Disability Federation of Ireland

An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector
Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2010

Working for Public Benefit

DFI is often asked by the HSE and other public bodies to confirm that we are a registered charity, and we simply respond by giving the charity number. We probably don't stop to think that one of the tests in receiving charitable status is that the organisation must be in existence for "public benefit". Public bodies exist also to be of public benefit or service. The mission of the HSE is "To enable people to live healthier and more fulfilled lives".

So much of the concern at the moment is around services for people against the background of funding cuts that have taken place, cuts that are now happening and further cuts to come in future budgets. It is said over and over that the money is not there, and that everyone has to share the burden. There seems to be a certain logic to this, but also a sense that not to immediately agree is to somehow be selfish or unpatriotic.

Are the totality of voluntary disability organisations in Ireland simply machines to turn out services on the basis of funding from the State, without any interest in who receives those services, and how and why they are provided? The evidence points to quite the opposite, from the founding impulses through to the development of services by these organisations. The primary concern was for the redress of neglect and exclusion, along with a determined belief in the value and potential of the people they set about serving. Many organisations reluctantly got into direct service delivery when the State did not take it on, or did so, on behalf of the State.

Where would Irish society be today if it were not for the leadership and determined action of people, stretching back before the founding of this State, who voluntarily organised themselves into groups dedicated to improving the situation of so many people with disabilities and mental health needs. We still have a legacy of people living in institutional settings where their lives are greatly restricted and where their human rights are being curtailed. How many more would be in the same circumstances were it not for the work of voluntary organisations? How would Ireland respond to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the more recent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This is not by way of saying that we are and always were wonderful! We have not always got it right, and we have not made as much progress as possible. There is much more at stake today, beyond only a concentration on funding levels, to ensure that services are provided. Yes, service availability needs to be promoted strongly, but in a manner that is informed by the wider context of our motivation and values, as people and as organisations that claim to exist in order to serve the needs of others in order to enable them participate fully in Irish society.

Fintan O' Toole, speaking at the recent Wheel Conference, set out the catalogue of violated trust that is unfolding on a daily basis in Ireland, Banks, Church, Politicians, the institutions of the State, and State governance itself. He then noted that there is still one area where people have trust and confidence, namely, in the voluntary and community organisations right throughout the country. There is, however, the question that he did not verbalise. Are voluntary disability organisations fully recognising and living up to that role? Maybe we need to think and express more what we are about in order to best place the services and supports that we are currently providing.

The irony of the great financial crisis that we are in is that, while it is about money, it is much more about values and priorities. Government has stated and acted on the basis that we cannot afford not to save the banking system, but it so often seems that, at the same time, there is an acceptance that we cannot afford to save service provision for people with disabilities. We can save and protect the necessary services and supports that are needed, we cannot afford not to, because the level of social toxicity that is building up will destroy peoples lives and destroy the objectives of the National Disability Strategy.

The story of our State has been a mixture of major economic difficulties with short bursts of growth and prosperity. Yet during even the worst of times economically, people set up organisations, and the public supported them to improve the very difficult conditions that people with disabilities and their families found themselves in.

Now is the time when we must engage with a societal perspective, and have renewed resolve about our human and social values. It was voluntary organisations that set this State up. Voluntary disability organisations can be part of bringing renewal and value based practice and action on behalf of all who want to see disabled people fully included in all aspects of life.

John Dolan
Chief Executive Officer

DFI Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Disability Federation of Ireland took place on 14th May 2010 in its offices at Fumbally Court . The Chairperson, Paul Ledwidge, outlined progress across three distinct areas, each of which are noted in the DFI Annual Review 2009, which was presented at the AGM. The three areas were:

- Providing enhanced services and supports to members
- Getting a commitment in the “Renewed Programme for Government” on protecting the NDS throughout the recession
- Giving leadership and coherence to the task of progressing the needs of people with disabilities and disabling conditions at this very difficult time.

DFI’s Chief Executive Officer, John Dolan, commented that 2009 presented many challenges to the community and voluntary sector. He reminded people of the ongoing time lag in the effects of this economic downturn, and how it has taken, and will take time for the full effect to be felt by disability organisations and the community and voluntary sector as a whole.

However, commenting on the year he stated that “as the year under review progressed, our experience has been that there is a greater willingness amongst organisations within the voluntary disability sector, and others, to take a very proactive approach to working with others across a wide range of areas” he went on to note that “There remains that strong challenge to the voluntary disability sector to substantiate its reputation, value and status, not just in relation to the recession, but more immediately in the context of the Value for Money Review of the Disability Services.”

Elections to the Board of Directors

There were four vacancies on the Board. As there were seven nominees proposed for the vacancies an election was called. The National Council members were invited to vote. The newly elected members of the Board were Anne Winslow (MS Ireland), George Kennedy (Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland), John O’Sullivan (Enable Ireland) and Joe Lynch (Parkinson’s Association).

