NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2014

Disability Federation of Ireland

An advocate for the voluntary disability sector

Supporting organisations to enable people with disabilities

Strong Governance and Accountability Remains Vital In The Disability Sector

The charity and disability sectors in Ireland provide hugely valuable and vital services for people and communities all across the country. In coming together to tackle the issues facing people in their everyday lives, these organisations are essentially about public and community benefit and service; hand-in-hand with this, they also need to be about public transparency. The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is very aware and concerned about the governance issues currently unfolding in the charity sector. In light of the ongoing situation, the voluntary disability sector has realised, as never before, that it must be truly accountable to the public and, more particularly, to the people it serves and those who support it.

DFI has been heavily engaged in the areas of governance and quality for many years. Encompassing almost 130 organisations, we remain strongly committed to working with our members to strengthen their capacity in these areas, emphasising the importance of monitoring and evaluating their value and effectiveness. DFI was heavily involved in the development of the Governance Code, for instance; 15% of those signed up to it are members of our organisation. Equally, our range of strong governance supports has seen us work directly with the Boards of 47 member organisations on our Organisation Healthcheck, and 160 participants have availed of our PQASSO training programme over the past four years.

The immediate concern of DFI is to ensure that there is no negative effect on the work of our members in providing much-needed services and supports for people with disabilities. We are concerned that attention is not deflected from the other serious issues, such as funding cuts to public services that people with disabilities and their families need to access. Our work is consistently orientated towards strong, responsible governance and accountability in the voluntary disability sector. We must now work towards renewing public trust and confidence in disability organisations which play vitally important and meaningful roles in bringing about the full inclusion of people with disabilities.

John Dolan, Chief Executive Officer

DFI News and Events

DFI Conference On Disability and Citizen Engagement Announced for 3 April

The Disability Federation of Ireland has announced a conference on citizen engagement and people with disabilities in local government on Thursday, 3 April.

The conference, to be opened by Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan TD, will be held in Dublin Castle between 10am and 4pm on the day. The event comes at a crucial stage, as local government reforms will empower local representatives with greater decision-making powers following the upcoming elections on Friday, 23 May.

These reforms mean that local government will be responsible for decisions on funding, and the development and oversight of local community and economic plans. Changes to the representative structures within local government will also be introduced as part of this process, offering opportunities for stronger community representation.

Active participation

The conference is set to explore the engagement of people with disabilities as citizens in their mainstream localities and communities, examining how they and other stakeholders can become actively engaged at a local level in the context of these upcoming reforms. The role of local government and decision-makers in facilitating such engagement, as well as the means by which representative structures can be best utilized to support it, will also be considered.

The importance of the participation of people with disabilities, along with other citizens, in local communities will be highlighted throughout the event. These groups must be represented in the development of local projects and initiatives, as well as in their

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implementation and review. Real, meaningful citizen engagement should create opportunities for people with disabilities and others to not only become more aware and informed of local decisions, but also to become active participants in the decision-making which will affect their lives in their own communities.

This conference on citizen engagement is especially important given the upcoming local government reforms and local elections, set to take place on 23 May.

Image by taoty, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

A variety of speakers will present positive examples of citizen engagement in Ireland, outlining the resulting outcomes and benefits. Insight will be given into the Scottish experience of local government reform and community reform, and the participation of people with disabilities in this process. This example should prove very informative, as Scotland has more experience of community representation in local structures.

A series of breakout sessions and discussion groups will allow for a greater focus on the ways in which people with disabilities, along with other community groups, can actively engage in the new local government process. A report from the event will be made available as a consultation document to the Minister, Mr Hogan TD, to inform the work of his Department in implementing the arising recommendations.

Registration

Booking is now open for this event, with registration closing on Monday, 24 March. Even though the focus is on the experiences of people with disabilities, other community groups, such as older people, members of the travelling community, migrant communities, women, children and families, would also benefit from the conference. Attendance costs €60 per person, with concessions available upon request.

For further information on the conference and to register, please visit https://www.regonline.co.uk/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=1487096.

Alternatively, please contact Cathy McGrath at events@disability-federation.ie, or on 086 3847 440.

DFI Launches ‘Access To Life’ Report Highlighting Importance of PA Services

Chief Executive of DFI, John Dolan; Minister of State for Disability, Kathleen Lynch TD; and Chair of DFI, Maurice O’Connell at the launch of the ‘Access to Life’ report in Trinity College

Minister of State for Disability, Kathleen Lynch TD, addressed the launch of the new Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) report on Personal Assistant (PA) services for people with disabilities in Trinity College on 6 February.

“Access to Life: Personal Assistant Services in Ireland and Independent Living by People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities” highlights the importance of community-based supports in disability services.

The study, examining the PA service for people with significant physical and sensory disabilities, aims to explore the meaning of the service today, its key positive features, and the ways in which these could be protected and strengthened. As well as a review of policy documents, interviews were conducted with thirty people using the PA service, which is largely funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE), as part of the research.

The PA service was established in the early 1990s by a small group of people with significant physical and sensory disabilities. Users of the service, called Leaders, engage with Personal Assistants to support their independent living. Leaders are in charge of their service delivery, managing the specific personal supports for their own individual needs and plans.

Empowerment

The perspectives given by the thirty Leaders contributing to the research reveal how the PA service enhances their well-being and enables them to pursue a fuller life. Laura Leeson, one of the participants, explained, “running my own PA service has allowed me to live my life, my way”. Another Leader commented, “without the service, I wouldn’t be me, really”.

Laura Leeson, one of the Leaders who participated in the research, with Kathleen Lynch TD at the launch of the ‘Access to Life’ report

However, the findings demonstrate that, although the PA service remains distinct and unique from care and home support services, a shared understanding of its role and purpose is lacking. The service has also been largely ignored by policy-makers evaluating disability supports and services, and stands vulnerable to cuts and inappropriate forms of regulation. Emphasising the value of the PA service to people with disabilities, John Dolan, Chief Executive of DFI, stated that it “has and continues to form the backbone of community services and supports which enable people to live independently in the community, supporting people’s choice and control. However, over the last few years, this service has been squeezed and cut back, and this is undermining people’s capacity to live independently in their own communities”.

Development

The study recommends stronger cross-agency co-ordination and Government performance in defining, developing and evaluating the PA service, and exploring new ways of funding the service, such as an ‘Independent Living Fund’. The Department of Health should commission an independent, holistic evaluation of the service, with any future assessment processes or regulatory developments being carried out with contribution from Leaders so that they can influence and have a sense of ‘ownership’ in the process.

