



Disability Federation of Ireland Newsletter

An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector.
Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities
March 2007

“A Lot Planned, All To Do”

DFI: Programme for Government (2007 – 2012)

We are seeking to have three core proposals embedded in each party’s general election manifesto and for inclusion in the next programme for government. These proposals are strongly based around the implementation of the National Disability Strategy (NDS) as recently agreed to by all social partners with Government. They relate to:

- putting necessary day to day cost of living money directly into the pockets of disabled people to finally put them on a par with others.
- shoring up the capacity of voluntary disability organisations to provide their current level of service provision to acceptable standards in preparation for implementing the National Disability Strategy.
- ensuring that the National Disability Strategy is implemented fully in an efficient and effective way.

CONTENTS	
News	2
Funding	6
Events	12
Newsletters	13

The voluntary disability sector urgently needs to have its confidence in Government commitments reassured. The Cost of Disability payment and under funding of current service provision by organisations are issues that have not been sorted in spite of promises going back over a decade.

The NDS, if implemented, will ensure that people with disabilities can openly and freely participate in all aspects of life in Ireland. The day to day lived experience of people with disabilities continues to be one of restriction and exclusion.

The commitments in the NDS will not implement themselves, they need to be driven strongly by the incoming Government. Five years from now we will be half way through “Towards 2016”. We should be half way to effectively implementing the National Disability Strategy. Our three proposals, if committed to, can be progressed in the first week of any new Government.

We have no reason to be hopeful that a new suite of commitments, namely the NDS, will be delivered effectively. The NDS is a massive cross Government and public service project, not only requiring resources, but also change. Experience of the health service reform programme confirms our concern about the capacity of our public administration system to effectively manage major social programmes.

In conclusion, we are seeking to have these proposals headlined in each party’s Manifesto and in the next programme for government:

“Commence progressive implementation of the Cost of Disability payment”.

“Adequately resource current service delivery by voluntary disability organisations”.

“Identify for each year of the programme for government the objectives and outcomes for the National Disability Strategy, having regard to the vision and long term goals for people with disabilities as set out in “Towards 2016”.

Details of the Oireachtas briefing and media launch of “A Lot Planned, All To Do” DFI: Programme for Government (2007 – 2012) are on page 2, along with details of regional events which DFI is supporting on page 3.

John Dolan
CEO

“A Lot Planned, All To Do”

DFI: Programme for Government (2007 – 2012)

Launch

Venue: The Dun Library,
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland,
6 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Date: 28th March

Time: 1.00p.m. *Sharp*

DFI will call for the next agreed programme for Government to include:

“That Government will commence progressive implementation of the Cost of Disability payment”.

“That Government will adequately resource current service delivery by voluntary disability organisations”.

“That Government will identify for each year of the programme for government the objectives and outcomes for the National Disability Strategy, having regard to the vision and long term goals for people with disabilities as set out in “Towards 2016”.

All members of the Oireachteas will be invited to the Launch.

To confirm your attendance please contact:

Mary Redmond

Tel: 01-454 7978

Fax: 01-454 7981

E-mail: maryredmond@disability-federation.ie

DFI AGM

Date: 15th May
Time: 5.30p.m.
Venue: Ashling Hotel,
 Parkgate Street,
 Dublin 8.

DFI Seminar

'Chairs as Effective Leaders'

Date: 15th May 2007
Time: 1.00p.m. - 4.30p.m.
Venue: Ashling Hotel,
 Parkgate Street, Dublin 8.
Cost: €35 per person
 (Non-Members)
 €25 per person
 (Members)
 A light lunch is included

The *Chairs as Effective Leaders* project is an initiative of DFI. The project was set up to ascertain the training and developmental needs of Board members involved with DFI affiliate organisations.

DFI has carried out research into the experiences of our member organisations Chairs. The findings of the research will be presented at the seminar and will be the focus of discussion on the day.

Agenda and further details will follow.

DFI

Regional Election Activity

Please contact the relevant Support Officer for details, their details are on the back page of the Newsletter. Others events are being organised, please contact your local SO for details.

Date: Friday, 20th April 2007
 Time: 11.00 – 1.00
 Venue: Clarion Hotel, Clarion Road, Ballinodan,
 Sligo

The format of this will be a Q & A Session. In order to achieve this type of format, questions are required beforehand.

Contact: Marcus Hufsky.

Date: Friday, 27th April 2007
 Time: 11.00 – 1.00
 Venue: Clanree Hotel, Derry Road, Letterkenny,
 Co. Donegal

The format of this will be a Q & A Session with candidates for the General Election. In order to achieve this type of format, questions are required beforehand.

Contact: Marcus Hufsky.

