



## **Disability Federation of Ireland**

### **Newsletter**

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

**May 2009**

#### **Time for Government to Reaffirm its Commitment to Disability**

Before this recession there was a services crisis for people with disabilities – that is why there is a National Disability Strategy. Government must understand that Ireland does not only have a new unemployment crisis but that it already had a social services crisis for people with disabilities. Socially it must act to counter the crisis for people with disabilities putting in place urgently a plan to progress the implementation of the National Disability Strategy (NDS) during the recession. A plan which is built around three things. Firstly acknowledge that there are major service deficits currently for disabled people. Secondly, that mainstreaming of services and supports is the starting point and thirdly, that Government has a commitment in its Programme for Government to prioritise the interests of people with disabilities.

The NDS is a major whole of Government commitment. With the Government fully committed to the delivery of the NDS it is critical that a new five year implementation Plan is developed urgently that outlines clearly disability commitments and areas to be prioritised during the current difficult environment. Failing to do so will mean that the substantial gains achieved through the NDS to date will be eroded and Governments stated priority to disability will prove to be hollow. People with disabilities, their families and the organisations that support them will believe that, as in the 1980's, they have again paid a disproportionate price in a time of economic recession.

Local authorities are key actors in the implementation of the National Disability Strategy, both because they manage services such as housing and community facilities, and because they can promote better inter-agency co-operation. The upcoming Local Elections provide us with an important opportunity both in terms of educating all candidates on their responsibilities to the people with disabilities and on our sector's expectation that they will commit to the ongoing implementation of the NDS at local level, if elected.

**John Dolan**  
**CEO**

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## **Disability Federation of Ireland A.G.M. 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

Venue: Brandsma Hall, Carmelite Community Centre, 56 Aungier Street, Dublin 2

The A.G.M is being held on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at 8.30a.m. (a light breakfast will be available from 8a.m.), in The Carmelite Community Centre, 56 Aungier St., Dublin 2.

There are five vacancies on the Board of Directors and the nomination paper for election to the Board of Directors has been sent to those eligible to nominate.

Please contact DFI at 01 4547978 if you will be attending the AGM and also if you would like to avail of the early breakfast. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

## **Responding to the Challenges of 2009**

DFI Seminar (following DFI A.G.M)

20<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Venue: Brandsma Hall, Carmelite Community Centre, 56 Aungier Street, Dublin 2

**Purpose of the Seminar:** This Seminar will address the challenges 2009 has brought to date. The Seminar will offer a space for organisations to consider their strategic position going forward.

**Who is this Seminar for:** This Seminar is particularly relevant to senior decision makers in organisations, CEOs, Chairpersons, and senior staff members.

The Seminar will examine and discuss disability services in the mainstream and responding to change in relation to the challenges that are currently being presented. A presentation will be given by Josephine Keaveney from the Disabled People of Clare called "Responding to Change". This will be followed then by a presentation on DFI's Suite of Services to member organisations. The Seminar will also include time for issues to be discussed by organisations through workshops and open forum discussion.

If you would like to attend this Seminar please contact DFI for a booking form and return by email to [johndoyle@disability-federation.ie](mailto:johndoyle@disability-federation.ie) by 11<sup>th</sup> May. Please mention any accessibility or dietary requirements at time of booking.

Car parking is available at various locations close to the Carmelite Community Centre (St. Stephen's Green, Drury Street, Royal College of Surgeons, Trinity Street) or on street car parking

is also available. Map to venue: <http://pininthemap.com/ppd04d5939a924364e3>. Any queries please contact DFI on 01-4547978.

## **NATIONAL / LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June is Election Day which, for people with a disability and voluntary organisations working with them, creates an opportunity to advance our agenda on three different fronts – by influencing the campaign and priorities of potential County Councillor, Local Community and Voluntary Forum representatives and Members of the European Parliament (MEP's). DFI is supporting member organisations across the state to campaign as effectively as possible on our common issues.

DFI will continue to raise the profile of national disability issues such as the health funding cutbacks throughout the pre-election period, while DFI's Support Officers will be working with members to campaign to obtain commitments on disability from local candidates.

In this time of great uncertainty and retrenchment, we must keep the needs of people with a disability at the top of the Government's action list. Many of you will recall the desperate situation that confronted this sector long after the crisis of the 1980s. The run-up to 5<sup>th</sup> June gives us the chance to explain why disability cannot be allowed to be marginalised again.

The DFI campaigning Manifesto's can be viewed on our website. : [http://www.disability-federation.ie/information\\_elections.htm](http://www.disability-federation.ie/information_elections.htm)

For further information contact the local Support Officer in your area. All contact details for support officers are available at the end of the newsletter.

## **Local Election**

Local authorities are key actors in the implementation of the National Disability Strategy (NDS), both because they manage services such as housing and community facilities, and because they can promote better inter-agency co-operation. The DFI Local Election Manifesto identifies key priorities for Local Government. These areas include :

- Local Authority working in partnership with voluntary disability organisations to plan and deliver services and facilities for people with disabilities
- Local Authorities ensuring that the housing needs of people with disabilities are prioritized and responded to

- People with disabilities have access to appropriate services and supports in their local community
- County Development Boards engaging with statutory and voluntary disability organisations to create seamless service coordination
- Commitment to reviewing local employment schemes with a view to enhancing their effectiveness for the local community

By engaging candidates about our priorities, voluntary organisations will also be reinforcing their role as key players in local government's implementation of the NDS.

## **The Community & Voluntary Forum Elections 2009**

The Community and Voluntary Forum are the recognised consultation and participation structure through which the issues and ideas of the Community and Voluntary (C&V) sector are brought before the Local Authority. Community representatives on Local Structures such as the County Development Board, the Social Inclusion Measures Group and Strategic Policy Committees on Housing, Education, and Enterprise and so on are drawn from the C&V Forum steering group which is generally known as the Community Liaison Committee. (CLC).

In June 2009 the election of the CLC membership takes place in each local / city authority around the country. Nominations are invited from the membership of the C&V Forum and elections take place in each of the electoral divisions in the county or city. Members of the CLC are elected for five years and are actively engaged in decision making at key levels. It is of great importance that the voluntary disability sector is aware of this opportunity, especially now in the current climate as key local strategies such as the Access Implementation Plans are agreed and rolled out through the Local Authority structures already mentioned. If the expertise of disability organisations is missing from these structures the outcomes from various local strategies aimed at social inclusion and access may be less effective and relevant.

The voluntary disability sector is always eager to be more involved in the framing and implementation of key strategies which affect the lives of people with disabilities in our areas; this is our opportunity to engage more actively in Local Government structures. One small but crucial step would be to become a member of your local C&V Forum. Membership costs as little as €20 for the year and there are also some other great advantages, such as access to a national group

scheme for organisational insurance which is very affordable. A range of positive collaboration and networking opportunities emerge also. But more significantly if nominations from the sector are put forward to the CLC and from there to strategic policy committees, the voice of people with disabilities will be heard at the decision making tables, where it counts.

