

# Disability Federation of Ireland



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

## NEWSLETTER MAY 2010

### Has the Disability Act Delivered?

As required by Section 6 of the Disability Act 2005, the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is reviewing the operation of the Act in 2010.

Looking back over the last five years, and at how the Disability Act has worked for people with disabilities, we need to consider what has been achieved and if more progress could have been made. The Act contains provisions over a wide range of issues that concern the inclusion of people with disabilities. The Act gave an expectation of major positive change. Key areas are:

- the entitlement to an independent assessment of need for health and personal support services and a service statement in Part 2 of the Act.
- an obligation on public bodies to ensure their public buildings and services are accessible as far as practicable
- substantive requirements about complaints and appeal processes and
- the obligation on six departments of government to formulate and implement comprehensive sectoral plans to ensure that they comply with the provisions in the Act.

Five years on, DFI is deeply concerned that the operation of

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the Act is not nearly as effective as it could be. Of course there have been improvements in accessing public and social services and infrastructure but not nearly enough. One can readily cite a number of areas.

Part 2 on health services has commenced only for children under the age of five, and even within that small cohort, problems persist, whereas the accessibility of services such as training, education, general health services and their outcomes for people with disabilities continue to be poorly monitored.

Section 13 of the Act requires a report on unmet needs to be provided to the Minister for Health and Children on an annual basis but with the commencement of the Independent Assessment of Needs not progressing beyond age 5 this cannot turn into the potent planning tool that was envisaged.

Overall there are concerns that there does not yet exist a fully functioning information management system along with timely and focussed support and direction for the Act within the context of the NDS, in other words, effective project management. There are significant State resources available to support the Act and the NDS, starting with the role of the Department of the Taoiseach, the Disability Equality Unit, (currently in Justice but moving to the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) the NDA and the Office of the Minister for Disability and Mental Health, but to date there is no sense that things are working optimally to ensure progress across the broad public service. Determined and ongoing leadership from central Government is urgently required.

Finally, the Review needs to consider that the Act was given further understanding and expression within the Disability Lifecycle in *Towards 2016*, the *Programme for Government '07* and the *Renewed Programme for Government '09* and these need, to be considered fully in this Review.

The Disability Act, as part of the National Disability Strategy, encapsulates the hopes and ambitions of people with disabilities, and the families and organisations who support them. This Review must not be seen only as a technical exercise but it must protect these hopes and ensure their delivery in these difficult economic conditions.

**John Dolan**  
CEO





## **DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND**

*Supporting organisations to enable people with disabilities*

*An advocate for the voluntary disability sector*

### **Notification of the AGM of DFI**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held:**

**Venue:** Disability Federation of Ireland, Fumbally Court,

Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8

**Date:** Friday 14th May 2010

**Time:** 9.15a.m. (*Light breakfast available from 8.30a.m.*)

# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## DFI Service Suite

DFI Service Suite is a unique package of solutions that has been purposely designed to support, and create growth opportunities for DFI member organisations. Through the relationships that DFI has built with external organisations, as well as our internal expertise, DFI Service Suite has developed a comprehensive range of specially discounted, member-exclusive services.

For more information on DFI Service Suite visit our website <http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=221> or contact the main office on 01-4547978 or your DFI Support Officer.

## Garda Vetting

Best HR Management Practice is that all organisations carry out Garda Vetting process for their paid staff and volunteers. Regularly vetting staff and volunteers greatly reduces the risks to the disability organisation, the responsible board members of that organisation, other staff, and most importantly the clients and members of the organisation. DFI can provide assistance to organisations in obtaining access to Garda Vetting and can also assist in drafting Garda Vetting policies.

We understand that for various reasons many DFI member organisations have been unable to obtain Garda vetting for their staff and volunteers. DFI have been working with the Gardaí to rectify this situation. Six Garda Vetting networks have been formed around six lead DFI member organisations to process Garda Vetting for other member and non-member organisations. To date a number of organisations have been assigned to these six networks to avail of the Garda Vetting service. If you don't yet have access to Garda Vetting and would like to benefit from the DFI Garda Vetting process please contact Eleanor Reece for more information on [eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie](mailto:eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie) or on 01-4547978. The DFI Garda vetting service is part of the DFI service suite for organisations

## SKILL Programme

SKILL stands for Securing Knowledge Intra Lifelong Learning, and is aimed at increasing the education, training and development of support staff and their supervisors in the Irish health and personal social services area. This FETAC accredited Training (levels 5 and 6) is provided through a programme of blended learning, where experience gained in the work environment is combined with attendance in a learning environment during the modules and home study.

Full information on the SKILL Programme is available from the website [www.skillprogramme.ie](http://www.skillprogramme.ie) from regular updates on the DFI website [www.disability-federation.ie](http://www.disability-federation.ie) and from contacting Cathy McGrath on 01 4250124.

Over 700 staff from 27 DFI Member Organisations are currently undergoing SKILL Programme Training in VECs throughout the country.

