



Disability Federation of Ireland

Newsletter

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

April 2009

DFI Urges Government to Protect Funding for Disability Services in Mini-Budget 2009

The second budget of 2009 brings new anxiety for voluntary disability organisations, disabled people and their families. DFI has urged the Government to remember their commitment to disabled people and to refrain from any further erosion of disability services.

The National Disability Strategy was introduced in 2005 as a positive initiative to meet the needs of disabled people in Ireland. It was also introduced in recognition of the service deficits that exist many of which occurred during the health cuts of the 1980s. The disability sector wants to ensure that disabled people do not become victims of another recession. While the Government has announced that they do not want direct services to be affected by cuts, it is difficult to see how this can happen. Since the latter part of 2008, voluntary disability organisations have been hit by range of cuts. While organisations have tried to absorb these cuts into administrative and overhead costs, services have been affected.

Further measures to reduce the budgets of voluntary disability organisations will affect basic health services that have already been eroded due to core deficits and the decline in fundraised income. DFI have argued that the disability sector has already had its share of cuts. Last year it emerged that €53 million allocated to disability and mental health service in Budget 2007 was redirected to meeting overspending in other areas of the health services. In 2008, the Government committed €50 million in multi-annual funding to high priority disability services, however €17 million was later withdrawn and we have yet to hear how and if the remaining €33 million was spent. In 2009, we were expecting a further €50 million which was the last instalment of a multi-annual package. These cuts, in addition to the 3% funding cuts to voluntary disability organisations to date in 2009, will have major repercussions for service provision to disabled people in Ireland and will undermine the National Disability Strategy.

DFI will be conducting an analysis of the mini-budget and will keep members up-to-date on the outcome of this through general correspondence and the newsletter.

John Dolan

CEO

NATIONAL / LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Friday 5th 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 5th 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

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 of 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 Govt 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 MEP's 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.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DFI National Conference

“Count Me In!

DFI's National Conference took place in the Hilton Hotel, Kilmainham, Dublin on the 3rd March. This year we had assistance in organising the event from our colleagues in some of the Local Authorities. There was a huge attendance on the day with great participation and enthusiasm and we would like to thank all who attended and assisted us with the Conference, your participation was greatly appreciated. There was great input and contribution in the five workshops which were held in the morning and facilitated by Local Authority and DFI staff.

The aim of the workshops was to give focus to the Open Forum and also the speakers and questions throughout the day. A key tool to achieving this goal was the ability of all organisations, both Local Authorities and voluntary organisations and DFI to work better together. This allowed facilitators to gauge the issues affecting services and those on the ground before the panel discussions took place.

The Conference opening address was given by Minister John Moloney TD., Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children with responsibility for Disability and Mental Health. Following this, there were presentations from Eithne Fitzgerald, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, National Disability Authority and Michael Malone, manager of Kildare County Council. Michael is Chairman of the Local Government Management Services Board Disability Act 2005 Steering Committee.

In the afternoon we were pleased to welcome Mary Doyle, Assistant Secretary in the Taoiseach's Department who presented a paper titled, “Towards 2016” Agenda for Promoting Inter-Agency

co-operation in Local Service Delivery'. Mary heads the Economic Policy / Social Policy Division. This Division supports the implementation of Social Partnership Agreement, "Towards 2016" and it also works with other Departments and agencies to advance the National Disability Strategy and other social inclusion objectives. Mary Doyle is Secretary to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion.

Presentations were also made by Claire O'Neill, Mayo Advocacy Service for People With Disabilities, Colin Hehir from the Housing Policy and Finance and the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Séan O'Riordáin, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Séan has worked extensively with the Combat Poverty Agency on the social inclusion role of Local Authorities and he was Managing Partner of the Environmental Resources Management Ireland Ltd from 2000-2007.

An open forum discussion took place in the afternoon and this was facilitated by Paul Ledwidge, CEO St. Michael's House and Vice-chairperson of DFI Board. The open forum included speakers of the day and Rosarie McCarthy of NDA.

Geraldine Clare, Aware , and Tom Barry, Carlow County Council, assisted with chairing the morning and afternoon sessions. We would like to thank all of them for their contribution for a successful conference.

