



Disability Federation of Ireland

## **ANNUAL REVIEW 2016**

## ACRONYMS

CES	Comprehensive Employment Service
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CRM	Customer Relations Management
CPTN	Community Participation Training Network
CDLP	Centre For Disability Law and Policy
DSG	Disability Stakeholders Group
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
EASPD	European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities
EDF	European Disability Forum
EMI	European Movement Ireland
ESIF	European Social and Investment Fund
EU	European Union
HIQA	Health Information and Quality Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICSH	Irish Council for Social Housing
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTRG	Irish Charity Tax Research Group
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
LCDC	Local Community Development Committees
MEP	Member of European Parliament
NAI	Neurological Alliance of Ireland
NCF	National Consultative Forum
NDSIP	National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan
SSNO	Scheme to Support National Organisations
PPN	Public Participation Networks
PQASSO	Practical Quality Assurance Programme for Small Organisations
UN	United Nations

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Chairperson's Statement.....	4
CEO's Overview.....	10
The Year in Review.....	13
DFI Submissions 2016.....	20
DFI The Organisation.....	22
DFI Board 2016.....	23
DFI Affiliate & Associate Organisations 2016.....	24
Staff and Contact Details.....	27
Acknowledgements.....	29

## **Introduction**

### **Chairperson's Statement**

It was a year like no other for DFI – a ground breaking general election campaign 'Disable Inequality' then getting a disability inclusion candidate elected to the Seanad and the great loss of two powerful and greatly respected disability advocates – Mike Corbett and Martin Naughton. A loss compounded by them being our colleagues in DFI. The year ended as we agreed a Strategic Plan for the next four years.

The Seanad election saw DFI lead and then support ten organisations to collectively work together on agreeing our shared candidate selection through an open and democratic process. Eight leading disability organisations were central to this along with two other civil society nominating bodies. John Dolan, CEO of DFI, put himself forward as a candidate along with 34 others, DFI supported him in this decision, appreciating the many synergies between DFI's work and the work he planned to do in the Senate. It was a great boost for the disability movement when John was elected in April, as it ensures that people with disabilities are being strongly represented in our national parliament.

In the autumn, within a few short weeks of each other, we had the deaths of two staff members, Mike Corbett and Martin Naughton. More to the point they were two renowned and well respected advocates and role models for others with a disability here in Ireland and abroad. Two strong forces blowing across the country from their west of Ireland roots. Mike and Martin were friends to so many of us and they have left us a proud legacy of activism and commitment to building a fairer society.

We are dedicating this review to their memory and to their lifelong work for the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities. Their work now passes to a new generation of disability activists, organisations and leaders. DFI has a major role to nurture and support these activists, organisations and leaders.

I will now focus on some key areas related to the past year. In recent months we have confirmation of the continuing downward slide for people with disabilities – poverty (SILC), employment (ESRI), numbers of young people going into nursing homes and the social housing waiting lists.

**Poverty:** SILC data shows that disposable income increased for most socio-economic groups in 2015, except for those unable to work due to illness/disability. In 2015, 22.4% of people not at work due to illness / disability experienced consistent poverty (compared to 2% of those at work, and a national average of 8.7%). This is an increase from the rate of 14.4% in 2014, and 13.2% in 2008. ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie))

**Employment:** The ESRI report released in March 2017 'Employment Transitions among People with Disabilities in Ireland, An Analysis of the Quarterly National Household Survey, 2010-2015' showed that 31% of working-age people with a disability were at work compared to 71% of those without a disability. From 2010 – 2015, people with a disability were more likely to exit than enter employment.

**Nursing homes:** In 2015 according to the HSE there were 1,047 people aged under 65 living in nursing homes.

**Social Housing waiting lists:** The number of households with a social housing need, with household member(s) having an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual disability, raised from 3,919 in 2013 to 4,456 in 2016, an increase of 13.7%.<sup>[1]</sup>

These are not signs of recovery, they are hard evidence of the mounting effects of the recession, namely deepening exclusion.

While the Budget 2017 announcement of medical cards for children on Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is to be greatly welcomed the overall trend is that things are getting more difficult for people with disabilities, their families and the organisations that support them. Similarly, organisations have continuing income problems while dealing with

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Housing Agency (2016) *Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2016*  
<https://www.housingagency.ie/Housing/media/Media/Publications/Summary-of-Social-Housing-Assessment-Needs-2016.pdf>, p. 15

increases in the quantity of services needed and the cost of providing these services. This is along with the challenge of changing the model of service delivery as well as the major cultural shift required.

