



Disability Federation of Ireland

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

NEWSLETTER – JUNE / JULY 2011

There has been a lot of activity over recent months in the HSE, with the development of National Consultative Fora, the establishment of the steering group looking at Universal Access to health services and the publication of the Congregated Settings Report.

The National Consultative Fora have been developed by Cate Hartigan, Assistant Director of Disability, to replace the previous consultation fora that were set up following the publication of 'Enhancing the Partnership' and 'Towards an Independent Future'. The previous fora included Regional Development and Consultative Committees for services to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, and Regional Co-ordinating Committee for services to People with Physical and Sensory disabilities. They were established at Health Board level, as resources were allocated on this basis.

The new consultative fora will be established over the coming months at local, regional and national levels. The National Committee has already met twice, and its work is progressing.

Complementary to the work of this group, the HSE is looking at universal access to health services. Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 requires the HSE to develop structures and systems to ensure that its mainstream services are fully accessible to people with disabilities. Specifically, the act requires that all aspects of healthcare, including information provision, consultations and all forms of communications and service delivery to patients/service users, are fully accessible to people with disabilities. A working group has been created to look at this issue.

The report on congregated settings, 'Time to Move on From Congregated Settings', was also published this month. This is a very significant report which looks at a change programme for moving people from congregated settings into the community, in line with Government policy. The report recommends a seven year phased closure of congregated settings, with individuals actively supported to live full, inclusive lives at the heart of the family, community and society. This entails access to mainstream facilities, such as

housing, social life, education and work, with specialist support as required. Further details on this report can be found in an article further on in this Newsletter.

While all of this good work is going on in the disability arena, there are a number of areas of concern.

The HSE Performance Report, published in June, with information to the end of April 2011, also highlighted that 751 Assessments of Need for children aged 0-5, with disabilities, were overdue for completion. The Performance Report stated that the HSE had an over-spend of €184 million. The Minister for Health has written to the CEO of the HSE informing him that the Executive must break even by the end of this year. The bulk (€100m) of the over-spend is in the hospitals, but this will adversely affect people with disabilities as elective surgeries are cancelled and A&E hours are cut. While we understand the need for the HSE to break even, it must be done without affecting services to people with disabilities.

While we recognise that there is on-going work in the HSE to advance a number of priorities for people with disabilities, we are cognisant of the fact that issues in other areas of the HSE will affect people with disabilities and their carers too.

DFI is active in engaging with the emerging representation structures for disability in the HSE and will continue to work towards protecting disability resources.

John Dolan

CEO

DFI BOARD UPDATE

Elections to DFI Board

The Annual General Meeting of DFI took place on the 24th May at the Radisson Blu Royal Hotel. There were four vacancies on the Board of Directors. As seven nominees were proposed for the vacancies, an election process was necessary. The following four candidates were deemed elected at the meeting:

Don Bailey	Vantastic
Anne Coffey	KARE
Mike Glynn	Brainwave
Maurice O'Connell	Alzheimer Society of Ireland

We are pleased to announce that Maurice O'Connell has been elected as Chairperson, John O'Sullivan (Enable Ireland) Vice Chairperson, and Anne Winslow (MS Society of Ireland) Honorary Treasurer to the Board of DFI. We would also like to thank our outgoing Chairperson, Paul Ledwidge (St Michael's House) for the clarity and direction that he brought to the Board of DFI.

DFI MEMBERS

DFI Welcomes New Member Organisations

DFI would like to welcome **St. Hilda's Services** to our membership. Established in 1964 by the community, St. Hilda's Services is a voluntary organisation that provides a comprehensive quality service to people with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. St. Hilda's Services is committed to providing a service that puts the choices of the people they work with first, with all staff working in partnership with families.

For more information please contact info@sthildas.ie or www.sthildas.ie

DFI also welcomes **North West Parents and Friends Association** as new members of the Federation. The North West Parents and Friends Association are a voluntary locally based

community association, which is dedicated to the support of facilities and communities, working towards the fulfilment, needs and rights of people with intellectual disabilities and special needs, to achieve for each individual the greatest possible level of health and social gain, bearing in mind at all times, the personal dignity of each individual.

Web: www.nwpf.ie

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Charities to Draw up Code of Governance

Irish Charities have taken the first step towards drawing up a governance code aimed at boosting transparency and bolstering public confidence in the sector. A nine-member working group, drawn from across the community and voluntary sector, has published a draft governance code, and is due to publish a final version this year.

The code aims to provide guidance and a benchmark of good governance against which charities can measure themselves, as well as to clarify the roles, duties and responsibilities of board members and other governance bodies.

The draft code is based on five principles, including

- Providing better leadership
- Exercising greater control over organisations
- Being more transparent
- Working more effectively
- Behaving with integrity.

