



**2024**  
**Pre-Budget**  
**Submission**  
*Do Not Abandon Us!*

## Our Pre-Budget Submission

This document has been prepared with and is the result of extensive consultation of approximately 1000 people living with a physical disability across Ireland.

**We are calling on the Government to hear our voices and make provisions for our community in the upcoming budget. One in four people in Ireland are living with a disability. As a population, we are living longer and as a result, the likelihood of acquiring a physical disability is higher.**

We are calling on Government leaders not to **ABANDON** people with disabilities in the budget.

We see department reports come and go with no action plan or resources put in place to implement them and it's time to **STOP**.

**The Cost of Disability Report** commissioned by the Department of Social Protection found that people with disabilities spend between €9,482 and €11,735 a year extra on expenses related to their disability.

The annual income for a person in receipt of a disability payment is approximately €11,500. Hence, a high proportion of the disability community is living in poverty.

**The Disability Capacity Review to 2032** – A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity to 2032 reports the estimated need and cost of providing essential services, some have not received any additional funding since 2008. A review that shows *“Over the next ten years, the number of people with disabilities, their age groups, and where they are living, are all likely to change. Ireland needs to plan ahead to ensure that people with disabilities can get the right services, in the right place, at the right time.”*

**The National Housing Strategy for disabled people 2022-2027 states that its vision is** *“To facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choice and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community.”*

**We have seen no action on any of these Government reports.**

**We want choice, not charity.**

## SECTORAL FUNDING

### Recommendations

- Publish an Action Plan for the Disability Capacity Review and invest money to resource it.
- Provide multi-annual funding for Disability organisations delivering vital services on behalf of the Health Service Executive and the State.
- Eliminate underlying deficits when transferring budgets to the Department of Children, Inclusion Disability, Equality and Youth.
- Provide a dedicated funding stream to support the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Review Group.
- Initiate reform of the disability sector with meaningful consultation with stakeholders to enable Section 39 organisations to be adequately and sustainably funded to ensure continuity of vital disability service provision.
- Provide funding for full pay restoration for Section 39 organisations and return to alignment with HSE pay scales.

## PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

### Recommendations

- Publish an action plan based on the findings in the Disability Capacity Review and allocate resources in Budget 2024.
- Provide funding to section 39 organisations to achieve pay parity across the sector to enable service providers to recruit and retain staff.
- A comprehensive piece of work to be commissioned through the Central Statistics Office to establish the unmet needs of personal assistant services.
- Establish a new framework and pricing for the provision of publicly funded home support services, including providing a disability funded personal assistant services.
- Progression of the Personalised Budget Pilot.

## HOUSING

### Recommendations

- Amend Part M (Section 3 Access and Use) of the Building Regulations 2010 – The regulations currently only provide for wheelchair visitable housing and not wheelchair liveable, resulting in homelessness for people with disabilities due to the lack of available social and private rented housing for wheelchair users in Ireland. Universal Design is not wheelchair liveable unless it is Universal Design +/++.
- Many people with disabilities need the support of a personal assistant to enable them to live independently in their own homes and communities. The HSE needs to work collaboratively with the local authorities to ensure that there is a personal assistant service in place in tandem with a person being allocated a house.
- The Housing Adaptation Grant must be reviewed. The household income means testing criteria need to be reduced and increase the maximum grant to reflect current building costs.

## TRANSPORT

### Recommendations

- Immediately progress the review of the Disabled Drivers and Passengers Scheme and other supports so that people can afford to buy an adapted car. The Motorised Transport Grant and the Mobility Allowance were ended in 2007 with the promise of new legislation and a replacement of a fairer scheme, this has not happened.
- Given the cost of fuel an increase in the fuel exemption must be introduced immediately.
- Apply a large weighting to taxi operators with accessible vehicles in tender processes when awarding state contracts to encourage more companies to have wheelchair Accessible Vehicles as part of their fleet.

## DAY SERVICES

### Recommendations

- Appropriate multi annual funding to sustain day services and to plan for expanding need in the future.
- Change the allocation of funding from Community Employment Schemes to Core funding.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION

### Recommendations

- Publish an action plan and allocate resources to support the findings of the Cost of Disability Report.
- Establish the principle of a cost of disability payment in this year's Budget. Budget 24 should not be passed without implementing the findings of this report.
- Social Welfare rates need to be increased to reflect the rising cost of living.
- Fulfil the promise in the Programme for Government to double the target for employment of people with disabilities in the public service to 6%.

## SPORT

### Recommendations

- Provide additional funding to support the IWA-Sports performance programme which would allow our national teams in wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, para powerlifting, and para athletics to compete at the highest levels internationally i.e. European, World and Paralympic level.
- Establish a long-term sustainable model of funding to support the Irish Sports sector to deliver programmes specifically aimed at catering for people with a disability.
- Recognise and provide for the extra cost of specialised equipment for people with physical disabilities in the Sports Capital programme.