



Disability Federation of Ireland Newsletter

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

May 2008

HSE

Service Level Agreements

Proposed Cuts In Funding

DFI recently circulated to member organisations draft Service Level Agreements (SLA), which we received at a recent meeting with the HSE. These draft SLAs mark an important development in terms of the relationship between Community and Voluntary organisations and the HSE and we urge all organisations to take time to consider the Draft documents carefully. DFI is organising a meeting with CEOs on this issue for Wednesday 14th May where it is expected that organisations will discuss their issues concerning the SLAs (see inside for further information).

Another issue which arose during the past month is that there is now great concern in relation to the HSE 'efficiency cuts' and their effect on funding for the provision of services to people with disabilities. DFI has been in contact with Senior Staff in the HSE to gain clarity and confirmation on these proposed cuts. Budget 2008 brought no funding for core deficits, no inflation raises for the Multi Annual Funding Programme, and no additional development money. Further cuts in funding will greatly curtail the Governments commitment in its own Programme for Government to "delivering half of the National Disability Strategy by 2010".

John Dolan
CEO

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Disability Federation of Ireland
Presentation by Dr. Jimmy Devins, Minister of State,
Department of Health & Children, with responsibility for
Disability & Mental Health
AGM
& Service Level Agreement Discussion

14th May 2008

Jurys Inn, Parnell Street, Dublin 1

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| 8.00 am | Breakfast |
| 8.45 am | <u>Dr Jimmy Devins</u> , Minister of State, Department of Health & Children, with responsibility for Disability & Mental Health. Presentation on the National Disability Strategy (NDS) implementation structures having regard to the recent establishment of the Office for Disability and Mental Health. |
| 9.30 am | <u>DFI AGM</u> |
| 10.30 am | Tea/Coffee |
| 11.00 am | <u>Service Level Agreement Discussion (CEO's only)</u>
A discussion with CEOs of our member organisations regarding the draft Service Level Agreements. See further details below. |
| 12.30 pm | Finish |

As places are limited please confirm by 5 pm Monday 12th May 2008, if you will be in attendance for the entire morning or just part of it. Email or telephone Marta Cudnoch at martacudnoch@disability-federation.ie or 01 4547978

HEALTH

HSE and Draft Service Level Agreements

At a recent meeting with the HSE DFI received a copy of the draft Service Level Agreements which we circulated to all CEOs of our member organisations. Two specific types of SLAs are proposed. The first SLA will be signed by organisations who receive in excess of €100,000 from the HSE to deliver services or supports to people with disabilities. It is proposed that the second form of SLA will relate to organisations that receive less than €100, 000, and will have a more modest expectation in terms of the levels of reporting expected of voluntary organisations.

DFI is organising a meeting with CEOs on the draft Service Level Agreements on Wednesday the 14th May 2008 (details above).

Joint Response by Umbrella Organisations to the HSE Proposed 'Efficiency Cuts'

DFI, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies and the Not for Profit Business Association, recently jointly wrote to Professor Brendan Drumm, Chief Executive, HSE responding to recent communications, verbal and written, from the HSE directly with some member organisations relating to cuts in funding in the region of 1%. These cuts, requested as 'efficiency measures', 'without impact on levels of service', are being set out at a time when organisations represented through our umbrellas are already in negotiations with the HSE regarding existing and ongoing core deficits. It was suggested that a 1% decrease in disability funding could amount to approximately €1.3m. Although the voluntary and statutory agencies are both asked to explore efficiency measures, it is only voluntary disability organisations who provide levels of services beyond that for which they are currently funded.

Furthermore, organisations operating in deficit funding situations are naturally always seeking to make efficiencies because they have a very strong motivation to reduce their deficits. On that basis it is not likely that significant cuts can be made that will not impact on the quality and / or quantity of services being delivered. It was suggested that the occasion of annual or regular reviews about service provision between our member organisations and the HSE is the most appropriate place to consider the achievement of greater efficiencies which can be reinvested to support our client groups. The restoration of such an approach, which had been the practice prior to the adoption of a central, inflexible, catch-all approach now being proposed by HSE would be welcomed.

