
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF VOLUNTARY BODIES

Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disability

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**Welcome to National Federation Newsletter
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New Era for Intellectual Disability Sector

There has probably rarely been a more exciting, if somewhat challenging, time for people with disabilities, their families, the services who support them and the policy makers. As I write we have a new Government elected who will, as part of their new Programme for Government, have regard to the National Disability Strategy and the Value for Money & Policy Review and other important national policy initiatives. A key catalyst for the progression of change in the lives of people with disabilities and the organisations supporting them has been the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Clearly major changes in how services and supports are configured and delivered will become an immediate priority.

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies has been reflecting on how best to meet the challenges inherent in these important developments. The Board and member organisations of the National Federation have explicitly stated that they are up for the challenges presented which they will address in a proactive and constructive fashion.

However, as we embark on this very important next phase in the evolution of the intellectual disability sector in Ireland, we do so in the knowledge that we will not be accompanied on our journey by some very important people who have played a key role in the development of the sector both in terms of services and policy over the past number of decades. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies acknowledges the critical roles played by Mr. Paul Ledwidge, Chief Executive, St. Michael's House; Ms. Maura Nash, Chief Executive, COPE Foundation; Ms. Marian Keigher, Chief Executive, Brothers of Charity Roscommon, all of whom have recently announced their decision to retire. In so doing, they join Mr. John O'Dea, former Executive Director, Western Care Association, and Mr. Michael Noone, former Managing Director, Sunbeam House Services, Bray who retired from their positions in 2010. All are people of the highest calibre who made huge contributions, not just to the development of their own organisations but, also at the national level by ensuring that the full extent of the unmet needs of persons with intellectual disability was understood by Government and through their advocacy by having those needs substantially met. They will be missed, but their professionalism, dedication, commitment and pioneering efforts will act as a formidable example as we brace ourselves to meet the many challenges ahead. We should

also acknowledge at this time the outstanding contribution made by Mr. John Moloney, T.D., during his term as Minister for Disability & Mental Health. During very difficult times his strident advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities at the cabinet table meant that disability services were protected from the worst of the funding cuts and his efforts in this regard are appreciated by all in the Disability Sector.

As already stated, disability supports are on the cusp of the most significant change and reform. Developments in national and international policy are significantly converging at the present time, identifying an urgent need to radically change the ways in which people with disabilities are supported to live ordinary lives of their choosing, as citizens and valued members of their communities. This creates many challenges, but also opportunities to do things differently and more effectively. Services will increasingly be based on choice and focussed on inclusion, ensuring that ordinary life experiences are available to people with intellectual disabilities who will have more control in the decision making processes relating to matters affecting their lives. This will be achieved through a reconfiguration of current service delivery models, including the individualisation of supports which will be enabled by individualised funding mechanisms, including a facilitation of self directed services.

The summary of key proposals from the Review of Disability Policy (Department of Health & Children 2010) recently published by the Department of Health & Children, indicates that the current model of services provision will be unsustainable and thus requires innovative reform. In this regard, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies believes that civil society will play a more active role in shaping change and addressing needs. There will be increased and urgent emphasis on the development of more integrated approaches, greater dialogue and consultation between Governmental and non-Governmental organisations and greater transparency and accountability on the part of all the actors in terms of their activities, priorities and outcomes. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies will develop an out-reach programme to partner with existing community groups at a national level in order to leverage the potential in natural supports for people with intellectual disability at every level of community life; sporting; recreation; citizenship; youth organisations and more. The aim of the programme will be to animate national connections in order to develop capacity for inclusion and belonging of people with intellectual disability within each of these organisations and to mobilise the national potential in each for stimulating social inclusion.

This is just one example of what different will look like. Clearly the challenge as we look to the future will be to ensure that the services and supports are sustainable, relevant and bring a measurable value add to the quality of people's lives. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies is committed to working closely with the people we support and their families, Government and our funders to ensure that this challenge is met in a proactive and enthusiastic way.

Brian O'Donnell,
Chief Executive.