Date: 30th March 2007
 Time: TBA
 Venue: Offaly Exhibition & Research Centre, Bury
 Quay, Tullamore, co Offaly

Q & A Session with election candidates from Laois / Offaly Constituency. Questions to be submitted beforehand and chaired by DFI on the day. Short presentation of DFI Manifesto will precede the Q & A session.

Contact: Maria Fox.

Date: Monday 2nd April 2007
 Time: 9.30 – 1.30.
 Venue: DFI Offices, Dublin.
 A capacity building event 'Influencing Policy: Lobbying and Campaigning'.
 Contact: Louise McCann.

Date: TBA
 Venue: Gallonray House, Cootehill, Co Cavan
 A briefing with election candidates. Disability organisations and candidates are invited to send representatives to present issues.
 Contact: Joan O'Donnell.

Independent Needs Assessment

The Department of Health and Children (DoHC)

recently hosted two public consultative meetings regarding the Draft Standards for the Independent Needs Assessments (INA) under Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005. DFI were allocated a number of places at these meetings and we were delighted at the level of interest and response from our members in attending the meetings. We are particularly grateful to delegates who attended, at short notice, on the Service Users day rather than on the Service Providers day. The development of the Standards for the INA is well underway and should be finalised in April in advance of the roll out of the Independent Needs Assessment for under 5s on June 1st next. The actual process and protocols for the Assessment have yet to be developed and circulated. We will keep you informed as we learn more details.

For further information please contact: Maria Fox, Support Officer. Contact details on back page.

DoHC Review of the Operation of the Mental Health Act 2001

DFI would encourage your organisation to contribute to this Review. Please inform Maria Fox if your organisation intends to make a submission to this Review, and if possible please forward a copy of any such submission. DFI intends to write to the DoHC outlining our role in this regard and making particular reference to the input and importance of the Voluntary Mental Health Sector.

For further information please contact, Maria Fox, Support Officer. Contact details on back page of the newsletter.

Accommodation Needs Research Project

The study is a joint venture between Comhairle and DFI. The focus is on the accommodation needs of people with disabilities in an evolving policy context.

Focus groups are being organised as part of the research methodology. The focus groups will provide an opportunity for direct interaction between the research and the study target group.

The objectives are to:

- Provide an opportunity for focused consultation

with selected stakeholders

- Ascertain the views of people with disabilities and the organisation that work with them on how their accommodation needs are being met
- Ascertain the views of participants on the adequacy of supports necessary for independent living
- Identify potential areas for change for inclusion in the report.

A range of voluntary / community organisations will be invited to participate in the focus groups. These will include organisations working with people with mental health difficulties, intellectual disabilities, physical / sensory disabilities, acquired brain injury as well as people with disabilities themselves and their carers.

The emphasis in the focus groups discussions will be on getting participants' actual experiences and perceptions as distinct from broader generalisation.

For information on these Focus Groups or on the project please contact Martin Naughton, Support Officer, contact details on back page or

Joanne McCarthy, Tel: 01-454 7978, email: joannemcarthy@disability-federation.ie

National Action Plan for Social Inclusion

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 – 2016 (NAPS) was launched by Government on February 20th 2007.

In the foreword to the Plan, Government notes that despite the economic success enjoyed by the country over the past decade Ireland continues to face the challenge of tackling poverty and social exclusion. The NAPS using a lifecycle framework that addresses children, people of working age, older people and people with disabilities, sets out a wide-ranging and comprehensive programme of action to assist those who continue to be socially excluded from the greatly improved living standards and opportunities that the majority of us enjoy.

The Plan identifies a wide range of targets and interventions, as well as identifying a number of high level strategic goals in certain key priority areas in order to achieve the overall objective of reducing consistent poverty. These targeted ac-

tions and interventions are designed to mobilise resources to address longstanding and serious social deficits. Both this Plan and the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 (NDP), *'Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All'*, highlights these high level goals which are aimed at making a decisive impact on poverty.

They focus on:

- Ensuring that children reach their true potential
- Supporting working age people and people with disabilities, through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation
- Providing the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high quality standard of living
- Building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital

Government has stated that it recognises that the challenge is now delivery. However, it is committed to achieving the targets set out in the NAPS. Taken together with the NDP and *'Towards 2016'*, Government believes that it represents a strategy that will deliver real change for those most vulnerable in Irish society.

The NAPS is available on www.socialinclusion.ie

DFI Information Seminar on Charities Legislation

On 8th February DFI held an Information Seminar, *'Charities Legislation – Implications for Organisations'*. The purpose of the Seminar was to inform organisations of the content of the General Scheme for Charities Regulation Bill 2006, and the implications for voluntary / charitable organisations.

Presentations were made by Ivan Cooper, Director of Advocacy, The Wheel, and Sheila Nordon, Executive Director, Irish Charities Tax Regulation Ltd (ICTRG).

