



## **Disability Federation of Ireland**

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

### **NEWSLETTER BUDGET 2012 SPECIAL**

#### **BUDGET 2012 ANALYSIS**

The full impact of Budget 2012 as of yet cannot fully be realised. However, we welcomed the Taoiseach's move to pause the decision to cut the disability allowance for young people until a review by the chairperson of the Commission on Social Welfare and Taxation takes place. We encourage Government to consider the proposed cut to people's income in terms of what people with disabilities really need, that is greater equality of outcome.

However, despite the decision to pause the cuts to the income of people with disabilities, we fear that these same people continue to be targeted in terms of significant cuts to their services. We are hearing from across the HSE that they are exploring cuts of around 5%. Such a level would be unsustainable, as it comes on top of four years of successive cuts to these services at a time when there is increasing need.

It is appreciated that until the National Service Plan for the HSE is signed off by the Department a definitive decision on the cuts has not yet been made. While we are in the intervening period, and there is still time for pre decision making reflection each organisation should take this opportunity to contact your local representatives, urging them to consider the impact that further cuts to disability services will have on people with disabilities. They must be reminded that

- As this is the first of four austerity budgets, a 5% cut would be unsustainable
- Furthermore, people with disabilities and mental health make up the general population and so are well exposed to the general cuts taking place across all families and communities. Any specific cuts to income supports and services to disabled people announced through Budget 2012 will come on top of the cuts already made for people in general. People with disabilities will also be subject to the increase in the drugs payment scheme threshold, the introduction of the universal household charge, the increase in the minimum contribution required from those

on rent supplement, along with carrying the general impact that the increase of VAT by 2% will have on their disposable income.

There is general acceptance that people with disabilities incur extra ordinary costs, in their day to day living expenses in terms of special clothing and foods and increase heating costs for instance. The cumulative impact of the cuts announced in Budget 2012 will further exacerbate the day to day difficulties experienced by people with disabilities and the threat of falling into consistent poverty.

It is critical that we take this opportunity to also remind our elected representatives that attention needs to be paid to the potential that organisations have to positively influence and support local communities, families and people with disabilities, and the health services in ways that bolster health and wellbeing. Voluntary disability organisations have in the past been pioneers, working tirelessly to ensure that accessible public and private transport, accessible housing and public buildings and facilities were made available to people with disabilities, along with seeking increased income supports and supports for carers. They have taken the issues to a range of government departments and public bodies to get necessary improvements in areas such as education and training / employment. They routinely, through fundraising and otherwise, secure other resources for the benefit of people to live in the community. Without the work of these organisations, together with the support that they enlist from the public, the burden on health and social services would be much higher and the outcomes way more modest. These organisations should now be seen as a major part of the solution to the continuing difficulties that the State faces in the years to come.

Therefore, although the full impact of Budget 2012 as of yet cannot fully be realised, what is clear is that people with disabilities have been asked to carry too great a part of the burden. If this Government is truly committed to the achievement of social solidarity, as stated in the Programme for Government and reiterated by Minister Howlin in the Oireachtas Chamber on the day of the Budget, Monday 5<sup>th</sup> of December, Government Departments and agencies should not be allowed to make unilateral decisions that further target vulnerable groups. DFI will continue to engage with Government, its departments and agencies reminding them that the decisions that they make today will have real, devastating impacts on the quality of life for people with disabilities well past the lifetime of this Government.

These are the issues that we all face for 2012. For now, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas, and DFI looks forward to working with you all in the New Year.

**John Dolan**

**CEO**



To all our membership from the Board, Management and Staff of DFI, thank you for all your support during the past year. Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year to you all

## **HEALTH**

There were a range of areas in the budget in the health area that will affect people with disabilities. The main health commitments in the budget are as follows:

- Reduce the health budget to €13.64bn for 2012
- €35m allocated to fund community mental health teams
- €15m allocated to introduce free GP care for long term illness card holders
- 2% efficiencies in disability, mental health and children's services, saving €50m, with Minister Lynch also noting that "services will also have to make provision for savings in employment and procurement costs which are required of the health services as a whole next year"
- Increases in the Drugs Payment Scheme threshold from €120 to €132 per month
- Looking to reduce employee numbers and contain pay costs to save €145m
- Efficiencies in procurement, saving €50m
- Increases the charges levied on all private patients in public hospital saving €143m
- Additional funding to the Nursing Homes Support Scheme of €55m

- Capital investment of €390m per year to include primary care, disability, mental health, older people, acute hospitals and three high priority national projects (National Children's Hospital, replacement of the Central Mental Hospital and National Project for Oncology)

DFI welcomes the allocation of €35m to assist in the roll out of the community mental health teams under *A Vision for Change*. We also welcome the allocation of €15m for people who have a long term illness card to access free GP care. However, there is a lot in the health budget that are cause for concern.