## **European Elections 2009**

The European Parliament Elections is fast approaching and will take place on the same day as the Local Elections in June 2009. The European Parliament has a critical role to play in influencing national policy in Ireland and in particular the role out of the National Disability Strategy. With worsening economic conditions and a further squeeze on disability services it is important to anchor and use the European Institutes to progress the rights and opportunities of disabled people.

While the European Union might appear insignificant given the extent of pressures on organisations during the current climate, the reality is that most of our national disability policies have their origins in the EU. This includes the National Disability Strategy and the key Equality legislation that sit alongside it. Significant decisions are made through the European Parliament and are later implemented at national level. Therefore it is important that we have our say and vote for MEPs who have strong representation of the disability interests.

### **What can your organisation do?**

MEP candidates must clearly identify their ongoing commitment to represent all citizens, including those who are disabled. DFI strongly argue that all organisations should lobby and actively influence Political Party Manifestos and MEP candidates. This can be achieved through written submissions, letters or by organising consultation events with your clients around the country. As usual, DFI are happy to help with your activities through the local support officers. After the election it is important to continue to support your local MEPs by keeping them informed of what is important for disabled people in Ireland.

### **What are some key issues that MEPs can commit to?**

DFI strongly encourage you to lobby potential MEPs in the run up to the European Elections. We have also put together a list of key issues of concern that you may want to raise with those running for election.

Demonstrate a commitment to disability issues by joining the European Parliament Inter-Group on Disability which meets once a month and is an important mechanism for progressing the rights of disabled citizens in Europe.

The European Commission played a prominent role in negotiating the UN Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities. Advocate for the full ratification of the Convention by each of the Member States, including Ireland, without further delay.

Ensure that disability is mainstreamed in all areas of EU policy by establishing mechanisms to examine the impact of every policy on disabled people.

Work to implement a comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Directive that will protect and promote the equal treatment of disabled people in all aspects of life. At present people with disabilities are only afforded some protection against discrimination with regard to employment, occupation and vocational training. Other areas such as social protection, health care, education and access to goods and services are not included.

Work towards the de-institutionalisation of people with disabilities through the development of community based setting (CBS) and person centred services (PCS) as described in the UN Convention and other international documents.

Please feel free to contact your local Support Officer for advice and / or help in your campaign.

## **ORGANISTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **“Organisation Healthcheck”**

DFI has developed a new service for member organisations entitled the “Organisation Healthcheck”.

We have developed this service in response to the growing level of regulation of voluntary disability organisations. Evidence of this regulation can be seen in the recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor Generals Report on disability services, the Charities Legislation and the new Grant Aid and Service Level Arrangements developed by the HSE.

This service is supported by a grant DFI received from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Dermot O'Donnell DFI Support Officer – Support for Organisations is leading this project.

The “Organisation Healthcheck” is designed to assess the governance and capacity level of organisations and identify their strengths and weaknesses in the process.

The “Organisation Healthcheck” is carried out across four areas of performance;

1. Governance
2. Finance and Budgeting

3. Staff and Volunteers
4. Policies and Procedures

The process is carried out with one to one support from the organisations' Liaison Support Officer, with guidance and advice being provided by Dermot O'Donnell, Support Officer for Organisations, throughout.

Once the "Organisation Healthcheck" is complete, a report on the performance of the individual organisation is prepared, accompanied by key recommendations as to how and where improvements might be made.

The entire programme is entirely confidential. It is hoped that statistics gathered will prove beneficial in identifying common weaknesses and providing user-friendly remedies.

The roll-out of the "Organisation Healthcheck" began with a pilot being conducted with three organisations during Winter / Spring 2008/ 2009.

Since then its roll-out has been broadened, with fifteen organisations currently undergoing the process. It is intended to continue implementing the roll-out on a phased basis through the period 2009 / 2010.

If you are interested in learning more about the service please contact Dermot or your Liaison Support Officer.

### **Funding and Fundraising**

The economic crisis of recent months has taken its toll on all organisations, and it has been easy to forget that there are still some funding opportunities out there to explore.

While some funding sources may have been affected by the downturn, it is still worthwhile to have a look around and follow through, as there are so many sources still available. There are various resources available including EU funding, Irish funders and private foundations and trusts.

To begin with some funding information is available on the DFI website at <http://www.disability-federation.ie/information>. Also funding information is available from The Wheels' website at <http://www.wheel.ie/user/content/view/full/4479>. This is a facility called Fundingpoint and requires organisations to subscribe to it for usage. However it is possible to take a video tour of the funding site to see what funding areas and schemes are listed. To take the tour of the funding site use the following address <http://www.fundingpoint.ie/?q=fundingpointie-video-tours>. It is helpful to take the free tour before making a decision to subscribe. The tour is informative and offers an overview of how the site works.

Most organisations will be aware of the Create (formerly Café) Irish Fundraising Handbook. The 6<sup>th</sup> Edition is available at the reasonable price of €20, plus €3 p+p. The Create Fundraising Handbook offers a broad range of funding opportunities for organisations of all kinds and from a variety of sources.

For further details view <http://www.create-ireland.ie/projects-and-initiatives/publications.html> to download an order form or telephone Tel: 01-4736600.

Active Link is another invaluable website for job opportunities and information on training and education, events, campaigns and general community news. From time to time some funding information is also on the site. Their website address is [www.activelink.ie](http://www.activelink.ie) and for further information contact Conor Murray at 01 6677326. Finally don't forget that local and national newspapers continue to be invaluable sources of information.

### SKILL PROGRAMME UPDATE

SKILL Programme is a national training programme aimed at the upskilling and training of health support staff. Two FETAC accredited awards are delivered through this programme – the Health Services Skills award (FETAC level 5) and the Advanced Certificate in Supervisory Management Skills (FETAC Level 6). Training is provided **free of charge** to staff in local Vocational Education Committees throughout Ireland. The programme runs from September till June each year, with training delivered from 9a.m. – 5 p.m. one day per week. Organisations are provided with a **backfill financial contribution of €3,500 per participant** to support costs.

Since joining in 2006, 655 staff from 27 DFI member organisations commenced training on SKILL Programme, covering key core topics of Communications, Care Support, Infection Prevention and Control, Workplace Statutory Policies & Procedures and Work Experience. Other work related subjects include for example Care of the Older Person, Person Centred Focus to Disability, and Caring for Children and Occupational 1<sup>st</sup> Aid.

Further information is available from [www.skillprogramme.ie](http://www.skillprogramme.ie)

Part of the role of DFI has been to continuously promote the training needs of participating DFI member organisations at national level. We have developed our own internal SKILL Programme Steering Group, Training Strand and HR Strand with membership of these groups open to any DFI member organisation participating on the SKILL Programme.