The Chairperson acknowledged the resignation of Kieran Loughran (Headway) from the DFI Board and thanked him for his work and support while working on the Board.

The Chairperson welcomed the new members to the Board.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DFI Service Suite

PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)

Ever since DFI began promoting the quality assurance system, PQASSO, interest by our member organisations has grown, and likewise in the support provided to organisations in its implementation. The need for quality, both in the services offered by an organisation to its users and in the way the organisation is run, is more and more evident each passing day.

PQASSO is a straight forward, user-friendly quality assurance system intended to help organisations be more effective and efficient. It offers a flexible approach to quality which allows the organisation to work at its own pace. It helps organisations to take a systematic look at what they do, identify areas where they are doing well and not so well, and decide exactly where improvements are needed. It helps organisations plan, budget and allocate the resources for making these improvements over a realistic time period.

Research has shown that organisations using PQASSO can gain the following benefits:

- more effective and more efficient organisational systems and procedures
- better quality of services for users
- better communication among staff, Board members and volunteers
- greater credibility and legitimacy with funders
- more creative thinking, enabling new perspectives and ways of working

- organisational learning
- continuous improvement over time.

PQASSO is suitable for small, medium and large community and voluntary organisations, or for project teams in very large organisations. Organisations working in all areas – for example, health, social care, the environment – can use PQASSO. It can also be used by self-help and campaigning and research organisations. PQASSO is built on 12 topics or quality areas. These cover the main issues that organisations need to work on in order to function efficiently and assess the results of its work. In each quality area, the standard itself is clearly defined, and applies to all organisations. To work through the quality area, each organisation needs to ask itself if it meets the indicators at the level at which it is working, and set out plans to make any necessary improvements.

DFI through its Support Officer continues to develop and identify supports for organisations with implementing PQASSO in their organisations.

Support for DFI Member Organisations on Consultation & Participation

The primary commitment of voluntary organisations is to their members and service users, and to the delivery and development of services. That is their ‘raison-d’être’. At a time of recession, Value for Money (VfM) audits and the need to re-position, specific activities can be employed by member organisations to assist them to prepare for the future, whilst also reviewing both their services and their method of delivery.

When organisations carry out these activities, they will begin to ensure their validity to their members, people with disabilities. They can respond in a timely manner to the changing services for people with disabilities (mainstreaming / specialism) – lifecycle approach to services, implementation of the National Disability Strategy, etc. Being responsive will result in the identification of training and other needs that will enhance the flexibility and responsiveness of the workforce. At last year’s (2009) AGM, DFI noted that, “People with disabilities are citizens of Ireland. They are entitled to avail of services generally available to citizens. They have a right to participate in the decision making that affects their lives". **Consultation** is the first step towards active participation. As voluntary disability organisations we need to embrace the concept of consultation and to regularly review our process of consultation.

- Talking to service users is the beginning of understanding the need to change direction
- Active listening brings new ideas to planners and points to a way forward (maybe a new way)
- Person centred services as outlined in government policy in the NDS and T16 requires it
- It is good practice and an indication of a quality service that meets the needs of service users
- It validates new strategic and operational plans
- Evidence of consultation can be included on SLA descriptors

Currently many organisations consult and communicate with people with disabilities very effectively on an informal ad hoc basis. However, to fully harness the value of this communication it would need to be recorded as a matter of course.

Other elements might be:

- Complaints, when properly responded to, can be a valuable part of a consultation process
- One to one meetings
- Questionnaire
- Focus groups
- General consultation meetings
- Services user Fora (local or issue specific)
- Self advocacy groups
- Support to attend local social action, community groups
- Openness to addressing independent advocacy issues.

For organisations, the key will be to actively engage in the consultation process with members, and to actively listen and seriously reflect on what you are hearing. When possible provide independent facilitators to ensure non-partisanship.

How would the future look for your organisation if you more systematically took the independence, desires and hopes of your members and service users into consideration as you plan your services into the future? If you, or your organisation, are interested in learning more about consulting and hearing the voice of your members please contact tonigleeson@disability-federation.ie or 086-6004526

Training for Complaints Officers – HSE

The HSE will run an additional training session for Complaints Officers for DFI member organisations on Wednesday the 9th June from 10 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. Venue the DFI Boardroom, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8.

Voluntary organisations may have obligations under Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 regarding the establishment of complaints procedures. An organisation is obliged to comply with the Act if it:

- receives funding under Section 38 of the Act
- receives funding under Section 39 of the Act
- uses HSE facilities, for example to hold meetings.