Mr Dolan stated, “the research reveals how the PA programme empowers individuals to engage and contribute to society, as they can lead and direct the service to support them most usefully. However, it also indicates that this disability-specific social inclusion measure is being undermined by financial and regulatory constraints. If the Government is serious about ensuring that everyone in Ireland has opportunities to flourish, it must revitalise and enhance the PA service".

The 'Access to Life: Personal Assistant Services in Ireland and Independent Living by People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities' report is available at http://disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=10810

DFI Announces Full Membership of the European Anti-Poverty Network

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is delighted to announce that it has become a full member of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).

Although DFI has been engaging with the EAPN for some time, particularly in relation to the European Social Funds, the European Semester and as part of the Working Group on Europe 2020, it has only recently become a formal member in joining the organisation's Irish national network, EAPN Ireland.

Representing over two hundred local, regional and national anti-poverty organisations and individuals working against poverty, EAPN Ireland supports members to influence national and European policy through training, information, networking and collective action. It is one of 29 national networks of the EAPN, which has over two decades of experience in lobbying for progressive social change across Europe.

DFI, acutely aware of the links between disability and poverty, views this new relationship with the EAPN as a key and strategic partnership. Disabled people experience high levels of consistent poverty: 13% compared to 2% of those at work[1]. This means that they have a low income and difficulties with basic provisions, such as a meal with meat or fish every second day or the ability to have adequate heating. Furthermore, the additional costs of disability have been estimated to be a third of average weekly income[2].

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[1] CSO (2013) Survey of Income and Living Conditions:9

[2] Cullinan, J.,Gannon,B and Lyons,S. (2010) 'Estimating the Extra Cost of Living for People with Disabilities'. Health Economics Volume 20, Issue 5

The EAPN is not only focused on poverty but social inclusion in general, examining issues such as employment, structural funds, social services, and civil dialogue. DFI looks forward to collaborating with the EAPN in bringing about meaningful developments for social inclusion and furthering the disability agenda in Europe.

To learn more about EAPN Ireland, please visit http://www.eapn.ie. Read our Social Protection section to find out about upcoming EAPN workshops in advance of the Social Inclusion Forum 2014.

Image by Idea go, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Charity Regulation

New Charities Regulatory Authority Announced: Are You Ready?

On 17 January 2014, the Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter TD, announced that he was establishing a Charities Regulatory Authority. The first Chief Executive of the Charities Regulatory Authority, Ms Úna Ní Dhubhghaill, was subsequently appointed on 1 March 2014. Here, Alison Ryan, Support Officer with the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), talks through what this development means for existing registered charities.

The main areas covered by the new Charities Regulatory Authority include securing compliance of charities with their legal obligations, encouraging the better administration of charities, and the maintenance of a Register of Charities which will be accessible to the public. Will this entail more paperwork for your organisation, or are you already compliant?

Any organisation in receipt of charitable tax exemption from the Revenue Commissioners on the day that the register is established will be automatically deemed registered with the

Image by stockimages, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Charity Regulator. All other charitable organisations operating or carrying out any activities in the state will be required to register within six months of the establishment of the register, with all charities obliged to state in their public literature that they are a registered charity.

Charities must submit annual reports on their charitable activities to the new Regulatory Authority

Image by Pong, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Reporting Accounts

In terms of reporting requirements, all charities must keep proper books of account, and will be required to submit annual reports on their charitable activities to the Charities Regulator. If you are a company, the Companies Registration Office will automatically forward Annual Returns. For others, organisations with an income above a threshold yet to be prescribed (maximum of €500,000 per annum) will be obligated to submit audited accounts to the Regulator. Charities with an income less than this threshold may submit examined accounts, which are less demanding and expensive to produce, while those with income less than €10,000 will be exempted from filing annual accounts. However, they will still have to submit their Annual Activity Report unless, of course, they are companies, where the fining requirements of company law still apply.

Fundraising

When it comes to fundraising, both cash and non-cash (such as direct debits, standing orders, etc) funds raised from the public will require permits from the Gardaí; only registered charities will be able to conduct those types of fundraising. The default requirement for collections in public places will be sealed collection boxes, which will have to display the charity's name and number. The Regulator retains discretion to make an exception to the sealed collection box rule to facilitate the making of change for token sellers. Charities engaged in fundraising will be expected to comply with the non-statutory Statement of Fundraising Principles and the specific Codes of Good Practice for Fundraising. The Irish Charities Tax Reform has information on the Statement of Fundraising Principles and Codes of Good Practice for Fundraising on their website http://www.ictr.ie/content/fundraising-codes-practice .

Trustees

'Charity Trustees' are the people who have day-to-day control of a charitable organisation. Under company law, this means that the Directors of a charity which is a company limited by guarantee are considered the trustees of that charity; there may, of course, be other trustees in addition to the directors. For charities with 'management committees' or 'core groups', the members of these groups are deemed the trustees of the charities under law. Apart from expenses, a Trustee can only be paid for work which is not related to their role as a trustee. Directors' and officers' insurance can be purchased to indemnify its trustees for liabilities relating to acts done or omitted by the trustee in good faith and in the performance of their functions as a charity trustee.

DFI offers governance and quality support of all its members. If you require any further information or assistance on any of the above issues, please contact your DFI Support Officer. Contact details are available at: http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=18. More information on DFI's work in Planning and Governance is available at http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=55.

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Social Protection

Protecting Our Income: Diet Supplement Discontinued For New Claimants

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) has announced that it is to discontinue the diet supplement for new applicants from 1 February 2014. Here, Tomás Thompson of Cystic Fibrosis Ireland discusses the implications of this decision.

Under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme, weekly diet supplements may be paid to assist a person with additional dietary needs, such as a gluten-free diet, with the cost of those needs. These supplements are available for four prescribed diets, which must be certified by an appropriate medical practitioner, with the rate of payment based on a set

Image by Vlado, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net cost for each. An amount equivalent to one-third of the individual's social welfare payment is subtracted from this set cost to calculate the weekly figure. However, the supplement will now only be paid to those in receipt of it prior to 31 January 2014.

This cut once again affects the most vulnerable people in Ireland, leading to a two-tiered social welfare system. It also causes worry for people currently receiving the payment who are concerned that the diet supplement will be removed if their circumstances change or that they won't be eligible to receive it when they require it in the future.