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Welcomes New Board of Directors

Following completion of its review of its Memorandum & Articles of Association, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies arranged for the election of a new Board of Directors during February 2011. Each Area Federation Committee had the power to elect two directors to the Board and the people elected are as follows:

Dublin Mid Leinster: Christy Lynch (KARE) & John Hannigan (Sunbeam House)
Dublin North East: Pat Reen (Prosper Fingal) & Wally Freyne (Daughters of Charity Services)
Southern Area: Maura Nash (COPE Foundation) & Conor Counihan (St. Joseph's Foundation)
South East Area: Francis Coughlan (SOS Kilkenny) & Trevor Jacob (CWCW Enniscorthy)
Western Area: Bernard O'Regan (Western Care) & Winifred O'Hanrahan (Brothers of Charity)

The inaugural meeting of the new Board will take place on Tuesday, 15th March, 2011, where they will elect a new Chairperson of the National Federation and also co-opt up to five additional directors.

Seminar entitled "Individualised Supports - Supporting Service Providers in Transition"

The seminar entitled **Individualised Supports - Supporting Service Providers in Transition** was organised by the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, in conjunction with the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, NUI Galway, on 9th December 2010. The seminar was organised to discuss the challenge in supporting service providers on the individualisation of services in their organisations.



Two international speakers **Ms. Anne Hawker from New Zealand** and **Ms. Molly Harrington from Canada** were invited to speak to share the experiences and challenges they faced with this process in their countries. Ms. Anne Hawker who is currently the Principal Disability Adviser at the Ministry of Social Development, gave a presentation entitled "*The New Environment*" and Ms. Molly Harrington who is the Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy & Research Division, Ministry Of Social Development, British Columbia, Canada gave a presentation entitled "*Community Living British Columbia*".

This was followed by a questions & answers and discussion session. All presentations from the day are now available for download from our website www.fedvol.ie

Launch of Going to College Project



An inclusive higher education initiative to support the civic engagement of persons with intellectual disabilities at NUI Galway

The Launch of the Going to College Project took place on Monday 17th January 2011 in NUI Galway. Conor Pope who is a TV presenter and Irish Times journalist & former student of NUI Galway welcomed everyone and introduced the speakers.

The Going to College Project is a university/community partnership between the UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, NUI Galway; the Community Knowledge Initiative, NUI Galway and the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. This project will enhance the opportunity for students to develop the vision, knowledge and transferable skills to live a more inclusive, independent life in their community.

Students will participate in classes and other learning activities alongside undergraduate students and will also have an opportunity to participate in a number of existing NUI Galway community and civic engagement offerings, including:

- volunteering through the ALIVE programme,
- involvement in community activities/projects,
- active engagement in university clubs and societies
- work placements linked with their area of study



Left to Right: Dr Edward Herring, Dean of Arts and Prof Nollaig MacCongail, Deputy President and Registrar both from NUIG, and Ms Marie Wolfe and Mr Ger Minogue who are both members of the Going to College Advisory Group.

The first speaker was Pat Dolan UNESCO Chair of Children, Youth & Civic Engagement. He spoke about how the launch of the Going to College Project would be the beginning of a Process of inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in third level education in NUI Galway. He also said how this was a big step for NUI Galway and that he was happy to be involved in the process. He talked about how important it was for everyone to have a chance to learn and

to make friends and get involved in college life. He also said that this was a good example of a university/community partnership that worked well together to support students going to college.

The next speaker was Breda Casey who is working with NUI Galway to co-ordinate the Going to College Project. She spoke about how the students would start college in NUI Galway in September

2011 and each student would be individually supported while in college. She also said that they would be included in all aspects of college life both social and academic and they would have an opportunity to do some volunteering and work placements and join college clubs and societies. She said they would start recruiting students in March 2011.

The next speaker was Brian O'Donnell, CEO of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. He spoke a little about the National Federation's members and how they have a presence in nearly every town in Ireland. He said that the National Federation was delighted to be a partner in such a positive project and that it would give students an opportunity to learn skills that would help them to choose the life they wanted to live.

