



Disability Federation of Ireland

An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector

Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities

DFI NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2011

Facing the Challenge of Budget 2012

By the start of next week the Government will have taken further decisive actions to mend our broken economy. These decisions may widen the exposure and vulnerability of people and families living with disabilities or mental ill health. Alternatively, they may ensure that Ireland maintains and develops its support for those living with a disability or mental ill health.

At this time it is important to remember that investment over the last decade has reduced the very significant disadvantage that people with disabilities experience. The model of people leading independent and productive lives in the community has progressed a great deal. However, since 2008 the successive cumulative cutbacks on both the incomes and services on which people with disabilities depend are putting that investment in jeopardy. People with disabilities cannot survive in the community without adequate access to social and public services.

People with disabilities and mental ill health are not a distinct group unaffected by the general attrition caused by the recession. Disability visits individuals and families indiscriminately, and it comes on top of whatever other difficulties they find themselves in. It is difficult enough for people to have to face this extra challenge in the good times, but, as the recession cuts deeper and deeper into service provision and income supports, people urgently need the leadership and resolve of Government in order to be able to keep going. The 'disabled' are not an airtight category. We all know that disability happens; it is part of human life. Protection for people with disabilities provides a safety net for everyone.

The Programme for Government commits to "tackling Ireland's economic crisis in a way that is fair, balanced and which recognises the need for social solidarity". People with disabilities have already been subject to the cuts in income and services that have applied in recent budgets. We remind Government that social solidarity requires that these disabled people, who are found right throughout our society and in every age group and situation, are protected from a double or extra hit.

In making budgetary decisions the Government needs to consider where the welfare state will be in three or four years' time. Will the community model be sustained, or will disabled people increasingly be forced to resort to hospital and other high cost institutional care, because they lack the income and supports to stay healthy and living in the community?

We are hearing accounts day in and day out of how people on the ground are struggling to find some level of certainty in their lives. Many people are distressed, not just with the challenges of dealing with their disability, but with the threat of further cutbacks and uncertainty. We urge the Government, through the forthcoming budget statement and Finance Bill, to restore some level of certainty in the lives of these increasingly vulnerable people.

John Dolan
CEO

New Member Organisations

DFI would like to welcome three new organisations that have recently been accepted into our growing membership.

CoAction West Cork was accepted as general member on 13th October 2011. CoAction West Cork provides a wide range of supports and services for children and adults across all ranges of ability. Their approach is person/family centred, putting the family at the centre of planning, design and provision of supports and programmes. The goal of the organisation is to support everyone to live a full life as part of their community.

CoAction West Cork provides a diagnosis and intervention service for children in West Cork with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Website: www.coaction.ie .

Centre for Independent Living (CIL) Longford was accepted as general member of DFI on 13th October 2011. Independent Living is a way of life and a state of mind. Essentially, the independent living philosophy espouses people with physical or sensory disabilities live like everyone else, having the opportunities to make decision that affect one's own life and being able to pursue activities of one's own choosing, a process which the individuals must control themselves. For further information in relation to CIL Longford, please email longfordcil@yahoo.co.uk.

Sharing the Journey, a parent led, independent, parent to parent association was accepted as a general member on 10th November 2011. The organisation is a one stop shop providing information and support. The aims of Sharing the Journey include the provision of parent to parent support and the promotion of mutual respect for all parents and guardians of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHOH), irrespective of communication, education and technological decisions they have made or will make for their children, and the provision of educational, recreational and social activities for DHOH children. Sharing the Journey is based in Kilsallaghan. The website is currently being developed:

www.sharingthejourney.ie .

Details in relation to DFI member organisations are available on the DFI website:

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=138>

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Garda Vetting Survey and

Update on DFI facilitated Garda Vetting Networks

Since 2008, DFI has established and facilitated Garda Vetting networks, through which member organisations who do not have 'Authorised Signatures' within their organisations, can access Garda Vetting for their staff, work placement participants and volunteers through a number of lead agencies.

There are five Garda Vetting Network lead organisations through which Garda Vetting can be accessed. DFI and the Garda Vetting Network lead organisations held a bi-annual review meeting in November 2011. The networks, cost, membership uptake and process were reviewed.

DFI is now very interested in hearing from all member organisations about their experience with, and opinions on, the different aspects of the Garda Vetting procedure, and to this end, we would be grateful if your organisation would complete a very short Garda Vetting Survey, by Friday 16th December 2010. The survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/DFI_Garda_Vetting_Survey.

