

Pre Budget Submission 2022

**THE OIREACHTAS DISABILITY GROUP
(ODG)**

SEPTEMBER 2021



**National Disability
Services Association**
Equality through Quality



Introduction

Budget 2022 is an opportunity to show commitment to implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN CRPD. The Budget can build on what we have learnt from COVID-19. Disabled people have a right to participate in society.

Yet too often their experience is one of poverty and social exclusion. On average EU countries spend 2% of their GDP on social protection for disability. Ireland spends 0.8%, the second lowest in the EU.¹

Budget 2022 must invest in community-based services like personal assistance and the areas like housing, transport, social protection and employment that are critical to independence.

People with disabilities should be able to access the services they need to live independently. Yet currently services are significantly underfunded and carrying deficits of over €40m.

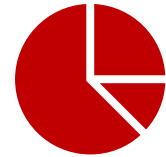
The Disability Capacity Review gives some indication of the level of investment required. It is estimated that a further €550m to €1000m investment in disability services by 2032 is required to address unmet need and demographic change.²

Budget 2022 must resource voluntary disability organisations to meet the true levels of need.

¹ EDF. Human Rights Report, p.26.

² Department of Health (2021). *Disability Capacity Review to 2032: A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032*, p. 16.

Statistics



The following statistics demonstrate some of the major issues facing disabled people:

- 37.5% of people not at work due to illness or disability are at risk of poverty, three times higher than the general population.³
- Ireland's rate of employment for people with disabilities, at 32.3% is almost 20% lower than EU average.⁴
- 27% of the homeless population have a disability- double the rate of the general population.⁵
- 5,057 disabled people are currently on the housing list, many for 5-10 years. Over 1,300 more are inappropriately placed in nursing homes,⁶ while 2,914 still live in congregated settings.⁷
- Only about 9% of people with disabilities, c. 56,000 people, are supported through specialist disability services.⁸

³ CSO SILC

⁴ European Disability Forum (2020). *Poverty and Social Exclusion of People with Disabilities: European Human Rights Report: Issue 4 – 2020*.

⁵ Census 2016.

⁶ Joint Committee on Disability Matters (24 June 2021). <https://bit.ly/3telPxK>, p.11.

⁷ HIQA (2020). <https://www.hiqanews.com/the-experiences-of-people-with-disabilities-in-congregated-settings/>

⁸ Department of Health. *Capacity Review*, p. 16.

Poverty and Employment



Poverty is a particularly acute issue for the disabled community. This is in part due to the significant additional costs of disability, estimated at €207 a week.⁹ Disability Allowance is inadequate, and has not increased since 2019 despite an inflation rate of 1.5% since then.

In Budget 2022:

- Increase Disability Payments by €20 as an interim recognition of extra costs incurred by people with disabilities pending the publication of the Cost of Disability report (cost €231.33m).
- Invest €10m to establish an assistive technology pathway that follows the person.
- Raise the €350 threshold on the earnings disregard on Disability Allowance to €400 (cost: €2.5m).
- Invest in 25 extra job coaches through EmployAbility or similar programmes (cost: €1.25m).
- Increase the Wage Subsidy Scheme to 65% of the minimum wage (cost: €5.7m).
- Fund Ability-type programmes to ensure work and training opportunities to young people with disabilities (cost: €2m).
- Improve funding for accommodations, disability awareness and diversity training for employers (cost: €3m).

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*.

Housing



The housing situation for people with disabilities is a crisis within the broader housing crisis, as demonstrated by the rate of disability among the homeless population and social housing waiting lists.

There are also huge levels of uncaptured need on top of this, such as young people living with their parents with no prospect of moving out and people living with elderly carers.

One core problem is access to the HSE support package that enables people to live independently.

The new Housing Strategy for Disabled People will be introduced in 2022. Funding should be allocated to deliver this across all relevant Departments.

In Budget 2022:

- Fund the establishment of a national mechanism for co-ordination between national HSE, Local Authorities, Housing Agency, Dept of Housing etc. to ensure oversight of local processes, aggregate need and agree budget allocations required across departments (Cost: €400,000).
- Appoint Disability Housing Coordinators in each Local Authority (cost: €1.8m).
- Build a minimum of 7.5% of houses in the future to universal design principles, including wheelchair liveable.
- Provide a minimum of €110m funding for the Capital Assistance Scheme (cost €15m).



- €280m for decongregation¹⁰ and complete full transition to community living within 5 years.
- Support 100 people with disabilities under 65 to move out of nursing homes (€17m).
- Increase investment in the Housing Adaptation Grants, to:
 - o Return the Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability to the 2010 level of €40m (cost: €8m).
 - o Increase the maximum grant amount, which has not been increased for 12 years, from €30,000 to €60,000.
 - o Increase the income threshold to qualify to account for cost of disability, and consider only the income of the disabled person.

¹⁰ Costing from Disability Capacity Review

Services to Enable Independence



The Disability Capacity Review outlines a great need for investment is required in disability services in Budget 2022:

- €12-22m for respite services
- €64m for PA¹¹
- €20m for home support services
- €10m for community services¹²
- €40-70m for day services
- €220-400m for residential services
- €280m to fund decongregation
- €48m for adult and child therapy services¹³
- €26m to fully roll-out Specialist Clinical Rehabilitation Networks in every Community Health Organisation
- €160-380m on housing capital for disability services

¹¹ This is higher than the amount recommended in the Disability Capacity Review. The ODG believes that the Review underestimates the level of unmet need for PA as “data on unmet need has not been systematically recorded” (p. 74)

¹² The Disability Capacity Review recommends €3m funding for community services. However, this is a significant underestimation of need as that figure only accounts for demographic change, and not unmet need.

¹³ The ODG believe that, as the figures stated in the Capacity Review were collated from 2017/8 data, it is likely that this is an underestimation of what is needed to provide therapies to adults and children, including delivery of Progressing Disability Services for Children. More work will be needed to properly estimate the level of need and inform future Budgets.



Provide funding to support accessible communities, including:

- Address growing waiting lists for neurology services, including funding integrated pathways.
- Fund a staff member at every Education and Training Board with the role of promoting disabled students' participation (cost: €1m).
- €20m to increase accessibility of local link transport.
- Funding to support the commencement and full implementation of the EPSEN Act 2004.
- Ensure access to career guidance counsellors in approx. 130 special schools which currently do not (€2.8m/€7.8m full year cost).
- Establish a Transport Support Scheme to replace the Mobility Allowance.
- Provide Free Travel Passes to anyone temporarily or permanently unable to drive due to the nature of their disability/health condition (e.g. epilepsy), irrespective of social welfare status.

Ensure that voluntary organisations, who provide almost 70% of specialist disability services¹⁴ are adequately supported to meet people's needs:

- Implement the Catherine Day Report, addressing existing deficits and multi-annual funding requirements (cost: >€40m).
- Provide pay parity to disability organisations.

¹⁴ Department of Health. *Capacity Review*, p.11

The Oireachtas Disability Group (ODG)

The Oireachtas Disability Group (ODG) is a group of national community and voluntary organisations, including Disabled Persons' Organisations and disability umbrella organisations, who work with TDs and Senators to advance the full implementation of the UN CRPD. It was established in 2017. The community and voluntary organisations are:

- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Inclusion Ireland
- Independent Living Movement Ireland
- National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers
- National Disability Services Association

Between our five organisations, we represent the broad interests of the disability sector and movement.