The discontinuation of the Diet Supplement means higher food bills for many people with disabilities.

Image by Grant Cochrane courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Research Commissioned

The DSP used a report it commissioned from the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) in 2013 as the basis to discontinue the supplement. The report, which examines the cost of healthy eating and specialised diets for a single individual in Ireland, states that all social welfare recipients, including those with special dietary needs, should be able to purchase an appropriate diet at a cost of no more than one-third of their weekly income if they have access to low-cost supermarkets or discount stores. [3]

However, many people with disabilities who are in receipt of the Diet Supplement receive disability or lone-parent payments, with many falling into low-income households. Such households are twice as likely as the general population to experience food poverty; almost 50% of lone-parent households and 36% of unemployed people experience some sort of food deprivation.[4] Living in a low-income household or socio-economically deprived area may influence dietary behaviours, through limited access to supermarkets, decreased transport services, and higher access to convenience stores.[5] On top of this, as the INDI study notes, foods used in larger quantities in high-protein high-calorie diets, for instance, such as full-fat milk, cream and sugar, are decidedly more expensive in convenience stores.

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[3] Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute, (2013), "Examination of the cost of healthy eating and specialised diets for a single individual in Ireland: 2013 Update"

[4] Healthy Food for All, (2009), "The affordability of healthy eating for low -income households", Dublin, HFfA

[5] Morland K, Diez Roux AV, Wing S., (2006), "Supermarkets, other food stores, and obesity: the atherosclerosis risk in communities study", AmericanJournal of Preventative Medicine 2006; 30: 333–339

Another crucial element of the report is that it is based on 2007 social payment rates, and therefore does not account for the now reduced rates for Jobseekers under 25 years of age, for instance. The cost of healthy eating and specialised diets can be as much as 60% of the weekly income for those who fall into this bracket. More generally, the report also finds that the cost of the healthy eating diet is now 35% of the social welfare allowance if you only have access to a convenience store, the location now used by most low-income families, many of whom include a person or persons with a disability, for their weekly shopping.

Reducing Support

The discontinuation of the Diet Supplement for new applicants marks the further erosion of the supports available to people with disabilities. DFI is disappointed in this development, an example of a stealth cut hidden in Budget 2014, and one which lies in contradiction to the Government's policy to improve people's health and well-being, *Healthy Ireland*. This allowance is extremely important to many people with disabilities; not following specialised diets can exacerbate an individual's condition, leading to poorer quality of life and a need to access medical care more frequently. People want to be able to live a healthy life, but a cut like this could force people to make decisions they don't want to make regarding their health, and could also act as a barrier for people with disabilities returning to work as they will lose the allowance if they ever have to return to social welfare.

To learn more about the Diet Supplement, please visit

http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Dietary-Supplement.aspx

DFI Extends Open Invitation to Meeting on Income and Employment Issues

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is hosting a Network of Interest meeting for anyone interested in income and employment issues on Wednesday, 2 April 2014.

The meeting will take place between 2pm and 4pm in the DFI Head Office, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane in Dublin 8. We will be discussing feedback from a recent roundtable discussion on the applications and appeals processes for disability payments, which was hosted between the Department of Social Protection and the Disability Stakeholders Forum

Image by Idea go, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

members. We will also have some discussion about the extra costs associated with living with a disability or chronic condition.

If you are interested in attending, or would like to find out more information, please contact Joan O'Donnell of DFI at joanodonnell@disailbity-federation.ie or on 086 383 4587.

Participation In Workshops Preparing For Social Inclusion Forum Encouraged

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is urging its members to participate and engage in the preparatory workshops offered by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Community Workers' Co-Operative (CWC) in advance of the Social Inclusion Forum (SIF).

The Social Inclusion Forum offers an opportunity for public discussion of social inclusion issues

These workshops, running across the country throughout the month of March, will play an invaluable role in preparing people to contribute to the upcoming SIF.

The SIF is part of the institutional framework laid out by the Government to support the development and implementation of its plans to tackle poverty and social exclusion. SIF 2014, taking place on 1 April in Dublin's Croke Park, presents an opportunity for wider public discussion and consultation on social inclusion issues, particularly for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, as well as the groups working with them. As such, the event provides a forum for people with disabilities, many of whom have experience of social exclusion, and the organisations supporting them to express their views.

Covering the issues impacting on the Government's plans to address poverty and social exclusion as well as the SIF itself, the workshops will deal with the SIF 2014 themes, including local government reform, the Healthy Ireland Strategy, homelessness and the Roma Integration Strategy. The workshops are free, but registration is vital. A small budget is available to support participation, which can be used to contribute to travel costs for unfunded or under-funded groups and to the childcare costs of unwaged individuals.

For more information on the Social Inclusion Forum, please visit www.socialinclusion.ie.

To register for SIF 2014, email social.inclusion@welfare.ie.

For more information or to register for the workshops below, email enquiries@eapn.ie

- Monaghan: 18 March, 10am – Enterprise Centre, Dublin Road, Castleblaney.
- Offaly: 19 March, 10am – Offaly Traveller Movement, Bury Quay, Tullamore.
- Kilkenny: 20 March, 10am – 47A Ossary Park, Kilkenny.
- Clare: 21 March, 11.30am – Ennis, venue to be confirmed.
- Kilkenny City – 20th March from 10:00am-1:00pm in 47A Ossary Park, Kilkenny, street opposite Government Buildings on the Hebron Road
- Ennis – 21st March at 11.30am venue to be confirmed (email: enquiries@eapn.ie for further info)

For more information or to register for the workshops below, please email info@cwc.ie

- Galway: 18 March, 1.45pm - Galway City Partnership, 3 The Plaza, Galway (above Argos)
- Dublin: 19 March, 1.30pm - F2 Centre, Rialto, Dublin 8
- Dublin: 20 March, 10.30am – Pavee Point Traveller Centre, 46 North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1 (Thematic Workshop: Roma and Traveller Health)
- Dublin: 20 March, 2.30pm – National Women's Council of Ireland, 4th Floor, 2/3 Parnell Square East, Dublin 1 (Thematic Workshop: Women)
- Donegal: 25 March, 7pm – Cheshire Apartments, Long Lane, Letterkenny.

DFI Raises Concerns On Inequality at Social Protection Consultation

The Disability Federation of Ireland participated in the Consultation on the Department of Social Protection (DSP) Input into the National Social Report (NSR) and the National Reform Programme (NRP) on 3 March.

