

No Sound, No Safety: The Fire Risk for Deaf Students at UCD

Fire safety measures are a critical component of any public institution's infrastructure, ensuring the well-being of all individuals during emergencies. However, for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals, traditional alarms (only auditory) can pose significant barriers to safety. In Ireland, while the Irish Fire Code and I.S. 3217 standards govern fire safety systems, these regulations often fail to address the unique needs of DHH individuals. This inadequacy is particularly evident at University College Dublin (UCD), where the absence of visual fire alarms, such as strobe lights, compromises accessibility and safety for this vulnerable population.

UCD is renowned for its academic excellence and recently has been recognized for being the "50th [university] worldwide for sustainability" (UCD Strategy, pg 6). However, true sustainability encompasses more than ecological practices; it must include creating a safe, accessible environment for all students. UCD's fire safety measures fall short of their obligations under Irish and international anti-discrimination and disability laws. Drawing on key legislation, including the Disability Act 2005, Equal Status Acts, and international sources such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and National Disability Authority (NDA) standards, the research highlights how UCD's failure to install strobe lights perpetuates inequality and jeopardizes lives. By focusing on UCD and the Irish context, I will explore the implications of the university's current policies and propose a feasible solution.

The Irish Fire Code and Accessibility Gaps

To begin, the current fire safety measures do meet regulations for Irish Code, however, the concern is strictly with Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals as the current measures are insufficient. The Irish Fire Code emphasizes the importance of emergency lighting systems, stating their primary purpose is "to illuminate escape routes to assist safe exit from a location in the event of failure of the normal electrical supply" (Fire Code, p. 27). Additionally, I.S. 3217 standards require functional emergency lighting systems across public buildings in Ireland. If a person was to be in a crowded room or their kitchen, they could simply hear the loud alarm and exit the building immediately. The additional emergency lighting usually involves a generator or green exit signs to direct people to the best escape route. With that said, the lighting only helps those who can see it or are in the area where the light can be seen. For example, if a person is in their room sleeping and the fire alarm goes off they will not see any escape or emergency lighting until they open their door to the public part of their building. They must rely on their sense of hearing to alarm them of the danger presented. Despite these regulations, the reliance on auditory alarms disproportionately affects DHH individuals who depend on visual cues for navigation during emergencies.

In comparison, universities in countries like the United States have made strides in accommodating DHH individuals. For example, the University of Washington mandates visual alarms in all public buildings and residence halls, setting a precedent for accessibility UCD lags behind these international standards, reflecting a broader gap in how Irish institutions address disability needs (University of Washington Housing and Food Services). Although UCD is an Irish university and is ranked within the “1% higher education institutions worldwide”, there seems to be a disconnect between what is best for the University and the people who make this university possible (“UCD by Numbers”). UCD does a phenomenal job with academia, events, inclusivity, and overall success of graduates, however, it is difficult to see the greater success of the college when there are individuals, such as myself, that are not represented. For a university to be within the top 1 percent of higher education and fail to meet accessibility standards that other universities have is an unacceptable issue.

The Human Right to Accessibility

Accessibility is a fundamental human right consecrated in both Irish and international law. Andrea Broderick, a leading researcher at Maastricht University, defines accessibility as “the inclusive practice of removing barriers to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities to built environments, goods, services, and facilities” (Broderick, 2020, p. 393). Without visual fire alarms, UCD fails to meet this standard, creating barriers for DHH individuals and compromising their safety. Broderick’s framework aligns with the Disability Act 2005, which mandates that Irish institutions eliminate barriers and improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities (“Disability Act 2005). Additionally, the National Standards Authority of Ireland explains that Universal Design describes how the application in any format must consider “differences in ability, as with other diversity characteristics, to be part of the normal human experience” (National Standards Authority of Ireland). By not providing strobe lights, UCD violates this legal obligation, perpetuating systemic inequality. Furthermore, accessibility is not merely a legal obligation; it reflects a societal commitment to equity. Institutions like UCD have a moral responsibility to lead by example, ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, feel safe and included. Ignoring accessibility concerns sends a harmful message about the university’s priorities.

