NATIONAL FEDERATION OF VOLUNTARY BODIES
Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disability

Oranmore Business Park, Oranmore, Galway, Ireland.
Phone: +353 91 792316 • Fax: +353 91 792317
Email: info@fedvol.ie • Website: www.fedvol.ie

Welcome to the National Federation Newsletter Spring 2015

Issue 44

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies oversees establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Intellectual Disability

The inaugural meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group took place in Leinster House on 21st January, 2015.

In all some 28 deputies representing all political parties and groupings attended what was a very lively and constructive first meeting. Colette Kelleher, Vice Chairperson, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their affiliation to the Group and for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend.

Colette provided members with a background to the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies which comprises 59 member organisations who provide direct services and supports to people with an intellectual disability. It was noted that voluntary organisations have a long and rich tradition in the provision of services to people with intellectual disability in Ireland, in some cases dating back to a time prior to the foundation of the State. Voluntary organisations are typically an amalgam of members of local communities, parents, friends, people with an intellectual disability and staff, who come together with one common objective which is to respond to local need by providing best possible support to people with intellectual disability in their communities. These organisations, established on a voluntary basis, were born out of local communities and therefore have very strong ties and affiliations with the communities in which they are embedded. Parents have a strong role in the governance of these organisations as evidenced by the substantial number who are members of the respective Boards of Directors.

Voluntary organisations have always been in a situation where demand for services exceeds supply within a context of finite resources. The focus has always therefore been on the efficient and effective use of the resources available. There has been a constant drive to innovate, to develop newer and better solutions to meet the diverse needs of the people we support. It was noted that we are operating in difficult times and there are many issues facing member organisations, however, times of crisis provide a time for opportunity and change.

Following some discussion of the members, Deputy Regina Doherty. T.D., agreed to act as Chairperson of the All Party Parliamentary Group. Following her appointment as Chairperson, Deputy Doherty facilitated a productive discussion on key issues of concern and relevance to people with I.D. and their families and carers, to which all the member present contributed. The issues debated included de-congregation, education, transport, school-leavers and inter-departmental cooperation. With regard to employment it was agreed that Christy Lynch, CEO of KARE would be invited to make a presentation at the next meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

It was also agreed that a Terms of Reference for the Group would be agreed at this meeting and a draft work plan will subsequently be prepared for approval by the Group.

As a National Federation we are delighted with this initiative which to our knowledge is the first All Party Parliamentary Committee focused on Intellectual Disability. We are very encouraged by both the numbers of politicians who have affiliated to the group and the interest in and knowledge of the issues affecting people with Intellectual Disabilities and their families which they displayed at the inaugural meeting. We believe that the Group has the potential to make a significant positive contribution to the I.D. Sector in the months and years ahead.

Brian O'Donnell,
Chief Executive, National Federation

Conference "Children First: How can we put children who have a disability first?"

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies hosted a very successful conference on Tuesday 10th March in the Heritage Hotel in Portlaoise entitled ***"Children First: How can we put children who have a disability first?"***. There have been significant policy and legislative developments in relation to children in Ireland in recent times and with the Children First Bill expected to be enacted shortly, this event provided an opportunity for all those working in the area of children's disability services, child protection & welfare to hear from a range of experts on the key legislative changes and the obligations on organisations in reporting child protection concerns.

The morning session was chaired by Mr. John Hannigan, Chairperson of the National Federation, and it began with an overview of the key leglisation by Ms. Jenny Bulbulia, Barrister at Law. Detective Sergeant Jennifer Molony from An Garda Síochána then spoke about the obligation on organisations in reporting child protection concerns to the garda. The newly appointed Ombudsman for Children Dr.

> *"Once again a very worthwhile day"*

Niall Muldoon outlined the functions of the Ombudmans for Children office and its role in promoting children's rights. This was followed by a presentation by Ms Marie Faughey from the HSE who gave an overview of the HSE's Children First Implementation Plan and how the HSE proposes to support funded agencies in meeting their children first obligations.

Roundtable discussions afforded delegates the opportunity to discuss the challenges facing their organisations arising from the morning presentations. The issues arising will feed into the National Federation's Children First / Child Protection & Welfare work plan for 2015/6.