Then there was a panel discussion around the importance of people with intellectual disabilities having the opportunity to attend third level and what support could be given to them. The panel included:

- Self advocates (Marie Wolfe, Ger Minogue)
- Family representative (Peggy Ryan)
- 3rd year student from NUI Galway (Aimee Lyons),
- Dean of the Arts Faculty from NUI Galway (Edward Herring)
- Director of Research and Policy Development from the National Federation secretariat (Edel Tierney)
- Coordinator & Academic Staff Developer of the Community Knowledge Initiative, NUI Galway (Lorraine McIlrath)
- Two people involved in business and who have agreed to act as employer champions for the project (Tina Roche from Business in the Community and Padraig O'Ceidigh from Aer Arann)

After the panel discussion there was a keynote address by Bruce Uditsky & E. Anne Hughson from the Alberta Association of Community Living & University of Calgary, Alberta Canada. They spoke about how they have been supporting people with disabilities going to college in Alberta for over twenty years. They also showed a short DVD presentation on the project in Canada which showed people with disabilities taking part fully in every aspect of university life in Canada. It also shows that both the students and the college benefited from the experience.

After that the going to college project was officially launched by Professor Nollaig Mac Congail Registrar & Deputy President of NUI Galway who said that NUI Galway was very committed to including students with intellectual disabilities in all aspects of college life.

*Brian Donohoe, National Federation Secretariat
March 2011*

Masterclass 5: Family Leadership & Partnership- Supporting and Empowering Families

The fifth in a series of Master Classes *Family Leadership & Partnership - Supporting and Empowering Families* took place on January 19th in the Tullamore Court Hotel. This Master Class examined the issue of family leadership and partnership. The question of how we can work together to develop and nurture this relationship was explored. Bruce Uditsky, Chief Executive of the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) and a parent and also E. Anne Hughson, Director/Associate Professor, Community Rehabilitation & Disability Studies, University of Calgary

were keynote speakers. Bruce and Anne facilitate the AACL annual Leadership Series for families in Alberta which has gained national and international recognition. The Albertan experience was accompanied by examples from across Ireland of families and services who have embarked on the journey of working together to support people with an intellectual disability lead inclusive and fulfilling lives. Peggy Ryan (Parent) and Sean Conneally (Director of East Galway Adult Services Brothers of Charity Services Galway) gave a presentation entitled *"A Family's Reflections on Working in Partnership with a Service Provider"*. A project in Ability West was represented by Colette Daly, Brega Kelly, and Carol Ann Beegan and examined the topic of *Family Empowerment, Where to Start?* Martina Rynne from the Brothers of Charity Services Clare spoke about her experiences and learning from Mamre in Australia and how she brought these principles of working back to Clare *Family Leadership - What? Why? How?*. Leap – Families working in Partnership were represented by Rachel Cassen and Geraldine Graydon. LEAP stands for Leading - Showing and leading the way, Educating - Families, Professionals, Service Providers & Policymakers, Advocating resource allocation system and system and policy change and Planning - for better futures for people with Intellectual Disabilities and for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. There was also a presentation from Prof. Pat Dolan UNESCO Chair and Director of Child and Family Research Centre Galway.

All presentations from the day are now available for download from our website www.fedvol.ie. Feedback was very positive from this event and included some important insights about the role of families in the future for designing and developing services and supports.



E. Anne Hughson, Sean Conneally, Peggy Ryan, Bruce Utditsky and Brian O'Donnell in a questions and answers session

National Co-ordinating Group on Progressing Disability Services for Children & Young People

The National Co-ordinating Group on Progressing Disability Services for Children & Young People was convened by the HSE and is chaired by Ms. Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive, Ability West. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies is represented on the group by Ms. Maria Walls, Director of Research & Policy Development, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Secretariat. To ensure that the breadth of National Federation's views is represented in this process of the

development of Children's Disability Services, we have agreed to establish a National Federation of Voluntary Bodies' Progressing Disability Services for Children & Young People Reference Group.

Nominations were sought from Member Organisations to participate in the Reference Group. The key aim of this Reference Group is to provide a conduit for information sharing and consultation between National Federation member organisations and our representative on the National Co-ordinating Group. The inaugural meeting of this group took place on Tuesday, 8th March, 2011..

National Federation Hosts Seminar entitled 'Advocacy in Ireland: Changing Times'

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies held a seminar entitled: **Advocacy in Ireland: Changing Times** in Dublin on Wednesday, 9th February, 2011. The purpose of this seminar was to inform our members about the new National Advocacy Service which was established in January this year. The National Advocacy Service fulfils the legislative promise as set out in Comhairle Act 2000 and the Citizens Information Act 2007 to provide independent, representative advocacy services for people with disabilities. It will be managed by five Citizens Information Services and supported by the Citizens Information Board and will take over the work of the 46 pilot advocacy projects, with a particular remit for more vulnerable people with disabilities. The new Service follows many of the recommendations of the Evaluation of the Programme of Advocacy Services for People with Disabilities in the Community and Voluntary Sector Final Report.

