



Disability Federation of Ireland

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

NEWSLETTER – November 2012

Quality and Standards in Human Services in Ireland: Disability Services

DFI welcomes and acknowledges the significance of the publication of the NESC report on quality and standards in disability services in Ireland this month.

The Report reviews existing regulation and quality processes in Ireland's disability services, drawing on interviews with a range of stakeholders. At the launch, Dr Jeanne Moore, the main author of the report, outlined that 'there is a need for a re-balancing of the regulatory system so that it includes formal regulations and inspections to safeguard vulnerable people, but also builds on and strengthens the active search for continuous improvement demonstrated by many service providers'.

DFI has been providing on-going commentary to the drafting process of this report through its work as a member of the Community and Voluntary Pillar and was encouraged by NESC's identification of this topic as one needing further exploration.

The report recognises current good practice but argues that this needs to be built upon and complemented. The report also suggests that there is much work left to be done to ensure that there are effective quality systems within organisations. In particular, there are improvements needed in incorporating the views of people with disabilities on their understanding of what quality means, real involvement of people in quality systems and regulation, and in terms of increasing people's expectations of reaching their personal outcomes. The report makes a number of recommendations which are useful in providing a platform for future directions in policy development, in particular the proposal to establish a 'Quality Forum', that would connect the work of HIQA, the HSE, voluntary providers, service users and families. Such a forum would support the sharing of good practice in relation to quality assurance, focus on continuous improvement, inclusion, and on outcomes for people with disabilities.

Developing and measuring outcomes for people with disabilities who receive person centred supports in these ways that support choice, independence, autonomy is more

challenging and requires a focus when developing a coherent and integrated set of outcome measures for disability services and policy.

As clearly stated in the report, people with disabilities must be instrumentally involved in the identification and development of good quality services. Enhancing people's input can be achieved partly by building on features that are already there, such as the organisations that are driven and led by people with disabilities and initiatives such as DFI's project to increase participation by people with disabilities and their organisations in local planning and decision-making fora.

The Report can be accessed at the following address:

<http://www.nesc.ie/en/publications/publications/nesc-reports/quality-and-standards-in-human-services-in-ireland-disability-services/>. Further information on the Report can be found inside this newsletter.

John Dolan
Chief Executive Officer

DFI PRE-BUDGET WORK

Budget 2013

The DFI October Newsletter listed a wide range of actions by DFI in its campaign to protect people with disabilities, and their voluntary organisations, from further cuts in Budget 2013. (Information on these activities is available at www.disability-federation.ie .) With the media discussing the prospect of more severe cuts next year, particularly in health and personal services, DFI continues to find ways of highlighting the issues to the wider public, as well as policy-makers.

John Dolan, CEO, made presentations to two Oireachtas Committees on 8th and 10th of November, the Joint Committee on Health and Children and the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform. This month DFI also participated in a Community and Voluntary Pillar meeting with Minister for Finance Michael Noonan, and with Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin, at which members of the Pillar highlighted key areas of concern for the community and voluntary sector, leading up to the Budget. Any other opportunities to promote disability as a social justice priority have been, and will be, energetically exploited, including campaigns such as the home support protest in October, and the upcoming disability rights protest in November.

DFI Support Officers are working with member organisations and others to lobby politicians in their regions, bringing home the consequences of further cuts. We urge everyone to be proactive, making the case for people with disabilities right up to Budget Day on 5th December.

Contact details of Support Officers are on the DFI website.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Governance Code Information Events 2012

It has now been just over three months since the phenomenally well attended launch of Ireland's [Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable \(CVC\) Organisations](#) in Dublin's Mansion House.

There has been a flurry of activity on the www.governancecode.ie website over the summer with almost 1,000 people registering their interest on the website.

The Working Group that developed the Code are hosting a series of post-launch information events taking place around Ireland in the coming weeks. The consultation events will take place from 5pm - 8pm on the following dates and at these locations:

1. Waterford: Wednesday 14th November
2. Cork: Thursday 15th November
3. Dublin: Tuesday 20th November

[Register for a free event here.](#)

The community and voluntary sector organisations in the Working Group are: Boardmatch Ireland, Business in the Community Ireland, The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Clann Credo, The Disability Federation of Ireland, ICTR, Volunteer Centres Ireland and The Wheel. Three organisations worked in association with the above as members of the Working Group: Arthur Cox, The Corporate Governance Association of Ireland (CGAI) and Sheila Cahill Consulting. The organisations involved in this project came together in the spirit of collaboration and partnership to create a Governance Code for the sector by the sector.

These events are part of a national post-Code launch which will run from 7th November until 20th November 2012.

