

Delivering the Commitment

Estimates
& Budget
Submission
2008



DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

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Summary of Priority Actions for Estimates & Budget 2008

Priority Action 1

DFI seek €20m to be set aside in Budget 2008 to address the core funding deficits within our membership.

Priority Action 2

DFI calls on the Government to deliver the commitment made that ‘for each year of the Programme for Government, it will set out the objectives and outcomes to be reached in the NDS having regard to the vision and long term goals for people with disabilities as set out in ‘Towards 2016’. This needs to be done explicitly as part of the Estimates and Budget Process.

Priority Action 3

Clear budget lines to be established in the Estimates and Budget 2008 in order to identify the funding directed to disability specific services and separately to mainstream services.

This is necessary to be able to accurately review, monitor and report on the progress of the Government’s commitment to implement at least half of the NDS by 2010.

Priority Action 4

DFI urges the Government to commit €5 million to fund the establishment of a Resource Support Centre for voluntary disability organisations. This Centre would provide information, and support organisational development to include collaborative working, governance, and financial management, within the overall context of maximising the impact of the NDS.

Priority Action 5

Government to introduce a Cost of Disability Payment of approximately €40 per week. This should commence with the initial payment being made to all disabled people in receipt of means tested benefits, and then be extended to all people with disabilities. The total cost of introducing a Cost of Disability Payment would be €183m.

1. Introduction

Disability Federation of 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 condition.

The National Disability Strategy (NDS), and the Social Partnership Agreement 'Towards 2016' create new opportunities for people with disabilities in Irish society. The 2008 Estimates and Budget will be the first occasion for this new Government to commence fulfilling its commitment to progress the implementation of the NDS.

DFI recognises that the NDS, and the government's commitment to mainstreaming of disability, represents one of the largest challenges to be undertaken by the State. We hold an expectation from the Programme for Government 2007 that 'at least half of the strategy will be implemented by 2010'.¹

This goal is supported by the Government's commitment to adopt a 'whole of Government approach' to the delivery of the NDS. This will involve government departments and public agencies working in collaboration to achieve the vision and long-term goals for disability as set out in 'Towards 2016', and noted in the NDS.

"We are committed to ensuring that the Strategy is driven and managed from a whole of Government perspective and it will be overseen and supported by the Department of An Taoiseach."
(Programme for Government, 2007:33)

It is recognised that 'joined up policy making and implementation is inherently difficult particularly where individual departments, or agencies, adopt a territorial approach to their work'.² It requires careful project management and supervision to ensure the effective delivery of the service outcomes and outputs that motivate spending in the first place.

¹ Government of Ireland (2007:33) An Agreed Programme for Government: A Blueprint for Ireland's Future 2007-2012. www.taoiseach.gov.ie

² NESC (2005:299) NESC Strategy 2006: People, Productivity and Purpose, No. 114, December 2005.

The commitment to publish annual objectives and outcomes to be reached in the NDS is one of the most important undertakings of this new Government and cannot be underestimated.³

This submission is the first in our five year Estimates and Budget campaign to ensure the continued implementation of the NDS throughout the lifetime of this Government. It should be seen in the context of the many submissions made by voluntary disability organisations that continue to support the rights of people with disabilities in Ireland.

³ 'The Government will for each year of the Programme for Government, set out the objectives and outcomes to be reached in the NDS'. (Programme for Government, 2007:33)

2. Priority Actions for 2008

This year we have identified five priority actions to be progressed in the Estimates and Budget Campaign 2008. These priorities have arisen from our recognition that:

- Voluntary disability organisations have a unique role and valuable contribution to make to the success of the NDS provided that they are adequately resourced;
- The NDS needs to be delivered in a measured way each year by connecting the outcomes to be achieved with the Estimates and Budget process, and;
- People with disabilities urgently need to have their day to day income brought up to an equitable level to those without a disability.

2.1 Funding Existing Service Provision for People with Disabilities

DFI urges the Government to address the persistent problem of core funding deficits so that voluntary disability organisations can continue to provide vital services to people with disabilities in partnership with the State.

Under-resourcing has occurred due to the rising cost of service provision, caused by inflation, increase in pay and overheads, cost of staff and reliance on inappropriate funding sources such as Community Employment.⁴ The NDS cannot be progressed without priority investment in the current under-resourcing of disability services provided by voluntary organisations.