With the implementation of Part 2 of the Disability Act, it should be clear, notwithstanding the achievement of any efficiencies, that a massive new investment in disability supports and services is required. The HSE was reminded that the voluntary disability sector has been at the forefront in securing extra resources to the health area and it is at least ironic that organisations should be targeted to pay for budget overruns that have taken place elsewhere within the HSE Budget. As pointed out, this year started with no commitment to resourcing core deficits experienced by organisations. This followed the unfair re-allocation of the 2007 allocation of €5m for this purpose. Furthermore, the allocation of €50m for the development of disability services identified in Budget 2008 is significantly short of the 2007 allocation.

Therefore even before proposed cuts, this year's allocation was only going to make a modest contribution and it in no way would mark the significant progress that is required to achieve health related commitments and provide services to people with disabilities. As things stand – i.e. without the imposition of any further erosion of core budgets – organisations are already absorbing very significant levels of embedded efficiency by:

- (a)** Seeking to implement new service developments in 2008 for the same level of unit cost as in 2007 – we noted that the targeted levels of residential, respite and day places in 2008 mirror precisely the levels identified in 2007, notwithstanding the erosion in purchasing power of the development funds available;
- (b)** Being expected to absorb very significant levels of non-pay inflation – evidenced dramatically in the massive level of heating and transport fuel over the past 18 months.

The organisations have noted that the current pressures on funding are such that any further reduction in funding cannot be taken without adversely affecting the quality and quantity of service provision. The seriousness of the situation that has arisen was noted and the three organisations have requested an opportunity to discuss these matters in greater detail with Professor Drumm as a matter of urgency.

Carers' Strategy Consultation

As part of the national social partnership agreement 'Towards 2016' (T16), the Government is committed to developing a National Carers' Strategy focusing on all family carers in the community. In recognising that many of our member organisations provide supports and information to families and relatives of people with disabilities, DFI has made a Submission to the consultation process.

The contribution family carers make to Irish society cannot be underestimated in terms of the social capital that they generate and the enormous contribution that they make in implementing Government policies. Family carers are key stakeholders in the roll out of the National Disability Strategy, in addition to which the Primary Care Strategy with its shifting emphasis on caring for people in their own homes relies on the support of those who care for others.

DFI is calling for a robust strategy founded on the creation of a comprehensive infrastructure of care that intersects all Government departments and all areas of health care provision in Ireland to address the systemic disadvantage experiences by those who perform caring roles for family members or members of their community. In addition to submitting the recommendations from DFI, we have also been actively involved with a group of caring organisations in making a Joint Submission. The Carers Strategy Consultation Group comprises of Age Action, Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Care Alliance Ireland, The Carers Association, Caring for Carers, Crosscare, Cúram Eirí Corca Baiscinn, Irish Farmers Association, Inclusion Ireland, Irish Senior Citizens Parliament and PWDI. DFI's Submission can be downloaded from our website. For further information, please contact Joan O'Donnell, DFI Support Officer (contact details on back page).

DFI Submission to a Review of Eligibility Criteria for Medical Cards

Eligibility rules for a medical and a GP card are being reviewed by Government, as promised under the social partnership agreement, Towards 2016 (T16). As a member of the Community and Voluntary Pillar, DFI made a Submission calling for the extension of eligibility for the medical card to all people with a disability.

DFI Submission

DFI's Submission highlights the new environment that has been created by NDS / T16, and the expectations raised by the establishment of ambitious long-term goals for people with a disability. Access to health services is an essential element. The Submission points out that the current means test denies a medical card to some people who face extraordinary medically-related costs attributable to their disability. Also those who would like to seek employment or a better job may be deterred because they would lose their medical card after three years.