Organisations eligible under Part 9 of the Act must have a nominated person to manage complaints, the “Complaints Officer”. The Complaints Officer is a person who is designated by the organisation for the purpose of dealing with complaints made in compliance with the Complaints Procedures established under the Act. Under Part 9 of the Act, voluntary organisations are obliged to ensure that their complaints procedure is compliant. This can be done by e-mailing your complaints procedure to nicolaj.williams@hse.ie. Information regarding the development of a complaints procedure can be found on the DFI website

http://www.disability-federation.ie

Places are limited for the DFI event on the 9th of June. If you would like to send your Complaints Officer to the meeting please e-mail eleanorreece@disability-federation.ie as soon as possible, stating the name of the person attending, with ‘Complaints Officer Training’ in the subject line. Please contact Eleanor Reece, DFI Support Staff, on 01-454 7978 if you have any questions.

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY / TOWARDS 2016

Disability Act Review

Section 6 of the Disability Act 2005 requires that the operation of the Act be reviewed after five years. DFI made a Submission to the Disability and Equality Unit (formerly in the Department of Justice but now in Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) who is responsible for the review. The Act created many important obligations on public bodies, including the provisions in Part 2 for the Independent Assessment of Need and Service Statements for people with disabilities, and for improved accessibility to public facilities and services in Section 6. The Sectoral Plans of six key Departments also derive from Section 6. Draft findings from the review are expected to be reported to the Disability Stakeholders Group in the coming months, and the review completed by year end.

DFI’s Submission proposed changes to ensure stronger and more coherent leadership in the implementation of the Act, noting for example, the limited achievements through cross-departmental working, which is an important feature of the Act. The failure to extend the Part 2 provisions beyond the 0-4 age cohort, or to demonstrate the project planning essential for such a roll-out, similarly reveals weak operational performance. Monitoring progress in implementing the National Disability Strategy, of which the Act is the central component, has been far too slow to benchmark progress against the agreed objectives, namely the long term goals of *Towards 2016*.

A number of specific operational issues were singled out in DFI’s Submission. In particular, DFI stated that any decision to alter the reporting procedures under Part 2 due to the special circumstances relevant to very young children, whose needs can evolve very rapidly, must not extend to reporting on older cohorts when Part 2 is commenced for them. For a copy of DFI's Submission, please contact lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie.

Fine Gael to set up Disability Commission

Fine Gael Disability Spokesperson David Stanton has announced that the Party is setting up a Disability Policy Commission in order to channel concerns from the sector into a new Disability Policy. The Commission is being set up at the request of Party Leader Enda Kenny T.D. Deputy Stanton said he was very happy to accept responsibility for its implementation "People with disabilities are still being sidelined by the Government. In spite of numerous promises from Fianna Fáil and the Green Party, much of the national disability strategy has not been implemented". Fine Gael is very worried that further cutbacks to disability services will now be inflicted. "As Fine Gael Disability Spokesperson I already maintain regular contact with individuals and groups. Fine Gael is now taking this a stage further by setting up a new Disability Policy Commission. This Commission will comprise a small panel of representatives and experts, and will channel the concerns of disability organisations, support groups and carers. These issues will be fed into the Party's new Disability Policy, which will address the many areas of the National Disability Strategy which have still not been implemented. Fine Gael's policy will be developed from a human rights perspective, encompassing the values enunciated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
It will be based on three main concepts of independent living, universal design and individualised funding, all of which aim to ensure that people with disabilities live full lives as active members of their communities".

Further information on the Fine Gael Disability Policy Commission from David Stanton, Disability Spokesperson 01-618-3181 or Nick Miller, 086 6992080

DFI Round Table on Responding to the New Policy Environment

As part of DFI's seminar series on the Value for Money and Policy Review, a number of senior staff and Board members of member organisations participated in a discussion of the implications of the public policy objectives for the sector that apply today. The main theme of the discussion was on the issue of how organisations are supporting people with disabilities to be independent and full participants in their community. The experience of two organisations was described, by Christie Lynch for KARE, and by Ann Winslow for MS Society Ireland. Different ways of working were critical in both cases to helping people access to services, whether in mainstream health or educational services. Exploring with people their personal priorities was seen as a first step for ensuring that the organisation was working most effectively on their behalf.

For a copy of the notes on the seminar, please contact lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

DFI's Position on the Value for Money and Policy Review

DFI has outlined its position on the Value for Money and Policy Review of the Disability Services Programme that is currently underway. The position paper and other relevant documentation are available on the website, www.disability-federation.ie.

The paper explains why DFI sees the Review as an opportunity to focus resources more on supporting people with disabilities to live a full life in their community, which is the objective of Government policy. The opportunity extends to voluntary disability organisations who work to enable members to manage their disability and to access services, including mainstream services.

The paper highlights the importance of the HSE up-grading and co-ordinating its information about people's needs. It points out the bias in the HSE's approach that has resulted from the way publically-funded disability services developed historically. The focus of the has been on institutional-type services, with much less attention and funding paid to important supports such as the facilitation of peer groups, advocacy and activities to enhance disability awareness, whether amongst people with a disability, their families, their service providers or the general public.

