



Disability Federation of Ireland

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

NEWSLETTER JULY 2010

More cuts to services as Government plan to protect the NDS long overdue.

We are now witnessing the effects of cumulative cuts and “adjustments” as they now directly impact on services. It is clear that we are now at a point where further cuts can mean only one thing, a reduction in services to people with disabilities.

To date some cuts were communicated and planned while others are simply being imposed without any indication or planning. On the other hand commitments such as the Value for Money and Policy Review and the NDS Protection Plan are not in place. Cutting spending without regard for stated Government disability policy continues to be the predominant practice.

Before this year is out there will have been needless loss of vital services to disabled people unless the HSE takes seriously its responsibility to protect and prioritise services to this group. The urgent publication of the Government’s plan to protect the NDS is well overdue and badly needed. We welcome the commitment of Minister Carey to advance this with his Cabinet colleagues but it needs to happen urgently.

John Dolan
Chief Executive Officer



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DFI BOARD AND NATIONAL COUNCIL

New DFI Board Members

DFI welcomes Joe Lynch, Chief Executive of Parkinson's Association, and John O'Sullivan Enable Ireland as new members of the Board. George Kennedy, Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland who had been co-opted to the Board in January and Anne Winslow MS Ireland, whose three year term had come to an end and was open to rotation, were also elected at DFI's AGM on the 14th May 2010.

New Member Organisations

DFI would like to welcome S.T.E.E.R Ireland Ltd. (Support Training Education Employment Research) as new members of the Federation. S.T.E.E.R. was established to develop a range of mental health services based upon the Recovery model approach to mental health and to promote a human rights agenda in mental health services. They seek to alleviate poverty and social exclusion of their client groups and to advance service users involvement within the mental health environment. www.steementalhealth.com

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Charities Act 2009 – Further aspects of Act to be commenced - Minister Carey announces steps to protect charity trustees

Pat Carey T.D., Minister of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, who has responsibility for the regulation of charities, is pleased to announce that he will be commencing two further sections of the Charities Act 2009 Section 4 and Section 90.

Minister Carey is very conscious of the great good work carried out by many people who are charity trustees. Many dedicated people give of their time and energy in this way, and they are pivotal to the success of Ireland's charities sector. However, there have been concerns over the current legal position in Ireland that charity trustees may in certain circumstances be personally liable for losses accruing to charities through their actions. This may serve to discourage persons from acting as charity trustees, so I am anxious to allay any such fears.

The commencement of Section 90 of the Charities Act, will grant power to the courts, in the event of proceedings against a charity trustee, to grant relief to such trustees from personal liability for breach of trust, where it appears to the relevant court that the trustee acted honestly and reasonably.

Minister Carey stated his hope that these safeguards will reassure those who are currently acting as charity trustees and will encourage more people to take on this valuable and important work.

The Minister also commenced section 4 of the Act, which will allow me to make regulations under the Act as we move towards the introduction of the new regulatory framework for charities in Ireland."

A new guide "Communities and Business Working Together"

The guide, published by non profit organisation Business in the Community Ireland and sponsored by Diageo Ireland and Ulster Bank, aims to help community and voluntary groups work with businesses in Ireland to achieve sustainable community development. This Guide was launched by Pat Carey T.D., Minister of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs

A key objective of the guide is to persuade community and voluntary groups to interpret their needs in terms of business skills, manpower and volunteering time rather than cash. The guide also provides a step by step process that community and voluntary groups can adopt when approaching businesses.

Case studies featured in the guide include

- Aviva and St Francis Nursing Home

- BT Ireland, Cpl and EPIC
- Deloitte and Merchants Quay Ireland
- Diageo Ireland, the Arthur Guinness Fund and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland
- 02 and Irish Autism Action
- Janssen and Special Olympics Munster
- Ulster Bank and the MoneySense for Schools Programme

Irish Charities Tax Reform (ICTR) to launch series of online educational seminars on the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising

ICTR will be launching a series of free, online educational seminars for the charity sector throughout 2010 that aim to highlight the contents of The Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

The Fundraising Principles are a set of overarching principles and guidelines for fundraising in Ireland, applying to charities that fundraise from the public. They were established in 2008 following a feasibility study that explored how the operational aspects of charitable fundraising could be regulated through Codes of Practice in Ireland.