In partnership with Enable Ireland, we launched a report into the benefits and potential of Assistive Technology for people with disabilities if properly harnessed in Ireland. We held a conference on employment that provided a platform for people with disabilities to set out their issues and expectations. There is a critical role for our member organisations to be of service and support to people with disabilities on their journey to full inclusion. The embracing of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is the roadmap to the journey's end that we all share. We continued to work with our organisations to support them on this necessary journey.

DFI did considerable work during the year to strengthen the capacity of people with disabilities in self-advocacy and leadership roles. We have supported organisations to develop Community Participation Networks (CPN's) to provide training and support to people with disabilities in self advocacy.

The new Government brought the usual public focus on their achievements over the first 100 days. For DFI our verdict was a holding one, as we waited for the promised ratification of the UN CRPD by end of year and the October Budget to see what commitments to improve services would be delivered. Both proved to be great disappointments given the stated ambition of Government to ratify and implement in a timely fashion.

We have consistently focused on the CRPD in terms of achieving the outcomes promised in it to give people with disabilities full lives. We see the ratification as the end of the first phase, and from there progressing the journey of actions, across all the aspects of living, to realise the promise. This also means provision through Budgets. There was nothing preventing our Government in the last Budget to make disability a cross departmental theme and to show their resolve. Supports in the community are at an all-time low, with no sign of improvement, and young disabled people are going into

nursing homes as a result. Poverty is increasing and yet there have been no effective measures to deal with the extra costs of living with a disability. There are many more issues related to employment, housing and public transport to only name a few.

To turn to broader but connected issues as we face the future, Brexit, the housing crisis and fears of a slowdown in growth are some of the major challenges for Ireland. At the same time, we will continue to fight for the implementation of the UN CRPD. The clear risk is that disability drops off the agenda and it is my view that this is what is continuing to happen at Government level. A commitment to ratify by the end of 2016 was given in late 2015 and again restated in the programme for government in May 2016. However, it has not come to pass. At the same time, there is no uplift in services to people with disabilities, despite the fact that we are now three years post-recession.

Disability organisations will continue to experience major pressures and changes as a result of growing governance and quality standards, the ongoing implementation of the HSE Transforming Lives programme and organisations will face further change in response to the UN CRPD, the Assisted Decision Making Act, and the work commencing on Direct Payments under the Programme for a Partnership Government.

Our Strategic Plan seeks to support organisations through the change process as each organisation finds its own path through this difficult environment. People with disabilities and their organisations have yet to feel the end of the recession. The ongoing funding constraints, the influence of the economic uncertainty posed by realities such as the threat from Brexit and the ongoing public pay negotiations cannot be underestimated in relation to their potential impact on people with disabilities' quality of life and the overall disability movement.

The external environment has changed significantly: we have a new government that has greatly changed its way of operating and disability got little focus in Budget 2017. We ended the year without having ratified the UN CRPD. DFI spent a good part of the last few months focused on the government promise to ratify the UN CRPD by the end of the year. While this did not occur, both DFI and John's work in the Seanad focused

on this issue, responding to government legislation around the implementation of the UN CRPD at DFI, and questioning the government about the implementation process in the Seanad.

We need to focus on the UN CRPD in a new way as we move into a new Strategic Plan. I believe that we require a stronger and more focused engagement with our organisations on these matters and this has to happen within the context of UN CRPD implementation. The great majority of our organisations are small to medium, Section 39 and are engaged in a range of 'hard' and 'soft' services and supports. This constitutes a challenge but also a great opportunity to embed mainstreaming and inclusion. There needs to be a rebalancing towards this area while staying faithful to the person with a disability focus. These are in no way at odds as the organisations are critical to improving the status of people with disabilities.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the board and staff of DFI for their commitment in 2016. We will be continuing our efforts in 2017 to ensure the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities in Irish society.

Thank you.