In 'Towards 2016' the Government is committed to appropriately resourcing the sector into the future. Furthermore, it states that 'the Sector's important role in service provision will continue to be funded appropriately where it is delivering services on behalf of the State'.⁵ Despite this, many voluntary organisations

⁴ In 2005, DFI identified 1,651 CE participants and 100 supervisors providing services to people with disabilities. (DFI, 2007:11)

⁵ Ireland (2006:71) Towards 2016: Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2016 Government of Ireland.

continue to struggle to maintain their current level of service provision and are dependent on income from fundraising and other independent sources to provide core disability services.

If core services provided by voluntary disability organisations continue to be under-resourced, it will be impossible for them to refocus sufficiently to develop new services arising from the Independent Needs Assessment (INA) and to progress with the implementation of the NDS.

Priority Action 1

DFI seek €20m to be set aside in Budget 2008 to address the core funding deficits within our membership.⁶

2.2 NDS: New and Enhanced Services

It is crucial that the Government adequately plan and fund new services arising from the NDS, and in particular to respond to the unmet need identified from the INA, the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD) and the National Intellectual Disability Database (NIDD). This will require careful project planning and strong collaboration between various Government departments, public bodies and the Social Partners.

The NDS put in place a programme of action to support and reinforce equal participation in society of people with disabilities. It is crucial that key services are developed in order to achieve the vision, as set out in 'Towards 2016', of an 'Ireland where people with disabilities can live a full life with their families and as part of their community, free from discrimination'.⁷

The continued investment in priority disability services through the multi-annual funding package 2005-2009 has been welcome; however, significant additional funding must now be committed to deliver new services arising from the implementation of the NDS, and the INA in particular.⁸

⁶ In addition to this we are aware that the Federation of Voluntary Bodies and the Not for Profit Business Association have identified the extent of core deficits amongst their member organisations.

⁷ Ireland (2006) Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2016, Government of Ireland.

⁸ "What I am dealing with today are certain high-priority services. However, I want to make it clear that other disability services will also continue to be dealt with as a normal part of the annual estimates process and will receive extra funding going forward as overall budgetary circumstances permit" Minister Brian Cowen T.D., December 2004.

At present, it is clear that the multi-annual funding package cannot address the level of unmet need as identified in the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD) and the National Intellectual Disability Database (NIDD).⁹ The NPSDD Annual Report 2006 identifies the extent of the demand for disability services, with over half (56% or 14,380 people) requiring an immediate assessment for therapeutic interventions and rehabilitation services. A further 41% (10,542) needed at least one technical aid and 29% (7,553) were waiting for an assessment for personal assistance and support services.

The fact that the NPSDD is voluntary in nature and does not include people over 65 years of age suggests that the demand for services is greatly under-representative of actual need and is not fully captured in this report. This is supported by evidence from the Census 2006 that found 35% of those who had a disability were over 65 years of age, increasing to over half (59%) of people aged 85 years and over.¹⁰

Additional funding is also sought to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities as noted in the National Intellectual Disability Database (NIDD) Annual Report. In 2006, it was noted that 2,371 people were either without service or without a major element of service (either full-time residential service, or a day service, or both).

Substantial resources are still required to address the need for community based services and supports for people with mental health problems. There is no single database to determine the extent of unmet need within mental health provision; however the 'Report of the Inspector of Mental Health Services 2006' outlines the extent of services required in this area.

“The Inspectorate is most concerned about the lack of community resources and the poor staffing of multidisciplinary teams”
(Report of the Inspector of Mental Health Services, 2006:86)

Priority Action 2

DFI calls on the Government to deliver the commitment made that ‘for each year of the Programme for Government, it will set out the objectives and outcomes to

⁹ National Physical and Sensory Disability Database Annual Report 2006 and National Intellectual Disability Database 2006, HRB.

¹⁰ CSO (2007) Census 2006 - Principal Socio-Economic Results, Table 31, Central Statistics Office.

be reached in the NDS having regard to the vision and long term goals for people with disabilities as set out in 'Towards 2016'.¹¹ This needs to be done explicitly as part of the Estimates and Budget Process.

Priority Action 3

Clear budget lines to be established in the Estimates and Budget 2008 in order to identify the funding directed to disability specific services and separately to mainstream services.

This is necessary to be able to accurately review, monitor and report on the progress of the Government's commitment to implement at least half of the NDS by 2010.¹²

2.3 Capacity Building of Voluntary Disability Organisations

The Government recognises that 'the enormous growth in the Community and Voluntary Sector in recent years has created increased needs for training and other technical supports to enable groups to do their work more effectively'.¹³ The increase in funding to develop services for people with disabilities over the last number of years is acknowledged and supported. However, for organisations to efficiently and effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities created by the NDS, there needs to be an investment in organisational structures and systems of governance.

