



**Disability Federation of Ireland**

**Newsletter**

**An Advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector**

**Supporting Organisations to Enable People with Disabilities**

**November 2009**

## **Preparing for Budget 2010**

DFI has been working over the last few weeks to influence the Review of the Programme for Government. We have argued that Government needed to urgently agree with the disability sector a five year plan detailing how the National Disability Strategy will be protected and advanced during the difficult period ahead. We have proposed that the disability sector can actively work with the State to ensure maximum value and outcomes. Protection of services for people with disabilities and those with mental health needs is an essential element in the State's battle to emerge from the recession and to ensure that a viable social provision infrastructure is in place to support people with disabilities and mental health needs.

DFI welcomes the disability commitments within the review of the Programme for Government. However, there is still much to be done before the Budget. It is critically important now that organisations keep the pressure up locally with T.D.s and Senators, and ensure that disability remains a high priority on the agenda nationally and locally.

In addition to these efforts however we must all prepare for a challenging Budget for 2010. If the full affect of the €50 million cuts proposed through the McCarthy Report is applied universally, this will equate to an approximate 5% cut to an organisations funding. We appreciate that further cuts on top of those already assimilated by organisations in 2006 will cause great difficulty within your organisation and may affect the sustainability of the services your organisation provides. I encourage DFI member organisations to contact one of our DFI Support Officers during this process to support you in your planning process.

**John Dolan**  
**CEO**

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## **New Members**

We would like to welcome Inishowen Children's Autism Related Education- i.C.A.R.E - as General Members of DFI.

i.C.A.R.E aims to improve the quality of life of children with autism and their families throughout their lives. i.C.A.R.E was set up by a network of parents in Inishowen to provide local support, training and information in the Inishowen area for these children.

We look forward to working with i.C.A.R.E in the future. Further information on all DFI member organisations can be found on our website:  
<http://www.disability-federation.ie/membership.htm>.

## **People with Disability concerned that Budget 2010 will wreak havoc on their services**

The launch of the DFI Pre-Budget Submission 2010 took place at the Mansion House Dublin on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Speaking at the launch, John Dolan, DFI Chief Executive, said that, "People with disability are reeling from the effects of what has happened to date by way of cuts in services and were fearful that worse is to come for the next two years".

It was clearly acknowledged that the application of the recommendations of the Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes ('McCarthy Report') in the forthcoming Budget would wreak havoc on disabled people in Ireland and their families. The Minister for Equality, Disability, and Mental Health, John Moloney T.D., and opposition spokespersons were asked to reiterate their commitment to the NDS, even at a time of economic constraint. Now more than ever it is important to protect vulnerable disabled people against cuts that could leave them isolated and excluded. The NDS must not be compromised.

John Dolan went on to say that he fully accepted that the Government has difficult choices to make, but equally those choices must demonstrate and reiterate clearly the State's ongoing commitment to people with disabilities. Income supports and services that people with disabilities receive must be maintained and protected, and unmet needs must be responded to.

DFI also highlighted some preliminary analyses of recent findings from their survey on the impact of the recession on DFI members. The survey shows that:

- 75% of respondents reported that their organisation had been either 'very significantly' or 'significantly' affected by the economic downturn
- Just over three quarters of respondents (76%) reported that the level of their organisation's income has decreased in 2009 compared with the previous year
- At the same time 72% of those who responded to the survey stated that the demand for their services has increased in 2009 compared with the previous year

- 91% of respondents stated that they have already reduced their costs in 2009. To date, and in advance of any cuts announced in Budget 2010, 35% of respondents have had to make direct cuts to their services.

Budget day has been set for the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009. DFI is continuing to lobby Government and relevant stakeholders against cuts to disability services and we urge you to do the same. We will be keeping you up-to-date on the Budget outcome and our response on the day.

## **Cost of Disability and the ‘McCarthy Report’ Implications**

DFI is of the strong view that, if implemented, the ‘McCarthy Report’<sup>1</sup> recommendations would seriously undermine the National Disability Strategy and the wellbeing of people with disabilities in society. This is because the Report approaches expenditure by individual departments, and ignores the reality whereby public services are designed around the individuals and their requirements as they move through the life stages. Many of the recommendations made in the ‘McCarthy Report’ would hit people with disabilities harder than non-disabled citizens if implemented. There is a clear lack of understanding and consideration of the ‘cost of disability’ and how additional cuts in this context would affect people with disabilities. The following is a snap shot of the potential effect of further cuts recommended by the ‘McCarthy Report’ on disabled people.

### **1. Income Support for People with Disabilities**

The McCarthy report recommends a flat rate cut to social welfare of 5%. This poses a considerable threat to the welfare of vulnerable disabled people who, through no fault of their own, experience a higher cost of disability. Already disabled customers are at greater risk of poverty because the money they receive on long term disability payments such as Disability Allowance, (currently €204.30), does not stretch as far as mainstream welfare payments (such as Job Seekers Allowance). For instance, a person with mobility difficulties may require extra heating in order to keep warm. They may also require special clothes and in some instances have special dietary requirements. In other words a 5% cut in their social welfare will have a greater negative impact on the life of person with a disability and must therefore be avoided.

