



Disability Federation of Ireland

Pre-Budget Submission 2018: 'Republic of Opportunity'? People with Disabilities Still Waiting...

July 2017

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‘Republic of Opportunity’? People with Disabilities Still Waiting...

Put simply, Ireland’s disability services are crumbling.

The economic crisis, which began in 2008, hit everyone hard, but was particularly harsh on people with disabilities, many of whom were already surviving on disposable incomes below the poverty threshold and who saw the vital services they depend on being cut. Ireland officially exited recession in September 2013.¹ Four years on, it is an inescapable fact that people with disabilities in our community are in a far weaker position today than when the recession first took hold.

The disposable income of people with disabilities fell by 7.4%, a drop of €1,047 between 2010 and 2015. This effectively means that people’s income is down by €20 a week.² Despite impressive levels of growth and Ireland being lauded as the fastest developing economy in the EU³, resources have not been made available to ensure improvements in the quality of life for people with disabilities and their position has actually regressed further. The consistent poverty rate rose from 14% to 22% for people with disabilities in 2015. 132,000 people with disabilities are now living in consistent poverty. This unacceptable figure will continue to spiral unless the Government decides to reverse years of neglect and chronic underfunding.

It is imperative that Budget 2018 provides significant resources to bring people with disabilities out of poverty and to ensure that others are not caught in cycles of disadvantage. Our new Taoiseach has spoken inspiringly of wanting to mandate the Government to create a “republic of opportunity” in his first address as our country’s leader.⁴ If we are to truly have a real republic that offers opportunity to every single one of its citizens, investment must be targeted at those who have been left behind and marginalised. The circle of opportunity needs to be widened to include people with disabilities. DFI are seeking a balanced programme to comprehensively address the outcomes that people with disabilities and their families require across the following interlinked elements:

¹ Independent, 19 September 2013

² www.cso.ie

³ Irish Times, 3 May 2016

⁴ Irish Examiner, 14 June 2017



Simultaneous and coordinated actions are required under these three elements, to enable people with disabilities to live independently and with dignity, to ensure people with disabilities are able to access community services on a par with every other citizen, and to allow people with disabilities to contribute to the development and renewal of our country.

Last year's Budget was a missed opportunity to undo some of the worst of the austerity measures in health and across other public services including housing, education, employment, and transport, in relation to key services that people with disabilities need. In Budget 2018, the Government will be making provision for its third year in a five-year term. Time is running out for this administration to deliver on its election promises and pledges in the Programme for Government to improve services for people with disabilities.

The case for significant financial resources in this Budget is made all the more compelling by the new Taoiseach's assertion that Ireland will ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) this year. The UN CRPD articulates what human rights mean in the context of disability. This major international treaty came into being because people with disabilities around the world have unfortunately all too often been denied the basic rights and fundamental freedoms that many people can thankfully take for granted. The UN CRPD is the international community's response to tackle this discrimination. It is the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century and at its core is a commitment to ensure the rights of people with disabilities to be treated as full and equal citizens.

Ireland signed the UN CRPD on March 30th 2007. It is welcome that the new Taoiseach has given a firm commitment to ratify the UN CRPD this year, but this has to be accompanied by meaningful financial provision. Ratification on its own will not change the lives of people with disabilities, unless this is underpinned by the budgetary resources necessary to begin building a society where people with disabilities have access to the same rights and opportunities as everybody else.

Ireland's long delay in ratifying the UN CRPD means many other countries have moved far ahead of us in underlining their commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities, in the provision of services and supports, and ensuring that they have full equality under the law. The Convention covers a wide range of areas including:

- health
- education
- employment
- access to justice
- personal security
- independent living
- access to information.

Ratification by Ireland must happen hand in glove with the provision of extra resources, otherwise it will be perceived as a hollow or empty gesture. A substantial budgetary package for disability will be a solid investment in Ireland's long term sustainability and international reputation. The services and supports which government badly needs to put in place in order to contend with the challenges posed by disability will have an impact, at some stage, on every single family in this country. Disability is a societal issue and needs a societal response.

