



INCLUSION IRELAND

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

Pre-Budget Submission 2018

**Department of Public
Expenditure & Reform**

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,
- Equality of opportunity,
- Supporting persons with disabilities in maximising their potential,
- Removing barriers which impact on access to services, education, work or healthcare,
- Introducing personalised budgets to provide an individual with more control in accessing services, greater independence and choice.

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 would encourage the Departments to ensure that all decisions made for Budget 2018 are in line with this duty by being proactive in promoting equality, ensuring human rights are realised and eliminating discrimination.

The recent departmental strategy statement commits to “more accountable and transparent administrative structures” and to “treat all colleagues and customers equitably in the complex and challenging modern environment, in keeping with our Public Sector Duty”.

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 Equality Proofing Budgets

The Programme for a Partnership Government commits to developing a process of budget and policy proofing as a means of advancing equality, reducing poverty and strengthening economic and social rights, ensuring that institutional arrangements are in place to support equality and gender proofing.

The establishment of an independent parliamentary budget office is one key aspect of equality proofing and providing the institutional reforms needed. This office would equip all parliamentarians to engage more effectively on budgetary matters, including issues regarding taxation, expenditure and performance, as well as policy costings.

The recent appointment of a director of the Independent Parliamentary Budget Office (IPBO) is a key first step but further progress must be made in Budget 2018. The publication of a clear and meaningful equality

statement in Budget 2018 would be a concrete, interim step before the IPBO commences equality proofing in Budget 2019.

It is important that there is a whole of government commitment to equality proofing. All government departments should have the knowledge and skills necessary to equality proof policy proposals in their relevant departments, with monitoring and oversight provided by the IPBO and the Oireachtas Committee on Budgetary Oversight.

Equality proofing is not just about ensuring that budgetary decisions don't impact more negatively on one social group or another. Each department has a broader duty to develop policies that promote and support rights and equality, and ensure that government expenditure promotes inclusion. Equality proofing should be embedded into the budgetary process.

During Inclusion Ireland Consultation for Budget 2018, we received the following feedback on equality proofing of budgets

"There needs to be focus groups of people who are all affected in different ways by disability to look at the real cost to people's lives the budget can have."

"It should also ensure there is a panel in charge of...equality proofing...consisting of at least 60% people with disabilities."

"Equality proofing should be the standard."

Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2018 on equality proofing

- Publication of a clear and meaningful equality statement in Budget 2018.
- The prompt establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Budget Office (IPBO).
- The work of the IPBO would begin immediately in order to equality-proof Budget 2019.
- The publication of an equality statement in Budget 2018.
- The recruitment of 5-7 budget specialists recruited as per the recommendations of the OECD.

- Participation of people with disabilities in equality proofing process.

3.2 Ring-fenced budgets

Public expenditure on social care services to persons with disabilities is around €1.6 billion per year. Much of this spend is tied up in the provision of models of service where persons with disabilities have no control or say in how services and supports are delivered.

A Value for Money (VFM) review of the disability spend stated "...those using disability services do not participate in society in any meaningful way ... have little opportunity to self determine or to live full and independent lives".

Government must ensure that between 8%-15% of the current HSE disability budget, which is governed by service level agreements (SLAs), is ring-fenced for individualised and community-based models of supports.

During Inclusion Ireland Consultation for Budget 2018, we received the following feedback on ring-fenced budgets

"Disability supports should be considered as being 'above politics' and a core social policy of the State."

"I think funding is given to certain services and we never see what it is used for."

"There should be choice given to the individual and if that is the choice the money should be given to the individual."

"Choice is the key thing."

Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2018 on ring-fenced budgets

- A commitment to ring-fence a percentage of the health budget for individualised services or personal budgets.

3.3 Personal Budgets

Personal budgets are seen as one tool to enable choice and control for persons with disabilities in their lives. In October 2016, The Minister for Disabilities established a task force to make recommendations on a personalised budgets model which will give persons with disabilities more control in accessing Department of Health funded personal social services.

The Task Force on Personalised Budgets is due to report to the Minister by end of 2017 and Budget 2018 should include a commitment to ring-fence a percentage of the health budget for personal or individualised budgets.

The system of personalised budgets introduced should not be limited to any category of individual, e.g. school-leavers, and should also lay out how a cross-departmental approach will be taken to the roll-out of personal budgets, i.e. beyond Department of Health spend alone.

The commitments in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy relating to personal budgets are loose, simply stating that “the Personalised Budgeting Task Force will report to the Government by Q4 2017 and its recommendations will be considered by Government in line with the commitment in the Programme for Partnership Government”.

The Programme for Partnership Government speaks of devolving “budgets to the person so they may shop beyond traditional service providers to better fit their needs”.

Simply put, a more robust commitment to a system of personal budgets must be announced and resourced in Budget 2018 with clear time scales for individuals who wish to avail of the option.

During Inclusion Ireland Consultation for Budget 2018, we received the following feedback on personal budgets

"People should be empowered to decide the type of support they want. We should be active participants in our support."

"Personal budgets recognise individual rights."

"A system of personalised budgets should be established with an independent commissioning body established."

"Everyone should have a personal budget and be a consumer to decide what service to go for and not that this is the only service available."

Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2018 on personal budgets

- A commitment to ring-fence a percentage of the health budget for personal or individualised budgets.
- An action-plan for the involvement of all departments in personal budgets.
- A timescale for the roll-out of the option of personal budgets to all people with disability.

For further information contact

Sarah Lennon, Campaigns & Policy Lead,

Inclusion Ireland.

01 855 98 91 / sarah@inclusionireland.ie