### SKILL Programme Information Session

Two SKILL Programme briefing sessions were held in Dublin and Galway earlier this year, to update staff and their line managers on what the SKILL Programme entails. These sessions were delivered jointly between the National Federation for Voluntary Bodies (NFVB) in Galway and DFI in Dublin. The Dublin event was streamed live for staff of the Centre for Independent Living in Kilkenny. Information and presentations from these briefing sessions are available from Cathy McGrath on 01 4250124 (DFI) or Jillian Sexton on 091 792316 (NFVB).



*Pictured Left to Right Cathy McGrath (DFI), Jillian Sexton (NFVB), Ciaran Dolan (Drumcondra VEC).*

## **SKILL Programme Graduation Ceremonies**

A graduation ceremony was held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010 for staff from DFI participating member organisations who graduated from SKILL Programme Training Programme since 2006. Awards were made at FETAC accredited Level 3, 4, 5 & 6 accredited programmes for Support Staff and Line Managers/Supervisors.

## **DFI SKILL Programme Critical Mass Site (CMS) approach to Training – 2009 / 2010 Evaluation**

The CMS approach allows for a number of staff from one particular employer to simultaneously participate on the SKILL Programme apart from the general SKILL Programme participants. For SKILL, the benefit is that the impact of the courses and the project on the workplace will be more easily seen. For DFI member organisations it allows for a greater level of involvement in the delivery of training to a particular cohort of staff, in this case personal assistants. DFI will continue monitoring this new approach to training within SKILL Programme, for its impact on staff and their participating organisations.

Currently a CMS is being delivered in a joint approach between Mayo CIL, Rehab Care and Irish Wheelchair Association. Now mid way through the training feedback from participants on their experience of this training approach has been gathered. You can download the full report on this CMS here:

<userfiles/file/Mayo%20CMS%20Evaluation.pdf>

<userfiles/file/EVALUATION%20OF%20MAYO%20CMS%202009.doc>

## **Training for Complaints Officers – HSE**

The HSE will run two training sessions for Complaints Officers in DFI member organisations on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 and Wednesday the 9<sup>th</sup> June from 10 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. in the DFI Boardroom, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8.

Under the Health Act 2004, voluntary organisations may have obligations under Part 9 of the Act regarding the establishment of complaints procedures. An organisation is obliged to comply with the Act if :

- it receives funding under Section 38 of the Act

- it receives funding under Section 39 of the Act
- it uses HSE facilities, for example to hold meetings.

Organisations eligible under Part 9 of the Act must have a nominated person to manage complaints, the “Complaints Officer”. The Complaints Officer is a person who is designated by the organisation for the purpose of dealing with complaints made in compliance with the Complaints Procedures established under the Act. Under Part 9 of the Act, voluntary organisations are obliged to ensure that their complaints procedure is compliant. This can be done by e-mailing your complaints procedure to [nicolaj.williams@hse.ie](mailto:nicolaj.williams@hse.ie). Information regarding the development of a complaints procedure can be found on the DFI website

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=85>

Spaces are still available for the DFI event on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June. As places are limited, if you would like to send your Complaints Officer to the meeting please e-mail [eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie](mailto:eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie) by Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010, stating the name of the person attending, with Complaints Officer Training in the subject line. Please contact Eleanor Reece, DFI Support Staff, on 01-454 7978 if you have any questions.

## **‘A Day in the Life’**

### **A National Cross-Disability and Mental Health Public Event**

This event, which took place on 19<sup>th</sup> April, profiled ‘A Day in the Life’ of people with disabilities and mental health difficulties in Ireland, who are supported to live full lives as included members of their communities. The event was held by Genio, a non-profit organisation established in March under the name of The Person Centre. The name was changed to Genio in April 2010. The focus of the organisation is on accelerating the availability of proven, cost-effective, personalised supports and information, enabling people with disabilities and mental health difficulties at risk of social exclusion to lead full lives.

Speakers included John Moloney T.D., Minister for Disability Equality and Mental Health, Martin Rogan, HSE Assistant National Director of Mental Health Services, Siobhan Barron, Director, National Disability Authority, amongst others.

In his presentation, Minister John Moloney stated that 'there is universal agreement that people with disabilities and mental health difficulties should be supported to live self-directed lives, in so far as is possible, and to valued as equal citizens.' He noted that the overwhelming support for the event from individuals and statutory and voluntary organisations gave him 'hope and confidence that positive change is in progress'.

Further information on the event, and n the work of Genio, is available on [www.genio.ie](http://www.genio.ie)

## **The Community Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) programme**

### **Free ICT Help**

If you would like to get access to low cost computers, free software and free software training then read on. Access to the best available technology not only helps NGOs fulfil their missions, but it also enables them to reach more people and even drive transformational change. Whether they are small organizations using software to run local offices or global humanitarian assistance operations with complex technical systems, Microsoft helps NGOs gain access to existing software, curriculum, and technical knowledge they need to fulfil their mission.

The Community Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) programme helps schools, voluntary organisations and the communities that they serve gain access to low-cost computers. These refurbishers supply refurbished, high-quality computers complete with licensed copies of Microsoft Windows and Office.