As a student at UCD who identifies as Hard of Hearing, I have experienced firsthand the challenges posed by the university’s insufficient fire safety measures. This past November, while studying on the third floor of the James Joyce Library, I removed my hearing aids to minimize overstimulation from surrounding noise. When the fire alarm activated, I initially heard a faint sound but did not understand the severity of the situation. It was only after observing others evacuating that I realized there was an emergency. Upon reinserting my hearing aids, I was met with a blaring siren, which further delayed my response. Even though I was able to follow the other students and find the exit signs, I wondered what my experience could have been like if I had been alone. The what-ifs became my reality that if I could barely hear the alarm while in a

public place, what would happen while sleeping? As a study abroad student, I looked for the university that best met my needs in addition to its location. Even with the accommodations in my housing and sleeping area, many concerns could be fixed with alarms that follow Universal Design. This incident underscores the critical need for visual alerts to ensure timely evacuation for DHH individuals, especially in a university setting where quiet environments like libraries are common.

Addressing Photosensitive Epilepsy Concerns with Modern Strobe Light Design

Before continuing this discussion, it is necessary to discuss a potential reason for the lack of visual alarms following its audio counterpart. A common argument against the installation of strobe lights is the potential risk they pose to individuals with photosensitive epilepsy. Epilepsy is a “neurological disorder which affects the brain” and certain things may trigger seizures to take place, including “missed medication.. lack of sleep, stress, [and] illness. Photosensitive epilepsy occurs in roughly “3-5%” of epileptic individuals and seizures may ‘potentially’ be triggered by flashing lights (Epilepsy Ireland). However, the National Disability Authority (NDA) addresses these concerns, noting that modern strobe lights, particularly LED-based systems, operate at safe frequencies of 2-4 hertz, well below the 5-30 hertz range most likely to trigger seizures (NDA, 2021). Proper installation to avoid overlapping flashes further mitigates these risks, making strobe lights a viable solution that balances safety and accessibility for all individuals.

Moreover, modern technology offers customizable options that can cater to diverse needs. For example, some strobe systems (such as Lumastrobe and Ultra Secure) include adjustable brightness and frequency settings, ensuring safety for those with photosensitivity while providing critical alerts for DHH individuals

Supporting Evidence from International Standards

While Ireland’s fire safety regulations have yet to mandate visual alarms, international standards, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have set a precedent for inclusive practices. The ADA requires that dormitories and public accommodations include visual alerts to ensure the safety of DHH individuals. This accessibility highlights a critical gap in Ireland’s fire safety measures, emphasizing the need for UCD to adopt similar practices. Although the ADA is not directly applicable in Ireland, it serves as a compelling example of how visual alarms can enhance accessibility and safety. From an Irish-specific perspective, the NDA’s guidelines recommend visual fire alarm systems as best practices for institutions aiming to comply with the Disability Act 2005.

Failure to provide reasonable accommodations, such as strobe lights, exposes institutions to legal liability. In Ireland, case law has established that negligence leading to preventable harm constitutes a breach of duty (Irish Legal Guide). For example, in the precedent-setting case

Musgrove v. Pandellis (1919), liability was assigned when negligence resulted in injury during a fire-related incident. This case involved a hotel fire where insufficient safety measures led to harm, demonstrating that institutions are accountable for ensuring adequate safety protocols. While this case predates modern disability law, its principles remain relevant. Since some safety measures match the case from 1919 and technology seems to have advanced rapidly, an emergency can potentially be more severe. If a fire-related emergency at UCD resulted in harm to a DHH individual due to the absence of visual alarms, the university could face significant legal repercussions under anti-discrimination and accessibility laws.