**Pat Clarke**  
**Chairperson**





Elisa O'Donovan, Michael Lorigan, Catherine Keane, Kerry Blake and Michelle Purcell at the 'Make it Work: Employment & People with Disabilities' conference – November 2016



Christina McCarthy, Siobhán Long, John Dolan, Joan O'Donnell, Pierce Richardson and Fionnuala O'Donovan at the Launch of Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities and Older People Discussion Paper – November 2016

## **CEO's Overview**

The year started with the Dáil and Seanad elections, by mid-year there was more critical public attention on organisations in the disability and charity sectors. Autumn brought the shocking news of the deaths of two colleagues and friends, Mike Corbett and Martin Naughton. There followed the Budget Statement that did not highlight disability as any kind of priority and then what was seen as confirmation, the non-ratification of the UN CRPD, by year end. As the year ended the Company Members adopted a new Strategic Plan.

Before I say anything more on these matters it is important to underline what is steering and influencing our work approach. The twin strong guides to the year past are the Memorandum and Articles of Association along with the Operational Plan 2015 – 2016, which has been routinely reviewed by you our Company Members. The Sustainability and Growth Plan, 2015 has also guided our direction and focus.

Influenced by these guiding documents, we have run the Disable Inequality campaign and witnessed the Seanad campaign. In like manner we have carried out more structured work and engagement with people with disabilities. We have enhanced our public and social media presence and we have progressed complementary changes as to how DFI does its work with an enhanced skills mix and new ways of working across staff. Similarly we have sought to be more progressive and efficient in how we engage with our member organisations and civil society organisations.

DFI's work has always involved building good working relationships with a wide range of people, organisations and representative structures. Our new Strategic Plan pushes that approach much further. It will also be a challenge externally as we seek to progress equality and inclusion for people with disabilities across a growing range of fora. We will be using the opportunity of the ratification of the UN CRPD to fuel engagement with the various fora that can influence and improve people with disabilities' inclusion and quality of life.

Our ways of working and our focus has developed over the years, this has happened in a planned and conscious way. Now we find ourselves working more and more with people with disabilities, and with increasing support from our organisations. Similarly, with more involvement of external entities and stakeholders and increasing emphasis on the community, to name a few areas. At the same time we are stepping up in a number of internal areas, namely team working and project management and all with the realisation that our internal cohesion and messaging needs to be optimised. It will be a challenge internally in DFI as we reach to better synergise across our work, blending our work streams in an integrated way across working with disability organisations, policy and strengthening the voice of people with disabilities.

Overall, 2016 has been marked by significant changes on many fronts: we were deeply saddened to lose two serving members of staff in 2016, Mike Corbett and Martin Naughton, both of whom greatly influenced the direction that DFI has taken to turn our consciousness more and more towards the person with a disability perspective. We have weathered significant changes in staff and moved to change the culture of the organisation. We have secured funding for a Community Worker and Assistive Technology Development Officer. We have also taken on a full time Communications Manager, signifying a major change in our capacity to deliver on DFI's message.

The failure of the Government to ratify the UN CRPD - despite repeated assurances from the relevant Departments and An Taoiseach that it would be ratified by end of 2016 - is a source of great frustration and anger for me and every person living with a disability and their families in Ireland.

DFI will continue to press and will use every opportunity to ensure that this vital convention will be ratified in 2017. We are also determined to make Government understand that a meaningful financial package is necessary to bring about the sea change that is needed for people with disabilities in Irish society. This will inform our preparations for DFI's Budget 2018 submission. Ratification must happen hand in glove with the ongoing commitment to the provision of extra resources to allow people with disabilities have the same opportunities to equally participate in our national life as their fellow citizens. There is also the ongoing need for a societal change to a mind-set of

equality inclusion and the complimentary legislation areas that are needed to support that cultural shift and the focus of resources.

I had a year as never before in my successful campaign to get elected to Seanad Éireann. There are many to thank at so many levels; the Board for supporting the general concept and for allowing me to contest, the nominating bodies that at short notice gathered together and supported this novel approach, and all those individuals, many with disabilities, who supported me during the campaign. Being in the Seanad has unlocked opportunities to promote, at every opportunity, the spirit of the UN CRPD, namely to make Ireland provide the reality of a full and meaningful life for people with disabilities.