We would like to remind our members that the Garda Vetting process is an essential element of best practice in HR management. Not only does Garda Vetting apply to newly appointed staff and volunteers, it must also be part of the organisations on-going management process. The Garda Vetting Unit recommends that staff and volunteers should be re-vetted at least every three years, or even sooner should the need arise.

Therefore, we urge all DFI members and associated organisations to ensure that a suitable vetting strategy is in place in their organisation. Organisations that do not have a system in place, and who wish to participate in the DFI led vetting network, can also avail of a 'Garda Vetting Policies and Procedure' template, which is available free of charge on request from DFI.

The contact details for each of the Garda Vetting Networks are below, and for more information talk to your DFI Support Officer, or contact Eleanor Reece at eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie or Tel: 01-708 0101.

Garda Vetting Network Contact Details

Organisation	Name	Phone No:	Email address
Acquired Brain Injury	Lorraine Maher	01 2804164	lmaher@abiireland.ie
Bluestack Foundation	Joe O'Grady	087 670 9624	info@bluestackfoundation.com
Debra Ireland	Lynn Donovan	01412 6924	lynn@debraireland.org
National Recruitment Federation	Yvonne Donovan	087 135 0681	gvs@nrf.ie
Walk	Ken Kearney	01 465 0388	ken@walk.ie

SKILL Staff Training Programme – 5 years on

The Disability Federation of Ireland has been involved with the SKILL (Securing Knowledge Intra Lifelong Learning) programme since late 2006. To date over 1,100 participants from over 33 DFI member organisations have been progressing through the SKILL Programme. On average, organisations have been awarded approximately €3,500 per participant as a backfill.

The SKILL Programme provides a valuable opportunity for support staff and supervisors, working in the personal and health services, to gain a recognised qualification in a unique environment of blended learning, where practical experience gained in the work environment is combined with classroom learning. Successful completion of the SKILL Programme leads to a FETAC accredited level 5 or level 6 qualification.

The SKILL Programmes distinctive benefit lies in the mechanisms by which it encourages workers, who may have long since left the classroom, to return to education. Recognition of prior learning that takes place in the working environment is a valuable asset to the programme. Furthermore SKILL offers a range of FETAC training courses, including level 3

and 4 courses, to allow participants to ease themselves back into the classroom environment.

As we reach the closing months of 2011, and look forward to the possibilities for the New Year, it is timely to reflect on the impact that the SKILL Programme has had for our member organisations over the course of the last five years. Feedback from organisations indicates benefits for organisations, staff members and service users. Roscommon Disability Support Group Ltd, for example, has reported the following benefits:

- An enhanced higher quality and efficient service.
- Increased professionalism at all levels of the organisation.
- Confidence in staff and managers who have enhanced skills and knowledge to deliver a quality service.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland noted that benefits for staff have included:

- Increased confidence in their professional roles
- Enhanced personal development
- Confidence in their competency, resulting in enthusiasm to continue learning and initiative to expand their working activities

Donegal Centre for Independent Living also identified a number of benefits:

- Staff are assisted in reaching their potential
- Achieve an accredited and recognised qualification.
- Enhance and Update any existing Skills they may have attained previously.
- Motivate, inspire and develop their confidence in Learning

A spokesperson for Donegal Centre for Independent Living noted that “With a well-trained and highly skilled panel of Personal Assistants, we can confidently ensure that our Leaders will reap massive benefits on the ground...This project has brought DCIL to another level”.

A spokesperson from the MS Society of Ireland comments that the SKILL programme “...is like a large helping hand bringing us along this great road of excellence”.

Comments from other participating organisations will be highlighted in future editions of the DFI Newsletter.

DFI would like to congratulate all of the organisations and their staff members who have participated in the SKILL Programme. The true benefits of such a programme depend on

the enthusiasm with which it is received and utilised, and the participants on SKILL have made it a worthy initiative.

The SKILL Staff Training Programme has allowed organisations to enable their staff to attend accredited training, allowing them to evolve in an increasingly competitive environment. To date the benefits have been myriad for organisations, employees and service users. DFI values its role in the facilitation of this programme for our member organisations and looks forward to future involvement in the programme. If you would like further information about the SKILL programme please contact Martin Naughton at martinnaughton@disability-federation.ie or Sabrina Lane at sabrinlane@disability-federation.ie.

