



Disability Federation of Ireland

An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector

Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities

NEWSLETTER – March 2011

Programme for Government Must Name and Position Disability as Priority Societal Issue

The major focus of our recent work has been the General Election. The election campaign focussed little on social issues other than unemployment. However DFI's persistent efforts to present disability as a social insurance, and not just a special interest issue, and flagging the importance of protecting benefits and services as key elements of that insurance, paid off in the final Leaders' debate. Both Labour and Fine Gael singled out disability, including mental health, as a priority. We described this as groundbreaking, but let's see if it turns up in the Programme for Government, and that they get on with prioritising Disability and Mental health.

We built our campaign around our document 'Securing Our Future'. We focused on contacting all candidates in relation to our issues and placed particular attention on influencing the manifestos of the Parties. We secured written commitments from each of the main parties including a commitment to have a National Disability Strategy plan. We also worked closely with all the other disability umbrella groups. Since the election we have been focusing on directly influencing the Programme for Government and planning for engagement with the changed Oireachtas membership.

DFI has written to the Leaders of Fine Gael and the Labour Party underlining the key commitments made during the election campaign, to prioritise people with disability and mental health needs. Both parties are in agreement that disability and mental health is the priority social justice and equality area to be progressed. This along with their earlier commitments, to DFI, to putting a plan in place to protect and advance the National Disability Strategy, is very welcome. It is now a matter of leadership and commitment from the leaders of our new Government. It is important that the new Government appoint a Minister with specific responsibility for disability and that all Departments involved co-ordinate their efforts to maximise outcomes."

John Dolan CEO

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PQASSO

Using PQASSO in DFI to Drive Quality

DFI is currently implementing PQASSO. The PQASSO core group held its second and third meetings on the 20th of January and the 22nd of February 2011. The Quality area currently being tackled by the group is **Quality Area 9**.

Communications and Promotion

The Standard: The organisation communicates effectively with its users and other external stakeholders. It builds a visible profile in its wider community, and effectively promotes its services and activities. Information about the work of the organisation is shared and used to influence change.

Benefits: Effective communications and promotional activity is about letting the right people know about your services and activities, and about the potential benefits.

What the standard covers: Communicating effectively involves:

- Representing your organisation at meetings and other events.
- Providing information and promotional materials, such as leaflets, flyers, posters and other publications in various formats.
- Writing articles and press releases.
- Disseminating research and evaluation findings.
- Providing information on your organisation's website, or on other relevant websites.

External stakeholders include: users and beneficiaries, funders, investors, purchasers, other agencies, partners, donors, supporters, regulatory bodies, policy makers and the wider community.

Building a visible profile means:

- Representing your organisation publicly.
- Participating in government and other sector consultations and initiatives.
- Setting up meetings with stakeholders to talk about your organisation's work.

Effectively promoting the organisation's service and activities includes:

- Being clear about who you are trying to reach.
- Knowing what you want to tell them.
- Planning how best to communicate with them.

Progress to Date: DFI is currently working on Level 1 indicators 1, 2 and 3.

Level 1: The organisation knows what it wants to communicate and to whom. It takes steps to promote its work and to represent the needs of its users.

Indicators:

Indicator 1: The organisation is clear about the key message it wants to communicate to users and the other external stakeholders.

Indicator 2: The organisation maintains an up-to-date contact list of users and external stakeholders.

Indicator 3: Promotional materials give essential information about the services and activities available, including how to contact the organisation.

Next Meeting

The Next Meeting is scheduled for the 10th of March 2011.

If you have any question or would like to comment please email the PQASSO Champion at pqasso@disability-federation.ie

PQASSO Award for Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups

The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups has become the first organisation in Ireland to receive the highly recognised quality award PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Social Organisations) level 1 (3rd edition).

Everyone at the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups has worked hard over the past two years to ensure that all systems in place meet the requirements and standards set by the PQASSO quality system.

The Carmichael Centre is delighted to achieve recognition for the quality of our services to the Community & Voluntary Sector in Ireland. PQASSO has helped us to strengthen our own organisational systems and procedures. This in turn enables us to build stronger

charitable, community and voluntary groups nationwide by providing the shared services, targeted training, good practice and governance support they need to build effective and sustainable organisations.

For information on PQASSO training and mentoring please contact:

Derek O'Reilly; Training & Support Services Manager

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups; *Building Stronger Charities Nationwide*

<http://www.carmichaelcentre.ie/trainingandsupport/courses.php>

Eastern Region Activity Event – Employment Law

The first Eastern Region Activity Event of 2011 took place on 2nd February 2011, with the usual high attendance.