“The uniquely innovative aspect of the draft code is that it is firmly based on the principle of proportionality. Our sector is diverse and no two community and voluntary organisations are alike. We therefore need a nuanced and flexible approach,” said Deirdre Garvey, chairwoman of the working group.

This year a separate voluntary code on fundraising was launched, also aimed at boosting transparency and bolstering public confidence in the sector.

The consultations on corporate governance were hosted in various locations across the country between May 16th and June 4th.

The working group is made up of representatives from Boardmatch Ireland, Business in the Community Ireland, the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Clann Credo, Irish Charities Tax Reform Group, Disability Federation of Ireland, Volunteer Centres Ireland, The Wheel, the Corporate Governance Association of Ireland, Sheila Cahill Consulting, and Arthur Cox.

The draft code and information on the consultation process is available at:

www.governancecode.ie

Regulation of the Operational and Administrative Aspects of Fundraising by Charities through Codes of Practice

All organisations that engage in fundraising must now develop a Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising and put it into practice in all fundraising activities as part of meeting the requirements of the Charities Act 2009 in relation to fundraising. A monitoring group is now being put in place to oversee compliance.

Background

In May 2006 Irish Charities Tax Research (ICTR) was invited to work in partnership with the then Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to carry out research and make recommendations on how the operational and administrative aspects of fundraising by charities could be effectively regulated through Codes of Good Practice. They conducted an extensive research and consultation process which included the development of the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising the final Feasibility Report was published in May 2008. The report set out a proposed scheme to develop Codes of Good Practice on the operational and administrative aspects of fundraising by charities and also made recommendations on bringing this scheme into operation. ICTR then went on to bring the proposed scheme into operation and set up an Implementation Group to oversee the process.

Implementation

Phase 1: The first phase of the implementation focused on developing a resource pack and good practice guidance materials to assist charities in putting the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising into practice. This material together with a series of online educational seminars (webinars) on how to implement the Guiding Principles is available to download and view here on the ICTR website on the Fundraising Principles page.

These are now available on <http://www.ictr.ie/content/fundraising-codes-practice>. These were developed by the implementation group in response to requests for additional guidance material to assist organisations in implementing the Guiding Principles for Fundraising and include:

- Cash and Non Cash Donation Handling
- Garda Permits
- Data Protection
- Data Protection Checklist
- Raffles and Lotteries
- Insurance
- Pre-signed Mass Cards

Charities will have the opportunity to formally sign up to the Principles online. The list of charities who sign up will be publically available.

Phase 2: The second phase of the project is now concentrating on raising public awareness about the Guiding Principles for Fundraising and on the development of the Monitoring process which includes the setting up of an independent Monitoring Group to oversee compliance with the Principles.

DFI involvement:

DFI made a submission to ICTR on the proposal to regulate Codes of Good Practice in Fundraising in 2006 and contributed widely to the debate available here: [www.disability-federation.ie/Submission to Irish Charities Tax Reform](http://www.disability-federation.ie/Submission%20to%20Irish%20Charities%20Tax%20Reform) .

DFI has also hosted presentations to DFI member son this topic, most recently in April 2011. Sheila Nordon, Chief Executive gave a presentation to DFI members which is available by emailing Eleanor Reece at eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie

If you require any further information or advice, please contact Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer DFI or ICTR, www.ictr.ie Tel: 01 400 2100

Department of Finance Sanctions Increased Human Resources for Garda Central Vetting Unit

Minister for Justice and Law Reform, Alan Shatter T.D. announced recently that the Department of Finance has sanctioned the retaining of 10 temporary employees in the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) in Thurles.

The Minister also announced that a further sanction has been obtained to engage an additional ten temporary employees for the Unit and these are now being recruited. At

present a total of five Gardaí, 76 full-time Garda civilian personnel and ten temporary civilian personnel are assigned to the GCVU.

This increase in temporary staff is expected to have a positive impact on processing times. The average processing time for vetting applications fluctuates in line with periods of increased demand but the Minister confirmed that the average processing time for vetting applications received at the GCVU is approximately 10 weeks.

Current System

The current vetting process was established in 2005 and at present it is recorded that the vetting service has now been extended to over 18,000 organisations. To access Garda Vetting through the GCVU, an organisation must have access to an Authorised Signature. Many organisations do not have an Authorised Signature within their own staff.

For these organisations, DFI have facilitated access gateways for disability organisations. Five organisations, four of which are DFI member organisations, act as Lead Organisations within the Garda Vetting Networks facilitated by DFI and will process Garda Vetting applications on behalf of the network member organisations for a fee.

To avail of this service, contact one of the organisations that provide access to Garda Vetting, listed below, or your DFI Support Officer.