John Hannigan Chairperson, Brian O'Donnell National Federation, Dr. Aisling Gillen Tusla, Dr. Niall Muldoon Ombudsman for Children, Maire Faughey HSE, Colette Daly Ability West, Detective Garda Jennifer Molony, Colette McLoughlin Tusla and Jenny Bulbulia, Barrister at Law.

The afternoon was chaired by Ms. Maria Corrigan, Principal Clinical Psychologist, and it began with a presentation from Dr. Aisling Gillen & Ms Colette McLoughlin, Tusla - Child & Family Agency. They outlined the function of Tusla in supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children and also supporting and encouraging the effective functioning of families. They discussed the development of Child and Family Support Networks and presented case studies under the Meitheal model.

Ms Maria Corrigan chairing the afternoon session

The final input of the day came from Ms. Colette Daly, Ability West, whose presentation was entitled 'Children First: Why an explicit Action Plan is needed to protect children with

"Very interesting event full of practical information"

disabilities' and outlined feedback and concerns arising for Federation members in relation to child protection and welfare concerns.

The event proved very successful and demand for places resulted in the event being closed to new bookings several days prior to the event with 220 delegates in attendance. Feedback was very positive and delegates are given the opportunity to provide feedback through an online survey.

The Irish Association of Social Workers CPD Committee awarded four CPD points to the event and delegates can request a certificate by emailing Mary Barrett at mary.barrett@fedvol.ie All presentations for the event are available to download on the National Federation website www.fedvol.ie and a report on the event will issue very shortly.

220 delegates attended the Children First Conference

Next Steps Project receives International Award

Next Steps Project receives Zero Project "Innovative Practices Award" 2015

In February 2015, The Next Steps Project - which is a community of learning of 23 member organisations of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies - was recognized as one of 39 "Innovative Practices 2015" at the United Nations offices in Vienna. The project was highlighted at the 2015 Zero Project Conference, an international summit on independent living and political participation attended by more than 400 experts in the field from around the world, for its achievements in supporting people with intellectual disabilities to live lives of their choosing and

sharing the learning from developing individualised supports as a community of practice.

Below: The Next Steps Project receives the **Zero Project Innovative Practices award 2015** for their dedicated work in offering individualised support and sharing lessons learned.

Members of the Next Steps project were commended for developing individualized supports for people with intellectual disabilities so that they can live a life of their choosing. The project was also commended for its work in supporting people in their move from congregated settings into community-based settings.

Issues addressed by the Project

National policy recommends that people with intellectual disabilities are fully included in their communities, and individualised support enables people to live full lives as equal citizens. However, this requires the provision of a flexible range of support services that are tailored to the needs of the individual, and that are primarily determined by the person him/ herself.

Solution & Methodology of the Next Steps Project

The Next Steps Project aims to identify both supports and barriers to progress, as service providers move to offer more individualised assistance so that the people they support can live a life of their choosing. Through the project the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies has developed a community of learning, connecting the member organizations and key stakeholders with each other and enabling cooperation as they develop more innovative community-based support. One of the first actions of the Next Steps project was for the participating organizations to agree on a vision for individualised support, and this vision remains at the centre of the initiatives that the members are continually developing and implementing.

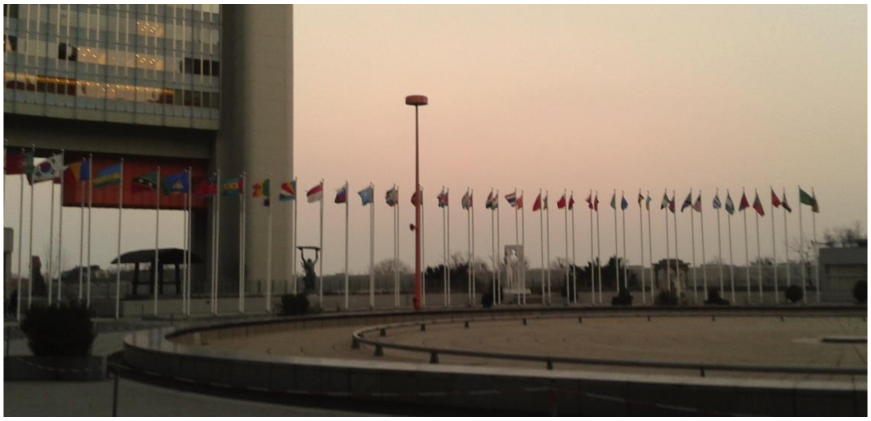
Members of the Next Steps Project at one of their shared learning events