As stakeholders in the community and voluntary sector with links to your own network and connections, The Working Group would like to invite you to come to an information event on one of the above dates planned around the country (or ask a colleague to attend in your place). They are timed specifically to attract both paid staff people as well as volunteer

board membership - so please pass this on to you board or management committee so that they are aware of it.

On behalf of the eleven-member [Working Group](#):

[Boardmatch Ireland](#) | [Business in the Community Ireland](#) | [The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups](#) | [Volunteer Ireland](#) | [Clann Credo](#) | [ICTR](#) | [The Disability Federation of Ireland](#) | [The Wheel](#) | [The Corporate Governance Association of Ireland](#) | [Sheila Cahill Consulting](#) | [Arthur Cox](#)

Following @GovCodeIRL on [Twitter](#) and/ or by 'LIKING' [The Governance Code Page on Facebook](#). You can also join the [Irish Charities Good Governance Group](#) on LinkedIn.

HR & Employment Law Update

Disability Federation of Ireland, in conjunction with Adare Human Resource Management, has in place a support structure for member Organisations to avail of discounted Human Resource and Employment Law Support Services exclusively for DFI members.

Adare Human Resource Management provide HR and Employment Law Support Services to a large number of Organisations within the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Our HR and Employment Law Support Services include

- Contracts of Employment & Employee Handbooks containing policies & procedures - drafting / review / update
- HR Helpdesk – provision of on-going access to Phone / Email HR Advice and Support
- Representation at Workplace Relations Commission, Rights Commissioners, Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) and other external employment bodies
- HR Consultancy Services – Recruitment / Investigations / Dispute Management

Adare Human Resource Management support organisations through minimising the risk of exposure to legal challenges by ensuring legal compliance for organisations in their practices as well as policies and procedures.

Record Keeping

There are a number of pieces of legislation which set down record keeping requirements for Organisations. The Data Protection Acts set out guidelines for data controllers and processors to ensure personal data is processed in accordance with the Acts.

The Acts set out that Data must be;

- Obtained and processed fairly
- Accurate, complete and kept up to date

- Obtained only for one or more specified, explicit and legitimate purpose
- Shall not be processed in a manner incompatible with these purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Shall not be kept longer than is necessary
- Should be controlled with appropriate security measures

There are other pieces of legislation which set out timeframes for which records should be kept. See below some such requirements:

Act	Record Keeping Requirement
Organisation of Working Time Act 1997	3 years (this includes records of annual leave, public holidays, working hours and rest periods)
Carer's Leave Act 2001	Must be retained for 8 years.
Parental Leave Act 1998 and 2006	Parental Leave and Force Majeure leave records must be kept for 8 years.

Employers would be advised to keep records for time periods as detailed below in order to be in a position to defend against a case, should a case be taken. Examples of these are as follows:

Act	Record Keeping Requirement
Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973-2005	1 year as claims must be brought within 12 months of the date of the offence
Payment of Wages Act 1991	1 year as complaints may be presented within 6 months from the date of an unlawful deduction of payment, this may be extended by up to a further 6 months in exceptional circumstances
Maternity Protection Act 1994-2004	Complaint can be made within 6 months from date employer was notified of employee's intention to take leave which can be extended to 12 months in exceptional circumstances so records should be held for a minimum of 1 year.
Adoptive Leave Act 1995-2005	Complaint can be made within 6 months from date employer was notified of employee's intention to take leave, which can be extended to 12 months in exceptional circumstances so records should be held for a minimum of 1 year.

If you have any questions relating to record keeping requirements within your Organisation, do not hesitate to contact us. For further information on the HR Support Services provided click on the link below:

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=50>

Ecotherapy – Re-discovering the Healing in Nature

By Maeve Halpin, Social and Organisational Psychologist

Maeve Halpin is a practising counsellor and Social and Organisational Psychologist, with many years' experience in the Community and Voluntary sector, latterly as Chair of the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups. In conjunction with Maeve, DFI have launched an External Supervision and Support Service for staff and Boards of DFI member groups.

As a population, we have become more urbanised and sedentary, with decreases in our levels of physical exercise and outdoor activity. As a result, we have become more disconnected and divorced from nature than any previous generation. Many studies suggest that our sense of identity, our emotional well-being and our personal fulfilment are all impacted by our relationship with nature. The newly-emerging discipline of ecotherapy draws on a variety of approaches and techniques to capitalise on the inherently therapeutic effects of conscious and focussed engagement with our natural surroundings.