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	Lorraine Maher	01- 2804164	lmaher@abiireland.ie
Bluestack Foundation	Joe O'Grady	087- 670 9624	info@bluestackfoundation.com
Debra Ireland	Lynn Donovan	01 -412 6924	lynn@debraireland.org
National Recruitment Federation	Yvonne Collins	087- 135 0681	gvs@nrf.ie
Walkinstown Association	Ken Kearney	01-4650388	ken@walk.ie

Understanding and Addressing “Founder Syndrome” in Organisations

by Maeve Halpin, Social and Organisational Psychologist

Many Community and Voluntary Sector organisations owe their existence to a dynamic, visionary, entrepreneurial individual who recognised a need, and took on the challenge of creating an organisation to meet that need. This person's drive and enthusiasm attracted others who were inspired by their strong leadership, commitment and ability to get things done. At this early stage of organisational development, decisions are made informally,

usually around a kitchen table, and there is little attention given to policies, procedures or the separation of Board and executive functions.

The founder of an organisation typically has a deep emotional investment in meeting the need they have recognised – they might be a parent of a child with special needs who sees the lack of resources or they may have an affinity with a particular marginalised or disadvantaged group. While this passion is the driver of the start-up phase of the organisation, it can sometimes become a liability when the organisation grows and different leadership skills are required.

The Symptoms of “Founder Syndrome”

The term “Founder Syndrome” was coined to describe those founders (they may be a Board member or CEO) who stifle the growth of the organisation due to an inability to cede control of decision-making. Common features of such organisations include lack of strategy (they are in constant fire-fighting mode), lack of succession planning, a Board comprising long-serving and low-performing Directors, discouragement of open dialogue, under-management due to lack of structures and processes, and poor staff motivation. There may be an undue emphasis on the “founding story”, and a focus on the founder's personality and personality traits as indispensable to organisational success. There can be a high level of emotion at meetings (including Board meetings and meetings with staff), with feelings taking precedence over objective discussion and decision-making.

Recognising “Founder Syndrome”

Not all founders will exhibit Founder Syndrome. Those who do are characterised by a number of traits including a resistance to planning, policies and procedures; a dismissive attitude to accountability, documentation and evaluation; intolerance of people who disagree with their opinions; over-ruling of decisions made by others; promotion of compliant Board Directors and staff; and strong resistance to change. They keep important information to themselves, in order to retain control, and can present themselves as hard-working and sacrificial, and therefore above criticism. They value loyalty over effectiveness, leading to a high turnover of Board Directors and staff, with stronger people typically choosing to leave the organisation.

Addressing “Founder Syndrome” difficulties

Board Directors and managers can take advantage of under-management to build a “micro-culture” which is based on professionalism, accountability and transparency, providing a

healthier environment for staff. Developing advisory teams and/or implementing a quality system such as PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Social Organisations), with assistance from support organisations such as DFI, can bring the influence of objective outsiders to bear on organisational development. Producing an agreed Strategic Plan, ideally facilitated by an external consultant, allows performance to be assessed against clear, measurable targets. Up skilling Board Directors and using a medium such as Boardmatch to recruit new Directors with specific expertise, can strengthen Board decision-making. Introducing job descriptions for Board Directors, limiting the number of committees on which an individual may serve, and implementing term limits for all Board Directors, will ensure more effective and efficient governance. External Support can be an invaluable tool for dissecting the complexities of Founder Syndrome, and developing appropriate and timely responses.

Maeve Halpin is a practising counsellor and Social and Organisational Psychologist, with many years' experience in the Community and Voluntary sector, latterly as Chair of the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups. In conjunction with Maeve, DFI have launched an External Supervision and Support Service for staff and Boards of DFI member groups. More

information is available at <http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=215>.

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HR & Employment Law Update

Disability Federation of Ireland, in conjunction with Adare Human Resource Management, has in place a support structure for member Organisations to avail of discounted Human Resource and Employment Law Support Services exclusively for DFI members.

Data Protection relates to the protection of the personal data of individuals whether they are customers, employees, donors or clients.

Personal data is data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the data controller.

A **Data Controller** is the individual or the legal person who controls and is responsible for the keeping and use of personal information on computer or in structured manual files.

A **Data Processor** is an individual, who holds or processes personal data, but do not exercise responsibility for or control over the personal data.

Responsibility for ensuring personal data is processed in accordance with data protection legislation lies with the data controller and/or data processor.

This responsibility lies with both Employers who control the data and also Employees who process the data in the course of their work. Processing of data includes collecting, recording, storing, altering, disclosing, destroying and blocking.