### **2. Long Stay Health Charges**

DFI welcomed the decision by the DSFA to extend the right to Disability Allowance (DA) to those living in institutional settings. At the same time we voiced our concern at the levying of inpatient charges to those in long-stay care. This means that up to €153.25<sup>2</sup> may be withdrawn from a DA of €204.30 leaving the individual with an allowance of just €51.05. This is not a sufficient amount to support social inclusion. A simple trip to the cinema can cost €9.90<sup>3</sup>, apart from the cost of clothing, shoes, a

<sup>1</sup> The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes 2009

<sup>2</sup> Inclusion Ireland Pre-Budget Submission 2010 [www.inclusionireland.ie](http://www.inclusionireland.ie)

<sup>3</sup> Rate taken from evening show at Dundrum cinema

holiday, a birthday gift. A further reduction in DA would hit these already vulnerable disabled people particularly hard and is totally unacceptable.

### **3. Social Inclusion**

The 'McCarthy Report' recommendations in relation to community services would seriously undermine the mainstreaming agenda for people with disabilities and jeopardise the successful implementation of the National Disability Strategy. For instance, it recommends the discontinuation of the Family Support Agency which supports Family Support Centres (FRCs) in the community. FRCs are ideally placed to advocate on behalf of disabled people and their families within the local community context. This is in addition to other recommendations made by the 'McCarthy Report' in other Government Departments which would decimate community services if they are implemented.

### **4. Employment for People with Disabilities**

DFI recognises the value of secondary benefits as important social inclusion and activation measures for people with disabilities and their carers, and which must be protected in Budget 2010<sup>4</sup>. For instance, the higher rate of payment to people with disabilities in Community Employment Schemes must be continued in recognition of the extra 'cost of disability' and high rate of unemployment among people with disabilities.

### **5. Support to Carers**

The 'McCarthy Report' recommends that the half-rate Carer's Allowance be discontinued. DFI believes that removing this payment would be a mistake. We are already disappointed at the failure to publish the Carer's Strategy, which was committed to by the Government. Carers play a very valuable role in our society, saving the State millions of euro by providing home care to elderly and disabled people. The average cost of residential support in a community setting is in the region of €80,000 per annum and can be up to €300,000, and in some cases more for people with complex and high support needs (see Inclusion Ireland Budget Submission 2010). The 'McCarthy Report' recommendations must be considered within this context and in the context of the need to support carers in their important work.

### **6. Medical Card and Health Expenses**

The 'McCarthy Report' recommendations will impact to a greater degree on families with disabled members who are not entitled to any allowances because the family income is above the means test limit. Recommendations such as the proposed reduction of Child Benefit and the discontinuation of treatment benefit will have a huge impact on the finances of this group, as mainstream measures such as these go towards offsetting the cost of disability to some extent. Any reductions would erode their income more so than a family who does not include a disabled member who experiences extra costs of disability.

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<sup>4</sup> For instance the 'half rate carers allowance', the higher payment for people with disabilities on CE, FIS

In addition, such families will be further affected if recommendations linked to other departments are introduced. This includes the proposal to increase the threshold for the Drugs Payment Scheme to €125 and to introduce a co-payment of €5 for each prescription under the General Medical Scheme (GMS). These examples serve to point to the need to disability proof proposed budgetary measures.

## **7. Transport for People with Disabilities**

The 'McCarthy Report' recommendation to abolish the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) would come as a significant blow to people with disabilities living in rural communities. Under this scheme communities have been able to develop accessible community-led transport to serve remote areas of the country. Without the RTI many of these people would simply not have access to other services nor have access to their local communities.

Any decision to discontinue the RTI has an impact on social welfare customers in receipt of long-term illness and disability payments. They will be forced to order private taxi's which are more expensive and this would significantly erode their welfare payment of €204.30. It would be another cost of disability. In worse cases, where no accessible taxis are available, people would be left isolated and alone.

### **Disability Proofing the 'McCarthy Report'**

DFI is deeply concerned that the adoption of the McCarthy Report recommendations, without first applying a disability proofing test, will undermine the National Disability Strategy, a key part of the national policy agenda. DFI calls on the Government to ensure, when considering the Report, that they take into account the person at the receiving end of proposed cutbacks. People with disabilities must be protected in Budget 2010.

### **DFI Submissions to The Department of Finance on the 'McCarthy Report'**

DFI continues to highlight its concerns about the impact of the recommendations of the 'McCarthy Report', on public expenditure and employment cuts. Prior to Government Departments submitting their responses on the 'McCarthy Report' recommendations to the Department of Finance in preparation for Budget 2010, DFI made submission to Ministers, Secretaries General and relevant Oireachtas committees.

DFI's submission explained that people with disabilities would be affected not just by the proposed cuts in disability-specific services, but also by the wide-ranging general cuts. The submission noted that the recommendations should be assessed using the established Developmental Welfare State policy approach. In particular, DFI called for Departments to subject any possible cuts to a disability-proofing test, and more positively, to implement a plan to protect the National Disability Strategy in relation to the provision of public services and facilities.

For a copy of DFI's submission, please email [lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie](mailto:lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie).

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICAITON TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

### Cutting ICT costs by 50%



If your organisation receives government funding and you have an ICT budget, please read on. As part of a Department of Finance initiative your organisation can drastically reduce its ICT cost by participation in this scheme.

The Department of Finance, in collaboration with public service inter-organisational groups, has established a number of procurement arrangements in the areas of IT Hardware, Telecommunications and Data

Networking. These arrangements provide the benefits of aggregated procurement power to obtain value for money and the provision of services under Government terms and conditions. In addition, use of these arrangements reduces the complexity, cost and timing of procurement. Further information on these arrangements is provided below. Under the scheme you can purchase Laptops, Desktops, Printers and Phones. Most of the major suppliers are covered in the scheme so it should not affect your desktop strategy, if you have one.