This was the first Activity Event to be streamed live across the web and, in a first for DFI, we also were able to stream the presentation simultaneously. We had 10 people who logged into the web stream.

The main presentation came from Derek McKay, Managing Director of Adare HRM (www.adarehrm.ie), DFI's partner in the HR Compliance and Support Services product that we launched some time ago.

Derek gave a detailed and comprehensive presentation (and answered lots of interesting questions) on current HR legislation and issues that are current in the Community and Voluntary, with so much happening around cutbacks, salary cuts, changes in working conditions and redundancies.

This was followed by a short presentation from Maeve Halpin of Maeve Halpin Counselling (www.maevehalpincounselling.com).

Maeve spoke about the emotional impact of redundancies on those losing their jobs, on managers who have to make the difficult decisions, and, most interestingly, on those left behind. Staff who see their colleagues being let go can also suffer trauma, irrational guilt, fear that they might be next, and increased workload.

In relation to managers, Maeve referred to the concept of the “toxic handler”, the person who has to manage the distress, anxiety and anger generated by pay cuts and redundancies in an organisation. For more on this, see Maeve's article below.

If you would like any further information about this Activity Event or if you'd like a copy of Derek's presentation, please contact me, Anthony Carrick, on 01 708 0105 or anthonycarrick@disability-federation.ie

I am hoping to make sections of the presentation available as video clips on our website and I will advise you if this becomes a reality.

Are you the “Toxic Handler” in your Organisation?

By Maeve Halpin, Social and Organisational Psychologist

The role of the organisational “toxic handler” was first recognised and researched by Peter Frost and Sandra Robinson, in an article published in the Harvard Business Review in 1999. They acknowledged that negative emotions are often an inevitable part of work life, and that certain people in organisations voluntarily take on the responsibility of containing and neutralising these emotions for everyone else. This usually takes place behind the scenes, in informal meetings and phone conversations, sometimes outside work hours, so that the essential work of the toxic handler often usually goes unrewarded and unrecognised.

Causes of Organisational Pain

A multitude of factors can contribute to emotional distress for staff and volunteers in an organisation. Frost and Robinson identify **organisational change** and **downsizing** as two key influences on the quality of work life. The uncertainty that comes with change, especially when it is implemented without consultation, will trigger confusion, anxiety and fear among staff. Downsizing, including pay cuts, redundancies and service reductions, has become a fact of life for many Community and Voluntary organisations in Ireland. This too generates enormous stress, both for staff whose jobs may be at risk, and for managers who have to implement unpopular cost-cutting measures.

Other organisational problems can include difficult personalities, clashes between Boards and CEO's, unclear reporting lines, unmanageable workloads, and poor internal communications. Many C and V organisations do not have a dedicated HR resource, so it

falls to an empathetic and caring person, usually someone in a senior position, to shoulder the burden of calming the feelings of anger, frustration and anxiety that are routinely generated by organisational stress.

Characteristics of the Toxic Handler

As well as being a compassionate listener, the toxic handler is skilled at finding solutions, often working behind the scenes to manage difficult situations and troublesome people. They are good at keeping confidences, which encourages others to confide in them. They provide the buffer between warring factions in the organisation, smoothing the waters so that the work of the organisation can continue without too much disruption. They may be the person who manages a difficult boss, diffusing negativity that would otherwise impact on staff.

While they play a vital role in maintaining a harmonious working environment for those around them, toxic handlers are at serious risk of burnout themselves. Sensitive to the needs of others, they may find it hard to “switch off” outside work. They are effectively taking on the role of counsellors, perhaps without any training in how to deal with emotional distress. Symptoms of burnout can include insomnia, headaches, chest pains, changes in weight, increased alcohol intake, low job satisfaction, depression and anxiety.

Supporting the Toxic Handler

Anyone who finds themselves in this role in an organisation needs to ensure that their own needs are being met. “Self-care” is a term that covers all the nourishing, strengthening and supportive things we need to do regularly to maintain a healthy body, mind and nervous system. These include eating healthily, taking exercise, getting enough sleep, having quality time with family and friends, and having fun. Discussing problems with a trusted colleague, friend or partner, can also be invaluable. External Support, which is part of the DFI Service Suite, is a service which provides a dedicated space, away from the workplace, for staff and Board directors to talk about work issues on a confidential, one-to-one basis. It allows for an objective look at the dynamics of difficult situations and provides an opportunity for new and creative approaches and solutions to be generated.