Charities Legislation Update and Comment on Uptake of Guiding Principles for Fundraising

Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter TD, outlined his approach to making progress on Charities Regulation and also expressed his disappointment at the low level of sign-up by Charities to the *Guiding Principles for Fundraising* at ICTR's Annual Conference *Whither or Wither Charities* last Thursday (10th November). Link to the Minister's full speech is available at: <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/SP11000216>.

Charities Legislation

The Minister made the point that, in the current economic climate, it is not realistic to fully implement the Charities Act 2009 in the medium term, and therefore we need to be pragmatic and revisit the principles behind the Act, what it was intended to achieve, and how best to achieve this in the current circumstances. He summed up the objectives of the Act as being to enhance public confidence in Irish charities by increasing the transparency of these organisations through a proportionate regulatory framework. He noted that he is looking at what can be done to protect the sector, prevent abuse, and maintain public confidence, and he indicated that he is '....currently taking legal advice in terms of what might practicably be done within available resources, but, subject to this legal advice, and particularly given the long-stated desire across the sector for regulation, I would hope that we will be in a position to take steps to enhance the regulation of the sector.'

He noted, however, his belief ‘...that this regulation must involve, in the first instance, much greater participation from the sector in the charitable fundraising Codes of Practice project.’ He expressed the hope that over the longer term he would have the resources to fully implement the Act but in the meantime we need to work together to ensure that we have a confident, transparent Irish charities sector.

Guiding Principles for Fundraising:

The Minister then challenged the sector to play its part by signing up to the *Guiding Principles for Fundraising* which has had considerable investment by the State, and are considered an integral part of the regulation process.

He stated: “Indeed I would see involvement with the codes of practice as an ideal forerunner to the development of a better governed, more transparent charities sector.

However, individual charities will have to stand up and be counted, and demonstrate that this long stated desire for regulation is genuine and will be translated into action on their part. Regulation will not work without buy-in from the Irish charities sector. And I stress that buy-in begins with signing up to the fundraising codes of practice. Indeed, I am exploring ways under which adherence to the Codes might potentially be a requirement for collection permit applicants.” (DFI emphasis)

What do you need to do to meet the requirements for signing up to the Fundraising Principles?

1. The Board or governing body of your Charity needs to formally commit to complying with the Principles, and this should be noted in the minutes of the meeting. On the sign up form you will be asked to indicate that the commitment has been formally made, and the date of the meeting at which the decision was recorded.
2. You should indicate, in an accessible position on the website (i.e. not hidden away) that your charity is committed to compliance with the *Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising*.
3. You must have a Donor’s Charter and Complaints procedure easily available to the public – again this would normally be on your website (possibly on the fundraising

page), and you should really give a named individual as the contact person for feedback and / or complaints.

4. Use the Checklist <http://www.ictr.ie/files/Compliance%20Checklist.pdf> to ensure that you have got everything in place before signing up.
5. Once you are satisfied that you are ready, then sign up on the ICTR website at <http://www.ictr.ie/content/sign-guiding-principles>

Note that there are sample templates for all the documents required on the website at <http://www.ictr.ie/content/list-resources-support-implementation-statement-guiding-principles-fundraising>

HR & Employment Law Update

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

Renewal of Fixed Term Contracts

Many organisations have individuals on fixed term contracts which are on a yearly basis subject to funding. It is important at this time of the year to assess what contracts are up for renewal in the new year and to plan accordingly. If contracts are not being renewed it is important to link in with those staff affected to ensure that they too can plan for the future.

Renewals of fixed term contracts should be communicated in advance of the end date of the previous contract and should always be communicated in writing.

Fixed term contracts and renewals have a number of clauses in them which differentiate them from permanent ones. It is important to ensure that a fixed term has a natural expiry clause in it relating to unfair dismissals acts and also the reason for the fixed term or end date should also be contained within it.

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

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

New Video to Launch
External Supervision and Support Service for Staff
from DFI and Maeve Halpin (Social and Organisational Psychologist)

In conjunction with Maeve Halpin, a Counselling Psychologist from Appletree Health and Wellness, DFI has developed an External Supervision and Support Service for staff and Boards of DFI member groups. More information is available at the following link:

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

In this new video from DFI, Maeve talks to DFI about how to deal with the emotional impact of redundancies in organisations, for those made redundant and those left behind, and introduces the concept of the "Toxic Handler".

