

DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

Check against delivery

DFI Pre-Budget Submission Launch 2013

Mansion House, Dublin, 4th October, 2012

John O'Sullivan, Vice Chairperson, Disability Federation of Ireland

On behalf of the Disability Federation of Ireland, as its Vice Chairperson, I would like to welcome everyone here today. I must apologise for our Chairperson Maurice O'Connell who could not be present today and to also welcome a number of my fellow Board members. DFI is an umbrella organisation with over 120 members and associates who involve people with a wide range of disabilities and disabling conditions, including mental ill health. Our Strategic Plan for 2011-2016 sets DFI's mission: "To act as an advocate for the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities and disabling conditions, in all aspects of their lives."

DFI realises that many people with disabilities simply cannot survive more cuts to their services and their standard of living. As citizens of Ireland they are entitled to experience ordinary, meaningful lives. Budget 2013 must respect that.

This is a critical time for people with disabilities and for the voluntary organisations working with them, and at the Forum today we have the opportunity to highlight what is at stake. We want to send a strong, clear message to the Oireachtas: Budget 2013 must end the erosion of supports that enable people with disabilities to lead full lives as citizens of Ireland. Instead the budgetary measures need to promote people's inclusion.

The programme for this morning's Forum is tightly packed. First, our CEO, John Dolan, will set out the issues as DFI sees them. Then Cathal Mac Coillewhose voice you will recognise from the RTE's "Moring Ireland" will take over for the next stage. He will be the independent facilitator for the debate amongst the spokespersons for the political parties who will explain

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their positions on disability in the context of Budget 2013. They will also debate the issues. Cathal intends to make time for questions from the floor.

We would wish to express our thanks to Cathal for accepting our invitation to voluntarily bring his interviewing skills to assist all of us to get more out of this event.

Following the question and answer session there will be further opportunities to engage with members of the Oireachtas and colleagues who share a strong interest in disability and tea and coffee will be available.