#### The Process

1. Send an email to a defined address using the template provided with you request (you can't pick Dell over Lenovo, you must define the specification you need, so you would indicate, for example, 6 pc's with 4GB Ram, Windows XP and next day support)
2. All the participants of the scheme will receive your request automatically.
3. They will reply to you individually within the timeframe you require.
4. You pick the winner according to the criteria you set.
5. You place the order and in some cases you can even stick with your current supplier.

The above is a simple outline of the process. However, you will need to read the documentation carefully and ensure that you clearly understand the process. Once you use the framework you will never look back. DFI has used the framework to purchase equipment, and can provide assistance if necessary.

Below are the contact details for the various components of the framework. However, before you begin, we recommend you flick through the information provided here in this link:

<http://share.ictHub.ie/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

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|---|---|
|    | <p><b>PC Framework</b></p> <p>Supply of Personal Computers plus associated products and services.<br/> <b>Term:</b> Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009. <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ictframeworks@gov.ie">ictframeworks@gov.ie</a><br/> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://pcframework.gov.ie">http://pcframework.gov.ie</a> * <b>Tel:</b> (01) 604 5021</p>                                   |
|    | <p><b>Notebook Framework</b></p> <p>Supply of Notebook Computers plus associated products and services.<br/> <b>Term:</b> Effective from 8<sup>th</sup> Dec 2006 to 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2008. <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ictframeworks@gov.ie">ictframeworks@gov.ie</a><br/> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://notebookframework.gov.ie">http://notebookframework.gov.ie</a> * <b>Tel:</b> (01) 604 5021</p>                    |
|    | <p><b>Monochrome Laser Printer Framework</b></p> <p>Supply of Mono Laser Printers plus associated products and services.<br/> <b>Term:</b> Effective from 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011.<br/> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://monoframework.gov.ie">http://monoframework.gov.ie</a> * <b>Tel:</b> (01) 604 5021 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ictframeworks@gov.ie">ictframeworks@gov.ie</a></p> |
|    | <p><b>Colour Laser Printer Framework</b></p> <p>Supply of Colour Laser Printers plus associated products and services.<br/> <b>Term:</b> Effective from 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 to 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011.<br/> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://colourframework.gov.ie">http://colourframework.gov.ie</a> * <b>Tel:</b> (01) 604 5021 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ictframeworks@gov.ie">ictframeworks@gov.ie</a></p>     |
|   | <p><b>Mobile Voice and Data Framework</b></p> <p>Supply of Mobile Voice and Data plus associated products and services.<br/> <b>Term:</b> Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011.<br/> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://mobile.gn.gov.ie">http://mobile.gn.gov.ie</a> * <b>Tel:</b> (01) 604 5018 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mobiles@gov.ie">mobiles@gov.ie</a></p>                      |
|  | <p><b>Government Networks (Template RFTs)</b></p> <p>Supply of Data, Voice and Video Network services.<br/> <b>Term:</b> Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006 onwards.<br/> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://gn.gov.ie">http://gn.gov.ie</a> * <b>Tel:</b> (01) 604 5037 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:gn@gov.ie">gn@gov.ie</a></p>  |

If you require any further help please contact your DFI Support Officer (contact details are available at the end of the newsletter).



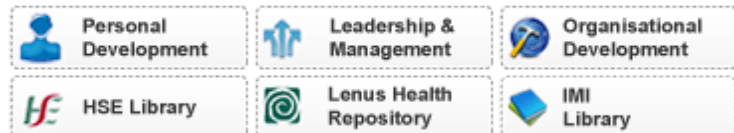
## Get access to the HSE's online resource for Learning & Development



HSELand contains online learning programmes, resources, assessment & planning tools, to provide for



### eReference Resources



and support you and your organisation including your personal and professional development.

This site is a must have for all

voluntary organisations. There is lots of information around HR, Knowledge Management, Online learning both ICT and soft skills. The online learning section deals with many areas including Computer Skills, Clinical Skills, Conference and Training events, Learning and Development Specialists Network Programmes and Personal Effectiveness Skills.

They also have a Personal Development Portal site that allows you to plan and progress your own development using the tools and training within the site.

There is a large amount of information available on the site that can't be covered in a short update. The registration link is provided below. The employee number is requested when registering. However it is possible to access the site by inputting any five digit number. For further information please contact your DFI Support Officer.

<https://www.hseland.ie/tohm/registration.asp>

## HEALTH

### **Department of Finance Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services**

John Dolan, CEO DFI, has been invited to join the Steering Group for the Value For Money and Policy Review of Disability Services, currently being carried out in the DoHC. This Group is chaired by Laurence Crowley and met for the second time on the 29<sup>th</sup> September. The invitation to join this Group issued on 17<sup>th</sup> September, after the Group was formally established and after its first meeting in July. Brendan Broderick, former Chairperson of the Federation of Voluntary Bodies, and CEO of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary, Monasterevin, was also invited to join the Steering Group.

