



Disability Federation of Ireland

ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

ACRONYMS

CES	Comprehensive Employment Service
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CRM	Customer Relations Management
CPTN	Community Participation Training Network
CDLP	Centre For Disability Law and Policy
DSG	Disability Stakeholders Group
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
EASPD	European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities
EDF	European Disability Forum
EMI	European Movement Ireland
ESIF	European Social and Investment Fund
EU	European Union
HIQA	Health Information and Quality Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICSH	Irish Council for Social Housing
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTRG	Irish Charity Tax Research Group
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
LCDC	Local Community Development Committees
MEP	Member of European Parliament
NAI	Neurological Alliance of Ireland
NCF	National Consultative Forum
NDSIP	National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan
SSNO	Scheme to Support National Organisations
PPN	Public Participation Networks
PQASSO	Practical Quality Assurance Programme for Small Organisations
UN	United Nations

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Introduction

Chairperson's Statement

The Annual Review is an important opportunity to reflect on the progress of the Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016 and Operational Plan 2015 -16. It also gives us the opportunity to highlight key areas of work and specific instances that occurred during the year.

Our work is to ensure the progressive inclusion of people with disabilities in Ireland. In this regard our Memorandum and Articles require us to focus on supporting Ireland to become an accessible and welcoming place where people with disabilities can flourish and thrive.

I wish to highlight a number of areas but otherwise the Review will provide the full report for the year. It is useful to remember that, as company members, you are also receiving regular progress reports on the implementation of the Operational Plan 2015-16 in the Strategic General Meetings.

The overarching focus of 2015 was our preparation for the General Election, a considerable amount of work was invested into researching and developing the Disable Inequality campaign and in engaging with the political system to highlight the needs of people with disabilities. Significant planning took place during the year and this proved critical in its subsequent roll out in 2016 with the calling of the general election. Through this campaign we have successfully developed a model for public engagement which has the involvement and life experiences of people with disabilities at the heart of it. It provides us with the confidence and platform from which to launch further campaigns. Disable Inequality was a well-resourced and public campaign, centred around people with disabilities. It, along with deciding to take a disability focused approach to the Seanad election, were two critical decisions taken in 2015 which mark a distinctive shift in the way DFI intends to operate.

Late in the year the Government published a roadmap to ratification in relation to the UN CRPD and committed to ratification of the UN CRPD by the end of 2016. Shortly afterwards the Assisted Decision Making Bill was passed by the Oireachtas.

Significant work progressed from the local, through the national and on to the European level. While change needs to happen at the local level, where people live, it is becoming more and more the case that what happens at European and national levels greatly determines what will be available in local communities. Our understanding of the lives of people and families gave us the knowledge of the extent of the continuing attrition taking place in communities and therefore limiting the lives of people with disabilities and their families. By focussing on key areas such as those with disabilities who, under 65 years of age, were inappropriately placed in nursing homes, DFI was in a position to inform the media and general debate on this in the autumn and to drive this policy agenda.

The adoption of the DFI Sustainability and Growth Plan by DFI at the start of the year was crucial to developments throughout the year. It refocused our energies on a small number of critical areas under the banner of DFI becoming an "Agency for Cultural Change". It complemented and gave focus to the work in areas such as education and training, research and in our ongoing relationships with affiliate organisations. That plan, which had strong support from both staff and board, has provided a clear focus along with a growing confidence in relation to the critical work of DFI to bring change to every aspect of Irish life. In this regard it builds on our core objective, as agreed at the 2014 AGM, namely to support Ireland to fully include people with disabilities.

We came into the year with the revelations of abuse in Áras Attracta and the disturbing coverage of growing levels of hate crime, both of which generated significant public debate. These demonstrate the level of cultural and social change required to ensure that people with disabilities are understood and treated as equal citizens in their own communities. Building on our commitment to act as an agent for cultural change DFI placed particular emphasis on engagement with local and national media on a wide range of issues from disability legislation,

DFI's analysis of the Government's legacy to disability, the events as they unfolded in Áras Anghallgairí as well as a wide range of policy and budgetary issues. This enhanced the public understanding of disability and complemented our proprietary work for the General Election.