The service will be regionally structured with five regional teams to provide a service to people with all types of disability across the country. Each regional team will be managed by a particular Citizens Information Service in Dublin, Westmeath, Offaly, Waterford and Leitrim. Teams will have a regional manager, a senior advocate and a number of other advocates. In the near future, the enactment of the instrument to legislate for the advocates statutory powers as set out in the above legislation will be agreed. The Managers in the different regions are as follows:

- 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

The Seminar was well attended by our members and included a large number of people supported by member organisations. The speakers and their presentations were as follows:

- Standing Beside: Human Rights Principles and International Perspectives on Advocacy - Dr Eilíonoir Flynn, CDLP, NUI Galway
- The Roll out of the National Advocacy Service in Ireland in 2011 - Ms Helen Lahert, National Advocacy Service
- Advocacy in Practice - Ms. Selina Doyle, Regional Advocacy Manager
- "Choosing Where I Live" - Bert Coster & Rachel Bergin

The presentations are available on our website www.fedvol.ie

Inclusive Research Network - Launch Report of National Study on Friendships Relationships and Supports

On 1st March the Inclusive Research Network launched the report of its national study on Relationships & Supports Study: People with Intellectual Disability in Ireland. This report is now available for download from www.fedvol.ie/irn.

The day was packed with other inclusive projects which have been happening around the country including; "My Story" by Martin Doohar; "I'd like to choose who I dance with" –An Inclusive Research Project on Bullying by The Brothers of Charity Roscommon; CSI Kilkenny the Movie with an introduction by Marrie Bergin & Margaret Larkin from SOS Kilkenny.

Members of the Clare Inclusive Research Group introduced us to Forum Drama and we tried this out by using it to explore the topic of relationships. Alison Harnett from the National Federation gave us a briefing on the New Next Steps Project which is being undertaken by the National Federation. Finally we spent some time exploring what the members of the Inclusive Research Network would like to do next.

All presentations are available for download on our website. See www.fedvol.ie/irn



Using forum drama to explore the topic of relationships



Members of the IRN discuss the future of the Network

Meeting Law Reform Commission

The Law Reform Commission has invited the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies to an informal discussion on the Review of the Criminal Sexual Offences Act, 1993, as part of their consultation on Sexual Offences and Vulnerable Adults Project under the Commissions Third Programme of Law Reform. Nominations will shortly be sought from member organisations for people to attend this meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday 30th March in the Law Reform Commission Offices. The meeting will be organised in two parts:

- (1) The first part will be for National Federation members to exchange views with each other and agree key messages.
- (2) The second part of the meeting will be with Patricia T. Rickard Clarke, Commissioner of the Law Reform Commission and Darelle O'Keefe, Legal Researcher on the project.

The LRC intend to publish a consultation document on this area in September 2011.

Training and Development

SKILL Programme 2011/12 – Call for nominations:

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies has been allocated 150 places for the SKILL Programme training which is commencing in autumn 2011. Organisations that are interested in nominating Support Service Staff / Managers to undertake the FETAC Level 5 / 6 training should contact Jillian Sexton – jillian.sexton@fedvol.ie - by Mid March for full details. To date almost 900 staff / managers from across National Federation member organisations have registered with the SKILL Programme with 420 participants having successfully completed their training and graduated. Two briefing sessions, jointly organised with the Disability Federation of Ireland, took place during February 2011 and were targeted at training personnel and Support Service Staff / Managers.



Further details on the SKILL Programme can be found on the programme website – www.skillprogramme.ie

Manual Handling Instruction Standards – Health & Safety Authority:

Ms. Fiona Colvin, Risk Manager, Stewarts Care, has been representing the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies on the Manual Handling Training Advisory Group which was established by the Health & Safety Authority in 2006. Through the work of the group two FETAC Level 6 Standards (specific purpose certificates) for Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction have been developed. The group also developed a policy in relation to FETAC registration of Training Providers who deliver manual handling instruction and people handling instruction. Full details on the manual handling standards are available on the FETAC website – www.fetac.ie

Fiona was thanked for her work in representing the National Federation on this Advisory Group and for the regular feedback which she has provided to members of the Federation / Training & Development Sub-Committee.