Legal Obligations Under Irish Law and International Precedent

The Disability Act 2005 explicitly requires public institutions to identify and eliminate barriers to accessibility, ensuring every person has equal access to facilities and services. UCD's failure to implement strobe lights highlights a clear violation of this mandate. Similarly, the Equal Status Acts prohibit discrimination in access to goods, services, and facilities. Even though it may not be visible how certain services or facilities are not accessible, it is important to know that some areas of the university do not meet Equal Status Acts. By neglecting to provide visual fire alarms, UCD denies DHH individuals their right to safety, effectively discriminating against them based on disability.

Jeffrey Brown, a legal scholar, reinforces this perspective in his paper "What Makes Disability Discrimination Wrong?" by arguing that "moral obligations to provide accommodations are essential to achieving equality and respect for individuals with disabilities" (Brown, 2021, p. 2). Reasonable accommodations, such as visual fire alarms, address structural barriers and express societal commitment to inclusivity and equality. These accommodations should not need to be labeled 'accommodations' as providing a visual alarm in addition to an aural one should already be the standard practice.

The ADA's requirement for visual alarms sets an international standard for accessibility in fire safety. Similarly, in the UK, the Equality Act 2010 mandates that public institutions make "reasonable adjustments" to accommodate individuals with disabilities (Equality Act 2010, c. 15). Case law, such as Barclays Bank PLC v. Edwards (1999), which takes place in the United Kingdom demonstrates the legal repercussions of failing to implement such adjustments. Although these examples are outside the Irish jurisdiction, they underscore the growing global emphasis on accessibility.

Institutions that fail to meet accessibility standards are often subject to significant legal and financial penalties. For example, in the Irish case M.X. v. Health Service Executive (2012), the HSE was ordered to pay €750,000 in damages for failing to provide reasonable accommodations to a patient with disabilities. This case illustrates the potential costs UCD could incur if found negligent in ensuring fire safety for DHH individuals.

The Installation of Strobe Lights Is a Feasible and Necessary Solution

The financial feasibility of installing strobe lights across UCD's campus is well within reach. To estimate costs accurately, I used multiple sources to ensure the breakdown is grounded in realistic figures. Using my mathematical knowledge as well as other students studying engineering, I was able to find the following information and output.

1. **Number of Strobe Lights Required:** UCD's campus comprises approximately 60 buildings, including accommodations, schools, libraries, additional buildings, and offices, based on the UCD Campus Map and Building Directory. Assuming roughly 50 strobe lights per building—covering lecture halls, separate study rooms, and common spaces—a total of 3,000 units would be necessary.
2. **Cost Per Unit:** According to suppliers like Woodie's and Kidde, strobe lights suitable for fire safety systems range between €50 and €150 each.
3. **Labor and Installation Costs Per Unit:** Based on estimates from Stillorgan Electrical Services' main page, labor costs for professional installation average €100 per unit.

Calculation:

- **Lower Estimate:** $(3,000 \text{ units} \times €50) + (3,000 \text{ units} \times €100) = €450,000$
- **Upper Estimate:** $(3,000 \text{ units} \times €150) + (3,000 \text{ units} \times €100) = €750,000$

This investment, while significant, is modest compared to UCD's annual budget allocations and revenue from tuition and student fees. UCD proudly claims they have received “722 million euro... in externally funded research in last 5 years” (UCD by Numbers). Understanding that this money was received by partnerships, organizations, and other institutions is clear, however, if the university claims to not be able to provide updated smoke/audio alarms due to cost, this will need to be further examined as they seem to be receiving a fair amount of funds from outside sources. With tuition for non-EU students reaching upwards of €20,000 annually and on-campus housing costing an average of €7,000 per year, the university generates substantial income (University College Dublin 2024). Transparency in allocating this income is vital, especially when safety measures remain underfunded.

Most Feasible Solution

UCD must prioritize the installation of strobe lights in key locations. To address concerns about cost and potential disruption during installation, the university can phase in the upgrades over two to four years, beginning with the highest-risk buildings like sleeping areas and high-occupancy lecture halls. By collaborating with electrical contractors specializing in accessibility-focused safety systems, UCD can ensure efficient implementation while minimizing disruptions

to campus activities. Additionally, the use of energy-efficient LED strobe lights aligns with the university's sustainability goals. The best time of year to install in the areas would be summertime as most students are home and staff are on holiday.