The data protection principles outlined in the Acts are as follows;

Data must:

- Be obtained and processed fairly
- Be accurate, complete and kept up to date
- Be obtained only for one or more specified, explicit and legitimate purpose
- Not be processed in a manner incompatible with these purposes
- Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Not be kept longer than is necessary
- Be controlled with appropriate security measures

For further information on the HR Support Services provided click on the link below

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=50>

HEALTH

Report of the Review Group on Congregated Settings

“Time to Move on from Congregated Settings - A Strategy for Community Inclusion”

This Report was commissioned by the HSE in late 2007 and identifies that approximately 4,000 (based on 2008 census) people with disabilities in the Republic of Ireland live in congregated settings, a residential setting where they live with ten or more people.

Notwithstanding the commitment and initiative of dedicated staff and management, the picture that emerged in the course of preparing this Report is one of a group of people who

live isolated lives apart from any community and from families; many experience institutional living conditions where they lack basic privacy and dignity. Most have multiple disabilities and complex needs.

The thrust of the Report is for a 7 year phased closure of congregated settings with individuals actively supported to live full, inclusive lives at the heart of the family, community and society. This entails access to mainstream facilities such as housing, social, education and work with specialist support as required. The Report makes 31 recommendations focusing on the following examples, including:

- Policy- no new congregated settings will be built
- Cessation of admission
- Links with local authorities
- New community models-dispersed housing in the community
- Funding-individualised budgets
- Bridging funding
- Evaluation
- Reviewing residential services for people with a disability residing in nursing homes and mental health institutions.

The Report identifies that

- People with the most severe disabilities make the most gains in community settings.
- Dispersed housing in the community delivers a better quality of life than clustered (campus) housing.
- Community living is no more expensive than institutional care once the comparison is made on the basis of comparable needs and comparable quality of care.
- Accommodation will primarily be in ordinary houses and made available for local (public or private) housing stock.

The significant challenge that implementing the Report poses to the many stakeholders, including clients, families, service providers, the HSE and the various Departments; will require the need for a major change programme. Furthermore, everyone currently living in congregated settings should have the opportunity and right to move to a home of their choice in the community and therefore engaging with clients and families' will take time and it is difficult to predict how clients will choose to live in the future.

This Report states that this change is not the sole responsibility of the HSE, but rather a collaborative responsibility shared between the person, their families and carers, a multiplicity of agencies, Government and society as a whole. There will be significant

challenges in implementing this change programme for the many stakeholders. A major change programme over the next number of years will commence during 2011. This will include a robust implementation plan which will be developed through the National Consultative Fora and will include a monitoring and evaluation framework. The Regional Leads for Disability Services will play a key role in implementation.

Considerable work undertaken by the Working Group in the development of this Report and would like to specifically acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Pat Dolan in his role as chair of the working group, Mr. Christy Lynch in his role as Project Manager and Ms Eithne Fitzgerald, NDA.

Health Services Enter New Phase

HSE Interim Executive Board Announced

The new Board of the HSE will see senior figures from the Department of Health and Children and from the HSE, including clinicians, establish a new, more direct line of accountability between the management of our health services and the Minister for Health and Children. The Board will be chaired by Dr Frank, Dolphin who has accepted Minister Reilly's request to remain as chair until its later dissolution.

The new Interim Executive Board will meet with greater frequency, and will discharge all of the relevant requirements of the HSE Board, as set out in law. However, in addition, the direct relationships established will form the bedrock of the present and future connection between the Minister for Health and Children and those persons charged with managing our health services.

Minister Reilly has made it clear that he intends to introduce legislation to formally remove the legal requirement for a separate board of the HSE, but even when the board structure is dissolved, the resource represented by this group of people will be pivotal into the future.

Membership of the New Interim HSE Board:

- Dr Frank Dolphin, Chairman
- Cathal Magee, Chief Executive Officer, HSE
- Michael Scanlan, Secretary General, Department of Health and Children
- Dr Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Children

- Paul Barron, Assistant Secretary, Primary Care & Eligibility, Department of Health and Children
- Bairbre NicAongusa, Director, Office for Disability & Mental Health & Citizen Participation, Department of Health and Children
- Dr. Barry White, HSE National Director, Clinical Strategy & Programmes
- Dr Philip Crowley, HSE National Director, Quality, Risk & Clinical Care
- Laverne McGuinness, HSE National Director, Integrated Services - Performance & Financial Management
- Brian Gilroy, HSE National Director, Integrated Services - Reconfiguration.

The remaining two vacancies will be filled in the near future.

Value for Money & Policy Review of Disability Services Programme

DFI continues to seek to influence the content of the VfM Review, repeatedly highlighting the importance of extending its attention beyond the institutional-type disability services that take up most of the Disability Services Programme (DSP) budget, to consider the kinds of services and supports being delivered in the community to people who live in the community. DFI points out that the current configuration of the Review, with so much money going to institutional care, is ill suited to supporting the needs of most disabled people.