The increase in the threshold in the Drugs Payment Scheme from €120 to €132 per month will have an effect on people and families who are already struggling to survive. The Government predict that this will save €12m per annum, but will impact particularly on those families who are currently struggling to make ends meet.

The overall reduction in the health budget for 2012 is concerning. The HSE will finish 2011 with a deficit of around €150m, which will have to be carried over to 2012. With the deficit and the increase in demand let schemes, it means that the real cut in the health budget for 2012 is €843m. This will have a major impact on everyone who is accessing health services, but in particular, those who need to access the services the most. The Minister for Health recognised in his press release that there will be reductions in service from 2012 and beyond, but that the extent and nature of the impact on services will be addressed in the preparation of the HSE National Service Plan for 2012.

We are very concerned about the 2% efficiencies announced to disability organisations, along with the additional savings to be applied by the HSE. In her press release, Minister Kathleen Lynch stated that "services will also have to make provision for savings in employment and procurement costs which are required of the health services as a whole next year". Although she also highlighted that the "precise levels of savings required will vary depending on the profile of the individual service providers and will be determined within the context of the HSE's service planning process", we are hearing from several parts of the HSE that they are planning to introduce cuts of between 4.7 and 5.5 %. According to Cate Hartigan, National Director for Disabilities, the full impact of the further efficiency savings is not yet clear, and that work is ongoing within the HSE in this regard, and scenario planning is being carried out.

Depending on the levels of savings implemented, this could have a major impact on service provision for people with disabilities and their families.

## **SOCIAL WELFARE**

The changes announced to age of eligibility and reduced payments of Disability Allowance are now being paused pending a review. On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 the Minister had proposed that the age of Disability Allowance be increased from 16 to 18 years for new applicants and that this amendment would be compensated by the fact that the age of eligibility for Domiciliary Care Allowance be increased to 18 years. In addition, the rates of DA were to be reduced for those aged 18-21 by €88, or 47% and by €44 for those aged 22-24 years.

DFI had lobbied strongly after the announcements were made in absence of consultation with the disability sector. Currently recipients of Disability Allowance are excluded from new activation measures such as the Tús Scheme, the Springboard Programme and the JobsBridge Initiative. For this reason, the decision to cut DA to young people demonstrated the lack of understanding at Government level of the need to put the correct supports in place to make mainstreaming work. DFI will continue to address this issue with the Minister in the New Year and as the matter is reviewed.

Budget 2012 also marks another year where cost cutting measures have not been disability proofed to account for the cost of disability. There has long since been a recognition that certain disabilities incur extra additional costs which are a direct result of having a condition are above and beyond ordinary living expenses for the general population. In this Budget, large households headed by a person with a disability, or lone parents with a disability in particular will feel the cumulative impact of the cuts to social welfare.

- Child Benefit will be maintained at €140 per month for each of the first two children. The rates for the third and subsequent children will be standardised at €140 per child per month over the next two years. In 2012 the rate for the third child will be €148 and for the fourth and each subsequent child will be €160.
- Fuel Allowance is paid to people who are dependent on long-term social welfare and who are unable to provide for their own heating needs. It was announced in Budget 2012 that the heating season will be reduced by 6 weeks from 32 weeks to 26 weeks. The fuel season for 2011/2012 will end on the week ending Friday, 6 April 2012. This is a direct hit

on disabled people, as well as older people who require more heat because of mobility problems.

- Family Resource Centers will have funding cut by 5% in 2012, and cuts of €1.265 to the counseling grants scheme run by the Family Support Agency.
- New applicants for the Carers Allowance who are not living with the person being cared for will not be entitled to the Household Benefits Package. The person receiving care will be entitled to the Household Benefit Package in their own right from April 2012.
- Carers Benefit and Allowance will now be included in calculations for Family Income Supplement.
- From January 2012 new participants on Community Employment scheme will not be able to claim another social welfare payment at the same time.