Over the next 12 months, ICTR will reach out to more than 2,000 fundraising organisations in Ireland with charitable tax exemption status through a series of free, online webinars, targeting the 75-80 larger charities from June to August 2010. They will then commence a second and third phase that will target 400 mid-sized and 1,520 smaller charities respectively.

The objective with this series is to inform the sector about the contents of these Fundraising Principles and how they are best applied within an organisation. ICTR will be inviting individuals employed in the charity sector, particularly CEO's, CFO's and those who are responsible for fundraising to participate in this series and to take a leadership role in applying the Fundraising Principles within their organisation.

By Autumn 2010, an Independent Monitoring Group will be established to pro-actively monitor the usage and adherence to the Fundraising Principles and to deal with complaints made by members of the public. Therefore, ICTR encourage you to participate and take the first step in learning how to put appropriate systems in place within your organisation that will ensure strong ethical practices and standards. For further information on ICTR see <http://www.charitytaxreform.com>

Research on the Impact of the Charities Act 2009 On Community and Voluntary Organisations

The new charities legislation was enacted on 28 February 2009. Sections 4 which will allow the Minister to make regulations under the Act, Section 90 will grant power to the courts, in the event of proceedings against a charity trustee, to grant relief to such trustees from personal liability for breach of trust, where it appears to the relevant court that the trustee acted honestly and reasonably and Section 99 regarding the sale of Mass cards. It is expected that the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (renamed in May by the Taoiseach as Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) will sign commencement orders at various stages over the next 24 months to put the Act into effect.

For the first time, the Act will introduce an integrated system of registration, regulation and supervision for all charities based in Ireland. The new legislation will introduce mandatory registration of all charities.

A Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) will be established on order from the Minister. The CRA will be responsible for the Register of Charities. Many in the sector welcome the new regulations for transparency and accountability reasons, while others see it as more costly red tape in economic times when many organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

Masters Student Research on the Impact of the Charities Act 2009

Don Lucey, a Masters student in Community and Voluntary Management at All Hallows College Dublin, is currently conducting research on the **impact of the Charities Act 2009** on community and voluntary organisations. The findings of the research will help inform the sector how to adapt to the new legislation.

Don is inviting feedback from managers within the sector by means of a short online survey, which can be taken here: [Charities legislation impact survey](#)

Using Complaints to Compliment Change

During the last few months DFI has facilitated two training sessions for Complaints officers from Voluntary organisations that may have obligations under Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 regarding the establishment of complaints procedures. Good practice and policy dictate that organisations have both a complaints policy and a designated person to manage the complaints procedure.

Last month in the newsletter we looked at consultation with and participation of service users as good practice tools for service development and delivery. This month we look at Complaints as a compliment to consultation and the participants of service users. From this perspective there is another side to complaints made to an organisation, about their behavior, their services or their policies. How does an organisation receive these complaints? Do we receive them defensively with outrage and anger or can we view complaints as a first step towards the alignment with a service user's needs and an opportunity to move forward together towards a more streamlined and mainstream method of service provision?

A complaint is really an opinion, often irate, voiced from someone with whom we have not communicated adequately. We have not heard their voice and they in turn may not have heard ours. How do we redress this? Approaching the complaints procedure as an opportunity to hear the concerns of the service user and then to reflect on organisational policy and practices can give us clearer indications of where

policies need to change and in what direction. They also give us insight into the clarity of our focus on the needs of service users. Responding positively to a complainant and addressing their concern together can result in a new and better way of doing our business. It can result in positive outcomes for both the organisation and the service user and allow us to explore new ways of moving forward together with better and clearer services that meet the needs of our members and services user. It is time to take the mature attitude to complaints and make them work for us and we move positively into new and better ways of doing our business together.

Funding: Are You Losing Out?

A recent survey found that fundraising is now the number one priority for 84 % of all community, voluntary and charitable organisations.*

Tracking down funding opportunities is, however, very labour-intensive and time consuming and therefore expensive!