This is also a fundamental value-for-money issue. As people live longer, the numbers of people acquiring a disability will continue to rise. If Ireland does not show the foresight to strongly invest in tackling disability now, we will inevitably end up squandering public money for decades to come. Money will continue to be wasted on very poor and inappropriate services, resulting equally in diminished outcomes for people with disabilities and taxpayers. Disability inclusion is a part of the public service reform agenda.

Respite and emergency residential places are a big issue as noted by An Taoiseach, but are not the only areas for investment. It is imperative that the Budget prioritises the building of Ireland's community disability services. Our core message is that this vital work will require a whole of Government approach, which will involve the deployment of substantial resources over a range of budgetary subheads in order to transform the

way Ireland deals with the challenges posed by disability. These challenges are relevant to every community – rural and urban – in our country.

The austerity period severely damaged the existing services and supports that people with disabilities need to live ordinary lives in ordinary places. The situation is now critical and Government can no longer delay in allocating substantial resources to people with disabilities in Budget 2018.

Our comprehensive budgetary submission, as set out below, details a €260 million investment in core priority areas that will deliver tangible improvements to bolster incomes and progress inclusion opportunities for people with disabilities. This comprises €133m in income, €50m for Community Services, €50m in other Public Services, and €30m for the Housing Adaptation Grant. This submission also highlights the needed investment above and beyond core priority areas, to support the implementation of the UN CRPD.

This series of actions must equally focus on children and young people, adults of working age, and older people. Such an investment will maximise the possibilities of people with disabilities participating fully in employment, as well as in family and community life. It will also underline that our Government is intent on providing equal rights and equal opportunities for every single person in our State, as well as helping to fulfil our international obligations under the UN CRPD.

Budget 2018 must address:

- I. INCOME**
- II. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS**
 - **Health – Disability Services**
 - **Health – Mainstream Services**
 - **Employment**
 - **Education**
 - **Housing**
 - **Transport**
 - **UN CRPD Implementation**

I. INCOME

Many people with disabilities rely on social welfare payments for their income because they face barriers trying to access work. Evidence shows they have not seen any benefits from the recovery, and so austerity continues for them.⁵

Article 28 of the UN CRPD recognises the right of people with disabilities to have an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families. This includes “adequate food, clothing and housing” and “the continuous improving of living conditions”. The same article states that people with disabilities should receive social protection without discrimination based on disability, which includes “assistance from the State with disability-related expenses”. Currently, Ireland is not meeting these standards:

- 132,000 people with disabilities were living in consistent poverty in 2015. The consistent poverty rate rose from 14% to 22% for people with disabilities in 2015, compared to a national average that year of 8.7%.⁶
- The disposable income of people with disabilities fell by 7.4%, a drop of €1,047 between 2010 and 2015⁷. This effectively means that people’s income is down by €20 a week.
- The Disability Allowance (DA) is €193 a week, which is the same as Jobseekers’ Allowance. However, Jobseekers’ Allowance is a temporary allowance for someone looking for a job. Many people with disabilities are relying on the Disability Allowance as a long-term payment. In addition, there are a range of measures to assist jobseekers back into work. Many people with disabilities who are in receipt of DA would benefit from accessing similar back to work supports.
- In a national poll carried out for DFI with 1,000 responses, almost half of those surveyed or their family members have incurred extra costs due to illness or disability. These costs are related to:
 - health and therapy services: 48%,
 - travel costs to access health and social services: 24%,
 - heating bills: 16%.⁸

⁵ Between 2010 – 2015 people with a disability were more likely to exit than enter employment. For those without a disability, the rate of job entry picked up in the recovery period and the rate of exit dropped. However, there was little sign of a recovery for people with a disability by 2015.

⁶ CSO (2017) (SILC) 2015, Table 2. www.cso.ie

⁷ www.cso.ie. Median equivalised real disposable income for 2010 was €14,184, and €13,137 in 2015.

