



Disability Federation of Ireland Pre-Budget Submission 2009

Disability Federation Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation and advocate for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland that provide services to people with a disability and/or disabling conditions.

Almost 10% of the population in Ireland are reported to have a disability¹. Despite strong economic growth over the last decade, people with disabilities continue to experience an unacceptable level of social exclusion and disadvantage. Twice as many disabled people are in consistent poverty compared to those without such a condition².

It is increasingly evident that disability services are facing a shortfall in funding. There is grave concern that money allocated to disability through the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 is not adequate to deliver the National Disability Strategy (NDS) particularly in light of the modest increases in funding in the later part of the NDP. While the Department of Finance calculated the annual percentage change of 6.57% in 2008 for the NDP, this will decrease to 2% per annum from 2010.

In addition, the lack of investment for disability services in Budget 2008, and the re-allocation of monies within

the HSE, has led to growing concerns that this Government will be unable to deliver their commitments under the NDS.

DFI has identified four key priorities to be progressed in Budget 2009.

FUNDING THE NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

DFI calls on the Government to commit €50 million to develop disability services in addition to multi-annual funding for 2009.

Government committed to investing €50m annually to high priority disability services³ between 2006 and 2009 through the Multi-Annual Funding (MAF) programme. To date the 2008 allocation for disability services has not been released, further jeopardizing the implementation of the National Disability Strategy.

The fact that the MAF did not keep pace with the rate of inflation further undermined the value of money directed to disability services. For instance €50 million in 2006 is worth just €46 million in 2008.

While MAF is very welcome, it represents just a fraction of what is needed to undo decades of under-

1. There are 394,000 people or 9.3% reported to have a long-standing illness or disability in Census 2006

2. DSFA (2008) 'Statement of Strategy 2008' Government Publications

3. High priority disability services focused particularly on the provision of extra residential, respite and day places, extra home support and personal assistance, and extra places in community based mental health facilities

Chart 1 Multi-Annual Funding (MAF) by Real Value of MAF 2006-2008

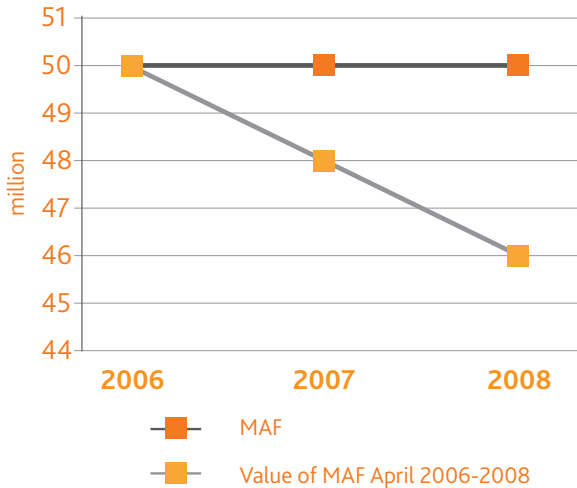
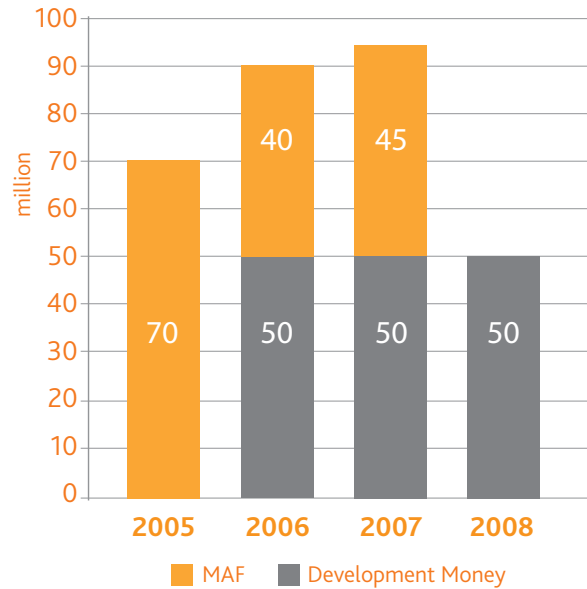


Chart 2 Funding for Health Services for PwD 2005-2008



funding and to respond to new demands arising from the implementation of the National Disability Strategy.