Why don't you ask the experts to do it for you? Fundingpoint is Ireland's most comprehensive and up-to-date source of funding information for community, voluntary and charitable organisations. It places details of over 700 funding schemes at your fingertip, including:

National Government (statutory) funding

Local Government grants

European Union funding

Trusts and charitable foundations grants

Fundingpoint also features free advice and guidance on every aspect of fundraising and a number of innovative tracking tools that will ensure that you will never again miss an application deadline!

Visit: wheel.ie to find out more, or here to [subscribe](#).

* Survey: Pressing issues impacting on Ireland's Not for Profit Sector, Grant Thornton, 2010

HEALTH

Value for Money and Policy Review

As well as providing a DFI information brief about the Review process itself, DFI is preparing an Executive Summary of its position paper on Value for Money (VfM) & Policy Review. These will be posted on www.disability-federation.ie shortly.

The position paper (already on the website) highlights the Review's focus on the over-riding policy objective that should drive spending under the HSE's Disability Services Programme, namely, supporting people with disabilities to live a full life in their community. The implications of a funding allocation system guided by that objective are analysed. The weaknesses in the information currently available to assess performance are flagged as a particular concern. That weakness is especially serious regarding physical, sensory and neurological disabilities since counts of residential or day places are not necessarily the main services provided. This information gap underlines the importance of voluntary disability organisations ensuring that their contracts with the HSE, and their inputs to the databases managed by the HRB, properly reflect their contribution towards the provision of valued services and policy objectives.

VfM presentations at a number of regional meetings of member organisations reiterated the message that enabling people to access mainstream opportunities is a valuable contribution. For example organisations play a useful 'broker' role when they improve people's access to primary care health services. Moreover organisations are well placed to consult with people with disabilities to find out what supports and access are most important to them. At the same time it was stressed that organisations need to keep track of this work if they are to get funding for it.

During the summer DFI will continue to keep people informed about developments in the Review and a further seminar is being planned for the autumn.

Service Level and Grant Aid Agreements

DFI has received limited feedback from member organisations about negotiating contracts with the HSE for 2010. In some areas contracts have been signed. But the situation very much depends on the HSE area. So too does the level of detail required of a given organisation. If an organisation has encountered problems about which DFI might be able to assist, please contact lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie.

In view of the likelihood of the HSE progressively expecting more detailed information in the contracts, for example about specific services and outputs, and also the uncertainty about cutbacks, organisations will no doubt be preparing for a more stringent environment in the future. Information about the outcomes for people with disabilities from service provision, on the one hand, and information about cost / service relationships, on the other hand can be expected to prove very useful.

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies' Survey

Shows Massive Cuts in Funding for Intellectual Disability Services

A recent survey of its member organisations by the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies identified over-reduction in salaries of €4.2m and over-deduction in other value for money cuts of €11.4m, giving a total over deduction by the HSE in funding for services to people with intellectual disability in 2010 of €15.6m. These figures when added to the agreed funding reductions equate to an overall reduction of in excess of 4% or twice what had been agreed with the HSE.

In the report it is noted that during discussions which the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies had with the HSE in late 2009 and early 2010, reductions in the funding allocations to take account of the public sector pay reductions, in all organisations, plus a value for money cut of 2%, were agreed. Service Providers noted that funding cuts of this size would not be without their challenge given that organisations have suffered significant value for money cuts over the past few years. However, given the extent of the national macroeconomic difficulties, affiliated organisations agreed to take these cuts and through further efficiencies and

innovative work practices endeavour to maintain the quality of services provided to people with intellectual disability.

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies is very concerned that behind these figures are people with disabilities and their families who are suffering serious hardship and disruption as a consequence. Already, families in many parts of the country, including Limerick, Galway and Meath etc, are being informed of immediate service reductions.

In addition, the strict implementation of the Moratorium on Recruitment of front line staff is having a devastating impact on the ground. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies there is already clear evidence of people moving into larger group settings and this is neither a safe nor an appropriate manner in which to treat vulnerable citizens. There is a critical point beyond which services cannot go in terms of quality and safety and this point has now been reached.