DFI Recommendations

DFI proposes that access to a medical card should not impede people with a disability from becoming more active in Irish life. All those who have a disability be entitled to a medical card. It suggests that the Independent Assessment of Needs (under the Disability Act 2005), when it is fully implemented, could provide the screening for this benefit. An immediate step is recommended, however, whereby people on a disability benefit keep their medical card so long as their disability persists, irrespective of the employment or other income that the person is able to gain. DFI observes that an assessment process into the health needs of family carers is also warranted in the context of access to a medical card.

For a copy of the submission, please contact Lillian Buchanan, DFI Support Officer (contact details on the back page).

Adult Funded Day Services Update

In August 2007 the HSE started the work of the Review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services. Census forms representing 930 Day Service Centres were completed by service providers during the week of January 7th to 11th 2008. The form asked questions about the numbers of people receiving services, the type of service they were receiving, the staffing profile of the service, the funding received from the HSE to provide the service amongst a number of other questions relevant to the work of the Review.

At present the information contained on all 930 forms is being validated by local HSE validation teams. Once the validation is completed the information contained on the forms will be inputted to a National Database and the HSE will then be able to extract national reports giving full details in relation to current service delivery.

Within the National Working Group they are aware of current good practice in the delivery of HSE Funded Adult Day Services and they included a section in the Census form to make sure that we would capture all of this good practice. The HSE also consider it appropriate to look at International Best Practice in the provision of Day Services and to explore the factors that are influencing the development of Day Services for people with disabilities in Ireland. This will culminate in the examination of models of best practice and recommendations in regard to the reconfiguration and modernisation of day service delivery.

The Research is being carried out by Dr. Pauline Conroy (Ralaheen Ltd.) who is being assisted by Cornell University (N.Y.) in tracking and examining National and International models of best practice. A full report will be available from Dr. Conroy by Mid-June 2008.

They are also carrying out a number of forms of consultation to inform the outcome of the review of day services:

i) Formal Submissions

Any person with a disability, any service provider, carer or any other interested party can make a formal submission to the review.

ii) Focus Groups with Service Users

Inclusion Ireland, People with Disabilities Ireland and the Irish Mental Health Coalition are arranging to convene focus groups with service users to establish in detail their views regarding current day services and their vision for future service development.

iii) Open Consultation Meetings

Four Public Consultation Meetings are scheduled to take place around the country during the last week in April and the first week of May.

For further information see their website www.dayservicereview.ie

NATIONAL / LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Advisory Group on National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

At its third meeting on 21st April 2008 the National Group discussed three items:

1. The Local Authority / HSE protocol that is being developed to regularise the approval process for supported housing projects proposed by housing associations;

2. An up-date on the streamlining of the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) approval process;
3. A draft outline of the Housing Strategy.

The Departmental official explained that it is hoped to finalise the protocol on supported housing by mid year. The idea is for the HSE to respond to a proposal within three months once all the pertinent information has been submitted, followed by the Local Authority processing the application. The discussion highlighted the risk of the protocol stalling projects that are needed when the HSE cannot identify the requisite revenue funding. The officials stated that the question of ring-fenced funding for support services was outside the remit of the protocol negotiations. The Strategy is being developed 'within existing resources'.

A flow chart was presented on the CAS procedure, emphasising the necessity of voluntary organisations understanding and complying with the process. In the discussion it was pointed out that Local Authorities need to look at the 'big picture' and not depend totally on housing associations alone to identify unmet housing need and the gaps in service.

The timeframes and contents of the draft strategy outline were discussed on a preliminary basis. The Department will explore with the National Disability Authority (NDA) and the Centre for Housing Research the undertaking of research work on the private rented sector as a housing alternative, on best practice in housing provision and on supports for people experiencing mental health illness.

Officials reported that public consultation on revised Part M of the Building Code is expected to commence in May 2008. It is hoped that the regulations for disability certificates for new non domestic buildings will apply by mid-year. The advisory group will meet again on 10th June 2008.

For further information, please contact Martin Naughton, DFI Support Officer or Lillian Buchanan, DFI Support Officer (contact details on the back page).