DFI also advocates for the recommendations of the Review to give impetus to mainstreaming, or enabling people with disabilities to access generally available health services and other kinds of health-sustaining public services. We point to the important role of voluntary disability organisations in promoting mainstreaming through their work, to improve disability awareness and people’s understanding about the opportunities outside DSP, and their efforts to build relationships with local service providers to facilitate greater participation.

DFI supports the much-discussed move towards more individualised budgeting, pointing out that the transition from block funding needs to be managed with care to ensure high quality and equity. The reform of the allocations system also must recognise and protect the “enabling supports”, such as peer support groups and help lines, that are not readily amenable to competitive tendering or similar commissioning methods yet contribute to achieving the policy objectives at relatively small cost.

DFI will be making another submission to the Review in the near future, and this will be posted on www.disability-federation.ie . The presentation by the Minister for Disability and Mental Health, Kathleen Lynch, at DFI's Council meeting on 24 May featured a discussion of the Review. If you would like a copy of the Minister's Presentation, please contact maryredmond@disability-federation.ie.

Exploring the Experiences of Men Providing Care to a Loved One or Close Relative in Chronic Illness

Ann Stokes, of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, TCD is currently undertaking a research study as part of her PhD exploring the experiences of men providing care to a loved one or close relative in chronic illness. Ann is interested in meeting with men to hear about their experiences as a man providing care to an adult family member with a chronic illness. Taking part in the study will involve talking with a researcher, at a time and place that is convenient for them. Individuals will be asked questions about how looking after someone has affected their life. The rights of privacy and confidentiality will be protected during and after the study. If you would like further information on how to participate in this study, please contact: Ann Stokes School of Nursing and Midwifery, TCD
Ph: 087 933 68 58 Email: astokes@tcd.ie

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016

DFI Submission on NDS Infrastructure and Outcomes

DFI has sent a substantive submission to key Ministers of the new Government outlining the steps that need to be taken if there is to be effective implementation of the National Disability Strategy, in keeping with the commitment in the Programme for Government. If we are ever to achieve the right outcomes for people with disabilities, namely self-determination and full participation, in DFI's judgement the structures and processes that underpin the NDS need to be strengthened. These steps, which are designed to build disability awareness into the thinking of public policy makers and practitioners, are neither costly nor onerous to implement, but they are urgent. The Disability Stakeholders Group (of

which DFI is a member) did considerable work on the infrastructure with Government officials prior to the election.

One key component advocated by DFI involves giving the Minister for Disability and Mental Health a clear remit to promote cross-organisational co-ordination, where required, to achieve priority outcomes. Another key requirement is stronger engagement with the voluntary disability sector. In fact, these are implicit in the Programme for Government, which states, “We will ensure whole-of-Government involvement and monitoring of the Strategy, in partnership with the disability sector”.

The second part of DFI’s submission considers what actions should be planned to achieve the agreed outcomes. It addresses health, education, employment, income support, housing transport and communication issues.

DFI is seeking to engage with Ministers to discuss the submission. To read the submission, ‘DFI Proposal to Support NDS Implementation’, click www.disability-federation.ie

“Challenging Times”

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies held a conference on 23 June with international and Irish participants who are involved in disability policy decision-making and implementation. The day focussed on what changes voluntary disability organisations are making to support greater self-determination by people with disabilities. The message conveyed by the speakers was that the ways of working by a disability organisation have to centre on the person with disabilities, on what that person seeks and on a path that person chooses. Services have to be supportive in that context. The discussion covered the changes underway in services both for children and for adults with disabilities

Bairbre nic Aongusa, who chaired the first session, highlighted the shift anticipated in resource allocation towards individualised budgeting, and she indicated that consultation on findings from the Government’s value for money and policy review of the HSE’s Disability Services Programme is planned for the autumn. A number of organisations, including some DFI members, described the journey they were taking together to develop ways to share and strengthen their supports for people. This work was started with Genio funding.

Information about the papers given at the conference are available on the website: www.fedvol.ie

HOUSING

New Regulations for Social Housing Needs Assessment

On 18 May DFI hosted a discussion of the new Regulations for Social Housing Needs Assessment. An Official from the Department of Environment, Communities and Local Government (DOECLG), Housing Officers from Dublin City Council and Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown Council and a number of representatives of voluntary disability organisations and Disability Advocates participated. New Regulations had been promised in the Department's Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005, and these came into effect on 1 April 2011.

The DOECLG Officer emphasised that the intention the regulations is to standardise the process across the country. While the two local authorities said that no major changes are anticipated so far as people with disabilities are concerned, the Officer pointed out that this was not the case in some other jurisdictions. She noted that the same application form would be used everywhere, one that encouraged people to ask for help from a Housing Officer if they felt they needed it. In assessing, local authorities will consider if a person's housing need can be expected to change in the future, e.g., due to a progressive disabling condition. However, access to the waiting list for social housing for disabled adults who already have their own room in shared housing (of an acceptable standard) remains at the discretion of the Local Authority. There will be improved transparency throughout the process, although the housing needs assessment report is not given to the applicant. The public representatives agreed that the process should yield much better information about the extent and nature of housing need amongst people with disabilities than that provided in the previous regime.

