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# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF VOLUNTARY BODIES

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*Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disability*

**Annual Report 2009**

**Accessible Summary Version**



**Written by Brian Donohoe National Federation of Voluntary Bodies**

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Oranmore Business Park, Oranmore, Galway  
Tel: 091-792316 Fax: 091-792317  
Email: [info@fedvol.ie](mailto:info@fedvol.ie) Website: [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)

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Cover based on artwork by Bridget Ward. Bridget's hobbies include drawing & writing, clothes, shopping, being out in the community. Bridget also enjoys her work experience in Clare Hall. Bridget is supported by Western Care Association.

# 1. Chairperson's Statement

2009 was a very difficult year for services with cutbacks causing serious problems for service providers who are working to keep services going, while meeting the changing needs of people who use our services.

2009 saw the setting up of the Government's Value for Money & Policy Review Group. The National Federation works with this Group in a positive way by taking part in the Group. We were asked by Mr. John Moloney, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Health & Children, to write up a Vision Statement for the Intellectual Disability Sector to help the work of the Policy Review Group. I was pleased that the Board of Directors and our members agreed with the Vision Statement in 2009 which represents the interests of people with intellectual disability and their families.

The work of the Secretariat in 2009 was to make sure that the concerns of service providers, especially the funding cuts, were made clear at the highest levels both within Government and in the HSE. I am happy to report that while this work was ongoing member organisations worked to meet the cut backs, while at the same time protecting front line services as much as possible.

In these very difficult times it is important to have a Board of Directors to give leadership to our members. I would like to thank the Board for their hard work during 2009. The National Federation is also kept up to date by its Sub Committee's and by the member organisations through meetings of the General Assembly and our Area Federation Committees. I would like to thank our Chief Executive Brian O'Donnell and his Team who gave excellent support to the Chair, the Board and the National Federation's member organisations.

While 2010 will be difficult the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies is committed to getting the best results for the people who we support and also on promoting the voluntary sector in this mission.



**John O'Dea,  
Chairperson**

## 2. Chief Executive's Introduction

2009 was another very busy year for the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. While the economic situation is difficult for service providers I am pleased to say that voluntary organisations got on with the work and dealt with the cutbacks. The National Federation played a role on the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group which was set up to look at how well the strategy is working, this includes the development of Sectoral Plans by six Government Departments. We hold the Chair of the Disability Stakeholders Group Sub Committee on Environment, Heritage & Local Government and have been involved in the National Housing Strategy for people with disabilities.

During 2009 the state of the economy puts pressure on all of us to do more with less money. Therefore we had to work on new ideas about how services should be provided while still making sure that children and adults with intellectual disabilities had good lives.

In November 2009, the National Federation held an international conference with the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) on the topic "Inclusive Education for All". The conference was attended by over 300 people from the 27 countries. The Conference was a great success and I would like to say thanks to each member of our Education Sub Committee and its Chairperson, Maura Nash, for their work in the organisation of the event

In these difficult times there is a need for an organised approach to the development of training and education of all people employed in our sector. There is also a need to make sure that our work is in line with best practice and there was excellent work done by both our Human Resources and Training & Development Sub Committees on this.

During 2009, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies has been active through the work of our Community Participation & Inclusion Sub Committee, and our Volunteering Sub Committee in promoting the social inclusion of people with intellectual disability. And in late 2009 we linked up with Professor Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair at NUI Galway which supports the social inclusion of children and young people with intellectual disabilities in Ireland.

Research and policy are important functions of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. Our Research Strategy 2008–2013 identified Living Options for People with Intellectual Disabilities as the topic during 2009. Our Research Sub Committee, chaired by Dr. Brian McClean, organised a number of successful events and the publication of a number of papers on Living Options during the year. We were also very pleased to have finished the piloting of the Informing Families Best Practice Guidelines in the Cork Region during the year.

Finally I would like to thank our Chairperson John O’Dea, for his commitment and support during 2009. I would also like to thank all the Secretariat Team, who has done well in achieving the National Federation’s objectives and in the delivery of our Service Plan for 2009.



