



Disability Federation of Ireland

Newsletter

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

JULY 2008

HSE Imposing 1% Efficiency Cuts

The HSE has recently advised us that they are requesting DFI and all of its member organisations to achieve what they describe as “efficiency targets” of 1% p.a. from the current disability and mental health allocation. The HSE insist that these efficiencies can be applied on the basis that it will not affect front line service levels.

In response DFI has stated that we are not in a position to identify to the HSE where we can make such savings as to do so would require us to be complicit in the permanent removal of funding from the disability area to other areas where the HSE is over budget. We explained that we have worked hard over many years to increase the investment going into services. As we are aware that much more funding is required for disability services we cannot simply offer up such funding, noting that it was the Oireachtas that voted this money.

In relation to efficiency and value for money we stated that DFI and its member organisations would welcome and expect that the HSE would enter into routine discussions with individual organisations that it provides funding to. These discussions are essential to ensure that efficiency is achieved and resources that go into front line delivery are maximised. We are very much in favour of greater efficiency and effectiveness but not as a device to take funding from disabled people at a time when there is so much unmet need for a whole range of basic services.

The reduction of current disability budgets by 1% p.a. is not an insignificant amount of money when viewed over the remaining period of the National Development Plan (NDP), which is the source of disability funding. With this cut commencing this year, and without factoring in any other cuts, it amounts to €150m out to the conclusion of the NDP in 2013.

Briefly on other HSE related areas, namely the proposed Service Level and Grant Aid Agreements we wish to remind you that it would be premature to consider signing at this stage. We have written to the HSE and they have asked us to enter into discussions with them. Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

Also, DFI welcomes the announcement by the Minister of State for Disability and Mental Health, Mr John Moloney T.D. that €50 million allocated in Budget 2008 will now be released to address the funding of services for people with disabilities. DFI is currently writing to the Minister to seek clarification that the full amount of €50 million committed to in Budget 2008 will be delivered over the remainder of 2008, and that this money will be directed across all of the areas outlined for the Multi Annual Funding Programme.

John Dolan
CEO

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Launch of The SKILL Experience
A Report on the Participation of
DFI Member Organisations in the SKILL Project



(from left to right): Norbert McCabe, SKILLVEC Region 4 Co-Ordinator, Caroline O' Regan, Assistant General Manager SKILL Project, Alan Smith, General Manager, SKILL Project, Matt Merrigan National Industrial Secretary, the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) John Dolan Chief Executive Officer, DFI

SKILL stands for Securing Knowledge Intra Lifelong Learning, and is a unique national initiative, aimed at educating, training and developing the skills of 32,000 support staff and supervisory / line management within the Irish Health Sector including staff of the voluntary disability sector. The aim of SKILL is to recognise and build upon the wealth of experience and knowledge of those who deliver services on a one to one basis with people in the community. The project is being accredited through FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council).

The SKILL Experience, a Report on the Participation of DFI Member Organisations in the SKILL Project was launched on Wednesday 2nd July by Matt Merrigan, National Industrial Secretary, the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU).

The Launch was chaired by Niall Byrne of Cheshire Ireland, and Chair of the DFI SKILL Project Steering Group, and gave those involved in SKILL the chance to come

together to celebrate the collaborative working approach which has defined our experience of SKILL to date.

In his launching of the Report, Matt Merrigan as driving force behind the initiative since the late 1990s acknowledged the challenge of returning to education faced by all participants. Matt voiced his enthusiasm for the partnership approach working which the SKILL Project team, DFI staff, DFI participating member organisations, and training providers of SKILL VEC and Open Training College (OTC) have developed, as support to the 474 SKILL participants from the 23 DFI participating member organisations.

In his speech Alan Smith of SKILL Project emphasised the continued determination of the SKILL Project team to achieve their goal of supporting approximately 8,000 frontline support staff of the Irish Health Services Sector through SKILL Project training by the end of 2009.

Other speakers on the day included John Dolan Chief Executive Officer of DFI, Winifred Jeffers who wrote the report for DFI and Rita Buggy, a staff member of Alzheimer Society and herself a participant on SKILL.

The report can be downloaded from the DFI website <http://www.disability-federation.ie>. For further information on SKILL Project please contact Cathy McGrath on 01 4547978 / cathymcgrath@disability-federation.ie

HEALTH

Disability Services Seriously Threatened in 2008

DFI Meeting with Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and Children on 1st July 2008.