NAI launch report "The Future for Neurological Conditions in Ireland"

"The Future for Neurological Conditions in Ireland: A Challenge for Healthcare; an Opportunity for Change, An essential guide to neurological care in our health services", a report published by NAI, the Neurological Alliance of Ireland, was launched in Dublin on Tuesday, 29th June 2010 by the Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney TD, who has also contributed the foreword to the report.

Ireland is facing a crisis in neurological care, according to this landmark report published by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI), the national umbrella group of over 30 charities working in the neurological field.

Over 700,000 Irish people, 17% of the population, are living with neurological conditions such as stroke, epilepsy, acquired brain injury, multiple sclerosis, dementia and Parkinson's disease. This report, sees leading neurospecialists, academics and health organisations unite to provide an essential guide to neurological care in our health system. It highlights that immediate steps are needed

now to address decades of underinvestment and the ongoing lack of planning in this area.

The launch of the report marks the start of **VOTE FOR THINKING AHEAD**, a nationwide campaign by the NAI and its member charities, calling on the HSE, to put in place a National Programme for Neurological Care which will require the HSE to publish and implement its own recommendations for investing in and improving services for people with neurological conditions.

Members of the public are encouraged to join the campaign by signing the petition on www.nai.ie

A copy of the full report and more information is available on the NAI website, www.nai.ie or for more information, phone 01-8724120 or email naiireland@eircom.net.

The Neurological Alliance of Ireland, (NAI) is the umbrella group for organisations working with people with neurological conditions.

Forum of End of Life in Ireland

Draft Action Plan Published April 2010.

The End of Life Forum was launched in 2009 to promote a national conversation on dying, death and bereavement, find out what the key issues are and to explore the concerns of the public. Many disability organisations, including DFI made presentations to the forum on issues that are of concern. The Forum also held public meetings throughout the country. As a result of the consultation, Bob Carroll, the Former Director of the National Council on Ageing and Older People drafted a report. The report has resulted in the creation of a Draft Action Plan which the Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) have just published. Both documents can be downloaded from www.endoflife.ie or www.hospice-foundation.ie. Once the Draft Action Plan is finalised, it will help to guide the work of the new National Council of the Forum on End of Life in Ireland, which is being established under the chairmanship of Justice Catherine McGuinness.

End of Life Care: New Standards Launched

The Irish Hospice Foundation recently launched “Quality Standards for End of Life Care in Hospitals”. The standards have been developed as part of the Hospitals Friendly Hospitals Programme, a five year national programme initiated by the Irish Hospice Foundation in 2007 in partnership with the HSE and supported by Atlantic Philanthropies. These standards have been developed in partnership with healthcare staff and interested parties including bereaved relatives. They set out a shared vision of the end of life care each person should have and what each hospital should aim to provide. Four words emerged as highly significant in the development of the standards; **Competence, Compassion, Communication, Co-ordination.**

The standards take a life cycle approach in recognition of the OECD report on an integrated public service for Ireland that recommended that *“no population group – children, younger and older adults of working age, older people or people with disabilities – is over looked by society.”*

For further information or to raise any issues regarding End of Life Care for people with disabilities, please contact Joan O’Donnell, Support Officer DFI. To download a copy of the Standards, please visit: www.hospice-foundation.ie. The telephone number is (01) 6793188.

Launch of Informing Families Project Tools for Implementation National Best Practice Guidelines for Informing Families of their Child’s Disability

These guidelines were developed by the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies and launched by the Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney T.D. in December 2007. These guidelines were based on a significant consultation and research process and were widely endorsed by professional bodies, parent and family organisations and educational institutions.

For the past two years the Informing Families Project has embraced the challenge to translate research into practice through a two year pilot implementation of the

guidelines in the Cork Region, across hospital, community and voluntary disability services. The pilot project has been successfully implemented and has been announced as one of the recipients of the Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards 2010.

Through the pilot project in the Cork region a range of valuable tools and materials have been developed which can be used around the country to support the implementation of best practice when informing and supporting families of children with disabilities.

