

National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities

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Helen Lahert
Manager of Advocacy
Citizens Information Board

Advocacy in Ireland: Changing Times

Wednesday 9th

February 2011

Pilot Programme Advocacy for People with Disabilities

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46 projects 2005 to 2010

Residential, community

Case loads 10 – 120

Multi-stakeholder Steering Committees

Range of employers

Range of Target Groups

Range of advocates

Different models

Gaps in service

Evaluation Considerations

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- Consistent quality service
- Geographical spread
- Access
- Reaching the most vulnerable
- Involvement of people with disabilities
- Good partnership working
- Independence
- Advocate support & supervision
- Case Management
- Flexibility to changing circumstances



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Representative Advocacy

In representative advocacy, a trained person, independent of services, represents the wishes of the person with disability and supports the person accessing entitlements, defending basic rights, making life choices or making formal complaints or appeals.

The advocate has been described as the lynch-pin, drawing together the various services and supports required by people with disabilities in order for them to live as full, independent and dignified lives as possible.

Independence

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- The advocacy service is free of conflict of interest and is provided by an organisation that is structurally & operationally independent from organisations providing other services to people with disabilities
- Independence ensures that the advocacy service represents only the wishes and views of the person with disability.

CIB Statutory Remit

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- ***Comhairle Act 2000***
 - To support the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services.
 - To assist and support individuals, **in particular those with disabilities**, to identify and understand their needs and options and to access their entitlement to social services.
- ***Citizens information Act 2007***

Gave CIB a new representative advocacy role **specifically for people with disabilities**



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Irish Government Policy

Strategy for Equality, 1996 (Report of the *Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities.*)

Improving the Delivery of Quality Public Services, NESF 2006

National Disability Strategy (Disability Act, 2005, Citizens Information Act 2007, Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and Departmental Sectoral Plans)

Towards 2016 (Social Partnership Agreement 2006 to 2015)
HIQA; National Quality Standards: Residential Services for People with Disabilities

Vision for Change 2008 – Policy document on Mental Health Services

Advocacy Developments within CIB

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- Jigsaw of Advocacy, 2003
- Goodbody report, 2004
- Advocacy Resource Officer pilot projects
- Community and Voluntary Sector pilot Advocacy Programme
- Roundtable/Solution Enable Evaluation 2010
- **National Advocacy Service 2011**
- **Advocacy support worker programme 2011**

Personal Advocacy Service (PAS)

Citizens Information Act, 2007

- Confers additional functions on CIB particularly with regard to Advocacy for people with disabilities
- Statutory service for qualifying persons with a disability (adults and children)
- Rights for advocates under PAS
(Access to services, access to information, right of attendance at meetings)

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Not yet commenced. Evaluation recommended that elements be introduced into National Advocacy Service

