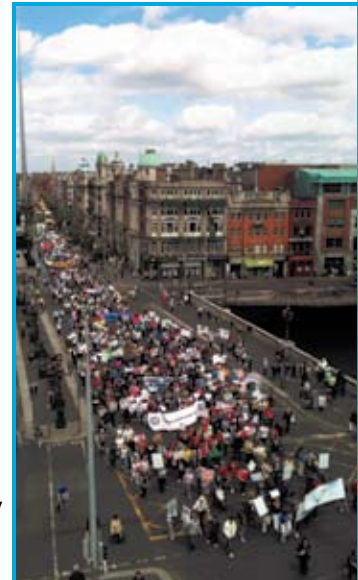




INCLUSION IRELAND LEADS PROTEST MARCH OF 3,000

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Inclusion Ireland organised and led a national protest march on 7th July 2010 down O'Connell Street to Leinster House under the banner 'People with Disabilities Say No More Cuts'. In addition to cuts to education and social welfare, many people with a disability and their families have seen cuts to services they receive, and such cuts dominated press headlines in July. The protest march started at the Garden of Remembrance, marching down O'Connell St, and assembling outside Leinster House (pictures from the march are on the back page). People with disabilities and their families gathered from across the country. The march was on the front page of nearly all national newspapers the following day and was the main news items on television and radio. TDs and Senators met protesters at Leinster House, and cutbacks affecting people with a disability was raised during Leaders Questions in the Dáil that morning, especially respite services. Taoiseach Brian Cowen said respite would not be cut, but Inclusion Ireland is aware of areas where respite has been reduced. Inclusion Ireland will continue to raise the issue of cuts affecting people with a disability, especially in the coming weeks as Budget 2011 is being finalised. People with a disability and their families did not reap the benefits of the Celtic Tiger and simply cannot take any further cuts to social welfare, services they receive or education supports.



PEOPLE MUST BE SUPPORTED TO LIVE LIFE OF THEIR CHOICE

In a recent opinion piece in the *Irish Times*, Inclusion Ireland CEO Deirdre Carroll discussed the need for an alternative way of providing funding for services for people with a disability, saying "there is growing demand from people with disabilities to live the lives of their choice". "Difficult questions about how we provide essential services for people with disabilities need to be asked: questions about value for money for the €1.6 billion spent in 2008, and most importantly, there are questions about where persons with disabilities fit into this scenario. A draft HSE report shows that 4,000 people with disabilities are still living in institutions, costing on average €115,000 per person per year. Currently, all people can do is refuse to accept cuts. This will require a change in how services are funded, as well as a change in mindset and attitude. It is time for Mary Harney and John Moloney to ringfence disability funding and ensure that new policies are implemented by the HSE and those contracted to provide services. The exclusion of people with disabilities from the equation must end." A full copy of Deirdre's article is available at www.inclusionireland.ie.

REVIEW OF THE DISABILITY ACT

In July 2010 the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs published a review of the Disability Act 2005. Under the Act, a review has to take place five years after it was enacted. All interested organisations and Government departments were invited to provide submissions as part of the Review. Inclusion Ireland lodged a submission. One of the main provisions of the Act is the section dealing with assessment of need. Below are some of the observations of the Review on assessment of need. Currently there is only an entitlement for children aged 5 and under to an assessment of need as the parts of the Act relating to children of school going age and adults have been put on hold for financial reasons. A full copy of the Review can be download at www.pobail.ie/en/DisabilityPolicyDivision.

Assessment of need:

- The independence of assessments is questioned;
- There is a lack of consistency to the assessment of need process;
- The assessment process can take up resources that reduce the level of service;
- Increased awareness of the right to an assessment of need is required, as is more accessible information on this right;
- The person should be at the centre of the assessment process;
- Social supports as well as clinical need should be identified;
- The assessment should not have an end point but should be an ongoing process;
- The Act should state when the Assessment Report is given to parents and what it should contain;
- The Act should be more prescriptive about what Service Statements should contain, and Service Statements should be required to include detailed information on unmet need;
- Information on unmet need should be compiled and aggregated by region;
- Given that complaints Officers are HSE employees, there are questions over the independence of this role;
- There is not adequate time allowed for an appeal to be lodged;

All of the issues raised in the Review will be examined by a group of senior officials from Departments responsible for the operation of the Act. This group will then issue a response, which will be discussed by the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group, which Inclusion Ireland CEO Deirdre Carroll sits on. The outcome of this discussion will be submitted to the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs.