Outlook & Transferability

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies are committed to ensuring that the learning gained is applied in a systemic way throughout the sector. In this regard, the Next Steps Project takes a case study approach, with each of the participating organizations reporting on their work with one or more persons on an individual basis, developing new types of support in line with the agreed vision. Initiatives are monitored regularly, and every two months the participants come together to share the lessons learned with all key stakeholders. Organizations have shared information through study visits, case study presentations, and two major national conferences. Currently, 23 organizations are participating in the project with over 240 people's journey's having been shared through case study learning to date.

The Zero Project

The Zero Project focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities globally. It provides a platform where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face are shared. The Zero Project was initiated by the Essl Foundation in 2010, and has run in partnership with the World Future Council since 2011 and with the European Foundation Centre since 2013. The mission of the Zero Project is to work for a world without barriers, according to the principles and Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).



UN Headquarters in Vienna where the Zero Project Awards were presented.

Inclusive Research Network – Where we are now

The Inclusive Research Network (IRN) have almost completed analysing the feedback from the current Research project which is called ***The Home & Independence Study*****.** At the meeting on March 10th the IRN talked about three different methods of launching the findings of this Research i.e. magazine, video & book. We will let you know more information about the launch once it is organised.

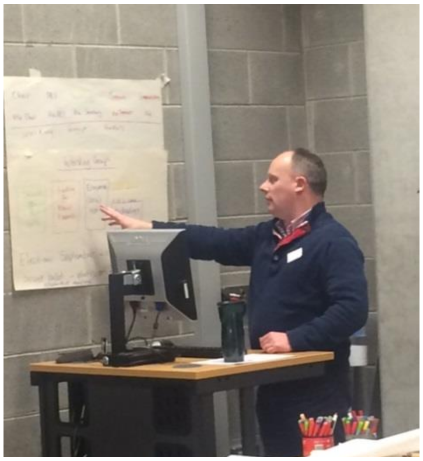
The IRN will be holding ***elections*** in September to elect a new **Steering Committee** as the current Steering Committee will be at the end of the its 3 year term. All positions are for re-election with the exception of Secretary which will continue to be held by Brian Donohoe from the National Federation. It has also been decided to add some new positions including a Communications Officer.

The IRN is also in the process of designing a ***new logo*** to make it more professional when communicating with outside agencies. Members from Galway chose 5 designs for IRN members to vote on. Each member filled out a voting sheet for the design, the color scheme and the type of lettering to use in the logo.

Following on from the ***submission*** made by the IRN members to the Department of Justice last September on the Sexual Offences against Vulnerable Persons Position Paper the IRN wrote to the Oireachtas Justice Committee members. An email was sent from Patrick Santry and Brian Donohoe on behalf of IRN in an effort to reinforce the point made in their submission that they don't want a separate law/offence for people with disabilities and don't feel the term 'vulnerable person' is appropriate.

At their last meeting IRN talked about ways of ***keeping in touch*** and worked on getting the names of one lead person for each group and ways to keep in contact with members between meetings by text and email so they feel part of the group. They got everyone's names and a lead person could be supported by staff.

IRN members working in groups analysing the results from the Home & Independence Study



Brian Donohoe presenting at an IRN meeting in February

Minister O'Sullivan announces allocation of resource teacher support to children with Down Syndrome

Interim allocations to be made pending the introduction of a new model of allocating additional teacher supports to all children with special educational needs.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan, T.D., has recently announced that the Government has agreed that additional resources will be allocated to schools as an interim measure to support those children with Down syndrome, who are not already supported through the National Council for Special Education's (NCSE) annual allocation process.

The Minister is introducing this measure now in recognition of the length of time it will take to introduce the new resource teacher model which was recommended by the NCSE. Under the interim measure schools will receive 2.5 resource teacher hours per week for each qualifying child.