Maeve Halpin is a practising counsellor and Social and Organisational Psychologist, with many years’ experience in the Community and Voluntary sector, latterly as Chair of the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups. In conjunction with Maeve, DFI has launched an

External Supervision and Support Service for staff and Boards of DFI member groups.
More information is available at the following link

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=215>

Human Resource & Employment Law Update

The Disability Federation of Ireland, in conjunction with Adare Human Resource Management, has in place a support structure for member Organisations to avail of discounted Human Resource and Employment Law Support Services, exclusively for DFI members.

Dignity at Work

The term Dignity at Work is often used in the context of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying prevention in Organisations. Employers and Employees are required to work together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to Dignity at Work.

Behaviours that represent an affront to Dignity at Work would include harassment, sexual harassment or bullying. Every Employer has a duty to manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put at risk employee's safety, health or welfare at work or represent an affront to an Employee's dignity at work.

Prevention is the best way to minimise bullying, sexual harassment and harassment in the workplace. Effective policy and a strong commitment to implementation are required. The purpose of an effective policy is not simply to prevent unlawful behaviour but to encourage best practice and a safe and harmonious workplace where such behaviour is unlikely to occur. This policy is likely to be more effective when it is linked to a broader policy of promoting equality of opportunity.

It may be preferable that issues of this nature that arise are raised and resolved informally in the first instance, however, this is not always suitable or possible. Therefore, a formal procedure should be detailed within an Organisation's Dignity at Work policy.

Organisations should ensure that all Employees are aware of and understand the Dignity at Work policies and procedures that are in place in the Organisation.

For further information on the HR Support Services provided click on the link below:

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=50>

Garda Vetting Update

DFI would like to inform you about another pathway to accessing Garda Vetting for disability organisations.

As you are aware, DFI has facilitated access to Garda Vetting for disability organisations through some of our member organisations who have been recognised by the Garda Vetting Unit to. An additional pathway for Garda Vetting has now opened up for disability organisations through the National Recruitment Federation (NRF).

The National Recruitment Federation is a voluntary organisation set up to establish and maintain standards and codes of practice for the recruitment industry in Ireland. The authorised Garda Vetting Service provided by the NRF was started in June 2007. It was initially set up to facilitate employment agencies providing contract staff to the healthcare sector. Following referrals from both the Garda Central Vetting Unit and the HSE, the NRF now processes Garda Vetting forms for over one hundred and twenty different organisations both members and non-members of the NRF.

There is a dedicated NRF Garda vetting manager who will provide training and a back up service for the vetting process. The NRF charges a fee of €12.50 per application form, this covers the cost of training, processing the application form and any required back up. If you wish to use this service please contact Yvonne Collins at 087 1350681.

As stated previously, availing of Garda Vetting can greatly reduce the risks to organisations, the responsible board members and staff, and most importantly to the clients and members of that organisation.

Garda Vetting for DFI member organisation can now be obtained from the following organisations. Please contact the organisation directly.

Organisation	Contact Name	Telephone No:	Email address
Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	Lorraine Maher	01- 2804164	lmaher@abiireland.ie
Bluestack Foundation	Joe O'Grady	087-6709624	info@bluestackfoundation.com
Debra Ireland	Lynn Donovan	01-4126924	lynn@debraireland.org
National Recruitment Federation	Yvonne Collins	087 1350681	gvs@nrf.ie
Walkinstown Association	Ken Kearney	01-4650388	ken@walk.ie

If you would like more information on Garda vetting and appropriate Garda Vetting polices and procedures for your organisation please see our website at www.disability-federation.ie or contact your DFI Support Officer.

eTenders - MBS Strategic Procurement

Dublin City University Business School Executive Programmes Unit will be running a Graduate Diploma/MBS in Strategic Procurement Programme from October 2011. The National Procurement Service (NPS) in the Office of Public Works, and the National Public Procurement Policy Unit (NPPPU) in the Department of Finance, are endorsing this programme as an important component in developing strategic procurement education for both public and private sector bodies.

The programme operates on a modular basis over two years, with delivery based on a block release on Thursday, Friday and Saturday once a month during the academic year. The NPS/NPPPU encourages both public and private sector organisations to propose and support candidates involved in procurement in their organisations for inclusion in the Programme.

The NPS/NPPPU also encourages individuals who are interested in developing their procurement skills and capabilities to enroll in the programme.

The Programme has been successfully running since 2006 and the feedback from individuals from both the public and private sectors has been very positive.