MY RIGHT TO AN INDEPENDENT LIFE

Hello my name is Paul Alford and I work for Inclusion Ireland and am working for five years with them. I went over to Berlin on the 16 -19 June 2010 for an Inclusion International Congress and gave a speech on my right to an Independent life. I talked about the workshops and how I got the job working with Inclusion Ireland and also my life and my new apartment, and I had to fight to get a new bath into my apartment and all my travels. This year is a big one for me because I am going back to Australia by myself to see if I can do it on my own because I have never travelled that far alone, and I was asked to go into their office and work with them and I am looking forward to working with them. My speech in Berlin is available on Inclusion Ireland's website under the 'Projects' page.

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Inclusion Ireland receives a large amount of enquiries and one of the more frequent topics is money and financial issues. The “Making Decisions about Money” booklet is of the most popular publications. In response to this, Inclusion Ireland wanted to explore what men and women with intellectual disability thought about banks, building societies, post offices and credit unions, and how they found using the services. To do this we held a focus group of people with intellectual disabilities who are customers of financial institutions and asked them to tell us their experiences. It is hoped that the information will be used to advise financial institutions on what their customers would like to see done to improve their services.

Inclusion Ireland is currently working with the Credit Union Managers Association to advise them on their policy around customers with intellectual disability. Some of the issues for people that were raised were:

- the opening of an account can be difficult, with the application form and the proof of address particularly difficult;
- there was a lack of training on how to use the services particularly ATMs - participants felt that financial institutions could make their documents and forms easier to use;

The overall theme from the participants was that they felt that the account holder should be the one to carry out transactions as well as receive the statements of the account.

Participants felt that an advocate or friend could support them, but that this should be when they asked for support. Inclusion Ireland hopes to hold more focus groups throughout the coming months on various issues so that we can better represent the voice of people with intellectual disability. The easy to read publication “Making Decisions about Money” is available free of charge from the Inclusion Ireland office or website.



Want to take part in a focus group?

Inclusion Ireland is always looking for people interested in sitting on focus groups. If this is of interest to you, or someone you know, please contact Sarah in the Inclusion Ireland office.

INCLUDING SAMUEL

The award winning documentary ‘Including Samuel’ will be shown in Dublin on Thursday 7th October 2010 in D4 Hotel (formerly Jury’s), Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 as part of an event called ‘Positive Attitudes and Actions for Inclusion’. The event is being organised by parents of a child with a disability and who run the website www.myspecialneeds.ie. Including Samuel is a documentary that has played on PBS (Public Service Broadcasting USA).

Professional Photojournalist Dan Habib, tells the story of his son, Samuel who is diagnosed with cerebral palsy, and several other families of children with disabilities. Shot over four years, it takes a close look at children with a disability and their families. The film aims to put across a message of inclusion. The film maker and his wife will travel from Boston to attend and speak at the event.

Disability Minister John Moloney will also speak at the event which starts at 7.30pm. It is a free event but attendees must register in advance, via www.myspecialneeds.ie.

CONTACT US:

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Inclusion Ireland will hold a **Members Meeting** on Saturday 20th November at 2pm at Inclusion Ireland's office in Dublin. **AGM 2011** will be held in the Galway Bay Hotel in Salthill, Galway, on Friday and Saturday 15th and 16th April 2011. 2011 is the **50th Anniversary** of the founding of Inclusion Ireland and we hope to launch a programme of events to celebrate our big birthday in the coming months! Please contact the office for further information on any of the above.

CAPACITY CAMPAIGN

Inclusion Ireland continues our campaign for modern capacity legislation. Following a press conference in March, and an online petition, information evenings on what capacity is and how it impacts on people with an intellectual disability will be rolled out in the coming months. Events in Castlebar and Newbridge will take place shortly and details will be available on the Inclusion Ireland website. If you would like a presentation in your area please contact Siobhán or Sarah on 01-8559891. The petition remains online and will stay there until new legislation is introduced.

FRONTLINE

FRONTLINE is an Irish quarterly magazine published since 1989 for people interested in issues relating to intellectual disability. It provides information on good practice, and a forum for people with intellectual disabilities and their advocates to exchange views and experiences. Subscription costs €26 annually for individuals, with other rates available for parent and friends organisations and service providers. If you would like to subscribe please email secretary@frontline-ireland.net or visit www.frontline-ireland.net to download a sample issue. FRONTLINE is a not-for-profit organisation with a voluntary editorial board of professionals and parents.



Pictures from national protest march in July 2010, organised by Inclusion Ireland.