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

Maeve presented on this topic at a DFI Eastern Region Platform earlier this year and has also written on this topic in DFI's Newsletter:

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=10304>

The video and news is available for viewing on DFI's website at <http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=10463>.

Maeve Halpin is a practising counsellor and Social and Organisational Psychologist, with many years' experience in the Community and Voluntary sector, latterly as Chair of the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups. In conjunction with Maeve, DFI have launched an External Supervision and Support Service for staff and Boards of DFI member groups. More information is available at <http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=215>

Reduce your Information and Communications Technology Spend

Reduce your ICT spend with the Government ICT Procurement Framework. This procurement process allows your organisation to purchase ICT equipment at much cheaper prices than available on the open market. This reduced pricing is achieved with the sheer buying power of the government in partnership with key suppliers.

All organisations that are funded or part funded by the government or a government agency like the HSE are entitled to use this process to obtain cheaper ICT equipment.

The range of services offered is as follows:

- Personal Computers
- Notebook Computers
- Printers
- Mobile phone and data services
- Fixed & VoIP
- Government Networks
- Software Asset Management

Most small to medium organisations will only ever be interested in the PC, Notebook, Printer and Mobile. The other services are mainly limited to large government bodies (Gov. Networks) (Software Asset Management) and would only be of interest to large ICT departments that manage lots of different types of software.

DFI has used the PC and Notebook frameworks to secure cheaper purchase for our annual hardware spend as part of our Desktop replacement policy. If anyone has experience in the other offers please post a reply to our Facebook page where we will also post this article. [Click here to go to our Facebook page.](#)

For further information go to: <http://ictprocurement.gov.ie>, or contact:

PC, Notebook, Mono & Colour Frameworks

Vinny Slevin, Contract Management Team: Tel: 01 604 5106 Email: ictframeworks@gov.ie

Mobile, Fixed & VOIP, Government Networks

Ken Barclay
Contract Management Team
Tel: 01 604 5018 Email: ictframeworks@gov.ie

HEALTH

Consultation on the Report of the Disability Policy Review

Although the Department of Health consultation period was very short, DFI's roundtable meeting on the report on 26th October 2011 was well attended by member organisations, and the discussion identified many constructive, as well as challenging features of the disability policy review.

We are aware that several of the participants subsequently made submissions to the Department of Health. These will remind decision-makers of the critical role played by voluntary disability organisations in supporting people with disabilities to manage their lives.

DFI's own submission is available on the website, www.disability-federation.ie It welcomes the person-centred approach adopted in the policy review, and the focus on supporting self-determination for people with disabilities. However it also calls for a broader perspective and ambition, recognising that disability policy is a social justice issue and that prevention, early intervention and amelioration are critical to effectiveness. It explains how voluntary disability organisations are valuable partners in achieving more choice and stronger supports for people with disabilities.

The Steering Group for the Value for Money and Policy Review of the HSE's Disability Services Programme will be considering the submissions in identifying the findings and recommendations on the future of the Programme.

For further information on DFIs work in the area of Value for Money of Disabilities Services contact Lillian Buchanan, lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

HSE Disability Consultative Structures

The HSE has recently re-established the disability consultative fora. A three tier structure has been created at national, regional and local levels.

The national level of the consultative fora was established in May 2011, and so far there have been four meetings. This group has membership from service provider organisations, advocacy groups and service users, and key HSE personnel. The objective of this group is

to advise the HSE on the overall strategic direction, coordination and monitoring of services to persons with a disability, and to provide the HSE with a forum through which to explore the further direction of disability services with key stakeholders within a collaborative framework, in line with the National Disability Strategy.

The National Consultative Forum has recently established the Regional Consultative Fora as part of the consultative structures. There will be one committee in each of the four HSE Regions – Dublin Mid Leinster, Dublin North East, HSE South and HSE West. These groups will meet a minimum of four times a year and will develop an annual work plan.

The terms of reference of the regional group are as follows:

- To advise the HSE Regional Management Team on maximising the effective delivery of health and personal social services within available resources to meet the needs of people with disabilities, in line with the National Disability Strategy.
- To adopt and prepare plans to implement findings and recommendations for the VFM and Policy Review as agreed through the National Disability Committee and through the Annual National Service Plan.
- To provide guidance / advice on the co-ordination of disability services in the region to ensure consistency and equity.
- To make recommendations to the National Committee based on the needs agreed at regional level in the context of the agreed prioritisation criteria and the creation of a service plan for the region.
- To monitor the implementation of the regional business plan for services for persons with disabilities.
- To identify the requirement of regional or supra-ISA services and prepare plans to address this.
- To Share models of best practice.
- To advise the National Committee on issues which need to be addressed at national level.
- To participate in the evaluation of services in the region.