I want to mention two recent developments in 2016, namely the formation of the new Government and the election of our CEO to Seanad Éireann. There are many commitments to disability and mental health in the Programme for a Partnership Government yet there is scant detail concerning implementation. It is a significant achievement that there is now a Minister at the Cabinet table with a specific disability remit. We must not take the view that progress in these areas will deliver the services and supports that need to be restored after the recession, never mind the serious lack of services that are also there. Ireland continues to be constrained in relation to the availability of public funds and there is serious competition for that funding. DFI will continue to advocate for prioritisation of resources to services and income supports instead of pay restoration across the public services beyond what has been agreed. More service provision is urgently needed as there has been no improvement in the lives of people with disabilities and there is no likelihood of same for some time given the rising demand for such services and competing areas for funding.

The successful campaign by John Dolan that saw him take a seat in the Seanad marks an historic highpoint for our movement. This is the first Seanad general election that returned a vocational non-party candidate. He got elected on the strength of votes from across the political spectrum and allied to that ten of the nominating bodies worked together to support the nomination of two disability focused candidates, the other being Lorraine Dempsey. That also was an historic achievement. We now have a platform within the Oireachtas to help push on the work of getting the UN CRPD ratified but more important to getting the real day to day life changes that are required for people to be able to live with dignity and to participate fully.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors for their hard work and commitment throughout the year, noting the work of the subcommittees and in particular Gary Lee who took over from Clíodhna O' Neill as Chair of the Governance Compliance

Committee and Don Bailey, who continued as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee. I would also like to acknowledge the work and service of my fellow officers, John O Sullivan and Barbara O Connell, Vice Chairpersons. Otherwise I make particular mention of Mike Glynn, recently retired CEO of Epilepsy Ireland and long serving member of the DFI board who stood down this year. Mike has faithfully served DFI since he first joined the Board in 2004 and has also contributed to a number of our Board Committees, most recently as Chair of the Premises Committee and also on the Governance and Compliance Committee.

A special word of thanks to John Dolan, CEO, the management team and staff for their focused commitment to the work of DFI in a year where there were significant and long lasting developments.

It was a year that saw the sad passing of a member of our board, Joe T Mooney. Joe along with a former company member, Dermot Walsh passed away during the summer period.

Joe and Dermot can be described as two great disability advocates, but to me I prefer to identify them as fearless warriors who took the fight for disability inclusion to wherever it needed to be. They were also joined by Frank Mulcahy, who had not been active in recent years due to ill health. Frank, former Chairperson of IWA, was one of the founders of the European Disability Forum in the late 90's.

I knew and worked with Joe and Dermot in DFI. And I have heard so much of Frank through my work in EDF. He was a leading figure in the formative days of EDF and he is still well remembered and respected for his contribution.

To their families and those who loved them is given the greatest loss to bare but for all of us who worked with them goes the loss of great leaders and role models. May they rest in peace while they continue to inspire the next generation.

Thank you.

Pat Clarke

Chairperson

CEO's Overview

The year under consideration was an important year for DFI and this Review helps us appreciate where we are in the context of what opportunities and challenges lie ahead.

We now have a new government and there are a range of commitments relating to disability and mental health along with a super junior Minister for Disability issues, namely Finian McGrath TD. At the same time, the political and Government attention is greatly focused on the housing crisis. It is a crisis and needs to be solved. Disability is a long running crisis which, because it is always there, doesn't get to be seen as a crisis. There is an almost all pervasive attitude that sees disability as an issue that will have something done about it in the good times but which can be neglected in difficult times. It is seen as ok to come and go in relation to responding to it. It is vital that Government and our array of public services understand that the progressive implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN CRPD) requires consistent and whole of Government implementation.

This is a major challenge that faces our movement and we need to be alert to the fact that government commitments do not simply implement themselves. Thankfully Ireland is back to strong growth yet, at the same time, there are growing demands and pressures coming from a range of interests seeking their areas to be prioritised. Public service workers are looking to accelerate restoration of the pay cuts they took above and beyond the agreements that they entered into and there are other instances.