Mr John Moloney, T.D. Minister of State with special responsibility for Mental Health and Disability will launch these valuable tools for supporting best practice on Monday 28 June 2010 in University College Cork

- The Roadmap for Implementation – *Informing Families of their Child's Disability: Report of the Cork Implementation Project*
- A website of information to support parents and professionals developed through the pilot project: www.informingfamilies.ie
- An e-Learning module based on evaluated training materials designed to support professionals who work with families of children with disabilities

Download the guidelines here:

http://www.fedvol.ie/fileupload/File/Informing_Families_Guidelines.pdf

Health Literacy and Health Service Providers

At a recent seminar in Dublin the meaning of 'literacy' in a health context was explored, and information shared about research work in this field, particularly on an EU project in which Ireland is participating. Several voluntary disability organisations attended as well as DFI.

From a disability perspective the research initiatives are welcome. The seminar discussion focussed on the role of health literacy in promoting health equity across society and the empowerment of health service users – two issues already on the disability agenda. A broad definition of health literacy is the ability to access, understand and use information for maintaining good health.

Surveys have shown that about one quarter of Irish people lack basic literacy skills in reading, writing and numeracy, and the percentage is much higher amongst older persons, i.e., where disability is most prevalent. Health literacy depends on general literacy but also is influenced by the context in which health issues arise. For example, common words as well as technical terms can cause difficulties when used in a tense and unfamiliar situation by an intimidating 'expert'.

The importance of health literacy for people with disabilities and their families is underlined when considering the literacy spectrum identified by researchers. The most basic means the ability to understand written instructions, for example, on a medicine bottle; the intermediate level involves the capacity to interact with the GP and others to probe the significance of information being communicated. The highest level involves the ability to navigate and analyse information and manage one's health issues in collaboration with others.

A feature of research in the area is increasing attention to the fact that health literacy really is a two-sided coin. The focus is not only on the user of health-related services, but also on the providers. Efforts to include this dimension into the training of pharmacy and medical students were described at the seminar. In addition NALA and the HSE highlighted their joint report, *Literacy Audit for Healthcare Settings*. This document gives guidance on literacy friendly settings, such as the value of relevant visuals and good oral communication; it then poses questions by which an organisation providing health care settings can audit itself.

Speakers at the seminar viewed health literacy as an asset, one that merits investment both to enhance the well being of people and the effectiveness of the health system. To contact NALA, visit: literacy@nala.ie

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016

Meeting between the Disability Stakeholder Sub-group for Department of Social Protection and the Department of Social Protection June 2010

The Disability Stakeholder Sub-Group (DSG) for the Department of Social Protection (DSP) (formally the Department of Social and Family Affairs) comprises representatives from six umbrella groups. These are the Disability Federation of Ireland, Federation of Voluntary Bodies, Inclusion Ireland, People with Disabilities in Ireland, Not for Profit Business Association and the Mental Health Coalition. The group meets six times a year and at least twice with Senior Department officials. The last meeting between the DSG Subgroup and Department officials took place on Wednesday 16th June 2010. The following provides a synopsis of some of the issues that were discussed.

Transfer of Functions

There has been considerable transfer of functions as a result of the reshuffle of Government Departments. The Social Inclusion Division and Family Affairs Unit have transferred from the DSP to the new Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs (CEGA). Rural Affairs has moved over to the DSP. The areas of Equality and Diversity have also transferred from the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform (DJELR) to CEGA.

The responsibility for all FÁS functions has transferred to the Department of Education & Skills (DES). This is an interim arrangement until the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2010, which is currently going through the Oireachtas, will give the Minister for Social Protection the authority for FÁS Employment Services and the community programmes when they transfer to DSP. The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) and the Community Support Programme (CSP) will also transfer from CEGA to DSP.

It is expected that the FÁS functions will not transfer to DSP until the end of this year. Carers are not affected by the change in functions.

Disability Sectoral Plan

At a recent meeting of the Senior Official's Group, it was agreed that Departments will report bi-annually on the basis of responsibilities under the Sectoral Plans so that all areas, previously reported on, will continue to be included. It was agreed that DSP will base the bi-annual progress report on the draft Sectoral Plan 2010-2012.