Beyond installing visual fire alarms, UCD must implement regular checks to ensure all systems are functioning. This includes scheduling maintenance for both auditory and visual components and receiving feedback from students, including those with disabilities, to identify any gaps in the alarm's performance or accessibility. Furthermore, UCD could integrate advanced technologies, such as mobile-based emergency notifications to enhance campus-wide accessibility. This could be used with the Living at UCD app or a student broadcast to ensure every person in the area is aware of the danger. Even though accommodation provides a flashing light and small vibrator disc for sleeping areas, there could be a wearable wristband or SMS message that students use when an emergency takes place.

Conclusion and Clear Investment

Investing in strobe lights protects UCD from potential lawsuits and aligns with its ethical responsibility to provide a safe environment for all students. Furthermore, given Ireland's recent allocation of substantial public funding for educational improvements, UCD has an opportunity to prioritize accessibility initiatives like fire safety upgrades. Even if there have been no cases of injured students, staff, or visitors on UCD's campus, these improvements should be a priority to ensure the safety of everyone. If a study abroad student, who has been living in Ireland and their accommodation for less than four months can recognize a clear issue in accessibility- I can only wonder what other problems students may see spending four years on the campus. It is not just the accommodation but also the public spaces where students are at risk due to the university's negligence.

While UCD has been celebrated for its environmental initiatives, true environmental sustainability must account for the human environment. Investing in fire safety accessibility for DHH individuals fulfills legal and ethical obligations as well as aligns with the university's broader commitment to sustainability and innovation. Ensuring that every student feels safe and included reflects the essence of a truly sustainable campus, that values its community as much as its ecological impact.

Annotated Bibliography

Broderick, Andrea. "A Reflection on Substantive Equality Jurisprudence." *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law*, no. 1–2, SAGE Publications, Nov. 2014, pp. 101–22. *Crossref*, doi:10.1177/1358229114558381.

Andrea Broderick, a researcher from Maastricht University, examines how European and international law, in certain disability equality cases, has not reached the minimum standard of protection. One of the main methods discussed in the paper is recognizing the different experiences of people with disabilities in society. Discrimination against people's diversities, especially in education, is a common thread throughout the paper. The primary issue the researcher addresses is discrimination based on disability, which includes all forms of discrimination, with a particular focus on indirect discrimination and the denial of accommodation.

The paper highlights the positive steps that have been taken to raise awareness and find solutions for individuals with disabilities. However, it also points out how governments have failed to recognize the systemic disadvantages that exist in environments where negligence and uneducated perceptions prevail. The researcher offers potential solutions or changes to the system, citing cases that demonstrate positive trends and steps being taken to improve equality for all people.

The central theme of the research paper is that disabled individuals and Roma applicants are among the most marginalized groups in society. Both groups are subjected to higher standards than the general population, which she makes clear is not inequitable and unjust. Roma applicants refer to individuals from the Roma ethnic group, often facing discrimination and marginalization, particularly in areas such as education, housing, and employment. (225 words)

Brown, Jeffrey M. "What Makes Disability Discrimination Wrong?" *Law and Philosophy*, no. 1, Springer Science and Business Media LLC, Apr. 2020, pp. 1–31. *Crossref*, doi:10.1007/s10982-020-09384-5.

Jeffrey Brown focuses on what makes disability discrimination particularly objectionable. Throughout the paper, he defines disability discrimination as the failure or denial of reasonable accommodations for a disabled person. Brown emphasizes that reasonable accommodations are modifications that allow disabled individuals to enjoy the same privileges as non-disabled individuals, without specific context or limitations.

