



**INCLUSION IRELAND**

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

# **Pre-Budget Submission 2019**

**Department of Public  
Expenditure and Reform**

**August 2018**

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

# About Inclusion Ireland

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

The vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights as citizens.

Inclusion Ireland's work is underpinned by the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy.

## Public Sector Duty

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In the most recent strategy statement (2016-2019)<sup>1</sup>, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform notes that it will work toward implementing the Department's Public Sector Duty as part of its planned positive outcomes and values of the strategy.

The Department must increase its commitment to the duty by fulfilling its requirements to not just treat people equally but to be pro-active in its approach. Inclusion Ireland would therefore encourage the Department to ensure that all decisions made for Budget 2019 are in line with this duty by being proactive in promoting equality; ensuring human rights are realised and eliminating discrimination.

## About this submission

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Inclusion Ireland held consultations in Cork, Tullamore & Sligo as well as an on-line survey with respondents from all 4 provinces of Ireland. People with a disability, their family members and people who work in disability all took time to complete the survey.

Inclusion Ireland is moving towards complete accessibility of its work and this document contains an easy to read summary at the start.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Statement of Strategy 2016-2019

# Easy to read summary

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The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is an important Government Department.

The Department is responsible for improving our public services and to help public services spend their funding appropriately.

## **What is the Budget?**

The Budget is the Government plan of how money will be spent for the coming year.

Inclusion Ireland is asking the Department to look at 3 areas.

### **1. Equality proofing Budgets**

We ask the Department to publish a clear and meaningful equality statement in Budget 2019.

We also want the Department to start work on equality proofing Budget 2019.

This means that each Department's budget should make sure that people are treated equally.

### **2. Personal Budgets**

We want the Department to fund the set-up of specific units on personal budgets within each Government Department.

We also want the Department to make sure that there is an action plan for each Department put together on how personal budgets will work once the pilots are finished.

### **3. Ring-Fencing Budgets**

We are asking the Department to put aside a part of the health budget for individualised services or personal budgets.

# Introduction

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In the Programme for Partnership Government, there is a commitment to Eliminate any persisting discrimination on the nine grounds,

- Equality of opportunity,
- Supporting persons with disabilities in maximising their potential,
- Removing barriers which impact on access to services, education, work or healthcare,
- Targeted improvements in welfare

Inclusion Ireland believes that persons with disabilities should live self-determined lives and Budget 2019 provides an opportunity to create a more equal & just society and to develop pathways into a life in the community for people with a disability.

Inclusion Ireland has identified 3 areas of reform for Budget 2019 that fall within the remit of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. These are

1. Equality proofing Budgets
2. Personal Budgets
3. Ring-Fencing Budgets

# 1. Equality Proofing Budgets

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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 recent appointment of a Director of the Independent Parliamentary Budget Office (IPBO) and the establishment of the office is welcomed but further progress must be made in Budget 2019. In the IPBO's own report into its role and functions<sup>2</sup>, the office fails to include a role for the office in equality-proofing budgets and is silent on encouraging other Departments to be more equality-driven. This office could equip all parliamentarians to engage more effectively on budgetary matters, including issues regarding taxation, expenditure and performance, as well as policy costings.

However, it is welcomed that the IPBO published the Gender and Equality Budgeting pilot, outlining the Departments involved and the metrics each one will be measuring<sup>3</sup>. A next step would be for the office to conduct further pilots, and to expand their goals and metrics to include other equality issues that affect different groups. The office could also begin looking at the issues facing people with disabilities, such as poverty and social exclusion, and commence work on encouraging other Departments to address this 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. The publication of a clear and meaningful equality statement in Budget 2019 would be a proactive step the office could take in order to ensure the body further advances equality in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> The role and functions of Ireland's Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), Briefing Paper 1, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> The Gender and Equality Budgeting pilot in the Revised Estimates for Public Services 2018, Briefing Paper 4, 2018.

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.

### **What people said in our consultation about equality proofing:**

*"Provide proper healthcare services for people with disabilities; provide Occupational therapy, physiotherapy, Speech Therapy. Bring equality to Disability."*

*"This government needs to bring compassion and equality to disability once and for all."*

*"More inclusion with regards to job opportunities and equality all around, have a user friendly Budget for individuals in easy read".*

*"Lots of barriers to children with additional needs and expenses to access what is a basic human right."*

### **Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2019 on equality proofing**

- Publication of a clear and meaningful equality statement in Budget 2019.
- Commence work on equality proofing Budget 2019.
- The recruitment of 5-7 budget specialists recruited as per the recommendations of the OECD.
- Participation of people with disabilities in equality proofing process.

