



### **PRIMETIME HIGHLIGHTS EFFECT OF CUTBACKS ON CARERS**

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RTÉ's recent *Primetime Investigates* programme on carers clearly showed the ongoing frustrations carers face in dealing with the social welfare and health systems. It has sparked calls for the Government to show a real commitment to Carers by implementing a full National Carers Strategy, as promised in the 2011 Programme for Government. *Primetime* highlighted how cutbacks have affected those caring for children with disabilities, older parents and those with debilitating illnesses. Issues raised include cuts to social welfare allowances, particularly the Carers Allowance, delays in accessing allowances, cuts to home support and respite, and delays in accessing essential medical care. 8 out of 10 carers say they have been affected by cutbacks in supports, forcing some families to consider residential services. Inclusion Ireland CEO Deirdre Carroll says "it is in the best interest of all involved for carers to be supported. The majority of people wish to stay living in their homes and their families want them there. Given that residential services cost the State an average of €100,000 per year, it makes no economic sense for supports for carers to be cut." Following the programme, Health Minister Dr James Reilly said he was "utterly amazed" at any reduction in home help hours because it made "no logical or financial sense" to force people into long-term institutional care. Inclusion Ireland welcomes these comments but says action must be taken to change the situation for carers and those they are caring for. Inclusion Ireland has raised these issues with Government Ministers in the past and will continue to do so.

### **50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENTS**

Inclusion Ireland is celebrating 50 Years in 2011 and we are holding a number of events to celebrate this important anniversary. A flyer has been enclosed with this newsletter with more details. Pictured right is actor Gabriel Byrne with Inclusion Ireland Chairperson Frieda Finlay and her daughter Mandy, with a painting by Mandy. Gabriel kindly mentioned Inclusion Ireland's art and poetry competitions during a Culture Ireland launch in Dublin on 27<sup>th</sup> May.



### **OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN REPORT ON DEALING WITH PUBLIC BODIES**

The Ombudsman for Children recently published 'A Children's Rights Analysis of Investigations', which was conducted by Dr. Ursula Kilkelly. The investigation focussed on ten cases involving issues such as housing, school transport and education. Five of the cases involved children with disabilities. Dr Kilkelly found that in all ten cases, other considerations appeared to dominate over ensuring that the rights and interests of individual children are met. The investigation showed examples of an overly bureaucratic approach to decision-making, and a disconnect between those making decisions and the families and children affected by those decisions. The full Report is available at [www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie).

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## **INCLUSION IRELAND NOMINEE ELECTED TO SEANAD**

Mary Moran was appointed to Seanad Éireann in May as one of the Taoiseach's nominees. Ms. Moran was Inclusion Ireland's nominee to the Administrative Panel of the Seanad, but despite polling well, was not elected to that panel. However, she has become a Senator on foot of her nomination by Enda Kenny. Ms. Moran is the parent of a child with an intellectual disability, from Louth. She was a General Election candidate for the Labour Party in February 2011, and a teacher at St. Vincent's secondary school in Dundalk. Her initial application to Inclusion Ireland for a nomination was endorsed by Inclusion Ireland member organisation, the Special Needs Active Parents. She was Chairperson of the Parent's Council from 2001-2011 at St. Mary's Special School, Drumcar, Co. Louth, which her son Cillian attends. Some of Ms. Moran's key campaigning issues are the need for standards and inspection in disability services; the need for modern capacity law; and individualised funding.

## **FRONTLINE - CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED FOR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

Frontline magazine will have an edition dedicated to Inclusion Ireland's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary later this year. Frontline is a quarterly magazine that deals with issues affecting people with intellectual disabilities and autism and their families in Ireland. Frontline is hoping to dedicate an edition to the impact of Inclusion Ireland and the organisation's development. If you would like to contribute, or have any ideas on possible articles, email [info@inclusionireland.ie](mailto:info@inclusionireland.ie). See [www.frontline-ireland.net](http://www.frontline-ireland.net) for more information on Frontline.

## **PROGRESSING DISABILITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

A National Coordinating Group has been established for the HSE-led 'Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People'. Inclusion Ireland was asked to put forward a parent representative and Dublin-based Aoife Thornton is now part of this Group. The 'Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People' Project came about as a result of the 'Report of the Reference Group on Multidisciplinary Disability Services for Children aged 5-18', that was published in December 2009. The Coordinating Group is charged with implementing the recommendations of that Report. The recommendations of the Report aim to change how services for children with disabilities are provided. The crux of this is that services will be based on geographic area and will be based as close to the home as possible. If possible, services will be met by the local primary care team. If the child's needs are more complex, early intervention and school age teams in each network area will assist, with the appropriate support of specialist teams. More information is available at [www.inclusionireland.ie/topics\\_childrengservices.asp](http://www.inclusionireland.ie/topics_childrengservices.asp).

