

# Disability Federation of Ireland



## Strategic Plan 2017-2020

# Foreword

I am pleased to present the Disability Federation of Ireland Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020 which was approved by the company membership at the Strategic General Meeting, on 24th November 2016. Implementation of this plan becomes the ongoing responsibility of the Board who are obliged to regularly report progress to the company members through the Strategic General Meetings.

I wish to thank everyone who participated in the making of this plan, company members, our organisations, Board colleagues, staff and stakeholders.

Our work was being concluded over the autumn when we experienced the sudden deaths of two of our colleagues, Mike Corbett and Martin Naughton. Two men from the West who brought the gift of hope and the promise of full inclusion for all people with disabilities through every day of their lives. We thank them as we take up the responsibility to pursue this plan with the resolve and vigour that they brought to their work. I have great pleasure in dedicating this Strategic Plan in their honour and to their memory.

Pat Clarke,  
Chairperson.



**Mike Corbett**

1959 - 2016



**Martin Naughton**

1954 - 2016

# Introduction

**This Strategic Plan was agreed, in line with our Memorandum and Articles of Association, by DFI company members at a Strategic General Meeting on the 24th November 2016.**

## Consultation Process

This Strategic Plan was developed over the period January to August 2016. The process was informed through background review, research and consultation with the full range of relevant stakeholders.

We reached this Strategic Plan through the following steps:

We returned to our Memorandum and Articles of Association and our Guiding Principles to anchor our work

We reviewed our work over the last six years

We consulted and reflected to reach this Strategic Plan

We noted the salient features and factors in our internal and external environment

The consultation process was guided by external facilitators and included workshops with the Board, the company members through the Strategic General Meeting, DFI management and staff. This was supplemented through engagement with key stakeholders and online consultation which offered people with disabilities and organisations affiliated with DFI, or interested in our work, to contribute their views confidentially. We considered the contributions of all stakeholders through a series of facilitated workshops. The results of this process, coupled with a review of work completed during our previous Plan and guidance from the Sustainability & Growth Plan has shaped the focus of our work for the next Strategic Plan period (2017 - 2020).

## What we bring to this Strategic Plan

During the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011- 2016, DFI underwent much learning and development which guides and informs the Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

During the previous Strategic Plan period, particular attention was paid to our communication and social media infrastructure. In particular our ability to involve people with disabilities and the public in issues / campaigns. Our 'Disable Inequality' Campaign was particularly successful in bringing disability centre stage. This was further enhanced through the election of our CEO to the Seanad in April 2016.

DFI invested time and resources identifying and supporting new opportunities that are changing how people with disabilities are enabled and empowered. For example, through assistive technology and the provision of training directly to people with disabilities. We also increased our involvement in local government and enhanced our community development work. We brought SOLA to fruition as the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Quality in the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Evidence based research is recognised as a core strength of the organisation and informs all aspects of our work. In the years 2013-16 we advanced our applied research work by choosing strategic projects to inform and shape policy development. This work is the foundations for the Research Hub, which will deepen our delivery of evidence based research into the needs of people with disabilities to inform policy and service development.

DFI, like many other organisations during this period, had considerable financial challenges. However, we continued to refine our systems and processes to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. For example, we have been guided by the recommendations of our Sustainability and Growth Plan. We have redefined roles to reflect the changing demands and opportunities within the external environment. We are committed to monitoring our work and learning from what has happened.

As we begin the Strategic Plan 2017-2020, Ireland is emerging from recession. The country is on the cusp of ratifying the UN CRPD and a Minister for Disability has been appointed for the first time. These developments pose real opportunities to improve the lives of the 600,000 people with disabilities and their families living in Ireland today.

DFI has played a lead part in bringing these developments about. At the same time recovery from the austerity measures seem to only relate to 'restoration' of public pay while we require restoration of services as an immediate starting point for the advances required. We are aware of the enormity of the challenges ahead and the possibility that success is not assured.

Removal of the wide and interlocking ranges of inequalities faced by people with disabilities is still not a whole of government priority. The disability movement has been shook, not only by the contraction during the recession, but also by the recent public disclosures of poor governance and quality in some organisations providing services. It has been a difficult time for people with disabilities and their families, and for the disability movement overall.

We look to 2017-2020 in order to harness the opportunities offered by the ratification of the UN CRPD to renew our collective commitment to bring about full equality for people with disabilities.

## Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan

To implement this Strategic Plan DFI will develop two yearly Operational Plans. These Operational Plans will set out our work, in line with our four strategic priorities. DFI is committed to quality and continuous improvement in all aspects of its work. Progress reports will be prepared for the DFI Board and the Company Members three times each year.

The Progress Reports will capture the tracking of progress against each Strategic Priority. This monitoring and evaluation framework will allow us to reflect our learning and point towards any necessary refinement as the Plan unfolds.

# VISION

Our vision is an Ireland where people with disabilities and disabling conditions are fully included and enabled to reach their full potential in the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)

# MISSION

Our mission is to advocate for the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities and disabling conditions in all aspects of their lives.

## Our strategic priorities for the next four years:

**1** Support the participation and empowerment of people with disabilities within society

**2** Drive the implementation and monitoring of policy to positively affect the lives of people with disabilities

**3** Engage organisations across the disability movement to develop and respond to change

**4** Strengthen our organisational capacity to deliver our strategic priorities

It is our intention to strengthen our capacity to influence positive change in policy, services and the lives of people with disabilities. The overarching results of our work that we look forward to by 2020 are:

- Public opinion in relation to people with disabilities is expanded and enriched
- People with disabilities are active, within their communities, as participants, advocates and representatives
- Disability organisations have evolved in response to UN CRPD and the Charities Act (2009)
- DFI continues to be relevant, useful and valued by all of the stakeholders in the disability movement
- DFI has the finances, systems and staff to operate effectively and to honour our vision and priorities set out in this Strategic Plan

**Our First Strategic Priority is to:**

Support the participation and empowerment of people with disabilities within society

**We will work towards this by:**

- Consulting with and working alongside people with disabilities
- Supporting people with disabilities to enhance their participation
- Working with communities and organisations to deepen their engagement with people with disabilities
- Working with strategic partners to expand the possibilities of participation
- Engaging with society through targeted campaigns and other initiatives to generate a shared understanding of disability
- Assisting in the development of spaces and platforms to facilitate and expand the participation of people with disabilities

**We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:**

- Growth in the number of people with disabilities engaging with DFI campaigns, consultations and community
- Signs of greater and more meaningful involvement of people with disabilities, sharing their experiences and expressing their needs
- Expanded participation by people with disabilities through the use of new and different spaces and platforms that suit them

**Our Second Strategic Priority is to:**

Drive the implementation and monitoring of policy to positively affect the lives of people with disabilities

**We will work towards this by:**

- Monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), European Disability Strategy (EDS) and the National Disability Implementation Strategy (NDIS)
- Engaging with policy-makers around the practicalities of ratifying, incorporating, implementing and monitoring the UN CRPD, and the NDIS
- Progressing the implementation of policies relevant to enhancing the lived experience of people with disabilities
- Preparing strong position papers and deepening our analysis to inform policy implementation
- Conducting applied research
- Choosing strategic partners and pursuing alliances, both nationally and internationally, to progress our policy work

**We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:**

- Ratification of the UN CRPD
- Progress in the implementation of the UN CRPD, EDS and NDIS
- DFI policy work and research being used to inform policy development
- Signs of positive changes to the lived experience of people with disabilities

## Our Third Strategic Priority is to:

Engage organisations across the disability movement to develop and respond to change

### We will work towards this by:

- Consulting and communicating with organisations
- Creating the conditions for alliances, networks, collective responses and collegiality amongst organisations in responding to our ever changing environment
- Providing information, guidance and support to assist organisations to implement the intentions of the UN CRPD
- Engaging with disability organisations to create shifts in ways of working and responding to the needs and potential of people with disabilities
- Working with organisations to refine their response in service and support to people with disabilities

### We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- New and purposeful alliances being formed and responding constructively to the changing environment
- Organisations continuing to approach DFI for guidance and support along contemporary themes, e.g. realisation of the vision of UN CPRD, collaborative working, brokerage, etc.
- Signs of organisational strengthening and adaptation to new ways of working to improve our societal response to the needs of people with disabilities

## Our Fourth Strategic Priority is to:

Strengthen our organisational capacity to deliver our strategic priorities

### We will work towards this by:

- Strengthening our leadership and management with all staff
- Refining our internal and external communication
- Developing relevant core competencies
- Bringing in more reflective practice to consider the ongoing effects of our work
- Developing our processes and offering for organisations and people who we work with \*
- Maintaining financial sustainability
- Constantly evolving our systems and processes to effectively and efficiently implement our Strategic Plan

### We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- Signs that we are strengthening as an organisation, e.g., clearer lines of communication, strengthened team work
- Preparation, implementation and tracking of our operational programme
- Honouring of our corporate governance commitments including the completion of regular reviews of our operational programme

\*This includes DFI affiliates, associates, organisations and individuals with whom we work

## Guiding Values and Principles

These guiding values and principles have been developed from our Memorandum and Articles of Association and the consultation process to develop this Strategic Plan. These values and principles will assist us to shape and inform our decision making.