NAS Review in 18 months re commencement

Definition of qualifying person

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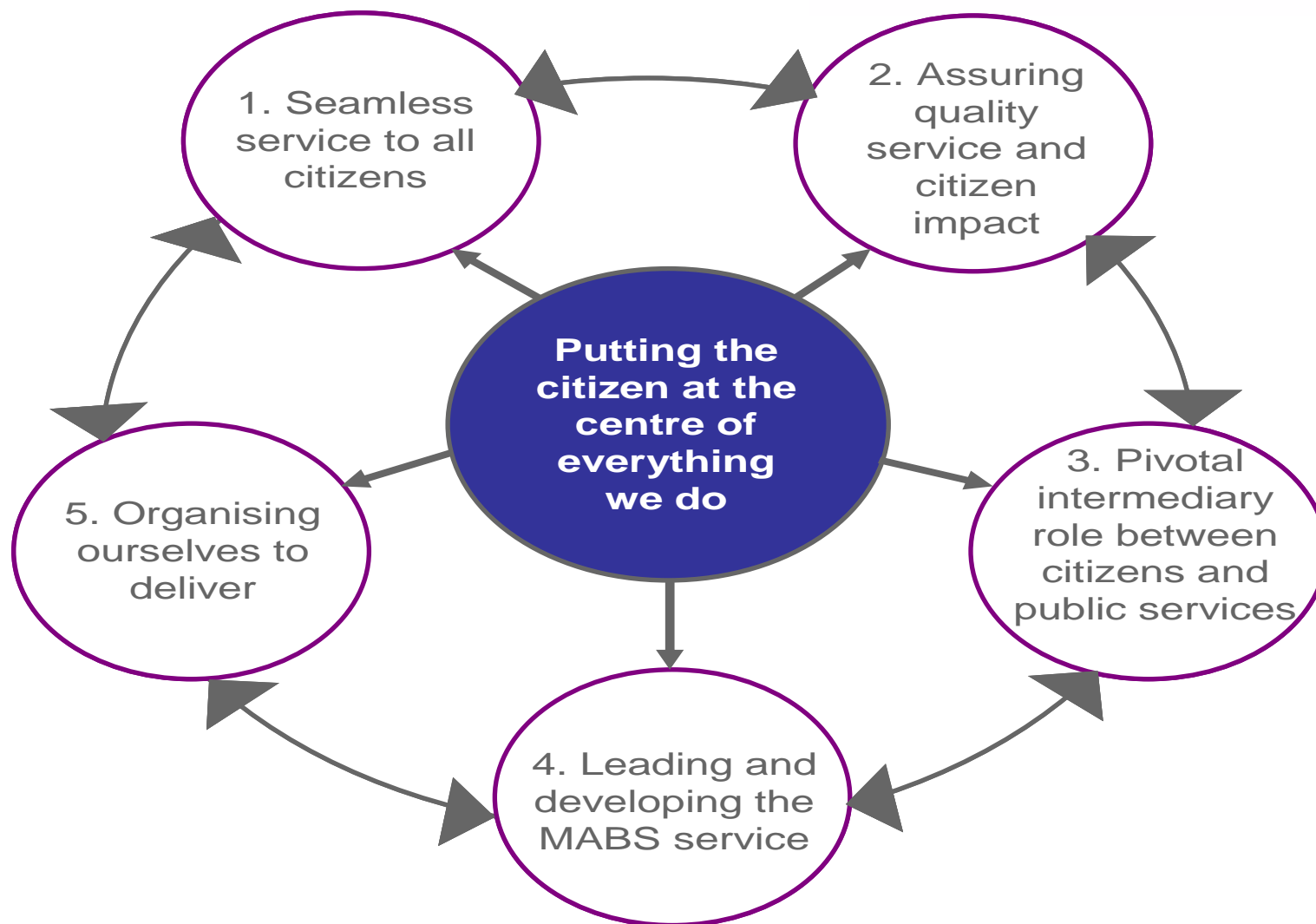


- Not less than 18 years of age, or if under 18 the parent or guardian is a qualifying person, or circumstances are such that it is unreasonable to expect them to act on child's behalf.
- By reason of disability has difficulty in obtaining a social service without the assistance of a personal advocate
- There are reasonable grounds for believing there is a risk of harm to health, welfare or safety if not provided with social service



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CIB Strategy



Vision for NAS

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- To ensure the voices of people with disabilities are heard, their rights are safeguarded and that they access their rights and entitlements - resulting in an improvement in the quality of their lives .
- A professional service that adheres to the highest standards nationally.
- A service that targets the most vulnerable, those who are socially isolated, disconnected to services, inappropriately accommodated, and those with limited communication skills

National Identity

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A service (while regionally based)
with

- national identity
- national phone line
- national planning
- national policies and procedures
- national standards

