

Strategic Plan

2026-2029



**DISABILITY FEDERATION
OF IRELAND**



Foreword from the CEO Elaine Teague

Welcome to the Disability Federation of Ireland's Strategic Plan 2026-2029. We are launching this plan during a time of significant development in Ireland, the EU, and internationally. With the National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People launched and HSE regionalisation underway, there is a renewed focus on disability. DFI is committed to providing strong leadership in this evolving landscape.

This new strategy is the result of a robust development process. It has been informed by a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of our previous strategy and an in-depth assessment of the current context in which we operate. To ensure this plan truly reflects the needs of our sector, we undertook extensive consultation involving interviews, focus groups, and surveys with a wide range of stakeholders. This included people with disabilities, our member organisations, our funders, officials across the wider public sector, as well as our staff and Board. We are very appreciative to all those who gave their time and input to guide our considerations.

The result is a vision for an Ireland where disabled people shape their own lives and take part in their communities with equality, inclusion, and independence.

In 2029 we will know we have achieved our ambitions if:

- Our members are connected to one another and actively involved in DFI.
- Peoples lived experience of disability is shaping the work of our members, DFI and state bodies.
- Disabled people are experiencing improved inclusion in public services and local communities.

Finally, we recognise the importance of language in relation to realising disability rights and that people have different preferences. We use the following terms: disabled people, people with disabilities, and people with disabling conditions.

We look forward to working with our members, allies, and the state to drive full inclusion and equity.



Foreword from the Chairperson Shane O'Brien

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the DFI Strategic Plan 2026-2029.

This plan represents a commitment to working with and for our members and disabled people. A Strategic Planning Committee, involving representatives of both the Board and the executive team, was put in place to oversee the strategy development process. Through a series of facilitated workshops, the Board played a key role in analysing the rich information gathered during consultation to inform the development of this new plan.

Good governance and accountability are central to our work. To support our outward-facing priorities, DFI is committed to strengthening our effectiveness as a positive and flexible

organisation. We will ensure the implementation of this plan through rigorous monitoring, with progress reports compiled every four months and presented to the Board, and subsequently to our members at our Strategic General Meetings and Annual General Meetings.

I am confident that this strategy provides a strong framework for DFI to deliver on its values of Respect, Inclusion, Fairness, Empowerment, and Collaboration. We will continue to put disabled people and their lived experience at the heart of everything we do over the coming years.

Vision



DFI's vision is an Ireland where disabled people shape their own lives and take part in their communities with equality, inclusion, and independence.

Mission



DFI is a federation that works with our members, disabled people, allies, and the state to drive full inclusion and equity.

Values



Respect



Inclusion



Fairness



Empowerment



Collaboration

Our strategic priorities





Drive accountability: Make sure Government, state bodies and others deliver on their disability commitments.

We will:

- Actively oversee what government and agencies promised, what they delivered, and what still needs action.
- Create practical ways for our members and the public to identify and share the status of disability rights commitments.
- Make full use of our members' experience to support stronger advocacy, shared campaigns, and clear monitoring of progress.
- Deepen our work with relevant cross sector partners, EU networks and public bodies, to support the implementation of disability rights.



Champion inclusive communities: Work nationally and locally, with our members and wider civil society to support communities and mainstream services to be inclusive.

We will:

- Promote best practice methods to realise inclusive communities and encourage more organisations and people to get involved.
- Empower our members to further develop inclusive practices.
- Support people with disabilities to influence services and policies.
- Build partnerships across sectors to make disability inclusion part of everyday services and strengthen members' impact.





Advance disabled people's leadership: Strengthen opportunities for disabled people to speak for themselves, shape DFI's work, guide our members and influence national policy.

We will:

- Promote inclusive leadership to guide the sector.
- Support members to strengthen disabled people's leadership within their organisations.
- Ensure disabled peoples' lived experience informs the work of DFI.
- Prioritise cross sector partnerships that support shared mainstream ambitions.



Influence policy: Use evidence and experience to influence laws, policy and national programmes.

We will:

- Engage in research and policy analysis to guide our advocacy and inform clear policy recommendations.
- Enhance members capacity to engage in the development and implementation of national policy.
- Ensure members' lived experiences shape our policies and guide our advocacy priorities.
- Build strong partnerships with public bodies, civil society, disabled people and their representatives organisations, community groups and others to achieve shared impact.





Connect and Empower Members: Support and strengthen member organisations so they can improve outcomes for disabled people and show the real value of their work.

We will:

- Highlight members' transformative work and innovations.
- Respond to members needs and challenges through collective advocacy and representation.
- Support member leadership through peer networks, learning events, and forums that build cooperation and shared knowledge.
- Foster collaborations and partnerships between members and other relevant organisations locally and nationally to strengthen services and support long-term community improvements.

To support these outward-facing priorities, DFI will:



Strengthen our effectiveness: We will be a positive, connected and flexible organisation, with good systems and ways of working that support our staff and adapt as needs and challenges change.

We will:

- Embrace diversity, inclusion, and equality, to support implementation of our strategy and enhance staff wellbeing.
- Improve our accountability and performance by measuring impact, tracking progress, and strengthening leadership and governance.
- Strengthen our role as thought leaders in public policy, advocacy and effecting change.
- Pursue long-term financial sustainability and enhanced organisational effectiveness.





DFI's Vision

DFI's vision is an Ireland where disabled people shape their own lives and take part in their communities with equality, inclusion, and independence.



DFI's mission

DFI is a federation that works with our members, disabled people, allies, and the state to drive full inclusion and equity.

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