The DFI representatives on the Regional Consultative Fora are as follows:

Dublin Mid Leinster

Representatives: Louise McCann(DFI Staff) and Ava Battles (MS Ireland)

Alternates: Anthony Carrick (DFI Staff) and Barbara Flynn (Friedrichs Ataxia Society)

Dublin North East

Representatives: Martin Naughton (DFI Staff) and Donnchadh Whelan (ABI Ireland)

Alternates: Joan O'Donnell (DFI Staff) and Kieran Loughran (Headway Ireland)

West

Representatives: Toni Gleeson (DFI Staff), Aiden Larkin (Brainwave), and Anna Kelly (Brainwave)

Alternates: Michael Corbett (DFI Staff) and Lynn Buffington (Mid-West Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Association)

South

Representatives: Alison Ryan (DFI Staff) and Liz Owens (Headway Ireland)

Alternates: PJ Cleere (DFI Staff) and Mary Lawlor (Brainwave)

If you would like further information on these structures, please contact your local DFI Support Officer or Jacqueline Grogan at jacquelinegrogan@disability-federation.ie.

HSE Performance Report September 2011

The HSE Performance Report for September 2011 was published on 22nd November 2011. This report provides an overall analysis of key performance data from the HSE. The activity data reported is based on Performance Activity and Key Performance Indicators, as outlined in the HSE's Service Plan 2011.

The report highlights a financial deficit for the HSE of €300m at the end of 2011, subject to further cost reduction by service directorates. The report notes that measures have been put in place to address this overspend, but that the data has not improved sufficiently to deliver a balanced vote by year end. Some of the other key points in the report include:

1. Demand for hospital services is still high and hospitals continue to deliver services at activity levels that are above Service Plan targets. This activity contributes to hospital

deficits of €145.6m at the end of September as well as a shortfall of €22.6m in income billing.

2. Within community services to the end of September there is a deficit of €34.6m. The deficit is substantially represented by a deficit on childcare services of €53.7m. Other care areas such as homecare services are compensating for this deficit. Childcare services are statutorily-based and are therefore essentially demand led.
3. As of the date of the Report, to the end of September 2011, there were three months to the end of 2011, and the health system will have to intensely manage cost at every level of hospital and community services along with tight cash management measures to achieve a balanced budget.
4. The number of individuals covered by a medical card in September is 1,701,951, which is an additional 716 since August. There has been an additional 86,142 individuals issued with a medical card since December 2010.
5. The loss of and non-replacement of therapy and nursing staff is having an impact on the services being delivered by Primary Care Teams. There are currently over 450 posts vacant in Primary Care Teams around the country. This has a massive impact on the delivery of mainstream healthcare for people with disabilities.
6. The collection of data across all voluntary and statutory services is now complete and the DOHC is progressing the data analysis component of this review with a view to identifying unit costs for services nationally. VFM efficiency savings will be identified once the report is completed, expected at year end.

Further information on this issue from Jacqueline Grogan

jacquelinegrogan@disability-federation.ie

National Physical and Sensory Disability Database Direct Access Project, 2011 Update

The National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD) Direct Access Project enables disability organisations to be directly involved in the recording and management of their clients' data in the NPSDD. Prior to the initiation of this project, all NPSDD client data entry and management was carried out by Health Service Executive (HSE) personnel.

Phase 1 of the project commenced as a pilot in 2009 with four agencies participating. On completion of this pilot, the project has continued with the recruitment of new agencies and extension of direct access to additional offices of some of the original agencies. Seven agencies are now involved, with some directly accessing the NPSDD at multiple sites. A feedback session was held in October 2011 which was attended by representatives of the majority of the existing agencies.

Current activities include the extension of direct access to additional offices of existing agencies, the provision of training and support to agency users and on-going efforts to recruit new agencies.