In 2007 on recommendation of our Steering Group, DFI conducted a listening exercise with participating staff, line managers and key stakeholders of the SKILL Programme (see separate report the [SKILL EXPERIENCE](#) or contact the DFI main office). While the programme was

generally acknowledged to be an extremely valuable source of training for staff, there was call for the training needs of the disability sector to be more adequately addressed within the training programme.

In 2008, we secured a representative seat on the National SKILL Programme Steering Group. This further strengthened our representation of organisations at national level. At this stage DFI submitted a joint application for funding with the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies (NFVB), highlighting the training needs of our sector to the National SKILL Programme Steering Group. This application was successful and a grant of €30,000 has been made available jointly to DFI and the NFVB.

Organisations are now invited to **submit their training needs** within the SKILL Training Programme to [cathymcgrath@disability-federation.ie](mailto:cathymcgrath@disability-federation.ie) and to **attend a Training Needs Analysis on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009 in the Richmond Room, [The Carmichael Centre](#), North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 from 11am - 4pm.**

## HEALTH

### **Update on Service Level Arrangements and Grant Aid Agreements**

The process of implementing these HSE contracts in the voluntary disability sector continues. The HSE and the umbrella organisations – DFI, the Not for Profit Business Association and the Federation of Voluntary Bodies continue to work to develop agreed protocols that will operationalise their implementation. The terms of reference for the Standing Committee that will oversee the first year of implementation are being defined as well.

We understand that voluntary organisations are now working with their HSE counterparts to fill in the relevant Schedules. The HSE has indicated that it will seek to get the documents signed in June. Legal advice that had been requested about the contracts will be another consideration when each Board decides its position on the contractual arrangement.

### **Capacity to respond to emergency requirements for disability services**

Service providers and the HSE have come together to develop a document to look at how to respond to the needs of individuals who require residential services on an emergency basis in 2009, and how this can be responded to within available resources. The aim is to agree a

process within which service providers (statutory and non statutory) and HSE management can plan and provide for these emergency requirements at LHO level.

This document includes:

- Principles in relation to the use of resources available for services for people with disabilities.
- Recommendations on a collaborative approach, at LHO, on dealing with emergencies.
- The need for each provider and each LHO to prepare a plan to minimise, identify and respond to emergency needs.
- Criteria or guidelines, which assist in ensuring that emergency needs are identified in a consistent manner across all service providers and LHOs.
- Protocols for reporting and filling any vacancies which occur in existing services.
- Areas where additional capacity may be identified or generated, within existing services and resources, in order to be able to respond to emergency needs.

The document emphasises the need for all providers, statutory and non statutory, to work together in a flexible and creative manner, to maximise the effective use of all available resources in order to address the needs of people with disabilities in their LHO/Region and, in particular, those who need access to services on an emergency basis.

The document is nearing completion and will be forwarded to all organisations once it has been signed off.

### **National Disability Advisory Committee**

A meeting of the National Disability Advisory Committee took place on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009. This group was established as a commitment in the Health Sectoral Plan as part of the monitoring and review process and is Chaired by the Office for the Minister for Health and Children. The terms of reference of the committee are to provide a forum to inform policy at national level in relation to services to people with disabilities; to form part of the overall monitoring mechanism in relation to the implementation of the National Disability Strategy in so far as it relates to health services; and to advise the Minister for Health and Children on progress in the implementation of the Disability Act 2005 within the health services.

The agenda covered a number of areas including the Disability Appeals Officer (please see article below), an update report from the Department of health and Children and the Department of Education and Science, and an update report by the HSE. One of the key points in the HSE

presentation was that from now on there would be a quarterly update on spending on disability services as a while going forwards, and that this would include ongoing and development funding.

### **Office of the Disability Appeals Officer**

Section 16 of Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 stipulates the appointment of an appeals officer to consider and determine appeals regarding the assessment of need, service statements and redress provisions of Part 2.

- The Act states that in performing their functions, the Disability Appeals Officer (DAO) is to be independent of the Department of Health and Children.
- Section 18 of the Act defines the grounds on which an applicant can appeal and the grounds of which the HSE or an educational service provider can appeal.
  - For example, an applicant may appeal a finding or recommendation of a Complaints Officer
- The DAO can refer an appeal to mediation if appropriate and acceptable to the applicant.
- From the start of June 2007 to the end of January 2009, the HSE received 235 complaints under Part 2 while the OADO received 23 appeals (10%).
- Of the appeals 15 concerns the Assessment of Need process while 5 concerned Service Statements. Almost all of the valid appeals are being processed, with one decision made as of 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

Further information, including applications forms, is available at [www.adao.ie](http://www.adao.ie).

### **National Implementation group for Assessment of Need 0 – 5 year**

The National Implementation group for the Assessment of Need under the Disability Act 2005 met on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March last. DFI is represented on this group by a staff member and by a representative from KARE a member organisation of DFI.

This meeting looked at the work of the group to date – agreeing and ratifying the initial process, guidelines for the assessment of need and attention to good practice in the roll out of the service.

To date almost 400 personnel, both HSE and Voluntary services and across many disciplines have been assigned to this process. There will now be a review of the process to date examining how assessors work, over-seeing the services that are in place, protocols and frameworks will be reviewed and focus groups will be set up to talk to service users about their experiences and any

issues that arise. The review will also look at the efficiency of early Intervention teams within the assessment and intervention process.

Numbers accessing the assessment process are levelling out. There are a significant number of complaints, primarily concerning the delays either in processing applications or in actual assessment but the HSE is confident that these will be dealt with in due course.

Concerns from the voluntary sector continue with regard to maintaining the intervention services while continuing to provide assessment of needs, the use of multi-disciplinary teams to perform assessments even for the simplest of assessments, the challenge of Child and Adolescent mental health assessments taking a long time.

There will be opportunities for parents or carers to participate in focus groups during the review process. If you have any comment or question regarding the Assessment of Need please contact Toni Gleeson DFI. Contact details at back of newsletter.

### **Review of Special Needs Assistants (SNA) Scheme**

A Value for Money and Policy Review is in process, with eight items in the terms of reference, including identification of the objectives of the Special Needs Assistants( SNA) Scheme and the role of an SNA. Officials of the Department of Education and Science have invited interested groups to furnish their views on the Scheme. Increased resources for the Scheme is not a likely outcome of the Review which will be completed in 2009. The final report, once approved will be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

In addition the national Council for Special Education, through the local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) is conducting a review to ensure that the criteria governing the allocation of SNA posts at primary, special and post-primary schools are met.

### **HSE Occupational Guidance Service**

The Occupational Guidance Service provides people with disability with information, advice and support to identify training and occupational options that suit their needs. The service is free and confidential and available to anyone aged between 18 and 65 years with:

- intellectual disability
- physical disability
- sensory impairment,
- mental illness
- autistic spectrum disorder
- life changing illnesses such as heart attack and stroke.