Human Resource Matters

Establishment of Health & Safety / Employee Wellbeing Sub-Committee:

A new working group was established to facilitate health and safety practitioners within National Federation member organisations to meet with colleagues to pursue objectives of common interest and to share information on best practices regarding health and safety management, policies and procedures and other key documents across Federation member organisations. The group is now formalising itself as a Federation Sub-Committee and is agreeing its terms of reference. If you are interested in getting involved in the work of the group please contact Jillian Sexton – jillian.sexton@fedvol.ie

Vhi Corporate Solutions – Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):



The Vhi Corporate Solutions Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides confidential counselling and information services to 28 member organisations of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. The purpose of the EAP is to provide employees within member organisations with easy access to confidential short term counselling and to date, has provided support for a wide range of issues including both personal and work related concerns, which include emotional health, relationship, financial and family issues.

All employees in contact with the service receive a comprehensive psycho-social assessment according to their specific needs, followed by the identification of the most appropriate plan of action, whether that be a referral to a counsellor or other support/resource options that suit these needs. This immediate access to experienced and qualified EAP professionals – both qualified counsellors and information specialists - ensures that employees are provided with a positive and supportive first contact through which they can access the highest quality assistance and support on both work and non-work related issues.

Case Study:

The two facets of the EAP team often work in tandem in the provision of support to an individual i.e. providing practical information in conjunction with emotional support. A recent case example of how this works is as follows:

An individual called through to the EAP regarding her husband's business which is failing. Their family home has been used for collateral and a lot of the loans were in her name. The EAP Specialist Information team provided information on how to approach banks and also information on who to go to for legal assistance with her current situation. During this the clinical team also provided emotional support and the person was referred out to face to face counselling to help deal with relationship issues and stress, which were caused by the situation she is facing.

The EAP is provided by Vhi Corporate Solutions and in conjunction with the NFVB, a highly competitive rate has been agreed for all member organisations. If your organisation has not yet signed up to the EAP and if you would like further information on the service, please contact Joe Doddy (Senior EAP Consultant) on 085-1100427 or 01-7994120, or you can email info@vhics.ie.

Member Organisation's News

New CEO Appointments:

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies would like to welcome the following new appointments:

- Ms. Patricia Doherty who has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of St. Michael's House following the retirement of Mr. Paul Ledwidge;
- Mr. John Murphy who has been appointed as General Manager, St. Patrick's Centre Kilkenny following the retirement of Ms. Noelle Cody;
- Ms. Margaret Glackin, who has been appointed as Acting CEO, Brothers of Charity Services, Roscommon, following the retirement of Ms. Marian Keigher.

New Housing Initiative for People with Intellectual Disability Completed

The completion of a new housing project at Leargan, Ballymoneen for people with intellectual and physical disability, some of whom lived in a two storey house on the Woodlands Campus in Renmore, marks a major milestone in their lives. The new homes and apartments were planned and purpose built to meet the specific needs of people with an intellectual disability. In a joint programme between the Peter Triest Housing Association, Galway City Council, The Department of the Environment, The Brothers of Charity Services and O'Malley Construction, housing is being provided for a total of 20 people under Part V of the Housing Act.



Left to right - Tony Bruton & Catherine Dillon, New Tenants, Mixie Donohue, Manager, Anne Geraghty, Acting CEO Brothers of Charity Services, Galway, Ann Loughney & John Joe Higgins, Directors of Peter Triest Housing, Helen Casserley, Managing Director O'Malley Construction, Minister Eamon O'Cuiv, David Casserley, Director O'Malley Construction, Jarlath Joyce, Site Foreman & Marcus Feeley, Site Engineer, O'Malley Construction.

In one of his last public engagements before he leaves office, Mr. Eamon O'Cuiv who has held a number of ministerial portfolios in recent times, acting in his role as Minister for the Environment, was present for the official handover of the project by David & Helen Casserley, Directors of O'Malley Construction, John Joe Higgins & Anne Loughney, Directors of Peter Triest Housing Association.

The new homes will greatly enhance the quality of life for the people who have moved from an institutional setting to live in the community. It will allow them space and privacy to live life in the community with the support of staff members from The Brothers of Charity Services. This project is another step to enable all people with an intellectual disability in Co. Galway move from institutional settings to live in their communities.

