

# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: .....LIVES ON HOLD

## DFI Pre-Budget Submission 2019



**There are over 640,000 people living in Ireland today with a disability. Four out of five acquired their disability during their working lives and another 56,000 will be diagnosed with a disability this year alone. There is no 'Them' and 'Us' in disability; it is in all our interests to address this issue properly.**

Budget 2019 will be this government's first budget since ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

People with disabilities are still experiencing the impact of the recession:

- 26% of adults with a disability live in consistent poverty, compared to 22% in 2015, and 11% in 2011 <sup>1</sup>.
- 31% of working age people with a disability were at work compared to 71% of those without a disability <sup>2</sup>.
- People with disabilities capable of living independent lives are trapped in their homes, residential homes or nursing homes due to a lack of Personal Assistant and Home Support hours.
- Not enough money is being spent to support people to live independently in their community; only 0.3% of all people with disabilities get a Personal Assistant Service. Personal Assistant Services enable people to live and take part in their communities <sup>3</sup>.



1. [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie), 2016 SILC data, based on the principal economic status, of people not at work due to illness or disability.  
2. Watson, D., Lawless, M., and Maitre, B. (2017) Employment transitions among people with a disability in Ireland  
3. HSE National Service Plan 2018

- There could be up to 15,300 people needing but not receiving the Mobility Allowance <sup>4</sup>.

In order to see some improvements to the living situation of people with disabilities, Budget 2019 must address:

## 1. Income

Increase the Disability Allowance by €20 a week to provide an adequate minimum income to guard against poverty, at a cost of approx. €130m.

Commission research into the extra costs and expenses for persons with disabilities.



## 2. Community Services and Supports

DFI is calling for the introduction of:

- A cross-departmental package of community supports
- Provision of a multi-annual investment programme to fund these supports

### a. Health and Social Care

- Commit to a Multi – Annual Investment Programme, of €11m per year, for five years from 2019-2023, a total of €55m <sup>5</sup>. This will include:
  - Personal Assistant Services
  - Home Supports
  - Other Community Services.



4. Minister Finian McGrath, TD, <https://www.kildarestreet.com/committees/?gid=2017-10-11a.20>

5. Based on figures in the HSE Transforming Lives Working Group, 'Report on Future Needs for Disability Services'. February 2018

Invest an additional €7m in post-acute rehabilitation beds, rehabilitation supports and community supports.

Clearly proportion funding as listed below across services for people with different physical, sensory, neurological disabilities and intellectual disabilities:

- Invest €10m in Respite Services
- Invest €13.5m in adult therapy services in 2019, and in 2020, a total of €27m.

Ring-fence funding to give effect to the recommendations of the Taskforce on Personalised Budgets.

## **b. Other Community Services**

Investing in community supports is cost effective; it keeps people out of residential centres, facilitating them to live in their own homes and in their communities.

An investment of €50m to begin to provide better community supports in education, training, employment, transport, housing and assistive technology. This includes:

- Commit 7% of all social housing stock in 2019 to the provision of appropriate housing for people with disabilities, provided through both new build and acquisition.
- Increase the Housing Adaptation Grant by €13.75m <sup>6</sup>.
- Fund and appoint Disability Experts at Education and Training Board, ETB, level as the lead and support person for students with disabilities at a cost of €1.5m.



6. The 2010 allocation for the Housing Adaptation Grant scheme was €80m. On 4th May 2018 the Government announced that €66.25 million will be spent in 2018 on Housing Adaptation Grants: <http://rebuildingireland.ie/news/minister-damien-english-announces-e15million-funding-for-housing-with-support-demonstrator-project-at-st-michaels-estate-inchicore/>

- Invest in the Fund for Students with Disabilities to support part-time students in Irish Further Education and Higher Education sector <sup>7</sup>.
- Increase numbers of National Educational Psychological Service, NEPS, psychologists by 20 to progressively achieve target of 238, at a cost of €1.6m <sup>8</sup>.
- Introduce an Assistive Technology, AT, Passport at a cost of €1.5m <sup>9</sup>.
- Establish the Transport Support Scheme to replace the Mobility Allowance.

It is welcome that the Minister for Disabilities confirmed to the Dáil that Ireland's ratification of the Convention will 'involve a charge upon public funds'.<sup>10</sup>

The actions listed above are a reminder that every part of government, not just the Department of Health, must be involved in the goal of full equality.

Ireland must work to build a society where people who have a disability are treated equally. People with disabilities should be able to get on with their lives just as others do. This is the real intention of the UN CRPD.



7. This is in line with recommendation 10 of the HEA's review of the Fund. <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/10/HEA-Review-of-the-Fund-for-Students-with-Disabilities.pdf>

8. As stated in the Programme for a Partnership Government, this also includes the cost of improved administration.

9. The AT Passport can support Assistive Technology users to access the training and supports they need across education, work and independent living.

10. Dáil Éireann, 7th March 2018