DFI has expressed serious concerns about the current and future funding of the sector to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on 1st July. Three main points were raised by DFI at this meeting. Firstly, the threatened diversion by the HSE of funds allocated by the Oireachtas specifically for disability. Secondly, the 1% 'value for money' cuts imposed by the HSE, and thirdly, what DFI is calling

'governance issues, or issues relating to the unilateral overturning by the HSE of decisions of the Oireachtas in relation to voted funding for the National Disability Strategy.

In DFI's Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee, John Dolan, CEO, stated that the "HSE has imposed a 1% cut on all current funding to disability services, amounting to €25m; furthermore DFI anticipates that €50m Multi Annual Funding allocated by the Oireachtas to fund services to people with disabilities in Budget 08, will not be released but used instead to address overruns elsewhere in the health services. In total disability services could loose €75m in 2008 alone - and this is deplorable and unacceptable."

John Dolan noted "the Programme for Government states that 'Government is determined to continue to prioritise the interests of people with disabilities over the next five years'. It is now time for the Government to show that determination and release the €50m due in 2008 for disability services and immediately scrap the 1% cut in services."

The paper presented by DFI stated that "It must be acknowledged that the ongoing reform programme within the HSE, when viewed against the significant extra demands that the Disability Strategy alone is putting on it, is having a detrimental impact on the implementation of the Disability Strategy".

John Dolan also noted that DFI is 'calling on the Government to maintain, as a top priority, all of its commitments to the disability sector and to the 400,000 Irish people who experience some level of disability – as well as to their carers and families.

People with disability and their families will experience the brunt of these severe cut backs."

DFI estimated that if the 1% cut in spending is maintained, it will equate to a €150m reduction in expenditure, over the remainder of the National Development Plan (NDP). Furthermore, it was noted if the €50m development funding was not released it would equate to a loss of €300m over the remainder of the National Development Plan.

DFI welcomes the announcement by the Minister of State for Disability and Mental Health, Mr John Moloney T.D. on Wednesday 2nd July that €50 million allocated in Budget 2008 will now be released to address the funding of services for people with disabilities. As noted in the opening article in this months newsletter, DFI is currently writing to the Minister to seek clarification on the full 2008 amount to be delivered and the service areas that will benefit from this allocation.

DFI's Submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and Children will be available shortly on the DFI website, www.disability-federation.ie

DFI Meeting with Séamus McNulty (Assistant National Director, PCCC) and Lead Local Health Officer Managers with Lead Responsibility for Disability

DFI met with Seamus McNulty and a number of Lead LHMs for disability on the 18th June 2008 as part of our regular quarterly meetings with the HSE.

The following are a number of learning's from the meeting:

- The HSE, at this point, could not confirm that the €50m for MAF will be available for 2008 but they anticipate offering clarification as to whether this funding will or will not be available by the end of June
- A discussion document on the replacement of RCCs to be circulated shortly
- The HSE proposed efficiency adjustments (1% cut) to be administered across all organisations
- The HSE acknowledged the DFI correspondence on Service Level Agreements and Grant Aid Agreements. It was noted that DFI, in partnership with the Not for Profit Business Association and the Federation of Voluntary Bodies wish to enter into discussions with the HSE on the proposed documents
- The HSE confirmed there will be limited funding for core deficits this year

DFI noted that it was preparing a paper on the health funding issues, including the threat of reallocation of the €50 million MAF money and the core deficits experienced by voluntary disability organisations, to be presented at a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the 1st of July.

In relation to the efficiency savings, DFI has advised the HSE that:

- We would not be advising our organisations to identify funding to be offered back to the HSE

- It is a matter for the HSE to decide what it wants to do
- Organisations should co-operate with the HSE around efficiencies where the money would remain within disability services

DFI welcomes the recent announcement by the Minister of State for Disability and Mental Health, Mr John Moloney T.D. that €50 million allocated in Budget 2008 will now be released to address the funding of services for people with disabilities. As we have already noted, DFI is currently writing to the Minister to seek clarification that the full amount of €50 million committed to in Budget 2008 will be delivered over the remainder of 2008, and that this money will be directed across all of the areas outlined for the Multi Annual Funding Programme.