Evidence from Studies

In the 1960's in the UK, psychiatric patients who were housed in tents due to an outbreak of tuberculosis found their condition improved. When they returned to the indoor wards of the hospital, most reverted to their original chronic state. Two classic US studies in the 1980's highlighted the benefits of exposure to nature. Prisoners in Michigan whose cells overlooked fields had 24% fewer sick visits than those whose cells overlooked the prison yard. Post-operative patients in Pennsylvania whose rooms looked out on trees recovered faster and with less medication than those who could see only a brick wall from their room. More recently, a correlation has been established between levels of stress reported by residents and the amount of accessible green space in their neighbourhood environment.

How Ecotherapy Works

Ecotherapy combines the benefits of exercise, contact with nature, mindfulness and social connection. Forming a closer relationship to the natural world helps people articulate,

process and make sense of their emotions and life experiences. This can include a range of activities from gardening or walking in the countryside to building shelters, creating outdoor rituals, camping or learning survival and bushcraft skills. A University of Essex study involving over 3,000 people has identified 3 key benefits to shared, green (i.e. nature-based) exercise: 1) improved psychological health, with enhanced mood and less anger, depression and anxiety, 2) improved physical health across a wide of measures and 3) greater social networking and connectivity.

Even spending short periods of time in a natural environment has been shown to enhance self-esteem and emotional well-being. The diversity of colours, sounds and smells in nature, the opportunity to observe animals in the wild, the slower pace and the sense of connection to something greater, all contribute to an experience of tranquillity, escape from everyday pressures and the feeling of coming back to oneself. Learning to recognise the metaphors for life in nature can help break down the sense of isolation and alienation that is so pervasive in modern life.

Aspects of Ecotherapy

As the name suggests, ecotherapy encompasses a wide variety of interventions, including Wilderness Therapy, Pet-Assisted Therapy, Equine-Assisted Therapy, Nature Awareness, Green Therapy, Horticultural Therapy and Walking Therapy. Examples in Ireland include Earth Force Education in Wicklow, who teach courses in tracking, bushcraft, survival skills and bird language for adults and children. ELISTA Education in Co. Meath provides education and training opportunities in Animal Assistance and Therapy. The Lough Allen Adventure Centre in Leitrim hosts workshops that include foraging, navigation techniques, fire-lighting using flint and open boat skills. Ecotherapy can allow us to re-connect with our ancient knowledge and intuition and expand our sense of ourselves beyond the ubiquitous and very limited identity of “consumer”.

© Maeve Halpin Nov 2012 More information is available at <http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=215>

HEALTH

Keeping you Informed About this National Programme for Restructuring of Children's Disability Services

Standards & Performance Reporting

Services must account for the outcomes of their interventions. The National Group for Children's Disability Services is developing a draft performance reporting framework with a focus on outcomes for children with disabilities & their families.

What are the benefits for children and families as a result of services? An online survey on desired outcomes is taking place with parents, young people receiving services or who received services as children, and staff.

You will find the survey from October 30th to November 23rd at the following links:

Parents and Families: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YR2M5QH>

Children & Young People: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/82BM9QL>

Staff: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YBDS9TR>

Please take part so your views will be included, and circulate as widely as possible

For further information please contact tonigleeson@disability-federation.ie

Census 2011 – Data on Disability and Health

The Central Statistics Office published its health and disability profile, based on Census 2011, on 1st November. Profile 8: Our Bill of Health – Health, Disability & Carers in Ireland includes data on a number of items, including age, sex, type of disability, location, principal economic status, social class, good / bad health, and changes in the numbers of people with a disability since the last Census in 2006. Statistics have already been published from Census 2011 giving the numbers of all people with a disability living in the country.

Disability was defined in the Census as:

- (a) Blindness or a serious vision impairment.
- (b) Deafness or a serious hearing impairment.

- (c) A difficulty with basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying.
- (d) An intellectual disability.
- (e) A difficulty with learning, remembering or concentrating.
- (f) A psychological or emotional condition.
- (g) A difficulty with pain, breathing, or any other chronic illness or condition.

The data below, taken from the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS), refer to the total numbers of people with disabilities in the State. The total number of people who reported that they had a disability in the State on Census night in 2011 was 595,335. This includes the types of disability listed above from (a) to (g). Over a third of this group were aged over 65 years, and almost 50% were in the people of working age category.