Where appropriate they will refer and support the individual to access FÁS services.

Following receipt of a referral the Guidance Officer:

- Makes an appointment to meet with individuals and their families as appropriate
- Assists in identifying and clarifying personal life goals and individual needs
- Explores the training and development options most suited to their needs
- Supports the individual in accessing their selected service option.

The HSE Occupational Guidance Service can be contacted on (047) 83674.

## **TOWARDS 2016 / National Disability Strategy**

### **Sectoral Plan of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG)**

On 6 May the DOEHLG's Disability Act Sectoral Plan Advisory Committee, DASPAC, reviewed progress in the implementation of the Plan.

#### **Progress Report**

A number of commitments are proving difficult to complete, including

- the protocol to co-ordinate decision-making between the HSE and local authorities on supported housing projects. The protocol has to reconcile capital spending commitments for a project with HSE's current spending commitments;
- the proposed revision of Part M and the introduction of a Disability Access Certificate for new commercial buildings and apartment blocks. These finally are expected to be released very shortly.

Areas where resource cutbacks will affect progress were noted, including

- 2009 disability funding to local authorities for improving accessibility has been cut from €10m to €9m for capital spending and from €5m to €3m for current spending;
- the allocation for special social housing projects (for older people and people with a disability) falls from €130 m to €110m;
- the allocation for housing adaptation grants is cut by €10m;
- in addition the hiring moratorium will progressively constrain both the Department and local authorities.

The Department is making advances in a number of areas.

- Work to develop the national housing strategy for people with disabilities is proceeding. At present the focus is on research to support the strategy in the areas of good practice in housing provision, housing issues for people with mental health disabilities and the potential of the private rented sector as a source of housing.
- Department officials cautioned that the official March 2008 assessment of the number of people with disabilities who are in need of social housing (1,155 households) is unreliable for a number of reasons. For example, it underestimates the level of housing need to the extent that a housing applicant is categorised as homeless or elderly even though the applicant has a disability. Further work is required in this area.
- A local authority Disability Access Officer network has been established. These officers serve as the initial contact point between the local authority and local disability groups and people with disabilities but may take on additional disability-related roles. The members will meet quarterly to share good practice experience, especially about improving disability awareness across authority staff.
- A code of practice for the Employment of People with a Disability in the Local Authority Service has been published.
- A good practice guide on roads and streets, the product of inter-departmental collaboration, is now available.
- Together with the NDA, the Department has developed practical guides for Electoral Returning Officers to facilitate access on polling day.

The Department is developing its monitoring in a number of areas. For example, the accessibility funding in future will be linked to the priorities in each local authority's Disability Act implementation Plan.

### **Sectoral Plan Review**

The Department aims to have a draft review ready for consultation during the Summer. DFI will be making a submission, and would welcome input from voluntary disability organisations about their experience with the Department's services and facilities, as well as with local authorities and other agencies.

The review is an important opportunity for the disability sector to seek the Department's continued commitment to the National Disability Strategy and the long term goals for people with disabilities, despite the more difficult economic environment. Please contact Lillian Buchanan- contact details are available at the end of the newsletter.

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## **Community & Voluntary Pillar Meeting with Government**

Following the Taoiseach's announced intention to re-engage in the partnership process and the C&V Pillar's positive response, two bilateral meetings have been held over recent weeks.

The Government reported on the slow progress being made in the context of huge economic instability. The Pillar representatives, including DFI on behalf of the disability sector, emphasised the need for a strategy during the downswing that protects the public services on which the most vulnerable are particularly dependent. They pointed out that while the banking and fiscal crises clearly need to be resolved, the social infrastructure protects all members of society, and it is already being eroded. A balanced strategic approach recognises the wider social underpinnings for any recovery.

The Pillar highlighted its ability to contribute to a strategic approach that minimises the adverse social impact of Government measures responding to the crises. The members explained that the government's reluctance to engage them in substantive planning means that the partnership process is failing to take advantage of this resource. While the Government officials remained cautious given the continued uncertainty, they proposed a number of actions to improve information sharing about responses to the crises and the implications for ordinary people.

## **Community & Voluntary Pillar Meeting with the Department of Education and Science**

C&V Pillar representatives, including DFI, met Department of Education and Science (DES) officials to review a range of issues, including early education, educational disadvantage, lifelong learning and literacy, and implementation of the EPSEN Act. For example, information was provided about the on-going review of the "Special Needs Assistants" service.

Although unwilling to disclose the details, the officials stated that the educational and health resource implications of fully commencing the EPSEN Act, and covering children aged 5 to 18 years, was beyond the capacity of the Government at present. They said that the Act would be implemented as soon as possible, and that meanwhile very considerable resources were being allocated to supporting children with special needs. Investments in anticipation of EPSEN were noted such as the training of classroom teachers so that they most effectively include children with disabilities in school work. The Department also outlined its efforts to smooth the transition of children with a disability through the different educational stages.

DFI intends to follow-up on the issues raised regarding educational services for children with disabilities. For families and children with disabilities a key component of the National Disability

Strategy is the introduction of person-centred assessments of health and educational needs and statements naming the services to be delivered. For further information about the bilateral meeting, please contact Lillian Buchanan-

### **Third Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Group on 'A Vision for Change'**

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 the third annual report of the Independent Monitoring Group on 'A Vision for Change' was launch by Mr John Moloney, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children with responsibility for Equality, Disability and Mental Health. The Independent Monitoring Group was established in March 2006 to monitor and assess progress on the implementation of a Vision for Change.

The Monitoring Group reported progress with the implementation of certain recommendations of the Report including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, engagement with service users and mental health information systems.

The Monitoring Group has highlighted that the HSE has still not issued a detailed implementation proposal for the plan. The report also highlighted that the absence of a clearly identifiable dedicated leader may also be contributing to the poor facilities and standards of care in some areas. When launching the standards, Minister Moloney indicated that he agrees with the recommendation of a dedicated leader of a National Mental Health Service Directorate to drive implementation of 'A Vision for Change' and that he has had discussions with Professor Drumm in this regard.

The Group also expressed concern in relation to:

- Continuing poor facilities and standards of care and practice in some areas.
- The recovery ethos not being pursued consistently across HSE areas. This is vital as it will not only benefit the service user but also society and the economy as a whole.
- The lack of a detailed implementation plan outlining how the HSE proposes to implement the recommendations in 'A Vision for Change'.
- The new 13 mental health catchment areas recommended in the document are not yet operational, although they have already been identified by the HSE.
- Poor resourcing of multidisciplinary mental health teams. The Report states that many of the 129 general adult teams in place do not have a full multidisciplinary complement.
- Slow progress in developing mental health services to people with an intellectual disability.