In relation to SLAs DFI will be working with the Not For Profit Business Association and Federation for Voluntary Bodies in relation to engaging with the HSE on this matter. If organisations become aware of any developments on this issue at regional or local level, please contact the relevant DFI Support Officer.

Independent Assessment of Need

The Disability Federation of Ireland is represented on the National Implementation Group for the National Disability Strategy, comprising statutory and non statutory service providers and service users. DFI has two places on this Group, one of whom is a staff member, Toni Gleeson, and the other is Catherine Byrne from KARE, a member organisation that provides services to children.

The Group has a remit

- To provide a national overview and direction to support the cohesive and effective delivery of provisions of the Disability Act 2005
- Focus on Key issues and approaches taking a high level view of what needs to be achieved.

Update: Numbers applying for Assessment of Need continue to rise and are now at an average of 230 per month for the first five months of this year. Growth in numbers has been most evident across the South of the country but is consistent everywhere with the possible exception of the North East; even in this area numbers in Meath and parts of North County Dublin are high. It has been noted that most areas are

managing the rise in numbers quite well, there are however logistical and resource constraints in Galway that are leading to delays and backlogs.

Quantifying unmet need: The first report to the Minister quantifying the level of unmet need is due at the end of June. It is unlikely that the HSE will be able to meet this deadline but are confident that the Report will be complete by the end of July. There have been difficulties and challenges with regard to how to identify and verify the unmet need. An interim method for quantification will therefore inform the first report. Using a process of informed estimation the Report will extrapolate from the case managers' service statement shortfall identification to identify overall unmet need. Case Managers have sent a letter to all parents or carers of children who have been assessed identifying the shortfall of service.

Stage two of the Assessment of Need is to activate the process for children 5 – 18 years of age. A group is now in place that has met twice to date. DFI is not directly represented on the 5-18 years group but receives updates and information through the National Implementation group. The process of aligning the EPSEN Act with the Assessment of Need process is progressing slowly with concerns and delay on both sides; issues such as the varying timelines in both pieces of legislation and differing interpretations of language, both in the legislation and within each service. This Group meets again at the end of July.

The National Implementation Group will meet again in September. If you or your organisation want to make any comment, discuss or question any developments or lack thereof please contact Toni Gleeson at Tel: 0504-22977, Mob 087-6004526 or Email: tonigleeson@disability-federation.ie

HIQA Standards for Residential Services for People with Disabilities

The HIQA draft standards for residential services for people with disabilities is nearly complete and will be going out to public consultation in September. It is envisaged that the document will be published by the end of 2008. HIQA are currently looking for feedback from our organisations on the draft document. Responses should be received by DFI no later than Tuesday 22nd July. If you would be interested in contributing to this process or would like more information, please contact Jacqueline Thomson on jacquelinethomson@disability-federation.ie.

National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD)

MAP Bulletin Issue 3 - Measure of Activity and Participation (MAP): the experience of people with neurological conditions

Issue 3 in the MAP bulletin series explores the difficulties in participating experienced by people with a neurological condition who have completed the MAP section of the NPSDD.

The data found that *climate/weather* and *income* represented the largest barriers to participation in life activities for people with neurological conditions. It was also found that those with a neurological diagnosis experienced the most restriction in participating in sports or *physical recreation, socialising, shopping, leisure/cultural activities* and *family life* and the majority who experienced restriction were bothered somewhat by this restriction. Furthermore, the majority of participants stated that they have been emotionally affected by their disability.

The MAP data is useful as it offers a holistic view of disability by measuring the barriers and challenges experienced in participating in life activities and provides an overview of functional ability. This data can also be used to measure the effectiveness of service use and their impact on individuals' participation. This bulletin explores the difficulties in participating experienced by people with a neurological condition. The basic premise behind the MAP tool is to provide information on the services to people with disabilities in order to improve their level of participation in those areas of life from which they feel wholly or partially excluded. The data has shown that the impact of PA services is clearly significant.

This bulletin is available to download from the HRB website www.hrb.ie

For further information, or for a copy of this bulletin, please contact Anne Doyle in the Disability Databases Unit of the HRB at adoyle@hrb.ie or by telephoning 01 2345 193.