⁸ Nationally representative sample survey carried out for DFI, conducted independently by iReach Insights an independent Market Research Agency during the period of 15th to 28th November 2015 using the iReach

These extra costs have been estimated to be an average of €207 a week.⁹

- More than half the population of people living with disabilities (53.2%) are not able to afford essential items such as adequately heated homes, two pairs of strong shoes, a warm coat or meat on a frequent basis¹⁰

To contribute to achieving this standard, DFI asks that the government:

- a. Increase Disability Allowance by €20 a week to provide an adequate minimum income that guards against poverty at a cost of €133m. This as an interim measure; DFI also recommends further increases in DA over the next few years to offset the decreased purchasing power of people with disabilities, and to contribute to the extra costs of living with a disability.**
- b. Grant Medical Cards based on medical need, not income.**
- c. Re-introduce the Telephone Allowance as part of the Household Benefits Package, and allow for the inclusion of mobile devices and internet access under the allowance¹¹.**

II. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Health - Disability Services

Article 25 of the UN CRPD requires state parties to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy “the highest attainable standard of health”, including “health-related rehabilitation”, and that they do not face discrimination in health services due to their disability.

Article 19 of the UN CRPD addresses living independently and being included in the community. Many people with disabilities require supports to achieve this goal, which the UN CRPD recognises by asking states to ensure that “people with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance”.

Article 26, on habilitation and rehabilitation, also addresses this issue. This article requires that services to enable people with disabilities to

Consumer Decision Research Panel which delivered 1,000 responses from adults in Ireland aged 18+ and is nationally representative by age, region, gender and social class. This research has a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 3%.

⁹ Cullinan, J., & Lyons, S. (2015). The private costs of adult disability. In J. Cullinan, S. Lyons, & B. Nolan, The economics of disability: Insights from Irish research.

¹⁰ See CSO 2009 (SILC) 2008, Table 3.3 & CSO (2017) (SILC) 2015, Table 2. www.cso.ie

¹¹ The Household Benefits Package comprises the Electricity or Gas Allowance, and the Free Television Licence.

achieve the greatest level of independence and ability must be provided. At the moment, many of these kinds of services in Ireland are not provided and are under-resourced. For instance:

- The budget for disability services was reduced by €159.4m (9.4%) between 2008 and 2015. This has severely reduced the delivery of frontline services.
- According to 2016 data from the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database, 455 people required one or more personal assistance and support service.¹² Of these, 127 require a Personal Assistant service, and 166 require a Home Help service. Personal Assistant services continue to be underfunded, with the budget for 2017 providing for fewer PA hours than were delivered in 2016.¹³
- The budget allocated to disability services in 2017 was €1.68bn, and of that, €1bn is spent on residential services. Community services and supports, such as the ones listed below, represent a small proportion of the overall spend, are currently underfunded, and are crucial in enabling people to live independently.
 - Personal Assistance
 - Condition specific therapies
 - Assistive technologies
 - Preventive supports including symptom management, and supports to health and well-being
 - Advice, information, and advocacy
 - Case management and
 - Neuro-rehabilitation

Underfunding of these services which support people with disabilities has led to the inappropriate placement of younger people with disabilities in nursing homes. For example, there are currently in the region of 1,000 younger people with disabilities living in nursing homes across the country.

In order for Ireland to reach and uphold the standard for health required by the UN CRPD, DFI asks that the government:

¹² HRB (2017) Data is based on 6,111 people whose NPSDD records were either registered or reviewed in 2016. Of these, 1,719 people used personal assistance and supports services comprising home help (552); personal assistant (491), and peer support (469). This data is an under-estimation of the true unmet need for these services as registration on the database is voluntary, and therefore, it is incomplete. There is no satisfactory recording of true need for PA services.

¹³ <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/serviceplans/Service-Plan-2017/Operational-Plans-2017/Social-Care-Operational-Plan-2017.pdf>.

- a. Restore the budget for disability services to its former level prior to the recession, by increasing it by €50m each year from 2017.**
- b. Develop an overarching policy framework for Personal Assistance and meet the need for the service by increasing the budget by €15m each year for the next two years.**
- c. Provide for the re-allocation of funding under the 'Fair Deal' through the proposed statutory homecare scheme.**
- d. Invest in Local Area Coordination and roll it out across the country as a means to support people with disabilities to live in their communities¹⁴.**
- e. Ensure the implementation of the Assisted Decision Making Act is properly resourced, including training for people such as social workers and health care professionals who will be using it in their work.**
- f. Invest in the roll out of community neuro-rehabilitation teams in each of the nine CHOs as part of the revised implementation plan for the Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy.**
- g. Under the Progressing Disability Services for Children programme, provide consistent investment in therapy posts until the required complement of posts for each team (Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Child Psychologists) has been reached. The backlog in demand for children's therapy services is now from 300 – 400 posts, to rise to 350-450 by 2021, and stay steady to 2026¹⁵. An estimated cost to recruit 350 posts is €24 million¹⁶.**
- h. Invest in therapy posts for adults. There are no accurate figures for the number of therapy staff in adult disability services, which makes it difficult to do a costing. It is estimated that demand for therapy staff is likely to double for both people with intellectual disabilities, and physical and sensory disabilities¹⁷.**
- i. Cut waiting lists for specialist and mainstream health services by 50%.¹⁸**

