

Service Plan 2022

1. Executive Summary

The activities of the National Federation Secretariat team focus on representing its member organisations in their work to provide high quality person-centred services and supports to people with an intellectual disability. Operationalising this work involves a wide range of actions. A summary of some of the key actions planned for 2022 is outlined below, whilst noting that the nature of the representative role of the National Federation evolves over the period of the year, and thus actions will be agreed to meet with challenges and requirements as these arise.

The Service Plan for the National Federation Secretariat was developed following consultation with our Board of Directors, who at their January 2022 Board Meeting identified a range of priority areas of focus for the year. Our wider membership also fed in their priority areas through the General Assembly; and there were consultation processes undertaken through our various Sub Committee structures.

Included within the key priorities are areas of specific time-based needs – such as the response to the Covid 19 pandemic and the unfolding conflict in Ukraine; and ongoing priorities - including the implementation of the UNCPRD and our campaign to ensure sufficient, multi-annual funding is provided to support the current, and previously unmet needs, in the delivery of services and supports for people with an intellectual disability in Ireland.

There are several fundamental policy and legislative developments taking place in 2022 that require a significant response from disability service providers. Key amongst these is the expected commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making Amendment Act in the summer months of 2022. Under the UNCPRD priority area of the Service Plan, the National Federation will support its members in developing submissions in response to the amendment legislation and the draft Codes of Practice; and in preparing organisations for implementation. We will also recruit a co-ordinator to support National Federation members in preparing for commencement, and liaising with HSE and the Decision Support Service in the development and dissemination of training, awareness-raising, policies, and procedures.

As the action plan for the Disability Capacity Review is developed in the first half of 2022, the National Federation will engage to support the work required to address the significant unmet needs identified in the Review, and to ensure that key areas such as changing needs are reflected in the planning and actions. We will work closely with the Housing Agency to provide

our member's views into the development of the Implementation Plan for the new Housing Strategy for Disabled People and in coordinating our member's engagement locally in the Housing and Disability Steering Groups.

In the area of influencing change towards accountable autonomy, the work of the Health Dialogue Forum established on foot of the Catherine Day report will reach a critical stage in 2022, with its planned work including the review of the Service Arrangement; the development of shared principles to guide the relationship between the voluntary sector providers and State actors; and the working through of case studies to support detailed understanding of the work required to move forward positively in the voluntary-statutory relationship. The National Federation will actively participate in each of these strands of work.

Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders (including Government Departments and Ministers; the HSE; Regulatory Bodies; Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's); and our fellow umbrella bodies) continues to be a central support function of the National Federation Secretariat. The collaborative work of the Federation through its Sub Committees and engagement with the wider Community and Voluntary Sector, seeks to develop and progress common approaches to a range of challenges facing disability service providers. We will continue to work with our umbrella body partners in the Oireachtas Disability Group to ensure that elected representatives are fully informed on key disability-related issues, and this will support the work of our own Budget 2023 campaign. This campaign will seek to engage with elected representatives from early in 2022 to provide a significant time of preparation ahead of the budgetary process.

Our response to the significant challenges facing member organisations in relation to recruitment and retention will be focused through the work of our newly established Recruitment and Retention Working Group, which will develop a range of initiatives to support members and coordinate the response to these challenges. In this regard we will work closely with the HSE on initiatives undertaken in the context of the Disability Action Plan and workforce planning. The Section 39 Pay Parity Working Group will continue to progress its campaign to secure pay parity for the Section 39 member organisations, further gathering and presenting evidence of the need to address this key issue which threatens the sustainability of Section 39 members into the future - and in turn their ability to support the critical needs identified in the Disability Capacity Review.

The substantial work of the Federation's Sub Committees will continue to be supported in areas such as Quality and Standards, HR, and Safeguarding; and the Secretariat will respond to emerging member enquiries throughout the year. The Sub Committees will continue their work in supporting members through regular meetings, shared approaches to challenges across members, responses to queries, engagement with relevant employment and quality forums, and progressing initiatives as guided by the Sub Committee work plans. The Pension Scheme of the Section 39 members will continue to be administered on behalf of members and will complete a substantial piece of work in transitioning the scheme to its new provider.

A continued commitment to ensuring appropriate governance, employment and company requirements is reflected in the priorities of this service plan; whilst the work of the review of Federation structures and governance will come to completion with the development of a new Constitution and a renewed structure to support the working of the National Federation.

2. Key Priority Areas 2022



3. Planned actions to support key priority areas

3.1 Drive the mission of the National Federation.

The National Federation was established as a company limited by guarantee in the year 2000 and is a registered charity with the stated aim to:

Represent the members of the Federation in respect of issues concerning or touching upon people with an intellectual disability and which relate to the provision of services, funding arrangements, standards for service provision and relationships at local, national, and international levels where concerted action is indicated and appropriate and to promote, support, and respect the aspirations and objectives of the members of the Federation, based on the shared philosophy of the dignity and equality of the person and associated core values, vision and statutory status.

