

## **Disability Representative Organisations' Joint Statement, on Budget 2018 provision for people with disabilities.**

We the undersigned are 7 leading organisations representing the broad disability and mental health movement. Again we call on Government, to invest significant Budget funding to stop the exclusion and start the recovery for people with disabilities. Effectively, to honour its long repeated commitments and implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

This is the third budget in the lifespan of the Government. It can continue to ignore the worsening situation of people with disabilities, including mental health. February's Survey in Income and Living Conditions (SILC) shows that while overall general poverty rates in Ireland are showing some improvements, they are getting worse for people with disabilities. The recovery has not yet started for people with disabilities.

Having chosen other priorities last year, Government can, this year, choose to prioritise people and families right across Ireland who carry the extra burden of trying to live with a disability. This Budget can mark the start of a determined campaign to stop the growing poverty and exclusion of people and families living with a disability or mental health need. These people have also experienced the other effects of the recession. Such a move would action UN CRPD implementation.

Three things need to happen across Departments through Budget 2018:

1. Increase income to move disabled people out of and away from poverty
2. Increase funding in community disability services
3. Improve availability of public services and programmes

### **1. Increase income to move disabled people out of and away from poverty (Articles 27 and 28 UN CPRD)**

Work is not an option for everyone. Equal social welfare supports will not result in an equal standard of living, where people with disabilities are experiencing greater poverty. People with disabilities have extra costs associated with their disability. Budget 2018 can provide additional social welfare supports targeting this problem. It can move people out of or away from poverty, and enable them to live in dignity, with equality in their communities.

Implementation of the recommendations in the 'Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities Report to Government 2017' would, as intended, make a strong start.

### **2. Increase funding in community disability and mental health services (Article 19, 25, and 26 UN CRPD)**

We acknowledge the improvements that are taking place this year. Yet we still do not have enough quality services for people with disabilities to live and take part in their communities

like everyone else. Increased and targeted investment is needed to make disability and mental health services respond to people’s needs at all stages of life. Supporting family carers is also critical.

### **3. Improve availability of public services and programmes (Articles 9, 19, 20 and 30 UN CRPD)**

The deficiencies in accessible and appropriate public services such as housing, transport and health, in particular community services and long waiting lists, are inhibiting people with disabilities getting on with their lives. These services are key in facilitating people take up education, training and jobs, move out of the family home, nursing home or a congregated setting, and participate in the community. These are day-to-day issues for people with disabilities.

**ENDS**

**Supporting facts below**

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## Supporting Facts

### 1. Increase income to move disabled people out of and away from poverty (Articles 27 and 28 UN CPRD)

- In Budget 2017 people with disabilities were granted the same €5 increase as everyone else in receipt of a social welfare payment.
- February's findings in the Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 'SILC' showed that while overall general poverty rates in Ireland are showing some improvements, they are getting worse for people with disabilities, across all three measures of poverty (at risk of poverty, deprivation and consistent poverty), and that
- Disabled people are at almost twice the risk of living in poverty (34.8%) as the general population (16.9%).
- About half of people with disabilities have extra costs associated with their disability. In Ireland, these extra costs average about €207 / week.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Increase funding in community disability and mental health services (Article 19, 25, and 26 UN CRPD)

- Despite an increase last year, the budget for disability services was reduced by €159.4 million, or 9.4%, between 2008 and 2015.
- Despite recent budget allocations, at the end of 2016 the staffing level in mental health services was still almost 1,000 posts below the level in 2008.
- Personal Assistant (PA) services continue to be underfunded, with the budget for 2017 providing for fewer PA hours than were delivered in 2016.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 2014 and 2015 the number of referrals for the Counselling in Primary Care Service increased by 18% from 14,407 to 17,000.<sup>3</sup> In child and adolescent mental health services the number of referrals has grown from 8,663 in 2011 to 13,062 in 2014, i.e. by more than 50%.<sup>4</sup>
- Despite an increase in service delivery since 2013, the amount of people actually receiving services has not been fully restored to the 2008 levels.<sup>5</sup>
- There is an apparent reduction in the number of hours of home care delivered to each client. But reliance by officials on measurement tools called 'absolute utilisation ratios' can mask deficits in the actual care provided on an individual level.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cullinan, J., & Lyons, S. (2015). The private costs of adult disability. In J. Cullinan, S. Lyons, & B. Nolan, *The economics of disability: Insights from Irish research*.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/serviceplans/Service-Plan-2017/Operational-Plans-2017/Social-Care-Operational-Plan-2017.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source: HSE Counselling in Primary Care

<sup>4</sup> Mental Health Reform, Pre-Budget Submission 2017, 1

<sup>5</sup> Care Alliance Ireland, 'Analysis of Home Care Supports Funded by the HSE 2008-2016' (Care Alliance Ireland, 2016), <http://bit.ly/2qMRJFp>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

- Demographic pressures suggest that a deficit in public home care provision of in excess of 4m hours will emerge by 2018.<sup>7</sup>

### **3. Improve availability of public services and programmes (Articles 9, 19, 20 and 30 UN CRPD)**

- There are 600,000 approx. people with a disability living in Ireland. Out of these,
- Over 1000 disabled people under the age of 65 are living in nursing homes due to a lack of appropriate housing and community-based supports.
- As of May 2016, the figure cited by Government in March of this year, there were 2,725 people still living in larger institutions called congregated settings. It is envisaged that by 2021 just one-third of those will be moved to smaller community-based housing.<sup>8</sup>
- Meanwhile, 4,456 households with members having an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual disability qualified as having a social housing need.
- Almost 50% of people living with a physical disability experience difficulty with going outside the home alone.<sup>9</sup>
- More than 24% of people with disabilities lack access to private transport, the mode used most often by this group (as a passenger).<sup>10</sup>
- 1 in 4 people with a disability do not use public transport for accessibility reasons.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid and also based on HSE Service Plan targets for 2017. Assuming no further increases in provision 2018 (19.4.m hours target in 2018 v's 23.60m needed; Older Peoples Services)

<sup>8</sup> Minister of State with Special Responsibilities for Disabilities, Finian McGrath, TD, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-03-28a.917&s=congregated+settings#g918.q>

<sup>9</sup> CSO (2006) National Disability Survey

<sup>10</sup> Watson, D. & Nolan, B. (2011) A Social Portrait of People with Disabilities in Ireland. ESRI

<sup>11</sup> Ibid