



Disability Federation of Ireland

Newsletter

An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector

Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities

September 2009

Improving Delivery Through Corporate Governance

All of our organisations are operating in a challenging environment. Service pressures, cuts already in place, along with anticipated further cuts can potentially blur our sense of direction and control of situations. We are also affected by the contention that there are too many voluntary disability organisations and too much duplication of work.

Leaving these pressures aside, we have an ongoing responsibility to enhance the direction, relevance and performance of our organisations.

Since the publication of DFI's current Strategic Plan by its National Council in 2003, we have committed to advancing organisational capacity across our membership. At a time when the major focus was on the development of disability legislation and the National Disability Strategy, DFI recognised the key role that "healthy" disability organisations would play on the journey along this new pathway. The "Chairpersons as Effective Leaders" programme, SKILL Programme, and DFI's 2007 conference, "Count Me In", which focussed on inter organisational collaboration, were all important parts of this process. We have forged structured and stronger relationships with organisations within and beyond the disability movement to add value to this work.

Over the past few months we have brought these and other services together in our new programme, 'Service Suite', to further support our member organisations. Key to this is our increasing focus on organisational governance and capacity, as delivered through our programme, the Organisation Healthcheck and PQASSO quality assurance system. (More about PQASSO on pages 2& 3).

Behind all of this practical work is the realisation that the promise of the National Disability Strategy, that people with disabilities will be able to live full and active lives, requires the best organised and co-ordinated efforts of the voluntary disability sector. In the past, the efforts of the growing voluntary disability sector encouraged a Government level response to the disability question. There is no doubt that it will be through a reinvigorated sector, with its many, varied and valuable organisations, working together and with the State, that the National Disability Strategy will be fully implemented.

In light of the challenges we all now face, in parallel with implementing the policy of mainstreaming, it is all the more necessary that we continue to improve the health and fitness of our organisations so that we can drive forward the delivery of full and equal citizenship for all people with disabilities in Ireland.

John Dolan

Date for your Diary:

DFI Pre Budget Submission Launch Mansion House 8th October 2009

DFI will hold an invitation only event on the 8th October 2009 in the Oak Room of the Mansion House. Member organisations, members of the Oireachtas and the media will be invited to attend the event in order to discuss critical issues affecting people with disabilities. This will be an opportunity for disability organisations to meet with politicians and the media and to outline their own priorities for Budget 2010.

For further information in relation to this event please contact John Doyle on johndoyle@disability-federation.ie

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DFI Staff Member Qualifies as first PQASSO Mentor in the Republic of Ireland



Dermot O'Donnell

DFI is pleased to announce that Dermot O'Donnell, DFI Support Officer for Organisations, has become the first licensed PQASSO Mentor in the Republic of Ireland. PQASSO, the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations, is a key component and support to DFI's Service Suite, and is fast becoming the most widely used quality assurance system in the

community and voluntary sector in the UK (see article following - *'PQASSO Quality Mark receives Charity Commission stamp of approval'*).

PQASSO is an 'off the shelf' quality assurance system that offers a practical step-by-step approach to self-assessment by organisations against twelve quality standards. However, PQASSO is far from a bookkeeping exercise - it is all about improving the way we do our business and enhancing the services we provide to others.

In June 2008, funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, DFI appointed Dermot O'Donnell as Support Officer for Organisations, with specific

emphasis on organisational development. Following initial research, and working closely with the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups and The Wheel, PQASSO was identified as an appropriate quality assurance system for the voluntary disability sector as a process which clearly assists organisations in working more efficiently and effectively in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

In January 2009, the DFI Organisation Healthcheck was initiated with a number of member organisations, and, to date, 25 DFI member organisations, including both the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups and DFI itself, are at various stages of involvement with, and implementation of, the Organisation Healthcheck and PQASSO, supported by the relevant DFI Support Officer.

Increasing organisational capacity and internal working structures are supported in DFI through its network of Support Officers. This type of organisational support has become more relevant to member organisations due to the changed working environment resulting from new legislation and monitoring, the gradual introduction of standards, and decreased funding. Examples of these changes include:

- Charities Act 2009
- HSE Service and Grant Aid Arrangements
- Increasing regulation across all Government bodies
- Economic recession and resulting decrease in statutory, philanthropic and fundraised incomes
- Demand by funders for evidence of quality assurance and measurement of outcomes

DFI's approach over the last few years has been to develop practical responses to the changing landscape within which the community and voluntary sector operates. In early 2009, DFI formalised this by the introduction of the DFI Service Suite.