Green Paper: Stronger Local Democracy

John Gormley, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on 22 April launched a consultation paper on Local Government reform. Following consultation, a White Paper will be published in the autumn.

The Green Paper focuses on strengthening direct participation, especially through the introduction of directly elected mayors, starting with the Dublin region. It discusses various new forms of engagement while at the same time recognising the benefits of strengthened relationships between local community groups and local authorities. It suggests that having a full time mayor as chair might invigorate the County / City Development Boards.

The paper highlights the changing environment in which local authorities operate, with their increasing role in community development, arts and culture, the built and natural environment and social inclusion, including 'providing the access and facilities for the disabled as mandated under the Disability Act' (page 89). Differences in services across local authorities are accepted as generally justified, with efforts to promote best practice presented as a key method for improving customer service.

Minister Gormley encouraged individuals and organisations to give feedback on the Green Paper which can be viewed on www.environ.ie.

Government Action to Strengthen County / City Development Boards (CDBs)

In the Social Partnership Agreement Towards 2016 the Government undertook to develop and strengthen the CDB structure 'to ensure that it can operate effectively as a vehicle for supporting a more integrated approach to service delivery at Local level.' The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) commissioned Indecon Economic Consultants to review the CDB strategic reviews and make recommendations. After considering Indecon's Report for several months, the Department has released it, at the same time indicating that the recommendations set out in the Report have been approved by the Government.

Actions

The Report contains 15 largely incremental changes, designed to strengthen the CDBs. They include 'invest in integrated training'; 'introduce arrangements to facilitate reporting on CDB issues within Local Authority'; 'alter incentives by a range of measures, including an awards scheme for integrated service delivery'; 'radically improve availability of county / city data'.

The main proposal is to establish a CDB National Co-Ordinating Group to oversee implementation of the recommendations. Tony Killeen, Minister of State for Environment and Energy will chair this Group which will include a wide range of Government Departments as well as the HSE. The Minister is writing to each relevant Minister in recognition of the importance of their local statutory agencies constructively participating in CDBs.

Implications for the Disability Sector

Effective operation of CDBs, including access to the process by voluntary service providers, is crucial for holistic service provision for people with a disability. Therefore initiatives to strengthen the CDBs are welcome. The Indecon Report's proposal, that the composition and role of SIM groups be reviewed, is an issue on which the disability sector will want to engage.

It is worth noting that the minority groups receiving particular attention in CDBs do not specifically include people with a disability although the Department's Sectoral Plan directed CDBs to make disability a priority theme. The new Co-Ordinating Group is to support the role of the CDBs in relation to the roll out of the Childrens Services Committees and implementation of the Traveller Interagency Initiative.

The Indecon Report will be placed on DoEHLG's website at www.environ.ie

Tackling Disability Issues Using Local Government Structures Seminar

DFI and Carlow Local Authority are hosting the seminar 'Tackling disability issues using local Government Structures.' It is open to the Community and Voluntary agencies and statutory agencies. The theme is how to support State and Voluntary disability agencies to work in partnership through Local Authority structures in tackling disability issues.

Date: June 17th 2008

Time: 10 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Venue: Talbot Hotel, Portlaoise Road, Co. Carlow

For more information contact PJ Cleere, DFI Support Officer (Contact details on back page).

SOCIAL INCLUSION

NDA launch booklet on 'Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities.'

The National Disability Authority (NDA) has launched an important new publication titled 'Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities'. The publication is aimed at ensuring the speedy and safe evacuation of public buildings by people with a disability, particularly in the event of an emergency.

This publication will be of special interest to facilities managers, accommodation officers, health and safety personnel, access officers, disability liaison officers and human resource professionals in the public sector. It will also be of interest to design consultants and disability organisations involved with accessibility matters as well as people with disabilities, families and carers.

This important guide will assist organisations to plan effectively for the safe evacuation of people with disabilities, both staff and customers. Readers will find information on evacuation strategies, alarm equipment, evacuation equipment, training and specific building types, including healthcare buildings, educational buildings and heritage buildings.