On a positive note, the Report does state that progress has been made in some areas. It highlights that the provision of child and adolescent mental health services is beginning to improve and that there is better engagement with service users.

However, less than a week after this Report was published, it was reported that the HSE had reduced the fund for the running of day-to-day mental health services this year by €8.5million compared to last year. This is worrying as it is now unclear how many of the recommendations of the Independent Monitoring Group will be implemented in 2009 with this substantial funding cut.

**DFI is setting up a network of interest in the area of mental health and mental capacity. If your organisation is interested in being kept up to date on this, please contact Jacqueline Thomson, Support Officer and she will keep you informed of all issues as they arise.**

### **Social Housing for People with a Disability**

All local authorities periodically examine their housing waiting list, and inform the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) of the number of households that they consider to be in need of social housing. DFI has been informed that the March 2008 assessment of the need for social housing reported 1,155 Irish households with a disabled person were in need of housing support. This count is almost 3 times higher than was reported in 2005, doubtless due to the efforts of the disability sector to reduce the level of hidden need by encouraging people to register with their local authority.

Addressing this level of need will be a major challenge for local authorities, the HSE, DOEHLG and voluntary disability organisations. To put it into perspective, a 2006/7 survey by the Irish Council for Social Housing found that its members provided a total of 2,064 housing units for people with disabilities. The count of those in need amounts to more than half as much housing again.

If meeting housing need will be difficult in the current economic environment, there are positive factors to bear in mind:

- Identifying the need that exists is the essential first step in taking remedial action.
- The completion of the National Strategy for People with a Disability should facilitate implementation.
- Reform of the mechanisms for assessing need and allocating social housing in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill going through the Oireachtas, especially if the amendments

proposed by DFI are adopted, should result in more consistent and careful responses to individual circumstances.

## **Reviews of the Departmental Sectoral Plans**

Under Section 31 of the Disability Act 2005 Government Departments that prepared sectoral plans for the implementation of their obligations must report on the progress achieved at “intervals of not more than 3 years from the date of the publication of the plan”. While the Department of Transport produced its review in 2008, the other five Departments - Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Health and Children; Social and Family Affairs - will be reporting in 2009.

The Act specifies particular responsibilities for each of the five Departments; for example, including the arrangements of the Department of Health and Children for the implementation of Part 2, on the assessment of need, service statements and redress. But many obligations cover all, such as the responsibility to ensure, where practicable and appropriate, that the provision of access to services by persons with and persons without disabilities is integrated, and to provide for assistance, if requested, to persons with disabilities in accessing the service.

### **Input by Voluntary Disability Sector**

This review process gives people with a disability and the voluntary disability sector an opportunity to give feedback and make recommendations. Departments have been reporting twice yearly about developments, against which organisations can compare their experience. Given the breadth of the reviews, crossing five departments and all the agencies under their aegis, an important focus will be the effectiveness of inter-agency working to deliver appropriately packaged services for the diverse needs amongst people with disabilities.

For the sector's over-arching monitoring mechanism, the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG), of which DFI is a member, the sectoral plan reviews are a vehicle to seek to reinforce the Government's commitment to the National Disability Strategy. The DSG is pressing the Government and key departments to produce a strategy that reaffirms the goals for people with disabilities as set out in Towards 2016, and describes how they will be achieved, even in the current difficult economic and fiscal environment.

By participating in departmental consultations on their sectoral plans and by making submissions, voluntary disability organisations can add to the impetus for a renewed, practical strategy to deliver both mainstream and specialised public services and facilities for people with disabilities. The reviews are a means to resist any temptation for Government to set aside its disability priority because of harder times.

The voluntary disability sector can insist that collaboration by the departments is most important during a time of austerity: 1) to ensure any cutbacks minimise the adverse impact on people with disabilities and to ensure that they do not jeopardise our pathway to the long term goals, and 2) to assist in the 'smarter' use of existing resources.

The sectoral plans and other information are available on the Department websites:

<http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/> , <http://www.entemp.ie/>, <http://www.environ.ie/>, <http://www.dohc.ie/>  
<http://www.welfare.ie/>.

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION**

### **Supplementary Budget April 2009**

The Disability Federation of Ireland acknowledges the commitment of the Government to disability and the National Disability Strategy by not targeting disability health funding directly in the Supplementary Budget.

However, we are very concerned at a number of aspects of this budget which we believe will marginalise the vulnerable and push disabled people into poverty. The impact of budget cuts affects people with disabilities in two ways. They experience the strain of mainstream cuts to services (such as the abolition of the Christmas Bonus), along with specific cuts to disability services (such as PA services).

#### **Cuts in Funding to Voluntary Organisations**

DFI met with the HSE after the Budget announcement and although they confirmed that there would not be an immediate introduction of another cut to the funding given to voluntary disability organisations they cautioned that there may be further cuts later in the year. At this stage they did not know the effect of the cut to the funding of Demographic Service Pressures would have on disability services and stated the HSE would still be running a deficit for the year.

Organisations partly or fully funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs have been informed of cuts to their funding. Members have reported cuts as high as 8% to their budget. This is part of a €15m savings cut to be made across various areas, including supports for the Community and Voluntary Sector and local and community development programmes. Community Partnerships are also expected to be hit with funding cuts which is an example of how mainstream services to people with disabilities might be affected. Organisations getting some or

all of their funding through the Department of Education and Science have also been informed of cuts to their budget.

These cuts will of course put increasing pressure on voluntary disability organisations to maintain services at their current level. The impact of these cuts is that more and more core services are being provided through fundraised income. This is totally unsuitable and carries a high risk at a time when the economy is so unstable and the general public are less likely to have disposable income to donate to charities and also not in keeping with Government commitment to prioritise disability.

### **Health**

DFI is still waiting to hear the full impact of the cuts in funding to health services for people with disabilities. There are no exact details on these cuts until the amended Service Plan is published in the next couple of week. We do know however that significant savings are to be made from the HSE budget and these will impact on disability services.

There is to be €40m cut from the funding for Demographic Service Pressures. According to the 2009 Service Plan this includes funding for primary care teams, child and adolescent mental health teams, emergency placements in disability and public fast track beds for older people. Furthermore, there has been a reduction of €20m in the 2009 Health Capital Plan. Included in this plan are a mental health infrastructure project, disability capital, older people's projects and PCCC projects. While additional funding is to be directed to the HSE through the Supplementary Budget, they will still be running at a deficit of €147m. Therefore, we need to be aware that this may lead to further cuts to disability services. DFI will keep members informed when further details emerge.

### **Income Support**

DFI welcomes the decision made through the Supplementary Budget that social welfare rates will not be reduced. Future cuts were however indicated by the Minister for Finance who stated that 'it may be necessary to review rates of payments in future years if reductions in the cost of living materialise'. DFI along with member organisations must continue to lobby the Government against any such cuts to disability payments. We strongly argue that the continued lack of a Cost of Disability Payment justifies the need to maintain disability support at a level that will enable vulnerable disabled people to participate in their community.