Persons with a Disability by Age Group:

Age	Number
0 – 14	53,058
15 – 24	44,513
25 – 44	120,426
45 – 64	173,269
65+	204,069
Total	595,335

Profile 8 will provide us with data on for example the numbers of people who are blind, or who have a serious vision impairment and where they are living in the country. It will also tell us, for example, the principal economic status, that is, whether a person is working, unemployed, a student, unable to work due to a permanent disability or sickness, looking after the home / family or retired as well as the type of disability they have. Profile 8 will also give us information about whether a person has difficulty in carrying out various activities including, for example, dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home; or participating in other activities, for example leisure or using transport

When Profile 8 is published DFI plan to carry out an initial analysis of the data and draft a summary report on findings of interest to people with disabilities and member organisations. For further information, please contact Joan O’Connor, email: joanoconnor@disability-federation.ie

NESC Report Published

“Quality and Standards in Human Services In Ireland: Disability Services”

The report, ‘Quality and Standards in Human Services in Ireland: Disability Services’, is a very useful and timely addition to the process underway to reform public services with respect to people with disabilities. It incorporates the recent policy analysis stimulated by the Value for Money and Policy Review of the HSE Programme and related HSE reports. It advances thinking about appropriate regulation of services being delivered to people living in the community.

The Report states that the focus is on a minority of people with disabilities, (specialist services are delivered to 6% of people with disabilities). In fact, many people with disabilities are supported by voluntary disability organisations, a number of which are led by those with disabilities or members of their families, including people aged over 65 years, those who mainly rely on help-lines, advice, peer group participation. These services may be used less intensively and episodically but can be critical to enabling people to live independent lives. These services are poorly appreciated partly because they obtain much of their resources outside the HSE but more importantly because of the way the HSE has categorised these types of services inadvertently hides them.

The Report recognises the diversity (and quality variability) and the implications this has for quality regulation. It recognises that some organisations have brought in their own quality assurance procedures in the absence of State involvement, which demonstrates excellence and internationally recognised quality provision. Equally many organisations have no quality assurance systems in place. The sector it notes is largely, self-regulatory. The Report discusses the potential for effective ‘regulation of self-regulation’ which seems a sensible and viable approach in relation to services in the community, especially given the diversity that exists and the importance of innovation.

The Report also discusses the notion of responsive regulation, where other key actors in the system perform and achieve regulatory goals. This can include a variety of tasks such as standard setting or providing supports to implement standards. In this regard, it mentions key actors such as the NDA, HIQA, the Health Research Board, the HSE SLAs as well as independent quality assurance systems such as PQASSO. The work of national umbrella organisations is also recognised in encouraging and developing quality assurance and better governance capacity. However, it notes that the relationships between these actors are not established in any systematic or official way. In relation to PQASSO and other

quality assurance systems, the Report notes that this quality 'work' is not monitored by an official centre or regulator so there is little learning captured from their activities and no official recognition of its value and place in the regulatory system.

The Report also emphasised that there has been a lack of focus on outcomes across the disability sector. An outcomes focus is more of a challenge when attention moves beyond 'wrap around' service models to person-centred models focusing on building services and supports around a person in a seamless and integrated way, for example, developing outcomes for services that support prevention, early intervention as well as amelioration for people with disabilities. Developing and measuring outcomes for people with disabilities who receive person centred supports in these ways that support choice, independence, autonomy should be the focus when developing a coherent and integrated set of outcome measures for disability services and policy.

Responsive regulation also encompasses involvement of people with disabilities at all levels of service design, delivery, regulation and monitoring of outcomes and processes. They note that some organisations placed great emphasis on engaging with people using their services, while others reported that this could be challenging. They emphasised the importance of individualised budgets and while this policy development is important, it is not a sufficient response. In our view, enhancing people's input can be achieved partly by building on features that are already there, such as the organisations that are driven and led by people with disabilities and initiatives such as DFI's project to increase participation by people with disabilities and their organisations in local planning and decision-making fora.

The concern expressed about the variability of quality, given "the grass roots nature of quality in the disability sector" makes essential a multi-faceted approach to quality.

Recommendations in the Report focus on the sharing of good practice, and learning across the sector; and the need for a balance between formal regulation, continuous improvement, sharing of good practice, and monitoring and learning. The development of a 'Quality Forum', bringing together key actors, and emphasising the value of sharing good practice is a key recommendation from the Report.

This is a very important, and timely Report, and we would encourage all organisations to take time to consider its findings. For further information please go to the following website

<http://www.nesc.ie/en/publications/publications/nesc-reports/quality-and-standards-in-human-services-in-ireland-disability-services/>

NESC Conference: Quality and Standards in Human Services

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) will hold a conference on the 21st November, in Croke Park on Achieving Quality and Standards in Human Services.