All presentations are available on www.regonline.com/dfi (click on the tab marked presentations) and a Conference Report is being prepared and will be available in the near future

Teleconferencing

With the recession hitting hard many organisations travel budget are being cut. Organisations can use technology to allow them to have effective meetings without travelling in person.

DFI have been trialling a simple solution called 24 / 7meeting. Unlike other teleconferencing options 24 / 7 meeting allows organisations to hold phone conference meetings nationally and internationally with your own dedicated access details and there is no booking needed as 24 / 7 meeting assign each client with a personal log in.

The system works best with a phone conference phone like Polycom if you have more than one person at one end, but will work with any phone. They also provide web conferencing with video that allows you to share presentations and other files online in real-time, unlike other solutions it requires no installations on client machines. You can also share any part of your desktop to work in teams on live documents. For more details visit their site, www.247Meeting.com

247 Meeting are offering free 2 week trials.

Follow this link to view the details : <http://w3.247meeting.com/freetrial.aspx>

For further details contact 24 / 7 meeting on 01 4877046.

DFI purchased our conference phone from [Eircom's site](#).

Check out the [DFI's ICT Page](#) for more ICT help and pointers.

Email: icthub@disability-federation.ie if you have any questions

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups

The upcoming spring Management Training Programme offers a range of new courses covering the needs of volunteers, staff and directors alike.

The first course in the spring programme looks at the importance of branding in helping community and voluntary groups position themselves clearly in the minds of funders, volunteers, statutory agencies and service users alike.

Course Title	Date in 2009
Good Practice for Management Committees (NEW) - Galway	April 20 th
Conflict Resolution	April 23 rd
Finance for Non-Financial People	April 24 th
Financial Reporting for Charitable Organisations	April 29 th
Dealing with Grievance & Disciplinary	April 30 th
Writing a Marketing Plan (NEW)	May 14 th
Effective Board Meetings	May 18 th
Corporate Fundraising	May 20 th
Producing an Annual Report	May 21 st

The Wheel

Conference for Community and Voluntary Organisations - Sligo

Date: 28 April 2009

Venue: [Sligo City Hotel](#), Quay Street, Sligo

Time: 9.30am - 4.15pm (registration from 9am)

The Wheel is hosting a series of Conferences across Ireland during 2009, to celebrate their 10th anniversary, and to help equip organisations with the latest information and thinking on the key issues facing the community and voluntary sector.

For further information email register@wheel.ie , view the website <http://www.wheel.ie/user/content/view/full/4978> or phone 01 454 8727.

The Wheel Training Events Calendar 2009

The Wheel have prepared an interesting and varied Spring calendar for 2009. Whilst continuing the programmes of *Getting to Grips With Governance*, *openIT* and the *CEO Breakfasts*. The Wheel are introducing a series of workshops on *Risk Management* and an exploration into the use of new and social media.

The Wheel is also introducing a selection of **practical events** aimed to help organisations manage their way through the potentially troubled times ahead.

All of their training workshops will provide **timely and expert information** on a variety of relevant topics and an invaluable opportunity to network with, and learn from, experts and other organisations in the sector.

Date	Location	Event
April		
01	Dublin	Employment Law Briefing
01	Galway	Briefing on the Charities Act
02	Galway	openIT
07	Dublin	Getting to Grips With Governance
28	Sligo	Sligo Conference
30	Dublin	Social media for Charities
May		
12	Cork	Introduction to Risk Management
13	Waterford	openIT
28	Dublin	Managing Your Resources in a Recession
June 09	Dublin	Introducing Risk Management

HEALTH

DFI Seminar

DFI is hosting a Seminar on the following topics on the 15th April 10.30- 1pm, (followed by a light lunch) at our Dublin offices in Fumbally Court:

- **Mental Capacity Bill 2008:** Dr Mary Keys, Law Faculty, NUI, Galway will be speaking at the Seminar.

An introduction to issues pertaining to people with disabilities arising in the Heads of the Bill will be discussed.

- **Nursing Homes Support Scheme Bill 2008**

Lorna Roe, Policy Inclusion Officer with Age Action Ireland will talk us through the Bill and its relevance to people with disabilities, who are inappropriately placed in nursing homes or are over 65.