The NSR and NRP are documents produced by European Union (EU) member states signed up to the Europe 2020 Strategy. The NSR presents the national social situation including progress towards poverty and social inclusion targets and recent policy reforms, while the NRP contains national targets relating to EU-wide headline targets and explain how governments intend to meet them and overcome obstacles to growth. Consultation with civil society and representative organisations is an inherent part of both processes. However, the depth and quality of consultation varies significantly across Europe.

The meeting with the Social Inclusion Division of the DSP on the NSR and NRP submissions revolved around three themes: poverty and social exclusion, adequate and sustainable pensions, and active inclusion strategies. During the consultation, Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer with DFI, expressed serious concerns around the perpetuation of structural inequalities which serve to compound the challenges faced by people with disabilities. She made particular reference to access to activation programmes for people with disabilities.

Both the NSR and the NRP are due to be submitted to the European Commission in April 2014. The submission of the NRP completes the second phase of the European Semester, an annual cycle of economic policy coordination and the key delivery tool for the Europe 2020 Strategy at national level. Produced alongside stability/convergence programmes, the NRP also sets out what measures will be taken, when, by whom and with what budget implications. Meanwhile, the proposed thematic focus for the 2014 NSR is access to social protection of young unemployed persons.

The DSP issued a tight deadline, providing less than a week's notice, for written comments on the documents. DFI will make a submission on behalf of people with disabilities and our member organisations.

Since exiting the Troika bailout, the European Semester is of increasing importance to Ireland because we have greater autonomy regarding economic and social policies. DFI would like to see this autonomy reflected in the content of the 2014 NRP and NSR. This is the opportune time for the government to demonstrate their priorities for the future as well as their commitment to people with disabilities. Post-troika, this is also an opportunity for the disability movement in Ireland to ensure that its collective voice is heard by engaging in consultation process.

For more information on the consultation or the DFI submissions on this issue, please contact Joan O'Donnell at joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie or on 086 383 4587.

Department of Social Protection Seeks Submissions for New Fraud Initiative

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) is calling for submissions and comments on a new Fraud and Control Initiative to be launched in 2014.

The DSP is seeking suggestions for a new initiative aimed at ensuring that social welfare payments are received at the right time by those who are legitimately entitled to them. The

Department has stated that this remains a high priority, and that a strategic approach to combating social welfare fraud was enacted in its Fraud Initiative 2011-2013.

A new Initiative is set to be introduced during the year, with the DSP now inviting submissions and suggestions to assist and influence its development and creation. Submissions and comments should be sent by email to Catherine.connellan@welfare.ie before the deadline, which falls on 7 March 2014.

For more information, please contact Joan O'Donnell at joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie or on 086 383 4587.

To read previous submissions from the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) to the DSP, please visit http://disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=10485.

Organisational Development

DFI Committed To Guarding Standards and Reviewing the Governance Code

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) has campaigned for more effective regulation and governance of charities over the past twenty years.

As well as consistently engaging with government departments and the wider community and voluntary sector on this issue, DFI has been heavily involved in the development, promotion and adoption of the Governance Code. Some 240 organisations are on the road to compliance with the Code, with 15% of those so far signed up representing members of DFI.

Image by basketman, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Code development

The Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable (CVC) Organisations was first published in February 2012. As stated within the Code itself, "governance is how an organisation is run, directed, and controlled… But good governance is not about rules. It is an attitude of minds. It is about the ethical culture of the organisation and the behaviour of the people on the governing body".

DFI Support Officer Dermot O'Donnell, seen here speaking at a DFI Symposium on Quality in November 2013, was heavily involved in the development of the Governance Code.

As such, the Code remains voluntary, embodying five main principles – including leading and exercising control over organisations, transparency and accountability, working effectively and behaving with integrity - with three sub-clauses each. These are designed with recommended guidelines and actions to ensure that the principles are properly embedded into an organisation, which is expected to compare itself to the Code standards on a 'comply or explain' basis. Checklists are designed so that groups can measure themselves against the various principles and related actions, making any changes needed accordingly.

Three types of organisation are catered for by the Code, and while the five principles remain the same across all three categories, the actions required by the organisations are different. Following these to bring about good governance of a CVC organisation reassures current funders that their money is being managed by a well-run and effective organisation, and allows for increased transparency, avoidance of risks, speedier achievement of goals and reduced costs for the organisation.

Development

The Code was drawn up by a working group of which DFI remains an active member. Developed alongside Boardmatch Ireland, Business in the Community, Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Clann Credo, Irish Charities Tax Reform, Volunteer Ireland and The Wheel, its aim is to increase transparency and bolster public confidence in the sector.

These organisations collaborated closely, meeting every month from Autumn 2009 through to the end of 2011, with sub-groups formed to deal with specific aspects of the work in between these meetings. CVC groups of all sizes, private funders, regulators, statutory authorities and funders, and other stakeholders submitted feedback on the draft Code as part of the development process, with over 112 written submissions received during a public consultation held between May and July 2011. The working group then finalised the Code, taking this and other feedback into consideration.

Speaking at its launch, Deirdre Garvey, Chairperson of the working group, explained, “in the absence of adequate regulation, the community, voluntary and charity sector has shown great initiative by developing this Code, particularly at a time when many charities are struggling with funding and an increasing demand for their services”.

All members of the working group have signed a written agreement to share the responsibility for guarding the standards in this Code, committing to reviewing the Code within three years in reflection of the experiences organisations have had in adopting and implementing it.

Implementation

Support Officer with DFI, Dermot O’Donnell, stood as the DFI representative on the working group towards the development of the Governance Code. He explains that “community and voluntary organisations face pressure not only in providing valuable supports and services, but also in demonstrating their accountability and efficiency. Organisations have to meet growing expectations from the people they provide services to and represent, public and private funders, and government legislative requirements”.

DFI recognises that organisational governance is critical for effective operation in a rapidly changing and challenging environment, and strongly encourages its member organisations to implement the Governance Code, taking full advantage of the opportunities it presents.

If you have any questions or queries in relation to the Governance Code, please contact Dermot O’Donnell at dermotodonnell@disability-federation.ie or on 086 780 8639. For more information or to sign up to the Governance Code, please visit http://www.governancecode.ie/index.php.

Maternity Leave and Recruitment Processes: HR Update

The Disability Federation of Ireland, together with Adare Human Resource Management, operates a support structure which allows member organisations to exclusively avail of discounted Human Resource and Employment Law Support Services.