The conference will highlight the most important findings from the NESC work with noted scholars and prominent practitioners elaborating on its implications for future reform of important human services. There will also be a series of workshops in which participants can assess the challenges and possibilities in delivering high quality services in particular areas. One of the workshops is on disability services, and will involve a presentation by Jeanne Moore, NESC, a response by Tom Hughes, Western Care, and will be chaired by Eithne Fitzgerald, NDA. Further information on the conference is available at:

<http://www.nesc.ie/en/news-events/events/quality-and-standards-in-human-services-conference/>

Consultation: Residential Care Services for People with Disabilities

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has published, for public consultation, draft national Standards for care centres providing residential services to adults and children with disabilities. The final date for receipt of submissions is 21st November 2012.

The draft Standards can be downloaded from www.hiqa.ie

DFI will be making a submission to the consultation and would welcome the perspectives of voluntary organisations and people with disabilities for drafting its paper. Giving feedback to HIQA, via DFI and / or directly will help to ensure an effective, person centred standards regime.

Dr Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive of HIQA, said the Standards “represent a revision by HIQA of previous Standards and, for the first time, bring together Standards for residential services for adults and for children, while at the same time reflecting the different and divergent needs of these two distinct groups. When the registration of residential centres for people with disabilities begins, the registration and inspection process will apply to both centres for children and for adults. These national Standards will apply to all care centres providing residential services to people with disabilities whether operated by public, private or voluntary bodies or agencies. Centres requiring to be registered will include congregated services and institutions, group homes, community houses and other types of residential services.” Please send your comments to joanoconnor@disability-federation.ie

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

National Disability Strategy

At DFI's pre Budget Forum in the Mansion House, Minister Kathleen Lynch announced that completion of the National Disability Strategy (NDS) Implementation Plan would be delayed until January 2013, after the Budget. The document continues to be developed under the administration of the Department of Justice and Equality, and the Disability Stakeholders Group, comprising national representative organisations and disability spokespersons, continues to provide comments.

A large number of Government Departments are expected to set out the actions they will lead in undertaking, ideally also giving the time frame and Key Performance Indicators; however we are anxious that participation and on-going engagement by Departments is critical to the successful implementation of the Plan. The drafting attempts to factor in the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Ireland has promised to ratify.

Within the Disability Stakeholders' Group (DSG), DFI underlines the importance of the Plan identifying the key areas for making progress on the NDS, and the milestones for measuring that progress. It would be unfortunate if planning and monitoring again turned into reports of mostly routine actions, as this would make it difficult to determine what was being achieved. It is critical that the Minister focus on promoting change, including closer co-operation when the different entities need to work together to achieve outcomes for people with disabilities.

For further information on this work please contact Lillian Buchanan,

lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

Local Government Reform and the Implementation of the National Disability Strategy at Local Level

The impact of NDS implementation needs to be realised in the changes experienced by people with disabilities living in their own communities. The Implementation Plan for the NDS needs to take account of how it progresses actions at local level, and how it monitors and evaluates progress.

On October 16th the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) launched “**Putting People First - Action Programme for Effective Local Government**”. Speaking at the launch, Minister Hogan referred to this process as “the most fundamental overhaul of the Local Government sector in over 100 years “.

The key shift arising from this reform is that programmes and initiatives previously funded at central level will in future be funded and implemented locally with local elected representatives becoming ultimately responsible for local and community actions. Local Government reform will see a reduction in Councilors by 42%, the number of local councils will be reduced from 114 to 31, and the DECLG expects to save €420 million.

Under the new system, Local Government will be responsible for ensuring that all publicly funded agencies work together to produce a cohesive planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation system in each county and city. This will result in the development of a 5-year city and county local and community plan.

The plan will reflect a whole of county /city approach to all local and community issues, including disability.

Local disability issues will therefore need to be raised and considered within this overall planning process, as disability actions over those five years in a given city or county will form part of the overall mainstream plan. The same will apply to the local NDS commitments of the Sectoral Plan Agencies, including those of the DECLG.

The County and City Development Boards (CDBs) will be phased out (some possibly by the end of 2012), with a replacement structure being developed. This will be called the Socio-Economic Committee (SEC) and it will have much more authority and responsibility. There will be an SEC in each City and County Council area for planning and oversight of all local and community development programmes.

All of the reforms are expected to be in place before the 2014 local elections. As this is a very recent development, DFI will be taking some time to absorb the new systems and structures. In the meantime, we expect to see other announcements following on the heels of the launch, in particular the publication of the long awaited 'Alignment Report', which will detail how local development agencies will be aligned with Local Government as part of this reform process. DFI will continue to watch developments closely. Further information on Local Government Reform can be found here www.environ.ie

DFI has been offering training workshops in Local Government Structures and Community Representation for a number of years now and continues to do so. It is essential for the future of the disability sector that organisations understand and engage with local structures for the future. The workshops are free to attend and are open to statutory and community agencies around the country.