- **End of Life Issues for people with Disabilities and Disability Organisations**

The End of Life Forum organised by the Irish Hospice Foundation is hosting a year long conversation around the issue of death and dying. They have invited Disability organisations and DFI to make presentations at their workshops. This is an opportunity to feed in some of the broader policy issues that need to be addressed by the Forum from an organisational perspective.

In order to ensure a place at this discussion seminar, please contact Mary Redmond, maryredmond@disability-federation.ie.

For further information on the event, please contact Jacqueline Thomson, or Joan O'Donnell. Contact details are available at the end of the newsletter.

Service Level Arrangements and Grant Aid Agreements

Following the February meeting at Fumbally Court, where HSE officials outlined to DFI member organisations its plans for implementing the contracts, DFI held another session with its members on 26th March to update them on the progression of this process to date, contribute to the draft protocols being distributed to organisations, and discuss what supports organisations will need in understanding and/or completing the second part of the Arrangements/Agreements and in their implementation.

DFI emphasised its intention to provide clarity, information and support to all members involved in this process. DFI recognises the commitment of voluntary board members and staff in this time of financial uncertainty, and will work to ensure that any and all contracts and agreements entered into meet the needs of voluntary disability organisations and their members.

DFI asked members for feedback on the draft protocols that have been agreed between the three umbrella bodies and staff from the HSE's Business Unit. The purpose of the protocols, consisting of an introduction and 13 issues in the first phase, is to help both parties to an agreement to implement its terms in a consistent manner and to follow appropriate procedures. In other words, the protocols are to turn the 'legalise' of the contracts into practical processes for voluntary organisations and HSE officials to apply.

Workshop discussions at the meeting underlined the importance of clear, straightforward language in the protocols. They also identified a number of problematic areas for organisations in the Schedules part of the Service Level Arrangements and the Appendix of the Grant Aid Agreement. Organisations shared their experience as they began to fill in these documents and began to consider how DFI could usefully support them.

At this meeting DFI explained that once the first phase of the protocols are completed, the HSE have asked that the DFI Board and the Boards of the Not for Profit Business Association and Federation of Voluntary Bodies give consideration to the Arrangements on the behalf of their members. DFI advised that organisations begin to grapple with the Schedules and Appendix documents but not to sign the Arrangement or Agreement until the protocols have been completed. This stage is expected to be reached in the very near future, and DFI promised to keep members informed about further developments

The Service Level and Grant Aid Arrangements: Understanding the package

During the last year the three disability umbrella organisations, DFI, Not for Profit Business Association and the Federation of Voluntary Bodies, have worked with the HSE to translate the original draft Service Level Arrangements into a developed proposed contract package between voluntary disability organisations and the HSE. To aid your organisation in the filling out of the Schedules and also in considering the Arrangements, it is important to understand the different elements included in this package.

Service Level Arrangement Section 38 / 39 Parts 1 & 2 applies to voluntary organisations receiving more than €250,000 annually from the HSE.

- Part 1 is a set of 33 clauses or provisions about rights and obligations that define the business relationship between the HSE and Section 38 / 39 (Health Act 2004) organisations. This text is generic, applying to any community and voluntary organisation funded by the HSE.

- Part 2 consists of 10 Schedules in the case of Section 38 / 39 organisations. These are forms the two parties complete that specify the contact arrangements, service delivery specification, performance monitoring, funding, insurance, complaints, staffing and in-period agreed changes to the arrangement. Each organisation will have a unique contract with the HSE as set down in the Schedules to which the two parties agree. The HSE has indicated that it expects the detail in these schedules to increase with time and experience.

Grant Aid Agreement and Appendix applies to voluntary organisations receiving less than €250,000 annually from the HSE

- Part 1 contains 11 sections, and again is generic, applying to all organisations receiving limited funding from the HSE
- The Appendix is much less comprehensive than the Schedules, including only information about an organisational overview, purpose of the grant, the client group affected and a reporting timetable.

Protocols When finally agreed between the three umbrella organisations (DFI, The Not for Profit Business Association and the Federation of Voluntary Bodies) and the HSE, the Protocols should promote consistent implementation of the contracts across the country, by putting key provisions in practical, operation terms.