DFI's expectations of the Review are outlined, highlighting issues that it must address. These include the critical importance of increasing collaboration amongst stakeholders if policy objectives are to be realised and, during the transition, the need for support for many voluntary organisations to build their capacity, for example, in tracking outcomes for people in their membership.

VfM and Policy Review's Special Survey of Organisations

The Review's project team is responsible for gathering statistical information on costs and services delivered under the HSE's Disability Services Programme. The team will be conducting a special survey of service providers to fill significant gaps in the information available from the HSE. They are looking for trends in the amount of services provided, inputs and costs over the 2005-2009 period inclusive, as well as details for 2009 on non pay costs by type of service.

DFI attended a seminar on the survey to which 25 organisations were invited. The project team is asking those organisations to pilot the questionnaires before finalising them for distribution across the sector. The team agreed to make some changes in response to concerns raised at the seminar, and to revise the tables promptly for completion, ideally by 18 June.

DFI is encouraging organisations to name and describe any service and supports that do not fit easily into the service categories defined in the tables. This information could be included in the category called 'Other'. Although extra effort is required, the additions will help to underline work by organisations to support people with disabilities to maintain their health, independence and participation in their community – which, after all, are the objectives of the Programme.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The Open Training College

Open Information Sessions with

Open Information Sessions will take place in Galway on 29th June and in Cork on 30th June, at which adult education opportunities that are available to staff and managers working, or currently seeking work, in the non-profit / human services sector, can be explored.

Raymond Watson, Course Director at the Open Training College, will be answering the questions of those attending the Open Information events. He will also be announcing the new regional timetable for the BA in Applied Social Studies (Disability) that launches in September 2010.

All are welcome to attend and enjoy some discussions around the current options open in the West and South of Ireland regarding Applied Social Studies and Applied Management courses.

Session One: Woodlands Conference Centre, Brothers of Charity Services, Woodlands, Renmore, Co. Galway , Tel: 091-755241 When: June 29th, 2010, anytime between 4:30pm and 7:30pm.

Session Two: Cork Association for Autism, Greenville House, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork, Tel: 021-4883789, When: June 30th, 2010, anytime between 4:30pm and 7:30pm.

The Open Training College is a division of St. Michael's House established in 1992 in response to a need to provide professional education and training programmes to staff working in services for people with a disability.

Please join us in Galway or Cork and take the first step to earning a professional, accredited qualification specific to the non-profit / human services sector.

Please contact Conor Murray on (01)2988544 or cmurray@opentrainingcollege.com for further information.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Disability Inclusion Protocol

The Disability Focus Group of the Dublin City Community Forum has published a protocol called ‘Working Towards Disability Inclusion’. This is a guidance document to help organisations, especially community groups, ensure that they are disability friendly. It lists issues to consider about physical access, attitudes of staff and members and ways to promote meaningful participation. There are plans to hold some workshops with community organisations to encourage adoption of the protocol. For a copy go to www.dublincommunityforum.ie

Department of Social Protection Update

The Disability Consultative Forum of the Department of Social Protection took place on 23rd March 2010. The Consultative Forum brings key stakeholders together to discuss and monitor the implementation of the Disability Sectoral Plan and key issues in relation to social protection and disability. The following is a brief note on the last meeting of the Forum.

Carers’ Allowance Survey

A commitment was given under the Disability Sectoral Plan to undertake a survey of Carers’ Allowance recipients, and this was done in December 2009. A random selection of 1,000 customers was contacted, and 594 responded. A presentation was made to the Forum on key findings from the survey which were mainly positive. The report is not yet available on the Department website, but you can contact Louise McCann (DFI) for further information

Domiciliary Care Allowance

Community and Voluntary Disability representatives raised concerns that parents of children with specific conditions including Autism and Asperger Syndrome appeared to be turned down for Domiciliary Care Allowance. In response, the Department gave a full brief on the approach by the Department to dealing with the medical conditionality associated with the scheme and statistical information on claims dealt with from April 2009 to December 2009. The main points were as follows:

- The medical criteria set out in Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2008 requires that “the child has a severe disability requiring continual or continuous care and attention substantially in excess of the care and attention normally required by a child of the same age”
- Domiciliary Care Allowance is payable in respect of children who have a disability so severe that it requires the child needing care and attention and / or supervision substantially in excess of another child of the same age. The care and attention received must be given by another person, effectively full-time so that the child can deal with the normal activities of daily life. The child must be likely to require this level of care and attention for at least 12 months
- Eligibility for Domiciliary Care Allowance is not based primarily on the medical or psychological condition, but on the resulting lack of function of body or mind necessitating the degree of extra care and attention required. Each application is assessed on an individual basis taking account of the evidence submitted by the applicant.
- An expert medical group was set up with the primary purpose of agreeing a set of consistent and objective guidelines for use nationally in determining eligibility of children for the scheme, drawing on the professional experience of people who were involved in the scheme in the HSE and experts in child psychiatry and psychology.
- The new process operating in the Department involves submission of a detailed statement by the parent or guardian of the child, a detailed statement by the child’s GP and any other relevant evidence from qualified experts who have examined the child. This evidence is assessed by designated departmental medical assessors who have received special training
- In the case of an application being refused on medical grounds, the applicant may submit additional information and / or ask for the case to be reviewed by a different medical assessor designated for this task. Where a person is not satisfied with the decision of a deciding officer he or she may appeal the decision to the social welfare appeals office