The cost of providing the current level of Public Services is set to increase by €6 billion, according to the Fiscal Council over the 5 years ahead and this is a significant proportion of the projected "extra" funding available, subject to everything going according to plan for the economy. The implementation of the UN CRPD will require significant resourcing to follow its ratification. The upcoming, and subsequent, budgets must restore the cuts to services and then move on to resource delivery and full inclusion for all people with disabilities in Ireland. Clearly my election to the Seanad has come at an opportune time in parallel with the appointment of Minister Finian Mc Grath, T.D. and in that regard it is important that we all

work hard to make the case to our public representatives. DFI can be proud of the fact that we led our Disable Inequality campaign with a call for a Minister at cabinet to focus on disability inclusion.

Concerning the Disable Inequality campaign I wish to point to the opportunity and possibilities that it has provided to get our message out to the public and political entities across the state that disability is an issue that needs to be solved for the overall benefit of society. It provides DFI with a campaigning infrastructure that can be deployed to give us a platform where we can greatly increase the involvement of people with disabilities. The next set of elections, to the European Parliament and our local authorities, are only three years away. Our work now spans from the local community where people live, to the European Union and we continue to focus at both levels. The influence of the European Union is very significant in a number of areas including the shape and focus of our national budgets where we are required to stay within the fiscal spending rules.

Work progressed in other areas such as developing the capacity of people with disabilities for local participation, a project on assistive technology as an enabler for the better participation of people with disabilities and corporate and governance support to organisations. The work of SOLA - The Centre for Excellence and Sustainable Quality - continues to deepen as does our move to establishing a Research Centre in DFI that focuses on the lived experience of people with disabilities.

The year started with the launch of our DFI Sustainability and Growth Plan and it has steered and supported a range of concrete changes in the way the organisation operates. An obvious one being the changing orientation across the staff team. The work of the Development Managers, (formerly Support Officers), has continued to evolve to keep pace with the changing opportunities as identified by DFI over the years of the recession and as clarified through the DFI Sustainability and Growth Plan with it's clear orientation and ambition for DFI to be an "Agency for Cultural Change." We now have two community workers employed to focus on local communities and we are hoping to strengthen our European focus in the near future. The

Disable Inequality campaign was a major contributor to promoting the voice and active participation of people with disabilities and this approach must further grow in tandem with the continuing refinement of our consistent messaging. It was heartening to see the enthusiasm of many of our affiliate organisations in using the Disable Inequality brand and materials to assist in their own election campaigning work.

I wish to thank the Board and particularly the Officers and Chairs of the various committees for the serious commitment of their time and concern for the future of DFI. My express thanks to our Chairperson Pat Clarke for the extensive commitment of his time along with his support to me throughout the year. I give a special word of thanks to Mick Glynn for his faithful and insightful service to DFI through his work as a director of the company over the past 12 years. I wish him well with his retirement and hope that he will not be lost to us. Finally, I am proud to be leading the team of staff at DFI and I thank them for their continued commitment and service.

The deaths of three of our colleagues and fellow campaigners in quick succession last summer was a great blow to me and to all of us. Joe T Mooney, a serving member of our Board, Dermot Walsh a former company member and Frank Mulcahy who had been active in the development of the disability movement here in Ireland and then at a European level. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to these people and we remember the loss that their loved ones now bare. May they rest in peace.

John Dolan
Chief Executive Officer

The Year in Review

Policy Highlights for 2015

DFI has significantly progressed its work on Strategic Priority 1: “To influence the development, implementation and monitoring of policies affecting people with disabilities” over the past year. The following offers some of 2015’s policy highlights.

Health

DFI was proactive in influencing the development of multiple health related areas. DFI was represented on all the Working Groups of the HSE’s Transforming Lives programme, formerly the Value for Money programme. Our approach across these Groups focused on moving away from traditional models of services, to a ‘community services’ model. Other activities included highlighting the need for more linkages across the Working Groups to ensure a more cohesive programme, and holding a ‘Transforming Lives’ Forum for its members. DFI also advocated for effective and fair policies across a range of other HSE structures, including the National Consultative Forum (NCF), the Oversight and Development Forum, the Universal Access Group, the Taskforce on Vulnerable Adults, the Inter-sectoral Safeguarding Committee, and the Patients Forum. In partnership with the Not for Profit Business Association, DFI continued its work with affiliate organisations to explore and identify community based services’ outcomes for people with disabilities. Our work sought to meet DFI’s goals of mainstreaming and collaboration, along with progressing the movement of funding to community based supports.