It is important to state that the post-recession period is as demanding as the recession was. Cuts have stopped yet needs are growing, how resources and supports are to be provided must greatly change and right throughout the year there was a heavy impact and workload in DFI. It was a year where we needed a slower pace to better consolidate, that did not materialise. It ended with the passing of Mike and Martin and no boost from the Budget, or ratification. The commencement of team building work across all the staff towards the end of the year will hopefully bring renewed energy and recommitment to reflect and refresh the work across a changing staff team.

My thanks also to the board for their hard work throughout the year, where they also work on a number of board committees. To the officers, Pat Clarke, Chairperson, Gary Lee and Barbara O'Connell, Vice-Chairpersons, a special thanks with pride of place going to the outgoing Chairperson, Pat Clarke, for his ongoing engagement and work between meetings and his availability to support and challenge me in my role.

Finally to my staff colleagues for a year that had its major ups and downs where we needed to support each other and that was a tribute to the character of my colleagues.

**John Dolan**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **The Year in Review**

### **Policy Highlights for 2016**

DFI has significantly progressed its work in the area of influencing the development, implementation and monitoring of policies affecting people with disabilities over the past year. The following offers some of 2016's policy highlights

#### **Health**

DFI was proactive in influencing the development of multiple health related areas. DFI was represented on all the Working Groups of the HSE's Transforming Lives programme, formerly the Value for Money programme. Our approach across these Groups focused on moving away from traditional models of services, to a 'community services' model. Other activities included highlighting the need for more linkages across the Working Groups to ensure a more cohesive programme, and holding a 'Transforming Lives' Forum for members organisations. DFI also advocated for effective and fair policies across a range of other HSE structures, including the National Consultative Forum (NCF), the Oversight and Development Forum, the Universal Access Group, the Taskforce on Vulnerable Adults, the Inter-sectoral Safeguarding Committee, and the Patients Forum. In partnership with the Not for Profit Business Association, DFI continued its work with member organisations to explore and identify community based services' outcomes for people with disabilities. Our work sought to meet DFI's goals of mainstreaming and collaboration, along with progressing the movement of funding to community based supports. DFI has also joined the Home Care Campaign. This is a campaign, run by Age Action, to advocate for a statutory right to home care, to help people who wish to remain at home stay out of nursing homes.

#### **Social Protection and Employment**

DFI's campaigns focused on the continuing lack of effective solutions to address the cost of disability, the inaccessibility of, and exclusion from, mainstream employment supports, including Intreo and the Youth Guarantee, and the loss of secondary benefits on take up / return to employment. DFI continued its representation on the Department of Social Protection's Social Inclusion Forum where it worked to influence policy such as, the Employ Ability support service, and the Wage Subsidy Scheme. DFI carried out

research to highlight the barriers that people with disabilities face when they attempt to enter or re-enter employment after acquiring a disability. This research was the basis of the conference 'Make it Work: Employment and People with Disabilities' to highlight these barriers and offer solutions.

### **National Disability Strategy**

DFI was represented on the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG) as well as Departmental Consultative Committee meetings. The 'Disable Inequality' campaign rose to prominence late 2015, and was launch in early 2016. It was designed to mobilise people with disabilities on the ground, engage supporting organisations and ensure disability is injected into all elements of the general election campaign. Policy work included submitting Political Party Briefing papers, and holding meetings with Party policy advisors. A suite of election materials were also developed to support member organisations, people with disabilities, and political candidates to develop their understanding of the key issues facing people with disabilities. The year began with a vibrant and dynamic meeting of disability activists from all across the country joining together to support and add their expertise to DFI's election campaign. The time we have dedicated to developing our 'Disable Inequality' campaign will undoubtedly impact over the lifetime of this government.

### **National Disability Strategy – Local Implementation**

The Community Participation Network (CPN) developed by DFI last year continued to support the capacity of, and representation of people with disabilities in local community structures. Practical Self-Advocacy Training was delivered through these networks. DFI staff engaged with local Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and 13 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) through direct and indirect membership. Efforts to encourage and support member organisations to engage with these structures continued with emphasis on more effective participation and engagement by people with disabilities. DFI continued its participation on local and national housing structures across the country, influencing local Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities strategic plans.

## **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities/EU/International**

We have continued to work closely with our various EU partners. DFI continued to participate in the European Disability Forum, Board, General Assembly and other meetings. DFI was also active in its participation on the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) Policy Impact Group, and in the European Movement Ireland. DFI also joined the European Social and Investment Fund (ESIF) Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee last year.