Ivan Cooper gave an introduction to and exploration of the General Scheme for the Charities Regulation Bill 2006. He noted that the aim of this event was to enable organisations to be in a position to decide whether or not the legislation is what is wanted by the sector. He stressed the fact that the Bill is intended to be included in the forthcoming session of the Dáil, that the publication is imminent, that Government will be aiming for a quick turnaround, and that the sector needs to be in a position to react quickly to the contents of the Bill.

He outlined the Heads of Bill, noting that they provide for a statutory definition of 'charitable purposes', the appointment of a Charity Regulation and Appeals Board, a Register of Charities, the regulation of fundraising, annual returns by charities, formation of consultative panels and the imposition on trustees of a duty-of-care to ensure compliance.

Sheila Nordon examined fundraising and the regulation of fundraising practice, which is also referred to in the Heads of Bill. In terms of operational aspects, fundraising will be regulated by an agreed code of practice, and in the event that this is not successful the Minister will have the right to regulate.

Sheila emphasised that the ICTR have been asked by Government to consult with organisations in relation to how these Codes of Practice should be developed and enforced.

At present, ICTR have engaged with Peter Cassels and Trinity College Dublin to provide independent research in this area.

If you would like further information, please contact:

Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer, Contact details on back page.

Ivan Cooper, The Wheel,

Email: ivan@wheel.ie Tel: 01 4548727, or

Sheila Nordon, ICTR,

Email: ictr@iol.ie , Tel: 01 4002100

Tallaght Opportunities Day

The Opportunities Day for People with Disabilities took place at the Plaza Hotel, Tallaght on Tuesday 20th February. The event was organised by SPLTU (Special Project on Long Term Unemployment), and proved to be a great success. The Lord Mayor of Tallaght, Eamonn Maloney opened the event, and was followed by a short presentation by Maria Finn, Social Inclusion Officer from South Dublin County Council who also sponsored the Day. Over 150 people turned out for the day, many of whom were from the local area. A total of 22 stands were set up to provide information on rights & entitlements, as well as education, training and employment options available to people with disabilities. Feedback from the event noted the helpfulness of being able to find out information about the different kinds of services available.

Combat Poverty Agency Launch of Report and Policy Statement

On 15th February the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Seamus Brennan T.D., launched a Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) Report of the study on *'Poverty and Social Inclusion: Linking Local*

and National Structures'. Launching the Report, the Minister noted that it provided a stronger mandate for National and Local Authorities to work together to ensure that national policies in relation to poverty and social inclusion filter through and are implemented not only at national, but, importantly, at local levels also. He noted that the launch of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) the recently launched National Development Plan (NDP) is specifically dedicated to issues of poverty and social exclusion, targeting €50 bn over the next ten years to eradicate what remains of poverty and social inclusion in Ireland.

This study was commissioned by the CPA, its purpose being to identify potential linkages between national and local levels in the context of the development and implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. It was commissioned to enable the CPA to contribute to an on-going debate on the issue of incorporating social inclusion in the planning processes of both national and local government. The study found that the national partnership process has provided an institutional setting in organisational terms that is responsible for sustaining the principle that tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion are central to general policy formulation and implementation at national level.

In parallel with these efforts at national level, a focus has been brought to bear on public service co-ordination at local level through the setting up of the County / City Development Boards (CDBs) and, in relation to social inclusion the establishment of the CDB Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Measures Group (SIM). The study found that while many of the building blocks necessary to integrate the issue of poverty and social inclusion into both national and local levels are in place, there is, nevertheless, a need to create and reinforce important linkages between local and national levels. These linkages are essential to ensuring that national commitment in relation to poverty and social inclusion are translated into the local implementation framework.

The CPA Policy Statement, '*Linking Local and National Structures: Tackling Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion*', launched at the same time, draws on CPA's ongoing work with local authorities to tackle poverty and social inclusion, a recent research report by Environmental Resources Management, and a European funded project on Mainstreaming Social Inclusion. Noting the need for stronger local to national linkages in tackling poverty and social exclusion, this Statement emphasises the need for an integrated approach to policy development and implementation. This implies co-operation between central and local government, and between agencies at local level. To achieve this, new mechanisms to facilitate local to national links in an ongoing way are needed.

The Minister noted that the Report provides a strong mandate for Local Authorities. Both of

these documents are available on the CPA website, www.combatpoverty.ie.

Health Service Executive Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte National Lottery Grants

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

1. Respite Care Grant Scheme

2. National Lottery Grant Scheme

Applications are invited from groups and organisations involved in the provision of health and personal social services for once off funding for projects which can be completed within a reasonable period of time:

HSE Dublin North East, (comprising Louth, Meath, Cavan / Monaghan and North Dublin)

The Office of the Assistant
National Director,
Health Services Executive,
Dublin North East,
Gilligan House,
Dublin Road,
Dundalk, Co., Louth.
Tel: 042/9381384
www.hse.ie

HSE Dublin Mid Leinster, (comprising South Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath)

The Office of the Assistant
National Director,
Health Services Executive,
Dublin Mid Leinster,
Oak House,
Lime Tree Ave.,
Millennium Park,
Naas, Co. Kildare.
Tel: 045-880433
www.hse.ie

Completed applications must be delivered in sealed envelopes to the relevant address for your area (listed above) and clearly marked "National Lottery Application 2007" to arrive no later than **5 pm, Friday 16th March 2007**.