In 2005, the Minister for Finance made it clear that, in addition to MAF, other disability services would continue to be dealt with as a normal part of the annual estimates process. Despite these assurances no funding was allocated to develop new and enhanced disability services in 2008, as shown in Chart 2.

ADDRESSING CORE FUNDING DEFICITS

2

DFI seeks €20 million in Budget 2009 to address core funding deficits within voluntary disability organisations.

Voluntary disability organisations provide key health and social services on behalf of the state to support the

inclusion of people with disabilities. These core services include basic provision such as early intervention, day care services, respite, personal assistants and family support to name just a few.

Over the last number of years a core deficit has arisen in voluntary disability organisations because Government funding for these services has not kept pace with a rise in inflation and the increasing cost of service provision.

Government made some moves to address the problem by allocating €15 million in 2005 and a further €10 million in 2006. Budget 2007 committed a further €5 million to core funding deficits in voluntary disability organisations however this was subsequently diverted to address the HSE's own funding shortfalls.



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No funding for this purpose was committed in 2008. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed.

Overall, the DFI members listed in Table 1 raised 50% of their income themselves in 2006. Fundraising is not a suitable way to provide basic services. It remains clear that service delivery, provided by voluntary disability organisations in the absence of adequate or no funding, is not sustainable in the future.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF VOLUNTARY DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS

3

DFI urges the Government to commit €5 million to fund capacity building among voluntary disability organisations.

'Towards 2016' states that the Government recognises the valuable role of the Community & Voluntary Sector and commits to appropriately resourcing the Sector into the future as part of this agreement.

Now, more than ever before, the governance of voluntary disability organisations needs to be supported to lead organisations through times of change and to respond to increasing responsibilities in terms of accountability and standards in the delivery of services. The introduction of the Charities Legislation, Financial Regulations, and complaints procedures and rising standards in service provision are just a few examples of increasing demands on organisations.

Voluntary disability organisations recognise the need for these changes however they also acknowledge that the investment of adequate resources are required to enhance capacity

Table 1 DFI Member Annual Income & Fundraised Income 2006

Organisation	Annual Income €	Fundraised Income €	Fundraised Income %
Alzheimers Soceity of Ireland	13,657,368	3,806,331	28
Arthritis Ireland	919,851	603,000	66
AWARE	1,649,028	1,042,126	63
Cystic Fibrosis Association	1,650,750	1,502,873	91
Down Syndrome Ireland	1,976,654	1,905,866	96
Heart Children Ireland	192,181	192,181	100
Irish Deaf Society	503,922	397,106	79
Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association	1,311,000	1,010,000	77
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland	7,600,000	4,400,000	58
Muscular Dystrophy Ireland	1,600,000	250,000	16
Jack and Jill Foundation	1,900,000	1,400,000	74
Total	32,960,754	16,509,483	50



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building and systems of governance. This is supported by the Comptroller and Auditor General who reported that the State needs to actively work with organisations to strengthen their organisational capacity⁴.

COST OF DISABILITY PAYMENT

DFI calls on the Government to introduce a Cost of Disability Payment of €40 per week to People with Disabilities.

One key measure in supporting people with disabilities to participate fully in Irish society is the introduction of a Cost of Disability Payment. Research has shown that a significant percentage of people with disabilities incur additional costs of heating, clothes and day-to-day living expenses that are above and beyond that experienced by people without a disability⁵.

These costs vary but typically they affect a person's ability to participate in life-enhancing opportunities, and reduce their standard of living, in some cases below the socially acceptable minimum standard.

If people with a disability are to be equal, the extra costs generated by their disability should not be borne by them alone, but rather society at large should act to level the playing field by covering those extra but ordinary costs. This cohesive approach is essential if Ireland is to achieve the long term vision of an adequate income for people with disabilities as set out in 'Towards 2016'.

DFI urges the Government to progress the commitments in the Department of Social & Family Affairs Sectoral Plan, Towards 2016 and the Programme for Government to consider the Cost of Disability Payment. We recognise that such a payment must not act as a disincentive to employment and should be portable across the employment/non-employment divide⁶.

The introduction of a Cost of Disability Payment is essential to ensure that all people with disabilities have an adequate income and achieve equal participation in society.

⁴ Comptroller and Auditor General Report, 2005: 40

⁵ NDA (2004) Disability and the Cost of Living, National Disability Authority

⁶ Supported by NESAC, 2005: 168