The Benefits of Direct Access to the NPSDD

The NPSDD is managed by the Health Research Board (HRB) on behalf of the Department of Health and Children and the system is securely hosted in the Local Government Computer Services Board. It provides the ability for individuals with disabilities to identify their service needs in order to inform service planning and delivery at national, regional and local level. It highlights unmet need for services by geographical area. Registration on the database is voluntary and it is not a requirement for receiving services.

No licensing fee is charged to participating agencies, system training is provided by the HRB and the system is enhanced on an on-going basis to meet the needs of service providers.

Data collected in the NPSDD is used to produce reports which are provided to the Department of Health and the HSE to inform service planning at local, regional and national level. Direct access to the database provides disability agencies with the ability to ensure that the needs of their clients are included in the planning process for disability

services. Participating agencies can also use the database to produce reports locally on the service needs of their client group.

Discussions have begun about the development of a 'Service Provider' section within the NPSDD which will allow agencies to capture additional information about their clients and may include appointment scheduling functionality. Access to this information will be restricted to the agency and will not be available to the HSE, HRB or Department of Health. This will be developed in partnership with participating agencies.

Future Plans

In 2012 it is planned to continue the roll-out of direct access to the NPSDD to additional offices of currently participating agencies. Contact will be maintained with other agencies who have not adopted direct access to date with the aim of encouraging them to do so.

If you are interested in finding out more about the NPSDD Direct Access Project please contact Anne O'Donohoe, Health Information Manager, Health Research Board, at aodonohoe@hrb.ie or 01-2345214.

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016

Supporting Disability Organisations for Mainstreaming A Listening and Changing Project

Together with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI), DFI carried out this project with the aim of enhancing the capacity of people with physical, sensory and neurological disabilities, and their representative organisations, to advocate for access to general community services and facilities.

The project was made possible by funding from Genio, a pioneering non-profit organisation that works with the public, private and non-profit sector to stimulate and support social innovation in Ireland that has lasting impact. Genio promotes innovation and collaboration in the disability and mental health sector, by working in collaboration with the Office for

Disability and Mental Health, the HSE, and non-government advocacy and service providing organisations.

The policy context for the project came from the impetus within the disability sector towards mainstreaming, and the vision outlined in the Social Partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, of:

‘..an Ireland where people with disabilities have, to the greatest extent possible, the opportunity to live a full life with their families and as part of their local community, free from discrimination.’

Six organisations participated in the project. The project outputs included:

- Three regional seminars, where participating projects showcased their learning to other organisations, and to which other DFI organisations were invited to consider engaging in similar consultation processes.
- The development of ‘A Guide to Member Centric Consultation’, which will be available to DFI member organisations, and which can be used by them and their designated DFI Support Officer as a tool for planning consultations.
- The development of resources for data gathering and profiling, which will be available to DFI member organisations, and which can be used by them and their designated DFI Support Officer, to support good practice in these areas.

Key learning from the project included:

- The need for the project to be supported to create reflective space to engage in this kind of work.
- The involvement of participants in working groups was very successful, where it happened.
- The recognition that small practical changes can shift the culture within an organisation and provide open-ness to more substantial change.

The papers that have been developed from the project will be published by DFI in the coming months, and will be available to all DFI members. In the meantime, if you would like further information on the project, please contact your DFI Support Officer, details on the contact page at the back of the Newsletter.

Implications of Public Service Reform

On 17th November the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform published a report, 'Public Service Reform', which sets out a change agenda for Government. The report names five priorities:

1. Placing customer service at the core of everything we do.
2. Maximising new and innovative service delivery.
3. Radically reducing our costs.
4. Leading, organising and working in new ways.
5. Strong focus on implementation and delivery.

Although disability policy and programmes are never mentioned, this reform agenda is bound to affect the provision of disability services. The initial focus by the media is on the targeted reduction in the number of civil servants but the reforms are also likely to alter relationships with voluntary disability organisations. For example, the reform implementation plan includes:

- Promotion of 'external service delivery'.
- Nomination by the Ministers for Health and Children, Education and Skills, and certain others, of a senior officer who will have responsibility for the delivery of shared services in their sector.
- Reorganisation of the delivery of health services in line with Programme for Government commitments.
- Placing resources in the hands of citizens to acquire services.

The report explains that the direction of reform is set but that the means and pace will respond to conditions and experience.

DFI has been working proactively to persuade the Government of the importance of incorporating the NDS Implementation Plan into the wider public reform agenda, if the improved outcomes for Irish citizens are to be achieved. This work will now focus on linking the five themes identified by the Department to the implementation of disability policy.