Interested applicants are asked to contact phil.hughes@dcu.ie or helen.coleman@dcu.ie

Innovative Partnership

Enable Ireland National Assistive Technology Training Service & Dublin Institute of Technology Product Design

Enable Ireland's National Assistive Technology (AT) Training Service has been engaged in an innovative partnership with DIT's Product Design team for the past four years. Initial links focused on Enable Ireland contributing to an AT module, which led to final year Product Design students making a site visit, meeting with AT users, and developing a design concept to address barriers identified by AT users themselves. An annual Product Design Poster competition was initiated, with sponsorship by Ideal Technology in the first year and by BT in subsequent years. There are now over 60 Product Concepts in existence with a growing interest expressed by students in working with people with disabilities to address the challenges they experience in their everyday lives.

2011 sees an expansion of this partnership, with DIT's inauguration of its Community Design Challenge. Having secured funding through the Dublin Institute of Technology Foundation, AT users will collaborate with DIT students to develop practical AT solutions beyond concept stage to prototype stage. This development represents a real breakthrough in the level of collaboration, with a shift in focus from purely conceptual coursework from students to the actual fabrication of real AT solutions which we envisage may impact significantly on the lives of AT users and potential AT users.

Another exciting development involves the commencement of DIT's first IRCSET (Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology) scholarship-funded PhD in Assistive Technology. Scholarship winner, Pearl O'Rourke, is currently working on the development of a prototype communication device to enable users to communicate socially in a more efficient and effective manner.

Feedback from AT users in Enable Ireland indicates a high level of satisfaction with the current evolving model of collaboration. One of the recurring themes expressed by AT users

is their surprise at the level of commitment from students and their delight at the fact that barriers they identify are being seriously examined by others.

Already two international conference papers have been published, documenting the benefits of this collaboration, with plans for further publications over the coming year.

Enable Ireland and DIT will continue to grow this partnership over the coming years.

Open Information Session with the Open Training College

You are invited to an upcoming information event where you can explore the adult education opportunities that are available to staff and managers working, or currently seeking work, in the non-profit/human services sector.

What are the expected qualifications for someone working in the non-profit/human services sector today?

Are Continuous Professional Development modules available to the sector, and can past-pupils update their qualifications with newly developed accredited CPD modules?

What are the choices open to you regarding blended learning? What is it exactly?

What options are available to you in your region?

These are just a few of the questions that will be answered by Course Directors to those attending the Open Information Sessions in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

Please feel free to come along and enjoy some discussions around the current options open to you in your area regarding accredited Applied Social Studies and Applied Management courses, and accredited CPD modules.

Dublin: Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Marino, Dublin Tel: (01)805 7700 March 28th, 2011, anytime between 4:30pm and 7:30pm.

Cork: Cork Association for Autism, Greenville House, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork. Tel: 021-4883789, March 29th, 2011, anytime between 4:30pm and 7:30pm.

Galway: Woodlands Conference Centre, Brothers of Charity Services, Woodlands, Renmore, Co. Galway. Tel: 091-755241 March 29th, 2011, anytime between 4:30pm and 7:30pm.

The Open Training College is a division of St. Michael's House established in 1992 in response to a need to provide professional education and training programmes to staff working in services for people with a disability. We have been steadily growing our courses

and reputation since that time and now are a well respected, well established academic institute of excellence in our field. Recently, we have moved to providing management programmes to degree level to the wider non-profit sector – a move that was informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders from these sectors.

Please contact Conor Murray on (01)2988544 or cmurray@opentrainingcollege.com for further information

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016

HOUSING

Assessment of Social Housing Need, March 2011

In March local authorities across Ireland will be taking a measure of who is in need of social housing for use in planning future housing supply and allocation. Previous assessments have underestimated the number of people with disabilities who need social housing, with less investment to accommodate them the direct result. For example, the last count in March 2008 reported only 1,155 people with disabilities in need of housing.

Registering one's need and getting onto the local authority's waiting list is not easy, and voluntary disability organisations, advocates and others need to support people to do so. The IWA has taken the lead for the up-coming assessment, setting up a special website that offers a step by step guidance on registering. Their initiative, called "Operation Sign-Up", is one that people you work with may use. See further information on this initiative in the article below.

DFI urges people with disabilities and the voluntary organisations working with them to take advantage of the IWA resource, and undertake registration. In that way, we can produce the hard evidence to back implementation of the Government's commitment for appropriate housing for people with disabilities.

IWA calls on People with Disabilities to Register Housing Needs with Local Councils.

