



DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

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Sent via email to: taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie

Taoiseach, Minister Micheál Martin

Tuesday 14 June 2022

Dear Taoiseach,

The Coalition Government that you lead is reaching the halfway stage. I write in relation to implementation of commitments in "Programme for Government: Our Shared Future", concerning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN CRPD. I attach with this letter a briefing document analysing progress to date on the disability commitments in the Programme for Government.

Ireland now faces the extremely challenging intersection of post Covid along with the effects from the war in Ukraine. In excess of 643,000 people with disabilities along with their families are now further exposed and vulnerable.

Your government is now engaging with Employer and Trade Union representatives to fashion an agreed approach to dealing with this serious problem. A problem that is already biting deeply into the day to day lives of disabled people.

The "Programme for Government: Our Shared Future" has significant commitments to the disabled community. They were positively set within the context of the section on "A New Social Contract" where disability and the commitments to implementing the UN CRPD are set out. Disability is specifically mentioned in the opening paragraph to that section, where the ambition of your Government is also stated.

The Disability Federation of Ireland is clear that any agreement with the Employers and Trade Unions which does not specifically and significantly include disabled people and their families will be a repudiation of the programme for government disability commitments and will greatly worsen their already disadvantaged daily lives. In a word, the day to day lived experience of disabled people is one of continued poverty and exclusion.

The recently published CSO 2021 SILC data paint a bleak and alarming picture. The 'at risk of poverty' rate for those not at work due to a long-

standing health condition (disability) for 2021 was 39.1%. This rate is up almost 6% on last year's rate, when the overall average declined to 11.6% of the population.

The UN CRPD is a government commitment following a unanimous decision of Dáil Eireann, in March 2018. It is for close to 700,000 disabled people and their families throughout Ireland to hope and trust that you will hold that commitment strongly as our government party in the negotiations.

The income supports and public services that are committed to in the programme for government are expressed as part of "A New Social Contract". For employers and workers, they may be expressed as part of the "social wage".

I seek your early confirmation that the disability community will be specifically protected and supported through the outcomes from these negotiations. And that this will be done in the context of the ongoing and acknowledged poverty and exclusion that disabled persons and their families routinely face.

Yours Sincerely,



John Dolan
CEO
Disability Federation of Ireland