For information contact; PJ Cleere DFI Support Officer at pjcleere@disability-federation.ie mobile: 086 3811064 or your local Support Officer.

Implementing the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities

Appropriate Housing for People with Disabilities

Recent Newsletter articles have referred to the numerous committees set up by Government in relation to the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities 2011-2013. Although a vast infrastructure has been put in place to deliver on the Strategy, significant changes made for people as a result of the Strategy have yet to be realised.

The lack of appropriate housing supply, the very limited opportunities under NAMA-controlled properties and the decline in capital funding for new build social housing or for adaptations makes change challenging. The Department of Health (DOH) is transferring to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DOECLG) funding for 2013 of €1m for accommodation to facilitate the transition of about 150 residents out of congregated settings, mainly into leased housing in the community. But finding appropriate housing is proving difficult.

For people with significant physical and sensory disabilities registered on their local authority waiting list, the low turnover of adapted social units and shortage of capital funding

is a serious concern. The Housing Strategy aims to explore ways of matching better applicants with potential supply.

Work is reported to be underway in assessing the housing need of residents in consultation with those residents, most of whom are intellectually disabled. For people who live in the community and experience housing need, no significant changes are likely in the short term, although the plan intends to strengthen the assessment process. The implementation plan also indicates that households on the local authority waiting list are to be prioritised for reassessment. In addition the 'statutory assessment of housing need', last held in 2008, is to be repeated in 2013. This is an important opportunity to have the housing needs of people with disabilities captured and we would strongly encourage people with disabilities and organisations to raise awareness of this development. The findings will influence planning and housing investment.

For further information, please contact lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie

NDA Conference, “Achieving Inclusive Communities”

The NDA's annual conference on 10th October focused on building inclusive communities, something in which people with disabilities and their voluntary organisations have long been engaged. Many of the presentations looked at the home, school and neighborhood environment and ways of making it more disability friendly and reducing the avoidable risks faced by people with disabilities who live and work there.

Another key theme was the funding of supports to enable people to live and thrive in the community. The discussion concentrated on personalising disability-specific funding to center on the individual and his or her needs. This is an area of research on which the NDA has been working with the HSE. DFI is represented on the Research Steering Committee.

Of course personalised disability budgeting is only one aspect of achieving inclusive communities. There is also the work of CIL Leaders and many others to get mainstream health, education, housing, transport and other services to accommodate the particular requirements caused by disabilities. It is important this latter contribution is recognised and supported.

The presentations at the conference will soon be available on the NDA's website:

www.nda.ie

Law Reform Commission

Proposed New Programme of Law Reform

DFI has been invited by the Law Reform Commission to make suggestions for reform of the law. In accordance with the Law Reform Commission Act 1975, the Commission is required to prepare, from time to time, a Programme of Law Reform which forms the basis on which we carry out our statutory mandate to keep law under review, with a view to reform and modernisation.

Views and suggestions in relation to the Programme of Law Reform will be considered by the Commission for inclusion in a new Programme of Law Reform, in keeping with its statutory mandate to keep the law under review with a view to its reform and modernisation. The Commission's proposed Programme will be submitted to the Government for approval. The deadline for DFI's contribution is 30th November, so that anyone wishing to provide us with ideas and comments for drafting the DFI submission should do so by 16th November.

The Commission has noted that 'it is especially conscious at this time of the need to ensure that the proposed Programme of Law Reform will include areas of current concern for Irish Society, or which it can be anticipated should be examined now with a view to their reform.'

For further information or to contribute to the DFI Submission please contact

joanoconnor@disability-federation.ie

The National Council for Special Education

2012 Research Conference

Wednesday 21st November 2012

Hogan Suite, Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin

9.00am – 4.00pm

The NCSE annual research conference provides an opportunity to hear about and discuss some of the latest national and international research in the field of special education.

The conference features presentations from on-going and completed studies commissioned by the NCSE, as well as from international guest speakers on key contemporary issues.

Conference speakers will address the themes of teacher education for inclusion, achievement and outcomes, models of provision, special classes, and findings from the NCSE longitudinal study.

Please click [here](#) for the **conference agenda**

and Please click [here](#) to complete submit the **online booking form**.