DFI has also continued to focus on the implementation and ratification of the UN CRPD in Ireland. We have engaged with government and other organisations over Bills under consideration that are intended to implement the UN CRPD, in the hopes of influencing the decision making process and bringing these Bills as close as possible to the standard of the UN CRPD. We have also continued to call for ratification in the media. To prepare member organisations and our media spokespeople for ratification and the process that will come after, we have developed and given seminars on the UN CRPD, and will continue to do so.

## **Research**

The research project to explore the profile and situation of younger people with disabilities living in nursing homes has continued. DFI's Erasmus + project on de-institutionalisation and education supports for people with disabilities, 'Unlocking Freedom Through Adult Education' is also continuing. DFI is also working with the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP) at NUI Galway to fund a Ph.D. student in working in the area of mental health, who will also work with DFI on a part-time basis. DFI has also, along with several other organisations and universities in Europe, put in another Erasmus+ application, which if successful will fund a project to create a training course for service providers to teach them to deliver services in a person-centred way, taking a rights-based approach. Finally, DFI has applied for funds from the Irish Research Council for a researcher to conduct a thorough audit of Ireland's disability

laws, to establish where Ireland needs to change its laws and policies to come up to the standard of the UN CRPD.

### **DFI Representation on Policy Committees 2016**

DFI continue to represent the disability movement at local, regional and national level in order to push for a vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities are fully included and equal citizens in society. In 2016, DFI was represented on numerous committees and working groups across the areas of health, social protection, education, transport, housing, advocacy, human rights, governance, community development and local government to name a few.

### **Support for Our Member Organisations**

In 2016, SOLA, launched in 2015, continued their work. SOLA: 'The Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Quality in the Community and Voluntary Sector', is a partnership between DFI, the University of Limerick and Johnson & Johnson, based in the University of Limerick. The aim of SOLA is to empower individuals and organisations in the community, voluntary and disability sector by engaging in research, education, and training to implement proven governance and sustainable quality systems.

DFI, through SOLA, delivered courses with University of Limerick in Quality Management, Innovation Management, and Problem Solving. The University of Limerick has sanctioned a Level 8 Certificate to award to organisations that complete the University of Limerick/DFI suite of three courses. It is called the 'Certificate in Service Quality and Outcome Development for Community and Voluntary Organisations'.

SOLA is committed to progressing research that will support Community and Voluntary organisations to adopt quality principles and become more efficient so that they can deliver relevant, high quality services that meet legislation and national standard, albeit with reduced funding.

DFI also continued the important work with the National Council of Voluntary Organisations in the UK to provide training in relation to demonstrating outcome and implementing the PQASSO Quality Management System.



In addition to our work through SOLA, DFI has continued to engage with member organisations as they contend with a multiplicity of challenges. With the ratification of the UN CRPD hopefully imminent, DFI has also begun to deliver seminars on the Convention to our member organisations, to prepare them to use the UN CRPD in their work.

### **Strengthening the Voice, Impact and Relevance of the Disability Movement in Ireland**

During the election, DFI ran the Disable Inequality General Election Campaign, which had as its underlying principle strengthening the voice of people with disabilities in Ireland by creating a platform for them to speak of their own lived experience and on their own terms. To achieve this, an extensive communications strategy was employed. DFI collected stories of inequality, which helped to illustrate the lived experience of the 600,000 people in Ireland who live with a disability. Media training was also delivered, to provide people with the support and confidence to speak in public. This campaign was planned in 2015, and launched in 2016.

DFI has also hired two new Community Workers, who work in the community with people with disabilities and other groups, such as local authorities, to improve the lives of people with disabilities. As an example, our Community Workers have offered Practical Self-Advocacy Training, which helps people with disabilities develop the skills they need to advocate for their rights in their daily lives.

DFI is also developing a UN CRPD seminar for people with disabilities who act as media spokespeople for DFI. This session would familiarise people with disabilities with the UN CRPD, what rights it contains, and where Ireland stands on it. It will also include a media training session, so that our spokespeople are able to speak on the UN CRPD in the public domain. These session will also act as a way to raise awareness of the UN CRPD in the community.

In order to improve our messaging about the lived experience of people with disabilities, and the need for improved legislation around disability, including the implementation of the UN CRPD, DFI has hired a new Communications Manager. She will help DFI

improve the message that we present in the public domain, about the barriers that people with disabilities face in our society, and the need for true equality and inclusion in the community.