Social Protection and Employment

DFI’s campaigns focused on the continuing lack of effective solutions to address the cost of disability, the inaccessibility of, and exclusion from, mainstream employment supports, including Intreo and the Youth Guarantee, and the loss of secondary benefits on take up / return to employment. DFI continued its representation on the Department of Social Protection’s Social Inclusion Forum where it worked to influence policy such as, the Employ Ability support service, and the Wage Subsidy Scheme. DFI produced a critical review of the Comprehensive Employment

Strategy (CES), which was informed by DFI's 'Network of Interest' on income, employment and equality issues.

National Disability Strategy

DFI was represented on the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG) as well as Departmental Consultative Committee meetings, and produced a critical review of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013 – 2015 in July. This was widely disseminated across government, and the non-statutory sector prior to the National Economic Dialogue. DFI also made a submission on the new National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2016 – 2019, which is yet to be finalised.

The 'Disable Inequality' campaign rose to prominence late 2015. It was designed to mobilise people with disabilities on the ground, engage supporting organisations and ensure disability is injected into all elements of the general election campaign. Policy work included submitting Political Party Briefing papers, and holding meetings with Party policy advisors. A suite of election materials were also developed to support Affiliates and Associates, people with disabilities, and political candidates to develop their understanding of the key issues facing people with disabilities. The year concluded with a vibrant and dynamic meeting of disability activists from all across the country joining together to support and add their expertise to DFI's election campaign. The time we have dedicated to developing our 'Disable Inequality' campaign will undoubtedly impact over the lifetime of the next government.

National Disability Strategy – Local Implementation

DFI designed and rolled out The Community Participation Training Network (CPTN) to support the capacity of, and representation of people with disabilities in local community structures. Training in Community Development practice, Health and Wellness, as well as Empowerment and Advocacy commenced in a number of locations across the country. Other key activities included a joint campaign with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) on the restoration of the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) funding for 23 organisations who were previously excluded from this funding. DFI staff engaged with local Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and

Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) through direct and indirect membership. Efforts to encourage and support members to engage with these structures continued with emphasis on more effective participation and engagement by people with disabilities. DFI continued its participation on local and national housing structures across the country, influencing local Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities strategic plans. Two Community Development Workers began their work to support mainstreaming in Dublin / Wicklow and Cork. Through these new roles, work has already commenced to expand The Community Participation Training Network (CPTN) into Dublin, Cork, and various other regions.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities / EU / International

We have continued to work closely with our various EU partners. DFI continued to participate in the European Disability Forum, Board, General Assembly and other meetings. DFI was also active in its participation on the European Association of Service Providers (EASPD) Policy Impact Group, and in the European Movement Ireland. In addition, our CEO was elected as a member of the European Social Platform's Management Committee (Board). DFI was invited, by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, to become a member of the European Social and Investment Fund (ESIF) Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee (2014-2020). A position on this committee will enable DFI to influence mainstream and disability specific projects funded through ESIF across Ireland. At the first meeting DFI raised the need for people with disabilities to feel the effects of all funding, not just those that are targeted to people with disabilities.

DFI participated in the UN Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Steering Group, organised by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties in preparation for Ireland's review in May 2016.

DFI participated in the Civil Society Coalition on legal capacity reform, which campaigned for the enactment of legal capacity legislation which would be compliant with Article 12 of the UN CRPD.

Research

A research project to explore the profile and situation of younger people with disabilities living in nursing homes began, and a Research Advisory Group was established to guide the research.

DFI's proposal to the Erasmus + programme for a European project on de-institutionalisation and educational supports for people with disabilities was successful. It began in October and will run for three years. DFI successfully secured funding in another European project coordinated by EASPD. The 'Promoting Employers' Social Services in Social Dialogue III' project will run for two years. The objective of the project is to create a European Network representing employers in the Social Services Sector and thus ensuring their recognition as social partners at European level.

DFI Representation on Policy Committees 2015

DFI continue to represent the disability movement at local, regional and national level in order to push for a vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities are fully included and equal citizens in society. In 2015, DFI was represented on numerous committees and working groups across the areas of health, social protection, education, transport, housing, advocacy, human rights, governance, community development and local government to name a few.

As demonstrated in Table 1 below, DFI made 21 submissions across various departments and agencies at national and international level.