Community Foundation for Ireland's Small Grants Scheme

The next deadline for the Community Foundation for Ireland's small Grants Scheme is 30th March, 2007. Applications submitted for the November 2006 deadline, are currently under review. Applications are open to Community & Voluntary groups within the Republic of Ireland. The priority areas for the years 2004 - 2006 are to assist projects working to respond to the issue of isolation and to develop a more diverse society.

The Small Grants Scheme will have a particular focus on: Carers, Older people, People Leaving institutions, Sexual minorities, Ethnic Minorities and Families at Risk

Application forms and guidelines are available at www.communityfoundation.ie or by calling 01- 8747354.

SEUPB Consults on Future of INTERREG Funding

Northern Ireland, the border counties of Ireland and parts of western Scotland are set to benefit from a new seven-year €256m (£170m) INTERREG programme made up of €192m in additional funding from the European Union along with national contributions of €64m.

The Special EU Programmes Body, which is responsible for the management of the new programme, published the proposed INTERREG Operational Programme for public consultation. The document contains the rationale for the new programme, its priorities and areas of intervention along with the proposed implementation provisions.

The new programme follows on from the previous INTERREG Programmes which provided more than €182m in funding for Northern Ireland and the border counties since it began. It focuses on two distinct priority areas that include diversifying and developing the economy by encouraging innovation and competitiveness and supporting activities that promote cross-border co-operation.

Shaun Henry, Director of Programmes, Special EU Programmes Body is urging all people and organisations with an interest in future EU INTERREG funding to participate in the consultation and submit their views on the proposed Programme priority areas and implementation plans. The programme offers an opportunity to build on the existing historical, cultural and economic links between Northern Ireland, the UK and Ireland and western Scotland.

"The overall theme of the Programme is to

strengthen and deepen cross-border co-operation with an emphasis on supporting strategic plans and projects which will maximise the impact of the funds throughout the eligible area. The aim, therefore, is to create a more prosperous region and improve access to services to enhance the quality of life for those living in the eligible area." Within the two priority areas, there will be a focus on regional co-operation for enterprise supporting new and existing businesses to promote innovation, encourage competitiveness and create a more sustainable economic base. Support for the development of tourism products that will attract domestic and overseas visitors, collaborative approaches that will promote innovative ways of addressing specific cross-border problems, delivering services within border areas and promoting sustainable communities will also be included along with support for a number of cross-border infrastructure projects in the areas of telecommunications, transport, energy, waste and utilities and the environment.

"Ultimately, this consultation presents a real opportunity for people to have a say about how the new Programme can make a difference to life in their community and I would urge people to respond," Continued Shaun Henry The consultation will run until Monday 30th April 2007. The proposed Operational Programme can be downloaded from the SEUPB website:

www.seupb.org/consultation

Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust Funding

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust is an independent, progressive organisation committed to funding radical change towards a better world.

The JRCT makes grants to individuals and to projects seeking the creation of a peaceful world, political equality and social justice. They chiefly support work undertaken in the UK, Ireland and South Africa.

Funding deadlines in South Africa and Ireland: 19th March 2007 and 20 August 2007.

Further Info available on: <http://www.jrct.org.uk>

'Putting People First' NCBI's five-year strategic plan

Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney, TD, on January 30th unveiled NCBI's five-year strategic plan, which sets out NCBI's goals from 2007 - 2012.

The strategic plan, entitled 'Putting People First', will ensure that NCBI, and the services provided by the organisation remain relevant, responsive and proactive. As the name of the document suggests, one of the key objectives is to place the people with whom NCBI works at the heart of

everything it does.

Minister Harney introduced the report by commending NCBI for continuing to provide much needed services to people who are blind and vision impaired and for reassessing the delivery of these services.

"A very different environment existed in 1931, when the founders of NCBI set out to deliver services to people with vision impairments. Last year, NCBI celebrated its 75th anniversary and while that was an occasion for looking back at the history of the organisation and the milestones that were reached along the way, this is an opportunity to look forward", commented the Minister.

"This strategic plan is a roadmap that will guide NCBI through the next five years and that will give those involved with the organisation – staff, service users, other service providers and funding bodies – a chance to play a collaborative role in its development," continued Minister Harney.