¹⁴ Funding was provided under the Dormant Accounts Fund, and administered by Pobal to a number of Local Area Coordination pilots across the country.

¹⁵ NDA (2017) Draft Report on Future Needs for Disability Services. HSE's Transforming Lives programme, Working Group 1.

¹⁶ Based on €69,000 for each new recruit, which includes administrative and recruitment costs, as per Labour's alternative budget for 2017.

¹⁷ NDA (2017) Draft Report on Future Needs for Disability Services. HSE's Transforming Lives programme, Working Group 1.

¹⁸ In April, 2015, 21,821 people remained on waiting lists for speech and language assessments and interventions; more than 15,300 people were waiting for assessment by an occupational therapist, with 2,409

- j. Increase the mental health budget to at least 8.24% of the overall health budget, as recommended in A Vision for Change. Ireland compares badly with other jurisdictions such as Britain and Canada, where it is currently 13%, and New Zealand where it is 11%. The amount allocated for mental health in 2017 was €851.3m, which is 5.8% of the total health budget (€14.6bn). Increasing this to 8.24% would cost an extra €351m.**

Health – Mainstream Services

Article 25 of the UN CRPD requires state parties to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy “the highest attainable standard of health”, including “health-related rehabilitation”, and do not face discrimination in health services due to their disability.

In order for Ireland to reach and uphold the standard for health required by the UN CRPD, DFI asks that the government:

- a. Tackle the high costs of prescriptions charges, medicines, and hospital charges to offset the costs of disability and illnesses experienced by people with disabilities.**
- b. Grant Medical Cards based on a person’s medical needs, not on their income.**
- c. Invest in increasing the number of GPs and associated health professionals working in primary care teams around the country. This has been estimated to cost €47m a year for 5 years, based on data from the Sláintecare report.**
- d. Invest in prevention interventions and policies tailored to the specific needs of different groups of people with disabilities as part of the implementation plan for the Healthy Ireland Framework. The budget for the implementation of the HI Framework should be doubled to €10m.**

Other Community Services

Employment

The UN CRPD also recognises, in Article 27, the right of people with disabilities to work “on an equal basis with others”, and requires state parties to uphold and promote this right.

children waiting for over a year; and 28,749 people were waiting for a physiotherapy assessment. Figures are relevant as of April 2015 and were provided to Róisín Shortall TD through a Parliamentary Question (PQ Ref. No. 18511/15).

- 31% of working-age people with a disability were at work compared to 71% of those without a disability¹⁹.

To contribute to achieving this standard, DFI asks that the government:

- Introduce a tax credit similar to a blind person's credit to offset the cost of disability.**
- Raise the Medical Card earnings disregard from its current level of €120 per week for people on Disability Allowance or on Partial Capacity Benefit associated with Invalidity Pension as per the recommendation in the 'Make Work Pay' report.²⁰**
- Allow people to retain their Free Travel Pass for five years after starting work, as recommended in the 'Make Work Pay' report.²¹**
- Ensure that eligibility and supports for all employment activation schemes includes people with disabilities.**
- Ensure that cross-departmental responsibility for funding Personal Assistant hours in the workplace is clarified, to ensure that people who need PA support can receive it, and participate in work.**
- Invest in accessible and assistive technologies to support people in education training and employment.**
- Introduce protocols to assure fast track reinstatement of Disability Allowance for those for whom a job does not work out.**

Education

Article 24 of the UN CRPD addresses the right to education. The Convention requires that state parties provide "an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning". It also requires that people with disabilities "are not excluded from the mainstream education system on the basis of disability". In Ireland, children can often find accessing services for their disability difficult:

- 1 in 4 children in Ireland have special education needs.²² Many of these children have to wait long periods to have their needs

¹⁹ Watson, D., Lawless, M., and Maitre, B. (2017). Employment transitions among people with disabilities in Ireland. An Analysis of the Quarterly National Household Survey.