The abolition of the Christmas Bonus will come as a great disappointment for people dependent on social welfare, including disability payments. This is an expensive time of year and in absence of additional financial support families are at particular risk of getting into debt.

Job Seekers Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance for the under twenties has been halved to €100 a week so as to incentivise the young unemployed to participate in training programme. This does not affect young people on disability allowance.

### **Back to Work Allowance**

DFI is deeply disappointed at the announcement that the Back to Work Allowance is to be closed to new applicants. The scheme provided a transitional payment to those moving from unemployment and disability allowances to full-time work. Under the scheme qualified persons could go back to work and retain their social welfare payment at 75% for the first year, 50% for the second year and 25% in the third year. Furthermore, a person's wages were not affected while on the scheme. The Allowance provided an important incentive for people with disabilities to return to work and the move to remove this would appear to go against the Governments own policy of activation.

### **Rent Supplement**

Changes to the rent supplement scheme are sure to impact negatively on vulnerable people with disabilities and those with mental health problems. The budget announced that payments under the rent supplement scheme will be reduced to reflect the fall in price in the rental market. Tenants must now pay at least €24 from end May 2009 towards their rent, while the maximum rent level will also be reduced from between 6% and 10%. In their statement the DFSA said they 'hoped' that landlords will decrease the rent however DFI is concerned at the lack of any incentives to do so.

### **Early Childcare and Education**

DFI welcomes the provision of a free Early Childcare and Education year for all pre-school children as a positive initiative. We do have to stress however that if this is to fully apply to all children, including those with a disability, a number of issues must be addressed. Firstly, adequate resources must be put in place to support a disabled child to attend mainstream pre-school. Furthermore, it remains unclear as to what happens to a child with a disability who reaches 4 years 6 months but is not ready to go to school. Does this package disappear? DFI and member organisations must raise these questions at relevant forums to increase awareness by Government of the specific needs of children with disabilities.

### **Transport**

DFI is particularly concerned at the extent of cuts to transport initiatives that will directly impact people with disabilities in the community. These cuts include both mainstream and disability

specific transport initiatives. Over a dozen planned public transport projects have been postponed as a result of cutbacks totalling more than €500 million introduced by the Government since last October's budget (Irish Examiner). Transport Minister Noel Dempsey said savings announced in the supplementary budget would inevitably lead to delays in some projects because he had been forced to cut his Department's spending budget for 2009 by €315m. Most noticeable is the reduction in public transport accessibility funding for people with disabilities by €5m – now down to €20m.

### **Looking forward**

In order to gain as much knowledge of the impact this budget will have on disability services DFI need the help of our members. Please send Louise McCann(details available at end of newsletter) any information you have on the cuts to be imposed on your organisation, from what Department this is arising from and how you intend to implement this. By collating this data we can strengthen our opposition to further cuts to disability services.

It is important to recognise that the next budget is fast approaching. It will be too late to begin our campaign in September or October. We need to act now and work together to gather as much intelligence on how funding cuts are directly affecting services to people with disabilities.

## **GENERAL NEWS**

### **Count Me In!**

#### **Local Elections 2009 Disability Federation of Ireland**

DFI would like to invite people with disabilities, disability organisations, and community representatives to participate in a Breakfast Meeting with local Election Candidates from all parties in the Inishowen Peninsula.

The event will be held on 13th May 09 at 11.00 am in the Main Building of the Connolly Foundation in Malin Village. Discussion Topics may include:

- Working with Voluntary Disability Organisations
- Funding Cuts affecting People with Disabilities and Services
- Housing for People with Disabilities
- Access to Services and Facilities
- Physical Access

- Coordination of Services to People with Disabilities
- Training and Support for Voluntary Disability Organisations
- Government Employment Schemes.

For further information view our website:

[http://www.disability-federation.ie/information\\_elections\\_events.htm](http://www.disability-federation.ie/information_elections_events.htm) where the booking form can be viewed or contact Marcus Hufsky at [marcushufsky@disability-federation.ie](mailto:marcushufsky@disability-federation.ie). Booking is essential for this event.

## **People of the Year Awards 2009**

The Rehab Group is an independent, not for profit, non governmental organisation, operating across national boundaries, which is dedicated to promoting social integration, economic independence and equal opportunities especially for people with disabilities.

The Rehab Group are looking for nominations for the People of the Year Awards 2009. They are looking for someone whose achievements are inspiring and whose contribution to society deserves recognition. Nominations can be submitted on the web, by post or by email. This year there will be a special award for a nurse who has made a unique difference to people's lives.

The People of the Year Awards, which are organised by Rehab, sponsored by QUINN-healthcare, and televised live on RTÉ One, will take place on Saturday 12th September 2009. Tickets for this glittering gala occasion are available on [www.ticketmaster.ie](http://www.ticketmaster.ie) or by contacting Kate Ryan on 01 2057 231

Closing date for nominations: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009.

For more information on the Awards, visit <http://www.rehab.ie/about/peopleoftheyear.aspx> or [phone 01 2057200](tel:012057200).

## **Seminar on Acquired Brain Injury in Childhood and Adolescence.**

Brí will be holding a Seminar on acquired brain injury in Childhood and Adolescence which will be opened by: Minister Barry Andrews, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

The Seminar is aimed at Parents, Carers, Disability Managers, Case Managers, Educators, Health Service Staff, Service Providers and Politicians.

Topics include Education on Acquired Brain Injury when it occurs in Childhood or during Adolescence, what services are recommended internationally for these young people and what is currently available in Ireland and what parents / carers feel they need in order to manage the unique challenge of caring for a child / young person with ABI.

**When :** Friday, 22nd May 2009, @ 10:00am-4:00pm

**Where:** Red Cow Moran Hotel, Naas Road Dublin 22

If you are interested in joining them for the day:

Please RSVP to: Toni Burton at: [info@briireland.ie](mailto:info@briireland.ie)

By phone on 01 235 5501 or 01 235 5127.

## **An Awareness & Education Programme**

### **For Family Members Caring For and Supporting Someone With An Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)**

- Do you have a family member who has a brain injury?
- Would you like to develop your skills and knowledge of ABI to help you in your caring and rehabilitation role?
- Would you like to learn in an environment with other family members?

If so you will be interested in an Awareness & Education programme being run by Acquired Brain Injury Ireland in Kilkenny in May/June.

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (formerly the Peter Bradley Foundation) has recently received funding from Pobal under the Dormant Accounts Fund to provide training for carers for those caring for someone with an acquired brain injury. Acquired Brain Injury will be running Awareness & Education events for carers throughout Ireland over the next two years and a pilot programme is to be run in May / June 2009 in Kilkenny at the IWA premises, Claddagh Court, College Road, Kilkenny. Sessions will be run one day a week over a period of 6 weeks.