Responses and initiatives that have been developed include:

- DFI support for the involvement of member organisation in the DFI Organisation Healthcheck / PQASSO
- DFI / Certified Public Accountants joint publication - 'Keeping the Books'
- DFI publication - 'Chairpersons as Effective Leaders'

- DFI / Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Organisations jointly run course – ‘Chairing the Organisation’
- DFI implementation of the SKILL Programme for supervisory and support staff of DFI member organisations
- Development of DFI Garda Vetting Networks to ensure staff and volunteers within organisations are vetted fully, in line with HSE and other Government department requirements
- DFI support for the introduction of Human Resource Support Services through Adare Human Resource Management

Organisational supports will continue to be developed by DFI, in collaboration with our partners, The Wheel and Carmichael Centre, to ensure that organisations can continue to provide a quality service to members / service users.

For further information on Organisation Healthcheck and PQASSO, contact Dermot O’Donnell on 01 425 0125 / 086-780 8639, dermotodonnell@disability-federation.ie or your DFI Support Officer. There is also information available at <http://www.oneworldtrust.org/csoproject/cso/initiatives/results/?loc=country&country=80>.

PQASSO Quality Mark receives Charity Commission stamp of approval

DFI’s chosen Quality System, PQASSO, was recently endorsed by Dame Suzi Leather, Chair of the Charities Commission for England and Wales. Dame Suzi



noted that ‘The Charity Commission has announced its endorsement of the PQASSO Quality Mark - the new 'kite- mark' for the third sector’. She went on to say that ‘the Commission, was *"delighted to welcome the PQASSO Quality Mark to our growing family of endorsed quality standards"*. **Organisations that achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark at levels 2 and 3 will be able to use the Charity Commission's Charity Quality Standards stamp**

Dame Suzi Leather

confirming that they are accredited by standards that meet the Hallmarks of an Effective Charity”.

PQASSO, developed by Charities Evaluation Services (CES), is widely recognised as one of the leading quality systems in the third sector. This announcement gives the assurance that the standards comply with those of the regulator, at a time when the role of accredited quality standards is growing in importance for the sector.

Dame Suzi stated *"Without evidence of both beneficiary need and a charity's ability to meet that need in terms of quality and fitness-for-purpose, there is no compelling reason for a funder to hand over cash or a commissioning authority to award the contract"*.

This latest endorsement, following on the position adopted by the Scottish Executive in December 2008, requiring organisations funded from the public purse to implement PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations), reinforces DFI's decision to select PQASSO as the Quality Assurance System of preference, for supported implementation by itself and its member organisations.

At present, DFI is pioneering an “All Ireland PQASSO Mentor Network”, to provide a reservoir of knowledge and support to groups within the sector implementing PQASSO in their organisations. Dermot O'Donnell, DFI Support Officer for Organisations, is leading the roll-out of both the “Implementing PQASSO” and “PQASSO Mentor Network” projects. See previous article for further information and contact details and further information on PQASSO.

South East Physical & Sensory Platform Meeting

Many DFI member organisations in the South East are struggling to continue to provide services and supports in this time of cutbacks, and it seems that more cutbacks may be on the way. At a recent meeting of DFI representatives in the region a decision was made to have a full Platform meeting with organisations who do not have their own representative seats on HSE structures (e.g. Regional and Local Co-Ordinating Committees. The aim of the meeting is to facilitate discussion on the real issues which are affecting organisations and those they support at this time. This information is essential so that we can work on behalf of organisations

within the HSE financial prioritisation structures and in other forums on which we sit, and where we may hear about additional supports which could be made available to organisations. DFI would also like to be in a position to highlight the impact of cutbacks on those you provide services and supports to and also highlight the impact on the services provided by organisations.