A range of structures and governance arrangements were put in place at the outset to deliver upon this aim and support National Federation members. The intervening twenty years has seen substantial change and evolution in the structure of the health services; the Departments responsible for disability nationally; and the delivery of disability services - and it is therefore timely to review the structures and governance arrangements of the National Federation to ensure they are fit for purpose to drive the mission of the Federation in this changed context. In supporting this priority in 2022 the following actions will be undertaken:

- A review of the structure and composition of the National Federation was completed in 2021 to ensure that as an umbrella body, our constitution is appropriate and responsive to the current environment and issues facing our membership. The outcome of this review will be implemented in 2022 through the work of the Governance Sub Committee, providing a renewed structure with changes implemented in the following:
 - Constitution;
 - Mission Statement;
 - Board structures & election of Board members;
 - Area Federation Committee structures;
 - Sub-Committees and task groups;
 - Criteria for membership of the National Federation
- The National Federation team will continue to focus on supporting the ongoing development of the National Federation as a collective, engaged, cohesive group; to advance its objectives through the work of the Board, General Assembly, Secretariat, Sub Committees, Area Federation structures and engagement with individual member organisations.

3.2 Support the implementation of the UNCRPD and the development of individualised, rights-based approaches to services for people with Intellectual Disability

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) aims to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The Convention was ratified by the Irish Government in March 2018 and the Irish State submitted its first report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in November 2021. The report outlines progress to date in protecting and enhancing the rights of people with disabilities. During 2022 we will again maintain a focus in striving to ensure that our work is guided by the UNCRPD and that we are actively engaging with our members and key stakeholders in progressing the implementation of the Convention. In advancing this priority we will:

- Support our members in their progression and development of disability services with a central focus implementation of the UNCRPD;
- Contribute to the work of the HSE’s National Consultative Committee and its strategic focus on the development of UNCRPD-focused services nationally;
- Participate in the work of the review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy; and the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG 6) established by the Minister of State for Disabilities in January 2022.
- Contribute to the development of a shadow report from the non-governmental sector on progress to date in implementing the Convention;
- Support advocacy groups to be part of key consultation processes including the work of the Disability Participation Network;
- Make submissions to key Government consultations, including the Departments of Health; the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, and the work of the Oireachtas Disability Matters Committee – with the aim of ensuring that they are reflecting the key elements of the UNCRPD and that the views of our membership are fully represented;
- Support the implementation of national legislation and policy central to achieving the aims of the UNCRPD, including *New Directions, Time to Move On from Congregated Settings*, and the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act. This will require the work of the National Federation’s Assisted Decision-Making Reference Group (further details below); and participation on a range of HSE Steering Committees established to support the implementation of national policy;
- Support the implementation of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027;

- Support the work of the Inclusive Research Network (IRN) to bring the voice of people with intellectual disability into key processes such as:
 - The HSE's Patient Engagement Forum;
 - The Department of Health's consultation on its 'Patient Voice Partners' policy;
 - The Department of Health's Adult Safeguarding Policy;
 - Contribute to the work of the Disability Participation and Consultation Network, which aims to ensure people with a disability participate in the development of relevant national policy and legislation.
 - Provide an input to the report from the non-governmental sector on Ireland's progress to date in implementing the UNCRPD;
 - Continue to work with the Digital Skills Research Project in partnership with Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability through their Citizens Advisory Panel which is made up of self-advocates supported by members of the National Federation.
 - Participate in the Disability Palliative Care for People with ID Project in partnership with Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability
- Members of the IRN will also continue to advance their independent programme of research in areas identified by the peer-researchers and will present their research findings to relevant HSE groups developing guidance documents e.g. GPs Communication Document. The IRN will also contribute to National Federation's campaigns and overall programmes of work, including the Budget 2023 campaign;
- Make submissions as appropriate to ensure the perspectives and needs of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and service provider finds expression in national legislative and policy developments.

Assisted Decision-Making Act

Through the work of the National Federation's Assisted Decision-Making Reference Group, the National Federation will provide support to our member organisations in this important year of commencement of the Act as follows:

- Support our members to understand the implications of the Assisted Decision-Making Act and the impact it will have on how services are provided;
- Continue a substantial process of engagement with members to coordinate and deliver the National Federation's response to the draft Codes of Practice published by the Decision Support Service;
- Recruit an ADM Coordinator to work with members in their preparation for the commencement of the Act, including exploring training events and process development for implementation;

- Engage with members to participate in the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Assisted Decision Making-Amendment legislation in Quarter 1 of 2022, and present this feedback at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth;
- Participate in the HSE’s newly established working group to support the implementation of the ADM in disability services and with the work of a range of key stakeholders including the Decision Support Service as required;
- Consult with the National Federation’s Safeguarding Group to coordinate responses to the ADM as it relates to safeguarding;
- Invite key speakers as required to meetings in order to inform members on particular relevant aspects of the legislation and how it may influence supports, for example Prof Eilionoir Flynn, Centre for Disability Law, and Policy (CDLP), NUIG, regarding consent to intimate relationships.
- Engage with the Decision Support Service (DSS) on a range of issues of relevance to National Federation members in relation to the commencement of the ADM Act.