Strategy

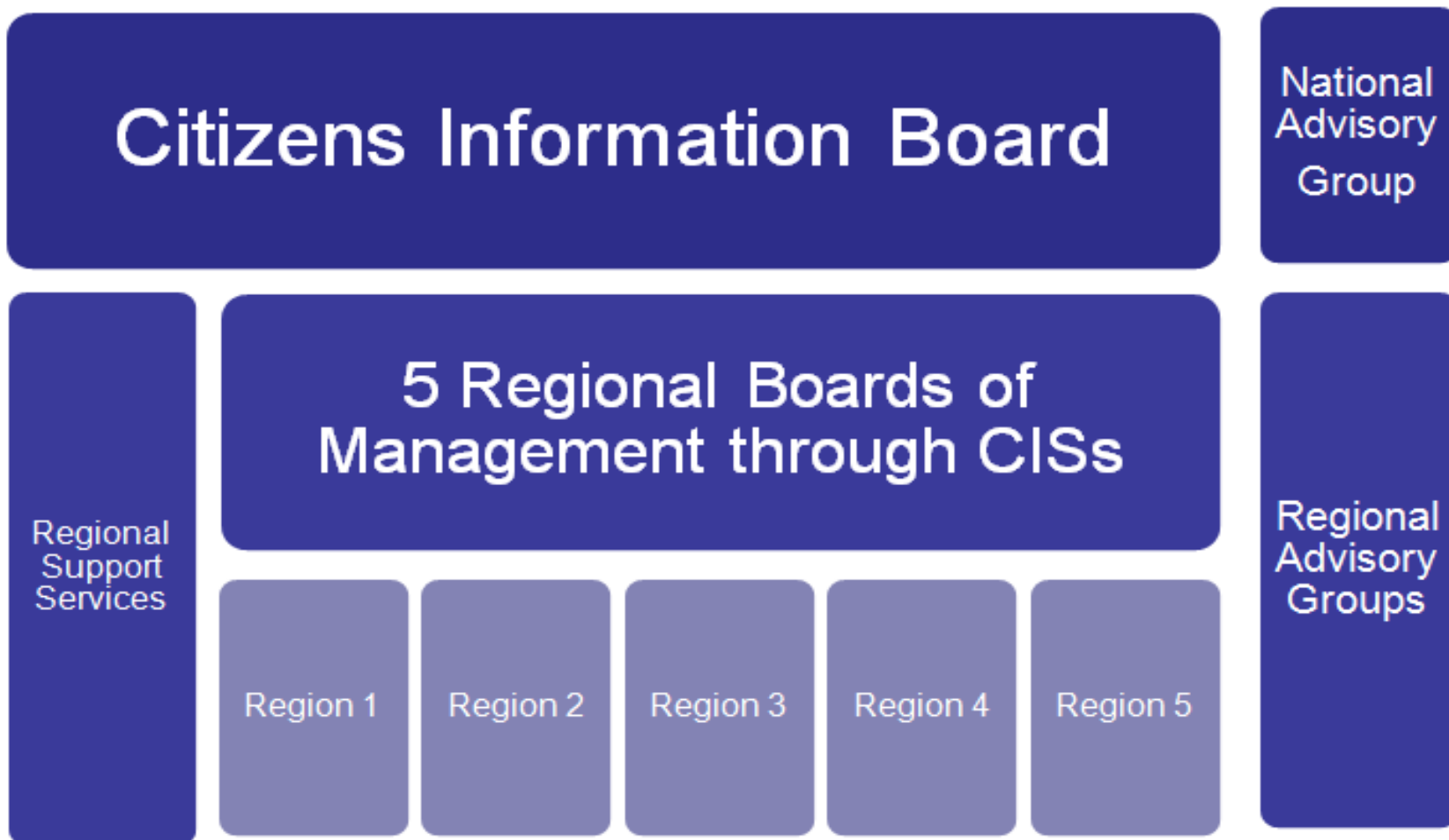
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- **Quality service** with national standards, training
- **Accessible service** that is easy for clients to approach and use. Information is made easily understandable and staff are approachable and friendly.
- **Responsive service** with customer feedback evidence based feedback, influencing policy
- **Cohesive service** with Mainstream links, CISs, MABS local C&V organisations
- **Outcomes driven service** with improvements in the lives of people with disabilities its measure of success
- **Targeted service** for more vulnerable clients with complex cases with clear entry points and referral pathways

Recommended Structure

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Managers

Dublin Region (Clondalkin CIS)

Ben North

North East Region (Westmeath CIS)

Louise Loughlin

South East Region (Offaly CIS)

Selina Doyle

South West Region (Waterford CIS)

Patricia O'Dwyer

West / North West Region (Leitrim CIS)

Josephine Keaveney



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Dublin Region (Clondalkin CIS)	2 Senior Advocates	6 Advocates
North East Region (Westmeath CIS)	1 Senior Advocate	5 Advocates
South East Region (Offaly CIS)	1 Senior Advocate	5 Advocates
South West Region (Waterford CIS)	2 Senior Advocates	5 Advocates
West / North West Region (Leitrim CIS)	1 Senior Advocate	7 Advocates



Continuum of Mainstream & Disability Advocacy

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- CIS : advocacy service for those who need additional support to access entitlements, negotiate with public bodies or employers or appeal a decision
 - *Advocacy Support Workers to enhance capacity of information providers to advocate effectively, providing training, coaching and case review*
- People with disabilities supported to use mainstream information, advice and advocacy service wherever possible.
- National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities will work with more vulnerable people with disabilities both in institutions and in the community where cases are complex.



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**National
Advocacy
Service**

For People
with Disabilities

Individual's Name:
Job Title:

Service/Centre Name Here:
Address:
Address:

T. 0123456

F. 0123456

E. rachel.dowmes@advocacy.ie

NAS on the road

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Still to do.....

- National and Regional Advisory Groups
- Source permanent offices for advocates
- Fit out these offices
- Finalise Identity and Logos
- Launch Service at end of March
- Promote service
- Build case load of clients
- Seek out those who need an advocacy service

What can Services Do?

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- Work with the National Advocacy Service
- Listen to clients and support them to speak up
- Train staff and support them to understand independent advocacy and its benefit for clients
- Refer clients
- Allow advocates access to residential institutions
- Welcome feedback from advocates and see it as a way of improving services
- Support other types of advocacy, self advocacy, citizen advocacy

Improving the Quality of Life for People with Disabilities

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SAN MURATO

Temporary National Contact Number

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Rachel Downes

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