Brian O’Donnell,  
Chief Executive

### 3. Policy Development

The member organisations of the National Federation provide 85% of services to people with intellectual disability in Ireland. It is important that we are always working to make the lives of children and adults with intellectual disability better. Working closely with our sub-committees, the National Federation develops policy on a lot of topics for our Board to look at and approve.

We also work on and look at other projects developed by the State authorities including the Department of Health & Children, Health Service Executive, National Disability Authority, Health Information and Quality Authority etc. and speak on behalf of our sector on advisory groups and national committees.

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies also helps with policy development in Europe by being on the Board of the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). This gives us opportunity to take part in developing various European laws, to help in the running of the Council of Europe's Disability Action Plan and helps us to follow what happens at European level.

The National Federation has close links with the centre for Disability Law and Policy at the university in Galway. They are looking at the laws about disability. Work with this centre continued in 2009 with different projects to develop knowledge and policy in this area.

Policy activities which happened in 2009 are set out below.

<b>Objective:</b>	<b>Key Achievements in 2009:</b>
<b>To Keep up to date with Government plans for disability</b>	Brian O'Donnell, Chief Executive, speaks for the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies on the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group which is made up of members of the Disability Stakeholders Group. This group looks at the plans of six Government Departments for Disability.
<b>To Organise European Conference in Dublin in November 2009 on the</b>	The Education Sub Committee helped to organise the Inclusive Education Conference "Salamanca, 15 Years On – Inclusion, A

## topic “Inclusive Education for All”



School for All”. This took place in the Grand Hotel, Malahide, Dublin on 12th & 13th November, 2009.




- 300 delegates from 25 countries came to the conference. Conference speakers included a wide range of national and international speakers including people with disabilities, their families, and other organisations, plus from some government departments and policy makers.
- The Dublin manifesto was written at the end of the conference which says that all children and adults have an equal right to high quality education in an inclusive environment.

## To develop a new Vision Statement for Intellectual Disability Services.

In January 2009, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies set up a Working Group to develop a new Vision Statement for Intellectual Disability Services in Ireland. This was done after a meeting between the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies and Mr. John Moloney, T.D., Minister of State, for Disability and Mental Health.

## 4. Information Sharing

One of the main roles of the National Federation is to share information among members and with the wider community. Information on best practice, new things being done, important policy issues and other areas of interest is gathered by the Secretariat team from a wide range of sources. Information that is important to the members and other stakeholders is then sent in various ways through training, publications, on our website ([www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)), quarterly newsletters, conferences, by email, and through the meetings of the General Assembly, National Federation Board, and Sub-Committees.

Objectives:	Key Actions:
<p>To organise and update the information on the National Federation website – <a href="http://www.fedvol.ie">www.fedvol.ie</a>,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2009 we improved our website so that it would be clear, professional, modern, and more accessible for all its users. Our website now has WAI Accessibility Level AA and we will improve accessibility in the future. . .</li> <li>• In 2009 our website was updated on a weekly basis.</li> </ul> 
<p>To give out information and resources to the secretariat and member organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Federation Secretariat team sent emails and fact sheets about a lot of issues to Member Organisations, for example research reports, policy updates, media coverage, work updates etc.</li> <li>• 3 National Federation newsletters were published in 2009.</li> </ul> 
<p>To advise the Board of National Federation about the training and employment of people with intellectual disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2009 we supported the Vocational Training &amp; Employment Sub Committee in its role in advising the Board of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies on issues about vocational training &amp; employment of adults with an intellectual disability.</li> </ul> 

# 5. Research

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies aims to support best practice in services to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. We do this by supporting good research within National Federation member organisations.

The National Federation research agenda is supported by the Research Strategy 2008-2013. The principles of this document are that people with disabilities must be given the opportunity to live as full a life as possible.



The National Federation works to promote quality research in intellectual disability and last year we asked our members for all the research done in their organisation since 2000. We then put this research on our website so that we can learn from each other by finding out what the best person centred practices are.