Table 1 DFI Submissions 2015

No.	Submission	Department or Agency
1	DFI comments on the UNCRPD Shadow Report	EASPD Policy Impact Group
2	DFI Submission on the 2015 European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) Shadow report on the implementation of the UN CRPD by the European Union	EASPD Policy Impact Group
3	EASPD 2014 report on the Europe 2020 strategy and on the European Semester	EASPD Policy Impact Group
4	Submission to Department of Justice on Comprehensive Employment Strategy	Department of Justice and Equality
5	Letter from EASPD to MEP's on the adoption of a Written Declaration on the promotion of deinstitutionalisation of people with disabilities in the EU	European Parliament
6	DFI comments on EASPD briefing on Personal and Household Services	EASPD Policy Impact Group

7	Submission on the Draft Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland	Department of Environment, Community, and Local Government
8	Applications and Appeals for Payments Department of Social Protection	The Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection
9	Submission on Medical Eligibility Criteria for Illness and Disability Related Payments.	The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection
10	Review of the Disability Act 2005 and the National Disability Strategic Implementation Plan (NDSIP)	The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence, and Equality
11	Submission on Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB)	Department of Social Protection
12	European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Europe 2020 Working group DSP Pre-budget submission 2016	Department of Social Protection
13	Department of Social Protection Pre-budget Submission 2016	Department of Social Protection
14	Submission on the New NDSIP 2016 - 2019	Department of Justice and Equality
15	Submission on the Health and Social Care Professions	HSE National
16	Measure for Disabled End users Accessibility Statement	ComReg
17	EAPN Submission Paper on Positive Activation	Department of Social Protection
18	Employability Review (Indecon)	Department of Social Protection
19	Submission to Action Plan for Jobs 2016	Department of Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation
20	DFI and the Centre for Disability Law & Policy (CDLP) Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
21	Contribution to the European Disability Forum (EDF) submission for the Commission consultation on multi-modal travel information services under the ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) Directive 2010/40	European Disability Forum

Support for Our Affiliate Organisations

2015 saw the launch of “SOLA: The Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Quality in the Community and Voluntary Sector” at a symposium held in the University of Limerick. SOLA is a partnership between the DFI, the University of Limerick and Johnson & Johnson and is based in the University of Limerick. The aim of SOLA is to empower individuals and organisations in the community, voluntary, and disability sector by engaging in research, education, and training to implement proven governance and sustainable quality systems.

DFI, through SOLA, delivered courses with University of Limerick in Quality Management, Innovation Management, and Problem Solving. In 2015 there were 27 participants on the “Quality Management: Theories, Standards and Practices for the Community and Voluntary Organizations” course which was delivered in the University of Limerick and Dublin.

The University of Limerick has sanctioned a Level 8 Certificate to award to organisations that complete the University of Limerick/DFI suite of three courses which will be called the “Certificate in Service Quality and Outcome Development for Community and Voluntary Organisations”.

SOLA is committed to progressing research that will support Community and Voluntary organisations to adopt quality principles and become more efficient so that they can deliver relevant, high quality services that meet legislation and national standard, albeit with reduced funding. SOLA has worked with students on the University of Limerick Specialist Diploma in Lean Healthcare (level 9), to complete two research projects:

- 1- Using the PQASSO System to Simplify Compliance to the HIQA National Standards
- 2- Improving the Processes Involved in the PQASSO Champions Network

These projects were presented at the DFI/ University of Limerick Symposium in November 2015.

DFI continued the important work with the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (formerly Charities Evaluation Services) in the UK to provide training in relation to demonstrating outcomes and implementing the PQASSO Quality Management System.

To date 49 organisations engaged with our DFI Organisational Health check and 27 with the PQASSO Quality Management System. The PQASSO Champions Network is a network of Community and Voluntary organisations who meet in order to share their learning and experiences, thereby providing support to each other. Organisations that are researching the possibility of implementing PQASSO are welcome to attend the Champions Network meetings in order to meet and learn from those who are already on the PQASSO journey.

DFI continues to have representation on the committee of the Governance Code Working Group. A major review of the Governance Code was undertaken and work was done on the three year strategy 2016-2019.

In addition to the formal education and training courses referenced above DFI has engaged with affiliate organisations as they contend with a multiplicity of challenges.