Meanwhile, work also continued on developing the Disability Research Hub. The goal of the Disability Research Hub is to perform research on the lived experience of people with disabilities, with the goal of improving their quality of life and progressing their rights. The Disability Research Hub has already begun projects, including taking a subcontract for an NDA report on good practices for employees with disabilities in the public service. The Research Hub has also successfully worked with the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP) at NUI Galway to fund a Ph.D. student in the area of mental health, who is also employed part time at DFI. In addition, DFI is working with the CDLP to fund a postdoc who will look into the implementation of the UN CRPD, comparing Irish law to the UN CRPD to find out where progress is needed. The researcher will work with the disability community on this work. This research, if it goes ahead, will help clarify where Ireland must work to improve the rights of people with disabilities, and involving the disability community will allow people with disabilities to have a say in research that could have an impact on their lives.

DFI continues to involve our member organisations in submissions and campaigns as well as research, and is working to become a greater resource to member organisations in the provision of training and capacity-raising support as outlined in our policy and support to organisations work portfolios. DFI also continues to contribute to the CV Pillar and Health Linkage Group, as well as contributing to the work to revise the Governance Code in conjunction with Community and Voluntary organisations. We also play a key role in ongoing discussions on regulating advocacy work and the relationship between the CV sector and policy makers. We continue to represent the disability interest to government departments and policy makers through engagement in HSE forums, Department of Social Protection Forums and the CV Pillar mechanisms.

Finally, we have gained legitimacy as a representative voice of the European Disability movement via involvement with the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) and European Disability Forum (EDF) presenting a

strong presence in relation to rights, employment, and the importance of a changed approach by political decision makers in Europe. DFI has been successful in securing Erasmus funding with DFI as lead partner in a project that will see organisations in Ireland and Europe working more closely to support deinstitutionalisation via adult education.

**DFI Submissions 2016**

	<b>Submission Name</b>	<b>Submitted To</b>
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1	Accessibility in the EU	Deirdre Clune MEP
2	Health Priorities for People with Disabilities	Senator John Dolan
3	Policy Impact Group Participation	EASPD Policy Impact Group
4	Proposed amendments to the Part 2, Chapter 1 of Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Bill 2016 relating to inclusion of universal design considerations.	Senator Colette Kelleher
5	Proposed amendments to the Part 2, Chapter 1 of Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Bill 2016 relating to inclusion of universal design considerations	Senator Alice Mary O'Higgins
6	Housing Issues for People with Disabilities	Senator John Dolan
7	Royal College of Physicians Consultation for Future of Healthcare	Royal College of Physicians
8	UNCRPD Committee Participation	EDF
9	Submission on the Residential Rental Strategy	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
10	C&V Pillar Meeting with Dept. regarding Housing issues for People with Disabilities	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
11	Royal College of Physicians Consultation for Future of Healthcare	Royal College of Physicians
12	Policy Impact Group Participation	EASPD Policy Impact Group
13	National Disability Inclusion Strategy Public Consultation	National Disability Strategy Implementation Group
14	Observations on Action Plan for Education	Senator John Dolan
15	Future of Health Disability Issues	Senator John Dolan

16	Pre-Budget Submission	Department of Finance
17	Pre-Budget Submission	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
18	Pre-Budget Submission	Department of Health
19	Pre-Budget Submission	Department of Social Protection
20	Submission to Oireachtas Committee on Future of Healthcare	Oireachtas Committee on Future of Healthcare
21	Neurorehabilitation Strategy	HSE National

### **DFI: The Organisation**

Important corporate developments were achieved during 2016. DFI's Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was approved by the Board and Company Members.

Performance reports were submitted every four months to the Board and the Strategic General Members in relation to progress on implementing the Operational Plan (OP) 2015-2016.

We progressed many aspects of the DFI Sustainability and Growth Plan in our work, this plan had been adopted in early 2015 and it has strongly influenced our work approach since then.

We expanded our communications work by employing a Communications Manager, we have increased our engagement with media on planned campaigns and in response to issues that arose. We adapted our systems to allow for improved campaigning and this was put into practice during the Disable Inequality campaign.