- In the period 1st April 2009 to 31st December 2009 a total of 3,389 applications for Domiciliary Care Allowance were received in the required format by the Department. Of these, 2,823 cases have been fully processed to date, 1,031 were awarded and 1,792 were deemed not to be eligible, a 36.5% allowance rate. Remaining applications were pending decision at the end of 2009.
- Of the processed applications in 2009, 286 applications had a recorded medical condition of Autism / Autism Spectrum Disorder, 125 of which have been deemed eligible and 161 have been deemed not eligible for Domiciliary Care Allowance, a 44% allowance rate.

Rent Supplement

The Community and Voluntary Disability representatives raised concern with regard to Rent Supplement and the fact that, where people move out of residential care to semi-independent living units, that they do not appear to be getting Rent Supplement. It would seem that there may be different approaches being taken to the administration of the Rent Supplement in different regions of the country.

The Department advised that if there was evidence of inconsistency the matter should be brought to the attention of SWA section. Please contact Louise McCann (DFI) to feed into any of these issues.

Citizens Information Board New Publication

A representative from the Citizens Information Board (CIB) provided the group members with copies of the CIB's Social Policy Report, "Getting There – Transport and Access to Social Services", and also with copies for their magazine, "Voice". These can be obtained from the CIB directly.

For further information please contact Louise McCann (DFI) with regard to the Department of Social Protection Disability Consultative Forum at 01 4250126 or louisemccann@disability-federation.ie. While individual cases cannot be progressed this is an important mechanism to advocate with regard to key social policy issues.

HOUSING

Housing Policy Update

Capital Assistance Scheme

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) issued a call for proposals for housing projects for older people, homeless persons and people with disabilities, with a total of €25 million available. The funds must be spent this calendar year, making applications for acquisitions the most likely response. The funding condition reduces the probability of housing specifically designed to meet the needs of those with significant mobility difficulties. For further information, please contact the Irish Council for Social Housing at www.icsh.ie.

Development of National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities

This Strategy is aimed at promoting tailored housing for people with disabilities and is a key priority of Towards 2016 and DOEHLG's Disability Act Strategic Plan. Departmental officials responsible for developing the Strategy indicate that the draft is close to completion, pending resolution of certain issues with the Department of Health and Children (DOHC) and the HSE. These issues relate to the implications of the congregated settings study and recommendations contained in Vision for Change. The National Advisory Group, on which DFI participates, will meet to review the completed document. DOEHLG expects to make a joint submission with DOHC proposing the Strategy to the Government.

Housing Needs Assessment Regulations

The Regulations, based on the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, are still being drafted by the DOEHLG. The Act empowers the Minister to direct Local Authorities about their procedures regarding applications and eligibility criteria for social housing. DFI and others in the disability sector made submissions calling for changes in practices to make the process disability friendly.

GENERAL NEWS

People of the Year Awards 2010

Who is your Person of the Year?

Nominate those who inspire! The People of the Year Awards are seeking nominations for this year's awards. Each year, the People of the Year Awards seek to honour those who have made a real difference to people's lives.

Do you know someone who has acted above and beyond the call of duty, someone whose success has inspired a generation, someone who has made an extraordinary contribution to their community, someone whose courage and achievement has changed our society for the better? If the answer is yes, then get nominating now!

You can nominate an individual or a group in a particular category for a People of the Year Award. Categories are provided here as guidance:

- International Person of the Year
- Young Person of the Year (under 25)
- Community Group of the Year
- Inspiring Mum of the Year
- Sports Person of the Year
- Garda of the Year

Tell as much as you can about why your chosen person or community group should receive an Award. Please include as much relevant information as possible to support the nomination, which you can submit in one of the following ways:

1. Log on to www.peopleoftheyear.com and complete the online nomination form.

2. Write to People of the Year Awards, Rehab Group, Roslyn Park, Sandymount, Dublin 4

3. Email poy@quinn-healthcare.com

Please include your name, address, telephone number, email address and the name of the person you are nominating. CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS: Tuesday, 15th June 2010

New Guide Launched to Encourage Partnership with Business

‘Business In the Community’ has launched a new guide for community groups to assist them to strategically partner with other businesses.

A key objective of the guide is to persuade community and voluntary groups to interpret their needs in terms of business skills, manpower and volunteering time rather than cash. The guide also provides a step by step process that community and voluntary groups can adopt when approaching businesses.