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) recently launched a new and innovative housing initiative to inform and educate people with disabilities about the benefits of applying for social housing. Operation Sign-Up aims to encourage and support individuals who wish to live in their own homes, but cannot do so from their own resources, to apply for social housing through their local City and County Councils.

Operation Sign-Up provides people with disabilities with the relevant and necessary information required to apply for social housing. The new housing website, www.iwa.ie/house is an accessible and easy to follow micro site, which includes a step-by-step guide to applying for social housing in the area in which the individual wishes to live. IWA has broken down the ten steps involved in the application process and has also listed all other relevant information an individual will require during the application process, such as contact details for local councils, information links to local health centres and tax offices, and also details of all local IWA centres.

All information and details about Operation Sign-Up and social housing can be found on this site. The housing micro site also provides information and details regarding many other housing issues including: the direct provision of housing; housing information; advice on housing tenures; and related services and supports.

This housing initiative has been developed by IWA to support its members to live as independently as possible. People with disabilities often have very specific housing and accommodation requirements. There are a variety of options available to meet each individual's circumstances and the new IWA housing micro site is designed to provide as much information as possible about the many different housing options available.

For more information about *Operation Sign Up* and housing for people with disabilities please log onto www.iwa.ie/house.

Funding for 2011 for Housing Adaptation Grants

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has announced the provision of €79.46 million for the housing adaptation grant schemes targeting older people

and people with disabilities. This amount does not include the 20% share required from local authorities, a contribution that some authorities appear to have difficulty making. In March 2010 the Department announced an allocation of €100 million for that year. In other words, Departmental funding for the grants has been cut by 21%! For the press release, dated 15/02/11, giving a county breakdown of the 2011 funding allocation, go to www.environ.ie

The evaluation of the grant schemes that commissioned by the Department over one year ago still has not been released.

Community & Voluntary Meeting

Community and Voluntary members of the Housing Linkage Group, including DFI, will meet senior housing officials of the Department on 31st March. Cuts in capital funding for social housing provision and adaptation grants will be on the agenda, as well as such issues as difficulties registering on local authority housing waiting lists. Anyone with housing policy-related concerns can let DFI know in advance of the bilateral meeting. Contact lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

TRANSPORT

Transport News from the European Parliament

An important vote took place recently in the European Parliament in relation to Passenger Rights Regulations, which will have positive consequences for passengers with a disability or reduced mobility. These will include, from 2013, the right of all bus and coach passengers to enjoy non-discrimination based on nationality, disabilities or reduced mobility, as well as financial compensation for loss or damage to mobility equipment in case of accident, regardless of the means of transport or length of journey.

You can read more about the new regulation in this news story by EU online media EurActiv: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/food/parliament-backs-new-rights-bus-coach-passengers-news-502178>

Please also see this European Parliament Press Release:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20110215IPR13670/html/Bus-passenger-rights-to-enter-into-force-in-2013>

HEALTH

Palliative Care Grants from Irish Hospice Foundation

As part of its mission to support the development of hospice / palliative care at home and abroad, the Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) operates a number of grant schemes. These grants offer development opportunities under

- A. Development activities (Applications via annual call)
- B. Sponsorship for specialist workshops
- C. Education/professional development
- D. Hardship fund

The Closing date for receipt of applications is 21st February 2011. For further information log on to www.hospice-foundation.ie

Launch of Obesity Hub

The Obesity Hub was established by the HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research (UCC/UCD) in collaboration with Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) and the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (Northern Ireland) (QUB). It aims to be an authoritative source of obesity related evidence, data and good practice, and to support the

strategic development and implementation of obesity prevention and management strategies across the island.

The launch will take place on 11th March 2011 from 10.30 am to 12 noon in Room C006, Health Science Building, University College Dublin – Belfield Campus. Registration will take place 10.00am and tea and coffee will be available.

Register your interest in attending these events by Wednesday, 9th March with Suzanne Kirk, The Institute of Public Health in Ireland, Tel+353 1 478 6300 Fax: + 353 1 478 6319
Email: suzanne.kirk@publichealth.ie www.thehealthwell.info or www.publichealth.ie

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Genio Trust update February 2011

In 2010 the Genio Trust, combining €3m Government health innovation funding with a contribution from the Atlantic Philanthropies, provided support to 50 disability and mental health projects around Ireland. Grants totalling more than €3.6m have been made to support over 100 individuals and increase opportunities for hundreds more.