These supports are being provided in recognition of the fact that children with Down syndrome experience a cluster of difficulties relating to this syndrome, in addition to general learning difficulties, including speech and language developmental delays.

These interim allocations will remain in place until such time as the proposed new model for allocating teaching supports to children with special education needs comes into force. Commenting on the announcement, Minister O'Sullivan said: "I have had the opportunity over recent weeks to meet with Down Syndrome Ireland, and with different groups of parents of children with Down syndrome. It has been clear to me that the cluster of difficulties which children with Down syndrome face, require that some additional teaching supports be made available.

"*Over the next couple of years, we will pilot and then implement a new model of allocating supports that will remove the need for parents to pay for assessments, and for children to receive a diagnosis in order to receive additional teaching support. In the meantime, I have decided that the needs of children with Down syndrome are sufficient to warrant an interim allocation.*

I want to thank the parents who took time from their busy lives over recent weeks, to share their experiences with me. It is very clear to me that we have more work to do to alleviate the burden on parents, but I hope the allocation announced today will go some way towards allowing their children to reach their full potential."

While there are expected to be some additional costs arising from this decision, the Minister has made clear that any additional costs which arise during 2015 will be met from within the existing Budgetary allocation for 2015.

Information for schools on how to apply for these supports will shortly be available on the NCSE website – www.ncse.ie.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Implementation of New Model on Allocation of Special Educational Need Teaching Resources postponed

In 2014 the Department of Education consulted with all relevant stakeholders on a proposed new model for allocating special educational resources in mainstream schools, and the National Federation made a submission in this regard.

The proposed new model moves away from special needs teaching resources being allocated based on diagnosis and instead provides for a needs-based model in which schools receive an allocation based on the profile of the school using a range of criteria including the number of students with complex needs in the school, the performance of the students in standardised tests on numeracy and literacy, along with the gender profile of the school and levels of social disadvantage. All schools would also receive a baseline level of support. Using the above model it is envisaged that the school will then be in a position to allocate the resources to individual children/classes rather than the allocation being set out by the Department.

In early February of this year, the Department of Education & Skills announced that it had not been possible to address fully some of the concerns relating to the new model, in time for it to be implemented from September 2015. The Department is currently working to devise a pilot of the new model, which schools could opt into on a voluntary basis in order to work through the complexity that is required to fully roll out the model.

As soon as we are advised of any movement on the implementation of the new model we will update all members.

Launch of translated Finnish version of the Informing Families Guidelines

International interest in the *National Best Practice Guidelines for Informing Families of their Child's Disability,* which were originally developed in Ireland by the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, has been growing over recent times. The use of the Guidelines has been under consideration for use in the Finnish health service over the past number of years.

We are delighted to announce that the Guidelines have now been translated into Finnish and were launched at Helsinki Children's Hospital on Thursday 12 February 2015.

The Finnish version of the Guidelines is available on www.jaatinen.info/ensitieto and here on www.informingfamilies.ie.

The *Best Practice Guidelines for Informing Families of their Child's Disability* were originally developed through a comprehensive process of consultation and research with families of children with disabilities and with professionals who support them. Through a collaborative process of partnership between agencies in Ireland and Finland, training was provided by the Informing Families Project Co-ordinator, Alison Harnett and Chair of the Cork Implementation Project, parent Katherine O'Leary in Helsinki and Tampere in 2012, to share the information gathered through the Irish experience.

Download the Finnish translation of the Best Practice Guidelines for Informing Families of their Child's Disability

Informing Families network in Finland

Following on from the initial training sessions in Finland an “Informing Families Network” (Ensitietoverkosto verkosto) was established in Finland. The members of this network include the Finnish Ombudsman for Children, health care professionals from a specific ‘informing families’ workgroup in Helsinki University Hospital, representatives from various disability organisations, and individuals supportive of the introduction of best practice in the area of communicating the diagnosis of a child’s disability to families.

The aim of the network has been to work towards the introduction of the recommendations of the *Best Practice Guidelines for informing Families of their Child’s Disability* in Finland. From the training provided it was clear to the partners that co-operation across all stakeholders is vitally important in this matter, and this led to the setting up of the network. Dr. Miina Weckroth, Executive Manager of “The Association for Jaatinen, the Finnish Activity Centre for Disabled Children and their Families” and herself a mother of a child with a disability, is the contact person for the network which has initiated this work in Finland.