The “Communities and Business Working Together” guide presents the benefits of business support through case studies. These case studies captured on video feature the community, business and employee representatives talking about their community partnerships and highlight the different types of business support provided as well as the successes achieved.

The “Communities and Business Working Together guide is available at http://www.bitc.ie/corporate_responsibility/community_guide.html

President of the European Council meets with Leaders of European Disability Forum

Herman Von Rompuy, President of the European Council, recently met with Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and Pierre Gyselinck, President of the Belgian Disability Forum. The aim of the European Disability Forum is to include the Disability Pact into the Europe 2020 Strategy. According to EDF, Herman Van Rompuy took the stance that there is a “necessity for a new approach to disability policies in the EU”. The Europe 2020 Strategy, will be adopted by the European Council on 16th June 2010. Herman Van Rompuy “endorsed the State of the Union on Disability” which is a biennial meeting between the European Disability Forum, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the President of the European Parliament to evaluate previously taken measures and report to the European Council.

The Disability Pact for 2010 to 2020 is a policy framework at European and national level which aims at a cooperation between Member States and the European Union. At the moment, there is no long-term EU agenda on disability that involves a clear joint commitment from the Institutions and its Member States. The 27 Member States are developing 27 different national disability action plans. Coordination between the European and national actions, and clear and measurable objectives linked to the EU strategy for growth and jobs is the road to a barrier-free Europe. European Association of Service Providers for persons with Disabilities (EASPD) supports EDF in the campaign for a Disability Pact.

Such a pact will set the scene for the important discussions on how to implement the UN Convention in Europe and on how to build stronger legal frameworks underpinning and facilitating the enjoyment of human rights by all citizens. This pact should provide the guiding principles for a long term EU disability strategy. Being a network of support services for persons with disabilities, EASPD stresses the need for a chapter on service provision addressing concerns with regard to sustainable funding, correct legal frameworks allowing innovation, quality, staffing, training and retraining of carers and user involvement in both the new disability strategy and the Disability Pact.

European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) Highlights the Link between Human Rights and High Quality Social and Health Services

On 14th April, EASPD participated in a meeting set up by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. During the meeting the Regional Representative Mr. Jan Jarab and the Deputy High Commissioner Ms. Kyung-Wha Kang offered NGOs the opportunity to express their concern and explore ways for more intensive cooperation with the UN office in Brussels.

On behalf of European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), Mr. Luk Zelderloo pointed out the direct link there is between human rights and availability of affordable high quality social and health services. In close cooperation with the UN Regional office in Brussels EASPD will continue working on the further development of community based inclusive services as alternatives to institutionalisation.

"Show Me What You're Made Of" Follow Up

Following on from the "Show Me What You're Made Off" event held on 23rd March 2010, information has been compiled on the presentations at the event on a website, dedicated to providing information on services for people with disabilities in the North West region, www.disabilityinfonorthwest.com

Please support this website by providing information on items of interest, such as upcoming events, pictures, or other useful information or if you want to upgrade or upload your profile, please get in touch with marcushufsky@disability-federation.ie

Comber Seeks Professional Volunteers for Disability Services in Romania.

Comber, a leading Irish NGO, is calling for health care professionals to contribute their skills to a life-changing programme for children and adults with disabilities in Romania during the summer and autumn. Comber, are looking for enthusiastic, committed individuals from the following professions to participate in our 2010 volunteer programme: allied health professionals, intellectual disability nurses, and educators and trainers with experience of working with people with disabilities. This year, a six week summer programme will run from July and a second programme, to continue this work, will commence in September. Placements are available for a minimum of 3 weeks up to a maximum of 6 weeks on each programme. Applications should be made as soon as possible. For more information, please contact Alison Enright at alison@comber.ie; phone 087-2222456 and visit www.comber.ie.

Care Alliance Ireland Launch Family Caring in Ireland Report

Care Alliance Ireland have announced the publication of Family Caring in Ireland in May 2010. The report is intended for use by those with an interest in Family Carer issues in Ireland. The report was part-funded by the Citizens information Board.

The report is described as “a living document”, and will be updated on a regular basis. The latest version is available at http://www.carealliance.ie/publications.php

For further information please see www.carealliance.ie Email info@carealliance.ie

or telephone Care Alliance Ireland on 01-8747776

EVENTS

Celebrating Carers: Because we're worth it

Carers Week 14th - 20th June, 2010

Carers Week will be launched in the Mansion House, Dublin on 14th June at 11am. This will herald the beginning of an array of events happening around the country to celebrate the contribution that Family Carers make to ensure the wellbeing of those who have disabilities, illnesses or chronic conditions.

Please contact Esther Kavanagh to confirm your attendance at the Mansion House launch or to find out more about what you can do to organise an event that recognises carers 01-874 7776 or info@carealliance.ie. To locate an event in your area, refer to the website: www.carersweek.ie.