Genio was delighted to announce on January 24th that an additional commitment of €2m Government innovation funding is being made in 2011 to the Genio Trust.

The additional funding for 2011 will enable Genio to focus on one or more institutions or hospitals, to support the transition of service users to living arrangements within the community, with a focus on facilitating their participation as included members of society. The funding will also be directed towards increasing the provision of family and community based respite care, as an alternative to traditional institutional models.

Genio is continuing to work closely with the Office for Disability and Mental Health, Department of Health and Children and the HSE in order to set out appropriate guidelines and criteria for application to this fund.

The team in Genio would like to thank you for your patience while the final details for grant applications are being decided they hope to have a further update early in March.

Please note: the criteria for applications to the Genio Trust for 2011 will differ from 2010. Genio are not in a position to accept any applications for funding until official information and guidelines are issued on www.genio.ie

Due to the current status of this process, Genio is not currently in a position to offer application advice to individual organisations.

If you would like to be kept informed of details please join [mailing list](#)

For enquiries please contact them by email at info@genio.ie

Marlinstown Office Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath Tel: 353 (0)44 9385940 www.genio.ie

Department of Social Protection Disability Consultative Forum Update

The last meeting of the Department of Social Protection Disability Consultative Forum took place on 13th December 2011. The following is a summary of the main issues of interest to our members.

Department of Social Protection Transformation Programme

The Core Functions Programme was announced in 2006 and is now being managed as part of the Department's Transformation Programme. It is also seen as a key element of the Public Sector Reform process.

Protracted Industrial relations issues have delayed progress to-date, but the HSE management have now made an offer to the staff concerned. As a result, the full cohort of staff involved will be seconded to the Department of Social Protection SP for 9 months from 1st January 2011.

At the end of this 9 month period the staff will be permanently transferred to the Department. This will give the Department a greater role in managing the Community Welfare Service and integrating it into the Department.

Currently, these staff carry out means assessments for medical cards and are involved in other HSE related work. They will continue this work for a period of 6 months to allow arrangements to be put in place for the HSE to resume these responsibilities. Approx 1,000 staff including Community Welfare Officers (CWOs) and support staff will transfer.

It is intended that, initially, CWOs will retain their individual approach and continue to work from current base location. However, co-location will be considered where opportunities arise.

The vision behind the Transformation Programme is to:

- Improve customer service by focusing on the individual rather than the payment
- Activate customers
- Engage people as fully as possible to maximise their potential contribution to society, community and workplace.

The transfer of Community and Employment Schemes from FÁS is also being progressed under the Transformation Programme. This will provide greater support for activation. It will also provide a more streamlined approach in dealing with the unemployed.

Legislation is currently going through the Dáil and from 1st January 2011, this Department will take over the funding and policy functions of the Community and Employment Schemes.

The transfer of the cohort of staff in FÁS dealing with Community and Employment Schemes and the relevant buildings etc. will be completed during 2011. The challenge for the Department is to provide an integrated service working with those transferring from FÁS and the Community Welfare Service.

Role out of Public Services Card

The Minister for Social Protection announced his ongoing commitment to fraud control to achieve savings. This is supported by the roll-out of the Public Services Card. The new card will include a photograph and more details about the customer. Eventually it will replace the Social Welfare Services Card and Free Travel Pass. The Initial target base will be people on Job Seeker Allowance and Job Seeker benefit.

New Civil Partnership Legislation

Under the new civil partnership legislation civil partnerships and cohabiting same sex couples will be treated the same way under the Social Welfare code as opposite sex couples. There will be differences in the text of communications to reflect this.

For queries or more information on any issue raised in this article please contact Louise McCann (Support Officer and DFI Lead for Department of Social Protection) at louisemccann@disability-federation.ie or 01 4250126).

Family Carers and the Census on Sunday the 10th April 2011

This Census provides a unique opportunity to quantify the unpaid work of Carers and will, for the first time, include under 15 year old Family Carers. The campaign is being organised by a group representing ten voluntary agencies, including DFI. The lead organisation is the Carers Association. The purpose of the campaign is to ensure that Carers are aware that Question 22 about “unpaid help” is about Family Carers, and to ensure that all Family Carers, part-time and full-time, complete it.

On examining the results of the earlier Census in Northern Ireland and the UK, we are convinced that Carers in Ireland are under-represented in our Census of 2006. The gap is mainly in the group of carers who are also in paid employment and under age carers, though there is also a deficit in the fulltime carers’ numbers.