Topics will include the following:

- Introduction to Acquired Brain Injury
- ABI & the Family - How Families Cope with Acquired Brain Injury
- Meaningful Every Day Routines and Achieving a Meaningful Life
- Health Promotion and Wellbeing of Carers

- Emotional and Behavioural Changes Following Brain Injury
- Communication and the Challenges after Brain Injury
- Attention and memory difficulties following brain injury
- Children with an Acquired Brain Injury

If you wish to attend the programme or if you would like further information please contact: Katie Cunningham, Administrative Assistant, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Tel: (062) 64544 or Carol Rogan, Training Manager, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Tel: (01) 2804164 ext. 206.

For further information about Acquired Brain Injury Ireland see our website at [www.abiireland.ie](http://www.abiireland.ie).

### **National Carers Week 8th—14th June 2009**

Care Alliance Ireland is leading in the national co-ordination of the week and will host the national launch in The Mansion House on Monday June 8th at 10:30am. The Lord Major, Cllr. Eibhlin Byrne, together with Jim Bartley (aka Bella Doyle, Fair City) and other celebrities will join in with celebrating the week.

The Carers Week website ([www.carersweek.ie](http://www.carersweek.ie)) is currently being revamped to make it more attractive, usable and informative. The website will be formally launched on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

If you are interested in getting involved in organising an event for Carers Week, contact 01 -874 7776 or email [admin@carersweek.ie](mailto:admin@carersweek.ie).

### **South Dublin County Council &**

### **South Dublin Arts & Disabilities Programme**

South Dublin County Council and South Dublin Arts & Disabilities Programme are holding two upcoming events.

#### **‘UNHAPPY VALLEY RESOURCE CENTRE’**

‘Unhappy Valley Resource Centre’ is a series of three short dramas developed on the 1<sup>st</sup> year of South Dublin’s arts and disabilities training programme. The performance will include comic and dramatic collaborations played out by the students in response to their experiences both on the course and from their careers & life adventures of ‘disability’ and its many personal and political themes

On: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009 in Rossecourt Resource Centre 3.30pm

## **CRIPPLING IMAGES**

An exhibition of images and sounds equated with the theme of 'disability'.

Produced by 1<sup>st</sup> year students of South Dublin's Arts & Disabilities Programme.

The images & sounds populating the exhibition will be emotive and challenging,

Yet will be recognised as commonly used language and visual settings associated with disabled people and a disabling world.

On: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009 in Rua Red South Dublin Arts Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24, 5.30pm

**For further information Contact.** Valerie Brien Community Services Department, South Dublin County Council Tel: 086 8502194 , 014149000 ext 4673 , [vbrien@sdublincoco.ie](mailto:vbrien@sdublincoco.ie).

**Offaly Disability Advocacy Service** (ODAS) is a professional advocacy service available to assist people with a disability, to access their rights and entitlements. This includes people with physical, sensory, intellectual and mental health difficulties, children and adults living or using a service in the county. It is a free, independent, confidential and impartial service and is available on a one-to-one basis.

The Offaly Disability Advocacy Service (ODAS) is line managed by the Offaly Citizen's Information Service and steered by a committee of local organisations working with people with disabilities. The project is funded by The Citizens Information Board giving it independence from service providers. This allows for the advocate to be completely on the side of the person who is in need of the service.

The advocate based on an understanding of the client's needs, can advise and support clients in order to make their own decisions, claim an entitlement, and where necessary represent and negotiate on their behalf.

ODAS is based in the Tullamore Citizens Information Centre, The Bridge Centre, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Please feel free to contact Christina Devine on.Tel: 057 9352204 / 9327142, E-mail [offaly.disabilityadvocate@citinfo.ie](mailto:offaly.disabilityadvocate@citinfo.ie), Web: [www.odas.ie](http://www.odas.ie)

## **Events for National Epilepsy Awareness Week in the Midlands**

**May 18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> 2009**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May Brainwaves Community Resource Officer for the Midlands will present copies of its new publication on Children and Epilepsy to The Lisa Bassett Memorial Walk Committee. The

group organised a very successful fundraising event in memory of Lisa in 2007 and raised much needed funds for this worthwhile project.

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May will see Denise Cunningham Clinical Epilepsy Specialist Nurse travel to Tullamore to give a very interesting presentation to Brainwaves midland Parents / Carers Support group. The event will take place in Brainwaves office at OCIL Clonminch Rd Tullamore at 11am. Booking is essential. To reserve a place ring Margaret at 0579346790.

Epilepsy Awareness Presentations will take place in the following venues;

21<sup>st</sup> May IWA

Springfield Centre  
St Lomans Campus  
Mullingar  
Co Westmeath

22<sup>nd</sup> May

Sisters of Charity Jesus and Mary  
Portlaoise  
Co Laoise

### **Dublin Conference on Visual Impairment**

**Title:** 7<sup>th</sup> ICEVI European Conference 'Living in a Changing Europe'

**Venue:** The Hamilton Building, Trinity College, Dublin. (Closest Entrance: Lincoln Place)

**Dates:** July 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> 2009.

**Theme:** The needs of vision impaired people are changing. How best to meet them.

**Keynote Speakers include:** Professor Jonathan Jackson, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, Mr. Desmond Kenny, CEO of NCBI and Ms. Caroline Casey founding CEO of Kanchi.

**Conference Programme:** See [www.icevidublin2009.org](http://www.icevidublin2009.org).

**Conference Exhibition:** Open to the public on July the 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 5:00pm and admission is free. See and experience the latest developments in products and services for the visually impaired.

**Exhibitors:** There are a limited number of exhibition spaces remaining. If you are interested in exhibiting please contact the Exhibition Co-ordinator. Tel: 01 8373635 or email: [exhibition2009@stjosephs.ie](mailto:exhibition2009@stjosephs.ie).