DFI would also like to set up a more cohesive communication structure in the South East in order to keep organisations updated on feedback from these meetings, and also to create better channels of communication through which organisations can notify us of any emerging issues. To this end, DFI would like to invite organisations to bring their issues and concerns, proposed solutions, and information on any joint working arrangements, collaborations, etc., to a meeting in the **Springhill Hotel Kilkenny on Wednesday September 30th, 10.30- 3pm**. One of the expected outcomes from the meeting will be an understanding of the key priorities of organisations, and the drafting of an action plan to work on these matters collectively for the remainder of 2009 and into 2010.

DFI has sent a survey document to members in relation to their current situation and look forward to receiving your responses. Meantime, we would also urge you to attend the meeting on September 30th so that you can avail of support and information from other organisations with similar concerns to yours. Non DFI members are also welcome to attend. Please let us know by Friday September 7th if you would like to attend. Further information is available from P.J. Cleere, DFI Support Officer, South East, 059 9179431 M. 086 3811064 pjcleere@disability-federation.ie

Carmichael Centre

Autumn Training and Development Programme

The Carmichael Centre Autumn Training and Development Programme is available at <http://www.carmichaelcentre.ie/trainingandsupport/courses.php>. The Centre is due to launch a new website at the end of the summer and hopes to offer the option of booking online. Reservations can be made by post, fax or email. For further Information: T: 01 873 5285 Fax: 01 873 5283 e: tss@carmichaelcentre.ie

HEALTH

Training for Complaints Officers in Voluntary Disability Organisations

Under the Health Act 2004 (Part 9) voluntary organisations who receive funding from the HSE have obligations 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, or
- it uses HSE facilities, for example to hold meetings.

Under Part 9 of the Act, voluntary organisations must submit their policies and procedures for dealing with complaints to the HSE for validation, to ensure that the policies and procedures are compliant, and are of a comparable standard to the HSE policy. This can be done by e-mailing your organisation's complaints procedure to the Consumer Affairs Area Manager for your area, contact details below:

- Christopher Rudland, Area Manager, Consumer Affairs, HSE West
Tel: 091 775751 Email: consumeraffairs.west@hse.ie
- Debbie Keyes, Area Manager, Consumer Affairs, Dublin Mid Leinster
Tel: 057 93 57600 Email: deborah.keyes@hse.ie
- Sinead Byrne, Area Manager, Consumer Affairs, South
Tel: 056 7785598 Email: sineadj.byrne@hse.ie
- Rosalie Smith-Lynch, Area Manager, Consumer Affairs, HSE Dublin North East
Tel: 046 9280551 / 049 4360462/435 Email: rosalie.smithlynch@hse.ie

Information regarding the development of a complaints procedure can be found on the DFI website http://www.disability-federation.ie/information_complaints.htm.

Organisations must have a nominated person to manage complaints, the 'Complaints Officer', designated by the organisation for the purpose of dealing with complaints made to it, in compliance with the Complaints Procedures established under the Act. The HSE is now undertaking training for Complaints Officer. A training session for DFI member organisations will be held on **Thursday 24th September 2009 in the DFI Offices, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8**

from 10am until 4pm. As places are limited, if you plan to send your complaints officer to the meeting please e-mail jacquelinethomson@disability-federation.ie as soon as possible, stating the name of the person attending and providing contact details. Please contact Jacqueline Thomson, DFI Support Officer if you have any questions.

Mental Health Services Research Programme

The focus of this Mental Health Commission Research Programme is to support the creation of research partnerships to carry out innovative, high quality, multi-disciplinary mental health services research in Ireland. Proposals are invited on the following two key priority research themes:

- Theme A: Research on Quality in Mental Health Services
Full details from www.mhcirl.ie
- Theme B: Research Related to the Impact of Part 2 of the Mental Health Act 2001. Full details from www.mhcirl.ie

Funding

Two Research Programme Grants in Mental Health Services Research are available. The programmes will be expected to run for a maximum period of four years and each programme may receive funds up to the value of a €150,000 per annum.

- Working Together for Quality
- Mental Health Services

The Mental Health Commission, an independent statutory body, established under the Mental Health Act 2001, promotes high standards of care and best practice in the delivery of mental health services and ensures that the interests of those involuntarily admitted to Approved Centres are protected.