The report is available on the Department's website, at: <http://per.gov.ie/reports/>.

Meeting with Minister for Social Protection

On the 21st of November Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, T.D., met with members of the working group that had developed a set of actions, primarily focused on improving opportunities for activation by people with disabilities, for the Department to progress in the coming months. Represented were the voluntary disability members of the subgroup of the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG), chaired by John Dolan, and the senior Department officials involved in the work. In addition to the agreed list of actions, the DSG submitted to the Minister a more ambitious set of proposals for her to consider.

Speaking for the DSG, John Dolan underlined the importance of protecting the incomes of people with disabilities in Budget 2012. He pointed out that people had been adversely affected by cuts both in benefits and services, leaving no more room for manoeuvre. He reminded the Minister that both the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste had identified disability, including mental health, as their social justice priority. The Minister responded that she did not want to see any cuts in the rates, but that the budget had not yet been decided.

The Minister also noted the value of the joint working being done by the DSG and her officials. She acknowledged the suggestions by John Dolan that this work be extended in scope in the future, given the importance of making progress in areas that cross departmental boundaries, and also the need to protect the core supports infrastructure in the face of successive austerity budgets. She agreed to meet the working group again early in 2012.

Further information from Louise McCann at louisemccann@disability-federation.ie

National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities

DFI has made a submission to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government and the Minister for Health and Children, who are mainly responsible for implementing the Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities, and to their senior officials. The submission can be viewed on DFI's website, www.disability-federation.ie.

The Housing Strategy contains nine strategic aims, for each of which a list of actions is identified. The first key action is the establishment of a Senior Officials group, with representation from the key Government Departments, to develop an implementation plan

for the Strategy. There is also reference to setting up a Stakeholder Monitoring Group at a later date. DFI proposes that the work of the monitoring group be commenced immediately, so that planning benefits from the experience and expertise of stakeholders in the voluntary sector.

DFI also calls for early action in establishing Local Authority Steering Groups to guide implementation on the ground where it really matters. The proactive approach being adopted by Dublin City Council is noted as meriting support by the Department of the Environment.

Finally, DFI observes that policy making is on-going, and it is essential that both Departments disability-proof' their initiatives. Access for people with disabilities needs to be considered in developing all social policies – that is what 'mainstreaming' is about.

Further information from Lillian Buchanan, lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

Consultation on a Single Payment Benefits System

Senior officials from the Department of Social Protection presented their work to date on a single payment scheme for working age adults at a seminar organised by the National Disability Authority (NDA) on 9th November.

The scheme would use supports and services in tailoring person-centred planning to assist beneficiaries to find paid work or other types of activation. The officials noted that many important questions still had to be addressed and that cross-departmental co-operation on the provision of supports would be critical. Nonetheless they were scheduled to deliver a report to the Troika (EU Commission, European Central Bank, and International Monetary Fund) in March 2011.

There was a lively discussion of the issues at the seminar, for example on how the extra costs of disability would be incorporated, how age eligibility rules in the existing system would be harmonised and how income disregards would fit.

For a copy of the Departments analysis and a report on a consultation on the single payment earlier in 2011, please go to www.welfare.ie

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Review of Transport Sectoral Plan

In response to an invitation from Minister of State Alan Kelly T.D., DFI attended a meeting at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 25th October 2011, to discuss issues of concern in relation to transport for people with disabilities.

A number of consultation meetings took place, the purpose of which was to allow the Transport Sectoral Plan review steering group to explore further the views of the key stakeholder groups, as indicated through the written submission already received.

The meeting was chaired by the Minister of State, and members of the review steering group also attended, as well as representatives from the taxi industry, and the Irish Wheelchair Association.

It is fair to say that the concerns expressed by DFI and the IWA were well received by the Minister and others present. Notwithstanding the recessionary constraints on the public purse, the Minister noted that he and the review team would look at ways of resolving some of the issues that were raised.

In presenting its submission to the Sectoral Plan Review to the Department in September this year, DFI outlined a great number of issues of concern to people with disabilities in relation to public transport. The contents of the submission were informed by feedback from a number of consultation processes held throughout the country with groups of, and individual people with disabilities, carried out by DFI with the support of the Citizens Information Board. DFI is continuing to monitor transport issues, and will be following up with the Public Transport Access Committee on the meeting with the Minister.