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies is also involved in conferences, seminars, student placements, working with other research centres and networking. The aim of all this is to support research, policy and practice which help deliver quality services and supports to people with intellectual disability in Ireland and lead to better lives for people with disability.

Below describe the research activities of the National Federation in 2009.

Objective:	Key Achievements in 2009:
<b>Research Sub-Committee</b>	
<b>To support the work of the Research Sub-Committee.</b>	The role of the Research Sub Committee is to advise the Board of the National Federation on research issues about intellectual disability. To do this the Research Subcommittee met 4 times in 2009.

## National Research Strategy

**Research Priorities :  
To work on the topic  
of Living Options as  
a research priority in  
2009.**

The topic for 2009 was Living Options for people with intellectual disabilities. A document called an Action Agenda was done early in 2009 to look at this topic.

A number of things were done during the year to get knowledge about research in this area.

The Inclusive Research Network (IRN) organised a national study called '*Where we Live*'. Interviews were done by people with intellectual disabilities to find out the views of other people with intellectual disability about where they live.

A report has been done in an easy to read format and will be launched in January. A copy will be available on our website [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)



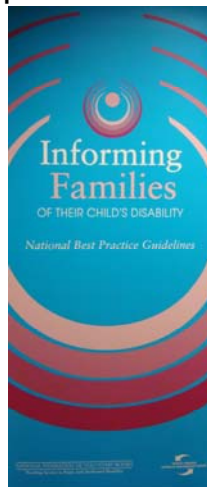
The IRN were invited to present the findings from this piece of research at the NDA Annual Conference on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2009. A copy of the presentation can be found on the National Federation website [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)



Marie Wolfe, Sarah Flynn and Simon Buggy made a presentation on the 'Where we Live' Study in October 2009 at the NDA conference

**Members of the Community Participation and Inclusion Sub Committee** were invited to give their views on the topic "living options for people with intellectual disability" to the Research Sub Committee at their Meeting in September 2009. Their Presentation was called ***A True Home***.

The pilot training programme was designed to provide learning in the best practice of the **National Best Practice Guidelines for Informing Families of their Child's Disability**.



The programme was given to medical students, junior hospital doctors and nursing & midwifery students in the Cork region. A paper showing the findings of this evaluation is currently being completed and will be published in a peer reviewed journal.

## 6. Inclusion

### Supporting Inclusion of People with an Intellectual Disability

The National Federation Secretariat is committed to helping member organisations promote inclusion, rights, independence and choice of people with intellectual disability within their own communities and within services provided by National Federation Member Organisations.

Objective:	Key Achievements in 2009:
<b>Social Inclusion Best Practice</b>	
<b>Developing Guidelines for Accessible Information</b>	
<b>To represent the National Federation on the National Accessible Information Working Group.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breda Casey speaks on behalf of the National Federation on a National Accessible Information Working Group.</li> <li>• The aim of the working group is to make information accessible for all people with disabilities and for people who may not have English as their first language.</li> <li>• A draft of the guideline document has now been developed by the group.</li> <li>• Consultation will take place over the coming months and the aim is to publish the final guideline document in 2010.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Participation &amp; Inclusion</b>	
<b>To support the work of the Community Participation &amp; Inclusion Sub-Committee.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to read documents e.g. agenda, minutes etc. are provided for all meetings of the Community Participation &amp; Inclusion sub-committee.</li> <li>• An article called “Supporting Each Person with an Intellectual Disability to Live a Full Active Life in their own Community”, together with an article on “The Things I’d Like to Change” were published in Frontline Magazine, Issue No. 75 2009.</li> <li>• A presentation was made up by the Community Participation Group called “A True Home” and presented to the Research Sub-Committee in September 2009 to contribute to the Living Options “Where we Live” Research Project.</li> </ul>

	<p>This research looked at Living Options for People with Intellectual Disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice documents are given to our sub-committee members on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Talks at sub-committee meetings about research and information which will help us to develop strategies for people with intellectual disability to be involved in their own communities.</li> <li>• The sub committee makes contact with service user groups. A presentation was made to the Seasamh group telling them about the National Federation and what it does. Seasamh is a group made up of people with intellectually disabilities who are elected on to the group by other people with intellectually disabilities who represents them and speaks up for them.</li> </ul>
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**Volunteering supports**