The agreed terms of reference for the project and other information on the Group can be found at <http://www.dohc.ie/press/releases/2009/20090918.html>

The purpose of this Group is to provide an interim report to the Department of Finance to inform the 2010 estimates process. The Interim Report will include a summary of outputs and costs together with a statement of current service objectives. A work plan has been agreed which focuses on the collection of provider profiles, costs and outputs etc. There will be a consultation process. The next meeting of the Steering Group is planned for 17<sup>th</sup> November and work has commenced on planning the public consultation phase of the Review.

Independent of John Dolan's participation on this Group, DFI has been preparing for some time to engage with this matter and will be drafting its own work plan to support member organisations. There are strong links between this work and the recent survey administered by DFI to its member organisations, 'Impact of the Recession on Voluntary Disability Organisations', in addition to the work progressing in the Service Suite.

In addition to the Steering Group there is a Project Team chaired by Dermot Ryan DOHC and an Expert Reference Group chaired by James O'Grady,.

### **HSE Proposals for Disability Consultative Fora**

The HSE has asked for comments on its proposals for a three-tiered consultative structure to support a partnership approach with the voluntary disability sector in planning, prioritising and allocating disability-specific resources. DFI sent the proposal to its members for comments and in preparing its response has questioned whether the proposal is, in fact, cost effective or supportive of access to mainstream health and related services.

For a copy of DFI's submission to the HSE, please email [lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie](mailto:lillianbuchanan@disability-federation.ie).

## **The National Review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services**

The National Review of HSE Funded Adult Day Services has now been completed and the report of the National Working Group – '*New Directions, Personal Support Services for Adults with Disabilities*', is being considered internally by the relevant HSE functions. Plans are already being advanced, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Children, to address some of the priority issues that have been identified within the Recommended Implementation Plan. A series of briefing meetings regarding the status of the report and the immediate actions to be implemented will be provided to the disability sector in October.

The HSE has acknowledged the cooperation of all sections of the Day Service sector in supporting the work of the Review. The spirit of partnership that underpinned the delivery of the Review work modules and targets was particularly evident during this work, resulting in the completion of the first ever Census of Day Services, together with one of the largest consultation processes undertaken in the disability sector. The Demonstration Seminar which showcased examples of current innovative practice has clearly illustrated the ability of the Day Service sector to embrace the further change that is recommended in *New Directions*.

The HSE is confident that once the vision for the reconfiguration and modernisation of Day Services, as outlined in *New Directions*, is shared with all parties, it will be embraced by all as a positive force for improving the lives of adults with disabilities by respecting their rights as individuals and advancing their opportunities for community inclusion and integration whilst addressing their health and personal social service needs.

## **National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD)**

A demonstration of the NPSDD system will take place on the morning of Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at the DFI offices in Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8. This session is an opportunity to see how information is recorded and managed on the system, in addition to showing how the information is used and reported.

If you would like to find out more on the NPSDD and / or the demonstration please contact Mary-Ann O'Donovan at (01) 2345117 or [modonovan@hrb.ie](mailto:modonovan@hrb.ie) , no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Places will be given on a first come first served basis.

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION**

### **Department of Social and Family Affairs Consultative Forum**

At the meeting of the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) Disability Consultative Forum on 17<sup>th</sup> September, the review of the Department's Sectoral Plan was discussed as well as a number of initiatives to improve the management of disability-related schemes. The Department noted the progress made under the Sectoral Plan, particularly in improving income support, but also in transferring programmes, such as Domiciliary Care to the Department and streamlining case management and the delivery of payments. There was also a presentation on the imminent introduction of an improved model for processing claims under the Invalidity Pension Scheme. Findings from customer surveys have helped to guide these reforms.

In the revised Sectoral Plan (which is close to finalisation) the Department expects to focus on further streamlining and customer service initiatives in addition to addressing policy and social inclusion issues. Forum members raised issues about protecting vulnerable clients when changes are made. There were concerns that, despite the degree of uncertainty that exists, the revised Plan should contain specific objectives that are not primarily aspirational.

For further information in relation to the DSFA Consultative Forum please contact DFI Support Officer Louise McCann. All Contact details are available at the end of the newsletter.

### **National Positive Ageing Strategy**

Government is in the process of developing a National Positive Ageing Strategy based on the UN Principles of Human Rights for older people which centres on the right to independence, participation, care, self fulfillment and dignity. DFI made a submission to the consultation process with the aim of ensuring that older people with disabilities are considered equally in the strategy. DFI aims to engender an understanding of the different experience of ageing with a disability or acquiring a disability in later years. We also highlighted some of the discriminatory practices which use chronological age as a determinant of eligibility for services, rather than placing the person at the centre of the service according to need.

DFI also calls for the implementation of a person centred approach to the provision of a comprehensive infrastructure for older people. The submission also sought to share the learning from the independent living movement in its move away from institutionalisation to independence and self determination. Finally DFI's submission seeks to gain some acknowledgment from Government of the vital contribution that the disability sector makes to the lives of older people in Ireland. To read the full text of the submission, please log on to

[http://www.disability-federation.ie/information\\_policyandresearch\\_submissiondohc.htm](http://www.disability-federation.ie/information_policyandresearch_submissiondohc.htm).

DFI has created a network of interest in the disability sector for issues that relate to older people. If you would like to be on this mailing list or would like further information on these issues, please contact Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer.

### **Older and Bolder Campaign**

The 'Older and Bolder' Campaign has launched a summary of the feedback received from the consultation meetings around the country as part of a submission to the National Positive Ageing Strategy. A campaign is also commencing to stop the 'McCarthy Report' proposal for reduction of 5% to state pensions. If you would like to find out more, or sign the petition, you can do so on line:

<http://www.olderandbolder.ie>.