In the context of the review of the Disability Act 2005, it is likely that CEGA will have to develop a Sectoral Plan. The Department of Education & Skills will most likely have a new Plan and amendments will need to be discussed at national level for a new plan in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation.

The DSG subgroup suggested that the Comprehensive Employment Strategy needs to be fully developed and the Department should take a greater role in this. The subgroup welcomed the move of employment (FÁS) to the DSP. Those Departments, such as Dept of Communications and Marine, should still retain a Sectoral Plan, given their mainstreaming function to disability. The Department responded that this should be made clearer, by the publication of the Review of Disability Act, when there is a greater understanding of the remit of each Department.

Disability Activation Project (DAP)

Sonya Felton (Not for Profit Business Association) has been elected the DSG subgroup representative on the local Implementation team for the Disability Activation Project. Previously there has been no representative for the C&V Sector. The pilot project is limited to the area of the midlands for the moment.

The DSG sub-group will work with their local contacts to promote the project and to refer suitable participants for the project. It was recognised that there is a national policy discourse that needs to be discussed at a higher level and the DSG sub-group is keen to engage in any discussions on the development of this. It is hoped that a National Committee will be developed in the future.

Partial Capacity Pilot Project

Provision for a Partial Capacity Payment did not appear in the current Bill but it is hoped this will be taken as a Committee stage amendment. Discussions on operational requirements of a pilot project will take place with representatives from various scheme areas. The Department hopes that the pilot project will be up and running by the end of the year. The DSG subgroup looks forward to the opportunity to feed into the regulations for the Pilot scheme. More information on the project is found in the May edition of the DFI newsletter.

Disability Allowance Review

The draft review was subjected to an independent quality assurance assessment in April. Comments made by the consultant are being considered by the Department at present. It is expected that the review will be published in mid-July, subject to the Minister's approval.

The DSG subgroup will engage with the Department in the follow up to the report in terms of the recommendations.

Advocacy

The meeting was briefed on the evaluation of the community advocacy projects. The consultation process with the projects on the findings of the evaluation is taking place shortly. Following the consultation, the report will be submitted to the Board of the Citizens Information Board (CIB) for approval and, if approved, the Board will furnish the report to the Minister, hopefully in September.

The DSG subgroup stressed the need for the Personal Advocacy Service (PAS) to be progressed as part of any re-structuring of the advocacy projects. There is an opportunity, through the review, to introduce a Personal Advocacy Service, as budgetary constraints were, in the past, given as a reason for the lack of progress on this issue. Concerns were also raised by the subgroup regarding the availability of funding for advocacy. These issues are to be addressed by the CIB at the next stage of the process. The evaluation of the advocacy projects has been a priority to date.

If you have any queries with regard to this committee, please do not hesitate to contact Louise Mc Cann (DFI Support Officer) secretary to the group. Her contact details are 01 4250126 or e-mail louisemccann@disability-federation.ie

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Transfer of Functions and Department's new title Department of Social Protection (DSP)

Arising from the recent changes in the responsibilities of some Government Departments, the title of the Department of Social & Family Affairs has now changed. The new name of the Department is now the Department of Social Protection or An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí in Irish, with effect from 2nd May 2010.

The Department will take over responsibility for five programmes from other Departments and Agencies, namely:

- The Rural Social Scheme and Community Support Programme both from the Department of Community, Equality & Gaelteacht Affairs;
- The Community Employment Programme and Employment Services Programme both from FÁS; and
- The Redundancy & Insolvency Programme for the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Innovation.

These programmes will transfer in on a phased basis between now and 1st January 2011 to allow time for the necessary consultation and other preparations.

The Family Affairs and Social Inclusion areas of the old Department transfer to the new Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, with effect from 1st May 2010.

Application Forms and Information Leaflets are currently being updated with the new name and these will be published on www.welfare.ie when updating is complete.

The website address will remain as www.welfare.ie

NCBI has created an easy to read guide to exercising your right of access to information and services

People with disabilities have a legal right to access buildings, information and services. The Disability Act 2005 and the Equal Status Act 2000 mandate accessibility of services delivered to the general public. These legal rights are often denied and doing something about it can be a daunting and difficult task for the person discriminated against. To make it easier, NCBI has created an easy to read guide to exercising your right of access to information and services. It leads the person step-by-step through the process of requesting access to buildings, information (online and in print) and services, making a complaint if it is denied and, if necessary, taking it further until they get satisfaction. Although aimed primarily at people with vision impairments, much of the guidance applies equally to persons with any disability.