To Apply: Full details of the Mental Health Commission Research Grant Scheme and guidelines for application, which include details of eligibility criteria and an

application form, are available on the Mental Health Commission's website at www.mhcirl.ie or from:

Marina Duffy, Mental Health Commission, St. Martin's House, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4; Tel: (01) 6362400; E-mail: marina.duffy@mhcirl.ie

Closing date for applications is: 5.00pm, Friday 2nd October 2009

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016

Review of the Disability Act Sectoral Plan of the Department of Health and Children (DoHC)

Departmental Sectoral Plans are key to the successful implementation of the National Disability Strategy, and to reaching the long term goals for people with disabilities, committed to in *Towards 2016*, the Social Partnership Agreement. In operation since 2006, the aim of the Sectoral Plans is to direct Departmental efforts to facilitate access for people with disabilities to all public services and facilities and to develop certain disability-specific services, such as increased provision of personal assistants in the case of DoHC. A revised Sectoral Plan must be published by the DoHC by the end of 2009. This should reflect achievements to date and respond to the changing context in which we are currently experiencing.

The DoHC's consultation includes an invitation to organisations such as DFI to complete a questionnaire for submission by 11th September. The questionnaire carefully distinguishes between the Department as the policy driver and the HSE as the service provider, asking respondents to identify achievements on each front, and suggestions for improvements or changes to the Plan. It then seeks proposals based on resource implications, with respondents invited to identify what, if any, added resources would be required. There is no reference in the invitation to either the squeeze on resources already being experienced within disability services, or to the fiscal context that the DoHC envisages for the Plan over the next three years.

While recognising certain accomplishments, such as the start of the Independent Assessment of Need (IAN) process, DFI is strongly critical of the level of progress to date. DFI points to the failure of the Department to insist that the agenda set in 2006

is implemented as planned, for example, by protecting resources allocated to disability services. The HSE's failures on a number of fronts are cited, including the inadequate inclusion of people with disabilities in the transformation of community care services, and the limited efforts to work with voluntary disability organisations as partners. DFI is proposing a number of improvements, some of which involve reconfigurations rather than additional resources, to reinvigorate the next phase of the Sectoral Plan.

Further information from DFI Support Officer, Jacqueline Thomson.

Consultation on Proposed Revision of Part M (Disability Access) of the Building Code

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley T.D., has released a consultation document on the **proposed Revision of Part M the Building Regulations (Disability Access)**. The Consultation Documents can be viewed and downloaded at the Department's website at www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentandHousing/BuildingStandards/PublicConsultations/ Submissions on the proposals must be received by the Department by 9th October 2009.

The disability sector has been seeking an improved Part M of the Building Code for some time. DFI will hold a meeting for member organisations and others interested in the proposed changes and the impact for people with disabilities. This meeting will be chaired by Martin Naughton, DFI Support Officer, and will include brief presentations by experts from the National Disability Authority and Dublin City Council.

The meeting will take place on **Monday, 7th September, 2009, in DFI, from 11am to 1pm, tea and coffee available from 10.30am**

Location map <http://www.pininthemap.com/pp6e6f6ffece2e257f9> To confirm attendance for this meeting please contact Eleanor Reece eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie.

Update on Housing Programme Developments

Like other sectors of the public and private economy, housing programmes over recent months have been subject to announcements of cutbacks and retrenchment. People with disabilities who are inappropriately housed, and the voluntary organisations working with them, are affected when funding for social housing investment is reduced by 16% below the 2008 level, and when Local Authorities close applications for housing adaptation grants. Most recently, the 'McCarthy Report' suggests that our housing associations might raise more funds themselves based on their existing assets as a way of trimming public outlays.

But the news is not all bad, in part because the adverse environment is stimulating some new thinking about delivering housing services. The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), for example, has a proposal to deploy some of the suitable housing and land going into the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) for use as social housing. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government is now focusing on leasing housing to address waiting lists as a partial substitute for new investment, an initiative that may accommodate some people with disabilities.

The National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities is nonetheless being completed when the economic environment is far from favourable. The Department insists that the strategy will be implemented within existing resources. To ensure that the commitment to housing tailored to needs is not washed away in the recession, it is important for people with a disability and voluntary disability organisations to impress on their local authorities and TDs the very positive social environment that has been established through the National Disability Strategy.

