. And it describes very simply how to assess conformity based on the types of conformity, whether it's first party, second or third‑party. First party being self certification. The types of functional requirements that you need to consider when you are determining which should be applied.

The reference documents that you may use to ensure that you have conformed to national standards. It could be building regulation, or it could indeed be this technical report 1761. The methodology to use, and then the stages at which you should assess conformity, and these would be inception, planning, construction and completion.

Then there are some sample tools and templates that can be used. We are pretty well used to doing this now here as designers, those of us who have acted as either a signed certifier or design certifier, and the procedures that we would normally use to assess conformity throughout the design process and through the construction and on completion would be somewhat similar, so we would be used to using this type of tool.

So I would just like to then move on to giving a couple of examples of how we have been able to use the European norm in practice. And in both of these examples I am going to talk about areas in the external environment, where it's not easy to find good guidance here in relation to external environments, and accessibility and usability. Because part M doesn't really cover them. So this first case relates to the Cobh public realm enhancement plan, currently being done by Cork County Council and Julie Maloney who many of you will know. And which is about the revitalisation of the central area of Cobh. As those of you who are familiar with Cobh, you will know it's very heavily trafficked with lots of car parking and movement in the centre of the town and it has taken a lot from the sense of place that one might otherwise have had a couple of centuries ago in this historic and hillside town.

Julie is trying to revitalise the town through this scheme, along with others in the County Council, and has had a lot of consultation with residents and visitors and organisations concerned.

When she approached us, and we in turn approached the national council for the blind in Ireland, to look at some of the detail of this area, to carry out an access audit first of all, and then to advise and discuss one of her proposals which was to use shared spaces throughout the central part of the town.

For those of you who are family with shared space, you will know that it's quite a contentious topic. Many people who are blind or vision impaired are not very happy with shared space, not just people who are blind and vision impaired but also older people, people with children, can be quite nervous in using shared space.

What's interesting about the EN17210 is that there has been guidance given as to how shared space might be designed in such a way as to be acceptable to all users.

So in working with Julia and with NCBI, we used the principles established in 17210, the principle of creating gateways, at the arrival to an area, that then used shared space, creating comfort zones, meaning having spaces which would be pedestrian only, and even though it's on a level surface with the shared space or the carriageway area, they are nontheless defined using the criteria given in the EN to ensure that they are identified as safe comfort zones.

We followed the guidance on pavings and crossings, and on the use of colour contrast to define spaces, which were shared and spaces which were not, and the use of planting and street furniture as well in order to achieve the type of user friendly environment that the design team were aiming for.

Finally I am just going to mention a little bit about another project, this time it's in Temple Bar. Working with Dublin City Council roads department on a new public realm improvement scheme for Temple Bar square and the surrounding streets. Here we were able to follow the guidance on squares, and using the guidance for accessible routes. Guidance paths, crossings from one side to the other, colour contrast, light reflectance, values and street furniture, and again it's something we have worked closely with users and other organisations as well in arriving at the final scheme.

So just to finish, I would like to give a word of caution nonetheless, because not everything in the standards go beyond TGDM. For example the EN is based on turning circle, if you like of 1500 millimetres, whereas the technical guidance document to our building regulation M is based on an 1800, so it's a higher standard. Not everyone is covered by it as well. I have had reason recently to see if there was much information on bariatrics and type three obesity, and no there isn't ‑‑ not very much a at all. So there is a lot of space too for improvement. And one other word of caution and that is of course the building regulations take precedence if you are faced with having to take a decision.

But nonetheless, I would strongly recommend that all of you consider purchasing a suite of these standards because there is a lot of information there which will be extremely useful to you in practice and will help in determining or in broadening your horizons in terms of the kind of information that's available for all the areas that part M does not cover. Thank you very much indeed.

>>: Great, thank you very much Fionnula for such insight. But also the practical examples already of using this standard here in Ireland.

We are delighted that we have Minister Anne Rabbitte here with us this morning. Minister for State with responsibility for disability, department of children, equality disability integration and youth. Minister, thank you very much, and I know you have been listening to a number of the presentations here this morning, so I would love to hear your views and your thoughts.