## **RESOURCE TEACHING HOURS**

The Department of Education and Skills recently announced a new process for allocating Resource Teacher posts. A two phase allocation process will be used for the coming school year. The National Council for Special Education has begun the first phase by allocating 90% of each school's identified Resource Teacher needs. The remaining 10% of Resource Teacher Posts will be held in reserve until September. Education Minister Ruairi Quinn says this is being done to ensure that any schools who suddenly find themselves in need of a Resource Teacher are able to be accommodated, and if the level of demand in September does not require all of the posts held in reserve, then the Department will reallocate these posts. Inclusion Ireland initially expressed concern at schools being given 90% of their allocation and will continue to monitor the situation over the coming months.

## 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY AGM & ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Inclusion Ireland's 50<sup>th</sup> AGM & Annual Conference was held in Galway on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April. Minister Kathleen Lynch, the newly appointed Minister for Disability addressed the audience of over 250 delegates of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and professionals working in the area of disability. She promised the new Government would commit to modern capacity law and inspection of disability services. Minister Lynch also took part in a debate chaired by RTÉ's Sean O'Rourke when delegates questioned Minister Lynch, Fianna Fail Leader Micheál Martin TD, Sinn Féin's Michael Colreavy TD and Fine Gael's Sean Kyne TD. They were questioned on issues including cuts to education supports for children with disabilities, inspection of disability services and cuts in Disability Allowance and Carer's Allowance.



Director of the Office of the Minister for Disability, Bairbre Nic Aongusa gave an overview of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services.



Inclusion Ireland Chairperson Frieda Finlay told delegates that 50 years on from the foundation of Inclusion Ireland, people with intellectual disabilities must be accepted by Government and society as full and equal citizens of Ireland.

Economist Jim Power discussed the future of disability services saying €1.6 billion is spent on disability services in Ireland, and "value for money will have to become the guiding principle". Christine Lenihan OBE from the UK Council for Disabled Children spoke on inclusion for children with disabilities. Prof. Roy McConkey was the final keynote speaker. He spoke on 'community inclusion – no more excuses'.

Beverly Smith of the Cork Advocacy Committee presented the DVD 'I'm OK - I Won't Pay', while Lisa McNabb and Christy Lynch of KARE presented on the 'In Control' Project which provides alternative ways to support individuals to be in greater control of their lives.



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## ANNUAL REPORT

Inclusion Ireland's Annual Report 2010 was launched at AGM. It provides an account of all Inclusion Ireland activities in 2010. It is available via the Inclusion Ireland website, or contact the office for hard copies.

## INCLUSION IRELAND AWARDS

Awards are presented at AGM for Media, Advocacy and lifetime achievement. Eilish O'Regan (pictured right) of the Irish Independent won the media award for her constant promotion of the issues affecting people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Avril Webster who nominated Eilish said "she discusses personal stories from people with disabilities and their families in a respectful and dignified manner, whilst still getting to the heart of the matter. She is a great supporter of Inclusion Ireland members and parents."



The Connect People Network (CPN) peer group won the Advocacy Award. This group comprises of people with intellectual disabilities who support each other through discussion of issues around relationships and sexuality, and promote their issues through talks and presentations. Phil Davy (pictured left) accepted the Award on behalf of the CPN.

Gerry McDonald was presented with the John Ryan Achievement Award for the promotion of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities for his tireless work for several decades in highlighting the rights of people at St. Josephs Disability Service in Portrane, Dublin, which is located beside St. Ita's psychiatric service. Gerry has fearlessly campaigned for people living in this Dickensian institution to be moved into community houses. In late 2010, people from the institution finally moved into community houses on the grounds of St. Josephs. Annie Ryan (pictured right with Gerry), a long-time campaigner on the rights of people living in St. Josephs, seconded Gerry's nomination.



Phyllis McCabe (pictured left) received the Inclusion Ireland 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award for her work with St. Peter's Parents and Friends Association in Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath. Phyllis was a founding member of the Association in 1976 and she has since then been involved in organising social activities for those living in St. Peter's as well as visiting the service regularly and supporting the rights of those living there.

**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DVD:** Inclusion Ireland produced a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary DVD, which was shown at AGM. It documents the development of Inclusion Ireland, then namhi, since it was founded in 1961 and illustrates how things have changed for people with intellectual disabilities in that period. The DVD lasts approximately 15 minutes and can be purchased for €10 by contacting the Inclusion Ireland office.