NDS / TOWARDS 2016

NDS Monitoring Update

A meeting of the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group (NDSSMG) took place on 12th June. This meeting occurs every six months and its role is to provide national monitoring of progress on the National Disability Strategy.

The Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG), which includes DFI, represents the disability sector while senior officials represent most Departments of Government with the Department of the Taoiseach chairing the proceedings.

The meeting took place within the context of the changing economic situation which was underlined by the input from the Department of Finance. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, which acts as the secretariat to the Group on behalf of Government, delivered the summary monitoring report in a new format which will track activities across departments against the vision and high level goals of the NDS. This is a positive development and should assist us in knowing if and where progress is being made.

Welcome progress was reported by the Department of Social and Family Affairs who confirmed that the Minister is soon to clear the appointment of the Director of Personal Advocacy Services along with other necessary staff posts to get the service operational. Detailed progress reports from each of the Sectoral Plan Departments should become available by August, and they will be analysed in the DFI Newsletter after they are released.

At the meeting DFI and fellow DSG members laid out the disability sector's concerns around the health / funding situation including the Independent Assessment of Need, core deficits of voluntary disability organisations, non delivery of the €50m due under the Multi Annual Funding Programme and Service Level Agreements.

Bilateral Meeting on Housing Issues

Representatives of the Community & Voluntary Pillar, including DFI, met senior officials in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) on 11th June to discuss housing issues in the context of the formal review of the Social Partnership Agreement, Towards 2016 (T16). Ways of ensuring delivering of the Government's ambitious social housing output commitments were discussed as well as the issue of providing suitable building sites for voluntary housing associations. Appropriate housing: Co-Ordinated provision of housing and personal supports was considered in the context of people with a disability, those who are homeless and older people in need of sheltered housing. The Department admitted frustration about the situation, and the scarcity of revenue funding for supported accommodation. The Pillar noted that T16 prioritises inter-agency co-ordination. The Department was urged to demonstrate leadership on such projects. The Pillar

proposed that the T16 Review incorporate the introduction of specific budget lines to overcome present difficulties. Rental dwelling standards and the availability of affordable rental housing were also highlighted by the Pillar, in view of the persistence of shoddy private rental accommodation and significant numbers of rent supplement tenants having to secretly top-up their payments to get or keep their homes. Looking ahead: The bilateral meeting on housing was a welcome engagement with the DOEHLG. A further meeting was agreed should it prove desirable. Meanwhile the text of the formal Review is being drafted by the Department of the Taoiseach and submitted to the social partners for comments. DFI is seeking to ensure that the Review addresses shortfalls in the completion of existing priority action commitments for people with a disability, and that further commitments necessary to reach the long term goals by 2016 are agreed.

NATIONAL / LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Tackling Disability Issues Using Local Structures Seminar

Carlow June 17th

Carlow County Development Board in collaboration with the Disability Federation of Ireland hosted a morning Seminar in the Talbot Hotel Carlow on June 17th. The objective of the Seminar was to bring together the key stakeholders in the county to build awareness of how local disability issues could be tackled through the Local Government Structures, and to discuss how greater collaboration could take place between all stakeholders to tackle disability issues jointly.

The Seminar was opened by the County Manager Mr. Tom Barry. At the seminar representatives from the Statutory Agencies, local elected representatives the Local Authority, the voluntary disability sector and people with disabilities came together to hear Maureen Gilbert, the well known Equality Consultant, speak on the opportunities and challenges which arise for all stakeholders when choosing to work together. Ms Gilbert also spoke about the responsibility of statutory agencies in the local roll out of the Sectoral Plans arising from the Disability Act 2005, and the responsibility of the voluntary disability sector to play their part in local decision making by utilising the opportunities for representation which are open to them through the local government structures.

The opening address was followed by workshops and an open panel discussion through which participants were facilitated to discuss the progress made to date in making Carlow County more universally accessible, identify whatever challenges might still exist to prevent closer working relationships between the sectors, and to identify possible priorities for collaborative actions for the future.

The outcome from the seminar will form the basis of a report which will be presented to the County Development Board on completion. It is hoped that further actions will follow with all key stakeholders in the county to promote greater involvement in local structures and support stronger interagency working.