In relation to Information Technology developments our Office 365 systems helped us to better share information internally and externally, while work on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook is improving our external communication.

We have fully met six of the twelve PQASSO's Quality Areas. The remainder are currently being considered and expect to be fully met by the end of 2017 or early 2018.

The quality areas that are fully met are:

- Planning
- Quality
- User-centred Services
- Communication and Promotion
- Managing Resources
- Monitoring and Evaluation

## **DFI Board 2016**

**Pat Clarke - Chairperson**

Down Syndrome Ireland  
(re-appointed 14/07/2016)

<b>Gary Lee – Vice Chairperson</b>	CIL Carmichael House
<b>Barbara O’Connell – Vice Chairperson</b>	Acquired Brain Injury Ireland
<b>Don Bailey</b>	Vantastic Ltd.
<b>Fran Brennan</b>	Post Polio Support Group (appointed 14/07/2016)
<b>Michael Doyle</b>	Irish Wheelchair Association (co-opted 10/12/2015 and appointed 14/07/2016)
<b>Olga Estridge</b>	The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland (co/opted 13/10/2016)
<b>Mike Glynn</b>	Epilepsy Ireland (retired 14/07/2016)
<b>Elaine Howley</b>	National Council for the Blind Ireland
<b>Joe Mason</b>	WALK (retired 11/10/2016)
<b>Sean Megahey</b>	Hail Housing
<b>Kathleen O’Meara</b>	Rehab Group (appointed 14/07/2016)
<b>John O’Sullivan</b>	Enable Ireland (re-appointed 14/07/2016)
<b>Colm Whooley</b>	Spinal Injuries Ireland (co-opted 10/12/2015, appointed 14/07/2016 and retired 06/09/2016)
<b>Company Secretary</b> <b>John Dolan</b>	

## **DFI Affiliate and Associate Organisations 2016<sup>1</sup>**

### **Affiliates with Nominating Bodies Status**

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	Down Syndrome Ireland
Alzheimer Society of Ireland	Dyslexia Association of Ireland
Arthritis Ireland	Enable Ireland
ASPIRE – Asperger Syndrome Association	Epilepsy Ireland (formerly Brainwave)
Ataxia Ireland	Fighting Blindness
AWARE	Genetic and Rare Disorders Organisation
BRÍ – Acquired Brain Injury Association	HAIL Housing Association for Integrated Living
CASA – Caring and Sharing Association	Headway Ireland
Central Remedial Clinic	Huntington’s Disease Association of Ireland
Centre for Independent Living Mayo	Irish Deaf Society
Centre for Independent Living Tipperary	Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind
Center for Independent Living Carmichael House	Irish Haemophilia Society
Cheeverstown House Ltd	Irish Kidney Association
COPE Foundation	Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association
County Roscommon Support Group for People with Disabilities	Irish Society for Autism
Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland	Irish Wheelchair Association
DeafHear.ie	KARE
D.E.B.R.A. Ireland	Leitrim Association of People with Disabilities
Disabled Drivers Association	Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland
Disabled People of Clare	Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
Doorway to Life Ltd	

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<sup>1</sup> At the Company AGM in May 2014 the new Memorandum and Articles of Association were adopted. Accordingly the membership categories were changed as follows: Nominating Bodies and General Members were incorporated under the title Affiliate Organisations. Associate Organisations remained under the existing title.



National Council for the Blind of Ireland  
National Federation of Arch Clubs  
Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland  
North West MS Therapy Centre  
Parkinson's Association of Ireland  
Post Polio Support Group  
Reach Ireland  
Rehab Group  
Royal Hospital Donnybrook  
Sophia Housing Association Ltd  
Special Olympics Ireland  
Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland  
Spinal Injuries Ireland  
St Catherine's Association  
St Gabriel's School and Centre  
St Michael's House  
Vantastic Ltd  
WALK (formerly Walkinstown Association)  
Western Care Association

## **Affiliates**

Ability West  
ACTS (Accessible Community Transport Southside)  
AHEAD  
Áiseanna Tacaíochta  
Anne Sullivan Centre  
Arklow Disability Action Group  
Autism Spectrum Disorder Initiatives (ASDI)  
Bluestack Special Needs Foundation  
Camphill Communities of Ireland  
Catholic Institute for Deaf People (CIDP)  
Care Alliance Ireland  
Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups  
Centre for Independent Living Blanchardstown  
Centre for Independent Living Carlow  
Centre for Independent Living Cork  
Centre for Independent Living Donegal  
Centre for Independent Living Galway  
Centre for Independent Living Greater Dublin  
Centre for Independent Living Kilkenny  
Centre for Independent Living Longford  
Centre for Independent Living Offaly  
Centre for Independent Living Sligo  
Centre for Independent Living Waterford