Walkinstown Association Rebrand and Launch New Strategic Plan

On 25th March 2011 Walkinstown Association will rebrand and launch a new strategic plan and revamped website (www.walk.ie).



Roscommon Advocacy Council / Research Group Project

The Roscommon Advocacy Council / Research Group consists of Suzanne Birchill, Mary Reddy, Stacey Myers, Margaret Conneran, Ruth Costello, Sean Keaveney & Tommy Hoey. The group is co-ordinated by the Kieran Keon & Anna Nolan (Social Work dept). The group has conducted a Research Project on Bullying. The methodology included one-to-one interviews and a focus group. This information has been collated into a final report. The findings of the research have been presented at the National Advocacy Conference in Clare. They have also presented their work in Trinity College Dublin at the Anti-Bullying Strategy group and in Galway at the Inclusive Research Network gathering.

The image shows the cover of a report. It has a purple background. At the top, the text "The Roscommon Advocacy Research Group" is written in white. Below that, "Inclusive Research on Bullying" is written in a larger white font. At the bottom right, "2010/2011" is written in white. In the center, there is a small cartoon illustration of two children, one taller and one shorter, standing and talking.

The Roscommon Advocacy
Research Group
Inclusive Research on Bullying
2010/2011

The Advocacy/Research group have also made a short video which involves a story entitled "I'd like to choose who I dance with" that tells the story of a young woman who experiences bullying on a night out. The video along with the research report portrays the message that Bullying is unacceptable and informs people what they should do to deal with this issue of Bullying such as; talking to friends, making a key person aware of the problem and also makes suggestions on how people should be supported to do role plays to educate each other on how to deal with some issues that affect them. The group have said that they have worked very hard in 2011 and hope to continue to work on researching issues that affect people with an Intellectual Disability and indeed the wider community.



'WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP' –

ABILITY WEST SERVICE USER COUNCIL

Ability West has a Service User Council in place which is representative of service users throughout its services. The Council has 13 members and meets regularly with the main purpose of being a representative voice for service users and having a meaningful forum by which issues of common interest are discussed. Council members regularly meet with the Senior Management Team and other groups within the organisation. Jimmy Sweeney, Chairperson of the Council also meets regularly with Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive of Ability West.

Members have been working through advocacy training which is good support when it comes to Council work. Ability West is currently developing its Strategic Plan for the next 3 years and the Service User Council have been involved in this. Indeed the Council have been instrumental in highlighting elements of crucial importance identified by service users themselves as part of this Plan.

We would like to link up with other Service User Councils throughout the country to form alliances in terms of sharing experiences, discussing common interest issues and being a mechanism for providing support to each other.

We would be delighted to hear from other Service User Councils, our contact details are:

- Jimmy Sweeney, Chairperson, Service User Council, Ability West, Blackrock House, Salthill, Galway. Telephone – 093 28707, Email: teamproducts@abilitywest.ie (note for Jimmy Sweeney's attention)
- Eileen Costello-Conneely, Facilitator, Service User Council. Telephone – 091 540900, Email: Eileen.costello@abilitywest.ie
- Ability West contacts: Website - www.abilitywest.ie  www.facebook.com/abilitywest

Your Power Your Vote

Sunbeam House Services have produced a short film entitled 'Your Power, Your Vote'. This was a result of the Sunbeam Service Users Forum approaching Sunbeam Media with the idea for an educational DVD.

From left in photo: Maura O'Loughlin, Personal Outcomes Trainer, Sunbeam House Services; Dan Ryan, Service User, Sunbeam House Services; Sinead Kavanagh and Mark Cagney from Ireland AM on TV3



Especially geared for people with learning disabilities, it outlines why you should vote, how to register and how to vote. Service-user Dan Ryan, the main man in the film, appeared on both TV3 and East Coast FM to promote the production. The film was distributed to a number of organisations around the country. Fun, funny and informative, it can be seen on the Sunbeam website www.sunbeam.ie, by clicking on the youtube link on the home page.