Strengthening the Voice, Impact and Relevance of the Disability Movement in Ireland

Undoubtedly to the forefront here was the development of the Disable Inequality General Election Campaign, the underlying principle of which was to strengthen the voice of people with a disability in Ireland by creating a platform for them to speak of their own lived experience and on their own terms. An extensive communications strategy was employed in this regard, central to which was collecting individual stories of inequality, which translated the structural and cultural barriers to inclusion into the daily reality of the 13% of the population who have a disability. Furthermore, media training sessions were delivered across the country with the aim of providing people with the support and confidence to speak in the public domain. At the end of 2015, the campaign was presented to DFI, along with its affiliates and associates, and was launched in early 2016.

As outlined in DFI's Sustainability and Growth document, a key priority is to reposition its work within the frame and meaning of an "Agency of Cultural Change", with the aim of positively influencing and shaping beliefs, values, attitudes and opinions regarding people with disabilities. Civil society is certainly one of the key instruments or systems through which the agency for cultural change approach is implemented, with the media in particular being the principal vehicle through which the public can be made aware that disability is a societal issue and the valuable contribution that can be made by people with disabilities if enabled to do so by the recognition of their full civil, economic, social and human rights.

To this end, DFI sought to influence the perception that exists of people with disabilities by highlighting the many barriers to inclusion they often face. There was extensive coverage on the topics of younger people with disabilities inappropriately placed in nursing homes, with twelve news items across different mediums. Our concerted efforts to place articles in significant national and regional media resulted in a further thirteen articles across various publications country wide about what legacy the Fine Gael/Labour government would leave for those with a disability. This is in addition to the widespread coverage of the Áras Attracta abuse stories, and assaults against those with a disability.

2015 also saw DFI produce a strong critique of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan (NDSIP) 2013-2015, which serves as an example of our ongoing contribution to the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG).

Strong representation across the disability sector is also evident in relation to collaboration with NUI Galway and others on making progress on the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) bill in anticipation of ratifying the UN Convention on Human Rights for People with Disabilities. The Act was signed by the president on the 30th December.

In 2015 DFI also initiated the development of a series of Community Participation Training Network (CPTN) courses for people with disabilities to support their capacity to self-advocate, advocate on behalf of others, and engage in community representation activities.

DFI continues to involve our affiliate organisations in submissions and campaigns as well as research, and become a greater resource to affiliates in the provision of training and capacity-raising supports as outlined in our policy and support to organisations work portfolios. In 2015, we increased the number of collaborative ventures and initiatives we are engaged in, which all helps to increase the understanding of disability in a wider societal context. Examples include leading the disability umbrella organisations in a joint statement on the theme of “Recovery needs to take hold for people with disabilities” in the run up to Budget 2016, participation in the Wheel’s joint pre-budget statement, and our involvement with the Better Europe Alliance.

We continue to contribute to the CV Pillar and Health Linkage Group, as well as contributing to the work to revise the Governance Code in conjunction with Community and Voluntary organisations. We also play a key role in ongoing discussions on regulating advocacy work and the relationship between the CV sector and policymakers. We continue to represent the disability interest to government departments and policy makers through engagement in HSE forums, Department of Social Protection Forums, and the CV Pillar mechanisms.

We are currently developing innovative partnerships and collaborations with organisations and academic institutions to advance the potential of assistive technology to improve the lives of people with disabilities. We have set up a community of practice, and are working closely with

Enable Ireland on a collaborative project to promote assistive technology. Partnerships with other umbrellas include work with the Neurological Alliance Ireland (NAI) on a Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO), work with the Not for Profit Business Association and National Federation of Voluntary Bodies on securing changes to Service Agreements, as well as the ongoing DFI/Not For Profit Working Group on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This work continues to inform our participation on the Value for Money (VFM) Working Groups.

Finally, we have gained legitimacy as a representative voice of the European Disability movement via involvement with the European Association for Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD) and European Disability Forum (EDF) presenting a strong presence in relation to rights, employment, and the importance of a changed approach by political decision makers in Europe. DFI has been successful in securing Erasmus funding with DFI as lead partner in a project that will see organisations in Ireland and Europe working more closely to support deinstitutionalisation via adult education.