## **EDUCATION**

There will be a reduced allocation of 20% to funding for student support access for students with disabilities. The Access Programme works to support students from groups that would have been under-represented in universities in the past. The supports are provided under three headings, financial, academic, and personal. For many students with disabilities these supports are vital for a smooth transition to university, and during their time there to help with any problems that may arise.

There is no indication given of any specific reductions in special needs education provision, including reductions in SNA. Government has stated that there will be continuing substantial provision for children with special needs, in terms of resource teachers and special needs assistants.

Students with disabilities will also be affected by other provisions covering the general population. Examples of these include:

- Increased teacher/pupil ratio allocations and a reduction in capitation grants by 2% will affect school funding and staff numbers.

- Increases in the cost of the school transport service have been introduced, and the doubling of charges from €50 to €100 will affect families with children of school-going age with disabilities who use school transport.
- In higher education, there will be an increase to the current €2,000 student contribution of €250 (in line with EU/IMF commitments).
- There will be no maintenance payments for new entrant postgraduate students. Over 2000 students on the lowest incomes will have their fees paid and another 4000 students will receive a fee contribution of €2000.
- Education disadvantage funding, under Dormant Accounts, down 20% from €2m to 1.6m
- Reduction to €40 in allowances paid to 16-17 year olds on Youthreach, Community Training Centres, and FÁS courses from 2012.

## COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, T.D., has directed that a review of all CE schemes be commenced immediately. No Community Employment scheme will close pending the outcome of this review.

- The purpose of the review will be to establish the ongoing viability of each scheme in the context of the overall objectives of the CE programme, and recognising in particular the community and social value of each CE scheme.
- From the 1 January 2012, the training and materials grant will be reduced from €1,500 to €500 per participant scheme. However the Minister has stated that the event that this reduction creates financial difficulties for schemes that would otherwise be viable, the Department of Social Protection will be in a position to fund such schemes from within the overall Departmental Vote.

DFI is aware of the vital community services such as Home Help and PA supports that CE scheme workers provide to people with disabilities. In addition, the schemes have also been an important pathway to employment for disabled people, and this is even more important at a time when fewer opportunities are available to access the labour market. We have begun working with

members to collate information to support our discussions with FÁS and the Ministers regarding how these reductions/ cut backs need to be managed. We ask that organisations support us in this work where required.

## **REVENUE AND TAXATION**

The Programme for Government committed that there would be no increase in income tax and as such income tax rates have remained the same; there have been no narrowing of bands and no reductions in personal tax credits. Instead, the Government opted to use indirect taxation such as VAT and Capital Taxes to reduce the financial deficit, ignoring the fact that this unfairly targets the people most reliant on the State for income support and already at risk of poverty. Below is a summary of taxation measures that were announced by the Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan.

### **Universal Social Charge**

- The exemption threshold for the Universal Social Charge (USC) has been increased from €4,003 to €10,036 from 1 January 2012. The USC had been widely criticised when introduced last year for bringing low income workers, including medical card holders, into the tax net.
- The proposed amendments are welcomed however they do not go far enough to protect those on low income. For instance, the USC still affects someone earning €100,000 at the same rate as someone earning €16,016.

### **VAT**

- The standard rate of VAT will increase from 21% to 23% from 1 January 2012. The changes will apply to a wide range of goods and services including motor vehicles, petrol, electrical goods, adult clothing and footwear, household goods and telecommunications services. Most food, children's clothing and oral medicines will remain at the zero VAT rate.
- The increase in VAT have wide ranging consequences for people with disabilities who have additional transport, food or clothing (to name a few) costs associated with their disability, as well as those dependent on social welfare or in low paid jobs.



## **Household Charge**

- A flat rate household charge of €100 was announced by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D, beginning in 1 January 2012. The purpose of the household charge will be to fund local government services.
- Those living in social housing owned by local authorities and/or charities, families in receipt of mortgage-interest supplement and people living in nursing homes or mental institutions will be exempt from the charge.
- A late payment penalty of 1% per month will be applied to all households who fail to make the payment.
- DFI believe that the household charge will bring greater hardship to poorer households who are expected to pay the same rate as the wealthiest. There are currently over 100,000 people on Disability Allowance and they, along with other social welfare recipients, are expected to pay the charge in full.