For further information contact; P J Cleere DFI Support Officer South East 086 3811064 Email: pjcleere@disability-federation.ie or Margaret Nolan Carlow CDB at 087 2033841 email: mnolan@carlowcoco.ie.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

The Department of Social and Family Affairs has clear responsibilities in terms of the activation of people with disabilities outlined in the Sectoral Plan. As part of this process a pilot project, funded by the DSFA and the EU, is being rolled out in the midlands region to support the economic and social participation of disabled people in the area. An aim is to develop individualised personal progression planning for candidates who want to participate more actively. The project proposes to use tailor-made education and training opportunities, backed up with a range of supports to enable better access to the labour market.

Feedback: The pilot will run for several years; it can be expected to influence FÁS programmes and other participation schemes. If a reader has been involved in the project, DFI would very much welcome feedback on that experience. Please contact Martin Naughton at martinnaughton@disability-federation.ie.

Sports Inclusion Disability Officer – North Tipperary.

In 2006, the Dormant Accounts Fund earmarked €2m nationally for projects which address the imbalance in opportunities for people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity. The Irish Sports Council, in collaboration with the network of Local Sports Partnerships, identified the need to

appoint dedicated Sports Inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs) at county level in order to address current gaps in the provision of sport and recreation for this group. North Tipperary Sports Partnership was successful in its bid for funding. As a result Kathleen Finn is now employed in the role.

The Local Sports Partnership aims to increase participation in Sport and Physical Activity for all. Many people with disabilities are precluded from participating in sports activities and often it is simply because of a lack of understanding on the part of service and facility providers. Kathleen believes that a co-ordinated approach with support at national level would be very effective in addressing the imbalance in opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in Sport and Physical Activity.

Aims

- Establish links with key agencies and access current provisions.
- Assess and provide support to existing clubs/groups that offer Sport and Physical Activity opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Establish Sports and Physical Activity Clubs for people with disabilities.
- Explore avenues and source funding for ongoing programmes and to sustain the programme post beyond 2 years.

Kathleen will meet with relevant stakeholders: Disability Organisations, Sports Clubs/Development Officers, Schools, HSE Personnel, and Local Leisure Centres.

- Run Taster Sessions around the county of various Sports and Activities,
- Aid in the development of new clubs: **Boccia, Athletics, Swimming, Fitness/Gym and Power Soccer.**
- Design a Disability Awareness Resource pack for training and education.

This Summer there will be

- Taster days of various Sports and Activities
- Disability Awareness Training for Coaches, initially targeting summer camps and teachers.

She will encourage more people with disabilities to participate and encourage more clubs/sports to become inclusive in their programmes.

For details or to see if there is a SIDO in your area contact Kathleen Finn, SIDO, North Tipperary Sports Partnership, c/o Lifelong Learning Service, Martyr's Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. 06743604, email: kathleen@ntsp.ie.

TV Access Campaign

By 2012, Ireland, will have completed the 'digital switchover' of free-to-air television from analogue to digital broadcasts. To continue watching television, all viewers will need to buy and install new digital television equipment. These changes present significant accessibility and affordability challenges for older people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes. It is vital that these challenges are addressed and properly dealt with; otherwise we face the risk of causing social exclusion on a large scale.

Organisations in the disability, ageing and poverty sectors must act now to ensure that the needs of older people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes are taken fully into account during the digital switchover.

Government lobbying is required to introduce a scheme to provide help where needed with the financial cost and installation work involved in switching from analogue to digital television.

Information about the switchover needs to reach everyone in accessible and understandable formats.

Increased subtitling, Irish Sign Language and audio description on Irish television channels must be sought as the switch to digital makes this possible on a much larger scale than before.

Accessible and usable digital television equipment must be made available for consumers in the Irish market and the electronic programme guides need to be accessible and usable for all viewers.

Equipment and services must be thoroughly tested by older people and people with disabilities so that feedback about accessibility and usability can be gathered and used to iron out any problems that may arise during use.

Continued monitoring upcoming of legislation is required to ensure that television will remain accessible and affordable.

To this end the Centre for Inclusive Technology (CFIT) is leading a campaign to ensure that people with disabilities and older people will not be left behind when the new technology rolls out. For further information, please contact Joan O'Donnell, SO, DFI joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie or Mark Magennis, Director, CFIT, Tel: 071 9147464 or email mark.magennis@ncbi.ie.