While most of the Protocols focus on a particular clause in the Arrangement / Agreement, some of them are over-arching. The document, *Introduction to the Protocols*, is especially relevant in this regard; it addresses the issues raised for example if an organisation is working across HSE boundaries or provides co-funded services. Each protocol explains the reason for the named contract provision(s) as appropriate, sets down a process that the two parties are to follow in complying, and identifies other relevant documents.

Standing Supervisory Committee In response to proposals from the voluntary disability sector, the HSE is establishing a Standing Committee comprising lead LHMs, the HSE's Business Support Unit and the three umbrella bodies. Its job will be to identify issues that arise during implementation of the contracts and, where possible, resolve them. The protocols will promote the referral of issues to this Committee.

Year-End Review Again in response to the voluntary disability sector, the HSE has agreed to a review of the package after one year. The Standing Committee will be key to this review.

Recognition of a partnership relationship : A letter from the HSE Director of Primary Community and Continuing Care to each of the disability umbrella bodies was given in response to representation by the umbrella bodies, the Director's letter outlines that as well as developing

the contractual relationships the HSE needed to recognise the valuable contribution of the voluntary sector, to innovative, quality focused, person-centred health and personal support services. The letter also acknowledges the shared commitment to enhancing benefit to people with disabilities and the wider partnership relationship that exists between the HSE and voluntary disability organisations.

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

Sources of information: http://www.hse.ie/eng/Publications/Non_Statutory_Sector/.

HSE Code of Practice for Integrated Discharge Planning

“Patients being discharged from hospital should receive a seamless transition from one stage of care to the next.” The HSE has published this Code of Practice which was launched in December and is now being implemented across the HSE. The code provides a framework within which efficient care and case management should be delivered, and it emphasises the need for different groups involved to work together. These groups include carers, hospital staff, family, primary care providers, community services and social services. The HSE Code of Practice for Integrated Discharge Planning document is available from the HSE. The document is available from the HSE.

http://www.hse.ie/eng/Publications/Hospitals/Code_of_Practice_for_Integrated_Discharge_Planning.html.

Aging and Older People

In recognition of the correlation between aging and disability and the growing number of people who are acquiring a disability as they age, DFI is setting up a network of interest on this issue. If your organisation is interested in being kept up to date on this, please contact Joan O'Donnell Support Officer and she will keep you informed of all issues as they arise, including the Forum on End of Life in Ireland, information on the Nursing Home Supports Bill 2008 as well as the evaluation of Home Care Packages.

HIQA Standards for Residential Services for Older People

Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney T.D., along with Minister of State for Older People, Máire Hóctor T.D. and Dr Tracey Cooper, CEO of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) launched the approved National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People on 9th March.

From 1 July 2009, the Chief Inspector of Social Services will have the power to inspect all designated centres for older people. As part of the new regime all Nursing Homes will have to be registered. This will replace the current system whereby the HSE registered and inspected private nursing homes only.

Speaking at the launch Minister Harney said “An effective, robust, independent and transparent inspection regime for residential services for older people is an absolute necessity. Our older population who can no longer live in the community because of their high levels of dependency and complex care needs deserve the reassurance that the care they will be given and the environment they will live in, will meet high standards.”

Minister Harney also announced that she will be introducing fees this year in respect of the new registration and inspections. The fees are set at €500 for registration, payable once every three years and an annual licensing fee of €190 per designated place in the home. The fees will apply to private providers and also to the HSE.

Also speaking at the launch, Minister for Older People, Maire Hctor T.D. welcomed the introduction of the standards. “I consider this to be a very significant step in reinforcing our duty of care to older people. Our most vulnerable need the most protection and the introduction of these standards will ensure that their needs are met”.

DFI is in contact with HIQA in relation to when the disability residential standards will be launched. DFI will update in relation to the disability residential standards when the information is returned from HIQA.

Forum on End of Life in Ireland

The Forum on End of Life in Ireland seeks to develop a vision of how modern Ireland can address the challenges of dying, death and bereavement.

It offers an opportunity for organisations and the general public to discuss the issues they believe are crucial at the end of life. Unless otherwise stated workshops will run from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm with registration starting at 9.30 am. Workshops will take place at Buswells Hotel in Dublin.

All attendance at workshops will be on a first come, first served basis as there is limited space. If you wish to attend any of the workshops please contact Linda Collins at 01 6755970 or email linda.collins@hospice-foundation.ie.

