

Colourful Crossings

NCBI Position Statement

NCBI supports the equal rights and fair treatment of LGBTQI+ people and laws banning discrimination. Colourful crossings are an expression of support for the LGBTQI+ community and are growing in popularity. In December 2021, Arklow Municipal District became the first urban area in Ireland to add a permanent rainbow to an existing pedestrian crossing as an expression of support for the LGBTQI+ community. Many similar additions to pedestrian crossings have followed around the country, including examples in Limerick and Dublin.

People who are blind or vision impaired require clear, consistent guidance on the location of safe crossing points and traffic control measures, thus making consistency in the design of pedestrian crossings essential for safe navigation across our roads and streets. Assuring the safety of all pedestrians in the design of road crossings is a design imperative.

Why is it Important?

Pedestrian crossings whose designs are inconsistent with traditional black and white crossings can pose a risk to the safety of pedestrians, particularly those who are vision impaired. Black and white crossings afford good visual colour contrast in all lighting and weather conditions. Such contrast is of the utmost importance for people who have a vision impairment as it provides guidance to remain on the correct line of travel and to cross the road safely. Importantly, these crossings are also easily recognisable to drivers. The use of other colours in combination at pedestrian crossings may not afford adequate visual colour contrast in

all conditions. Such colour combinations have potential to cause confusion for both pedestrians and drivers and make it difficult for pedestrians with a vision impairment to locate designated crossing points.

Accessibility Standards

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), 2006

Ireland has signed and ratified the Convention, and hence is bound by the obligations that it establishes.

Article 9 of the Convention states the obligations of State Parties to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. Section 1 and Subsection 1a of Article 9 also specifies that:

1. State Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications...These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to:

- a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces”.

Best Practice Recommendations

Where it is proposed to introduce colours other than black and white adjacent to designated pedestrian crossings, adhering to the following guidance may aid in ensuring the safe crossing of pedestrians:

- Provide effective colour contrast between multicoloured borders and adjoining road surfaces; e.g., by applying white borders along edges.
- Ensure colourful stripes in borders to pedestrian crossings run parallel to the direction of pedestrian travel, to avoid disorientation.

- Use durable, slip-resistant paint and undertake regular maintenance to ensure effective colour contrast.
- Ensure there is no colour placed on top of tactile paving.

Summary

Assuring the safety of all pedestrians in the design of road crossings is a design imperative. The implementation of clear, consistent guidance on the location of safe crossing points and traffic control measures and consistency in the design of pedestrian crossings is essential for safe navigation across our roads and streets.

About NCBI

NCBI, the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, provides support and services to over 55,000 people nationally. Offering technology solutions and innovative programmes to support people in education, the workplace, and wider society. NCBI acts as an advocate for a barrier free and accessible society for people who are blind or vision impaired.

NCBI's Possibility Lab is an innovative, solution-focused access and mobility consultancy offering bespoke training, design advice and fee-based access consultations to key stakeholders and businesses who share our vision for a barrier free and accessible society for people who are blind or vision impaired.

If you require any further guidance, please contact NCBI via hello@possibilitylab.ie

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