First Prize for Sunbeam House

Hall Lodge, a residential house in Sunbeam House Services, is proud to have won first prize under the 'Commitment' category in the Astellas 'Changing Tomorrow' Awards 2010, from over 100 entries. When financial cutbacks meant clients in the unit could no longer take an annual holiday, staff got together and set up a client holiday fund. They organised a number of fund-raising events, including a mock wedding and a quiz. Affordable holidays were sourced, and all clients enjoyed a fantastic break away which would not have otherwise been possible. Holidays included a trip on the Tall Ships with the Jubilee Sailing Trust, holiday cottages for a group of 5, a trip to the UK, and a hotel break for one client. The fund also provided for staff expenses, although some staff brought

clients away in their own time. Improvement in staff morale and more contented clients were two of the very positive benefits of the endeavour. The group would now like to widen the scope of their fund to improve the physical and emotional well-being of clients via purchasing more equipment to enhance their quality of life.



Congratulations are also due to Connect Employment, a division of Sunbeam House Services, who were specially commended under the Leadership Section of the Awards.

From left:- Patricia Kelly, Astellas Award Committee; Lyn Kirby, Unit Manager Hall Lodge, Sunbeam House Services; John Phelan, Community Support Worker, Sunbeam House Services; Phyllis O'Connor, Cook & Community Support Worker, Sunbeam House Services; Anne Nolan, Astellas Award Committee.

Websites and Resources:

Boardmatch - Do you need new board members?

Getting the right mix of skills, experience and knowledge on your Board is essential to having an effective and high performing board and organisation.

Boardmatch offers you an opportunity to recruit skilled and experienced people, from the business and professional, public and private sectors, for your Board.

Through Boardmatch you can:

- Get access to skills sets that may not be readily available
- Increase the diversity of your board composition
- Strengthen your board, and your organisation
- Enhance the governance in your organisation
- Develop contacts and relationships with Business

The online service is **free** and easy to use. Register your organisation at www.boardmatchireland.ie or contact Fiona O'Connor for further information on 01 6715005 or fiona@boardmatchireland.ie

"Boardmatch is a great resource. We needed to find a new board member who would bring strong financial and corporate governance skills. We filled the position on our first attempt with Boardmatch and have benefited hugely from his input."
EIRÍ Corca Baiscinn, West Clare.

Events and Dates for your Diary:



Citizens Information Board would like to invite you to the launch of the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities. This launch will take place in Dublin Castle on Wednesday 30th March 2011 from 11am – 1pm; light refreshments will be served after the event.

If you would like to attend the launch please contact rachel.downes@ciboard.ie or ring 01 6059073 by Wednesday 23rd March, 2011

Building a school for all: moving towards an inclusive education.

EASPD (European Association of Service Providers) are hosting a course which will consist of 10 three-hour sessions in Lisbon from 3rd – 10th October, 2011 and in Prague from April 23 to April 28th 2011.

For further information please contact Karel Casaer – karel.casaer@easpd.eu

**Pathways to
inclusion**





The Autism Europass Access Tool (AutismEPAT) has been developed by a multi-disciplinary team working across five EU countries (Germany, Ireland, the UK, the Czech Republic and Portugal).

The Autism Europass Access Tool (AutismEPAT) is intended to facilitate access to the Europass CV for people on the autism spectrum. Its function is to structure a conversation about any or all aspects of a person's life, with a view to building up a picture of that person's competencies and strengths, in the specific domains that can be included on a Europass CV. In this respect it is a 'scaffolding' device, aimed most specifically at those people on the autism spectrum who have difficulties communicating with others, and for whom potentially useful resources such as the Europass CV would traditionally remain inaccessible. As such it is designed to empower people with autism and to enhance their opportunities for fuller inclusion in all aspects of life.

- The tool is web-based, easily accessible, and free.
- The final AutismEPAT project presentation will be at the Werkstätten: Messe conference in Nürnberg, Germany on 18/03/2011.
- For further information please contact Martin Galvin on 01-8570692 or Deirdre McGrane on 01-8570427 in Gheel Autism Services www.gheel.ie



Irish Performing Arts Festival, 27th – 30th June 2011

The "Irish Performing Arts Festival" is a national arts festival for persons with an intellectual disability, their families, friends and supporting artists. It was founded in 2008 by Eoin Nash (Music Therapist with COPE Foundation) to provide people with an intellectual disability, opportunities to share and display their artistic talents at a national level.

COPE Foundation hosted the first and second Irish Performing Arts Festival in Cork, Ireland in June 2009 and June 2010. Due to their success, festival organisers are now working towards making this festival an annual event.

