



Disability in Ireland: Some Facts and Figures

Disability happens more than you imagine:

- In Census 2011, 595,355 people recorded having a disability, equivalent to 13% of the population of Ireland.
- However, the National Disability Survey (2006) which uses a broader definition of disability and chronic illness recorded a disability rate of 18%, comparable to other developed countries.
- At least 1 in 10 adults of working age have a disability (15-64 years)¹.
- Disability is age-related and increases sharply with age. Just 5% of children between 0-14 years have a disability compared to 38% of adults over 65 years (Census 2011).
- Approximately 4,000 people with disabilities still live in institutions or psychiatric hospitals.

People with Disabilities are more likely to experience poverty²:

- Families where the head of the household was not at work due to illness or disability had the lowest average annual disposable income in 2010. This was €23,900 compared to €56,537 for those at work.
- Disabled people are twice as likely to live below the poverty line as the rest of the population.
- Disabled people experience high levels of consistent poverty (13% compared to 2% of those at work). This means that they have a low income and have difficulty with basic provision such as a meal with meat or fish every second day or the ability to have adequate heating.
- Additional costs of disability have been estimated to be a third of average weekly income³.

People with Disabilities have poorer educational outcomes⁴:

- Among people with disabilities, 43% have not progressed beyond primary education. This compares to 19% of all adults.
- Over one third of young adults (25 to 29 years) with a disability left school before completing second level compared to one in six of young adults with no disability.
- About one third of people with disabilities have been found to leave education before they intended because of their disability.

Disability affects a person's employment opportunities⁵:

- In 2006, just 35% of people with disabilities were at work compared to 73% of the general population.
- However, over one third of people with disabilities and almost two thirds of younger people in the 18-34 age groups would like to work if the circumstances were right.

1. Census 2011, Small Area Population Statistics www.cso.ie.

2. Survey on Income and Living Conditions, EU-SILC, 2010 www.cso.ie.

3. Cullinan, J., Gannon, B. and Lyons, S. (2010), 'Estimating the Extra Cost of Living for People with Disabilities', *Health Economics*.

4. ESRI and Department of Social Protection (2011), A Social Profile of People with Disabilities.

5. Ibid