**To register or for further information:** See [www.icevidublin2009.org](http://www.icevidublin2009.org) . Call Carron Hodson on 01 8373635 or email: [chodson@stjosephs.ie](mailto:chodson@stjosephs.ie)



## Newsletters

**For information please contact the relevant organisation directly.**

Ability - Newsletter of the Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, Tel: 01 4572329, E-mail: [info@iasbah.ie](mailto:info@iasbah.ie)

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: [info@arthritisireland.ie](mailto:info@arthritisireland.ie)

Aspire - Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland. 01-8780027/9, E-mail: [admin@aspire-irl.org](mailto:admin@aspire-irl.org)

Asthma Society News - Tel: 01-8788511, E-mail: [office@asthmasociety.ie](mailto:office@asthmasociety.ie)

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121, E-mail: [info@migraine.ie](mailto:info@migraine.ie)

Brainwave - Quarterly Newsletter, Tel: 01 4557500,

E-mail: [info@epilepsy.ie](mailto:info@epilepsy.ie)

Care Alliance Ireland - E-mail: [ndo@carealliance.ie](mailto:ndo@carealliance.ie)

Clar na nÓg - National Youth Council of Ireland Tel: 01-4784122  
E-mail: [info@nyci.ie](mailto:info@nyci.ie)

Cleft Lip and Palate Association of Ireland -  
[www.cleft.ie/newsletter/index.htm](http://www.cleft.ie/newsletter/index.htm), Tel: (01) 2848227,  
E-mail: [georginawade@cleft.ie](mailto:georginawade@cleft.ie)

Community Exchange Newsletter, E-mail: [info@activelink.ie](mailto:info@activelink.ie), Tel: +1 667 7326

Connect - Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association. E-mail: [info@imnda.ie](mailto:info@imnda.ie),  
Freefone 1800 403 403

Community Workers' Co-operative – Community Work News. E-mail:  
[info@cwci.ie](mailto:info@cwci.ie), Tel: +353 (0) 91 779 030

Cornerstone - Homeless Agency -  
<http://www.homelessagency.ie/research/cornerstone.asp>, Tel: 01 7036100,  
E-mail: [homeless@dublincity.ie](mailto:homeless@dublincity.ie)

Cumhacht - People with Disabilities in Ireland  
[http://www.pwdi.ie/news\\_events/newsletter/index.htm](http://www.pwdi.ie/news_events/newsletter/index.htm), E-mail: [info@pwdi.ie](mailto:info@pwdi.ie),  
Tel: 01-8721744

Debra Ireland Newsletter, Tel: 01 678 5044, E-mail: [info@debraireland.org](mailto:info@debraireland.org)

Down Syndrome Ireland - Tel: 01-8730999, E-mail: [info@downsyndrome.ie](mailto:info@downsyndrome.ie)

Enable Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 1850 204 304 E-mail:  
[communications@enableireland.ie](mailto:communications@enableireland.ie)

Equality News - Tel: 01-4173333, E-mail: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)

E-Info Deaf Source— E-mail: [info@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:info@irishdeafsociety.ie). Tel: +353 1860 1878

Féach - Support to parents of blind and visually impaired children. Tel: 01 493 1896, E-mail: [info@feach.ie](mailto:info@feach.ie)

Fighting Blindness - Tel: 01 7093050, E-mail:  
[avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie](mailto:avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie)

Frontline of Learning Disability -Tel: 01-2862649. E-mail:  
[frontline@indigo.ie](mailto:frontline@indigo.ie)

GROWing - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474,  
E-mail: [info@grow.ie](mailto:info@grow.ie)

Guidelines - Irish Guide Dogs Association. Tel: 021 4878200 E-mail:  
[info@guidedogs.ie](mailto:info@guidedogs.ie)

Headway Ireland - National Association for Acquired Brain Injury - 'Making Headway', Tel: 01-8102066, E-mail: [info@headway.ie](mailto:info@headway.ie)

Heart News: - Newsletter of Irish Heart Foundation. Tel: 01 668 5001  
E-mail: [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie).

Heartstrings - Newsletter of Heart Children Ireland, published quarterly,  
Tel: 1850 217017 E-mail: [heartchildren@eircom.net](mailto:heartchildren@eircom.net)

Heatwave - Irish Raynauds Scleroderma Society,  
E-mail: [info@irishraynauds.com](mailto:info@irishraynauds.com), Tel: 01 2020184

HOPE - Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland. Tel: 01-872 1303, E-mail: [hdai@indigo.ie](mailto:hdai@indigo.ie)

Inclusion Ireland - Tel: 01 8559891, E-mail:  
[info@inclusionireland.ie](mailto:info@inclusionireland.ie)

Irish Deaf News - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-8601910; 01-8601878; E-mail: [info@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:info@irishdeafsociety.ie)

Irish Wheelchair Association - 'Spokeout', Tel: 01-8186 400, E-mail: [Joanna.marsden@iwa.ie](mailto:Joanna.marsden@iwa.ie)

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News 066-7180611, E-mail: [kerrypwdi@eircom.net](mailto:kerrypwdi@eircom.net)

MS News—Newsletter of MS Ireland. Tel: 01 6781600, E-mail:  
[info@ms-society.ie](mailto:info@ms-society.ie)

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-8721501, E-mail: [info@mdi.ie](mailto:info@mdi.ie)

DeafHear.ie - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail:  
[info@deafhear.ie](mailto:info@deafhear.ie), Minicom: (01) 817 5777

NCBI News - Newsletter of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Tel: 01 8307033, E-mail: [press@ncbi.ie](mailto:press@ncbi.ie), [www.ncbi.ie](http://www.ncbi.ie)

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8726338, E-mail: [nfaireland@eircom.net](mailto:nfaireland@eircom.net)

People First - Central Remedial Clinic Tel: 01-8057400  
E-mail: [vmmcutch@crc.ie](mailto:vmmcutch@crc.ie)

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: 071 64791  
E-mail: [newsletter@ppsg.ie](mailto:newsletter@ppsg.ie)

Poverty Today - Combat Poverty Agency. Tel: 01-670 6746

Rehab News -Tel: 01-2057200 E-mail: [dara.duffy@rehab.ie](mailto:dara.duffy@rehab.ie)

Simon News - Simon Community, Tel: 01-6711606  
E-mail: [info@simoncommunity.com](mailto:info@simoncommunity.com)

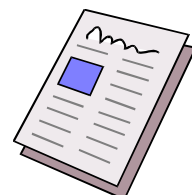
S.I. News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620  
E-mail: [info@sirl.ie](mailto:info@sirl.ie)

Social Housing - Irish Council for Social Housing Tel: 01-6618334; E-mail: [info@icsh.ie](mailto:info@icsh.ie)

Speaking up for Advocacy – Citizens Information Board Newsletter on advocacy. Tel: 01 6059035, E-mail: [mairide.woods@comhairle.ie](mailto:mairide.woods@comhairle.ie) or [davin.roche@comhairle.ie](mailto:davin.roche@comhairle.ie)

Volunteer Stroke Scheme News- Tel: 01-4559036.  
E-mail: [info@strokescheme.ie](mailto:info@strokescheme.ie)

Wheel E-Bulletin Tel: 01- 454 8727,  
E-mail: [info@wheel.ie](mailto:info@wheel.ie)





**Disability Federation of Ireland** is a national support and representation mechanism for voluntary disability sector organisations, covering all areas of disability and disabling conditions. There are currently over 100 voluntary disability organisations in the DFI Membership.

Fumbally Court  
Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8  
Tel: 01 454 7978  
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E: [info@disability-federation.ie](mailto:info@disability-federation.ie)

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