With the new Regulations, and the IWA's "Operation Sign-up" available, people with disabilities and those working with them should not hesitate to apply for social housing, if that would be appropriate for them. Successful applications will ensure that Government planners acutely aware of the deficit in housing available to people with disabilities.

Although the last waiting list count, conducted on 31st March 2011, will doubtless again underestimate the level of need amongst disabled people, another national assessment will be held before long, based on the revised application process. That creates an opportunity for the disability sector to underline the necessity of a rigorous implementation plan for the forthcoming National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities.

The Housing Officers noted that local authorities were to have a new social housing allocation schemes by 13th June, the development of which will be developed based on directives from the department and on consultations. The schemes will eventually change the allocation process, especially for those local authorities who do not currently use 'time on the list' as their main rationing device. The grouping of registered applicants into broad categories for queuing will be a feature.

For an electronic copy of the Regulations and Guidance provided to local authorities, please contact lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie. See also www.iwa.ie/house

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SKILL Staff Training Programme Graduations 2011

DFI would like offer congratulations to all staff in participating member organisations who attended the graduation ceremony from the SKILL Programme Training Programme, held in the Radisson Airport Hotel, Dublin.

Graduating staff were conferred with awards for Fetac Level 5 Health Service Skills and Fetac Level 6 Supervisory Skills. Well done and congratulations to everyone involved!

The goal of the SKILL Staff Training Programme is to provide accredited training and upskilling of staff within the health sector, and thereby to increase efficiency and effectiveness within the workplace and in turn to increase the quality and standard of services provided.

Survey: Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education 2009/2010

AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation. A core function of AHEAD's work is to monitor the overall picture and progress of students

with disabilities in terms of their access to and participation in higher education. To this end AHEAD surveys all Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Ireland on a periodic basis in order to get a snapshot of the numbers of students with disabilities getting to and progressing through the higher education system in Ireland and to identify trends and areas of improvement. These surveys carried out by AHEAD are the only national measure of the numbers of students with disabilities in higher education. This report details the results of AHEAD's survey on the participation of students with disabilities in higher education during the academic year 2009 / 2010. Some of these are outlined below.

- 26 HEI's in Ireland identified a total of 6,321 students with disabilities representing 3.3% of the total student population
- 1736 of these students with disabilities were new entrants, representing 27% of the disabled student population
- 1054 of these students were final year undergraduates, representing 17% of the disabled student population
- The majority of students with disabilities have a specific learning difficulty (61%)
- When compared with the general student population, students with disabilities remain underrepresented in subjects related to 'health & welfare' and 'education science' as well as in subjects such as 'nursing' and 'computing'. A higher percentage of students with disabilities are studying in the field of 'humanities & arts'.
- The impact of cuts in funding is most definitely being felt by disability / access staff on the ground with many noting the uncertainty associated with funding and the diminishing of already over-stretched support services associated with a contest where resources are decreasing while numbers attempting to access these resources are increasing.
- When asked about the embedding of inclusive practices across their entire institution, the average rating for all responses out of 10 was 5.8.

If you would like further information on this Report, please contact AHEAD at www.ahead.ie

Higher Education Authority: Springboard Programme

Springboard is a new programme from the Higher Education Authority Springboard that offers job seekers the option to take up a part-time course in higher education and training, free-of-charge.

Over 200 courses are available in higher education colleges around the country, at Levels 6-9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

All Springboard courses are designed to meet current and future skills needs in Ireland. Learners can study information and communications technology (ICT); the green economy; qualifications for the bio-pharma-pharmachem sectors as well as a range of courses developing innovative business and entrepreneurship skills.

Springboard aims to support two particular groups of jobseekers:

- Those who hold an award at Level 5 or FETAC Level 6 (or equivalent) on the National Framework of Qualifications, and who have a previous history of employment in construction, manufacturing or other parts of the economy where employment levels are unlikely to recover to pre-recession levels.
- Job seekers with a previous history of employment who hold a higher education qualification at NFQ Levels 6-9 and who believe that they would benefit from upskilling or reskilling to re-enter the labour market.