### **[Access to software](#)**

Free and Greatly Discounted software to meet your needs is offered by MAR for the greatly discounted software, eligible charities can apply for up to 6 software titles, with 50 licences of each every two years.



### [Access to Help & Training](#)

From basic instruction to advanced certification, Microsoft has a learning solution to help support the goals of your NGO. Get the most out of the software you have invested in!

To avail of all above please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/ireland/community/> and select "Assistance for Charities"

## **HEALTH**

### **National Physical and Sensory Disability Database**

#### **Direct Access update 2010**

The National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD) Direct Access Pilot Project Phase 1 commenced in 2009. This was a pilot project designed to examine how physical and sensory disability organisations could be directly involved in the management of data on their clients on the NPSDD system. Although this is common practice in terms of the National Intellectual Disability Database (NIDD), to date the HSE has been responsible for data entry and management of data on the NPSDD. Four agencies participated in this pilot.

#### **The Benefits of Direct Access**

The NPSDD is managed by the HRB on behalf of the Department of Health and Children and the system is securely hosted in the local government computer services board with 24/7 back up support. There is no licensing fee to access the system. The system is flexible and open to change to meet the needs of service providers.

Direct access is a way to inform and participate in a national planning tool and as well as the added benefit of being able to run off reports on the service needs of your client group that can serve an agency's information needs. It is envisaged that future development of the NPSDD will align with the National Intellectual Disability

Database (NIDD), enabling agencies to collect case based data in addition to the national data. This extra level of data will not be accessed nationally by the HSE, HRB or Department of Health and Children. Development of such a module will require agency input. An agency user group will be convened to discuss and gain consensus on what should be included.

In addition, if an agency has an information system already in place it is still possible to be involved.

For individuals with disabilities, the database is an opportunity to identify his/her service needs to the national system and inform service planning and delivery at national and regional levels. It highlights unmet need for services by geographical area. However, if a person does not participate in the database it does not preclude them from receiving services they need. Participation is voluntary.

### **Next Steps**

Phase 1 of this Project has now come to a close. A feedback session was held in September 2009. Recommendations made at that time are currently being progressed by the Health Research Board (HRB) through the national committee forum and discussions with DFI and individual agencies. It is anticipated that the pilot agencies will reconvene in April/May to receive report training on how to design reports and also to discuss progress made with recommendations.

In addition to phase 1 agencies, the HRB has met with a number of other agencies in 2010 to discuss the potential of direct access for those agencies. Some have committed to participation in direct access in 2010 and training dates for staff are being organised.

If you are interested in finding out more about the direct access project please contact Mary-Ann O'Donovan, Research Officer, Health Research Board, at [modonovan@hrb.ie](mailto:modonovan@hrb.ie) or 01-2345117

### **Eligibility for Independent Needs Assessment**

A recent High Court judgement, reported in the *Irish Times* on 22<sup>nd</sup> April indicates that in future, under part 2 of the Disability Act, the HSE should not refuse to assess any child who was under five years of age on 1 June 2007. The judgement referred to European law, and it confirmed a decision by the Disability Appeals Officer, which

the HSE had appealed. At issue is interpretation of the Commencement Order of June 2007.

The judgement implies that for children born between 1 June 2002 and 1 June 2007 whose disability did not manifest itself before they turned five, should still be able to avail of the entitlements in Part 2. This includes obtaining an Independent Assessment of Need, and, if meeting the Act's definition of disability, to a Service Statement. The HSE had confined eligibility to those under five years of age at the time of their application. The judgement does not imply that a child born after 1 June 2007 can apply for an assessment at any age.

## **The HSE & You: Consultation Document**

### **Submissions welcome**

A consultation document, developed by the Department of Health and Children and the HSE, aims to inform and empower individuals, families and communities to actively look after their own health and to influence quality healthcare in Ireland. The document is called 'The HSE & You: What service users can expect from the HSE and what the HSE can expect from service users 'People Caring for People' .

Feedback on the document in the form of submissions is now being sought. Closing date for receipt of submissions is Friday 21st of May 2010. To download the consultation document and for any further details please click on the following:

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/ysys/new/hseyou.html>

The deadline for receipt of submissions is Friday, May 21, 2010. For any further information or queries please email [june.boulger2@hse.ie](mailto:june.boulger2@hse.ie) or call 045 882544.

## **IMO Position Paper on Universal Health Coverage**

The Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) has published a short paper that sets out principles for the Irish health care system that include universality, free services at the point of access, and equality of access. At the same time the paper notes that "Government policy is actively increasing the use of private funding." Either a tax-

based or single social insurer system with appropriate subsidies is favoured by the IMO, particularly as preventing the diversion of funds elsewhere is a concern.