For updates on additional workshop log onto the End of Life Website: www.endoflife.ie . For further information contact Paul Murray or Linda Collins on 01-6755970. The following is a selection of the workshops taking place.

Workshop Title	Date
Specific Illnesses and Disability: Group B (this workshop starts at 11.00am)	Wednesday, 22 April
Children and End of Life	Wednesday, 10 June
Bereavement Groups	Wednesday, 08 July
Older People: Group A	Wednesday, 15 July
Older People: Group B	Thursday, 16 July
Carer Groups	Thursday, 30 July
Housing & Environmental Groups	Wednesday, 09 September
Social and Rural Groups	Thursday, 10 September
Emergency Services	Wednesday, 23 September
Human Rights, Advocacy and Legal	Wednesday, 07 October

TOWARDS 2016

Community and Voluntary Pillar

On 24 March the Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, T.D., invited the Community and Voluntary Pillar and the other Social Partners to engage with the Government to conclude a National Agreement that supports the strategic response recommended by the National Economic and Social Council in their report, *Ireland's Five-Part Crisis: An Integrated National Response*. The Taoiseach indicated that the Framework that had been agreed by the partners in February contained the core elements required.

DFI together with the other organisations in the C&V Pillar submitted a response welcoming the invitation on the understanding that the Agreement falls within the framework of *Towards 2016*. The Pillar noted that the NESC Report reflects its own perspective, particularly in recognising that economic and social development are complementary and inter-dependent. It pointed out that access to services in the community is already being adversely affected, often through a myriad of 'small adjustments'.

The Pillar reiterated its policy stance:

- That the brunt of the required adjustment should not be borne by the most vulnerable
- That an integrated approach to the crises is required to ensure solidarity and equity
- That the infrastructure of services and social supports be maintained in the years ahead.

For each of the five crises named by NESC - banking, fiscal, economic, social, reputational - the letter highlighted the social dimensions of the response needed. It reminded the Taoiseach that the Pillar members represent important segments of the Irish population who were vulnerable even before the onset of the crises. Furthermore, they are significant employers with extensive experience in solving problems collaboratively.

While the C&V Pillar is willing to engage, the next steps are uncertain as the date for the mini Budget fast approaches.

Evaluation of Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has commissioned the Centre for Housing Research to evaluate Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes which have now been operating for more than one year under revised terms and conditions. A call for submissions on any issues influencing the effectiveness of the schemes in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and older people was published with a deadline of 20th April.

On 12th March, DFI hosted a consultation session where a number of voluntary disability organisations and others outlined their experiences to the officer from the Centre who is leading the evaluation. A variety of problems were reported, including poor administration of applications by the local authority, means testing and funding caps that preclude appropriate adaptations, insufficient funding by local authorities and closure to applications.

DFI has made a submission, a copy of which can be obtained from Lillian Buchanan, lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie, or phone 01 4547978. Our concern is the need to reform the programmes to recognise the right of people with disabilities to no more than other members of society expect, namely to live as far as possible like others in houses that are functional or suited for the purpose of accommodating their basic needs.

Department of Social and Family Affairs meets with Disability Group

On the 31st of March a subgroup of the Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG) met with the DSFA to discuss matters of key concern and to develop a closer working relationship with the Department.

The subgroup flagged a number of priority issues at the meeting and these were discussed at length. They included:

1. The role out of the EU funded activation project in the midlands
2. Income support for disabled people in an increasingly difficult economic environment
3. The Government decision not to publish the Carers Strategy
4. The lack of implementation of the Personal Advocacy Services

The department also flagged the Review of the DSFA Disability Sectoral Plan and it was agreed that the subgroup would make a submission on behalf of the disability sector. It should be noted however that the DSFA are interested in consulting with the entire Sector and further information with regard to this process will be available shortly.

The group agreed to meet with the Department at a future date to discuss the submission and other issues of concern as they arise. The DSFA is known for its willingness to work with the voluntary disability sector and this is an important opportunity for us to progress priority areas for disabled people. DFI is Chair to the group and members are invited to contact the group secretary Louise Mc Cann (DFI) at louisemccann@disability-federation.ie if you would like more information on the group and how you might support its work.