There is a short article about the guide on the CFIT website at

<http://www.cfit.ie/news-and-commentary-archive/449-encouraging-demands/> .

The full guide is on the NCBI website at <http://www.ncbi.ie/living/exercising-your-rights/buildings-services-info/> .

For further information please contact: Dr. Mark Magennis

Director of the Centre for Inclusive Technology (CFIT) NCBI (National Council for the Blind of Ireland) Whitworth Road, Dublin 9, Republic of Ireland

Tel: +353 (0)1 882 1956 www.cfit.ie

European Citizens Initiative

DFI staff recently attended a conference on the European Citizens Initiative in Brussels on the invitation by North West regional MEP Marian Harkin. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is one of the major innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon. Its aim is to increase direct democracy in the European Union (EU). The initiative enables one million EU citizens, who are nationals of a significant number of Member States, to call directly on the European Commission to bring forward an initiative of interest to them in an area of EU competence.

The subject of the citizens' initiative must function within the boundaries of the existing European treaties and the powers of the European Commission.

For more information link to www.citizens-initiative.eu or contact MEP Marian Harkin at marian@marianharkin.com

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme

An Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme has been announced by Taoiseach Brian Cowen, designed at helping employers “create jobs and get people back to work.”

This scheme exempts employers from paying their share of PRSI for 12 months, which could save the company almost €3,000, according to the Taoiseach.

The scheme, aimed at taking people off the Live Register, was originally announced in last December's Budget. Key scheme criteria include that:

- The employee concerned must have been on the Live-Register (Unemployed) for at least 6 months;
- The job must be full-time and must be new and additional – employers will not be allowed to substitute existing employees to avail of the scheme;
- The employer will be required to furnish an up-to-date Tax Clearance Certificate;
- Employers will be limited to a maximum participation rate of 5% of their existing workforce or, for smaller companies, a maximum of 5 new jobs;
- The job must last for 6 months or more. If it does not the PRSI exempt amounts will have to be repaid by the employer.

Full details of the **Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme** are available at www.welfare.ie and from the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme section,

Department of Social Protection, Floor 2, Shannon Lodge, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim at LoCall 1890 927 999 from Monday 21 June 2010

Research into Mainstreaming in Primary Education

Dr Sheelah Flatman Watson, an NDA scholar, recently gave a presentation on research undertaken for her Phd studies. The work focussed on schools within the Kildare / Dublin area and on children with an intellectual or pervasive developmental disability. School principals, teachers and parents were contacted in the study.

A key finding concerned the difficulty many families had in finding a place for their child, and the lack of appropriate information and guidance about placements. Dr Flatman Watson also found evidence of concerns about the adequacy of the training of teachers. She concluded that equality of access to and participation in inclusive education environments and parents' right to choose remain aspirational for many. A number of recommendations to the educational and health authorities were designed to enable mainstreaming in practice. For further information please phone the NDA on 01-6080400

Training Event:

“Quality in Provision of Health and Social Services”

When: 20-21 September, 2010

Where: The Royal Marine Hotel, Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin

Phone: 01-230-0030

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland in association with CARF International (www.carf.org) are delighted to inform you of a training event that provides information on how the CARF Accreditation process can assist with the assurance of a best practice approach to the provision of services, and the promotion of quality in the provision of services to persons served.

This is an international training event, which for only the second time will be hosted in Ireland. It is a two day event, and is facilitated by Ms Chris McDonell, Managing

Director, Medical Rehabilitation with CARF International. Come and learn more about the CARF accreditation and survey processes, including a full review of the 2010 CARF standards. This comprehensive training session will highlight examples of organisational conformance to the standards as well as effective business management and service-delivery practices.