Other points are made in the paper to which people with disabilities will readily relate:

- Advances in diagnostic and screening technology are leading to earlier interventions and developments in pharmaceuticals and monitoring of chronic diseases means more patients can be treated in a community based setting.
- Universal health care on its own cannot resolve the issue of access to services. The public hospital system is already open to all but it is over-stretched.
- Due to failure to invest in primary and community based services and long-term care facilities, many people cannot get the kind of care that best suits their needs.
- The aging of the population makes reform of Ireland's health care system an urgent priority

The website of the Irish Medical Association is: [www.imo.ie](http://www.imo.ie)

## **Seminar on Financing Healthcare**

The Adelaide Hospital Society and the Department of Public Health and Primary Care at Trinity College held a conference on 14<sup>th</sup> April "Financing Universal Healthcare in Ireland – The Way Forward". Experts on social insurance schemes for delivering universal health care spoke about the legislation just passed in the United States, and experience with schemes in a number of European states. The Society launched its report on how to start shifting to the provision of universal healthcare coverage in Ireland. In addition Trinity College researchers summarised their latest report on the challenges and benefits of introducing social healthcare insurance in Ireland, outlining how universal coverage could be achieved without imposing unaffordable costs. For both publications contact [www.adelaide.ie](http://www.adelaide.ie)

### **Relevance to disability issues**

Universal care, where people do not have to pay for primary care, hospital care or for prescriptions, clearly would be advantageous to people with disabilities. For example, the current risk of becoming ineligible for a medical card after taking up

employment would not longer apply. Further, a universal access system is likely to focus much more on preventative measures and keeping people in good health.

It is also important to recognise the critical importance of cost controls under a scenario of extending coverage. Indeed the American speaker Dr Ezekiel Emanuel, amongst other things an advisor to President Obama, devoted much of his talk to the various ways in which the Act focuses on management of costs and on allocating resources in line with objectives. A key objective he identified was improving care for people with chronic illnesses since this currently absorbs a huge share of health spending. The focus on value for money and directing spending on getting better health outcomes for people at risk is very much the theme of the Value for Money and Policy Review of the HSE's Disabilities Services Programme that is now underway.

## **See Change Project**

### **Ideas Competition**

See Change is Ireland's new national partnership to reduce stigma and challenge discrimination associated with mental health problems. It is an alliance of organisations working together through the National Stigma Reduction Partnership to bring about positive change in public attitudes and behaviour towards people with mental health problems. The Vision of See Change is that of an Ireland where every person has an open and positive attitude to their own and others' mental health.

See Change is looking for ideas on how best to deliver its vision. Ideas could be around a memorable campaign slogan, or it could be an idea to reduce stigma and to challenges discrimination. A prize of €5000 is being offered for the best idea received.

The key messages of the See Change are:

- Mental Health problems can affect anyone at any time during their lives
- People with mental health problems can and do recover
- People affected by mental health problems are entitled to the same human rights as everybody else in society, without discrimination

- Every person – whether you have been personally touched by mental health problems or not – has the power to help stop the stigma and discrimination of mental health problems

The aims and objectives of See Change are to:

- Reduce stigma associated with mental health problems and challenge discrimination
- Create an environment where people are more open and positive in their attitudes and behaviour to mental health
- Promote greater understanding and acceptance of, and support for, people with mental health problems
- Create an environment where people with experience of mental health problems are empowered to gain equality, respect, and rights

For more information, log on to [www.seechange.ie](http://www.seechange.ie)

## **EDUCATION & TRAINING**

### **FÁS National Advisory Committee on Disability (NACD)**

The NACD met on 13 April and was given an update on the changes at FÁS. Although there is still much uncertainty, it appears that FÁS as an entity will transfer to the Department of Education and Skills, although employment and community functions would then move to the Department of Social Protection. The new, smaller FÁS Board has identified three goals: employment, training and social inclusion. It will be establishing sub-committees, one of which is likely to be responsible for employment, community, business policy and social inclusion. NACD may continue under this umbrella. Officials hoped that the shift would occur by May. The long term future of FÁS, except as a front-line face, appears to be unclear. NACD highlighted the need for the training and employment activities in FÁS to continue to

get advice from disability stakeholders, and the Chair will be writing to FÁS about retaining the Committee.

Statistics on FÁS activities were presented.

- The total number of people with disabilities placed in jobs was 2,069 in 2009, or 16% less than in 2008. However the statistics are not fully comparable for technical reasons.
- Looking at the Wage Subsidy Scheme, the numbers increased by 15% to 728 persons while the Supported Employment Scheme fell by the same percentage, to 726 persons.
- The number of people either reporting a disability or on a disability benefit who registered with FÁS fell in 2009 and was 26% below the target that had been set.
- On the other hand the number of people with disabilities completing programmes in 2009 was higher than in 2008 and slightly above the target set.

FÁS officials said that in future targets will be set on a regional basis since more responsibilities are being decentralised.

## **NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016**

### **Review of the Disability Act (2005)**

Section 6 of the Disability Act (2005) states that, “The Minister [of Justice, Equality and Law Reform shall], not later than 5 years after the commencement of this Act, carry out a review of the operation of this Act.” An information event about the Review was hosted by the NDA on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

At the event Government officials emphasised that the sections of the Act would be examined in terms of how they are operating, not in terms of the policy behind them. The Act contains a range of provisions including

- Part 2 on the independent assessment of need for disability-related health and personal support services, and the service statement based on that assessment.
- Part 3 establishing a legal duty to ensure public services are accessible and setting deadlines for compliance with accessibility standards for public buildings.
- Part 3 also requires six key government departments to have sectoral plans that outline measures taken, complaints procedures, reporting on progress. Cross departmental working is specified in several cases.
- Part 6 relating to the 3% minimum target for the number of people with disabilities employed by public bodies
- Part 6 on the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the NDA.