Adare Human Resource Management (HRM) provides these services to a large number of organisations within the community and voluntary sector. Organisations are supported by ensuring legal compliance in their practices, policies and procedures, and thus minimizing the risk of exposure to legal challenges.

Maternity Protection Acts

The Maternity Protection Acts 1994 and 2004 set out to provide limited leave in advance of the birth of a child, and more substantial leave following the birth of a child for the mother. All female employees are entitled to avail of up to 26 weeks of Maternity Leave and may wish to avail of an additional unpaid period of maternity leave of a further 16 weeks. While an employee may be entitled to receive Maternity Benefit of €230 per week from the Department of Social Protection (DSP), subject to meeting certain criteria, it remains at an organisation's discretion whether they provide payment to employees for some or all of the period of Maternity Leave. Organisations should act fairly and consistently with all employees, and this should be outlined in employment contracts or in the Employee Handbook. An employee who wishes to avail of the additional 16 weeks should note that she will not be entitled to a benefit from the DSP for this time.

Adare's Employment Law and HR Services At A Glance

- **Contracts** of Employment & Employee Handbooks containing policies & procedures - drafting / review / update.
- **HR Helpdesk** – provision of on-going access to Phone / Email HR Advice and Support.
- **Representation** at Workplace Relations Commission, Rights Commissioners, Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) and other external employment bodies.
- **HR Consultancy Services** – Recruitment / Investigations / Dispute Management.

Maternity Leave must begin a minimum of two weeks before the employee is due to give birth, and the employee must take at least four weeks of leave following the birth. An employee may avail of the remainder of their maternity leave at their own discretion, prior to or following the birth, determining the date of commencement as suitable to their own needs. It is important to consider public holidays, as an employee is entitled to a benefit in respect of any which fall during their maternity leave. A female employee is also entitled to reasonable, paid time off to attend ante-natal medical appointments during pregnancy and post-natal appointments until 14 weeks after the birth of the child. If an employee is breastfeeding, this entitlement to paid time off for post-natal care is extended to 26 weeks.

An employee is required to provide at least four weeks' notice of intention to commence maternity leave. A medical certificate confirming the pregnancy and the expected date of confinement must be provided at this time. An employee is not required to provide notification of her intention to avail of additional maternity leave until four weeks prior to its commencement. However, most Organisations do seek an indication on this matter.

An employee continues to accrue service during the period of maternity leave and should be treated as though she was not absent from work. Consequently, there should be no change to terms and conditions of employment arising from the employee availing of this period of protected leave, other than to remuneration and superannuation. An employee who avails of maternity leave, where possible, will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave, provided that this was their normal position. However, where this is not feasible, he or she may return to work to a suitable alternative position which is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

HR Management Topic |Recruitment & Selection

Making good recruitment and selection decisions can contribute greatly to an organisation's success in achieving its mission and goals, as well as supporting its values and methods of working. It is important that employers have fair and transparent recruitment procedures in place. The Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2012 set out nine protected grounds under which discrimination is illegal; in order to take reasonable steps to prevent this occurring, there should be a Recruitment and Selection Policy and an Equal Opportunities Policy in place. All those with responsibility for such activities should be aware of these policies and their obligations under the Acts, and trained in best practice recruitment procedures.

All organisations should have an Equal Opportunities Policy in place to prevent discrimination occurring in the recruitment process.

Image by jesadaphorn, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

In making any decision as regards the provision of reasonable accommodation for an applicant, the organisation is only required to provide such measures where they do not impose a disproportionate burden. In determining this, it must consider the financial and other costs entailed, the scale and financial resources of the organisation, and the possibility of obtaining public funding or other assistance. In order to be equipped to defend an allegation of discrimination, all recruitment records, including copies of rejected applications, interview notes and applicant screening records, should be retained for a minimum of 13 months after the competition is closed. This is because an allegation of discrimination may be brought under the Employment Equality Acts for up to 12 months. The extra month is to allow for notification of the complaint from the Equality Tribunal. In all cases an applicant may request access to any personal data held about them under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. This would include their recruitment records. An Employer has 40 days during which to accede to such a request.

For more information on this service, please get in touch with your DFI Support Officer or contact Derek McKay at dmckay@adarehrm.ie or on 01-612 7092. Alternatively, visit http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=50

Health Matters

Free GP Care For Under Sixes Must Comply with Disability Strategy, Says DFI

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) has drawn up its submission to the Department of Health on its Draft General Practitioner (GP) Contract to provide free GP care for children under six years of age.

The scheme was announced last October as one of the significant health measures in Budget 2014, and is expected to be introduced mid-2014 at a cost of €37 million. According to the Central Statistics Office in 2011, there are over 10,000 children aged four and under with a disability currently living in Ireland. Children with disabilities and their families will be regular users of their GP services, and this contract needs to reflect the role that GPs play in the diagnosis of disability and in follow-on support.

In its submission, DFI calls on the Department to ensure that the free GP care scheme is fully aligned with both Irish national disability policy and the wider health agenda. The national framework *Healthy Ireland* takes a "whole of society" approach to improving health, in line with the mainstreaming agenda of the National Disability Strategy and the Disability Act 2005. Community services and supports, including GP services, are vital to realising this and, ultimately, the principles set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which DFI is also urging the Department to ratify.

The organisation raises a number of concerns with the Draft Contract, particularly in relation to Section 13.1 which states that GPs would not have to treat a child where they would "require special skill or experience of a degree or kind which medical practitioners cannot reasonably be expected to possess". Concerned that this could be interpreted so that a GP could opt out of treating a child with a disability or chronic illness as they have no specialised training, DFI is seeking more clarity in the text.

Image by artur84, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

The need to ensure that various parts of the health system work effectively together in a person-centred manner in order to achieve the mainstreaming of children with disabilities is also pointed to. In addition to GPs working with integrated, multidisciplinary primary care teams, they must also engage with Early Intervention and School Age Teams as well as voluntary disability organisations, who regularly bridge the transition from hospital back to the community for children with disabilities.

The submission comes as part of the Department of Health's pubic consultation on the draft contract on the provision of free GP care to children under the age of six. The Department of Health and the Health Service Executive (HSE) are currently developing a fee structure for the scheme, and this will itself be subject to future consultation as well.