It also provides details of an appropriate planning process to ensure that people with disabilities can safely evacuate a building in case of emergency. There is a practical 'risk assessment checklist' to help organisations to assess their current situation.

This publication is available for free download from www.nda.ie or email publications@nda.ie or tel. 01-608 0400.

Commission for Taxi Regulation Publishes New Action Plan

The Commission for Taxi Regulation's Action plan 2008 / 2009 'Always Driving Forward' was launched on 27th February 2008, which outlines the Commission's continued reforms for small Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs) in Ireland.

The primary aim of this action plan is to continue to introduce new standards to meet the Commission's statutory objectives under the Taxi Regulation Act 2003. Measures to be taken ensuring the course of the Action Plan include the Commission becoming responsible for the administration of dispatch operators. Measures to be taken during the course of the Action Plan include the Commission becoming responsible for the administration of dispatch operator licensing and SPSV driver licensing in addition to its current role as the single authority for vehicle licensing.

The Commission is of the view that Dispatch Operators in Ireland are, and will continue to be, a key element in the provision of a first class service to the travelling public. The standards required for a Dispatch Operator will be as follows:

- The provision of a booking system that is accessible to people with disabilities such as fax, email and text.
- Training for management and staff, including customer care, fares, complaints, health and safety and assisting people with disabilities.
- Training records must be held and made available to the Commission on request.
- Dispatch Operators must, where possible, ensure that a fully accessible service is available to people with disabilities.

The Commission will audit Dispatch Operators to ensure the standards are in place prior to licensing.

For further information please contact The Commission for Taxi Regulation, 35 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2, Fax: 01 659 3801 or email commission@taxiregulator.ie

FUNDING

Enhancing Disability Services Programme (EDS) Final Round Call for Applications

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DoJELR) invites applications for funding under the final round of the 'Enhancing Disability Services Programme' from Voluntary, Not For Profit organisations working in the disability sector based in the State.

The Programme aims to contribute to the development of improved services for people with disabilities through:

- Promoting the development of collaborative approaches and innovative linkages between existing infrastructure and new needs;
- Improving co-ordination between disability organisations; and
- Enhancing existing structures and developing operational capacity.

To assist this process three public information sessions have been scheduled at the following venues, and will commence at 10 am sharp:

- 13th May 2008 – The Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth
- 14th May 2008 – The Clarion Hotel, Sligo
- 15th May 2008 – The Greenhills Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to attend one of the information meetings. Attendance at a specified venue to be notified to Pobal (abuzzoni@pobal.ie) by Friday 9th May. Please Note: Sign Language Interpreters are provided. The venues are fully accessible.

Appraisal of the applications and the management and support of the successful projects will be undertaken by Pobal on behalf of the DoJELR.

Application forms for the EDS programme, together with the programme guidelines are available from the DoJELR website (www.justice.ie) and also from Pobal's website (www.pobal.ie). They are also available directly from Pobal by telephoning 01-4484892.

This is an occasion to meet with the EDS Team, who will provide an overview of the EDS Programme, the guidelines and the application process.

Feel free to contact Ms Anna Buzzoni should you have any query or have any special requirements.

Phone: 01 4484892

Email: abuzzoni@pobal.ie

Address: Anna Buzzoni, EDS, Pobal, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2.

The closing date for application is 5 pm on Friday 27th June 2008

Community Foundation Launches New Ray Murphy Fund

The Community Foundation for Ireland recently announced the establishment of The Ray Murphy Fund. The fund has been set up to assist and encourage managers within the community and voluntary sectors to access leadership education and training. The Community Foundation will contribute €200,000 to the fund over the next 10 years.

The fund will make grants available to build leadership within the community sector for the next 10 years. The Community Foundation will also arrange seminars around the country for grant winners to share their learning and skills with other community groups. Five grants will be awarded annually and will be for a maximum of €4,000 each. The Community foundation will contribute €20,000 a year to the fund.