Children in Hospital Ireland

European Association for Children in Hospital 2010 Conference

Morgan Jamieson will be one of the key note speakers presenting at the European Association for Children in Hospital 2010 Conference **Register here**

For further information please view: http://conference.childreninhospital.ie

For info on the Conference Programme contact: Mary O'Connor, Chief Executive, E:mail ceo@childreninhospital.ie

For info on registration & fees contact: Louise Ryan, Conference Partners Ltd, E: louise@conferencepartners.ie www.childreninhospital.ie

Trinity College Dublin

Summer School 5th to 7th July 2010

'Inclusion through Education, Research and Advocacy'

The Summer School provides an inclusive forum for interaction and learning amongst people with intellectual disabilities, family members, and professionals working in the fields of disability, health and education. The Summer School will be opened on Monday 5th July by Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Director, Office for Disability of Mental Health. Plenary sessions include Lifelong Learning, by Dr. Joan Murphy on Tuesday 6th July, and Essential Values of Inclusion by Prof. Mary Falvey and Dr. Richard Rosenberg on Wednesday 7th July.

The Summer School offers a plenary session each day and workshops in the following areas:

1. Painting
2. Expressive Arts
3. Becoming an Advocate
4. Inclusive and Participatory Action Research
5. Transforming Lives: A Person Centred Way of Being
6. Early Learning
7. Inclusive Schools and Communities
8. Transitions to Independence

As there are a limited number of places in each workshop, please register early to ensure you can attend your choice of workshop. The cost of the event is €200 for eople with a disability / Family member, and €400 for professionals -----------Fee €200 There is an early bird discount of 10% for bookings before 11th June.

To book please contact: Ailish Kennedy, NIID. Ph: +353 (0)1 896 3885 or akenned@tcd.ie

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

An Invitation to all Charities and Not For Profit Organisations from Utility Aid Ltd & Energia

Save Money on Energy Costs

Utility Aid Ltd, would like to invite you to join them for a coffee at Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 on the 23rd June 2010 for an open forum on how to save money on energy costs

Utility Aid as the one of the UK's largest energy brokers dedicated to the Not For Profit Sector and Ireland's premier energy company Energia have joined forces to help Ireland's support sector**,**

1. Save money on their energy costs.

2. Reduce energy dependency.

3. Work as a collective in the future to secure better service and support from the energy sector.

In the UK, Utility Aid working with major energy suppliers and partners has saved the sector over Stg£4,000,000 by innovative and forward thinking and Utility Aid now seek your assistance in doing the same in Ireland.

Utility Aid will be holding two meetings between 9.30 am and 11.00 am and again in the afternoon between 2.30pm and 4.00pm on the 23rd June 2010. Please let them know which suits you best to do so please email Louise Duffy on louise.duffy@utility-aid.co.uk Further information can be found on the Utility Aid website for information on Energia please visit www.energia.ie

The Centre for Disability Law and Policy Conference
Friday 10th December 2010

The Centre for Disability Law and Policy has undertaken a global comparative study of National Disability Strategies and their impact on the lives of people with disabilities, entitled “Advancing Ireland’s National Disability Strategy: Building on Comparative and International Innovation.”

See http://www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp/projects/baseline.html for further information.

A monograph containing the findings of this comparative study is being prepared, entitled “From Rhetoric to Action: Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – the use of National Disability Strategies.” It will provide comparative perspectives on National Action Plans – grounded in Ireland’s experience of developing, implementing and monitoring its own National Disability Strategy. The findings of this study will be launched at a conference in Galway on Human Rights Day (10th December 2010). Key participants in the development of National Disability Strategies from around the world will attend the conference to share their perspectives and experiences. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability, Shuaib Chalklen, will present the keynote speech at the conference.

About DFI

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation and advocate for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions:

Hidden
Physical
Intellectual
Sensory
Mental Health
Emotional

DFI works to ensure that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise fully their civil, social and human rights. In pursuit of this vision:

- Acts as an advocate for the voluntary disability sector.
- Supports organisations to further enable people with disabilities.

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
- Networking
- Training and Support
- Advocacy and Representation
- Research and Policy Development
- Organisation and Management Development

DFI also supports the broader voluntary and disability sector through its representation of the disability strand with the Community and Voluntary Pillar of the Social Partnership process, as a social partner at the National Economic and Social Forum, Health Board Co-Ordinating Committees and other fora at regional, national and European level. DFI is recognised as a representative on disability issues to a broad range of local, national and regional fora this includes working with the HSE, NESF and Social Partnership.

Newsletters

For information please contact the relevant organisation directly.