Further information from Martin Naughton, martinnaughton@disability-federation.ie

Intellectual Disability Supplement to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (IDS-TILDA)

Growing Old in Ireland with Intellectual Disability

Professor Mary McCarron and the IDS-TILDA Team will present an Education Day, on 6th December 2011, for Registered Nurses, at the Intellectual Disability Section, INMO Professional Development Centre, Whitworth Building, Dublin 7.

Among the issues to be discussed are

- IDS-TILDA – An Overview.
- The epidemiology and assessment of falls among a cohort of older adults with ID.
- Personal choice and employment for older people with ID.
- The Physical and Behavioural Health of Older adults with Intellectual Disability in Ireland.
- Mental health and well-being of older adults with intellectual disability in Ireland.
- Social participation and social connectedness in older adults with intellectual disability

To book a place call the INMO at 01 6640641

Fee: €25 members; €100 non-members.

Increased Funding for Youth in Action Projects

The EU has increased the amount of funding for Ireland for its Youth in Action Programme. There are three dates for applications over 2012, 1st February, 1st May, and 1st October, and €2.35 million to be spent. The EU priorities focus on unemployment, poverty and marginalisation, with particular mention of disability, as well as promoting health behaviours. The Activities include Youth Exchanges, Youth Initiatives, Youth Democracy Projects, European Voluntary Service, Youth in the World, Training & Networking and Seminars.

Disability voluntary organisations working with young people (typically the 13-30 year cohort) may want to consider applying to fund a project fitting under one of these Activities. Details are available at the website www.leargas.ie/youthinaction.

Youth in Action Funding & Project Workshops

This Information Seminar is designed for Managers, Youth Workers, Youth Leaders and volunteers working with young people and interested in developing funding applications and projects for Youth In Action during 2012. It will take place on 13-14th December 2011 in Jury's Inn Parnell St- Dublin.

The workshop is split into 2 parts:

Session 1 December 13th 2011 (18:30- 21:00)

- information and updates on the changes to the programme for 2012
- discussion groups and networking session to share experiences and build networks

Session 2 – December 14th 2011 (09:30- 13:00)

- Workshops on how to apply for funding, project planning and management and working with themes like Youth unemployment in your projects

Overnight accommodation is provided if participants are attending both sessions on both days (*shared accommodation*). Workshops will be interactive and delivered through non-formal learning methods. Some workshops will run simultaneously and therefore it may be useful to register more than one person from your organisation in order to gain a broader perspective on the topic. Further information at www.leargas.ie/youthinaction.

Irish Deaf Society Publications

The Irish Deaf Society has published three information guides:

- “Communicating with Deaf People” poster;
- “General Information about the Deaf Community” booklet
- “Guide for parents of Deaf Children” booklet.

Please contact the Irish Deaf Society for copies at www.deaf.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

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Newsletter, Tel 01 2804164
email:cbrack@abiireland.ie

http://www.abiireland.ie/docs/ABII_Newsletter_Spring_2010.pdf

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: info@arthritisireland.ie

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

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

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121,

E-mail: info@migraine.ie

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-
6236414, or 01- 6236415 E-mail: info@mdi.ie

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

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

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

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

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: 071 64791
E-mail: newsletter@ppsg.ie

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

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

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

Shine News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620
E-mail: info@sirl.ie

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

Sonas aPc – Tel (01) 2608138. www.sonasapc.ie.

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

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

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





Disability Federation of Ireland is a national support and representation mechanism for voluntary disability sector organisations, covering all areas of disability and disabling conditions. There are currently over 100 voluntary disability organisations in the DFI Membership.

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**Representing the interests and expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included
Comprising organisations that represent and support people with disabilities**

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) represents the interests and the expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included in Irish society. It comprises organisations that represent and support people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

The vision of DFI is that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise their full civil, economic, social and human rights and that they are enabled to reach their full potential in life. DFI's mission is to act as an advocate for the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities and disabling conditions in all aspects of their lives.

There are over 126 organisations within membership, or as associates, of DFI. DFI also works with a growing number of organisations and groups around the country that have a significant disability interest, mainly from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI provides:

- Information
- Training and Support
- Networking
- Advocacy and Representation
- Research and Policy Development / Implementation
- Organisation and Management Development

DFI works on the basis that disability is a societal issue and so works with Government, and across the social and economic strands and interests of society.

For further information go to www.disability-federation.ie

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