DFI: The Organisation

Important corporate developments were achieved during 2015. DFI's Sustainability and Growth Plan was approved by the Board and presented to the Strategic General Meeting. We are progressing many aspects of the Sustainability and Growth Plan in our work. This plan was adopted in early 2015 and it has strongly influenced our work approach since then.

The Operational Plan (OP) 2015-2016 has been agreed by the Board and presented to the Strategic General meeting. Performance reports are submitted every four months. There are close synergies between the Sustainability and Growth Plan and the OP 2015 -16. Working Groups have been configured for each Strategic Priority.

Other key areas of work included expanding our communications work by increasing our engagement with media on planned campaigns and in response to issues that arose. Our CRM and Office 365 systems help us share information internally and externally, while work on the newsletter, website, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook is improving our external communication. A two year ICT plan has been developed. The theme of the plan is to maintain and consolidate our ICT infrastructure, to identify smarter ways for all staff to work together and share knowledge using the ICT infrastructure.

We have successfully met PQASSO's Quality Areas in Planning, Quality User-centred Service and Communication and Promotion. We are 95% through Monitoring & Evaluation and we are 30% through Quality Area Managing Resources.

DFI Board 2015

Pat Clarke - Chairperson	Down Syndrome Ireland
John O'Sullivan - Vice Chairperson	Enable Ireland
Barbara O'Connell – Vice Chairperson	Acquired Brain Injury Ireland
Don Bailey	Vantastic Ltd.
Michael Doyle	Irish Wheelchair Association (co-opted 10/12/2015)
Mike Glynn	Epilepsy Ireland
Elaine Howley	National Council for the Blind Ireland
Niall Keane	Deafhear.ie (retired 18/06/2015)
Kate Killeen	St. Catherine's Association (appointed 18/06/2015 & retired 07/10/2015)
Gary Lee	CIL Carmichael House
Joe Mason	WALK
Sean Megahey	Hail Housing
Joe T Mooney	Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (deceased 15/09/2015)
Clíodhna O'Neill	Rehab Group (retired 07/04/2015)
Colm Whooley	Spinal Injuries Ireland (co-opted 10/12/2015)

Company Secretary

John Dolan

DFI Affiliate and Associate Organisations 2015¹

Affiliates with Nominating Bodies Status

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	Doorway to Life Ltd
Alzheimer Society of Ireland	Down Syndrome Ireland
Arthritis Ireland	Dyslexia Association of Ireland
ASPIRE – Asperger Syndrome Association	Enable Ireland
Ataxia Ireland	Epilepsy Ireland (formerly Brainwave)
AWARE	Fighting Blindness
BRÍ – Acquired Brain Injury Association	Genetic and Rare Disorders Organisation
CASA – Caring and Sharing Association	HAIL Housing Association for Integrated Living
Central Remedial Clinic	Headway Ireland
Centre for Independent Living Mayo	Huntington’s Disease Association of Ireland
Centre for Independent Living Tipperary	Irish Deaf Society
Center for Independent Living Carmichael House	Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind
Cheeverstown House Ltd	Irish Haemophilia Society
COPE Foundation	Irish Kidney Association
County Roscommon Support Group for People with Disabilities	Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association
Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland	Irish Society for Autism
DeafHear.ie	Irish Wheelchair Association
D.E.B.R.A. Ireland	Jack and Jill Children’s Foundation
Disabled Drivers Association	KARE
Disabled People of Clare	Leitrim Association of People with Disabilities

¹ At the Company AGM in May 2014 the new Memorandum and Articles of Association were adopted. Accordingly the membership categories were changed as follows: Nominating Bodies and General Members were incorporated under the title Affiliate Organisations. Associate Organisations remained under the existing title.

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland
Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
National Council for the Blind of Ireland
National Federation of Arch Clubs
Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland
North West MS Therapy Centre
Parkinson's Association of Ireland
Post Polio Support Group
Reach Ireland
Rehab Group
Royal Hospital Donnybrook
Sophia Housing Association Ltd
Special Olympics Ireland
Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland
Spinal Injuries Ireland
St Catherine's Association
St Gabriel's School and Centre
St Michael's House
Vantastic Ltd
WALK (formerly Walkinstown Association)
Western Care Association