The Broadcasting Bill, 2008

The Broadcasting Bill was published in May 2008 and is open for public consultation. It does not impose any specific requirements for accessibility or affordability, but it does create a number of measures to help the broadcasting sector take into account the needs of older people, people with disabilities and socially disadvantaged people. According to the Bill, a new Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) will be created which shall:

“provide a regulatory environment that will facilitate the development of a broadcasting sector in Ireland that is responsive to audience needs and in particular is accessible to people with disabilities.”

Other measures allow for the direct involvement of people with disabilities or their representatives in structures that contribute to decision making. These include the Contract Awards Committee, the Compliance Committee, the boards of RTÉ and TG4 and the nine person BAI itself, all of which have membership criteria which qualify a person if they have experience of or capacity in matters pertaining to either disability affairs or social, educational or community affairs.

Additionally, the Bill proposes the setting up of RTÉ and TG4 audience councils, which will be:

“...representative of the viewing and listening public and, in particular, of persons with a sight or hearing disability.”

The Bill can be downloaded from www.oireachtas.ie. You can also register to participate in their e-consultation. For further information contact Joan O'Donnell at joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie or phone on 01 4547978.

CORI Justice's Social Policy Conference: Making Choices – Choosing Futures.

The Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) Justice held its 20th annual Social Policy Conference on June 19th. It took place in UCD, Quinn School of Business.

In conference the issues discussed related to the challenges that face Ireland in a changing economic environment and the impact that these changes are having and will have on Social Policy. The Conference looked at the questions facing Ireland in a changing economic environment. How can the available resources be best used to secure the required levels of infrastructure and social services? How can poverty, inequality and social exclusion be addressed in a more effective manner? What needs to be done to secure environmental, economic and social sustainability? These questions were discussed from a number of perspectives including the community and voluntary perspective, the business perspective and the trade union perspective. A panel was held from the economist's perspective with George Lee. The Conference addressed poverty, inequality and social inclusion.

For more information on this Conference and the work of CORI Justice contact 01 6677363 or email justice@cori.ie.

FUNDING

Community Enterprise Centre Application

Enterprise Ireland is seeking proposals from eligible communities in urban and rural locations that have the commitment, energy and aptitude to develop an Enterprise Centre within and for their own local community.

Assistance may be provided on a competitive basis for the acquisition, adaptation or construction of a suitable building in which micro enterprises can establish.

These centres provide a supportive environment for potential entrepreneurs and are in line with Enterprise Ireland's strategy of achieving regional balance. The application form and guidelines are available directly from Enterprise Irelands13 Irish offices.

See www.enterprise-ireland.com/Contact/IrishOffices for contact details of your nearest Enterprise Ireland regional office. Completed applications must be marked "CEC Application" and returned to: Enterprise Ireland Entrepreneurship and Regions Division, 500 Atlantic Avenue, Westpark, Shannon, Co. Clare by **1pm on Friday 29th August 2008**.

TRAINING

Applications for Post Graduate Diploma in Disability Needs Assessment now welcome.

Trinity College Dublin is hosting an innovative one-year, post-graduate diploma in disability needs assessment, designed for those involved with students with disabilities in the education sector. Applications can now be made for the 2008/2009 course, which is the second year that the diploma has been held.

Needs assessment, and subsequent provision of reasonable accommodations is fundamental to providing equity of access to learners with disabilities in all levels of education. This course provides participants with the opportunity to explore the theory surrounding disability and needs assessment; to critically evaluate education and the barriers that arise for learners with disabilities, and it will also equip participants with knowledge and skill in assessment of need. Successful candidates will be awarded a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education, and may move on to the Master in Studies programme.

This Diploma not only develops the knowledge and capacity of individuals who assess need, but through discussion and reflection is fostering progress in the sector as a whole. It is a collaboration between the School of Education in Trinity College, and the Disability Service, and is the first such collaboration.

It involves four modules, with a variety of teaching and learning strategies, including use of WebCT and contact sessions in Trinity College over one weekend per month.

The closing date is the 1st September 2008.

For more information, please contact: Conor Spillane, Continuing Professional Development Division, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. Telephone: (01) 896 129, E-mail: cpdinfo@tcd.ie.