He examines how disability law and policies that fail to meet the requirements for reasonable accommodations are, in fact, instances of illegal discrimination. Many legal scholars argue that failures to provide such accommodations constitute wrongful

discrimination in itself. Brown also discusses how the failure to make reasonable accommodations is inherently a form of discrimination. Although the discrimination may not be obvious to others, it is clear to the disabled person how an organization or community is failing them.

Brown argues that disability discrimination is wrongful and violates the principles of relational equality. He examines wrongful disability discrimination in literature, exploring relational theories of wrongful discrimination, and addressing further complications that arise in these cases.

Brown does an excellent job of providing clarifications and demonstrating that limitations are unavoidable in his discussion of reasonable accommodations. He argues that it's essential to focus on what is being denied to a disabled person, rather than treating reasonable accommodations as a general concept. Brown also explains his interpretation of disability discrimination and addresses the claims he encounters in his analysis. While this paper appears to be more opinion-based, it provides valuable sources that lend credibility to his argument. (247 words)

Carroll, Eamonn, et al. "Personal Assistance Services in Ireland: A Capability Approach to Understanding the Lived Experience of Disabled People." *Economic and Social Research Institute*, no. 4, MDPI AG, Nov. 2022, pp. 694–714. *Crossref*, doi:10.3390/disabilities2040049.

The authors of this study are researchers focused on social models of disability and educational quality. Their research examines personal assistance services (PAS) in Ireland, which are crucial for people with physical and sensory impairments. Personal assistance has become an integral part of Ireland's support system, but the study reveals that there is a significant gap between the demand and supply of these services.

One key finding is that personal assistants are underpaid and overworked. Despite the critical nature of their role, many do not receive adequate compensation for the hours worked. The study highlights that nationally, 1.7 million PAS hours were provided to just over 2,500 people. However, 84% of recipients received, on average, only 42 minutes of assistance per day—far less than what is needed for many people to live independently. Their findings were a bit confusing and they seemed to have a lot of information but not the best way to analyze it accordingly.

The researchers also note a lack of clear eligibility criteria for receiving PAS, allocating services inconsistent and inequitable. To understand how services are provided, the researchers interviewed seven individuals across different areas of Ireland. They continue to analyze data to determine how PAS hours can be better allocated to meet the needs of those requiring assistance. This study emphasizes the importance of improving the

system to ensure that people with disabilities can access the support they need. (236 words)

“Fire Safety In Ireland- Report of the Fire Safety Task .” *CFOA*, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, May 2018. https://www.cfoa.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/fire_safety_in_ireland_-_report_summary_of_conclusions_and_recommendations-2018.pdf

The Fire Safety Guide is designed to assist individuals who have control of premises in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Fire Services Act in Ireland. Fire precautions are generally classified into three broad areas: fire management, passive fire protection, and active fire protection. The guide includes sections on special hazards, the interpretation of the responsibilities of those in control of premises, and details on fire safety systems.

This comprehensive source spans roughly 100 pages, providing in-depth information on the Fire Services Act. It offers clear interpretations of the different sections of the Act, detailing various types of places where fires could occur, the appropriate actions to take, and evacuation plans and escape routes. As such, this source is highly valuable, contributing significantly to the existing body of work on fire safety.

The guide also addresses fire lighting in emergencies and discusses fire systems, making it a critical reference for understanding fire safety in different settings. Many other academic sources appear to have used this guide as the primary reference, as it seems to be the source for a great deal of the information found in their papers. Although the guide cites a limited number of additional sources, it remains the most authoritative reference on the topic.

Furthermore, the guide includes a quantitative analysis of fire safety regulations and presents tables for clarity. It also features three appendices that provide relevant legislation and reference standards. (234 words)

Hammond, Dr. Michaela, et al. “The Mental Health Needs and Experiences of the Deaf Community in Ireland – A Qualitative Exploration.” *Health Service Institute*, UCC, <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/mentalhealth/the-mental-health-needs-and-experiences-of-members-of-the-deaf-community-in-ireland.pdf>.