Little time is being provided for this Review; There is a template available on which comments must be made by stakeholders, and submitted by 4th May, 2010. A copy of the template and further information can be obtained from

[lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie](mailto:lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie)

### **Meeting between the Disability Stakeholder Subgroup for DSFA and the Department of Social Protection**

The Disability Stakeholder Sub-Group (DSG) for the Department of Social Protection (DSP) (formally the Department of Social and Family Affairs) comprises representatives from six umbrella groups. It meets six times a year and at least twice with Senior Department officials.

The last meeting between the Subgroup and department officials took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010. The following provides a synopsis of some of the issues that were discussed.

#### **Publication of the DSP Sectoral Plan for Disability 2010-2012**

The publication of the DSP Disability Sectoral Plan 2010-2012 has been delayed on the basis that it must be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas for approval.

Furthermore, the DSG subgroup is aware that restructuring of Government Departments may cause further delays to the publication of the DSP Disability Sectoral Plan, as Family Affairs no longer sit with the Department and all actions



relating to this may have to be transferred to the relevant Department. DFI will keep members updated on these developments through our newsletter as they arise.

### **Partial Capacity**

Provisions in the forthcoming Social Welfare Bill provide for the introduction of a pilot Partial Capacity Scheme. The precise details of the scheme are being developed at present and will be set out in Regulations to be introduced later in the year. The pilot scheme will be confined initially to those who apply for exemptions from the conditions governing entitlement to Invalidity Pension and Illness Benefit in order to take up employment.

It is envisaged that applicants for such exemptions will be assessed to determine their employment capacity and, depending on the level of capacity assessed, will receive a reduced rate personal payment. Any increases payable in respect of qualified adults or children will not be affected.

The introduction of a Partial Capacity scheme is intended to provide a policy response to address:

- A gap in provision in relation to the variation in the capacity of recipients of a range of illness/disability/invalidity payments to engage in the active labour market;
- As a result of Budget 2009 measures, a potential need to cater to recipients of Illness Benefit (IB) who will exhaust entitlement from January 2011 onwards;
- Activation/support for maximising the capacity of this cohort of SW recipients; and
- Inconsistencies and anomalies in the way the current system of exemptions across the relevant schemes works

### **Review of Disability Allowance**

A comprehensive policy review of the DA scheme is currently being subjected to an external Quality Assurance assessment with a view to its subsequent publication.

The review has been examining a range of issues associated with the scheme including:

- The range of factors behind the substantial increase in the numbers availing of the scheme – from some 36,000 when the scheme was initiated in 1996 to some 100,000 now. These include demographic changes, enhancements to the scheme (e.g. improvements in the means test and the extension of the

scheme to people in full-time residential care), migration from other welfare schemes, greater medicalisation and improved diagnoses; as well as control and other issues.

- The effectiveness of the income with the disregard of €120 per week and tapered withdrawal arrangements in encouraging the take up of employment opportunities by those on DA.
- The approach taken to activation of people with disabilities having regard to the outcomes to date of the EU-funded Disability Activation project and in the context of ongoing resource limitations
- Structural issues – including the case for amalgamating the Blind Person's Pension and the DA scheme
- Administrative issues

If you have any queries with regard to this committee, please contact Louise McCann (DFI Support Officer) who is secretary to the group. Her contact details are 01 4250126 or e-mail [louisemccann@disability-federation.ie](mailto:louisemccann@disability-federation.ie)

### **National Disability Survey**

In 2001 Government decided that the Central Statistics office (CSO) would conduct a National Disability Survey (NDS) after the Census of Population. During 2002 to 2004 the NDA initiated work on developing a disability questionnaire using the social model of disability. A small pilot survey was undertaken by the ESRI to test the questionnaire. CSO was part of the Steering Group overseeing this project. Government accepted NDA proposal for a large-scale survey and asked CSO to undertake it. The survey is now complete, and the Volume 2 has been published. The main purpose of the Survey was to establish the severity and impact of disability. The situation of people with a disability was examined in nine areas, caring and help from other persons, attitudes of other people, transport, accessibility to the built environment, education, work and training, social participation, sport and exercise. Some general issues were included, such health, use of medication, and smoking.