### **Carer's Week 2010**

Carer's Week is a celebratory week of events for Family Carers, organised by Care Alliance along with a number of partners, including DFI. We recognise that many disability organisations are providing supports, not only to people with disabilities, but also to their families who support or care for them. DFI would like to encourage disability organisations to get involved in Carers Week by organising activities that celebrate and express appreciation of and support for the valuable work of family carers. Carers Week will take place from 14<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2010. For further information, please contact Joan O'Donnell, DFI Support Officer, contact details at the end of the newsletter, or log on to <http://www.carersweek.ie>.

### **NDS / TOWARDS 2016**

#### **Community & Voluntary Pillar Meeting the Taoiseach and Minister for Social and Family Affairs**

The Community and Voluntary Pillar of social partnership met Taoiseach Brian Cowen and Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin to exchange views about addressing the current crisis.

The Pillar members, including DFI, which represents the disability interest on the C & V Pillar, expressed their serious concern at the short-sightedness and unfairness of the Government's proposed approach to reduce the deficit by cutting public expenditure on social welfare and public services. The Pillar stated that an increased tax take is needed to form part of a balanced solution if vulnerable people are to be protected during the recession. They outlined their proposal of an integrated five-point recovery strategy that would be more equitable and sustainable.

While the engagement with the Taoiseach and Minister was open and frank, the Government appeared determined to press ahead with a proposed €4 billion

expenditure reduction programme. Nonetheless, the Pillar will meet with the Department of Finance to argue their case for broadening the tax base in more depth.

### **National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group**

The NDSSMG is a key part of the structures underpinning the commitments in the National Disability Strategy and *Towards 2016*. The Group consists of senior officials of all the main Government Departments and six members of the Disability Stakeholders Group, of which DFI is one. The Department of the Taoiseach chairs the twice yearly meetings. The Group is designed to monitor and drive forward progress towards the long term goals for people with disabilities, contained in *Towards 2016*. It feeds into the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion.

Over-arching issues were reviewed at the last meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October. The Group was informed that the disability-proofing of Cabinet memoranda would become standard practice in the near future. The Departments of Health and Children, Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and Social and Family Affairs are well advanced in revising their Sectoral Plans under the Disability Act 2005, and they intend to submit them to the Oireachtas early in 2010.

The voluntary members of the Group underlined the importance of the Government formulating and implementing a plan for the protection of the National Disability Strategy through the current recession, to maintain people's faith in Ireland's commitment to people with disabilities and to prevent erosion of the valuable investment that has been made. They pointed out the contribution that the voluntary disability sector is making and the sector's willingness to work with others to sustain the Strategy. Since the Sectoral Plan progress reports for January to June 2009 were not circulated sufficiently in advance of the NDSSMG meeting, it was agreed that each Department would arrange to consult with the disability sector.

### **National Economic and Social Council: Well-being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland**

NESC, the statutory body tasked with analysing and reporting on strategic issues, published this two-volume report in October. The report, is very relevant to the implementation of the National Disability Strategy. Volume 1 of the report considers the value of monitoring indicators of well being and the challenges involved in doing so; it identifies possible measures of well being in six areas: economic resources; work and participation; relationships and care; community and environment; health and democracy and values. Volume 2 selects and tracks indicative statistics in all of these areas of life for each of the four life cycle stages named in *Towards 2016*.

The chapter on people with disabilities provides a wealth of information about well-being. For example, it notes the higher levels of deprivation experienced by people with disabilities as well as the extra costs incurred due to disabilities. The employment rates for people with disabilities, at 32% of the population, are one of the lowest in the OECD; people with disabilities are less likely to be independent and

more likely to be living in the parental home in middle age, and they are less likely to belong to an organisation or have access to a car than the general population.

While the report does not give new information, by pulling existing data and by beginning to link the indicator findings to the current policy framework, it highlights the importance of considering the impact of Government policies on people. It forms the base on which NESC and others can develop tools to critique social policies more cogently and effectively. The reports can be viewed on NESC's website: <http://www.nesc.ie/publications.asp>

### **Advisory Group on the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities**

The Advisory Group has been meeting on a monthly basis this autumn for consultation on the further development of the national strategy. Updates on progress on the three research projects, namely on good practice in housing provision, accommodation and support needs of people with mental health issues, and the potential role of the private rented sector was provided. All the projects are near completion.

Draft texts for the strategy were discussed. In relation to inter-agency working, for example, there was a lengthy debate about establishing local housing fora to plan for housing provision in a consultative manner. The Department has begun to work with their health counterparts and the local government sector on a protocol to support the strategic assessment of the nature and extent of local housing needs of people with disabilities.

### **C&V Pillar Agreed Position on the McCarthy Report**

During September the Pillar concluded and launched a Communications Strategy through a Subcommittee, of which DFI was a member. The Pillar Subcommittee considered how best to raise the agenda of the Pillar publically and with Government. This was linked closely to the Pillar's work following the publication of the McCarthy Report, where we forged a social analysis of the proposed cuts to understand their potential impact on the most vulnerable groups in Irish society.

