



# DFI Pre Budget Submission 2022

SEPTEMBER 2021



# Introduction

Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN CRPD, requires coordinated action across government departments. These measures are required to advance the Programme for Government UN CRPD commitments.

- The experience of disabled people is one of poverty and social exclusion: 37.5% of those not working due to disability are at risk of poverty, and 43% live in deprivation. These rates are three times higher than for the general population.<sup>1</sup>
- Ireland has the lowest employment rate for disabled people in the EU, 20% lower than the EU average of 50.8%.<sup>2</sup>
- 27% of the homeless population have a disability - double the rate of the general population.<sup>3</sup>
- Only about 9% of people with disabilities, c. 56,000 people, are supported through specialist disability services.<sup>4</sup>
- As of July 2021, 24,044 people were on the neurology outpatient waiting list with 11,439 people waiting over a year.<sup>5</sup>

On average EU countries spend 2% of their GDP on social protection for disability. Ireland spends 0.8%, the second lowest in the EU.<sup>6</sup> A Department of Health report estimated that a further €550m to €1000m investment in disability services by 2032 is required.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> EU SILC

<sup>2</sup> European Disability Forum (2020). *Poverty and Social Exclusion of People with Disabilities: European Human Rights Report: Issue 4 – 2020*.

<sup>3</sup> Census 2016

<sup>4</sup> Department of Health (2021). *Disability Capacity Review to 2032: A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032*, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> National Treatment Purchase Fund (2021). Outpatient waiting list data. <https://www.ntpf.ie/home/outpatient.htm>

<sup>6</sup> EDF. Human Rights Report, p.26.

<sup>7</sup> DOH. Capacity Review, p. 28



# Poverty



The extra cost of disability is estimated at an average of €207 a week.<sup>8</sup> The past year has highlighted the important role Ireland's social protection system can play in protecting people from poverty, through the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, PUP. However, the discrepancy between the PUP (€350) and Disability Allowance (€203) is stark. In Budget 2022:

- Publish and fund the Indecon Cost of Disability report.
- Introduce a €20 per week cost of disability payment for those on disability-related social welfare payments<sup>9</sup> (cost €231.33m).
- Address digital poverty and update the Household Benefits Package, including support for internet services, broadband and IT hardware.
- Invest €10m to establish an assistive technology pathway that follows the person.

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<sup>8</sup> 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*.

<sup>9</sup> Disability Allowance, Blind Person's Pension, Invalidity Pension, Partial Capacity Benefit, Disablement Benefit, Injury Benefit



# Health and Social Care Services



Disabled people have a right to services that enable them to live independently in their communities. The Disability Capacity Review outlines investment required in disability services in Budget 2022.

Yet 90% of disabled people are supported by general community health and social services.<sup>5</sup> In Budget 2022, invest in disability and mainstream services, including:

- €64m for PA<sup>10</sup> and €20m for home support services
- €48m for adult and child therapy services
- €18-22m for respite services
- €10m for community services<sup>11</sup>
- €40-70m for day services
- €220-€400m for residential services
- €160-€380m on housing capital for disability services
- €280m to fund decongregation
- €26m to fully roll-out Specialist Clinical Rehabilitation Networks in every Community Health Organisation
- Address growing waiting lists for neurology services including funding integrated pathways
- €17m to support 100 people under 65 to move out of nursing homes
- Implement the Catherine Day Report, addressing existing deficits and multi-annual funding requirements (cost: > €40m)
- Provide pay parity to disability organisations

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<sup>10</sup> This is higher than the amount recommended in the Disability Capacity Review. DFI believes that the Review underestimates the level of unmet need for PA as “data on unmet need has not been systematically recorded” (p. 74)

<sup>11</sup> 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.



# Housing



2022 marks the introduction of the new Housing Strategy for Disabled People. The housing situation of disabled people is a crisis within the broader housing crisis.

5,057 disabled people are currently on the housing list, many for 5-10 years. 2,914 live in congregated settings<sup>12</sup> and there are over 1,300 people under 65 in nursing homes.<sup>13</sup>

Resource the new Strategy in Budget 2022:

- Establish a national mechanism to drive inter-agency coordination between the Housing Agency, national HSE, Local Authorities, Dept of Housing etc. (cost: €400,000).
- Appoint Disability Housing Coordinators in each Local Authority (€1.8m)
- Increase Capital Assistance Scheme funding to €110m (cost: €15m)
- Ensure a minimum of 7.5% of all new houses built to universal design and accessible standards, including wheelchair liveable.

Increase investment in the Housing Adaptation Grants, to:

- Return the Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability to the 2010 level of €40m (cost: €8m).
- Increase the maximum grant amount, which has not been increased for 12 years, from €30,000 to €60,000.
- Increase the income threshold to qualify to account for cost of disability, and consider only the income of the disabled person.

<sup>12</sup> HIQA (2020). <https://www.hiqanews.com/the-experiences-of-people-with-disabilities-in-congregated-settings/>

<sup>13</sup> Joint Committee on Disability Matters (24 June 2021). <https://bit.ly/3telPxK>, p.11.



# Education, Employment And Transport

13.7% of disabled people aged 15 to 50 have completed no higher than primary education compared to 4.2% of the wider population.<sup>14</sup> Employment reduces poverty and social exclusion. In Budget 2022:

- Fund a staff member at every Education and Training Board with the role of promoting disabled students' participation (cost: €1m).
- Extend the Fund for Students with Disabilities to students at all levels of Further Education, including part-time students.
- Raise the €350 threshold on the earnings disregard on Disability Allowance to €400 (cost: €2.5m).
- Appoint 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).
- Increase accessibility of local link transport (cost: €20m).
- 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.

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<sup>14</sup> Census 2016