## 2. Personal Budgets

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Personal (or personalised) 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.

This Task Force has now reported to the Minister, and the recommendations were launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2018. Inclusion Ireland welcomes many aspects of this report, including Minister McGrath's commitment to invest €1.3 million into the running of the 'demonstration projects' or pilot programmes for personal budgets. However, the decision to exclude children from these pilot studies is hugely disappointing.

The pilots will assess how personalised budgets work in a practical sense. Conducting these projects without the inclusion of children will mean that no data will be collected on how the programme might work with younger people in Ireland, potentially preventing under 18s from accessing personalised budgets for years to come.

The recommendations<sup>4</sup> of the Task Force outlined that these pilot programmes will take place over a period of 2 years before being evaluated, and a report will be drawn up for the Department of Health. At this stage further recommendations will be made to government on what must be done to make personal budgets available to people with disabilities in the future.

Inclusion Ireland welcomes Recommendation 18 from the report of the Task Force that says information on personal budgets should be shared with other government departments. This is important as that 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. However, it is important that this recommendation goes further and that a unit should be set up in

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<sup>4</sup> Towards Personalised Budgets for People with a Disability in Ireland Report of the Task Force on Personalised Budgets, 2018.

each Government Department for personal budgets and that Budget 2019 should begin funding these stand-alone units.

Apart from the 2 year timeframe for the completion of the pilot programmes, there is no other clear timeline for when personal budgets may be rolled out nationally for people with disabilities. Progress up to this point has taken years of consultation and input so it is imperative that the Department of Health and the Government act speedily and efficiently in implementing the recommendations from the pilot programmes. This includes ensuring that any work necessary for legislative changes is done while the pilot programmes are in operation, in order to avoid any further delays in roll-out of personal budgets nationally.

#### **What people said in our consultation about personal budgets:**

*"Personalised budgets for children to offset lack of services and supports and help realise potential".*

*"We do not need new money but DPER should direct the DOH/HSE to have a slice of the budget available to people who want a personal budget. Give choice and not outdated institutional services."*

*"Individual budgets my family say would be good for me to live a better life, I would like to go places without my family."*

*"I spend my money on my own activities, I have access to money in the bank when I need it and that is really important to me, many people do not have this because they are not trusted with money".*

#### **Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2019 on personal budgets**

- Ring-fence a budget for a future pilot schemes of personal budgets for children.
- Fund a unit on personal budgets within each Government Department.
- Ring-fence a budget for the roll-out of personal budgets after the pilot-phase.

### 3. Ring-fenced budgets for individualised services.

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Public expenditure on social care services to persons with disabilities is around €1.7 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.

#### **What people said in our consultation about ring-fenced budgets:**

*"The government should invest more in supporting people to live independently in the community. There are still very few people that live like me and lots of people want to".*

#### **Inclusion Ireland asks for Budget 2019 on ring-fenced budgets**

- Require bodies receiving state-funding to ensure that a portion is ring-fence for individualised services or personal budgets.

# Conclusion

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A process is now required to ensure the equality proofing of budgetary and policy decisions. The establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Budget Office is a positive step, and there is a role for this office in encouraging other departments to equality-proof their budgets. However, more work must be done and Inclusion Ireland asks that the office publish a clear equality statement for Budget 2019.

Inclusion Ireland welcomes that the recommendations from the Personal Budgets Task Force have been published and that the process for commencing the pilot programmes has begun. However, the decision to exclude children from these pilot studies is a huge disappointment and a missed opportunity for the Government to address the barriers people with disabilities face in having control and choice over their lives. At this stage of the process, it is important that once the 2 year pilot have ceased that the Government act quickly in rolling out personal budgets for people with disabilities across the country.

There is need to move models of service provision away from traditional methods, and toward models that involve the person with a disability, giving them more choice and control. There should be a commitment from the Government to ring-fence a portion of the current health budget for more individualised services.

**For further information contact;**

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