>>: Good morning, and I am very pleased to join your webinar today and I hope you have found it valuable, and insights informative. And you are quite right, I have been sitting and listening and enjoying the prejudices for some time there, so thank you very much. I think that it's important that everyone procuring and designing new buildings and retrofitting existing buildings is aware of the benefits of incorporating universal design and accessibility from an early stage in all of its projects. Universal design and accessibility are a key part of design quality and should be recognised as beneficial to all users of all buildings or places. Earlier this month, I visited the house of disabled peoples organisation in Copenhagen an, described as the world's most accessible office building. Universal design was part of its design and construction from day 1. It was largely used by disability groups, but that can be used also by organisations, groups and companies. It was a very impressive building and one which showed how if universal design is incorporated from day 1, it doesn't necessarily mean increased building cost, it exemplifies the UNCRPD to an ultimate degree. I would highly recommend a visit to Copenhagen an. I think that this new standard EN17210 has the potential to become a very, very useful tool to enable useful design and accessibility to be integrated into projects as part of procurement, and then throughout the design and construction process.

I am conscious that accessibility of the built environment is central to Ireland's obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, in particular under articles nine, accessibility. And 19, living independently and being included in the community. You will also have heard here today that the European accessibility act sets out that accessibility should be achieved by the systemic removal and prevention of barriers, preferably through a universal design approach, which contributes to ensuring access for persons with disabilities on equal basis with others. We still have work to do in Ireland to ensure access for persons with disabilities on equal basis with others becomes a reality, but standards like this one can support us as we work towards that goal.

A practical example of how standards like the EN17210 can influence positive change in relation to our minimum standards is the current consultation on amending part M of the building regulations to provide changing places toilets in certain buildings. These are a facility that are badly needed to promote inclusion in our society, and I am aware that the new standard was used as a key reference by the working group, that developed the proposed changes to the regulations. I would encourage you to review the proposed changes of part M to provide for changing place toilets and to respond to consultation process. While standards are very useful tool however, we must also recognise the importance of engaging with users as part of the design process. Taking universal design approach to user engagement means that we prioritise the involvement of users with a wide range of ages, abilities and preferences. This is also aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, which sets out the need for consultation and active involvement of people with disabilities in decision‑making process that concerns them. Everyone involved in procuring, finding, building, maintaining and managing the built environment needs to be aware that their decisions can impact on the everyday life of disabled people from transport to education, employment and housing.

With user engagement in mind, I think another initiative for everyone here today to be aware of is the town centre first policy which was launched by the government in early February. That policy notes that towns impact on our quality of life and should be attractive places for people of all ages, all abilities and all social backgrounds to live. It refers to another useful tool developed as a partnership between the national transport authority, Age Friendly Ireland, green schools, and the CEUD, universal design walkability audit tool for roads and streets.

This is for audits intended to be carried out by a wide range of people of various ages and abilities. For example parents with buggies, children, wheelchair users, older persons and people with low vision to identify features of roads and streets that prevent them from focusing access services and amenities with ease.

I think that this standard, the EN172 societal has the potential to be a useful tool for local authorities when responding to walkability audits, with improvements to our public realm as it scopes, includes, external access routes like footpath, bus stops, public seating and other street furniture. With this in mind, I want to reminded you that part M of the building regulation sets out minimum requirements for access and use in the built environment. Very often, we focus on regulation the minimum requirements can be treated as the target rather than as a minimum. When we have that approach, the minimum requirements can often end up becoming the maximum standard achieved in practice.

I believe that we need to rethink our mindset in relation to universal design. Good practice standards such as the EN17210 can enable us to recognise and go beyond the minimum and have confidence that the specifications we seek are recognised at a European level, and can I thank all the presenters that I was listening to, because I really enjoyed the lady ‑‑ I think her name was Catriona, talk about actually when there is a car parked on that footpath and an overhanging tree. Simple things make an awful awful difference to person's accessibility. We need to look at the built environment indoor and out there. thank you so much for having me this morning.

>>: Thank you very much Minister, and I suppose taking your time out of a very busy schedule and being there in the background listening to a number of the presentations and definitely the ‑‑ we have heard both officially and unofficially your commitment to the whole area of disability and universal design. So we really appreciate your time here this morning. Thank you Minister.

So we are going to have a quick Q&A, there was a number of questions and I am going to hand over to Tom and Ruth for about two minutes. I think we will get back to other people on the questions. Tom and Ruth?