The strategy outlines NCBI's values, which focus on inclusiveness, choice and openness and also sets out six strategic goals, which are closely linked to the overarching vision, which is for people who are blind or vision impaired to have the same opportunities, rights and choices as others to fully participate in society.

Des Kenny, Chief Executive of NCBI highlighted the importance of the inclusive approach set out in the strategy. "This is an essential step in terms of the development, delivery and effectiveness of our services. We have considered how the organisation needs to adapt to ensure that it is able to meet any future challenges and to ensure that the services we deliver fit with the rights, needs and choices of the people that we work with now, as well as in the future."

For more information contact Eoin Dardis on 086 8077759 or email eoin.dardis@ncbi.ie.

A copy of Putting People First – Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012 can be obtained on the website www.ncbi.ie. You can also request a braille, audio or print version by emailing info@ncbi.ie or phone 1850 33 43 53.

Solid Foundations

Good Practice Resource Guide

Solid Foundations is a unique new publication for anyone working in community / voluntary / charitable organisations. It very simply explains between what you must do by law, what you ought to do, and what you could aspire to do, in terms of good practice, when setting up and running your group or organisation.

Solid Foundations is available in hard copy from The Wheel at a cost of €20 + €1.50 postage and packaging.

To members of The Wheel who join or renew their membership in 2007 there is no charge.

For more information and ordering please contact: Danielle:

fax no: 01-4548649

email it to danielle@wheel.ie.

Dynamics of Disability and Social Inclusion in Ireland

This research, by Brenda Gannon and Brian Nolan (2006), published by the Equality Authority and the National Disability Authority, establishes the relationship between the experience of disability over time and its impact in the areas of employment, income and social participation.

Using data from the Living in Ireland Surveys (1995-2001), it explores for the first time how employment, earnings, household income and social participation change as people acquire a disability, when people cease to have a disability and for people who have a disability on an ongoing basis over time.

This report can be downloaded from www.equality.ie or in hard copy by contacting:

Equality Authority
2 Clonmel St. Dublin 2.
Local 1890 245 545

Community and Voluntary Sector Governance

Community and voluntary organisations know that they must demonstrate accountability to funders and other stakeholders, and that they must comply with relevant government regulation.

The Wheel and Boardmatch promoted a series of briefings and training sessions in 2006 on governance for people working in the sector. As well as offering guidance to participants in complying with legal requirements and achieving best practice in governance, the seminars generated some wide-ranging discussions about non-profit governance in Ireland today.

The Wheel and Boardmatch have gathered the content of the seminars together in the form of a report that captures both the learning and the outstanding issues reported by practitioners on the ground.

Download the report (pdf file) from www.wheel.ie/user/content/view/full/3421

IPA Seminar

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) is holding a seminar and poster presentation on Friday, 30th March. Its purpose is:

- To review the state of play with respect to monitoring and evaluation in the health service at present
- To provide practical tools and framework for evaluation, and an opportunity to practice some of them

- To engage the 'whole system' rather than have a fragmented approach
- To begin a network of practice in evaluation across the health service

Also a poster presentation will run alongside the seminar, to showcase examples of good practice in evaluation.

For further information please contact:

Marie Brady, Tel: 01 240 3646, email: mbrady@ipa.ie, Bookings: Caroline Doyle, Institute of Public Administration, 57-61 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4, Tel: 01 2403666, Fax: 01 6689135, Email: cdoyle@ipa.ie, Web: www.ipa.ie

The IPA are also holding a series of Learning and programmes for March and April. Contact Tracey Herman, therman@ipa.ie or Tel: 01-240 3645, web: www.ipa.ie/training.

Free E-learning

The Open University have launched a free e-learning site called Learning Space. This site contains thousands of hours of online training in a number of different topics. These topics include Business, Human Resources, Education, Society, ICT and much more. This is a very new concept from the open source community. The idea behind Open content has been growing for some time now.

So if you are interested in free e-learning material go to: <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/>

If you register (it's free) you will get even more tools to play with.

CARI Training Programme

The CARI Foundation provides specialist psychotherapeutic support to children and families affected by child sexual abuse. CARI runs a number of training and continuing professional development courses for organisations and individuals. Each course is certificated and facilitated by trainers with a wide range of experience and expertise in the field of child protection, child therapy and forensic psychotherapy.

For more information contact:

Majella Ryan (Acting National Clinical Director)
Limerick Office
Tel: 01-6141331
Email: majellaryan@cari.ie
or Carmel Carey (Head of therapy Dublin)
Tel: 01-8308529
Email: carmelcarey@cari.ie

Therapy and Disability Workshop

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is hosting

a workshop. It will be of interest to anyone working in the area of disability such as Psychologists, Therapists, Counsellors, Social Workers, Case Managers etc.

Cost €300, Date 29th & 30th March

Venue: Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, County Kildare.