Our sector needs to inform those influencing and implementing housing policies about evidence that any cutbacks in housing investment represents false economy. Cases where a person has to be institutionalised because their home needs adaptations, where someone becomes homeless because of a lack of personal supports for maintaining his tenancy, or where a mother cannot properly supervise her children because she cannot get upstairs all result in costs to the state far in excess of the housing investment required.

Information on the ICSH's proposal can be viewed at

http://www.icsh.ie/eng/services/publications/ics_h_publications/ics_h_briefing_paper_on_nama

NATIONAL / LOCAL GOVERNEMENT

Dail Debates & Parliamentary Questions

Inclusion Ireland has developed a web resource through which users can search Dáil Debates and Parliamentary Questions for specific items and references to issues concerning people with a disability and their families. This is a very useful development, and Inclusion Ireland are to be congratulated on developing this resource. Parliamentary Questions and Debates are divided by topic and date. The section is regularly updated. http://www.inclusionireland.ie/news_oreachtas.asp If you have any comments on how this resource can be more user friendly please contact info@inclusionireland.ie.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Progress Report from the Department of Social and Family Affairs

The Department of Social and Family Affairs has released its draft report on developments during 2009 in implementing its Disability Act Sectoral Plan. The Plan has been in operation since late 2006. The report focussed on the Department's work in transferring benefits payments, such as the Domiciliary Allowance, from the health to the welfare function, on reforming medical assessment for applicants, and on the Disability Activation Project being piloted in the Midlands area.

In commenting on the report, DFI expressed concern that the momentum for achieving the goals for people with disabilities, established by Government and the social partners, appears to be slackening. While welcoming the protection of disability benefits in recent budgetary measures, it noted that the Personal Advocacy Service (PAS) remained on hold despite the risk that cuts in community and disability service funding were adversely affecting the most vulnerable. DFI also noted its regret that the Department did not contemplate progressing development of a

framework for a cost of disability package of payments and supports, although the need for this has been well documented.

DFI welcomed the fact that funding of the Midlands pilot, which is financed in part by the EU, was secure, and that programmes have been initiated in Athlone and Longford as well as in Mullingar. The importance of applying the learning from the project across the country was emphasised, and the significance of participation in activities outside the open economy for many of those involved was noted. DFI recommended that the Project take greater advantage of the expertise of voluntary disability organisations when seeking to 'activate' people with a disability.

DFI commended the Department on producing an informative report that tied activities on disability to the Department's strategic plan. Finally it highlighted the imperative of protecting benefits for people with disabilities, especially in times of recession and cutbacks.

People with Disabilities in Need of Social Housing

Measuring the nature and extent of housing need amongst people with disabilities continues to confound the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and others trying to plan. The Department admits that the official count of households in need of social housing – last conducted in April 2008 – inadequately covers this group. Although many voluntary organisations worked to get people registered on local authority waiting lists, obstacles persisted that meant some housing need remains hidden.

Even within the official count for 2008, the numbers are misleading. For example, Dublin City Council (DCC) reported only 15 households in need as a result of disability. At the same time, DCC counted 389 households with older people in need, 159 in need for medical or compassionate grounds, and some 4,322 people listed in other categories, many of whom may have disabilities. Further, there is no information collected on the nature of the need for housing, such as the health and personal supports that may be required, or the physical accommodation essential to make a standard house accessible.

The Department's intentions around incorporating better information into local authority housing action plans still lack practical detail. DFI and others involved in advising on the development of a national housing strategy for people with disabilities are arguing for a housing needs assessment process that is disability-friendly, and includes recognition that people currently accommodated in institutions or the family home may prefer to live more independently.

Information on the 2008 housing needs assessment, and also on the social housing output of housing associations and grants provided under the various housing adaptation grant schemes are reported by the Department in the *Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin 2008* which is available on the web at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/StatisticsandRegularPublications/HousingStatistics/FileDownload,20957,en.pdf>.

Emergency Call Answering Service

DFI has come together with Deaf Hear, The Irish Deaf Society and the Irish Hard of Hearing Association to make a submission to the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on the provision of an accessible emergency call answering service for deaf and hard of hearing people.