²⁰ DSP (2017) Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities.

²¹ Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities 2017.

²² Banks, J. and McCoy, S. (2011) A Study on the Prevalence of Special Educational Needs: NCSE Research Report No.9. ESRI

assessed. Parents who can afford a private assessment are more likely to get resource hours than other parents.²³

DFI asks that the government:

- a. Deliver further on the EPSEN Act 2004, prioritising entitlement to an Individual Education Plan with associated resources for every child with a disability.**
- b. Protect existing supports and resources to the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People, aged 0 – 18 years project, to ensure equity of access to education settings and services.**
- c. Invest in supporting people with disabilities access mainstream further education and training (FET) initiatives through the funding of appropriate supports and accommodations to learners with disabilities across all levels of FET programmes managed through the Education and Training Boards (ETBs); and through the appointment of a Disability expert at ETB and/or college/centre level as the lead and key contact and support person for learners.²⁴**
- d. Immediately extend the funding supports for people with disabilities in education to part time students.**
- e. Ensure that advances in universal design and technology are resourced to support people to participate in mainstream educational settings at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.**
- f. Increase numbers of NEPS psychologists by 20 to progressively achieve target of 238, as stated in the Programme for a Partnership Government, and provide improved administration at an estimated cost of €1.6m.**

Housing

Article 19 also addresses where people with disabilities live: “Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence [. . .] and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement.” States must “take effective and appropriate measures” to ensure that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their right to live independently. At the moment, in Ireland:

- The number of households with a social housing need or household member(s) with an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or

²³ Duncan, P. (September 8th, 2015) Affluent areas get more special needs teaching hours. The Irish Times

²⁴ AHEAD (2017) Recommendations for systems for FET inclusion 2017.

intellectual disability, raised from 3,919 in 2013 to 4,456 in 2016. An increase of 13.7%.²⁵

- It is planned to move just one-third of the people living in disability residential facilities, known as 'congregated settings', into houses within the community by 2021.²⁶
- There are over 1000 people with disabilities, under the age of 65, inappropriately living in nursing homes for older people,²⁷ due to the lack of accessible housing and health supports to allow them to live in their community.
- The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) is the main capital funding scheme for the provision of independent living accommodation for people with disabilities. Much of the annual designated budget is used to cover rollover costs from approved applications which are not completed within the budget year.

For this reason, DFI asks that the government:

- a. Increase the Capital Assistance Scheme to at least €90m to cover the rollover costs and to maximise the approval and completion of new accessible builds and acquisitions in 2018.**
- b. Introduce a tax rebate to incentivise private property developers to build new accessible housing for people with disabilities which would go beyond the Part M requirement of being visitable.**
- c. Likewise introduce a tax rebate to incentivise private landlords of existing housing to adapt their properties to make them fully accessible and not just visitable. Link this rebate to the renting of this property to people on the social housing waiting list on the grounds of disability.**
- d. Increase the Housing Adaptation Grant by a further €30m²⁸. This will facilitate people with disabilities to remain living in**

²⁵ 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

²⁶ Minister of State with Special Responsibilities for Disabilities, Finian McGrath, TD, 28th March, 2017
<https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-03-28a.917&s=congregated+settings#g918.q>

²⁷ Per HSE data. In particular, as of August 2015, 1,047 people under the age of 65 are in receipt of NHSS funding (i.e. are in nursing homes). Note that this would not include people under the age of 65 living in nursing homes who are not in receipt of the NHSS funding.

²⁸ The HAG is a key measure in supporting people with disabilities to live in their community. The 2010 allocation for the Housing Adaptation Grant scheme was €80m, in 2016, it was €45m, and in 2017 the allocation was €59.8m. Recognising that there has been investment in the HAG, in recent years, DFI is seeking a restoration to 2010 levels, along with meeting future need to complement policy of community living.

their homes within the community. This would also support the aims of the proposed statutory homecare scheme.