Dr Weckroth explained the reasons that these guidelines are important to implement in Finland;

“We believe that the Irish Guidelines are very useful to us in Finland. The Guidelines are evidence based, and a comprehensive consultation and research programme was undertaken. The feedback so far from hospitals implementing the Guidelines has been positive, and as such we can see that they can already be used in Finland.”

Dr. Weckroth went on to say:

"The translation is very helpful as the national guidelines are being processed in Finland, which we hope, will take place soon. The Guidelines call for respect for the child and the family, they take into account the many aspects that are relevant to the communication practice and give clear policies to guide practice with practical advice. The Guidelines highlight important points (such as providing positive, realistic messages and hope) and these are areas that require more attention."

The photos below depict the attendees at the launch of the Finnish translation of the Best Practice Guidelines for Informing Famiiles of their Child's Disability' at Helsinki Children's Hospital on 12 February 2015.

From left Kaija Mikkola, MD, Neonatologist, HUS (The Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa) ; Tuomas Kurttila, Ombudsman for Children; Päivi Juvala; mother representing 'Helsingin Kehitysvammatuki 57 ry' (an NGO for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families); Sanna Kekki, mother and representative from Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability; Dr. Miina Weckroth, MD, PhD, Executive Manager, The Association for Jaatinen, the Finnish Activity Centre for Disabled Children and Their Families; Jorma Komulainen, MD, PhD, Editor in chief, The Finnish Medical Society Duodecim Current Care Guidelines.

(*Photo by Jarmo Nummenpää, HUS, Finland*).

Attendees at the launch of the Informing Families Guidelines in Finnish, at Helsinki Children's Hospital *(Photo by Anu Lönnqvist, The Association for Jaatinen, the Finnish Activity Centre for Disabled Children and Their Families)*

HSE Announce appointment of Leigh Gath as Confidential Recipient

In response to the revelations at Aras Attracta in December 2014, the Director General of the HSE set up the role of Confidential Recipient, independent of the HSE, to whom anyone can make a complaint or raise concerns about the care and treatment of any vulnerable person who receives care in a HSE facility. On Tuesday, 16th December, 2014 the HSE announced the appointment of Leigh Gath as a confidential recipient.

Leigh Gath, a well-known disability advocate, will act as a "Confidential Recipient", independent of the HSE, to whom anyone can make a complaint or raise concerns about the care and treatment of any vulnerable person receiving residential care in a HSE or HSE funded facility.

Over the last three decades Ms Gath has been campaigning tirelessly and often fiercely for the rights of people with disabilities. Two years ago she successfully led a campaign to get the government to reverse planned cuts to PA services for people with significant disabilities.

To find out more about Leigh Gath and the role of the Confidential Recipient, click link http://www.hse.ie/confidential

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Member's News

Co Action

CoAction
EMPOWER • SUPPORT • CARE

Inspired by the achievements of a number of people who are now living more fulfilled lives in ordinary community places with supports provided in different ways CoAction undertook to have a look at the enablers and challenges to continuing to progress in this direction. Key factors which have been at the heart of people evolving their lives to more meaningful and connected relationships in community have been; people themselves and their own belief in the possibilities; support from other significant non service people such as family and friends; and a flexible supportive structure.

While these factors are broadly shared across the experiences of people who have made or are making transitions of choice it is evident that further structural and relational changes are needed in sustaining a growing number of people looking for moves to more community based options. Such options be they 'day' activities including training and work, living / 'home' options in community, social and recreational interests or lifestyle choices broader than current service options.

Is it worth doing? Well in the opinion of Martin who has recently moved from a residential group home to private rental accommodation with two friends. Martin describes the best thing as being "There are no staff and I'm the boss".

A core response in positioning ourselves for this journey as people, families, service and community has been a deliberative look at growing from core values. In practical terms this has involved four lead staff members completing the 'Enabling Excellence' (E.E.) training with Genio in 2014 and partnering with people and their families in enabling new opportunities of choice for people.