AHEAD –Work Placement Programme

WAM is a work placement programme for graduates with disabilities/specific learning difficulties and are currently seeking applications for this round in 2008, with placements due to start in September (to be confirmed). Some of the companies providing placements on this years programme are: Abbott Ireland, IBM, Microsoft, Civil Service.

For further information please contact : Fiona Ring, WAM Project Worker, 01 278 9325, fiona.ring@ahead.ie. More details can be found on the website: www.ahead.ie

GENERAL NEWS

New DFI Staff members

DFI is happy to welcome two new members of staff who have recently joined the team.

Eleanor Reece has been appointed as a new member of the Support Staff team.

Dermot O'Donnell has joined the team as a Support Officer – Support for Organisations.

We wish Eleanor and Dermot well with DFI.

MS Ireland Information Day

Date for your Diary: Neurological Information Day for Health Care professionals.

This will take place in the Clayton Hotel on Friday the 17th of October 2008.

For further information from MS Ireland, Western Regional Office phone 091862478 or email western@ms-society.ie

A New Standard For Disability in Business

Rehab & EIQA Announce the ABLE Award for Business Excellence:

A new standard for disability was launched by Rehab and EIQA. This is the ABLE Business Excellence Award. A joint initiative by Rehab and the Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA), this award sets the standard for Irish companies in how they interact with people with disabilities, whether they are employees or customers of a company.

This standard will be a key tool for businesses to demonstrate their commitment and achievement as employers of, and providers of services to, people with disabilities. It is a mark of quality and distinction, and is backed by the Rehab Group, the largest disability organisation in the country, and EIQA, the national quality association. ABLE will be the national standard for companies in relation to three key areas – employment and career, built environment and customer services.

The ABLE award will ensure people with a disability can be confident that they can relate easily to a company that has been awarded the standard. Any company, regardless of its size, which aspires to excellence in its dealings with people with disability, can apply for the award.

Companies can register their interest on www.able.ie. Following the submission of a self-assessment form, a site assessment will be arranged and carried out by ABLE representatives

after which the company will receive their result and feedback in the form of a report. The company will then be awarded the ABLE Business Excellence Award. Each company's assessment is followed by feedback which provides key learnings for further development.

.Businesses can apply for the ABLE Business Excellence Award at any time and the process takes approximately 12 weeks from application to assessment. The award year runs from October to October, with awards presented for the successful applicants at an annual presentation ceremony in conjunction with EIQA.

Hiking for people with disabilities

Date 29th July 2008 **Venue** The Kerry Way

On Sat 19th and Tues 29th July Nathan Kingerlee of www.outdoorsireland.com is organising a gentle days hiking along the Kerry Way for Visually Impaired People, Deaf People and People with Mobility Problems.

Exploring forest trails, glaciated valleys and mountain paths is accessible to everyone and is one of the best ways of keeping fit and healthy as well as experiencing a wonderful sense of wellbeing.

The days hiking, based in Killorglin, Kerry, will take a leisurely pace through a thick pine forest, along an ancient coach trail and down a quiet country road to the warm sand dunes and crashing surf of Rossbeigh Beach. Qualified, experienced guides will accompany you throughout the day and share with you some of the local history and legends.

The hike is suitable for all abilities and levels of walking speed. Four wheel drive backup will be available if anyone decides part-way through the day they have had enough. Transport will be provided from both Killarney and Killorglin. For more details contact Nathan Kingerlee on info@outdoorsireland.com or +353 (0) 86 860 45 63.

The First Annual National Fundraising Awards In Ireland Is Now Open For Nominations.

Presented by The Wheel and Fundraising Ireland, in association with the Vodafone Ireland Foundation, the awards aim to recognise exceptional achievement in Ireland's fundraising community.

The Fundraiser of the Year Award will be offered to the fundraising professional who, in the view of their colleagues or peers, has shown consistent excellence and best practice in achieving high quality fundraising through either their own efforts or their vision and strategy.

The Best Community Fundraiser Award is for any volunteer who has made a major contribution to fundraising, over a long period, for one or more organisations.

The Fundraising Campaign of the Year Award will go to the campaign that best demonstrates significant success and innovation in fundraising.

Read more about the criteria for each category and nominate online www.fundraisingawards.ie.

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

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

National Association for Deaf People - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail: nad@iol.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



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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