Applicants must be unemployed for a minimum of six months and at the time of starting a Springboard course must be in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, Jobseekers Benefit or One Parent Family Payment or be signing for contribution credits. However, in calculating the qualifying period of 6 months unemployed, time in receipt of any of the following allowances will also be taken into account:

- Disability Allowance
- Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)
- VTOS Training Allowance
- FÁS Training Allowance

For further information on the programme go to <http://www.bluebrick.ie/Springboard>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Multiple Sclerosis Research Symposium

Multiple Sclerosis Ireland will host a MS Research Symposium to celebrate 50 years of working with the MS Community. This National Convention will provide information on the latest research developments, and will take place on Friday, 9th September, 2011, at the Burlington Hotel, Dublin 4.

Further information is available from the MS Ireland website, www.ms-society.ie, or by contacting Aidan Larkin, aidan@ms-society.ie

IDS – TILDA Conference

The study, the Intellectual Disability Supplement to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (IDS – TILDA), is being led by Professor Mary McCarron and funded by the Health Research Board and the Department of Health and Children.

IDS – TILDA will launch its first major report on the lives of people with intellectual disability aged 40 years and over in Ireland as part of the study's 2nd International Research Conference to be held in Trinity College, Dublin.

The Report will draw on the findings from in-depth interviews with over 700 people with intellectual disability from across Ireland, providing the first comprehensive picture of people's lives across a range of key areas, including health, social, psychological, economic and environmental circumstances.

Demand for places at this conference is expected to be high, so early registration is advisable.

Conference Website:

http://nursing-midwifery.tcd.ie/events-conferences/ids_tilda_2011_conference/index.php

St Vincent de Paul

Campaign for a National School Book Rental Scheme

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is campaigning for the introduction of a national school book rental scheme to address some of the costs of education for all families in Ireland, and they are asking as many people as possible to sign up to and support this campaign.

They will begin the campaign in earnest next week, with greater publicity etc but at the moment they are asking, if you feel you can support this campaign, for as many of you as possible to click on the link and sign up to support it. www.svp.ie/books

CARDI Seminar: Extra Healthy Years or Just Extra Years?

There is a huge policy imperative to ensure that the increase in life expectancy is matched by better health and freedom from disability.

Increasingly societies are turning their attention to ageing and well being and new phrases have been coined like ageing gracefully or ageing actively. Many are also seeking to extend the working life, as shown by the planned increases in pension ages to 68 in both Ireland and the UK.

Working later and ageing well depends on older people being healthy and able to look after themselves for a longer number of years. As a result, there is greater attention on complementing the long-established idea of life expectancy with indicators of healthy life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy. However, a seminar in Dublin on 7 June 2011 heard that international and national data sources are 'not up to the job' of measuring these newer concepts.

The seminar, organised jointly by the Institute of Public Health, CARDI and the International Longevity Centre UK, discussed a number of topics around this issue, including results of considerable research carried out in the last 30 years into increasing life expectancy and how many of those extra years were spent in good health and free from disability. In this regard, it was concluded that it was not possible to make projections about health and disability (and hence care needs) beyond about ten years, partly due to data comparisons being hampered by weaknesses in the official data sources.

A number of other presentations were made, and if you would like further information on the Seminar, including full details of the issues addressed, please go to:

<http://www.cardi.ie/news/extrahealthyyearsorjustextrayears>

Dublin City Council Disability Implementation Plan for 2011

Dublin City Council (DCC) is seeking comments on its proposed up-dating of the Disability Act 2005 Implementation Plan for 2011, for example about access to services within the Council, and physical works listed for action under public buildings, roads or parks.

Although comments for the proposed up-dating were requested by the end of June, DCC will be pleased to have on-going comments from interested parties on the proposals from interested parties on the proposals.

This is a consultation that most local authorities have already undertaken, one which is affected by the decision of the Department of Environment, Communities and Local Government to provide no ring-fenced disability funding for 2011. 'Dublin City Council initially had a detailed Implementation Plan of works scheduled up to and including 2015 to make their roads, streets, pedestrian crossings, parks, open spaces, and public buildings universally accessible. However, due to the economic downturn over recent years, funding anticipated to realise this plan has ceased ... Departments responsible for access works in the built environment will now incorporate their annual works programs into this Implementation Plan. Their works will be to the highest level of accessibility and will make reference to the findings of the access audits throughout.' (page 15)

With its list of works designed to provide physical access by 2016 on hold, DCC's focus for 2011 is on improving access to services. Its Access Unit receives particular attention but all areas are touched on over the 67 pages (before appendices) of the Plan Update.

DFI encourages stakeholders to give DCC feedback on how well its intentions to disability-proof its mainstream budgeting are being realised. For example, does DCC appear to be allocating resources within its roads maintenance budget to ensure that special adaptations for the visually, hearing and mobility impaired are kept in good order?