In 'Towards 2016' 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'. This is supported by the Comptroller and Auditor General who reported:

"the continuance of relationship with non-profit service providers as partners in service development and delivery... would involve the State in actively working with organisations to strengthen their organisational capacity"

(Comptroller and Auditor General Report, 2005:40)

¹¹ Government of Ireland (2007: 33) An Agreed Programme for Government: A Blueprint for Ireland's Future 2007-2012. www.taoiseach.gov.ie

¹² Ibid

¹³ Government of Ireland (2001:33) Supporting Voluntary Activity, A White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector, Dublin: Stationary Office.

Now, more than ever before, the governance of voluntary disability organisations needs to be supported through times of change and to respond to the increasing responsibilities in terms of accountability.

To invoke effective delivery of the NDS, the Government needs to invest in voluntary disability organisations by providing funding to address issues such as governance, financial planning, strategic planning, service monitoring and evaluation within organisations.

Priority Action 4

DFI urges the Government to commit €5 million to fund the establishment of a Resource Support Centre for voluntary disability organisations.¹⁴ This Centre would provide information, and support organisational development to include collaborative working, governance, and financial management, within the overall context of maximising the impact of the NDS.

2.4 Cost of Disability Payment

One key measure in supporting people with disabilities to participate fully in Irish society is the introduction of a Cost of Disability Payment. It has been widely recognised that disabled people continue to experience a lower standard of living and are at greater risk of social exclusion and poverty compared to the general population.¹⁵

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 disability. This additional cost increases one's risk of falling into poverty and is reflective of persistent inequality in society. A Cost of Disability payment would be an important anti-poverty measure to offset the extra cost of disability and enable people with disabilities to be on an equal footing.

¹⁴ DFI (2007:32) Chairperson as Effective Leaders Disability Federation Ireland.

¹⁵ EU-SILC 2005 indicates that persons with chronic illness or disability were almost twice as likely to be in consistent poverty as those without a chronic illness or disability (9.5% compared to 4.8%).

The urgent need for a Cost of Disability payment has been supported by the Commission on the Status for People with Disabilities (1996) and the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF).¹⁶ It is also reflected in the NESF Strategy 2006¹⁷ which recommends:

“the Government strongly consider the case for a separate ‘cost of disability payment’ that, in line with its analysis in the Developmental Welfare State, would be personally tailored and portable across the employment/non-employment divide” (NESF,2005:168)

The commitments made in ‘Towards 2016’ and the ‘Programme for Government 2007’ to address the exclusion of people with disabilities through mainstream and disability services are acknowledged. However, everyday living expenses can only be met through direct financial assistance to the person with a disability.¹⁸

Priority Action 5

Government to introduce a Cost of Disability Payment of approximately €40 per week. This should commence with the initial payment being made to all disabled people in receipt of means tested benefits, and then be extended to all people with disabilities. The total cost of introducing a Cost of Disability Payment would be €183m.¹⁹

¹⁶ Income Maintenance Strategies Report No. 5 NESF 1994.

¹⁷ NESF (2005:168) NESF Strategy 2006: People, Productivity and Purpose, No. 114, December 2005.

¹⁸ DFI acknowledges the introduction of a number of target measures to off-set the cost of disability including a higher income disregard for those returning to employment. While this is a general social welfare payment it does not address the specific cost of living with a disability.

¹⁹ This figure is based on total recipients of Disability Allowance (86,263) and Blind Persons Pension (1,473) by €40.

3. Conclusion

This year we have identified five priority actions to be progressed in the Estimates and Budget Campaign 2008. These are the essential building blocks to commence the implementation of the NDS and to deliver the commitments made to people with disabilities in the Programme for Government.

Voluntary disability organisations have a unique and valuable contribution to make to the success of the NDS, provided that they are adequately resourced. This will require additional funding to deal with core deficits, along with financial support to build organisational capacity.

It has been recognised that the implementation of the NDS requires careful project management and strong collaboration between various Government departments, public bodies and the Social Partners. To ensure that the delivery of the NDS is accurately monitored, clear budget lines need to be established in the Estimates and Budget 2008 indicating what finances are directed specifically to disability services and separately to mainstream services.