The group, chaired by Frank Goodwin of the Carers Association, are now calling on all disability organisations to support the campaign. Specifically we are asking you to use the channels of your organisation and network, such as, newsletter, agenda of meetings, email circulation lists, notice boards, websites etc. to alert as many people as possible about Census Question 22 (Q22).

Accurate answers to Q22 depends on Carers:

1. Recognising that they are Carers and that Question 22’s “Unpaid help” refers to them.
2. Accurately counting their hours of caring per week.

We have included some material that you may consider using and the website contains helpful information for carers. (www.census.ie). This is a non-political campaign and is supported by the CSO. Please let us know if you will support this Carers Count Campaign and in what way. You may contact the campaign by e-mailing: cduffy@carersireland.com.

GENERAL INFORMATION

National Brain Awareness Week 7th to 13th March 2011.

Organised by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI), the umbrella group for over 30 neurological charities, this annual event aims to raise awareness of what it means to have a neurological condition.

Neurological conditions affect over 700,000 people in Ireland and include many common conditions such as stroke, migraine, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and acquired brain injury. Events are organised throughout the country to highlight the impact of living with a neurological condition.

Events include:

Monday March 7th: Launch of a drop in centre for people with neurological conditions by the Dublin Neurological Institute

Tuesday March 8th: A national conference on neurological care organised by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland: featuring presentations from leading specialists in neurological care in Ireland and the HSE (Dublin)

Thursday March 10th: 1st Neuroscience Symposium organised by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI Dublin)

Friday March 11th: A national exhibition on Memory in the Science Gallery Dublin with presentations and demonstrations open to the public

Look out for events nationwide organised by neurological charities locally

The full calendar of events is available on the NAI website, www.nai.ie

This year, the NAI will use the week to promote the messages of its national campaign for neurological care Thinking Ahead. Services for people with neurological conditions in Ireland lag far behind the rest of Europe.

With the number of people in Ireland developing neurological conditions set to increase dramatically in the coming years, as our population ages, we are rapidly running out of time to address this crisis.

The NAI will launch their national Action Plan for Neurological Care at their keynote conference on Tuesday March 8th 2011.

For further information on the campaign, visit www.thinkingahead.ie

SONAS Third National International Conference

This conference, Living Well with Dementia: Activity for Meaningful Lives, will be of immediate practical relevance to all those in the residential care sector who are providing care to older people who have dementia. A line-up of Irish and international experts will speak at the event, which will take place on Thurs 26th May, 2011 in Chartered Accountant House, Pearse St, Dublin 2

To book: contact Sonas aPc at (01) 2608138 or book online at www.sonasapc.ie. Email: sonasapc@iol.ie

Citizens Information Phone Service's new Live Advisor facility

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) to you. Whilst CIPS is primarily a Lo- Call phone service, we would like to draw your attention to there new Live Advisor service: www.ciboard.ie/liveadvisor

Live Advisor is an instant chat service operating between the hours of 9am and 5pm (Monday to Friday) which is targeted specifically toward people with hearing and speech difficulties and to others who have difficulty communicating by telephone. CIPS provides information on public services and on the entitlements of citizens in Ireland.

If you need any further information on the Live Advisor service or the work of CIPS please email phoneservice.admin@citinfo.ie and we will be happy to help.

Citizens Information Phone Service phoneservice.admin@citinfo.ie

Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board.

National Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration

The Annual National Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration was held on 30th January 2011 in the Mansion House, Dublin.

There were a number of speakers at the ceremony, and the commemoration event included readings, survivors' recollections, candle-lighting and music.

The theme for the event was "Learning from the past – Lessons for today". The commemoration cherished the memory of those who perished, and recalled the persecution and annihilation of millions of innocent men women and children who were murdered by the Nazis. Also included among the list of those murdered by the Nazis were people with disabilities.

This is an annual event and invitations are sent to a wide range of people or groups representing those listed as among the effected.

John Dolan addressed the Commemoration in his capacity as CEO of the Disability Federation of Ireland. The following piece was read out by John.

"The Nazis considered all people with intellectual and physical disabilities as 'life unworthy of life'. In order to eliminate such people from society, the Nazis initiated the T-4 Euthanasia Programme. Initially, children were targeted, but very soon it included adults with intellectual disabilities, who were resident in psychiatric institutions. Officially, the T-4 Euthanasia Programme was halted in 1941 following a public outcry led by Bishop von Galen, but the programme continued clandestinely throughout the war. It is estimated that the Nazis killed more than 200,000 people with disabilities. The grim efficiency of the machinery of mass murder developed for T-4 proved a model for later Nazi extermination programmes"

For further information on the National Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration please contact the Holocaust Education Trust, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2 Phone 01-669-0593, Email info@hetireland.org or visit www.hetireland.org

The Irish Hospice Foundation Ethical Framework

The Ethical Framework is an educational resource aimed at health professionals, patients, families and the public. It has had contributions from ethicists, legal experts, theologians, sociologists and clinicians. It looks at moral and ethical issues around End of Life.