This research, conducted by professionals in the fields of psychology and primary care, explores mental health challenges within the Deaf community. The researchers found that depression and other mental health issues occur at significantly higher rates in the Deaf population compared to the hearing population. Despite the publication of policy guidelines aimed at improving access to services and supports, a notable gap persists between the services provided and what Deaf individuals require and recommend.

The purpose of this study was to examine current healthcare experiences and assess whether the needs of the Deaf community are being met. Findings indicate a critical need to raise awareness and improve both the accessibility and sustainability of services for Deaf individuals. Importantly, the researchers expanded their analysis beyond Ireland and observed similar gaps worldwide, highlighting a broader issue of unmet needs for both the Deaf and the wider disability community.

The study employed a qualitative, exploratory approach, using interview questions focused on key topics such as mental health management, factors influencing mental health, community dynamics, and barriers or facilitators to accessing support and services. Major barriers identified include social isolation, lack of employment opportunities, stigma associated with being Deaf, difficulties in accessing healthcare services, and reliance on others for communication and support. This research underscores the urgency of addressing these challenges to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for the Deaf community and individuals with disabilities on a global scale. (237 words)

Linehan, Christine, et al. "Examining the Prevalence of Epilepsy and Delivery of Epilepsy Care in Ireland." *Epilepsia*, no. 5, Wiley, Apr. 2010, pp. 845–52. *Crossref*, doi:10.1111/j.1528-1167.2009.02417.x.

Christine Linehan, from the UCD Centre for Disability Studies, authored a research paper aimed at examining the prevalence of epilepsy and the delivery of epilepsy care in Ireland. This paper is distinguished as the first nationwide prevalence study of epilepsy in Europe, providing previously unavailable data on the population in Ireland. Before this study, Ireland lacked comprehensive information or research on epilepsy patients.

The study found that, nationwide, approximately 10 per 1,000 people aged 18 and older have a self-reported lifetime prevalence of epilepsy. This means that one in every 100 people has experienced epilepsy at some point. The research, which was funded to provide accurate and timely data on the prevalence of epilepsy and the delivery of care, reveals that previous research on this population was sparse. Furthermore, support for children with epilepsy was found to be inadequate, and family physicians faced considerable challenges in providing proper care due to the lack of available data.

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including data breakdowns, adjustments, and meta-analysis. It also involved discussions with Irish specialists, caregivers, hospitals, and patients to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

This source is incredibly valuable as it provides the first well-detailed, data-driven analysis of epilepsy in Ireland, using a wide range of sources to offer new insights into the prevalence and care of individuals living with epilepsy. (229 words)

McMahon, Paul. "Fire - Irish Legal Guide." *Irish Legal Guide*, 6 Jan. 2023, <https://legalguide.ie/fire-2/#:~:text=Fire%20Services%20Act%20Duty,-The%20Fire%20Services&text=It%20is%20the%20duty%20of,of%20his%20acts%20or%20omissions.>

Paul McMahon is a highly qualified professional, serving as a chartered tax advisor, qualified financial advisor, and solicitor with almost 30 years of experience in the legal field. His expertise lends significant credibility to the source, as he brings extensive knowledge of legal issues, including fire safety law, and translates them into terms that are accessible to the average person. The source is part of the Irish Legal Guide, a practical and comprehensive resource designed to make legal information more accessible to the public

This source provides valuable information regarding fire safety, particularly focusing on the deliberate setting of fires and the legal implications when a fire occurs. It also explores the Fire Services Act and the legal duties surrounding fire safety, especially when someone is injured due to negligence or improper fire management. The source emphasizes that the law must be enforced to ensure safety, and it explains how accidental fires still require accountability, especially when negligence is involved.

