

Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use

Rules and Procedures

1. Timing, Frequency and Openness of meetings

Meetings of the Assembly will generally take place at weekends (Saturdays and Sundays). Full details of the dates for meetings are available on www.citizensassembly.ie. Members of the public will not have access to the meeting venue but plenary sessions will be livestreamed at www.citizensassembly.ie, and recordings of all plenary sessions and presentations will be available online.

2. Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson, as the sole judge of order, shall be responsible for the smooth running of Assembly meetings, and where appropriate shall make recommendations to the Assembly on the management of its business in accordance with the Terms of Reference. It is the sole prerogative of the Chairperson to establish whatever advisory groups that he or she deems are needed, and to appoint whichever members to those advisory groups that he or she deems appropriate.

3. Work Programme

The work programme shall be agreed by the Assembly on foot of a proposal by the Chairperson and Secretary. The work programme shall be reviewed regularly, with subsequent changes only taking effect with a broad consensus of members.

4. Steering Group

A Steering Group shall be established to assist the Assembly with planning and operational issues associated with the overall work programme and meeting programmes. The Steering Group shall consist of a sub-group of the members, the Chairperson and the Secretary.

5. Members' Privacy and Deliberative Freedom

Members of the Citizens' Assembly are entitled to their privacy, and members' personal details will be treated in strictest confidence, in accordance with data protection legislation. The Citizens' Assembly as a whole is entitled to deliberative freedom, such that it can operate without pressure being exerted on it by stakeholders or interest groups. Any individual, organisation or lobby group that

contacts, or attempts to contact, a member of the Assembly to seek to influence that member's views on a particular topic will be automatically excluded from taking part in the proceedings of the Assembly.

6. Debates/speaking arrangements

The format and structure of interventions by members during the meetings shall be determined by the Chair. As a general principle, all contributions by members should be brief, respectful and non-repetitive.

7. Deliberative roundtable discussions

During roundtable discussions, members are encouraged to express their views, deliberate on the issues and request clarifications, if required, from speakers and support groups. The outcome of roundtable discussions can be reflected back to the Assembly during Plenary Sessions. Notes of roundtable discussions will be captured by the notetaker and reported in detail and summary form to the Secretariat, to identify emerging issues and recurring themes. Members will be provided access to the reports of each meeting.

8. Submissions

Submissions received by the Assembly secretariat shall be made available to all members of the Assembly via the www.citizensassembly.ie website.

9. Presentations

Following receipt of submissions, the Assembly may choose to hear oral presentations from any representative group or individual to assist in its deliberations. Invitations shall be issued by the Chairperson on behalf of the Assembly.

10. Voting

Decisions by the Assembly can be taken informally by a show of hands or through formal voting, as appropriate. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Counting of votes shall be overseen by the Chairperson and Secretary and at least 2 members of the Assembly.

11. Advisory Support Group

The Chair shall establish such advisory and other support groups as are considered necessary and appropriate to assist with the work of the Assembly in terms of preparing information and advice.

12. Accessibility of Services and Information for Persons with Disabilities

The Assembly will ensure that services and information will be accessible to all Members including those with a disability, insofar as is practicable and appropriate.

13. Press and Communications

Accredited members of the media shall be permitted to attend plenary sessions of the Assembly, subject to such terms and conditions as may be laid down by the Assembly. As a general principle, the Chairperson shall act as spokesperson in relation to administrative or procedural matters relating to the work of the Assembly.

14. Media and Public Commentary

Until such time as the work of the Citizens' Assembly has been completed and its final report published, members of the Assembly and advisory support groups shall refrain from making public comment about the substantive issues under consideration, including to members of the media or on social media platforms. However, public comment on more general issues such as the Assembly process and members' experiences of being involved in the Assembly, is not subject to the same restrictions.

15. Quality Control and Continuous Improvement

To ensure a high-quality process and to support continuous improvement, members are requested to complete a post-meeting evaluation form following each meeting of the Assembly. Members are encouraged to notify the Secretariat of any issues of concern regarding arrangements for meetings.