This has evolved in 2015 to a 'Values In Practice' programme using the UNCRPD, CoAction Vision, the E.E. Social Role Valorisation training and current Statutory Policy as enablers of thinking our way to a different place in supporting existing and emerging progression for people. This approach in thinking and actions in 'living the values' is happening concurrently (through 2015) with people who avail of supports, staff, families and community partners.

Martin contributing to the 3 day 'Values in Practice 'training with CoAction staff February 2015

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WALK

WALK launched **"Accessing Mainstream Training: Barriers for People with Intellectual Disabilities"**, a report funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.
It highlighted the following barriers:

- **Prejudices** outlined through negative attitudes towards people with disabilities; and a perceived hierarchy of disabilities.
- **Capacity** of the education provider ranging from lack of skills to limited awareness and a dearth of appropriate support.
- **Structural barriers** through lack of availability of appropriate levels of courses and qualifications.

Practical barriers included transport and logistics but also excesses of bureaucracy and administrative issues.

Joe Mason, CEO of WALK noted that unfortunately, there are no surprises in the report. It is however a fundamental piece of work as we support the full and active citizenship of all people. We hope educational institutions realise their legal obligation to support people in accessing mainstream education.

l-r: Angela Hegarty (Equality Expert and report writer) Carole Sullivan (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission) Mick Teehan (WALK) Stefania Minervino (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission) Joe Mason (WALK)

Carole Sullivan, Head of the Mainstreaming Unit, IRHEC, congratulated WALK on the report and encouraged us to use the report for promoting positive action and reasonable accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities.

WALK have established great partnerships with some education and training centres. We continue to work collaboratively with I.T. Tallaght who actively support people with disabilities in mainstream third level education.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Camphill Communities of Ireland

The Camphill Family & Friends Association (CFFA) has been a large part of Camphill life over many decades and has been a key supporter of the Camphill life. The CFFA organised a very successful presentation to members of the Oireachtas on key issues of concern to Camphill life on 25 February 2015. For more information on this meeting visit the Camphill website at: http://www.camphill.ie/Dail-Presentation-February-2015 .

Upcoming Events

DOCTRID

DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH INTO DISABILITY

RESPECT

Queen's University Belfast

Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services

DOCTRID IV Conference

Visit www.doctrid.ie to register!

Where: Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland

When: 27th & 28th April, 2015

Who should be there? Researchers (social, technological, behavioural and life sciences), Health care professionals, People with Intellectual Disability (ID)/Autism, their families and carers.

Join us for presentations from international experts in research and service provision panel discussions, workshops and poster sessions highlighting the future solutions to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and autism.

Key themes to be discussed:

Quality of Life and Social Inclusion
Gaps and innovations in service delivery
Prevention and Epidemiology
Future and Assistive Technologies

We look forward to seeing you in Belfast.

Consent & Capacity -
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Saturday 18th April 2015, Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Dublin 8

The date for La Touche Training's upcoming Conference - 'Consent & Capacity - Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults' has been set.

Who should attend ?

Healthcare professionals, solicitors, barristers, representatives from insurance companies and those who have an interest in the area of caring for the vulnerable adult.

Topics will include:

- Consent and the Vulnerable Adullt
- National Consent Policy, 2013
- Capacity: The current legal position
- Enduring Powers of Attorney and Wardship
- Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Orders (DNARs)
- The Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Bill, 2013

We look forward to seeing you at Conference.

La Touche Training | Suite 329 | The Capel Building | Mary's Abbey | Dublin 7 |
Tel: 01 8788 255 | www.latouchetraining.ie

BOOK NOW >

MAKE ENQUIRY >

7th International Disability Law Summer School in Galway

Monday 22 June to Friday 26 June 2015

This year's theme will be disability-inclusive development aid. We look forward, as usual, to a world-class Faculty and participants from around the globe including persons with disabilities, civil society groups, advocates for disability law reform, lawyers, policy makers and policy analysts. Registration and programme details will follow.

For a taster of our School see the video here.
See the recorded sessions from the 2014 School here.

European Yearbook of Disability Law – Volume 5

We are also delighted to announce the release of Volume 5 of the *European Yearbook of Disability Law* edited by Professor Gerard Quinn and Dr Eilionóir Flynn of the Centre, along with Professor Lisa Waddington of the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, Maastricht University. More details and purchasing information are available here.