The Community Foundation is currently accepting applications for grants under this scheme and further grant information and application guidelines are available from The Community Foundation for Ireland's office at 01-874 7354 or on their website www.communityfoundation.ie. Note: There is no deadline for applications to this fund.

TRAINING

Homeless Agency Learning and Performance Training Programme

The Homeless Agency Learning and Performance Programme for May 2008

- Detox Recovery & Relapse: 12th & 13th May 2008
- Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: 14th May 2008
- Drug Awareness and Understanding Addiction: 21st & 22nd May 2008
- Trauma, Self Harm and Suicide: 29th & 30th May 2008

Cost: One-day modules €70, two-day €120 and three-day €170.

Venue: Homeless Agency Conference Room, Parkgate Hall, 6 - 9 Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8.

Time: 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m..

For further details on these and further modules please visit the Learning and Performance Section of the Homeless Agency website at www.homelessagency.ie/services/LAPP/index.asp

HAS - Reducing Stress-Related Absence At Work

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is organising seminars geared towards organisations who want to find out more about how to implement appropriate safety management systems for managing stress and reducing related absences.

The two hour seminars are sector specific:

- 20th May Financial sector,
- 21st May Health sector,
- 22nd May Public Sector Agencies

Venue: Clarion Hotel, IFSC, Dublin 1

Time: 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. (registration and Tea / Coffee from 8.30 a.m.).

A limited number of organisations from each seminar will also be able to avail of further support, expertise and training without charge over a nine month period from September 2008 to May 2009 as part of the HSA pilot, based on the UK's (HSE) Willing 100 stress Programme. This is entirely voluntary and will be up to each attending organisation.

Please note that places are strictly limited to 20 organisations per seminar. Contact Patricia Murray, Occupational Psychologist with the Health and Safety Authority, on 01-6147055 or email Patricia.Murray@hsa.ie for further information.

GENERAL NEWS

Fundraising Codes of Practice Seminar

The final feasibility report Regulation of Fundraising by Charities through legislation and codes of practice prepared by Peter Cassells and the General Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising compiled by the special Working Group established in July 2007 will be formally launched by Minister Pat Carey TD (Dept. CRaGA) at the first of a series of regional seminars to be held in Dublin on the 14th May 2008 in the Davenport Hotel. This will be followed by similar seminars in Dundalk, Sligo, Galway, Cork and Kilkenny at the venues and times detailed below. The purpose of the seminars is to report back on the final outcomes and recommendations of the research project and to indicate what the next steps are likely to be in terms of implementation. They will also provide an opportunity to update participants on the legislative progress of the Charities Bill 2007.

Location	Date	Venue	Time
Dublin	14th May 2008	The Davenport Hotel	9.00am – 11.30am
Dundalk	19th May 2008	The Fairways Hotel	9.00am – 11.30am
Sligo	20th May 2008	The Sligo Park Hotel	9.00am – 11.30am
Galway	21st May 2008	The Galway Harbour Hotel	9.00am – 11.30am
Cork	22nd May 2008	The Clarion Hotel	9.00am – 11.30am
Kilkenny	23rd May 2008	The Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel	9.00am – 11.30am

Register online at <http://www.ictr.ie/seminars/index.html> (there is no charge).

Women with Disabilities and Public Maternity Services Research

Trinity College's School of Nursing and Midwifery have embarked on new research funded by the National Disability Authority (NDA) which will explore the strengths and weaknesses of publicly-funded Irish health services for women with disabilities in relation to pregnancy, childbirth, and early motherhood.

The researchers would like to talk to women with disabilities who have experience of publicly funded maternity services. They include women who are blind / vision impaired; women who are deaf / hard of hearing; women with a physical disability; women with mental health difficulties or women with an intellectual disability.

The research aims to ascertain the views and experiences of these women, throughout the country and across all socio-economic groupings, in relation to:

- the strengths and weaknesses they encountered in publicly-funded Irish health services during pregnancy, childbirth and in the first two years of motherhood;
- their experiences of accessing GPs, midwives, obstetricians, neonatologists, paediatricians, allied health professionals, public health nurses and public health doctors, health care workers, family support workers, and the service they received from these people.

