

Disability Specific Health: The Facts

Between 2008 and 2015, the budget for disability services was reduced by 159.4m¹ which included cuts to disability services and supports such as;

- Mobility Allowance,
- Motorised Transport Grant,
- Personal Assistant Service,
- Therapy services,
- Community services, and
- Home Support Service.

These cutbacks mean people with disabilities are forced to pay out-of-pocket charges due to the;

- high costs of prescriptions and medicines,
- and expensive hospital charges.

Waiting Lists

These cuts also led to lengthening waiting lists for services. In 2016;

- more than 15,000 people were waiting for a speech and language assessment,²
- 25,520 people were waiting for occupational therapy services,³
- and 5,000 people were waiting for home care services.⁴

Due to the economic downturn, fundraising for disability organisations was severely affected.

- Over half of the organisations DFI sampled in 2012 sustained an average drop of 17% in their fundraised income.⁵

Provision for the Future?

In the current budget, there is little evidence of provision for demographic changes that will see a steady increase of people with disabilities.

- There will be 1.45 million people aged over 65 in 2046 compared to 532,000 in 2011⁶
- The prevalence of people with disabilities increases as the population gets older

¹ DFI Pre-Budget Submission

² The Irish Times (<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/over-15-000-people-waiting-for-speech-assessment-1.2632566>)

³ Fianna Fail (<https://www.fiannafail.ie/budget-must-address-rising-waiting-lists-for-occupational-therapy-omahony/>)

⁴ Social Democrats (<https://socialdemocrats.ie/2017/03/01/5000-people-waiting-lists-home-care/>)

⁵ DFI Research (2012)

⁶ Age Projections (CSO)