Expansion of Disability Activation Project to assist people with disabilities to access employment

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, TD, on *25th October, 2012* announced funding of just over €7 million for a range of 14 projects under the Disability Activation Project (DACT). Speaking about the successful projects, Minister Burton said: **“These funds of €7 million will be used to create linkages between employers and people with disabilities – this is crucial to ensuring that the untapped potential of people with disabilities is allowed to flourish and that they are enabled to participate fully in the labour market.”**

The Minister made the announcement at the employer road show event being held in Sligo, where she outlined the extensive range of services and supports available to assist employers in growing their businesses and supporting their workforce through engagement with the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The extensive range of supports embraces specific measures to assist people with disabilities to avail of employment opportunities and includes the Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Workplace Adaptation Grant Scheme.

The DACT Project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund and the Department of Social Protection and it is targeted at the Borders, Midlands and Western regions. There are four strands to the Project as follows:

Strand 1 – Improving Access to Employment

Strand 2 – Progression Programmes for Young People

Strand 3 – Support for Progression and Retention of People with an Acquired Disability

Strand 4 – Innovative Employer Initiatives

Following a call for proposals inviting organisations that have experience of working with people with a disability to submit projects for funding, 35 applications underwent a rigorous appraisal process carried out by Pobal who are managing the DACT project on behalf of the Department of Social Protection. Ultimately, 14 proposals were selected for funding.

Referring to Strand 4 of the DACT, the Minister stated: **“Three of the selected projects - to be run by the National Learning Network, the Irish Association of Supported Employment and Monaghan Integrated Development Ltd. - will focus specifically on how best to establish links between employers and people with disabilities. The projects will continue until early 2015 and will be most helpful in learning how best to ensure that people with disabilities can avail of progression, education and development opportunities. ”**

Under Strand 3, the University of Limerick and Arthritis Ireland will seek to develop individualised occupational therapy programmes to enable people with arthritis to overcome the barriers they face in accessing, remaining in or returning to work. Similarly, the Peter Bradley Foundation and Acquired Brain Injury Ireland will use vocational assessment teams to support people with acquired brain injuries to remain in or re-enter the workforce.

EUROPE

The European Network on Independent Living

“Supporting Young Disabled People to Become Future Leaders of the Independent Living Movement”

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe brought together a group of young people with disabilities from across Europe for a week-long Study Session entitled “Supporting Young Disabled People to Become Future Leaders of the Independent Living Movement”. The study session, took place at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg ran until 28th October 2012, and

involved 36 participants from 11 European countries.

ENIL's study session aims to encourage and support young people with disabilities to advocate for Human Rights and Independent Living in their individual countries but also on a European Level. Led by a team of young facilitators, all of whom are experienced independent living advocates, the participants will discuss and learn about a range of topics including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, working with the media and personal assistance. Throughout the week, there was many opportunities to share personal experiences and discover more about the lives of young people with disabilities in other European countries.

A special focus of the study session was on leadership skills. In the words of Jamie Bolling, ENIL's Executive Director: "Young people are ENIL's future! I am excited to see that we have obtained our goal of having this study session! ENIL and Europe need an active youth to promote Human Rights and Independent Living!".

One of ENIL's main priorities is to increase the involvement of young people with disabilities in the Independent Living Movement. For this reason, ENIL hopes that the week in Strasbourg will provide participants with some of the skills to become tomorrow's Independent Living leaders and empower young people with disabilities in general to become active in the movement. One of the outcomes of the week-long study session will be the creation of an ENIL Youth Network. Based on the participants' input into its aims, structure and future activities, this will be an Independent Living Youth Network created by young people for young people.

For further information about the study session and ENIL's work with young people, please contact secretariat@enil.eu.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Giving Campaign Charities Seminar



Update on the progress so far in planning the Giving Campaign and an opportunity to give your input and / or have any questions answered.

Date: Thursday 29 November 2012

Time: 08.30 – 10.30

Venue: Alexander Hotel, 41-47 Fenian Street (off Merrion Square), Dublin 2

Breakfast will be available from 08.00. It is free to attend.

Please reply to Colette Houlihan at Philanthropy Ireland (Colette@philanthropy.ie Tel: 01 6768751) if you would like to attend.

PSP Association Dublin Support Group

The PSP Association is dedicated to providing support for people with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) and the related disease Cortico Basal Degeneration (CBD), and those who care for them.

PSP and CBD are rare terminal degenerative brain diseases of unknown cause. PSP symptoms include backward falls and problems with vision, while CBD initially affects only one side of the body. They progressively rob people of their ability to walk, talk, see or swallow. There is no treatment and no cure for either condition.

Both PSP & CBD are difficult to diagnose in the early stages as early symptoms may resemble those of other neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Motor Neurone disease or Multiple System Atrophy. The exact cause is unknown. Research has shown that a complex genetic component is involved and the disease itself appears to be triggered environmentally and selectively, perhaps by any one of a variety of neurotoxins, or injury to the head. People can be affected from age 40 on but the average age of onset is 62. Life expectancy is 5 -7 years. This progressive disease is very individual so the rate of progression of symptoms varies considerably from person to person.