The research project is a joint initiative between the National Disability Authority and the National Women's Council of Ireland. The study commenced in November 2007 and is set for completion in November 2009.

For further information please contact: Denise Lawler, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, 24 D'Olier Street, Dublin 2 or tel.: 086 3789758 or email lawlorde@tcd.ie.

IWA M.A.A.T.S Programme

The Irish Wheelchair Association held the launch of their M.A.A.T.S programme (Motoring Advice Assessment & Tuition Service) for the Mid-West region on Monday 21st April 2008 at their offices at Docklands Business Park, Dock Road, Limerick. It was very successful with many people attending. Their fully qualified and experienced driving tutor and Occupational Therapist were available for any queries as well as their fully adapted driving school car on site for people to have a look at the different adaptations.

The M.A.A.T.S Programme is a programme run by The Irish Wheelchair Association. The programme provides professional 'one to one tuition' for people who wish to learn to drive in the Mid-West Region. Whether you are a total beginner or are returning to driving after acquiring a disability you can avail of driving tuition in an automatic and fully adapted car through our M.A.A.T.S programme

Prior to receiving tuition, all pupils undergo thorough assessment. Assessments normally take one to two hours and are carried out by Occupational Therapists and Driving Instructors. The Service also provides information on all aspects of motoring services, entitlements etc.

If you wish to avail of this service or need any information regarding this please ring us on (061) 313691 or call to our office at Unit 10 Docklands Business Park, Dock Road, Limerick, or visit the website www.iwa.ie.

Centre For Nonprofit Management's 2008 Summer School

The Centre is holding its third annual non-profit Summer School entitled 'Relationships and Representation: Irish Civil Society at the Crossroads.' It will explore the processes and structures that exist for mediating relationships within the Irish non-profit sector and also between the non-profit sector and the public and private sectors. The School will consider the capacity of these processes and structures for addressing the challenges and the potential of this vibrant environment.

Time: Lunchtime Wednesday 18th June to lunchtime Thursday 19th June 2008

Venue: Irish Management Institute, Sandyford, Dublin 16

Bookings are on a first come, first served basis. Places are limited to 150 people. [Read the Programme](#) and [download the Booking Form](#) from their website www.cnm.tcd.ie

Communication Matters Roadshow

Communication Matters is a UK national charitable organisation of members concerned with the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) needs of people with complex communication needs. The Communication Roadshow showcases specialised communication aid technology for use by people with severe speech and communication impairment and writing difficulties. The Communication Matters Road Shows will be of a similar format to last year and will be visiting the following venues:

- 13th May, Cork: Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Tivoli
- 14th May, Limerick: Radisson SAS Hotel, Ennis Road
- 15th May, Dublin: Croke Park Conference Centre & Stadium

The Dublin event is being held jointly with the Royal National Rehab Hospital who will be launching their Loan Library on that day www.try-it.ie.

To book a free place to attend one of the Road Shows, book online at www.communicationmatters.org.uk or you can email admin@communicationmatters.org.uk or tel. +44 131 467 7487.

13th European Neurofibromatosis Meeting

The Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland would like to extend a very warm invitation to scientists, clinicians, Neurofibromatosis families and people involved in the care and welfare of patients. The Conference will facilitate the sharing of scientific advances and discussion on treatments culminating in improved care and management of Neurofibromatosis. The programme will be structured to ensure all participants return home with essential information and knowledge on this little known genetic condition.

Dates: Thursday 30th October - Sunday 2nd November

Venue: Brehon Hotel & Conference Centre, Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Themes for the Conference will include:

- Education and information for families, health professionals and scientists
- Neurofibromatosis in the 21st century
- Partners in Care
- Neurofibromatosis 1 and 2 from a family and medical perspective

For more information please check the Web Site: www.nfireland2008.org

IASBAH International Conference and AGM 2008

Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IASBAH) celebrates 40 years with the Conference is 'Positive Life Choices'

Venue: Radisson SAS Hotel & Spa Cork, Ditchley House, Little Island, Cork.