- e. Developers of all social housing projects be required by Ministerial Order to set out within the planning process what accommodation provisions will be made for people/families who have a disability.**

Transport

Article 9 on Accessibility requires that states ensure that people with disabilities have access to a wide range of public services, including transportation. This is true for both public and private operators, as the UN CRPD requires that states “ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities”. This is currently not the case in Ireland:

- Almost 50% of people living with a physical disability experience difficulty with going outside the home alone.²⁹
- More than 24% of people with disabilities lack access to private transport, the mode used most often by this group (as a passenger).³⁰
- 1 in 4 people with a disability do not use public transport for accessibility reasons.³¹
- Only 63% of Bus Éireann’s Expressway bus fleet are deemed accessible.³²
- In 2015 only 5% of the State’s taxis³³ were wheelchair accessible.³⁴ This figure represents a decline of 36% from a peak of 1,600 vehicles in 2008.

Given this, DFI asks that the Government:

- a. Progress drafting of the Transport Support Scheme for the new bill to replace the Mobility Allowance and commit resources to Scheme as a matter of urgency. This has been**

²⁹ CSO (2006) National Disability Survey

³⁰ Watson, D. & Nolan, B. (2011) A social portrait of people with disabilities in Ireland. ESRI

³¹ Watson, D. & Nolan, B. (2011) A social portrait of people with disabilities in Ireland. ESRI

³² Oireachtas Library and Research, 14th March 2017

³³ Small public service vehicles (SPSVs) are public transport vehicles with seating for up to eight passengers in addition to the driver. There are 6 categories: Taxi, Hackney, Wheelchair Accessible Taxi, Wheelchair Accessible Hackney, Local Area Hackney, and Limousine.

³⁴ NTA (2016) Taxi Statistics for Ireland. Statistical Bulletin Number: 01 / 2016

promised for several years, but so far the process has stalled.

- b. Double the number of fully accessible taxis by the end of 2018, bringing the figure to 10% of all taxis.**
- c. Introduce a major infrastructure programme to make all public transport services fully wheelchair accessible, including replacing non-wheelchair accessible vehicles for Bus Éireann subsidised services, constructing wheelchair accessible bus stops, undertaking accessibility works to bus stations, railway stations and the train fleet over a term of government. As part of this programme, provide for unassisted access to trains by ensuring that at least one carriage per train is fitted with an electronic-hydraulic ramp for use by wheelchair users. This would require an investment of €40m over 5 years.**

UN CRPD Implementation

The state is responsible for ensuring that its laws, policies and practices are up to the standard of the UN CRPD. Obviously, going through regulations, policies, and legislation to ensure this will take time and resources. Furthermore, the states must, under Article 33 of the UN CRPD, establish an implementation and monitoring framework that can oversee and monitor government behaviour around the UN CRPD. This framework must be properly funded and staffed, to ensure that government is held accountable for any failure to fully implement the UN CRPD.

With this in mind, DFI asks that the government:

- a. Provide a budget for the advisory committee to help IHERC monitor the UN CRPD of €150,000 a year³⁵.**
- b. Increase the budget for IHREC by €660,000, as the monitoring mechanism for the UN CRPD, to allow it to carry out its new duties.³⁶**
- c. Increase resources for all departments, to support their identification and improvement of policies that are not in line with the UN CRPD.**

³⁵ Based on the New Zealand Convention Coalition, a similar group; <https://www.hrc.co.nz/files/8014/2357/0686/Making-disability-rights-real-full-report.pdf> (page 107)

³⁶ The budget for IHREC in 2017 was €6.6 million (<http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2017/Documents/Expenditure%20Report%202017.pdf>), so this is a 10% increase, to support its work on monitoring of UN CRPD.

Conclusion

Currently, it is clear that people with disabilities are far from equal in Irish society, and in fact, the evidence shows they are becoming more unequal. Ireland will be ratifying the UN CRPD shortly, and it cannot say that it is meeting the standards of the UN CRPD while these statistics remain. This year's budget must show that the government is serious about addressing the gaps and deficits in community services and supports that have been preventing people with disabilities from participating fully in society.

People with disabilities represent around 600,000 people in this country, and along with their friends and families, disability affects millions of people in Ireland.

Disability is a societal issue and therefore, needs a societal response.



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 120 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.

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