For further information and booking contact

Miriam, Ph. 01 8338219,

email: peer@iwa.ie

Keith Ph. 087 2787817,

email: keith.oulton@iwa.ie

This event is recognised as a CPD event by the Psychological Society of Ireland.

Social Role Valorisation

Date: **21-23 March 2007**

Venue: At Emmaus Retreat & Conference Centre, Swords Co. Dublin

A three Day Residential Workshop to enable you to reflect upon, reconstruct and renew your personal values and commitments to supporting people who are at risk of being marginalised such as people with a disability, people with mental health problems, those who are aging and those experiencing poverty or homelessness.

The residential nature of this workshop will provide participants with opportunities for ongoing discussion.

For further information on this event please contact:

Ailish Kennedy,

Executive Officer,

NIID, Trinity College Dublin, 4th floor,

3 College Green, Dublin 2

Ph: +353 (0)1 896 3885

Fax: +353 (0)1 677 9131

Email: akenned@tcd.ie

Asthma Attack Card

A new "Asthma Attack Card" has just been launched. This is a credit card sized card designed to inform people with asthma and those around them what to do during an asthma attack.

To request a copy of the card please email office@asthmasociety.ie or telephone 01 8788511. The card can also be printed in PDF format and can be found in the Society Publication section of the <http://www.asthmasociety.ie/> website.

Carers Vote

The Carers Association have a pre-election page on The Carers Association website at 'www.carersireland.com', inviting people to send a standard letter to their local T.D., by email or hard copy. The issues specified in the letter are those in

their policy document, 'Towards a Family Carers Strategy'.

Free phone: 1800 24 07 24

DCU Sport

DCU's Sport For All policy ensures that people with disabilities can use all fitness equipment, programmes and services but more importantly that they are not excluded whilst doing so. Their sport for all culture includes people with physical, mental and hidden disabilities as well as the older adult, children and other special populations.

Equipment and facilities that ensure a sports for All Cultures:

- Wheel chair treadmills
- Erdometers (upper body rowers)
- Pool Hoist
- Accesible changing rooms
- Induction loop
- Facility fully accessible through lifts.

For further information call Club Reception 01 700 5797

Web: www.dcusport.dcu.ie

Dublin Bus Travel Assistance

Dublin Bus has recently set up a travel assistance scheme, offering practical advice on planning a journey using public transport. For instance, if your sight loss is making using public transport difficult, Dublin Bus can provide a trained travel assistant, who will accompany you on your journey for the first few times you use the service. The scheme is available to anyone over the age of 18 who would like to use public transport but needs assistance and information in order to build confidence to use the service independently.

A travel assistant will call to your house, travel with you to the bus stop and accompany you on the outward and return journey. The service will operate on all routes and is provided free of charge.

For information on how to book assistance contact:

Tim Fitzgibbon,
Accessibility Officer,
Business Development,
Dublin Bus,
59 Upper O'Connell Street,
Dublin 1.

Phone 01 7033204 or
email travelassist@dublinbus.ie

VSI International

Volunteer Projects 2007

Voluntary Service International (VSI) has been

organising volunteer programmers for the past forty years, bringing people from different countries to work together on projects that benefit local communities in Ireland. Usually projects last up to three weeks and generally have between six and sixteen volunteer participants.

Recent project partners in Ireland include the Irish Wheelchair Association, the Irish Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, Camphill Communities and St. Michael's House.

The projects are designed to assist and encourage local initiatives that will be continued when the volunteer project is completed. The projects help these groups in their long term work for a more just and peaceful society. The projects also aim to break down barriers between people and to develop international understanding.

Planning for the 2007 volunteer programme is currently underway and VSI is very interested in working with organisations to assist in any projects that are planned.

For further information please contact:

Helen Walmsley, VSI,
Tel: 01 855 1011,
email: vsi@iol.ie

Citizens Information Board Training Calendar

The Citizens Information Board has just released their National Calendar of Training Events, March—June 2007. This calendar of events includes 50 training events, including a number of new courses taking place throughout the country in the period March to June 2007. Check the Citizens Information Board website www.citizensinformation.ie for details and information on all Citizens Information Board services.

Respite Research

Are you or a friend or family member living with any of the following: Friedreichs Ataxia, Hydrocephalus, Muscular Dystrophy, Spina Bifida?

The HSE is funding research to be carried out jointly by three voluntary organizations; Friedreichs Ataxia Society of Ireland (FASI), Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (MDI) and the Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IASBAH). This research aims to help establish the level of need for centre based respite care among people living with the conditions listed above.

Focus groups are going to be held;

Limerick	18 th April 2007
Meath/ Cavan / Monaghan	24 th April 2007
Dublin Central	26 th April 2007

In each region there will be one focus group for people with disabilities and one focus group for friends/ family members. All focus groups will be

independently facilitated. Members of FASI, MDI and IASBAH who wish to take part in a focus group can contact the coordinator in their organisations, as listed below. People who are not members of the organisations are also welcome and they can contact the Independent researcher directly at 087-682 3530 or

Email: nuala.taft2@mail.dcu.ie.