Date: Friday, 9th May - Sunday, 11th May, 2008.

Time: Registration at 9.15 a.m. on Friday.

For information on the Conference please visit www.iasbah.ie

If you want to register a delegate please visit www.bookyourplace.ie

IWA Annual Conference and AGM

The annual Conference and AGM 2008 of IWA Ltd.will take place on:

Date: Saturday 17th – Sunday 18th May 2008

Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel in Santry, Dublin.

The theme of the Conference is 'Your Life – Your Way'. To find out more, contact IWA on 01-818 6400 or see www.iwa.ie. All IWA members are invited to attend. Every person who receives Spokeout by post is registered as an IWA member on IWA's database and is welcome to attend the Annual Conference and AGM.

People of the Year Awards

The People of the Year Awards are looking for inspiring people, young and old, who have achieved great things and made an outstanding contribution to society. This year, there will also be a special award for a teacher who has made a particularly significant contribution to the lives of his / her students.

The People of the Year Awards are organised by Rehab and sponsored by QUINN-healthcare. This year's awards will be televised live by RTÉ One on Saturday, 13th September 2008.

It's simple to nominate someone for a People of the Year Award. Just log on to www.peopleoftheyear.com to submit a nomination or, alternatively, you can email poy@quinn-healthcare.com or text AWARDS to 51444 (standard text rates apply) or tel. 01 2057394, with your name and address and you will be sent a nomination form.

For press and general queries about the People of the Year Awards, please contact Dara Duffy at 01-205 7268 or email poy@quinn-healthcare.com. The closing date for nominations is 1st June 2008.

National Epilepsy Awareness Week 2008

Brainwave the Irish Epilepsy Association are holding activities for National Epilepsy Awareness Week 2008:

- Monday, 19th May Brainwave Information stand in Health Centre, Tullamore
- Tuesday, 20th May Epilepsy Awareness Presentation in Tanyard Resource Centre, Tullamore
- Wednesday, 21st May Epilepsy Presentation for Parents and Carers by Cathy Madigan, Neuropsychologist in Offaly Centre for Independent Living, Tullamore

- Friday, 23rd May Epilepsy Presentation in National Learning Network, Portlaoise.

For more information on any of the above events please contact Margaret Bassett, Community Resource Officer, Brainwave, Midland Region, Tel: 057 9346790 or email midlandbrainwave@eircom.net

Migraine Association of Ireland Information Seminars

The Migraine Association provides information, support and reassurance to people suffering from migraine in Ireland. It also aims to raise awareness of migraine both among the general public and among health professionals.

Date: May 25th 2008

Time: 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Venue: The Plaza Hotel, Tallaght, Dublin

Cost: MAI Members: €7, Non-Members: €10, Children / Partners: Free

The MAI's AGM will be held after the Seminar at 5:00pm. For more information please contact the MAI Helpline at 1850 200 378, email info@migraine.ie or check their website www.migraine.ie

Disability Exhibition 2008

Disability Exhibition 2008 is an exhibition for people with disabilities, family and friends, carers and health professionals.

Date: Friday 6th and Saturday 7th June 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

Venue: Lagan Vally Leisureplex, Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

The exhibition will host exhibitors displaying a range of products and services for people with disabilities. A number of seminars and product demonstration events will also take place.

Pre-register online at www.disabilityaction.org/exhibition08 or alternatively tel. 028 9029 7880, textphone 028 9029 7882 or email marketing@disabilityaction.org

DFI Newsletter Information

DFI Newsletters are available for download from our website (www.disability-federation.ie).

Send newsletter submissions or subscription requests by email to:

newsletter@disability-federation.ie

or

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/newsletters.htm>



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 42 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:

1. Information
2. Training and Advice
3. Organisation and Management Development
4. Research and Policy
5. Advocacy and Representation

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