The Framework is the outcome of a unique collaboration between University College Cork, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and the Irish Hospice Foundation. It is possibly unique internationally, as it is based on extensive research both in Ireland and abroad.

Access the Ethical Framework on: <http://www.hospicefriendlyhospitals.net/ethics>

Volunteering Opportunities

SBHI, Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland was established in 1968 by a small group of parents whose children had Spina Bifida and / or Hydrocephalus. Today, SBHI has over 1,500 members and has branches in all four provinces, as well as a professionally run National Resource Centre based in Clondalkin, Dublin 22. SBHI was established to promote the care, welfare, interest, treatment, education, advancement and rehabilitation of persons with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland is now recruiting energetic and willing volunteers and staff for SHINE 2011 (Spina Bifida, Hydrocephalus Ireland Nurturing Empowerment), a residential Summer Independence Training Programme for teenagers and young adults with Spina Bifida and / or Hydrocephalus from all around the country. Apply online today at www.sbhi.ie/get-involved.html. Opportunities are available in the areas of Education, Health, Sports, Arts, Social Care & lots more

If you have any questions, please contact Christine or Helen Youth & Respite Team at 01-4572329 or shine@sbhi.ie, or our SHINE team at the National Resource Centre Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland (SBHI) National Resource Centre, Old Nangor Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Ireland, at the same number, or www.sbhi.ie

Pat Matthews conferred with an honorary doctorate from Trinity College Dublin.

The Irish Society for Autism is delighted to announce that Pat has been conferred with an honorary doctorate from Trinity College Dublin.

Pat Matthews, Executive Director of the Irish Society for Autism and Past President of the World Autism Organisation, was conferred with a Doctor in Laws (LL.D) at Trinity College Dublin on Friday 10th December 2010. During a lifetime of commitment to people with autism he has changed the ways in which people with autism are regarded and treated in society. He has campaigned most forcefully nationally and internationally for the rights of people with autism and has pioneered a deeper understanding of autism and his work has established an ethos of respect and regard for people with this disability.

Shopmobility Enniskillen

Shopmobility Enniskillen offers the use of a scooter or a manual wheelchair to any disabled or elderly person who needs help to make their journey to Enniskillen easier. The service is available from 10:00 to 16:00 Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays can be arranged on request. There is no service currently on a Sunday.

A child's wheelchair is also available, but this needs pre booking because of storage limitations in the office. If required the service can arrange for somebody to accompany the user on their shopping trip or visit as long as we have some notice of this.

The service is free of charge, but membership is required before any of the vehicles are taken out. There is no membership fee but anybody interested in joining should bring some form of postal id – preferably with a photo – and a passport size photo for their membership card. It is preferred that bookings for the scooters or wheelchair are made at least 24 hours in advance by telephoning either Claire, Stefan or Karen on 048 6632 9965 from the South or 028 6632 9965 within the six counties.

A voicemail is in operation too so, if callers don't get an answer, they should leave a message and somebody will call them back. For further information from Claire Cullen Coordinator, Shopmobility Enniskillen, Translink/Ulsterbus, Wellington Road Enniskillen, BT74 7EF

Tel: 028 66 329965 E: enniskillensm@live.co.uk Web: www.shopmobilityenniskillen.com

Newsletters

For information please contact the relevant organisation directly.

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

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, Freefone 1800 403 403

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

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

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

Debra Ireland Newsletter, Tel: 01 678 5044, E-mail:
info@debraireland.org

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

Enable Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 1850 204 304 E-mail:
communications@enableireland.ie

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

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

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

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

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

GROWing - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474, E-
mail: info@grow.ie

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Irish Deaf News - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-
8601910; 01-8601878; E-mail: info@irishdeafsociety.ie

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

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News
066-7180611, E-mail: kerryPWDI@eircom.net

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

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

DeafHear.ie - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail:
info@deafhear.ie, Minicom: (01) 817 5777

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

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland,
Tel: 01-8726338, E-mail: nfaireland@eircom.net

People First - Central Remedial Clinic Tel: 01-8057400
E-mail: 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

SonasaPc – 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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