Ability - Newsletter of the Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, Tel: 01 4572329, E-mail: info@iasbah.ie

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: info@arthritisireland.ie

Aspire - Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland. 01-8780027/9, E-mail: admin@aspire-irl.org

Asthma Society News - Tel: 01-8788511,
E-mail: office@asthmasociety.ie

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121, E-mail: info@migraine.ie

Brainwave - Quarterly Newsletter, Tel: 01 4557500, E-mail: info@epilepsy.ie

Care Alliance Ireland - E-mail: ndo@carealliance.ie

Clar na nÓg - National Youth Council of Ireland Tel: 01-4784122
E-mail: info@nyci.ie

Cleft Lip and Palate Association of Ireland - www.cleft.ie/newsletter/index.htm, Tel: (01) 2848227,
E-mail: georginawade@cleft.ie

Community Exchange Newsletter, E-mail: info@activelink.ie , Tel: +1 667 7326

Connect - Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association. E-mail: info@imnda.ie , Freefone 1800 403 403

Community Workers' Co-operative – Community Work News. E-mail: info@cwc.ie , Tel: +353 (0) 91 779 030

Cornerstone - Homeless Agency - http://www.homelessagency.ie/research/cornerstone.asp , Tel: 01 7036100 , E-mail: homeless@dublincity.ie

Cumhacht - People with Disabilities in Ireland http://www.pwdi.ie/news_events/newsletter/index.htm , E-mail: info@pwdi.ie, Tel: 01-8721744

Debra Ireland Newsletter, Tel: 01 678 5044, E-mail: info@debraireland.org

Down Syndrome Ireland - Tel: 01-8730999, E-mail: info@downsyndrome.ie

Enable Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 1850 204 304 E-mail: communications@enableireland.ie

Equality News - Tel: 01-4173333, E-mail:: info@equality.ie

E-Info Deaf Source— E-mail:: info@irishdeafsociety.ie . Tel: +353 1860 1878

Féach - Support to parents of blind and visually impaired children. Tel: 01 493 1896, E-mail: info@feach.ie

Fighting Blindness - Tel: 01 7093050, E-mail: avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie

Frontline of Learning Disability -Tel: 01-2862649. E-mail: frontline@indigo.ie

GROWing - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474, E-mail: info@grow.ie

Guidelines - Irish Guide Dogs Association. Tel: 021 4878200 E-mail: info@guidedogs.ie

Headway Ireland - National Association for Acquired Brain Injury - 'Making Headway', Tel: 01-8102066, E-mail: info@headway.ie

Heart News: - Newsletter of Irish Heart Foundation. Tel: 01 668 5001
E-mail: info@irishheart.ie .

Heartstrings - Newsletter of Heart Children Ireland, published quarterly,
Tel: 1850 217017 E-mail: heartchildren@eircom.net

Heatwave - Irish Raynauds Scleroderma Society,
E-mail: info@irishraynauds.com , Tel: 01 2020184

HOPE - Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland. Tel: 01-872 1303, E-mail: hdai@indigo.ie

Inclusion Ireland - Tel: 01 8559891, E-mail: info@inclusionireland.ie

Irish Deaf News - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-8601910; 01-8601878; E-mail: info@irishdeafsociety.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association - 'Spokeout', Tel: 01-8186 400, E-mail: Joanna.marsden@iwa.ie

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News 066-7180611, E-mail: kerrypwdi@eircom.net

MS News—Newsletter of MS Ireland. Tel: 01 6781600, E-mail: info@ms-society.ie

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-8721501, E-mail: info@mdi.ie

DeafHear.ie - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail: info@deafhear.ie , Minicom: (01) 817 5777

NCBI News - Newsletter of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Tel: 01 8307033, E-mail: press@ncbi.ie , www.ncbi.ie

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8726338, E-mail: nfaireland@eircom.net

People First - Central Remedial Clinic Tel: 01-8057400
E-mail: vmmcutch@crc.ie

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: 071 64791
E-mail: newsletter@ppsg.ie

Poverty Today - Combat Poverty Agency. Tel:01-670 6746

Rehab News -Tel: 01-2057200 E-mail: dara.duffy@rehab.ie

Simon News - Simon Community, Tel: 01-6711606 E-mail: info@simoncommunity.com

Shine News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620
E-mail: info@sirl.ie

Social Housing - Irish Council for Social Housing Tel: 01-6618334; E-mail: info@icsh.ie

Sonas aPc – Tel (01) 2608138. www.sonasapc.ie.

Speaking up for Advocacy – Citizens Information Board Newsletter on advocacy. Tel: 01 6059035, E-mail: mairide.woods@ciboard.ie

Volunteer Stroke Scheme News- Tel: 01-4559036.
E-mail:: info@strokescheme.i
Wheel E-Bulletin Tel:01- 454 8727,
E-mail: info@wheel.ie

Disability Federation of Ireland is a national support and representation mechanism for voluntary disability sector organisations, covering all areas of disability and disabling conditions. There are currently over 100 voluntary disability organisations in the DFI Membership.

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