The results in this report relate to the 8.1% of the population who reported a disability in both the Census of Population and in the National Disability Survey. The questionnaires posed a number of questions in relation to a number of areas:

- Caring and help from other people
- Attitudes of other people
- Transport
- Built environment accessibility
- General

The main findings of the survey presented in detail in Chapters 2 to 10 of Volume 2 of the survey, which is available to download from [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION**

### **DFI & Care Alliance Ireland Joint Seminar**

A very lively and thought provoking discussion took place at a recent seminar organised by DFI and Care Alliance Ireland regarding the interface between the carers sector and the disability sector. It was the first time that the disability sector and the carers sectors came together in a seminar to discuss issues of joint interest. Speakers included Sara Jacobsen from Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Ireland (SBHI) and Kate Power from Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (MDI) who gave very insightful presentations on the services that they provide to family members, whether it be through family support services, or youth and respite services. Sean Dillon from Carers Association gave an overview of the training opportunities that exist for Family Carers, and Lillian Buchanan from DFI also presented on the current pressures and opportunities for both sectors in the context of the Department of Finance Value for Money review. Discussion was chaired by Marie Lynch of the Irish Hospice Foundation who challenged participants to consider how we might come to view both the person with a disability and their carer as both being central without compromising the needs or rights of either. Following on from the discussion, DFI

and Care Alliance are to put a discussion paper together on this topic. For further information contact Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer, DFI.



*Pictured Marie Lynch, Development manager Irish Hospice Foundation and Sean Dillon, Head of Services, Care Alliance, In discussion at DFIs recent seminar on the interface between the disability and carers sectors.*

## **Care Alliance Ireland**

### **Launch of “Family Caring in Ireland – An Overview”**

This report is intended for use by those with an interest in Family Carer issues in Ireland. For the first time, the significant research on Family Carers in Ireland is brought together in one report. The report looks at issues such as defining Family Caring, working carers, health and wellbeing of carers, carer support services, young carers, and life after caring. Of particular interest and support to those currently researching the area, as well as those currently delivering carer support services, this resource, part funded by the Citizens Information Board, will be updated regularly on [www.carealliance.ie](http://www.carealliance.ie)

Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7

Tuesday May 4<sup>th</sup> @ 1pm sharp: A light lunch will be served

If you would like to attend please contact Care Alliance by Tuesday April 27<sup>th</sup>

Email: [info@carealliance.ie](mailto:info@carealliance.ie) or Phone: 01 874 7776

## **Getting on with “A Fair Deal”**

Age Action Ireland have been seeking people’s views and individual experiences of the roll out of “A Fair Deal” over the last six months. To date, 6,323 applications have been made for the scheme and Age Action is interested in hearing any further views on the scheme. They have sought clarification on some of the issues arising for those applying and have found that there is a lack of clarity around the social care professional responsible for the care needs assessment, and it was also difficult to access a care representative.

Some of the issues they have clarified include the following:

- Someone who has been a privately paying patient for the three years prior to entering the scheme will not be asked to use their home to fund care.
- People entering a nursing home and waiting for their financial assessment will be required to pay the cost upfront, and once assessed will have payments back dated.
- Waiting lists operate on a first-come first serve basis, not on a needs basis.
- Family Carers can no longer avail of respite in private nursing homes using subvention grants.

To provide further feedback, please contact Lorna Roe at Age Action either by phoning 01 4756989 or by email at [fairdeal@ageaction.ie](mailto:fairdeal@ageaction.ie)

## **Housing Needs Assessment Consultation Document**

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) circulated a consultation document outlining how it would approach regulation of housing needs assessment, as it is now empowered to do under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. The DOEHLG paper will result in new instructions for local authorities dealing with applications for social housing.

Although the time allowed for feedback was extremely short, a number of member organisations and others advised DFI in preparing a submission to DOEHLG.

While welcoming the move to introduce greater standardisation in the assessment process across the country, DFI’s submission questioned the approach taken in the

document on several grounds. We expressed concern that the assessment would not identify the nature of the housing need of people with disabilities nor the extent of the need, because the document failed to appreciate the diversity amongst people with disabilities. In addition, the approach risked channelling anyone with a disability into a 'special needs housing' category although general purpose social housing could suit many people with disabilities. DFI recommended that DOEHLG incorporate the learning gained in developing a National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities, on which the drafting is almost complete.

DFI's submission is available on the website [www.disability-federation.ie](http://www.disability-federation.ie)

## **Housing Supply**

On 8 April the Minister of State for Housing, Michael Finneran, T.D., notified local authorities of their 2010 capital allocations for housing. A total of €96 million is targeted at special needs housing for people with disabilities, older persons and homeless persons. It is not clear how much if any is available for new projects during the year. The Minister reiterated that priority is being given to the leasing scheme as a means of delivering housing for those in need. However it is not clear that property owners are coming forward to use this scheme in sufficient numbers.

## **National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities**

The National Advisory Group did not meet during April. However Departmental officials and the subgroup looking at the draft text are working to finalise the document for the Minister's consideration.

## **ComReg Survey of Telecommunications Services**

ComReg is conducting a survey of telecommunications services with respect to consumers with disabilities. Millward Brown Lansdowne is the research organisation contracted to assist ComReg in this regard.

Surveys have been issued by People with Disabilities in Ireland (PWDI) and DeafHear to some of their members. If you have a disability or would like to complete the survey on behalf of someone with a disability and have not received the survey already, you can get a copy of the survey in standard print format or audio format from ComReg (contact Barbara Delaney at 8049759) or go online to: [www.askcomreg.ie](http://www.askcomreg.ie).