Centre for Independent Living West Limerick

Centre for Independent Living Wexford

Children in Hospital Ireland

Childvision (formerly St Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired)

Co-Action West Cork

Cork Deaf Association

Crosscare Cedar Programme

Diabetes Federation of Ireland Southern Region

Dyspraxia Association of Ireland

Family Carers Ireland

Féach

Fibromyalgia Support Group (Midlands)

F.I.C.T.A. - Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Associations

GROW

Heart Children Ireland

ICARE (Inishowen Children's Autism Related Education)

Irish Electromagnetic Radiation Victims Network

Irish Hard of Hearing Association

Lakers Social and Recreation Club

Lucan Disability Action Group

Mental Health Reform

Mid West Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association

Migraine Association of Ireland

Move4Parkinson's

Neurological Alliance of Ireland

North Tipperary Disability Support Service Limited

North West Parents & Friends Association

North West Stroke Group

Out and About Association

Peacehaven Trust

Prader Willi Syndrome Association Ireland. (PWSAI)

Sharing the Journey

S.T.E.E.R – Support Training Education Employment Research

St Hilda's Services

St Mary's Centre (Telford)

**DFI Associates**

Livability Ireland (formerly John Groom)

Voluntary Services International (VSI)

Extra Care

Plan Ireland

Alcohol Forum

**New Organisations Admitted to Membership in 2016**

Mental Health Reform

North Tipperary Disability Support Service Limited

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Allen Dunne	Senior Executive Officer - Operational / Deputy CEO
Joanne McCarthy	Senior Executive Officer - Policy and Research

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Claire Gallery	Administrator – DFI and Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Quality
Alison Hillgaar	Corporate Services Support
Cathy McGrath	Support Staff
Martina McKenna	Clerical Administrator
India Sacre	Administrator

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## **Acknowledgements**

Disability is a societal rather than a sectoral issue and DFI has progressed its work in 2016 by working with a large number of organisations across all aspects of Irish society, including Government departments and agencies, community and voluntary organisations, universities and local government. We are very grateful to all of these organisations, bodies and groups. Their co-operation and support has been greatly beneficial, and very much appreciated. We have also worked with members of the Dáil , Seanad, and City and County Councillors and associated officials.

A large numbers of individuals from our member organisations represent DFI at a wide range of national and local structures. We wish to acknowledge these individuals, and to extend our sincere thanks for their work and effort on behalf of DFI and people with disabilities. Without their dedication, hard work and support, the work of DFI would be very much more difficult, and much less effective. To all of you, thank you for your commitment. We are very grateful.

**DFI also wishes to acknowledge the support and cooperation of its member organisations.**

**DFI is a member of the following organisations:**

- Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH)
- European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
- Charities Institute Ireland
- The Wheel
- The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups
- European Anti Poverty Network
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- European Movement Ireland (EMI)
- The Irish Social Policy Association
- The Irish Disability Studies Association
- Irish Social Policy Network
- Mental Health Reform



The main object of DFI “is to benefit the community by supporting the contribution, protecting the rights and valuing the roles of persons with disabilities and disabling conditions in its community and encouraging their fullest participation in shaping a society that promotes the wellbeing and quality of life of such persons”.

The main object is further supported by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006.

The governing body comprises of at least 50% of people who have a disability or who have had a personal and enduring experience of disability.

The governing body, namely the Company Members, agree the multi-annual Strategic Plan to promote the objects of the Company and this Plan is regularly reviewed by them.

There are over 120 organisations as member organisations, of DFI. DFI also works with a growing number of organisations and groups around the country and internationally, that have a significant disability interest, mainly from the statutory and voluntary sectors. DFI, as a critical and knowledgeable entity on behalf of the disability movement in Ireland, provides information, training and support, networking, advocacy and representation, research and policy development / implementation, and organisation and management development. DFI is Ireland’s National Council member on the European Disability Forum.

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.

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