During the month the Pillar issued letters to the Taoiseach and to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Finance & Public Service requesting an opportunity to discuss the McCarthy Recommendations. DFI scripted the Pillar's response to the Department of Health and Children regarding the McCarthy recommendations. On 14th September the Pillar organised a media launch to demonstrate the impact of decisions made on the lives of those most vulnerable in Irish society. At a subsequent meeting with the Department of the Taoiseach on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, the Pillar advanced its five alternative proposals for recovery in place of the McCarthy Report's approach.

## **Implementation of the Home Care Package Scheme**

### **(NESF Report 38 September 2009)**

The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) launched its comprehensive report on the implementation of home care packages scheme on 28<sup>th</sup> October. The report found that despite the existence of a national strategy and guidelines, this scheme is being implemented in different ways in different HSE local Health offices. The result is that applicants encounter different eligibility criteria, means tests and funding depending on where they live. DFI was represented on the Project team by Kris Dhondt from Rehabcare, who made a valuable contribution to the project. Further details are available on [www.nesf.ie](http://www.nesf.ie). A submission from DFI to the evaluation of the implementation process is available on the DFI website:

[http://www.disability-federation.ie/information\\_policyandresearch\\_submissionhcp.htm](http://www.disability-federation.ie/information_policyandresearch_submissionhcp.htm)

## **TRAINING AND FUNDING**

### **Lifelong Learning Programme European Commission and Léargas**

The European Commission has integrated its various educational and training initiatives under a single umbrella, the 'Lifelong Learning Programme'. This programme enables, individuals at all stages of their lives, to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe.

There are four sub-programmes, each focusing on different stages of education and training, and continuing previous programmes:

- [Comenius](#) for schools
- [Erasmus](#) for higher education
- [Leonardo da Vinci](#) for vocational education and training
- [Grundtvig](#) for adult education

The deadlines for the submission of applications have been announced for 2010. There are calls for submissions for a range of programmes, projects, assistantships and workshops. For further information please contact the National Agency in Ireland, Léargas - The Exchange Bureau (Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, Study visits) Tel. : (353) 1 8731411 Website <http://www.llp.ie> or <http://www.leargas.ie/>.

## **Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups**

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups has launched its new website [www.carmichaelcentre.ie](http://www.carmichaelcentre.ie). The Carmichael Centre is now also on UTUBE. The information video is available at : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v28ILS-SxA>. The Centre's web launch video is also available: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQkEQpb75S0>

The Centre is holding a course on Customer Care for Charitable Organisations on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2009. This course gives practical advice on customer care in the voluntary sector. The topics covered include identifying customers, developing and using communications skills for clients facing difficult situations, and quality assurance in customer handling.

If you would like further information about this course or future Carmichael Centre training events, please call Caroline Gobe on 01 8735285 or email [tssinfo@carmichaelcentre.ie](mailto:tssinfo@carmichaelcentre.ie).

### **The Wheel's Policy Forum December 2009 – Charting a Fair Way Out of the Social and Economic Crisis**

The Wheel's December Policy Forum will explore how we can remain focused on achieving the positive vision for society contained in the national agreement, Towards 2016. The forum will provide all comers with an opportunity to participate in developing The Wheel's advocacy agenda. The event will take place at [The Carmelite Community Centre](#), Aungier Street, Dublin 2 on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009. For further information contact The Wheel – [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie) – Tel: 01 454 8727.

## **GENERAL NEWS**

### **DARE – Disability Access Route to Education**

DARE is a support scheme for students with disabilities who would like to engage in higher education. The scheme was launched in early October. Seven universities, Athlone IT, DIT, National College of Ireland and the Mater Dei Institute of Education, are involved in this project.

This supplementary admissions scheme recognises the impact of disability on educational attainment and on progression to higher education. The scheme is aimed at all school leavers with disabilities. Approximately 300 students accepted places through DARE in 2009, and the participating colleges and institutions aim to

greatly increase this number in 2010 by offering over 1000 places on a reduced points basis.

School leavers who wish to be considered for DARE must apply as part of their CAO application ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)) from November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010. The student's supporting documentation must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

The colleges involved in DARE welcome queries, and contact details and further information is available on a dedicated website, [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie).

## **Better Options College Fair for Students with Disabilities & Specific Learning Difficulties**

This one day event for students with a disability and specific learning difficulties who are considering their college options in Ireland in 2010 is key in learning about DARE and completing the CAO Supplementary Information Form as part of the online DARE process, as well as checking out the services and supports available in universities and institutes of technology.

The event will be hosted by UCD in association with AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access & Disability) and DAWN (Disability Advisors Working Network). The fair will take place on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2009, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the Student Centre, Astra Hall, UCD. All are welcome, including students, guidance counsellors, resource teachers, learning support tutors, SENOs, NEPs & Parents.

For further information please contact Lorraine Gallagher, Information Officer, AHEAD, Tel: 01 7164396, Email: [lorraine.gallagher@ahead.ie](mailto:lorraine.gallagher@ahead.ie). Web: [www.ahead.ie](http://www.ahead.ie)

## **Garda Síochána Strategy for the Older Person**

An Garda Síochána has commenced work on the formulation of a new Strategy for the Older Person. They are inviting submissions to the Working Group, and these can be forwarded to:

### **Garda Síochána Strategy for the Older Person**

#### **Community Relations and Community Policing**

#### **Harcourt Square, Dublin 2**

Alternatively, submissions can be emailed to [communitypolicing\\_model@garda.ie](mailto:communitypolicing_model@garda.ie). The deadline for receipt of submissions is 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

## **Irish Gerontological Society Strategy**

The Irish Gerontological Society aims to develop a broad portfolio of ageing research in Ireland, and the Executive Committee membership includes representatives of social, psychological and healthcare aspects of ageing. The Society recently

launched its strategy for the period 2009-2012. For a copy of the strategy please email: [marianhughes@ireland.com](mailto:marianhughes@ireland.com) or phone 087 7463310.