FUNDING

HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster and Dublin North East

The Health Service Executive Dublin Mid-Leinster and Dublin North East have been allocated National Lottery Funding for distribution to community based groups and voluntary organisations under the following terms:

1. Respite Care Grant Scheme
2. National Lottery Grant Scheme
3. Applications are invited from groups and organisations involved in the provision of Health and Personal Social Services for once off funding for viable projects (non major capital projects) which can be completed within a reasonable period of time: Further information contact: Health Service Executive Dublin North East on 042 9381385, or Health Service Executive Dublin Mid-Leinster on 045-880433.

Closing date : 24th April 2009. The website link is :

http://www.hse.ie/eng/News/National_Tab/National_Lottery_Grants_Dublin_Mid_Leinster_Dublin_North_East.shortcut.html

GENERAL NEWS

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is the new name of The Peter Bradley Foundation.

The reason for the change of name is that the organisation believes that the name should reflect the people that they serve, the work that the organisation does and the regions in which they operate.

While the organisations name may change, their ethos will not. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland(ACBI) is, and will continue to be a provider of services and be a strong voice for people with acquired brain injury in Ireland. Most importantly of all ACBI will continue to put the people who use their services at the centre of everything they do. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland came into effect on March 4th 2009.

Irish Blind Sports

Irish Blind Sports has recently made a Sporting Interest Survey available online. This 10 question survey is aimed at identifying people with sight-loss living in Ireland and assisting them to access the sporting activities of their choice at a local level. This survey is open to people of all ages with sight loss and to those who may be interested in volunteering some of their time with Irish Blind Sports. All contact information will be kept confidential.

The survey is available at

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nJTd9kQdukT0j_2bOB2SYKlg_3d_3d.

For further information contact Irish Blind Sports on 01 202 0118.

Irish Mental Health Coalition Conference

Date : 18th May 2009

Venue: Radisson SAS Royal Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin 8

The Irish Mental Health Coalition presents a one day Conference on 18th May 2009. The IMHC campaigns for the improvement of the lives of people with mental health difficulties by advocating for people's rights to the highest attainable standard of mental health and mental healthcare. The topic of the Conference is Mental Health: Human Rights and Legislation What's Possible in Ireland?

The Conference will explore how legislation can be used to ensure quality in Ireland's mental health services while upholding international human rights standards and realising the ambitions of A Vision for Change, the Government's mental health policy.

Keynote speakers: Mr John Moloney, TD, Minister of State for Disability, Mental Health and Equality

Mr Anand Grover, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health

Places for this event are limited; to register your interest please email conference@imhc.ie.

Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland

Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland is holding its Annual Community Educational Forum and Conference in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Galway on May 8th 9th and 10th.

This Conference is aimed at the entire disability sector and its theme is very much centred on independence and challenges encountered by people with disabilities.

SBHI's National Conference is focused directly on your customers—those affected by Spina Bifida and / or Hydrocephalus and the carers and medical professionals who oversee their care.

For further information contact 01 4572329 or email conference@iasbah.ie.

Lucan Disability Action Group Annual Charity Golf Classic

Date: 17th April 2009

Venue: Hermitage Golf Club, Lucan, Co. Dublin

Tee Times : 8:30am – 4pm.

Lucan Disability Action Group (LDAG) is an organisation whose aim is to help people with disabilities achieve independent living, and participate in social and economic life.

Lucan Disability Action Group (LDAG) is calling on all 'drivers' to take part in their 6th Annual Charity Golf Classic in the picturesque surroundings of the prestigious Hermitage Golf Club, Lucan, Co. Dublin on Friday 17th April 2009.

For further details contact Tara or Trish on 01-6100475.

Doorway to Life, Abode Independent Living Programme

Doorway to Life, Abode is now accepting applications for its Independent Living Programme.

This programme is designed for people with physical and sensory disabilities who have a genuine interest in exploring independent living skills.

For further information, contact Clodagh or Barbara at Doorway to Life, Mahon, Cork.

Telephone: 021 4357606

Email: info@doorwaytolife.com

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

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: 01-8721501, 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: vmcutch@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

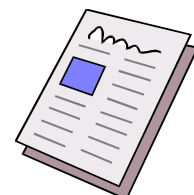
S.I. News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620 E-mail: info@sirl.ie

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

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