Affiliates

Ability West
ACTS (Accessible Community Transport Southside)
AHEAD
Áiseanna Tacaíochta
Anne Sullivan Centre
Arklow Disability Action Group
Autism Spectrum Disorder Initiatives (ASDI)
Bluestack Special Needs Foundation
Camphill Communities of Ireland
Catholic Institute for Deaf People (CIDP)
Care Alliance Ireland
Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups
Centre for Independent Living Blanchardstown
Centre for Independent Living Carlow
Centre for Independent Living Cork
Centre for Independent Living Donegal
Centre for Independent Living Galway
Centre for Independent Living Gorey
Centre for Independent Living Greater Dublin
Centre for Independent Living Kilkenny
Centre for Independent Living Longford
Centre for Independent Living Offaly
Centre for Independent Living Sligo

Centre for Independent Living Waterford
Centre for Independent Living West Limerick
Centre for Independent Living Wexford
Childvision (formerly St Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired)
Co-Action West Cork
Cork Accessible Transport
Cork Deaf Association
Crosscare Cedar Programme
Diabetes Federation of Ireland Southern Region
Dyspraxia Association of Ireland
Féach
Fibromyalgia Support Group (Midlands)
F.I.C.T.A. - Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Associations
GROW
Heart Children Ireland
ICARE (Inishowen Children's Autism Related Education)
Irish Electromagnetic Radiation Victims Network
Irish Hard of Hearing Association
Lakers Social and Recreation Club
Lucan Disability Action Group
Mid West Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association

Migraine Association of Ireland
Move4Parkinson's
Neurological Alliance of Ireland
North West Parents & Friends Association
North West Stroke Group
Out and About Association
Peacehaven Trust
Prader Willi Syndrome Association Ireland. (PWSAI)
Rathmines Pembroke Community Partnership
Sharing the Journey
S.T.E.E.R – Support Training Education Employment Research
St Hilda's Services
St Mary's Centre (Telford)
The Carers Association
Yoobyoo (formerly Children in Hospital Ireland)

DFI Associates

Livability Ireland (formerly John Groom)
Voluntary Services International (VSI)
Extra Care
Plan Ireland
Alcohol Forum

**New Organisations Admitted to
Membership in 2015**

None

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Senior Executive Officer - Policy and Research

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Martina McKenna

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Acknowledgements

Disability is a societal rather than a sectoral issue and DFI has progressed its work in 2015 by working with a large number of organisations across all aspects of Irish society, including Government departments and agencies, community and voluntary organisations, universities and local government. We are very grateful to all of these organisations, bodies and groups. Their co-operation and support has been greatly beneficial, and very much appreciated. We have also worked with members of the Dáil , Seanad, and City and County Councilors and associated officials.

A large numbers of individuals from our affiliate and associate organisations represent DFI at a wide range of national and local structures. We wish to acknowledge these individuals, and to extend our sincere thanks for their work and effort on behalf of DFI and people with disabilities. Without their dedication, hard work and support, the work of DFI would be very much more difficult, and much less effective. To all of you, thank you for your commitment. We are very grateful.

DFI also wishes to acknowledge the support and cooperation of its affiliate and associate organisations.

DFI is a member of the following organisations

- Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH)
- European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
- Irish Charity Tax Research Group (ICTRG)
- The Wheel
- The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- European Movement Ireland (EMI)
- The Irish Social Policy Association
- The Irish Disability Studies Association
- Irish Social Policy Network
- Mental Health Reform



The main object of DFI “is to benefit the community by supporting the contribution, protecting the rights and valuing the roles of persons with disabilities and disabling conditions in its community and encouraging their fullest participation in shaping a society that promotes the wellbeing and quality of life of such persons”.

The main object is further supported by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006.

The governing body comprises of at least 50% of people who have a disability or who have had a personal and enduring experience of disability.

The governing body, namely the Company Members, agree the multi-annual Strategic Plan to promote the objects of the Company and this Plan is regularly reviewed by them.

There are over 120 organisations as affiliates or associates, of DFI. DFI also works with a growing number of organisations and groups around the country and internationally, that have a significant disability interest, mainly from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI, as a critical and knowledgeable entity on behalf of the disability movement in Ireland, provides information, training and support, networking, advocacy and representation, research and policy development / implementation, and organisation and management development. DFI is Ireland’s National Council member on the European Disability Forum.

DFI works on the basis that disability is a societal issue and so works with Government, and across the social and economic strands and interests of society.

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