

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2025 SUMMARY



2025
Pre-Budget
Submission
Do Not Abandon Us!

Our Pre-Budget Submission

In 2023, Irish Wheelchair Association prepared our Pre-Budget Submission document through extensive consultation of approximately 1000 people with disabilities throughout Ireland. Using this collective voice, we called on the Government to hear our voices and make provisions in areas critical to our community in the upcoming budget.

- Sectoral Reform and Funding
- Lack of Investment in Personal Assistant Services
- Lack of Accessible Housing
- Lack of Multi Annual Funding to maintain Community Services

- Inaccessible Public Transport
- Cost of Disability Report recommendations.

Having seen department reports come and go, some with no action plan and all with no resources put in place to implement these plans, we called on the Government leaders to STOP this cycle of inaction and not to ABANDON people with disabilities in the budget.

12 months later, yet again, nothing has changed. The critical issues remain outstanding with little, or no action taken to properly address the concerns raised last year. People with Disabilities continue to be marginalised and bear the brunt of Government inefficiency. Therefore, Irish Wheelchair Association's 2025 Pre Budget-Submission remains almost the same. The inaction must stop and again we plead with the Government, **STOP ABANDONING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**. Your apathy must come to an end through visible and tangible action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTORAL FUNDING AND REFORM

- Invest money to resource Action Plan for the Disability Capacity Review
- Provide funding for full pay restoration for Section 39 organisations and return to alignment with HSE pay scales.
- Provide multi-annual funding for Disability organisations delivering vital services on behalf of the Health Service Executive and the State.
- Conduct a financial verification process to determine the real cost to voluntary organisations of providing HSE services, and to set out a financial pathway to ensure that the costs are met fully by the HSE to eradicate financial sustainability challenges and thereby lower this issue on the HSE corporate risk register.
- 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.

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

- Invest and resource the Disability Services Plan
- Provide funding to section 39 organisations to achieve pay parity across the sector to enable service providers to recruit and retain staff.
- Provide a sustainable model of funding, including a provision for pension auto enrolment.
- Provide alignment to future framework agreements in relation to funding of service
- A comprehensive piece of work to be commissioned through the Central Statistics Office to establish the unmet needs of personal assistant services.
- Progression of the Personalised Budget Pilot.

HOUSING

- 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.
- The Health Service Executive 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 is not for purpose. A review the household income means testing criteria and a substantial increase to the maximum grant payable is needed in order to reflect current building costs.
- A percentage of houses reflecting the present and future needs in each housing development in Ireland must be designed to be wheelchair liveable.
- Provide increased funding to Local Authorities for the Housing Adaption Grant to facilitate larger adaptations such as additional ensuite accessible bedrooms and other adaptations.

COMMUNITY CENTRES

- Appropriate multi annual funding to sustain day services and to plan for expanding need in the future.

- Provide funding to section 39 organisations to achieve pay parity across the sector to enable service providers to recruit and retain staff.
- Change the allocation of funding from Community Employment Schemes to Core funding.

TRANSPORT

- Introduce Mandatory Standards for Transport Infrastructure
- 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.
- Continue to implement measures to reach the target of a fully accessible taxi fleet.
- Apply a large weighting to taxi operators with accessible vehicles in tender processes when awarding state contracts.
- The Travel Assistance Scheme needs to be rolled out as a nationwide scheme that responds to the needs of people with disabilities in their own locality thus enabling people to build their confidence when using public transport.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EMPLOYMENT

- Social Welfare rates need to be increased to realistically reflect the cost of living to match the standard poverty line figure of €318.53 pw.
- Establish a realistic cost of disability payment in this year's Budget, and ensure that this figure is standard, regardless of a person's employment status or social welfare payments.
- As per UNCRPD, Article 4, commit to robust consultation on disability reform, that includes individuals with disabilities, Disabled People's Organisations, and disability organisations from the initial stages of review.
- Fulfil the promise in the Programme for Government to double the target for employment of people with disabilities in the public service to 6% and develop policies to promote and support self-employed disabled people.
- Set aside funding to promote disability awareness and diversity training amongst employers and to ensure that employers have sound information on supports and funding available to them.

SPORT

- IWA is not funded sufficiently to provide funding support to our club network. This funding must be maintained permanently for disability sport.
- Two thirds of counties in Ireland have no Sports Specific Clubs for athletes with a physical disability. Additional Sport Ireland Core Funding is required.
- Funding is required for our national teams in wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, para powerlifting, and para-athletics to compete at the highest levels.
- In Sports Capital Funding, recognition must be given to the fact that people with physical disabilities require more support for sports equipment than able-bodied athletes.
- Support the asks as outlined by the Federation of Irish Sport.