# Our Values

Person Centred

Participation

Inclusion

Human Dignity

Quality

Partnership

Diversity

Independence

Autonomy

1

DFI believes that policies and services for people with disabilities should be person centred and that services should be focused on the individual needs of each disabled person and be of a quality and standard that is in keeping with their human dignity.

4

DFI supports the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in mainstream services and, where appropriate, the development of specialist services for people with disabilities to support that participation.

7

DFI believes that relevant Government Departments and statutory agencies have primary responsibility for public service delivery in relation to the inclusive provision of services for people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

# Our Principles

**2** DFI is committed to working on ensuring accessible pathways for people with disabilities to an inclusive and participative life.

**3** DFI believes that people with disabilities should be involved in the design, delivery and the evaluation of services provided to people with disabilities and be central to decision making within voluntary disability organisations.

**5** DFI believes in working in partnership with other organisations in pursuit of its priorities of supporting member organisations and the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities.

**6** DFI, while respecting the autonomous nature of each member, commits itself and its members to delivering supports and services in a high quality, professional manner, which further the progression and independence of people with disabilities.

**8** DFI believes that voluntary disability organisations have a vital role to play in deepening the involvement and participation of people with disabilities and disabling conditions in the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and the National Disability Strategy (NDS).

## Gratitude:

**DFI wishes to thank all those who have contributed to the strategic planning process and support our work.**

# MAIN OBJECT



The main object for which the Federation is established is to benefit the community by supporting the contribution, protecting the rights and valuing the role of persons with disabilities and disabling conditions in the community and encouraging their fullest participation in shaping a society that promotes the wellbeing and quality of life of such persons, in particular by:

- providing assistance to organisations established for exclusively charitable purposes which provide services or other help or supports to people with disabilities or otherwise seek to enable or advance the interests of such persons, thereby advancing the efficient and effective use of the property of such charitable organisations and more efficient delivery of services by them;
- acting as a support for the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities and disabling conditions concerning all aspects of their lives by causing or supporting such action as is deemed appropriate to help people with disabilities to express their views and wishes; have their interests represented; access information and services; and explore choices and options thus empowering people with disabilities to speak up for themselves, to fulfil their potential and be involved in and influence decisions that are being made about their future;
- representing the interests of people with disabilities, and charitable organisations established to assist them, at national, European and international level so as to clearly communicate their needs and assist in the formation of strategies designed to best advance their interests and best secure their wellbeing and rights and;
- positively influencing and shaping beliefs and values, attitudes and opinion regarding people with disabilities and educating the public on the valuable contribution that can be made by people with disabilities to society, thus encouraging Irish society to become fully inclusive of persons with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise their full civil, economic, social and human rights and thereby be enabled to reach their full potential.

# SUBSIDIARY OBJECTS

The following objects set out hereafter are exclusively subsidiary and ancillary to the main object of the Federation set out in Clause 3 above and these objects are to be used only for the attainment of that main object and any income generated therefrom is to be applied for the main object only:

- to influence the development, implementation and monitoring of policies affecting persons with disabilities.
- to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the voluntary disability organisations associated with the Federation.
- to strengthen the voice, impact and relevance of the disability movement in Ireland.
- to promote the wellbeing and participation of persons with a disabling condition or conditions whether physical, mental, sensory, hidden, communicative, neurological or otherwise in all aspects of Irish society.
- to the extent only that they are compatible with Irish charity law, to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law in keeping with 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 or such other international agreements protecting the rights of people with disabilities as Ireland may ratify from time to time.



**Taken from the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Disability Federation of Ireland.**



February 2017

Disability Federation of Ireland, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8

Phone: (01) 454 7978 | Fax: 01 4547981 | [info@disability-federation.ie](mailto:info@disability-federation.ie) | [www.disability-federation.ie](http://www.disability-federation.ie)