Performances take place in theatres throughout Cork City and County. Events include; Singing, Drama, Dance, Instrumental Performances, Street Performances and Art Exhibitions.

Over 500 performers participated in last year's festival, so what are you waiting for. Come and share the joy and join the fun!

For more information and application forms please check out our website: www.irishperformingarts.ie or contact:

Eoin Nash
Music Therapist
COPE Foundation
Tel.: 021- 4643100 ext.(3229)



International Summer School 2011

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - From Paper Rules to Action

06 – 11 June 2011 : Centre for Disability Law & Policy, National University of Ireland, Galway.

The fee for attendance will be €300 which will cover materials and lunches. Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation. Further information regarding accommodation, teaching faculty etc. and the updated programme for the Summer School (which is subject to change) is now available on the following website: www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp/summer_school/welcome.html

Register for the Summer School by visiting the following link
<http://www.conference.ie/Conferences/AddRegistration.asp?Conference=99>

'Smart Fundraising: Succeeding in the new reality'

Fundraising Ireland's Conference 'Smart Fundraising: Succeeding in the new reality' will take place on **Wednesday, 30 March** in the **Convention Centre in Dublin**.

The conference has been designed for fundraisers, by fundraisers who understand the challenges facing people working in this area today. It will feature a line-up of fantastic speakers from Ireland and overseas who will provide practical advice, tips and essential 'know-how'.

To book a place or for further information please visit www.fundraisingireland.ie



BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES CLARE

Towards a Better Life: An exploration of the social role valorization framework, with regard to people who are marginalized. This workshop will take place on 15th & 16th March, 2011 Great Hall, Temple Gate Hotel, Ennis from 9.30am – 5pm

Workshop Overview

This 2 day event is for anyone who is serious about improving the lives of marginalized and disadvantaged people such as people with disabilities and people with a mental illness. It is designed to assist participants to:

- Understand social devaluation and its consequences for people who are marginalised.
- Learn about SRV as a means of addressing those experiences of devaluation.
- Strengthen one's motivation to counteract devaluation in the lives of people one knows and supports.
- Clarify the features of a good life and the essential means of obtaining that good life.

Workshop Presenter

John Armstrong has a long involvement in the lives of people with disabilities in informal advocacy and friendship roles as well as the formal roles of service provider, teacher, adviser and service planner. John is one of the three senior Social Role Valorisation and PASSING trainers in Australia. .

Cost (Lunch Not Included)

- Professionals €175, Family Members €50

For Further Information Contact

Mary Rowan, Brothers of Charity Services Clare, Banner House, Clare Road, Ennis.
Tel 087 6829230, email maryrowan@clare.brothersofcharity.ie

Open Information Session with the Open Training College

Dublin, March 28th, 2011
Cork, March 29th, 2011
Galway, March 29th, 2011



You are invited to an upcoming information event where you can explore the adult education opportunities that are available to staff and managers working, or currently seeking work, in the non-profit/human services sector.

- What are the expected qualifications for someone working in the non-profit/human services sector today?
- Are Continuous Professional Development modules available to the sector, and can past-pupils update their qualifications with newly developed accredited CPD modules?
- What are the choices open to you regarding blended learning? What is it exactly?
- What options are available to you in your region?

These are just a few of the questions that will be answered by Course Directors to those attending the Open Information Sessions in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

The Open Training College is a division of St. Michael's House established in 1992 in response to a need to provide professional education and training programmes to staff working in services for people with a disability. We have been steadily growing our courses and reputation since that time and now are a well respected, well established academic institute of excellence in our field. Recently, we have moved to providing management programmes to degree level to the wider non-profit sector – a move that was informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders from these sectors.

Please contact Conor Murray on (01)2988544 or cmurray@opentrainingcollege.com for further information.



LEAP is offering unique training opportunities for parents of people with intellectual disabilities and autism between February 2011 and June 2011. LEAP are parents working with professional allies whose mission is to support people with Intellectual Disabilities and people with Autism and their families through person directed education/training, planning and supports. Workshops offered include:

- Person Centred Planning
- How to build a Circle of Support
- How to Advocate for your family member with a disability
- Communications & Supporting Skills Programme for Parents
- For more information contact: Rachel Cassen, Chairperson, LEAP (Leading Educating Advocating Planning) Tel: 087 142 4797