BT Ireland was recently awarded a contract to provide 112 and 999 call answering services on behalf of the State. The service is currently provided by Eircom. The contract, awarded following the public procurement process, will see BT Ireland operate the service for the next five years from mid 2010. The Department, BT Ireland and ComReg have conducted a consultation process to which DFI has contributed. The submission can be found on DFI's website. For further information please contact Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer.

FUNDING

Work Placement Programme

The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment is offering a Work Placement Programme scheme to assist small to medium enterprises.

This Programme is a new initiative designed to give unemployed people, including unemployed graduates, the opportunity to gain six months work experience during the economic downturn. It is targeted at people that have been unemployed for some time and who are unable to find paid work. For unemployed graduates it offers them the opportunity to get some real-life work experience that will help them in their search for paid employment. The Programme, run by FÁS, will be offered to 2,000 unemployed people who have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for the previous six months. Employers who are interested in providing a work placement can find [information and an application form on the FÁS website www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie).

Further information: FÁS National Contact Centre freephone 1800 611 116.

CARDI announce Call 2 of their Grants Programme

CARDI (Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland) is a not for profit organisation developed by leaders from the field of 'ageing' in Ireland (North and South), including age focused researchers, academics, and statutory, voluntary and community sector representatives, with support from Atlantic Philanthropies. It is overseen by a Steering Group and hosted by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland.

CARDI has announced that Call 2 of CARDI Grants Programme is now open. In Call 2 it is expected that approximately €300,000 in awards will be offered. Awards of up to €25,000 will be made for research projects and up to €10,000 for networks.

Applications must be submitted by 15.00 hours (3pm) on Friday 2nd October 2009.

www.cardi.ie/grantprogramme has full details.

Further information: Paul McGill, Strategic Research Officer, CARDI,

Tel: 00353(0) 867 904 158 or Kate Morris, Communications Officer, CARDI, Tel: 00353 (0) 867 927 684

The Centre for Ageing Research and Development, 5th Floor Bishop's Square,
Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2, Ireland, t: +353 1 478 6308 / f: + 353 1 478 6319

Grants from Sustainable Energy Ireland

Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), the national authority responsible for promoting and assisting in the development of sustainable energy use, administers a number of grant programmes for eligible householders to invest in energy saving measures. The means-tested “Warmer Homes Scheme” or the “Home Energy Saving Scheme” may help some people with disabilities, but care is needed to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria and the application process. Information is available at www.sei.ie/hes.

A number of DFI’s Regional Support Officers are working with local voluntary organizations to assist them in supporting clients with a disability who wish to apply for a SEI grant. For more information, please contact michaelcorbett@disability-federation.ie

Ulster Community Investment Trust

The Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) was established in 1995 in response to decreasing grant support from government, and the difficulties experienced by community organisations in accessing commercial loan facilities. The organisation now stands as a key provider of loan finance and support to the social economy sector in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Since becoming operational in January 2001, UCIT has approved loans totalling in excess of €35 million to over 200 community organisations and social enterprises.

As a registered charity, all profits generated by the Trust are recycled for reinvestment into the community and social economy sector. Loans are available for many purposes including refurbishment of premises, the construction or purchase of new property, purchasing equipment, bridging funding gaps, restructuring existing debt and working capital.

The organisation helps community organisations, charities and social enterprises located in rural and urban areas across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Trust offers competitive interest rates, no arrangement fees or penalties against early repayment, flexibility in arranging lending terms and repayments, straightforward application process, dedicated personal Account Manager and access to free mentoring and support. UCIT does not charge arrangement fees or penalise against early repayment of loans. The Trust believes in free business support - UCIT offers each client organisation free business mentoring and support and they also show flexibility.

If you would like a chat about whether a loan is the right option for your organisation, the lending team can provide advice and know how gained from many years of involvement within the sector. For further information see www.ucitltd.com/ info@ucitltd.com.

GENERAL NEWS

The Wheel

ICTPoint Live: An IT Showcase for Charities Need to Format



With the advent of free open source software and cloud computing (online-hosted work environments), organisations no longer have to spend a fortune on Information Communication Technology (ICT). This special showcase, brought to you by ICTPoint.ie (The Wheel's free IT advice website for charities), will introduce you and your organisation to a wealth of free ICT resources. The event will take place on 16th September 2009 in the Sophia Wisdom Centre, 25 Cork St, Dublin 8, from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. [Book your place online now!](#)

The Wheel (contd..)