You don't have to face PSP alone- Come to our meeting:

The meetings are open to all; whether you are affected by PSP / CBD, are a carer, family member or friend. Come along and meet others who understand what you are going through, to find encouragement, support and possibly solutions to issues you are facing. Our meetings will have a guest speaker who will provide information relevant to living with PSP / CBD. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and get advice.

Further details: Jim at 01 8375020 jimlogue8@gmail.com

Caroline 01 8383606 dooley.martyn@gmail.com

The PSP Association depends totally on voluntary contributions.

Talking Mats DUBLIN Training

Talking Mats is a low tech communication aid designed to support people with a range of communication needs to express their views.

The evidence base for this technique is grounded in research spanning the past 10 years: research reports on Dementia, Aphasia, Learning Disability and other areas are cited on the website and are available on request. Talking Mats is a valuable tool that can be used by both adults and children. Here are some of the ways Talking Mats has been used:

- To get to know someone
- To allow people to think about their lives
- To elicit issues to be explored in more detail
- To give feedback to carers and professionals
- To allow people to be involved in meetings
- As a life planning tool
- As a goal setting tool
- To compare views over time (outcome measures)
- To facilitate self-management
- To explore sensitive issues

On November 29th 2012 Talking Mats is planning to hold a one day training course at The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups Main Offices, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

The cost per participant is £150 excluding VAT. Please contact the Carmichael Centre or Karen Crow at karen@talkingmats.com directly for more information.

www.talkingmats.com or <https://www.facebook.com/TalkingMats> for all the latest news and information

The STAR Awards 2013

Showcasing Teamwork Awarding Recognition

The STAR Awards are an awards initiative coordinated by AONTAS as part of the annual Adult Learners' Festival. The awards acknowledge the fantastic work undertaken by adult learning projects throughout Ireland and celebrate the positive contribution that these projects make to our society, our economy and our local communities. Five awards in total will be granted to adult learning projects based within the island of Ireland - four regional awards (Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Ulster) and one nationwide award.

Nominations are welcome from projects themselves, from people directly involved in the project or from people who think the project is just a great initiative and deserves to be nominated. In the last case it is important to inform the project that you are nominating them. Nominated projects can involve initiatives, resources or group work. Projects may come from adult learning organisations, community and voluntary groups, the private sector, government agencies, statutory bodies and non-government organisations.

The deadline for nominating projects is **Monday, 19th November 2012 at 5p.m.**

Nominators are encouraged to nominate their projects as early as possible and it is easy to nominate online! [Just click here.](#) For a list of [FAQs](#), a [sample nomination form](#) and more information on how to nominate visit www.adultlearnersfestival.com or get in touch with Kathryn, Festival Operations Officer at klaing@aontas.com.

The Adult Learners' Festival 2013 is kindly supported by the [Department of Education and Skills](#).

Further information from Kathryn Laing Festival Operations Officer

AONTAS National Adult Learning Organisation 2nd Floor 83-87 Main Street Ranelagh
Dublin 6 Phone: 01 4068220 Fax: 014068227

www.aontas.com | www.adultlearnersfestival.com

[Follow us on Twitter](#) | [Like us on Facebook](#)

[Nominate a project for an AONTAS STAR Award 2013](#)

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

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Newsletter, Tel 01 2804164 email: cbrack@abiireland.ie
http://www.abiireland.ie/docs/ABII_Newsletter_Spring_2010.pdf

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@cwci.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: 01-6236414, or 01- 6236415 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](mailto:info@strokescheme.ie)

Wheel E-Bulletin Tel:01- 454 8727,

E-mail: info@wheel.ie





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**Representing the interests and expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included
Comprising organisations that represent and support people with disabilities**

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) represents the interests and the expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included in Irish society. It comprises organisations that represent and support people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

The vision of DFI is that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise their full civil, economic, social and human rights and that they are enabled to reach their full potential in life. DFI's mission is to act as an advocate for the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities and disabling conditions in all aspects of their lives.

There are over 130 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
- Training and Support
- Networking
- Advocacy and Representation
- Research and Policy Development / Implementation
- Organisation and Management Development

DFI works on the basis that disability is a societal issue and so works with Government, and across the social and economic strands and interests of society.

For further information go to www.disability-federation.ie

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

Tel: 01-4547978, Fax: 01-4547981

Email: info@disability-federation.ie Web: www.disability-federation.ie

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