## **Carbon Tax**

- An increase in carbon tax on fossil fuels will be applied to petrol and auto-diesel from 7 December 2011. This will result in an increase of 1.4 cents per litre for petrol and 1.6 cents for auto-diesel. The increase on other fuels (for example fuel oil and natural gas) will take effect from 1 May 2012. No increase will apply to solid fuels.
- The additional costs for running motor vehicles and heating, in combination with the reduction in fuel allowance will significantly impact those with mobility problems who are unable to get public transport or require more heat (sometimes all year round) to keep warm. It is another example of the lack of insight and planning this Government has for addressing cost of disability.

## **Motor Tax**

- The rates of motor tax for all vehicles types will be increased from 1 January 2012. The increase will depend on the current motor tax bands and classifications of vehicle types applicable to the vehicle.
- This measure will have a negative impact on accessible transport companies, organisations with mini-buses to transport their service users, as well as people with disabilities who may not be able to access public transport.

## **COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Funding for the Local and Community Development Programme is cut by €8m in 2012 or 12.6%. This is disappointing in light of the role these projects have to play in supporting people with disabilities to participate in mainstream activities in their local communities.

Cuts in the programmes for other departments, such as in Community Employment and Family Resource Centres, will exacerbate the impact of this reduction on the community and voluntary sector.

Funding by the Department for local authorities is cut, notably with the termination of its contribution to the Local Government Fund, which in 2011 transferred €164m. Minister Hogan's budget release also refers to continued 'efficiency savings' at local level, especially through shared services and tendering.

## **HOUSING**

Overall, the capital spending on social housing was greatly pared back again and reduced from €519m this year to €380m in 2012. The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) which finances new housing for people with disabilities and others fell by another €19m. Out of the €70.7m CAS funding for 2012, only about €50m is available for special needs, with the rest being used to pump prime leasing projects. DFI has also learned that due to the carryover of unfinished projects, there is unlikely to be calls for any new CAS proposals for the 2012 spend. However some reserves may be available to fund small clustered special needs projects

A variety of other changes will strain the budgets of many people with disabilities:

- The minimum contribution required of rent supplement recipients increases, for example a single person will have to pay €30 instead of €24 per week.
- In addition it is expected that the rent ceilings will be reduced so that people may struggle to find accommodation under the rent supplement scheme in 2012.
- The allocation for all the housing adaptation schemes, another high priority for the Department has been reduced from €64.5m to €55m. There are no plans to change the parameters of the schemes at present. Officials had indicated previously that only the scheme designed for older people was significantly over-subscribed in many local authority areas, not the scheme targeted at people with disabilities. Information on experience on this front would be welcome.
- Revenue funding for homeless persons is likely to stay at about the level allocated in 2011, about €50m.

## **TRANSPORT**

The Budget cut funding for passenger transport, with an 8% reduction in subsidies for the CIE group of bus and rail companies. The Minister infers that fare increases will be the result, although not as high as 8%. Capital spending cuts for transport will not affect programmes on railway safety, bus fleet replacement for PSO (Public Service Obligation) routes, integrated ticketing in greater Dublin and some other smaller projects.

For those people with disabilities who have travel passes the adverse impact of the Budget in this sphere should not be severe. For others however, there is the prospect of higher transport costs, especially when the tax changes on cars are taken into account.

The doubling of charges for primary school transport from €50 to €100 under the Department of Education & Skills budget will also affect some families.

Funding for sports programmes was cut by 9%.

## 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)

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Newsletter, Tel 01 2804164  
email: [cbrack@abiireland.ie](mailto:cbrack@abiireland.ie)

[http://www.abiireland.ie/docs/ABII\\_Newsletter\\_Spring\\_2010.pdf](http://www.abiireland.ie/docs/ABII_Newsletter_Spring_2010.pdf)

**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), Freephone 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@irishdeaf society.ie](mailto:info@irishdeaf society.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@irishdeaf society.ie](mailto:info@irishdeaf society.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)

Shine 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)

Sonass aPc – Tel (01) 2608138. [www.sonassapc.ie](http://www.sonassapc.ie).

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

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

Hidden	Intellectual
Mental Health	Physical
Sensory	Emotional
Neurological	

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

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

There are over 127 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
- Networking
- Training and Support
- Advocacy and Representation
- Research and Policy Development
- Organisation and Management Development

DFI also supports the broader voluntary and disability sector through its representation of the disability strand with the Community and Voluntary Pillar of the Social Partnership process and other fora at regional, national and European level. DFI is recognised as a representative on disability issues to a broad range of local, national and regional fora this includes working with the HSE, and Social Partnership.

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