## **Dementia and Rehabilitation Challenges and Opportunities for Health Care Professionals - Autumn Conference**

The Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC) Autumn Conference will explore a broad range of issues in relation to dementia and dehabilitation. With many expert national and international speakers and facilitated workshops, it will be of interest to those who support people with dementia in any context, including health care professionals from the public, private and voluntary sectors. People with dementia and their carers are also welcome.

Where : Trinity Sciences Centre, St. James's Hospital

When : Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November

For information and Booking Form visit [www.dementia.ie](http://www.dementia.ie) or call 01 4162035.

### **Course: 'The Media as Your Ally'**

#### **18th NOVEMBER 2009, Farney Workhouse Carrickmacross.**

This course will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, at Farney Workhouse, Carrickmacross. The course will help organisations:

- Understand how to present your message most effectively using different supports
- Link your messages to current news agenda
- Appreciate the impact of positive media coverage on stakeholders and funders
- Devise a basic Media Relations strategic plan
- Better manage media relations in a crisis

Substantial interest in this course is expected. Places are limited to a maximum of two people from any one organisation, and this will include one paid member of staff and one volunteer. Allocation of places is at the discretion of the organisers, and preference will be given to those who demonstrate a commitment to use the training to best effect on behalf of the disability sector, and in conjunction with a sponsoring organisations, Monaghan Integrated Development and Breffni Integrated Development Ltd, who are also subsidising the cost of the event, €25 per participant.

For an application form, please email [maireadhlohan@disability-federation.ie](mailto:maireadhlohan@disability-federation.ie).

## **Proposed Lone Workers' Network**

For those of you who are the sole worker of your organisation in a county or region, it has been suggested that an information-sharing network be created. This network/group could :

- Be a way of communicating the activities and services of the organisation
- Encourage more efficient working as service providers in the North East
- Enable services to collaborate more effectively, eg. Link with Primary Care Networks
- Organise and plan events locally
- Enable lone workers to have a database of other professionals within the North East.

The group themselves can set their own terms of reference and priorities.

The initial meeting will be facilitated by Joan O'Donnell, Support Officer, DFI. It is proposed that an initial meeting this group be held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at 2.30pm in the Nurenmore Hotel Carrickmacross. For further information, and to confirm your attendance, please contact Hazel McGeough, Support Worker, Spina Bifida, Hydrocephalus Ireland, (086) 8194790. Email: [hmcgeough@sbhi.ie](mailto:hmcgeough@sbhi.ie).

## **North East DFI Platform - Meeting 9th December 2009**

The theme of this Platform Meeting will be 'Governance Issues'. Derek McKay, Adare Human Resource Management, and Cathy McGrath, DFI, will discuss services that DFI offers in relation to good governance practice for organisations. This will include information on a range of services such as Organisational Health Checks, HR package, External Supervision Support, Garda Vetting, and Guidance on Financial Implications of Charities Act 2009.

To confirm your place please email: [joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie](mailto:joanodonnell@disability-federation.ie).

## **Mayo Citizens Information Service and The Mayo Advocacy Service**

Mayo Citizens Information Service and The Mayo Advocacy Service are holding a conference on November 19th 2009, in Westport, Co. Mayo. The conference aims to focus on access to advocacy for people with disabilities identifying the issues and opportunities through presentations and workshops and how we are responding to the challenges now and in the future. The keynote Speaker will be The Ombudsman, Ms Emily O'Reilly.

The event will take place on November 19th 2009 at Knockranny House Hotel, Westport, Co Mayo

For further information contact [advocacy.conference@citinfo.ie](mailto:advocacy.conference@citinfo.ie) Tel: 094 9060371.

## **Lámh-a-Song Nursery Rhyme DVD Using Lámh signs**

Lámh, the manual sign system used by children and adults with intellectual disability and communication needs, has joined with Down Syndrome Ireland in producing and launching a new nursery rhyme DVD. The Lámh-a-Song DVD gives young users the chance to see Lámh signs on the TV screen for the first time, with each of the 15 popular songs on the DVD presented through vivid animation and a rich soundtrack that appeals to younger viewers. Lámh which was developed in the early 1980s and has a vocabulary of 500 signs, is used in Ireland by children and adults with Down syndrome, as well as those with intellectual disability, physical disability and autism.

The DVD costs €15 plus €1.50 post and packing. See [www.lamh.org](http://www.lamh.org) for more details.

The project was kindly supported by Bank of Scotland Ireland. Lámh is grant aided by the Health Service Executive.

For more information, please contact Mary Cullen, Lámh Development and Liaison Officer

Ph. 059-9139657, Email: [info@lamh.org](mailto:info@lamh.org) , web: [www.lamh.org](http://www.lamh.org)

## **Irish Vaccine Injury Support Group**

The Irish Vaccine Injury Support Group was formed to provide support to vaccine injury survivors/victims and their families who suffered injury or death following the administration of vaccines in the State. The Group's mission is *'to obtain an acknowledgement and a just recognition in the form of a fair compensation for victims and their families'* The Group welcomes contact from other interested groups For further information contact Rita Duff Secretary-041 6854142 or 087 7963767.