To see the proposed DCC Plan Update, and to comment, please click <http://www.dublincity.ie/AccessibilityForum/default.aspx?g=landing>

eTenders

Graduate Diploma/MBS in Strategic Procurement Programme

Dublin City University Business School Executive Programmes Unit will be running a Graduate Diploma/MBS in Strategic Procurement Programme from October 2011. The National Procurement Service (NPS) in the Office of Public Works, and the National Public Procurement Policy Unit (NPPPU) in the Department of Finance, are endorsing this programme as an important component in developing strategic procurement education for both public and private sector bodies.

The programme operates on a modular basis over two years, with delivery based on a block release on Thursday, Friday and Saturday once a month during the academic year. The NPS/NPPPU encourages both public and private sector organisations to propose and support candidates involved in procurement in their organisations for inclusion in the Programme.

The NPS/NPPPU also encourages individuals who are interested in developing their procurement skills and capabilities to enrol in the programme.

The Programme has been successfully running since 2006 and the feedback from individuals from both the public and private sectors has been very positive.

Interested applicants are asked to contact Helen Coleman helen.coleman@dcu.ie or Phil Hughes @ phil.hughes@dcu.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

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Newsletter, Tel 01 2804164
email:cbrack@abiireland.ie

http://www.abiireland.ie/docs/ABII_Newsletter_Spring_2010.pdf

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: info@arthritisireland.ie

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

Asthma Society News - Tel: 01-8788511,
E-mail:office@asthmasociety.ie

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121,

E-mail: info@migraine.ie

Brainwave - Quarterly Newsletter, Tel: 01 4557500, E-mail:
info@epilepsy.ie

Care Alliance Ireland - E-mail: ndo@carealliance.ie

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

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

Community Exchange Newsletter, E-mail: info@activelink.ie, Tel:
+1 667 7326

Connect - Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association. E-mail:
info@imnda.ie, Freefone 1800 403 403

Community Workers' Co-operative – Community Work News. E-mail:
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

Cumhacht - People with Disabilities in Ireland
http://www.pwdi.ie/news_events/newsletter/index.htm, E-mail:
info@pwdi.ie, Tel: 01-8721744

Debra Ireland Newsletter, Tel: 01 678 5044, E-mail:
info@debraireland.org

Down Syndrome Ireland - Tel: 01-8730999, E-mail:
info@downsyndrome.ie

Enable Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 1850 204 304 E-mail:
communications@enableireland.ie

Equality News - Tel: 01-4173333, E-mail: info@equality.ie

E-Info Deaf Source— E-mail: 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

Fighting Blindness - Tel: 01 7093050, E-mail:
avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie

Frontline of Learning Disability -Tel: 01-2862649. E-mail:
frontline@indigo.ie

GROWing - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474, E-mail:
info@grow.ie

Guidelines - Irish Guide Dogs Association. Tel: 021 4878200 E-mail:
info@guidedogs.ie

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

Heart News: - Newsletter of Irish Heart Foundation. Tel:
01 668 5001

E-mail: info@irishheart.ie.

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

Heatwave - Irish Raynauds Scleroderma Society,
E-mail: info@irishraynauds.com, Tel: 01 2020184

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

Inclusion Ireland - Tel: 01 8559891, E-mail:
info@inclusionireland.ie

Irish Deaf News - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-
8601910; 01-8601878; E-mail: info@irishdeafsociety.ie

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

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News
066-7180611, E-mail: kerryPWDI@eircom.net

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

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-
6236414, or 01- 6236415 E-mail: info@mdi.ie

DeafHear.ie - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail:
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,
www.ncbi.ie

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland,
Tel: 01-8726338, E-mail: nfaireland@eircom.net

People First - Central Remedial Clinic Tel: 01-8057400
E-mail: vmmcutch@crc.ie

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: 071 64791
E-mail: newsletter@ppsg.ie

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

Rehab News -Tel: 01-2057200 E-mail:
dara.duffy@rehab.ie

Simon News - Simon Community, Tel: 01-6711606 E-mail:
info@simoncommunity.com

Shine News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620
E-mail: info@sirl.ie

Social Housing - Irish Council for Social Housing Tel: 01-
6618334; E-mail: info@icsh.ie

Sonas aPc – Tel (01) 2608138. www.sonasapc.ie.

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

Volunteer Stroke Scheme News- Tel: 01-4559036.
E-mail: info@strokescheme.ie

Wheel E-Bulletin Tel:01- 454 8727,
E-mail: 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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ABOUT DFI

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations that provide services to people with diverse disabilities and conditions. DFI works to ensure that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities so that they can exercise fully their civil, social and human rights.

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

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

There are over 126 organisations within membership or as associates of DFI. DFI also works with a growing number of organisations and groups around the country that have a significant disability interest, mainly from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI provides:

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

DFI also supports the broader voluntary and disability sector through its representation of the disability strand on the Community and Voluntary Pillar of the Social Partnership process and other fora at regional, national and European levels including the Health Service Executive.

For further information go to www.disability-federation.ie

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