Open Source Software: software for everyone

Open Source software allows you to cut costs without compromising business processes. With half of the Internet now running on it, and one in five people using an open source browser, open source software has now become mainstream.

Cloud Computing: the new frontier

A new opportunity presents itself from the world of enterprise level business: cloud computing. Hosted, online applications allow charities to work without the overhead of expensive office based hardware, software and maintenance. Google offers a wide range of free online services, allowing employees to work anywhere there is an Internet connection and collaborating together to give their clients the services they need.

This event will introduce you to software packages such as Open Office, Thunderbird, Inkscape and more, and also hosted services such as Gmail and Google Docs. *Find out what you can get for free and how these technologies can help your organisation!*

The speakers will be Anthony Lindsay and Fergal Daly who are both technology professionals with over with over 20 years experience between them. Anthony is currently The Wheel's Information Systems Officer and the webmaster of ICTPoint.ie, while Fergal is a professional network engineer.

This event is **free to members of The Wheel**, but registration is essential. For non-members, the fee is 30 euro. [Book your place online now!](#)

Association Masterclass - 23rd September 2009

This Masterclass will take place at [No. 6 - Royal College of Physicians](#), Kildare Street, Dublin 2. The event is free of charge to association professionals and decision-makers, trade bodies, societies, voluntary & community groups including

CEOs, event managers, communication and advocacy professionals, membership administrators & volunteers.

Complete the [online registration form](#). Registration for this event is compulsory. Please view the [programme details](#) for times.

The One World Trust: A Database of Civil society Self-Regulatory Initiatives

Civil society organisations are facing increasing pressure to demonstrate their accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness. In response, a growing number of these organisations are coming together at national, regional and international levels, to define common standards and promote good practice through codes of conduct, certification schemes, reporting frameworks, directories and awards. The 'One World Trust: A database of civil society self-regulatory initiatives project' provides the first comprehensive inventory of such initiatives worldwide.

The One World Trust website hosts a portal on civil society self-regulation which includes a database listing over 320 initiatives (codes of conduct, certification schemes, working groups, self-assessments and information services) across 80 countries. Each initiative has a unique page with summaries of its content; contact details; areas and types of activities the initiative addresses; a list of participant organisations; compliance, monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms; among others. The launch of this database provides the first ever detailed stock-taking of the content and mechanisms of civil society organisation self-regulation worldwide. In addition, the portal offers an interactive map of civil society organisation self-regulatory initiatives linking directly to the database, briefing papers, and the latest news on civil society organisations self-regulation. The portal will be an important tool for civil society organisations, donors, researchers and the general public interested in the self-regulation of the sector.

Visit the portal: <http://www.oneworldtrust.org/csoproject> for more information.

"Safe Evacuation for All"

The National Disability Authority and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Fire Risk Management Section (FRMS) are running a one-day conference on "Safe Evacuation for All" at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northwood, Santry, Co. Dublin on 23 September, 2009.

This event will provide practical advice on planning for the safe evacuation of all building users, including people with disabilities. There will be a number of interesting case studies showing how Irish organisations are dealing with evacuation planning. The conference fee of €50 per person (including lunch and refreshments) is payable to IOSH, with a concession rate of €40 for people with disabilities, staff of disability representative organisations, IOSH members and other affiliated bodies. The event will be of interest to:

- Health and Safety advisors
- Fire Officers
- Engineers
- Training consultants in areas such as fire safety and health and safety
- Human Resources managers
- Disability service providers
- Disability representative organisations
- People with disabilities and their families

Further details including the conference programme and booking form are available at <http://tinyurl.com/safeevac4all>. Places are limited, so please book early.