Objective:	Key Achievements in 2009:
<p><b>To support Member Organisations to follow best practice in the selection, training, ongoing support of their volunteer’s contributions.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The findings from “Volunteering in Intellectual Disability Services in Ireland” survey continue to be given out.</li> <li>• Work on the Natural Supports and Volunteering Guideline document is ongoing. Links will be made with the Community Participation group to finish this document during 2010.</li> <li>• We took part in the Volunteering Ireland Conference in December 2009 about the social, economic and political value of volunteering and gave out papers from the conference to our Volunteering Sub-Committee and our wider member organisations.</li> <li>• Gave out information to our member organisations on the European Year of Volunteering 2011 and World Volunteering Conference 2012 which will be held in Dublin.</li> </ul>

## 7. People and Staff

In 2009 there were many challenges for HR people in our services – the ban on recruitment in the public sector and less money meant it was harder for HR people to save money and at the same time keep the same level of service. The HR Sub-Committee supports HR professionals by sharing information. Maura Donovan, Chief Executive, Stewarts Hospital, stood down as Chairperson of the Human Resources Sub-Committee in late 2008 and we would like to thank her for her hard work, as Chairperson of the Human Resources Sub-Committee. Liam Murphy, HR Manager, Brothers of Charity Southern Services, took the role of Chairperson in early 2009 and led the Sub-Committee through what was a very difficult year. The work of the Human Resources Sub-Committee was supported by a very active and committed group of members.

Objectives:	Key Achievements in 2009:
<b>Human Resources Sub-Committee</b>	
<b>To support the work of the Human Resources Sub-Committee.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In early 2009 a new chairperson was appointed to the Human Resources Sub-Committee – Mr. Liam Murphy, Brothers of Charity Southern Services, Cork.</li> <li>• Members of the Sub-Committee met 4 times in 2009.</li> </ul>
<b>To provide relevant human resource information when needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2009 updates were given to HR people about upcoming events.</li> <li>• The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies also looked for information about issues that were important to member organisations (e.g. practices about maternity leave arrangements, management of sick leave, absenteeism, etc).</li> </ul>



<p><b>To make sure that Garda vetting is in place for employees &amp; volunteers within NFVB member organisations.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2009 the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies continued to work with personnel from the Garda Central Vetting Unit to make sure that National Federation members could get Garda clearance for staff members and volunteers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inclusive Recruitment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In late 2009 a small group, working under the Human Resources Sub-Committee, began work on developing a guide for inclusive recruitment. This project will aim to show the work that has been done by organisations in this area and seek to highlight examples of best practices in terms of inclusive recruitment.</li> <li>• A guide to inclusive recruitment will be published in 2010.</li> </ul> 

## **8. Training and Skills**

The challenge for training and development personnel is to make sure that staff working in organisations has the necessary skills and abilities to provide the highest quality service to those using services. 2009 was a difficult year for those involved in training activities – with less money there is a need to make sure that all training activities are about supporting organisations to meet their service needs while making sure that the quality of service is not less. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Training & Development Sub-Committee aims to find a way by which training and development personnel can meet & exchange information. The Sub-Committee is made up of training and development people from 16 Federation member organisations.

The work of the Training & Development Sub-Committee during 2009 was led by the Chairperson Brendan Broderick.