## **EVENTS**

### **Brain Aware Training Programme**

#### **For Family Members Caring For and Supporting Someone with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)**

Do you have a family member who has a brain injury?

Would you like to develop your skills and knowledge of ABI to help you in your caring role?

Would you like to learn in an environment with other family members?

If so you will be interested in a Training programme being run by Acquired Brain Injury Ireland as follows:

Sligo Southern Hotel – May/June 2010;

Whitford House Hotel, Wexford – Sept/Oct 2010;

Green Isle Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin – Sept/Oct 2010; Galway City – Nov/Dec 2010

For further information contact: Una Kinane at (01) 2804 164 Ext. 207

Mobile: (087) 257 8235: Email: [ukinane@abiireland.ie](mailto:ukinane@abiireland.ie)

## **The Carers Association National Conference 2010**

### **Launch of 'Under the Radar- A Focus on Young Carers'**

This Conference will launch the national study of young carers commissioned by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and undertaken by the Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway;

The findings of the study will be presented, and the impact that caring has had on their lives will be explored, and mechanisms will be examined through which young Carers in Ireland can be identified and supported. The event will take place on Friday 7th May, 2010, in the Croke Park Conference Centre Dublin for further information contact Lee Ann Greville; Tel: 057 9322 920 E-Mail [lgreville@carersireland.com](mailto:lgreville@carersireland.com)

### **New Options Alliance**

#### **National Conference 13th & 14th May 2010**

The purpose of this conference is to provide an in depth look at some innovative person centred service arrangements in Ireland for people with a range of disabilities. The event will look at designing sustainable supports for individuals while taking a lead from people with disabilities and families

When: Thursday 13th and Friday 14th May 2010

Where: Portlaoise Heritage Hotel, Co. Laois

#### **Colloquium on Disability Law and Policy**

On 26-27 April NUI Galway is hosting an international conference at which a wide range of research papers will be discussed on disability law and policy. There is a small registration fee to attend. Subjects covered include

- The right to legal capacity
- The right to independent living
- Definitions of disability
- Effective national strategies for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of people with Disabilities
- The right to accessibility



- The right to inclusive education
- Mental health law and disability

For information go to [www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp](http://www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp)

## **Disability Law & Policy, Summer School, 2010**

### **Teaching Programme**

24th May – 4<sup>th</sup> June

Contact Details: Disability Summer School, Centre for Disability Law and Policy,  
National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland

Website: [www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp](http://www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp)

Email: [events.cdlp@nuigalway.ie](mailto:events.cdlp@nuigalway.ie)

Tel: +353 (0)91 494012: Fax: +353 (0)91 496669

SMS/Text messaging: +353 (0)87 6660634

### **DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

#### **Ireland's National Programme for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**

Regional Seminars as part of Ireland's National Programme for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

The Community Workers' Cooperative, the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland, with the support of the Community Platform have been contracted by the Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Social and Family Affairs to organise four half-day regional seminars as part of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Each regional seminar will address (1) Child Poverty (2) Access to quality work and learning opportunities; (3) Access to services – with a particular focus on older people; (4) People with Disabilities.

11<sup>th</sup> May      Galway,      13<sup>th</sup> May      Dundalk,

18<sup>th</sup> May      Wexford,      3<sup>rd</sup> June      Cork

The project partners are keen to ensure that as many people experiencing the issues are involved in the seminars and would be glad to work with you to ensure this. To register your interest in the seminars, or for further information, contact [2010@cwic.ie](mailto:2010@cwic.ie)

## **GENERAL NEWS**

### **Irish Sign Language Interpreting Service**

Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) is the national agency for the provision of sign language interpreting services in Ireland. It is supported by the Citizens Information Board. It is an independent voluntary body with its own board of management.

The interpreters that are registered with the Sign Language Interpreting Service are professionally qualified and have satisfactorily completed an accreditation process

You can contact Sign Language Interpreting Service at:

Sign Language Interpreting Service

c/o Citizens Information Board

Hainault House, The Square, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Tel: 353 1 4139670: Fax: 353 1 4139677: Mobile: 087-9806996

Email: [bookings@slis.ie](mailto:bookings@slis.ie) or go to [www.slis.ie](http://www.slis.ie)

### **Study Visit by Austrian Delegation**

As part of a study visit to learn about disability policy and its implementation in Ireland, the Austrian delegation consisting of parliamentarians, senior government officials and journalists; came to DFI on 15 April. The delegation was lead by Franz Wolfmayr who has been an active member of the European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD).

The particular interest of the Austrians at the DFI meeting concerned the role of social partnership in progressing the disability agenda. DFI explained how disability issues became a social partnership policy priority, and outlined the challenges still faced in implementing the agreed policy.