National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)

Universal Design Approach

Work is under way at a European level to recommend a curriculum for training ICT professionals in the Universal Design Approach on a European basis. Support is being provided by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). The group has

produced a draft document and it is now available for public comment until October 4th. For details, go to:

<http://www.nsai.ie/index.cfm/area/news/action/article/newsKey/641/info>

All comments are welcome using the template which is on the site

European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities

International Conference - 15 Years after Salamanca: Inclusion - A School for All

This event is organised by the EASPD Standing Committee on Education with support from the **National Federation of Voluntary Bodies** in Ireland, European Commission, Directorate General for Education Training, Culture and Youth, the Council of Europe, and other important stakeholders. The event will take place in the Grand Hotel, Dublin, on November 12th and 13th 2009.

The [Salamanca Statement](#) was developed 15 years ago, the outcome of the UNESCO Conference on Education for Persons with Disabilities. It is an important manifesto for inclusion as a way of achieving high quality education for all. While much has been achieved, there is a long way to go before reaching a society where equal opportunities in education are guaranteed for all. The conference will, therefore, explore ways to improve inclusion. The aim of the Conference is to:

- Create a new European Network of all those committed to inclusive education, providing examples of good practice.
- Offer guidance and active help to all parties interested in transforming mainstream schools into schools for all.
- Agree on a Dublin Statement and Action Plan.

Details of the Conference: <http://cbs.harvardinnovations.com/default.aspx>

For further information please contact mary.barrett@fedvol.ie

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

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: info@arthritisireland.ie

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

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

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

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

Care Alliance Ireland - E-mail: ndo@carealliance.ie

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

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

Community Exchange Newsletter, E-mail: info@activelink.ie, Tel: +1 667 7326

Connect - Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association. E-mail: info@imnda.ie, Freephone 1800 403 403

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E-Info Deaf Source— E-mail: info@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

S.I. 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

Speaking up for Advocacy – Citizens Information Board Newsletter on advocacy. Tel: 01 6059035, E-mail: mairide.woods@comhairle.ie or davin.roche@comhairle.ie

Volunteer Stroke Scheme News- Tel: 01-4559036. E-mail: info@strokescheme.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.

National Office

Fumbally Court Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8
Tel: 01 454 7978 Fax: 01 494 7981
E: info@disability-federation.ie

Dublin Mid-Leinster

Anthony Carrick
Dun Laoghaire, Dublin South East,
Wicklow (Dublin Office),
Mobile: 086 8206736
E: anthonycarrick@disability-federation.ie

Louise McCann
Dublin South City, Dublin South West,
Dublin West, Kildare, West Wicklow
(Dublin Office)
Mobile: 086 9189750
E: louisemccann@disability-federation.ie

Jacqueline Thomson
Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath
(Dublin Office)
Mobile: 086 3882600
E: jacquelinethomson@disability-federation.ie

Lillian Buchanan
Support Officer – Policy and Research
(Dublin Office)
Tel: 01 424 0127
E: lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

Dermot O'Donnell
Support Officer – Support for
Organisations (Dublin Office)
Tel: 01-4250125
E: dermotodonnell@disability-federation.ie

Dublin North-East

Joan O'Donnell
Meath, Louth, Cavan, Monaghan (Dublin
Office)
Mobile: 086 3834587
E: joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie

Martin Naughton
Dublin North Central, Dublin North West,
Dublin North
Mobile: 086 8207169
E: martinnaughton@disability-federation.ie

West

Michael Corbett,
Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
C/O DFI, Acres, Newport, Co. Mayo,
Tel: 098 41919,
Mobile: 086 3804750,
Fax: 098 41065,
E: michaelcorbett@disability-federation.ie

Marcus Hufsky,
Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal
St. Vincent's Business Park, Finisklin
Road, Sligo
Tel: 071-9150098
Mobile: 086 3811261
E: marcushufsky@disability-federation.ie

Toni Gleeson,
Limerick, North Tipperary, East Limerick,
Clare
DFI, The Forge, Croke St. Thurles, Co
Tipperary
Mobile: 086 6004526
E: tonigleeson@disability-federation.ie

South

P.J. Cleere
Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary,
Waterford, Wexford
DFI, Tinryland, Carlow
Tel: 059 9179431
Mobile: 086 3811064
E: pjcleere@disability-federation.ie

Alison Ryan
Cork, Kerry
101 North Main Street, Cork
Tel: 021 4271752 Mobile 0874198796
E: a.ryan@disability-federation.ie