



INCLUSION IRELAND

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

Pre-Budget Submission 2018

**Department of Housing,
Planning, Community & Local
Government**

August 2017

This document is written in font 12 Verdana in line with Inclusion Ireland plain English guidelines.

1. About Inclusion Ireland

Established in 1961, Inclusion Ireland is a national, rights based advocacy organisation that works to promote the rights of people with an intellectual disability.

Inclusion Ireland uses a human rights-based approach to its work. This recognises persons with an intellectual disability as rights holders with entitlements, and corresponding duty bearers and their obligations. Inclusion Ireland seeks to strengthen the capacities of persons with an intellectual disability to make their claims and of duty bearers to meet their obligations.

The vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights as citizens, to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential. Inclusion Ireland's work is underpinned by the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy.

2. Introduction

The Programme for Partnership Government commits to:

- Eliminate any persisting discrimination on the nine grounds,
- Develop the process of budget and policy proofing as a means of advancing equality, reducing poverty and strengthening economic and social rights,
- Removing barriers which impact on access to services, education, work or healthcare,
- Move persons with disabilities out of congregated settings to enable them to live independently and be included in the community.

Inclusion Ireland believes that persons with disabilities should live self-determined lives and Budget 2018 provides an opportunity to reform traditional services and systems, to create a more equal and just society, to encourage participation and decision-making, and to develop pathways into a life in the community.

2.1 Public Sector Duty

Government Departments are required to have regard to the public sector duty in all activities as provided for by Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014.

Inclusion Ireland welcomes the strong commitments to the duty in the Department's most recent strategy statement to ensure that equality and human rights consideration are factored into the day to day operations of all business functions of the organisation.

In particular, the Department has identified the provision of housing for people with disabilities as one of the most pertinent aspects of its business to which human rights and equality considerations apply.

We welcome the commitment to extend the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 to continue to deliver on its aims, the development of local strategic plans to identify housing needs to address the housing issues of people with a disability over the next 5 years.

2.2 Consultation

In preparing our pre-budget submission, Inclusion Ireland conducted regional focus groups across Ireland in Cork, Donegal, Sligo and Tullamore as well as an online survey. Men and women with disabilities, family supporters and people employed in disability-related services took part.

3. Priorities for Budget 2018

3.1 Time to Move on From Congregated Settings

Ireland has indicated an intention to close all large institutions of ten or more persons as established in the "A Time to Move On" report.

Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government made €10 million available to purchase houses to move people out of institutions in 2016. Only €2 million of this fund was drawn down.

To assist with transitioning people out of congregated settings into ordinary homes, a Service Reform Fund has been established. The fund has €27m available to services over a 3-year period. Despite being announced in June 2015¹, no money has been allocated from this fund as of May 2017.

Despite significant funds being made available to move people out of institutions in 2016, less people moved than in 2015 when dedicated

¹ Lynch welcomes collaboration with The Atlantic Philanthropies on service reform fund, press release, June 16th 2015, available at www.merrionstreet.ie

funds were not available. In 2016, only 52 people moved to community settings.

3.2 Housing for people with disabilities

For people with disabilities living at home with relatives, there are also challenges and blocks to finding a home. In 2015, there were 4,039 people with intellectual disabilities aged over 35 living at home with aging parents. Of this number, 734 were aged over 55 and living at home with their parents². Due to the social housing shortage and private housing shortage in general, many of these people have little hope of owning or living in their own. They are often the forgotten group because they are currently cared for by a family member.

3.3 Homelessness

Homelessness has soared in Ireland in recent years. People with disabilities are more likely to experience homelessness than non-disabled people. While people with a disability constitute around 13% of the population as a whole, 42% of the homeless population had one or more disability in 2011³. This is an extremely worrying statistic and impacts on children and those with high medical needs the most. Similarly those with the highest level of support needs often need adaptations to make their homes comfortable and safe. According to citizens information services, housing adaptation grants are available up to 30,000 for existing homes and up to 14,500 for new builds. These grants are means tested and often do not cover the cost of what a person truly needs to fulfil their potential, rather the bare minimum. On the ground in our work, we find that in different areas of the country it can be much harder to secure the grant than other areas and in some areas it is practically impossible to secure any grant at all. The money just isn't available in the Local Authority.

² Annual Report of the National Intellectual Disability Database Committee 2015, Doyle, A & Carew, A., Health Research Board, 2016.

³ Census 2011 .

During Inclusion Ireland Consultation for Budget 2018, we received the following feedback on participation on housing

"There isn't enough support for this. I was looking for support to help with cooking on a budget, routine planning etc and couldn't get it."

"We have an ageing intellectual disability population, and their parents are ageing."

"People should have the right to live wherever they want. They should have support to develop life and social skills so they don't get isolated and depressed"

"There is no reason why people with disabilities should be forced to live with parents or non relatives and are not entitled to their own home and own place."

"At the moment unfortunately we are building small institutions in the community and causing more isolation instead of inclusion. Everyone is entitled to a home not a house. I feel we should support people to live in their home as much as possible with the required supports."

"I find it difficult to live with five people, I would like to move out and get a house of my own."

Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2018 on housing

- The service reform fund money of 27 million which was promised in 2015 must be allocated.
- Funding needs to be made available for persons with disabilities who currently live within family homes and are in need of independent living arrangements but are currently outside the service provision system.
- New ringfenced funding must be made available to protect children with disabilities and specific medical needs from homelessness.
- Ringfenced funding for housing adaptation grants needs to be available and equitable across all counties in Ireland.

**For further information, contact:
Sarah Lennon, Campaigns & Policy Lead,
Inclusion Ireland.
01 855 98 91 / sarah@inclusionireland.ie**