It may be necessary to randomly select participants but the aim is to include as many people as feasible. The deadline is nearing, so please make contact no later than March 20th.

A Questionnaire will also be circulated to the members of all three organisations in early May. Contact details for the Research Co-Ordinators are as follows:

Members of **FASI**: Please contact Siobhan Hickey at 01-289 4788 or email ataxia@eircom.net

Members of **MDI**: Please contact Kate Power at 01-872 1501 or email info@mdi.ie

Members of **IASBAH**: Please contact Michelle Sweeney or Nicola Mernagh at 01-457 2329 or via msweeney@iasbah.ie

The better the response, the better the research. So, please lend your time and support. Wherever possible, your transport to and from the focus group meetings will be compensated.

Electoral Information

In consultation with the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, information on the electoral system in Ireland in audio CD and cassette format is now available from Local Authorities. Braille copies are only in English at present but work on a version in Irish is progressing.

This information is identical to that of the eight leaflets recently published in hard copy format.

These are:

- The Referendum in Ireland
- European Parliament: How Ireland's Representatives are Elected
- How Members of Local Authorities are Elected
- Register of Electors
- Information for voters with Disabilities
- How the Dáil is Elected (Lower House of Parliament)
- How the Séanad is Elected (Senate/Upper House of Parliament)
- How the President is Elected

Please contact your local authority for further information.

Developing an Environment that Supports Volunteers

Date: Monday 26th March
 Time: 10.00am – 4.00pm
 Venue: Hardwick Room, Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7
 Cost: €125 Volunteering Ireland members / €150 non-members
 Maximum participants: 14

This session builds on the knowledge participants will have acquired in past workshops and in their careers. These sessions equips participants to create a work environment in which volunteers are welcomed and valued and make the maximum contribution to the agency.

To book a place please complete the booking form and return it with the correct fee to Volunteering Ireland

Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7.

Telephone 01 872 2622

Download booking form:

www.volunteeringireland.ie/page.php?id=75

If you require more information, please contact Deirdre Hough:

email info@volunteeringireland.ie

Tel: 01- 872 26 22.

Vacancies

Health Action Overseas

Special Needs Teacher

HAO is seeking a fully qualified Special Needs Teacher with minimum 3 years experience required. This is a 3 week volunteer placement starting July 13th 2006. Living allowance, accommodation, return airfare and insurance provided. Please email CV to hao@iol.ie. Full details on www.hao.ie

Civil Service Executive Officer

(Confined to persons with disabilities)

The Executive Officer grade is the entry level to junior management in the Civil Service. Closing Date, for receipt of applications is **Thursday 15th March 2007**.

Applications should be made on-line through www.publicjobs.ie.

For further information please contact :

Public Appointments Service, Chapter House, 26/30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1,
 Lo-Call: 1890-449999,

Tel: + 353-1-858-7400, x: + 353-1-8587500 ,

Fax: + 353-1-8587574 ,

email: info@publicjobs.ie.

Forthcoming Events

Please make direct contact with the organisation for a quicker response

IMNDA - Easter Egg Raffle 2007

The Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association (IMNDA) is hosting an Easter Egg Raffle. They are providing Easter Eggs to raffle in your local / pub / club or workplace. Each egg should be raffled at €2 per line (raffle sheets will also be supplied). If you are interested in undertaking a raffle on their behalf, please e-mail fundraising@imnda.ie or Freefone 100 403 403 to ensure you have your Easter Egg(s) on time.

Plain English Course

28th March, Athlone

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is running one-day courses on plain English for anyone whose work mainly involves writing or putting documents together.

Please contact Clodagh McCarthy, Plain English Co-Ordinator at NALA, email: cmccarthy@nala.ie or Tel: (01) 809 9194 for a course outline, charges and a booking form.

Each course is limited to 15 people, so please book early to secure a place. Web: www.nala.ie

Mental Health Awareness

The National Learning Network Continuous Professional Development course Mental Health Awareness is being held on **March 21, 22 and April 19** in the Glen Royal Hotel in Maynooth.

Participants will gain an understanding of mental health difficulties and apply learning to support people who have mental health difficulties in a positive way.

The course is 3 days and requires completion of assessment piece to receive FETAC Level 6 certification. The course costs €750 and includes all materials and lunch.

Please contact National Learning Network Continuous Professional Development on 01-451-3859 or email on cpd@nl.n.ie

Raynaud's & Scleroderma Society Annual Conference.

Date: Saturday **28th April** 2007

Time: 10am to 4.15pm

Venue: Stillorgan Park Hotel, Stillorgan Road (N11), Co. Dublin.

Price: No charge for Conference attendance.