One of the most important aspects is the concept of negligence. According to the source, when a fire hazard exists, occupiers or others responsible for the premises may be held liable under negligence law if they fail to manage the fire risk appropriately. They are legally obligated to ensure the safety of individuals on the premises in the event of a fire, which includes having proper fire alarms, signage, and other safety measures in place. (235 words)

Meehan, Gráinne Patricia. *Flourishing at the Margins: An Exploration of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Women's Stories of Their Intimate Lives in Ireland*. Maynooth University, 2017, Maynooth University Research Archive Library, <https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/id/eprint/11186/1/pdf>.

Gráinne Patricia Meehan completed her research thesis examining the intimate lives of Deaf and hard-of-hearing women, focusing on how they navigate their sexual lives and, more importantly, how they feel toward others. The researcher explores the need for equality, even within the intimate lives of individuals. The main question posed is: *How can we create conditions for positive, sustainable change through practice and policy, where Deaf women have opportunities to flourish in their intimate lives?*

The researcher shares narratives and stories from women who were often not seen as “regular” humans simply because they were Deaf, and how being Deaf was perceived as an automatic disadvantage in the dating world. Using rich, detailed accounts, the thesis highlights how Deaf women can be marginalized and displaced within society.

This thesis, consisting of more than 390 pages, is an incredibly in-depth research study conducted at Maynooth University. The researcher sought to amplify Deaf women's opinions and improve access to sexual health services and information. These services include maternity care, contraception, sexual health education, access to Pap smears, and information on healthy relationships. Meehan’s thesis was valuable to the research paper as the issue being discussed needed a personable aspect of what accommodation looks like.

The source provided a clear outlook on what services Deaf women were missing and the ones being provided, but not well enough. (224 words)

Smyth, Emer and Helen Russell "Trends in Disability Prevalence among Young People: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study." *ESRI Research Series*, no. 192, Economic and Social Research Institute, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.26504/rs192>.

The authors are researchers from the Economic and Social Research Institute, as well as the Centre for Education, with a focus on youth and the well-being of children, particularly those with disabilities. Looking at mental health was a different approach to the sources used, however, they helped provide a personal aspect to the constant numbers.

The study examines trends in the prevalence of disability among 13-year-olds over the decades, specifically between 2011-12 and 2021-22. It explores changes in the size and composition of teenagers with disabilities and their socio-emotional symptoms. Researchers looked at disability, health, and overall well-being by asking mothers about their children's general health.

The report highlights that while more young people are seeking help for their disabilities, there has not been enough focus on assessing their needs or adjusting funding allocations for schools. Additionally, the research found that over time, girls with disabilities experience higher rates of depression as they grow older.

A key limitation of the study was the changes in the classification of certain conditions, as well as an increase in numbers across several groups. This made it difficult to identify specific trends or pinpoint clear evidence. However, one consistent finding was that girls consistently had higher numbers than boys, regardless of the overall increases observed.

This was valuable as the study wanted to see a change in children's ability and composition over the years. (230 words)

Treanor, Declan. "The Journey Toward Universal Design for Learning and the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations to Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland." *AHEAD Journal*, <https://www.ahead.ie/journal/>.

The author, Declan Treanor, is the Director of Disability Services at Trinity College Dublin. In his work, he emphasizes the need to reemphasize Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a fundamental approach to education. He argues that inclusive learning practices are essential to creating a support system that can fully accommodate students with diverse needs. Treanor explores how (UDL) serves as a framework to ensure that educational environments are accessible, flexible, and designed to support all learners, including those with disabilities.

He discusses the key drivers of inclusive learning, including policy shifts and pedagogical changes, as well as the stages involved in the development and implementation of inclusive learning models. Treanor particularly focuses on the evolving role of disability services staff in higher education, highlighting how they act as catalysts in promoting inclusivity and providing essential support to students. He examines how these services help ensure that students with disabilities are not excluded but are instead integrated into the academic community.

Treanor also looks at the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project, an initiative designed to increase the diversity of the student population by promoting inclusive teaching practices and policies. This project focused on improving curriculum accessibility and teaching strategies, aiming to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, have equal opportunities to succeed.

This source is well-written and works great to explain how there is a need for Universal Design and Learning. (235 words)