To view the draft contract of the free GP scheme, please visit:

http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/gmscontracts/under6GPcontract/draftcontract.p

DFI Calls For Extension of Advance Healthcare Directives In Mental Health

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) has produced its submission on the Department of Health's Draft General Scheme for Advance Healthcare Directives for incorporation into the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill 2013.

The General Scheme establishes a legal framework to ensure that the given wishes or instructions made by a competent adult in anticipation of future incapacity are adhered to. Advance Healthcare Directives (AHDs), also referred to as "living wills", lay out an individual's wishes in relation to the type and extent of medical treatments they would or would not like to receive.

DFI contends that the AHDs are a necessary addition to the Assisted Decision-Making Bill, and that such legislative provision will further progress the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in Ireland. Through enabling an individual to express their preferences and plan for their own future care, it allows a person a voice in the event of their incapacity; this is pertinent across the spectrum of disability, particularly where a condition is progressive.

However, the organisation also raised a number of issues with the draft scheme, expressing disappointment at the blanket exclusion of people involuntarily detained in mental health settings under the Mental Health Act. The submission carries a call for the extension of AHDS to include such individuals, in order to fully respect their rights under the UNCRPD. The Department of Health needs to consider that the proposed AHD is not applicable to the administration of basic care; preferences on how personal and basic care is provided are crucial to the ethos of independent living. More clarity is also required on whether, should a conflict occur, an AHD takes precedence over a Healthcare Power of Attorney, and on the role of the family in end-of-life decisions, especially when a family opposes the choices made in the AHD.

Advance Healthcare Directives should ensure that an individual's wishes are respected and accommodated in the event of an accident, emergency, serious illness or death.

Image by imagwerymajestic, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net.

In addition, DFI is concerned that the scheme does not recognise universal legal capacity for all, being based on 'having' or 'lacking' capacity. The organisation also pointed to the need to carefully monitor and regulate the implementation of AHDs, with an onus on health professionals to check if an individual has an AHD.

In its conclusion, DFI welcomed the fact that AHDs are being given a legislative footing, emphasising their importance to people with disabilities, chronic conditions and mental ill-health. It contended that the continuity of care in end-of-life treatment and cases where a patient loses capacity must be considered as public health matters requiring the cohesion of all public health planning, and that this must include recognition of the inevitability of death and loss, cultural sensitivity, equality of access for all, sustainability and utilising a population health approach[6].

The Draft General Scheme for AHDs is available at http://www.dohc.ie/consultations/open/AHDs/Draft_General_Scheme_AHDs.pdf?direct=1. For more information on the Department of Health's consultation process, please visit http://www.dohc.ie/consultations/open/AHDs

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[6] Law Reform Commission (2009) Bioethics: Advance Care Directives Report.

Children's Issues

Minister Announces Children First Legislation To Be Published Within Weeks

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, told the Fine Gael Ard-Fheis on 1 March that the legislation for the Children First Bill is to be published within weeks.

DFI strongly encourages member organisations to prepare for the implementation of Children First legislation.

Image by Vlado, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) has continually pushed for the implementation of the Children First Bill, designed to assist in the identification and reporting of child neglect and abuse. On 23 July 2013, Minister Fitzgerald TD announced that the Government had accepted the Heads of the Bill, initially published in April 2012, and approved the drafting of the legislation. The Bill improves child protection arrangements in organisations offering services to children, providing for mandatory reporting of concerns, as well as inter-agency working and information-sharing.

The Bill essentially gives statutory footing to the “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” code and the accompanying “Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook”. The proposed legislation is part of a suite of legislation aimed at strengthening child protection, including the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 and the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

In addition, TUSLA: The Child and Family Agency was established on 1 January 2014, now standing as the dedicated State agency responsible for improving well-being and outcomes

Image by artztsamui, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net for children. TUSLA has a primary responsibility to promote the safety and welfare of children, with An Garda Síochána also holding statutory responsibilities in this area.

DFI has taken a proactive approach in promoting the effective adoption of Children First across state-funded disability health services for children and young people, with Support Officer Toni Gleeson sitting on the National Disability Steering Group for its implementation. Children with a disability enjoy the same rights to protection as any other child; however, a child with a disability is up to 3.7 times more at risk of abuse and neglect than non-disabled children.[7]

This group monitors overall trends, issues, obstacles and risks in the implementation of Children First, reporting into the National Disability Governance Group of the Health Service Executive (HSE). Its terms of reference include the development and recommendation of a Children First Training Strategy for adoption by all disability service provider. The HSE also has an oversight group in place, whose purpose is to report to the Government Inter-departmental Group on Health Service Compliance with Children First across all care groups. This group is currently developing a Memorandum of Agreement between TUSLA and the HSE.

While waiting for the legislation to come through, DFI strongly encourages all disability organisations to seriously consider how they actively put children first within the organisation and its services. Any organisations are interested in training on Children First in advance of the legislation or are having difficulty accessing such training, please contact Toni Gleeson at tonigleeson@disability-federation.ie or on 086 600 4526.

To learn more about Children First and to see the National Guidance Document for the development of policy, please visit http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirstdisabilityservices. More information about TUSLA: The Child and Family Agency is available at www.tusla.ie. To see more of DFI's work with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, visit http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=10479

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[7] Jones et al, (2012), "Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies", www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2012/child_disabilities_violence_20120712/en/index.html

News and General Information

Greater Dublin Independent Living Announce Peer Mentoring Service

Greater Dublin Independent Living (GDIL) has announced that it is now offering a Peer Mentoring Service aimed at connecting people with disabilities who are having difficulties in their lives.

Those availing of the service will be linked with other people with disabilities who have been through similar situations, as a means of giving support and easing the challenges they face in their daily lives.

The service will benefit people with disabilities concerned about issues in the areas of employment, personal transport, personal assistance, grant applications, housing, social welfare, healthcare provision, education or relationships, for example. GDIL will work with applicants to match them with a mentor who can best serve their needs; sharing and dealing with these experiences with a person who has previously found themselves in the same position offers opportunities for great support, advice and guidance.

GDIL is taking a proactive approach to the peer mentoring programme; all mentors are trained in peer mentoring, with goals and outcomes being laid out for all pairs of mentors and mentees. The service remains confidential, allowing people to speak about their lives, and acknowledge and validate their experiences as a person with a disability.

The organisations is working with mentors who have left a residential or home setting and have experience of living independently, using public transport, employment, and designing and adapting their homes.

For more information on the Peer Mentoring Service, please contact Valerie Bowe on 086 088 7735, or Rhona Coughlan on 086 067 9101.