Session topics include:

- Overview of the CARF accreditation process
- Examination of the value of accreditation as an effective business management strategy
- Prepare for a successful CARF survey
- Program standards including: Inpatient, Stroke, Brain Injury, Pain, Outpatient, Spinal Cord, Amputation, Pediatrics

Contact

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GENERAL NEWS

A Vision for Change Monitoring Group

Have published *A Vision for Change* – the Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy

Fourth Annual Report on implementation 2009 June 2010

This is the first report of the Second Independent Monitoring Group (IMG) for *A Vision for Change* (AVFC) which was appointed in June 2009

Tender to Develop Sectoral Project to Promote Workplace Equality

The Equality Mainstreaming Unit of the Equality Authority is seeking calls for proposals from National or Regional Organisations and / or Sectoral Representatives and Associations who are interested in mainstreaming an equality perspective in their work and structures. The projects must be concluded by July 2011 and applications should be sent to the Authority to arrive no later than 5:00 pm on Friday 2nd July 2010. For further information please visit <http://www.ictu.ie/equality>

Neurological Information Day

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland are hosting a Neurological Information Day for health care professionals on Friday 10th September 2010 at the Dublin Airport Clarion Hotel, Co Dublin

The focus of the day will be the role of communication in the rehabilitation process for people with progressive neurological conditions. The day is primarily directed at General Practitioners, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Nurses and anyone who has an interest in neurorehabilitation and progressive neurological conditions.

Please [download registration and information forum \(.pdf, 138 KB\)](#) and return with booking deposit to MS Ireland, Western Regional Office, Curragrean, Merlin Park, Galway by Friday 27th August 2010. Contact the [Western Regional Office](#) for further information.

The Big Knit Challenge for Age Action

Are you handy with the knitting needles? Then Age Action desperately needs your help with its campaign to keep older people warm this winter.

The Innocent Big Knit challenge aims to get 80,000 little woolly hats knitted by the public between now and September. These hats will then be modeled by 80,000 little bottles of innocent fruit smoothies and sold in shops nationwide from mid September to early October to raise €20,000 for Age Action. "It is a huge challenge, and we are asking our members and supporters to knit and to organise knitting groups, knitting

circles and knitting coffee mornings to help us,” Said Age Action chief executive Robin Webster. Senator David Norris supporting the initiative added: “I think even a knitting novice like me could produce at least one of these small hats between now and mid September! So people of Ireland, I urge you to do your bit for Age Action’s excellent work and support the innocent Big Knit.”

Ali Gibbons of Innocent said: “Dust off those knitting needles, find a ball of your favorite wool and cast on to help make this year’s Big Knit the biggest ever!”

Hats should be sent before September 10 to,

Ali Gibbons

Innocent, Fruit Towers, 120 Lower Baggot St, Dublin 2

A how-to-knit video and knitting patterns can be found on

www.innocentdrinks.ie/thebigknit

www.try-it.ie

Electronic Assistive Technology Library

Short-term trials, for long-term gain...

Try-It.ie enables professionals and their clients to trial the latest technologies and make informed decisions – supporting independent living and improving quality of life.

“Thanks to the try-it loan bank, we have been able to recommend equipment with confidence having trialled it for a sufficient period of time to know that it will be used and of maximum benefit to the service user. It has also prevented inappropriate prescriptions and thus saved the HSE and Department of Education unnecessary expenditure”. Senior Occupational Therapists, Enable Ireland

Ensure your organisation is part of it.

[Click here](#) for membership details

[Click here](#) to download a PDF of the Try-It leaflet



About DFI

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

Hidden	Intellectual	Mental Health
Physical	Sensory	Emotional

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

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

There are over 120 organisations within membership or as associates of DFI. DFI also works with a growing number of organisations and groups around the country that have a significant disability interest, mainly from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI provides:

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

DFI also supports the broader voluntary and disability sector through its representation of the disability strand with the Community and Voluntary Pillar of the Social Partnership process, as a social partner at the National Economic and Social Forum, Health Board Co-Ordinating Committees and other fora at regional, national and European level. DFI is recognised as a representative on disability issues to a broad range of local, national and regional fora this includes working with the HSE, NESF and Social Partnership.

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, Freephone 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@irishdeafociety.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: 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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