## 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](mailto:info@iasbah.ie)

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: [info@arthritisireland.ie](mailto:info@arthritisireland.ie)

Aspire - Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland. 01-8780027/9, E-mail: [admin@aspire-irl.org](mailto:admin@aspire-irl.org)

Asthma Society News - Tel: 01-8788511, E-mail: [office@asthmasociety.ie](mailto:office@asthmasociety.ie)

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121, E-mail: [info@migraine.ie](mailto:info@migraine.ie)

Brainwave - Quarterly Newsletter, Tel: 01 4557500, E-mail: [info@epilepsy.ie](mailto:info@epilepsy.ie)

Care Alliance Ireland - E-mail: [ndo@carealliance.ie](mailto:ndo@carealliance.ie)

Clar na nÓg - National Youth Council of Ireland Tel: 01-4784122 E-mail: [info@nyci.ie](mailto:info@nyci.ie)

Cleft Lip and Palate Association of Ireland - [www.cleft.ie/newsletter/index.htm](http://www.cleft.ie/newsletter/index.htm), Tel: (01) 2848227, E-mail: [georginawade@cleft.ie](mailto:georginawade@cleft.ie)

Community Exchange Newsletter, E-mail: [info@activelink.ie](mailto:info@activelink.ie), Tel: +1 667 7326

Connect - Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association. E-mail: [info@imnda.ie](mailto:info@imnda.ie), Freefone 1800 403 403

Community Workers' Co-operative – Community Work News. E-mail: [info@cwci.ie](mailto: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](mailto:homeless@dublincity.ie)

Cumhacht - People with Disabilities in Ireland [http://www.pwdi.ie/news\\_events/newsletter/index.htm](http://www.pwdi.ie/news_events/newsletter/index.htm), E-mail: [info@pwdi.ie](mailto:info@pwdi.ie), Tel: 01-8721744

Debra Ireland Newsletter, Tel: 01 678 5044, E-mail: [info@debraireland.org](mailto:info@debraireland.org)

Down Syndrome Ireland - Tel: 01-8730999, E-mail: [info@downsyndrome.ie](mailto:info@downsyndrome.ie)

Enable Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 1850 204 304 E-mail: [communications@enableireland.ie](mailto:communications@enableireland.ie)

Equality News - Tel: 01-4173333, E-mail: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)

E-Info Deaf Source— E-mail: [info@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto: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](mailto:info@feach.ie)

Fighting Blindness - Tel: 01 7093050, E-mail: [avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie](mailto:avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie)

Frontline of Learning Disability -Tel: 01-2862649. E-mail: [frontline@indigo.ie](mailto:frontline@indigo.ie)

GROWing - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474, E-mail: [info@grow.ie](mailto:info@grow.ie)

Guidelines - Irish Guide Dogs Association. Tel: 021 4878200 E-mail: [info@guidedogs.ie](mailto:info@guidedogs.ie)

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

Heart News: - Newsletter of Irish Heart Foundation. Tel: 01 668 5001 E-mail: [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie).

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

Heatwave - Irish Raynauds Scleroderma Society, E-mail: [info@irishraynauds.com](mailto:info@irishraynauds.com), Tel: 01 2020184

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

Inclusion Ireland - Tel: 01 8559891, E-mail: [info@inclusionireland.ie](mailto:info@inclusionireland.ie)

Irish Deaf News - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-8601910; 01-8601878; E-mail: [info@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:info@irishdeafsociety.ie)

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

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News 066-7180611, E-mail: [kerryPWDI@eircom.net](mailto:kerryPWDI@eircom.net)

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

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-8721501, E-mail: [info@mdi.ie](mailto:info@mdi.ie)

DeafHear.ie - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail: [info@deafhear.ie](mailto: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](mailto:press@ncbi.ie), [www.ncbi.ie](http://www.ncbi.ie)

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8726338, E-mail: [nfaireland@eircom.net](mailto:nfaireland@eircom.net)

People First - Central Remedial Clinic Tel: 01-8057400 E-mail: [vmmcutch@crc.ie](mailto:vmmcutch@crc.ie)

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: 071 64791 E-mail: [newsletter@ppsg.ie](mailto:newsletter@ppsg.ie)

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

Rehab News -Tel: 01-2057200 E-mail: [dara.duffy@rehab.ie](mailto:dara.duffy@rehab.ie)

Simon News - Simon Community, Tel: 01-6711606 E-mail: [info@simoncommunity.com](mailto:info@simoncommunity.com)

S.I. News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620 E-mail: [info@sirl.ie](mailto:info@sirl.ie)

Social Housing - Irish Council for Social Housing Tel: 01-6618334; E-mail: [info@icsh.ie](mailto:info@icsh.ie)

Sonas aPc – Tel (01) 2608138. [www.sonasapc.ie](http://www.sonasapc.ie).

Speaking up for Advocacy – Citizens Information Board Newsletter on advocacy. Tel: 01 6059035, E-mail: [mairide.woods@ciboard.ie](mailto:mairide.woods@ciboard.ie)

Volunteer Stroke Scheme News- Tel: 01-4559036. E-mail: [info@strokescheme.ie](mailto:info@strokescheme.ie)

Wheel E-Bulletin Tel:01- 454 8727, E-mail: [info@wheel.ie](mailto: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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