## 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](mailto:info@iasbah.ie)

Arthritis Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 01 661 8188

E-mail: [info@arthritisireland.ie](mailto:info@arthritisireland.ie)

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

Asthma Society News - Tel: 01-8788511, E-mail: [office@asthasociety.ie](mailto:office@asthasociety.ie)

Brainstorm - Migraine Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8064121, E-mail: [info@migraine.ie](mailto:info@migraine.ie)

Brainwave - Quarterly Newsletter, Tel: 01 4557500, E-mail: [info@epilepsy.ie](mailto:info@epilepsy.ie)

Care Alliance Ireland - E-mail: [ndo@carealliance.ie](mailto:ndo@carealliance.ie)

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

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

Community Exchange Newsletter, E-mail: [info@activelink.ie](mailto:info@activelink.ie), Tel: +1 667 7326

Connect - Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association. E-mail: [info@imnda.ie](mailto:info@imnda.ie), Freefone 1800 403 403

Community Workers' Co-operative – Community Work News. E-mail: [info@cwci.ie](mailto: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](mailto:homeless@dublincity.ie)

Cumhacht - People with Disabilities in Ireland [http://www.pwdi.ie/news\\_events/newsletter/index.htm](http://www.pwdi.ie/news_events/newsletter/index.htm), E-mail: [info@pwdi.ie](mailto:info@pwdi.ie), Tel: 01-8721744

Debra Ireland Newsletter, Tel: 01 678 5044, E-mail: [info@debraireland.org](mailto:info@debraireland.org)

Down Syndrome Ireland - Tel: 01-8730999, E-mail: [info@downsyndrome.ie](mailto:info@downsyndrome.ie)

Enable Ireland - Newsletter—Tel: 1850 204 304 E-mail: [communications@enableireland.ie](mailto:communications@enableireland.ie)

Equality News - Tel: 01-4173333, E-mail: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)

E-Info Deaf Source— E-mail: [info@irishdeafociety.ie](mailto:info@irishdeafociety.ie). Tel: +353 1860 1878

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

Fighting Blindness - Tel: 01 7093050, E-mail: [avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie](mailto:avril.daly@fightingblindness.ie)

Frontline of Learning Disability -Tel: 01-2862649. E-mail: [frontline@indigo.ie](mailto:frontline@indigo.ie)

GROWing - Information on Mental Health, Tel: 1890 474 474, E-mail: [info@grow.ie](mailto:info@grow.ie)

Guidelines - Irish Guide Dogs Association. Tel: 021 4878200 E-mail: [info@guidedogs.ie](mailto:info@guidedogs.ie)

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

Heart News: - Newsletter of Irish Heart Foundation. Tel: 01 668 5001 E-mail: [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie).

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

Heatwave - Irish Raynauds Scleroderma Society, E-mail: [info@irishraynauds.com](mailto:info@irishraynauds.com), Tel: 01 2020184

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

Inclusion Ireland - Tel: 01 8559891, E-mail: [info@inclusionireland.ie](mailto:info@inclusionireland.ie)

Irish Deaf News - Irish Deaf Society. Minicom: 01-8601910; 01-8601878; E-mail: [info@irishdeafsociety.ie](mailto:info@irishdeafsociety.ie)

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

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities - Network News 066-7180611, E-mail: [kerrypwdi@eircom.net](mailto:kerrypwdi@eircom.net)

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

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland - MDI News Update Tel: 01-8721501, E-mail: [info@mdi.ie](mailto:info@mdi.ie)

DeafHear.ie - Link Magazine - Tel: 01 8723800, E-mail: [info@deafhear.ie](mailto: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](mailto:press@ncbi.ie), [www.ncbi.ie](http://www.ncbi.ie)

Neuro News - Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland, Tel: 01-8726338, E-mail: [nfaireland@eircom.net](mailto:nfaireland@eircom.net)

People First - Central Remedial Clinic Tel: 01-8057400 E-mail: [vmmcutch@crc.ie](mailto:vmmcutch@crc.ie)

Post Polio Support Group - Newsletter, Tel: 071 64791 E-mail: [newsletter@ppsg.ie](mailto:newsletter@ppsg.ie)

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

Rehab News -Tel: 01-2057200 E-mail: [dara.duffy@rehab.ie](mailto:dara.duffy@rehab.ie)

Simon News - Simon Community, Tel: 01-6711606 E-mail: [info@simoncommunity.com](mailto:info@simoncommunity.com)

S.I. News - Schizophrenia Ireland, Tel: (0)1 8601620 E-mail: [info@sirl.ie](mailto:info@sirl.ie)

Social Housing - Irish Council for Social Housing Tel: 01-6618334; E-mail: [info@icsh.ie](mailto:info@icsh.ie)

Sonas aPC News;etter – Tel (01) 2608138. [www.sonasapc.ie](http://www.sonasapc.ie).

Speaking up for Advocacy – Citizens Information Board Newsletter on advocacy. Tel: 01 6059035, E-mail: [mairide.woods@comhairle.ie](mailto:mairide.woods@comhairle.ie) or [davin.roche@comhairle.ie](mailto:davin.roche@comhairle.ie)

Volunteer Stroke Scheme News- Tel: 01-4559036. E-mail: [info@strokescheme.ie](mailto:info@strokescheme.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.

#### **National Office**

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