Centre for Disability Law and Policy
School of Law
Institute for Lifecourse & Society
Dangan, North Campus
National University of Ireland, Galway
+353 91 495888
www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp

National Job Shadow Day

Over 750 employers set to inspire career choices of job seekers with disability

The Irish Association for Supported Employment (IASE) has launched the eighth annual National Supported Employment Week which will run from Monday 20th – Sunday 26th April. Job Shadow Day (Wednesday 22nd April) is the highlight of the week and will see hundreds of people with disabilities take the opportunity to shadow a workplace mentor as he or she goes about a normal working day. Job Shadow Day brings people with disabilities and local employers together to highlight the valuable contribution people with disabilities can, and do make in the workplace. Last year, over 625 individuals with a disability shadowed at 501 employment sites in Ireland, with 34 securing a permanent job placement as a direct result. 113 jobs have been secured through the initiative since 2008.

IrishJobs.ie, Ireland’s number one recruitment website, is the main sponsor of National Supported Employment Week and the Job Shadow initiative.

Everybody is getting involved to open their doors to ability and inclusion, whether it are local businesses and organisations in your area, TV personalities or the Taoiseach! This truly is a great opportunity to promote inclusive business and employment.

This year, the IASE is inviting the public to play a more active role by joining the conversation on social media - tweeting a workplace selfie under the hashtag #workie, taking a 60 second video explaining why you support Job Shadow Day, or by nominating a company you know to get involved under the hashtag #JSnominate (@IASEemployment).
Employers and job seekers interested in participating in Job Shadow Day 2015 are invited to register their interest at www.iase.ie or email jobshadow@iase.ie or telephone 097 82894 for more information.

Training & Education opportunities

Open Training College (OTC) publishes new courses information

The OTC is delighted to announce the publication of new brochures outlining some of the award winning courses on offer to the sector this year.

The OTC courses are created by and for people from the disability and human services sector. They are sector specific, student-centred, practical, relevant and professionally accredited.

Our approach and educational philosophy is entirely driven by the needs of our learning community. This is made up of our expert staff, committed students, partner organisations and service users who, working together, create a truly unique learning experience.

For healthcare staff operating within the new HIQA regulatory environment and seeking an accredited and appropriate management qualification, the OTC has 3 courses available:

- Certificate in Applied Management (Nonprofit/Human Services), QQI, Level 6, 1 year duration

- Higher Certificate in Applied Management (Nonprofit/Human Services), QQI, Level 6, 1 year duration

- BA in Applied Management (Nonprofit/Human Services), QQI, Level 7, 1 year duration

For frontline staff wishing to achieve a professional qualification in Social Care, the OTC is offering:

- Honours BA in Applied Social Studies (Disability), QQI, Level 8, 1 year duration

- BA in Applied Social Studies (Disability), QQI, Level 7, 3 years duration

The OTC also offers a suite of customised, short courses in Supported Employment, Person Centred Planning, Positive Behavioural Supports, and Train the Trainer, among others, delivered regionally or onsite at your location.

For your copy of the latest courses brochures, or to find out more about any of our courses, please call Conor on 01-2990580 or email Conor at enquiries@opentrainingcollege.com, or check our courses webpage link: opentrainingcollege.com/home/courses/

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Food for Thought

The Assumption Trap

As a society we are guilty of making assumptions about people in terms of their ability; such assumptions are usually based on many cosmetic factors which are not necessarily reflective of who the person actually is or what their ability is.

This is particularly true for people with disabilities. How many times through the years have we heard that a person with a disability was less than capable? This may have been in relation to holding down a job, or living independently. It may have been in relation to travelling independently or preparing a meal. Those of us working with people with disabilities know that these assumptions are incorrect; we know that everyone can learn, everyone can build their skill set and everyone can work towards a goal, regardless of the ability or disability. We know that the disability is just one aspect of who the person is – it may result in a different set of needs or supports, but it does not mean the person cannot do things and it certainly does not mean the person is of lesser worth than their able bodied counterparts.

Society assumes the able bodied person can achieve what they wish regardless of the supports required.

Society also tends to assume that people with disabilities cannot achieve what they wish, regardless of the supports available.

Is this assumption not far more disabling than any disability?

Niav McEvoy