Finally, people with disabilities urgently need to have their day to day income brought up to an equitable level to those without a disability. A Cost of Disability payment would be an important anti-poverty measure to offset the extra cost of disability and enable people with disabilities to be on an equal footing in society.

Estimates and Budget 2008 must commence the delivery of this new Government commitment's to people with disabilities.

DFI: National Council & Associate Membership 2007

A.P.T.

ABILITY WEST*
(formerly The Galway Assoc.)

Action for Mobility

ACTS*

Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Anne Sullivan Centre*

Arklow Disability Action Group*

Arthritis Ireland

Aspire

Asthma Society of Ireland

AWARE

Bodywhys*

Brainwave

Brí

Care Alliance Ireland*

CARELocal*

Caring & Sharing Association

Carlow C.I.L.*

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups*

Central Remedial Clinic

Centre for Independent Living Dublin 7

Centre for Independent Living Cork*

Centre for Independent Living Mayo

Centre for Independent Living Tipperary

Centre for Independent Living Sligo*

Centre for Independent Living Wexford*

Centre for Independent Living Offaly*

Centre for Independent Living Waterford*

Centre for Independent Living Blanchardstown*

Cheeverstown House

Cheshire Ireland*

Children in Hospital Ireland*

County Roscommon Support Group

COPE Foundation

Cork Accessible Transport*

Crosscare Cedar Programme*

Cystic Fibrosis Association

DEBRA Ireland

Diabetes Federation of Ireland*

Disabled Drivers Association

Disabled People of Clare

Doorway to Life

Down Syndrome Ireland

Dublin 7 Centre for Independent Living*

Dyslexia Association of Ireland

Dyspraxia Association*

Enable Ireland

Express Yourself Ltd.*

Feach*

Fibromyalgia Support Group (Midlands)*
 FICTA*
 Fighting Blindness
 Focus Ireland
 Friedreich's Ataxia Society of Ireland
 Galway CIL*
 Genetic & Inherited Disorders Org.
 HAIL Housing Association
 Headway Ireland
 Health Action Overseas*
 Heart Children Ireland*
 Huntington's Disease Association
 Institute for Disability & Senior Citizens*
 Irish Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus
 Irish Deaf Society
 Irish Electromagnetic Radiation Victims Network*
 Irish Guide Dogs Association
 Irish Haemophilia Society
 Irish Kidney Association
 Irish Motor Neurone Disease Assoc.
 Irish Raynaud's & Scleroderma Society
 Irish Society for Autism
 Irish Wheelchair Association
 KARE
 Leitrim Association for People with Disabilities
 Lucan Disability Action Group*
 M.S. North West Therapy Centre
 Mid West Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Assoc*
 Migraine Association*
 Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland
 Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
 National Association for Deaf People
 National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)
 National Federation of Arch Clubs
 Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland
 Neurological Alliance of Ireland*
 Noinin Support for Autism*
 ONET*
 Out and About Association*
 Parkinson's Association of Ireland
 Peacehaven Trust*
 Post Polio Support Group
 Rathmines Community Partnership*
 Reach Ireland
 Rehab Group
 Schizophrenia Ireland

Shannon Community Workshop Ltd

Sophia Housing Association Ltd

Special Olympics Ireland

Spinal Injuries Ireland

St Catherine's Association Ltd

St Michael's House

St.Gabriel's School & Centre

The Jack and Jill Foundation

The Peter Bradley Foundation*

The Royal Hospital Donnybrook

VANTASTIC

Vergemount Housing Fellowship

Walkinstown Association

West Limerick Community Workshop

Western Care Association

* Associate Members



DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation and advocate for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

- Hidden
- Intellectual
- Mental Health
- Physical
- Sensory
- Emotional

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) works to ensure that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise fully their civil, social and human rights. In pursuit of this vision:

- DFI acts as an advocate for the voluntary disability sector
- Supports organisations to further enable people with disabilities

DFI represents and supports over 150 voluntary disability organisations and groups of which 69 comprise its National Council, and 41 of which are Associate Members. Allied to this, it works with and supports over 200 organisations and groups around the country that have a significant and growing disability interest, mainly coming from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI provides:

- Information
- Training and Support
- Organisation and Management Development
- Research and Policy Development
- Advocacy and Representation
- Networking

DFI also supports the broader voluntary and disability sector through its representation of the disability strand with the Community and Voluntary Pillar of the Social Partnership process, as a social partner at the National Economic and Social Forum, Health Board Co-Ordinating Committees and other fora at regional, national and European level.

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