Image by bplanet, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Constitutional Convention Backs Increased Rights for People with Disabilities

90% of the penal members of the Convention on the Constitution backed the inclusion of additional rights for people with disabilities in the Irish Constitution during the final meeting of the Convention on 23 February.

The Convention is a decision-making forum of 100 people, comprised of both citizens and politicians, established by the Oireachtas in July 2012 in order to examine areas of potential reform of the Constitution and submit recommendations to the Oireachtas on future topics for referendum. At its ninth and final meeting, the Convention considered whether the constitutional protection of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights should be strengthened, with 85% of members voting in favour of such action.

Members also supported the incorporation of increased rights in essential health care (87%), housing (84%), social security (78%), and language and culture (75%) into the Constitution.
Over the weekend, arguments were heard from experts and academics on both sides, with Colm O'Gorman, executive director of Amnesty International Ireland, standing in favour, and former Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell, among those in opposition.

The Convention decided that ESC rights are currently protected "in a limited manner" under the Constitution, and that the Constitution should be amended in order to enhance them. Tom Arnold, chairman of the Convention, explained that a report on the meeting and its proceedings would be given to the Oireachtas, with Government expected to respond to its recommendations by the summer.

To learn more about the Convention on the Constitution, visit its website at https://www.constitution.ie/Default.aspx.

New Charity Supports Children With Disabilities From Minority Backgrounds

Children from migrant or minority backgrounds living with a physical or intellectual disability can now find support with the recently-established Migrant Disability Network Ireland (MDNI).

The organisation, which aims to provide expert and compassionate support, advice and information to these children and their families, was founded by Angela Eguakhide-Kennedy, an intellectual disability nurse and children's' rights advocate, in November 2013. A primary goal of the organisation is to optimise the unique ability of every child, while ensuring they receive the right kind of care during each key developmental stage.

MDNI offers advocacy services for parents and carers of children with a disability, supports for non-English speaking families affected by disability, and education for parents on their child's condition. MDNI also assists families when booking relevant appointments with the Health Services, accompanying them to these consultations where necessary and working alongside families and health professionals through the assessment process.

Ms Eguakhide-Kennedy first came up with the idea to form the organisation while studying as an undergraduate of Intellectual Disability Nursing at Dublin City University (DCU). Upon qualification in September 2013, she set up MDNI as a non-profit organisation.

To learn more about the organisation and its work, please visit http://www.migrantdisabilitynetwork.com/home.html or email angela@migrantdisabilitynetwork.com.

New Series of Short Films From IHHA Challenges The Stigma of Hearing Loss

The Irish Hard of Hearing Association (IHHA) is set to release 'Hear Today', a series of five animated short films which aim to discourage misconceptions and stigmas about hearing loss.

The films, which will be periodically shared through the IHHA website and on Youtube from 13 March, are also to be screened at the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) Conference in Jerusalem in April 2014.

A still from 'Day In The Life', one of the five short films in the 'Hear Today' series

IHHA began work on the series in 2013, collaborating with Carla Maria Tighe, a young filmmaker, and animators from the Institute of Design, Art and Technology (IADT) in Dún Laoghaire to create it.

The organisation wanted to produce a film which supports its mission and enables it to reach a wider audience, and which helps the hard of hearing in Ireland to be assertive and open about their hearing loss.

The five films will be made available to watch over the coming weeks on www.heartodayfilms.com.The IHHA has also created a five-minute collection piece which will be submitted to film festivals for potential future screenings.

For more about the Irish Hard of Hearing Association and its work, visit http://www.ihha.ie. Image by Idea go, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Announcement of Job Shadow Day Supports Inclusion In The Workplace

Dessie Fitzgerald (right) job-shadowed in national radio station Today FM with presenter Ray D'Arcy (left)

The Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE) has announced that Nationwide Job Shadow Day, offering people with disabilities an opportunity to shadow a workplace mentor, is taking place on Wednesday, 9 April 2014.

Sponsored by IrishJobs.ie, Job Shadow Day promotes employment rights and access to work and training for all people with a disability in Ireland. Participants partner with a mentor, following them as they go through a normal working day at hundreds of companies and employment sites across Ireland.

Last year, over 460 individuals with a disability shadowed at 439 employment sites in Ireland, with 27 securing a permanent job placement as a direct result. Following on from its success in Ireland, National Supported Employment Week is set to roll out in Europe, with twelve countries already pledged to take part in 2015.

Local business, community organisations, celebrity chefs, television personalities, government departments and even the Taoiseach will demonstrate their commitment to inclusion in the workplace by getting involved on the day this year.

To learn more about how you can get involved or to sign up to the initiative, please visit initiative, see http://www.iase.ie/pages/job_shadow/job_shadow.html

Applications Sought For Visual and Performing Arts Fund

The Rehab Group is seeking applications for their Visual and Performing Arts Fund from individuals with disabilities or mental health difficulties working or studying in the arts.

The 2014 round of applications is open to anyone over the age of 17 interested in a wide range of visual and performing arts, including painting, sculpture, graphic art, film, drama, music and dance.

Funds of between €1,000 and €10,000 are available per project or individual. The deadline for applications closes at 5pm on Friday, 11 April 2014. The application form is available for download at http://rehab.ie/about/VisualAndPerformingArtsFund.aspx. For further information, please email artsfund@rehab.ie or call 01 2057 397.

Focus on Europe

Chief Executive of DFI Hosting Workshop At EASPD Annual Conference

Chief Executive of the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), John Dolan, is set to host a workshop at the upcoming annual conference of the European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD).

Image by dan, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

Taking place in Siegen, Germany between 27-30 March, the conference, ‘Planning Inclusive Communities: Challenges and Strategies of Local Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)’, looks at inclusion as a community-planning concept.


John Dolan,
Chief Executive of DFI

Focusing on ‘Strategic Options for Service Provision under Economic Threats and Consequences for Local Infrastructure’ in his workshop, Mr Dolan will also participate in the Board Meeting, General Assembly Meeting, Policy Impact Group and the Interest Group on Independent Living meetings of the EASPD to be held in conjunction with the conference.

The EASPD is organizing the event in partnership with the Ministry of Employment, Integration and Social Affairs of the German State North Rhine-Westphalia. It will explore how municipalities, service providers and people with disabilities can contribute to planning in order to create future communities that will be fully inclusive of people with disabilities and in line with the UNCRPD.