There will be lectures by Rheumatologists and other top consultants;
practical presentations by nutritionist, Raynaud's expert and medical professionals;
Question and Answer sessions with doctors;
Massage and Alternative Therapy demonstrations and information.

A hot lunch will be provided for 20 Euro per head. This will be free to fully paid up members who book in advance. Advance booking is ESSENTIAL. The full timetable will be provided closer to the date.

For further information and to reserve a place:

Tel: 01-20 20 184 or

email info@irishraynauds.com.

Ireland 2007

Fundraising and Donor Development

Date: **Tuesday 27 March 2007**

Venue: Hilton Hotel, Charlemont Place, Dublin 2.

This Conference will provide fresh ideas and inspiration covering best practice in various different fundraising disciplines. The event will give fundraisers a practical understanding of what works and what doesn't by offering case studies from fellow Irish fundraising professionals.

Speakers are going to share methods and techniques, offering participants the opportunity to learn from the advice and expertise of others.

To Register:

Email: events@institute-of-fundraising.org.uk

Fax: 0044-845 337 2735

Post: Conference Registration, Institute of Fundraising, Park Place, 12 Lawn Lane, London, SW8 1UD, United Kingdom

For all enquiries:

Tel: 0044- 845 337 2734

Barnardos National Children's Resource Centre Training Courses Calendar

Barnardos National Children's Resource Centre provides information, training and publications on anything to do with children and families. A membership scheme is available for those who wish to borrow resources and avail of the other benefits of membership.

Training is offered in a wide variety of areas, to practitioners, parents, carers and all people working with children:

For further details on any of the above events contact

Martina Dumpleton, Barnardos NCRC,

Tel: (01) 4530355

Email: martina.dumpleton@barnardos.ie

Newsletters Available

Ability - Newsletter of the Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, Tel: 01 4572329, Email: info@iasbah.ie

Action on Inclusion - Tel: 01-6194096 Email: jackie_coogan@taoiseach.irlgov.ie

Ahead News - 01-7164396, Email: ahead@ahead.ie

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188 Email: info@arthritisireland.ie

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

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

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121, info@migraine.ie

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

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

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

Care Alliance Ireland - ndo@carealliance.ie

Community Exchange Newsletter Contact info@activelink.ie, Tel: +1 667 7326

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

Community Workers' Co-operative - News Bites, E-Newsletter. Contact info@cwci.ie, Tel: +353 (0) 91 779 030

Cornerstone - Homeless Agency -http://www.homelessagency.ie/research/cornerstone.asp, Tel: 01 7036100 , Email: homeless@dublincity.ie

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

Debra Ireland Newsletter - Published by Debra Ireland, Tel: 01 01 678 5044, Email: info@debraireland.org

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

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

E-Info Deaf Source— email: info@irishdeafsociety.ie. Tel: +353 1860 1878

Féach - Support to parents of blind and visually impaired children. Tel: 01 493 1896, email: info@feach.ie

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

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

GROW News - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474, Email: info@grow.ie

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

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

Heart News: - Newsletter of Irish Heart Foundation. Tel: 01 668 5001 E: info@irishheart.ie.

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

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

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

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

Irish Deaf Journal - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-8601910; 01-8601878; ids@indigo.ie

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

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News 066-7180611, kerryPWDi@eircom.net

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

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-8721501, Email: info@mdi.ie

National Association for Deaf People - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800 Email: nad@iol.ie, Minicom: (01) 817 5777

NCBI News - Newsletter of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Tel: 01 8307033, email: press@ncbi.ie, www.ncbi.ie

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland 01-8726338 nfaireland@eircom.net

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

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: +353 1 889 8920 Email: info@ppsg.ie

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

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

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

S.I. News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620 Email: ifo@sirl.ie

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

Speaking up for Advocacy - Comhairle Newsletter on advocacy. Tel: 01 6059035, Email:mairide.woods@comhairle.ie or davin.roche@comhairle.ie

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

Wheel E-Bulletin Tel:01- 454 8727, Email: info@wheel.ie



Disability Federation of Ireland is the national support mechanism for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland covering all areas of disability and disabling conditions: intellectual, physical, sensory, hidden and mental health. DFI has ongoing involvement with over 150 organisations and groups across the country, 71 of which currently comprise its National Council., and 39 of which are Associate Members. Allied to this, it works with and supports over 200 organisations and Groups around the country that have a significant and growing disability interest, mainly coming from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

DFI provides:

- Information
- Training and Advice
- Organisation and Management Development
- Research and Policy
- Advocacy and Representation

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

DFI Newsletters are available for download from our website:

www.disability-federation.ie

Please send Newsletter submissions to: **newsletter@disability-federation.ie**

DFI SUPPORT OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS

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Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8
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Fax: 01 494 7981
E: info@disability-federation.ie

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