

Irish Wheelchair Association prepared this Pre-Budget 2027 Summary following consultation with people with disabilities across Ireland.

People with disabilities continue to experience disproportionately high levels of poverty, exclusion, inaccessible services, and the ongoing financial burden associated with disability.

Despite increased public discussion around disability rights, many people with disabilities continue to face impossible choices between heating and eating, paying for transport, attending medical appointments, remaining socially connected, or preserving basic necessities.

Budget 2027 must move beyond commitments on paper and deliver practical, measurable change. Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to fully resource disability equality, independent living, accessibility, and anti-poverty measures in line with Ireland's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

"Make sure our community does not have to continue to make choices between heating and eating."

Social Protection and Cost of Disability

UNCRPD Articles: Article 28 – Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection; **Article 4** – Consultation and Participation.

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Introduce an immediate Emergency Disability Payment of €400 prior to Budget 2027 as a bridge to a permanent Cost of Disability Payment.
- Introduce a €55 per week Cost of Disability Payment as the foundation of a long-term scheme.
- Increase Disability Allowance rates significantly to close the gap between current payments and the minimum income required to avoid poverty.
- Ensure people with disabilities who enter employment retain essential secondary supports.
- Increase the Fuel Allowance to 52 weeks per year for people with permanent physical disabilities.
- Ensure disability policy reform is co-designed with people with disabilities and Disabled People's Organisations.

Sectoral Funding

UNCRPD Article: Article 19 – Living Independently and Being Included in the Community.

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Provide multi-annual, inflation-linked funding for disability organisations delivering services on behalf of the State.
- Fund full pay restoration and parity for Section 39 organisations.
- Resource the Disability Capacity Review Action Plan.
- Provide funding to address pension auto-enrolment, regulatory compliance, insurance, and increased service demand.
- Address legacy funding deficits and ensure services are financially sustainable.

Personal Assistant Services

UNCRPD Article: Article 19 – Living Independently and Being Included in the Community

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Provide sustainable long-term funding for Personal Assistant services.
- Fund pay parity across Section 39 organisations to recruit and retain staff.
- Fully resource the Disability Services Plan.
- Progress the Personalised Budget Pilot.
- Recognise that Personal Assistant services are essential independent living supports, not home help services.

Housing

UNCRPD Articles: Article 19 – Living Independently and Being Included in the Community; **Article 28** – Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection.

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Review the Housing Adaptation Grant and align funding with actual building costs.
- Make the Housing Adaptation Grant non-means-tested.
- Require Local Authorities to implement measurable wheelchair-livable housing targets.
- Provide oversight and ringfenced funding for Universal Design and accessible housing delivery.
- Increase investment in assistive and digital technologies that support independent living.

Transport

UNCRPD Article: Article 9 – Accessibility

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Retain the Disabled Drivers and Passengers Scheme so people can continue to afford adapted vehicles.
- Reintroduce the Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant, or replace them with equivalent supports.
- Roll out the Travel Assistance Scheme nationwide.
- Introduce enforceable accessibility standards for public transport and public infrastructure.
- Continue measures to achieve a fully accessible taxi fleet.

Community Centres

UNCRPD Article: Article 19 – Living Independently and Being Included in the Community.

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Provide multi-annual funding for day and community support services.
- Replace reliance on Community Employment Schemes with core funding.
- Provide funding to Section 39 organisations to achieve pay parity and retain staff.
- Support transport and operational costs associated with community services.

Access

UNCRPD Article: Article 9 – Accessibility

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Provide ringfenced funding for a full-time Access and Inclusion Officer in every Local Authority.
- Establish an Access Fund to improve inaccessible footpaths and town infrastructure.
- Prioritise the involvement of people with lived experience of disability in accessibility planning and decision-making.

Sport

UNCRPD Article: Article 30 – Participation in Cultural Life, Recreation, Leisure and Sport

Irish Wheelchair Association calls on Government to:

- Deliver in full the €2.4 million ringfenced in the Programme for Government for disability sport-focused National Governing Bodies, on a guaranteed multi-annual basis.
- Provide sustainable multi-annual funding for disability sport organisations.
- Increase core funding to IWA-Sport to support staffing and programme delivery.
- Ensure funding reflects real delivery costs, including transport, support staff, insurance, and pension auto-enrolment.
- Provide long-term investment in performance pathways for athletes with disabilities.
- Support National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships to deliver accessible Para sport programmes nationwide.

People with disabilities cannot continue to absorb the financial burden of policy delays.

Disability poverty is not inevitable; it is the result of policy choices.

Budget 2027 must deliver meaningful action to ensure equality, dignity, accessibility, and independent living for people with disabilities across Ireland.