>>: Thanks Ger, lots of questions coming in in the background there. I think one is about the availability of material following the presentation. So I mean obviously this is going to be recorded, so it will be available for people afterwards, and you can get access to it through the NSAI, so we can follow up with further information there.

Ruth, do you have any outstanding questions that come to your mind.

>>: I see we have a question in about how this new standard relates to the British standard, the equivalent British standard BS8300 and does it supersede it? I don't know the answer to that, my view is that it's probably an equivalent alternative approach under ‑‑ as Eoin described, under the TGDM. I don't know if Elizabeth or own would like to come in on that?

>>: I could possibly answer that, and I see there is a similar question in relation to superseding TGDM. So we do cite BS8300 in the TGD as a means to support a requirement or provision of the technical guidance document. So the TGD will give a requirement and then say for further guidance go to BS8300 where it needs to flesh out details.

Any newer standards can be used as long as it continues to deliver the regulatory requirement. It won't supersede it per se, but it's not to say that in terms of 8300, that can still be used as that's the cited document but obviously there would be complimentary provisions within 17210 that may be similar to 8300. And the performances that are intended in the TGD are still being achieved is what's intended. The TGD as what was said, it is the minimum performances, but it does encourage that universal design approach and going beyond the minimum standards.

In terms of 17210 superseding a TGD, well, the TGD is a technical document published under the building regulations, so there is always be other documents that are similar in terms of our TGDs. But the TGD is the minimal national performance and doesn't supersede as a standard a technical guidance document, but there are options available in the use of a standard like 17210 to achieve the compliance of the building regulations as an alternative approach. It's achieving those minimal performances and a number of examples given in it, building on the minimum performances that we have to provide greater accessibility in the built environment. And again it has to be remembered that part M is dealing with buildings only, whereas 17210 is a far broader document, a lot of content in it in relation to getting around and using the built environment and a lot of good examples have been used in that. It's not just buildings. It's so much more than that. Part M is just buildings, just our minimum performances. 17210 goes into a lot of detail. Hopefully that will answer the question.

>>: Eoin thanks very much for that. That's really a clear answer to that question. I am conscious that we are behind time, and I see we actually ‑‑ I don't think we have any other questions hopefully due to the comprehensiveness of the presentations, so may be we will hand back to you Ger for your closing remarks.

>>: Very good. Thank you Ruth, Tom and Eoin for that. Yeah, it just gives me great pleasure to close this webinar today. We are just about to move into lunchtime. So again, I suppose to ‑‑ what we will put on the screen here where people can actually purchase the standards and through the National Standards Authority of Ireland. But I suppose what we presented here today is showing a whole systems approach from European to national at a very much macro level to ‑‑ a macro level at an organisation level where we had both Dublin south County Council, Cork County Council, implementing the standard already at local, regional level.

I think Selina gave a powerful presentation on the whole lived experience as well as Catriona and Fionnula, examples there what it is and how it can impact on the ground and the lived experience. Not only for persons with disabilities, but for older people, for everybody using buggies, et cetera, and moving luggage. So it is for everybody. Which is the cornerstone of universal design. And to conclude, we have over a number of decades, we have built great expertise here in Ireland which has been recognised at European and international level on the work that we have done in standards and contributing to standards development. So a great shout out to the working committee that NSAI and ourselves have brought together and their huge commitment, again as Geraldine Larkin mentioned at the very start, as the public service, you have actually contributed on developing this standard definitely has to be recognised here today.

Wish you all the best in implementing the standard, and now you know where we live as they saying goes, you can come and talk to us further on how best to implement this in practice. This work will continue as we push on implementing the European accessibility act. So this work, sorry for the committee members, is only starting! Lots more work to do over the next couple of years. So with that, we are also just ‑‑ we are also looking any time for new experts to join our committees, we have a number of committees built environment, ICT, wheelchairs, assistive technology, aging society, working groups. So if people are interested on contributing and being part of this journey, we are always delighted to new members. So with that, we will close this morning's webinar and thank you very much for everybody who has attended. Hopefully you have found that very useful. And we will be in contact with people who had other questions we didn't get a chance to answer. And as Elizabeth is putting up there, this webinar will be available shortly on the NSAI website. With that, I officially close this morning's webinar. And thank you Minister.