Objective(s):	Key Achievements in 2009:
<b>Training &amp; Development Sub-Committee</b>	
<b>To support the work of the Training &amp; Development Sub-Committee.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the Training &amp; Development Sub-Committee met regularly throughout 2009.</li> </ul>
<b>To host a 1-day seminar on ‘<i>Making the most of eLearning – How eLearning can support your Organisations Training &amp; Development Strategy</i>’.</b>	<p>On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2009 the Training &amp; Development Sub-Committee hosted a 1-day event on the topic of eLearning. The event aimed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain what eLearning is – what’s involved for organisations and learners, how it can be of benefit to organisations and go with other types of learning;</li> <li>2. Look at challenges involved for organisations in making the most of eLearning and using technology as a vital medium for learning and development;</li> <li>3. Examine the HSE's Learning Centre – <a href="http://www.hseland.ie">www.hseland.ie</a> - which aims to provide on-line learning and development opportunities to all staff working in the HSE and organisations funded by the HSE;</li> <li>4. Show how the learning experience of those doing college programmes can be improved by an eLearning / blended learning approach as described through the experience of the Open Training College.</li> <li>5. A range of guest speakers spoke at this event – Dr. Maureen Murphy, Aurion, Mr. Pat Kenny, HSE and Mr. Raymond Watson, Open Training College.</li> </ol>
<b>To provide relevant training and development related information to Federation members.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2009 regular updates were provided to Training &amp; Development personnel regarding upcoming events, funding opportunities, training programmes and so forth.</li> <li>• The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies website contains a dedicated section on training and development and regular updates are posted on the site.</li> <li>• The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies also sought information in relation to key</li> </ul>

	<p>issues of relevance to member organisations e.g. in-house training programmes, accreditation provided, feedback on policy documents, etc.</p>
<p><b>Training Programmes / Initiatives 2009:</b></p>	
<p><b>To deliver a programme for Front Line Managers: <i>'Managing for the Future: Building your skills as a Front Line Manager in a Person Centred Environment'</i>.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2009 saw delivery of the second cycle of the Front Line Managers training programme – <i>'managing for the Future: Building your skills as a Front Line Manager in a Person Centred Environment'</i>. A total of 14 people from across 11 organisations completed the programme which was run with the University of Limerick.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To support the development of the SKILL Programme.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies continued to participate in the SKILL Programme during 2009. The aim of the SKILL Programme is to educate, develop and train support staff in the health and social care sectors to reach their full abilities in order to improve their role in the quality of services provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dignity at Work Policy – Training for Support Contact Persons: <i>'Dealing with Bullying, Harassment &amp; Sexual Harassment in the Workplace – the</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the health service Dignity at Work Policy was completed in 2009 - the Policy is designed to prevent bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace and sets out a way of dealing with allegations of bullying / harassment.</li> <li>• With the launch of the revised Policy the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies organised 2 training sessions for those who are Support Contact Persons within organisations. The programmes were run in autumn 2009 in Galway &amp; Dublin with over 30 people taking part in the 2-day training.</li> <li>• The training was given by Leonie O'Dowd, Head of Education and Training, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre who has extensive experience of providing training in this area. A further 2 programmes are being planned for spring 2010.</li> </ul>

# Appendix 1

## **National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Board of Directors**

John O'Dea, Western Care Association (Chairperson)  
Brendan Broderick, Sisters of Charity of Jesus & Mary  
Tony Darmody, Kerry Parents & Friends Association  
Maura Donovan, Stewarts Hospital  
Wally Freyne, Daughters of Charity Services  
Mary Kealy, Brothers of Charity Services Clare  
Bro Laurence Kearns, St. John of God Hospitaller Services  
Edith Kennedy, MIDWAY  
Christy Lynch, KARE  
Paul Ledwidge, St. Michael's House  
Patricia Lee, Sisters of La Sagesse  
Vincent Millet, Irish Sisters of Charity  
Maura Nash, COPE Foundation  
Michael Noone, Sunbeam House Services  
Winifred O'Hanrahan, Brothers of Charity Services

## **National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Secretariat Team:**

Brian O'Donnell, Chief Executive  
Edel Tierney, Director of Research & Policy Development  
Maria McMahon, Office Manager  
Caroline Looney, Administrative Officer (Job Sharer)  
Mary Barrett, Administrative Officer (Job Sharer)  
Brian Donohoe, Clerical Officer (1 day per week)  
Jillian Sexton, HR & Training & Development Co-ordinator  
Alison Harnett, Informing Families Project Co-ordinator  
Breda Casey, Policy Development Co-ordinator  
John Doyle, on Student Placement from University of Limerick