



DFI Cost of Disability Payment Submission

About the consultation

The government has committed to delivering a permanent Cost of Disability payment. The Department of Social Protection recently held a public consultation on this.

This is the result of over two decades of advocacy on Cost of Disability.

What we did

DFI made a detailed submission to the consultation. Our submission addressed the four consultation questions on purpose, eligibility, payment amount, and how the payment should work.

It provided relevant context and evidence, and reiterated previous policy recommendations from recent years. It also made suggestions for the Department of Social Protection's Cost of Disability Summit on 13 May 2026.



DISABILITY FEDERATION
OF IRELAND

How we arrived at our key points



Research evidence

Extensive research has documented the scale and range of extra costs disabled people face.



DFI members and lived experience

Case studies, detailed concerns and data gathered from DFI members and disabled people.



International best practice

Guidance from international experts and organisations, including the European Disability Forum, and good practice examples.



Long-standing recommendations

Based on years of policy submissions to government and work with disabled people and civil society organisations.



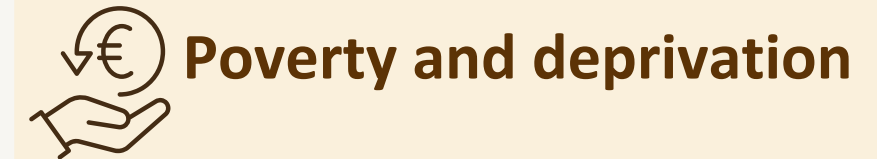
Key considerations on the Cost of Disability



Ireland is currently failing its obligations under the UN CRPD, particularly Article 28 (social protection) and Article 27 (right to work). The Cost of Disability payment must deliver on these rights.



The payment must be co-designed with disabled people and organisations. This will take time. A structured ongoing process is essential.



Disabled households need up to 93% more income to match the living standards of non-disabled households. Our social protection system doesn't address this.



Costs vary across the community ranging from low to extremely high. They can also change over time. The system must acknowledge and be responsive to this.



Cost of Disability is also driven by inaccessible, expensive, and unavailable public services. Tackling this will require a holistic, cross-departmental response.



Budget 2026 removed several supports for disabled people. This is putting a lot of pressure on disabled people, pushing them further into poverty.



Key measures to tackle the Cost of Disability

A weekly universal cash payment

Available to any disabled person experiencing additional costs, regardless of employment status, income or age.

Stepped payment structure

Baseline floor rate with graduated increases based on need, and scope to apply for specific costs as they arise.

No household means-testing

Assessment based only on the individual's costs, not family or partner income.

Simple eligibility process

Grounded in the social model of disability. Underpinned by a principle of trust, not administrative suspicion.

Decoupled secondary supports

Medical card, free transport and other measures should be linked to disability need, not income thresholds.

Disability tax credit

To support disabled people in employment who may fall above thresholds for additional supports.

Three-year cross-Departmental Action Plan

Measurable, time-bound commitments on Cost of Disability across Health, Housing, Transport and other departments.

Scheme review and impact

Track impact and enable improvement over time. No frequent reassessment of individuals. Measure poverty and employment rates.

Emergency interim supports

Replace what was removed in Budget 2026 as an interim measure before the co-designed Cost of Disability payment is implemented.