For more information on the EASPD Annual Conference 2014, please visit http://www.easpd.eu/en/content/annual-conference-2014-siegen

Image by Idea go, courtesy of freedigitalphotos.net

DFI Links Into European Disability Group Strategy On Use of Structural Funds

Chief Executive of the Disability Federation of Ireland, John Dolan, represented the organisation at the European Disability Forum (EDF) conference on the “Implementation of Structural Funds” in Athens, 22 February 2014.

Structural Funds

Structural Funds are financial tools and initiatives to implement regional policies of the European Union (EU). The EDF used the conference to highlight their importance, calling for their use to fulfil the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

(UNCRPD), a practice which would uphold the rights and protection of the 80 million people with disabilities across Europe.

Wladyslaw Piskorz from the EU Commission spoke about the importance of taking people with disabilities into consideration when Member States are making their proposals for the use of Structural Funds. He proposed the development of mechanisms to enable consultation with people with disabilities, thus ensuring the availability of expertise on disability issues. The provision of training to politicians and officials on the articles of the UNCRPD was also identified as priority.

Mr Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the EDF, speaking at the event.
Image courtesy of the EDF.

European Elections

EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, also emphasised the importance of the upcoming 2014 European Elections. In bringing different forces forward, such as new Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, ideas and policies, the elections offer an opportunity for the disability movement – including people with disabilities – to set its positions for a social Europe. Mr Vardakastanis also called on EDF member organisations to use the EDF manifesto to campaign at national level for the key priorities of the disability movement. DFI will be linking in with the EDF strategy on Structural Funds, keeping our members with updated on any developments and events.

The European Elections will take place in Ireland alongside the local elections on Friday, 23 May 2014. The DFI Local and European Election manifestos will soon be available on our website. You can access the EDF manifesto on its website through the following link: https://www.dropbox.com/s/47lnldkxbyg7pi2/EDF%20Manifesto%20on%20the%20EU%20elections%202014.doc. To learn more about EU Structural Funds in Ireland, visit http://eustructuralfunds.gov.ie/home.

DFI MEMBER ORGANISATIONS | NEWSLETTER DIRECTORY

For information, please contact the member organisations directly.

ACTS (Accessible Community Transport Southside)
Newsletter available at www.actsltd.ie

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland
Newsletter available at www.abiireland.ie/publications.html

Arthritis Ireland
Subscribe to e-zine at www.arthritisireland.ie

Aware
Subscribe to e-newsletter at www.aware.ie

Bodywhys
Subscribe to newsletter at www.bodywhys.ie,

Bray Lakers
Visit www.braylakers.ie/Newsletter/190 for newsletters

Care Alliance Ireland
Visit http://www.carealliance.ie/publications_newsletters

Carers Association
Subscribe at hwww.carersireland.com/newsletters.php,

Carmichael Centre
Sign up for news at http://www.carmichaelcentre.ie/news

Disabled Drivers Association
Subscribe to newsletter at http://www.ddai.ie

Down Syndrome Ireland
Twice-yearly magazine available to members of the organisation

Dyslexia Association of Ireland
Visit http://www.dyslexia.ie/about/download-section/

Enable Ireland
E-newsletter at http://www.enableireland.ie/newsletter

Epilepsy Ireland
Visit http://www.epilepsy.ie/index.cfm/spKey/news.html

Féach
Subscribe to newsletter at http://feach.ie/index.php/newsletter

Fighting Blindness
Visit http://www.fightingblindness.ie/news/email-newsletter/

GROW
Subscribe at http://grow.ie/blog/publication_titles/newsletters/

Irish Guide Dogs Association
Visit http://www.guidedogs.ie/iopen24/newsletters.php

HAIL (Housing Association for Integrated Living)
Download newsletters at http://www.hail.ie/publications.htm

Headway
Monthly e-newsletter at http://www.headway.ie/stayintouch

Heart Children Ireland
Subscribe at http://www.heartchildren.ie/sign-our-newsletter

Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland
Visit http://www.huntingtons.ie/content/hope-newsletter-0

Irish Haemophilia Society
Subscribe at http://www.haemophilia.ie/newsletter.php

Irish Kidney Association
Visit http://www.ika.ie/services/support-magazine-archive

Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association
Subscribe to newsletter at www.imnda.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association
Visit www.iwa.ie/information/publications/spokeout-magazine

Livability
Subscribe to e-mail updates at http://www.livability.org.uk/

Migraine Association of Ireland
Subscribe to monthly e-zine at http://www.migraine.ie

Move 4 Parkinsons
Visit http://www.move4parkinsons.com/join-move4parkinsons/

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland
Subscribe to e-newsletters at www.ms-society.ie

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
Subscribe at http://www.mdi.ie/newsletter-by-email.html

National Council for the Blind of Ireland
Magazine at http://www.ncbi.ie/news/ncbi-news-magazine

Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland
Subscribe to newsletter at www.nfaireland.ie

Offaly Centre for Independent Living
Email sarah@ocil.ie to subscribe to monthly newsletter

Neurological Alliance of Ireland
Sign up to newsletter at http://www.nai.ie/

Parkinsons Association of Ireland
Visit http://www.parkinsons.ie/mediacentre_publications

Post Polio Support Group
Newsletters at http://www.ppsg.ie/publications_survivor.html

Rehab Group
Visit http://www.rehab.ie/about/rehabnews.aspx

Roscommon Disability Support Group
Email mganly@rosdisabilities.ie to request copies of newsletters

Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland
'Ability' magazine at http://www.sbhi.ie/ability-magazine.html

Special Olympics Ireland
Subscribe at http://www.specialolympics.ie/home.aspx

Spinal Injuries Ireland
'Spinal News' at http://www.spinalinjuries.ie/?page_id=164

Walkinstown Association
Visit http://www.walk.ie/info_newsletter

Yoobyoo (formerly Children In Hospital Ireland)
Subscribe to newsletter at http://yoobyoo.ie/

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Representing the interests and expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included.

Comprising organisations that represent and support people with disabilities.

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) represents the interests and the expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included in Irish society. It comprises organisations that represent and support people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

The vision of DFI is that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise their full civil, economic, social and human rights and that they are enabled to reach their full potential in life. DFI's mission is to act as an advocate for the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities and disabling conditions in all aspects of their lives.

There are over 120 organisations within membership or as associates of DFI. DFI also works with a growing number of organisations and groups around the country that have a significant disability interest, mainly from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI provides:

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

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.

Disability Federation of Ireland, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8

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