Establishment of Children’s Reference Group

In 2022 a National Federation Children’s Reference Group will be established to support our members in addressing key issues arising for children with a disability. This group will act as a strategic forum to support the development of common positions to promote the rights of children with a disability. Membership of the group will be drawn from across National Federation members and will comprise representatives who have particular expertise in the provision of children’s support and services. Key areas of work for this group will include:

- Implementation of Article 7 of the UNCRPD / UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Implementation of Progressing Disability Services (PDS) and the establishment of the CDNT’s;
- Multi-disciplinary supports;
- Assessment of Need;
- HIQA – development of standards for Children’s services;
- Respite / Foster Care / Home Share – options for children;
- Methodologies for capturing children’s voices;
- Research – supporting research projects focused on children with a disability.

National Policy - Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth:

Participate in the ‘Children’s and Young People’s Public Policy’ consultation which will run throughout 2022. This consultation process will inform the next national children’s policy (2023 – 2028) and will seek to improve outcomes for children and young people living in Ireland. The National Federation will seek to ensure the specific needs / issues of concern relating to children with a disability are reflected in the new Policy.

3.3 Progress common approaches to compliance challenges

Member organisations are bound by an extensive range of legislative, regulatory and policy requirements. These requirements place significant accountability and governance-related requirements on organisations. In seeking to progress a common approach to compliance challenges during 2022 we will:

- Identify challenges experienced by member organisations in relation to compliance;
- Communicate to key stakeholders including at Government level where challenges occur in the resourcing of compliance requirements;
- Support members in relation to specific legal / regulatory requirements via the following:
 - Support Freedom of Information (FOI) Decision Makers through our Freedom of Information Network and provide appropriate training where required;
 - Facilitate FOI returns for the sector to the Office of the Information Commissioner;
 - Provide information to support member queries on the completion of quarterly lobbying returns under the Lobbying Act, 2015;
 - Provide information regarding data protection and related policies / legislative requirements, including holding workshops on topics highlighted by members;
 - Deliver a further cycle of the Frontline Managers Training Programme (Level 6 – Certificate in Management) in conjunction with the University of Limerick, which supports staff from across member organisations to meet the Health Care Act (2007) requirement for those appointed as a Person-In-Charge (PIC) to have a management qualification;
- Support members in meeting the requirements of Health Care Act 2007 / HIQA regulations through the work of the HIQA Providers Forum and the National Federations Quality & Standards Sub Committee. During 2022 we will also focus on the need for regulatory reform and develop a position paper on this issue;
- Facilitate the work of the National Federations Fire Safety Working Group, established in 2021, with the broad functions of consulting with HIQA regarding the Fire Safety Handbook (2021) and identifying the opportunities that exist for sharing of information, learning & expertise across National Federation members in relation to the management of fire safety. We will liaise closely with the HSE in relation to this programme of work;
- Work with the HSE National Open Disclosure Team to implement the requirements of the Open Disclosure Policy, 2019;
- Support members in meeting their employment-related obligations via the following actions:
 - Act as a conduit for HR related policies and procedures with which members are required to comply through the hosting of briefing sessions focused on employment law and HSE circular updates;
 - Facilitate the sharing of learning and good practice through the hosting of regular meetings of the National Federations Human Resources Group;

- Organise CPD related training opportunities for HR personnel aimed at developing knowledge in specific areas;
 - Enhance staff health and well-being through the operation of the National Federation's Group Employee Assistance Programme run in conjunction with VHI Corporate Solutions;
 - Address industrial relations issues arising for members with the health sector Trade Unions via the work of the National Joint Council and specific Working Groups established to address key IR issues;
- Provide input, on behalf of National Federation members, into the development of compliance related guidance and standards documents being developed by relevant stakeholders such as HIQA and HSE, as relevant to our sector;
 - Support members in accessing relevant online training via HSELand, aimed at promoting compliance in key work areas such as Children First, Adult Safeguarding, Infection Prevention and Control, etc;
 - Through the work of the National Federation's Safeguarding (children and adults) Group, support members in meeting their child protection and welfare obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and also the requirements of the HSE Adult Safeguarding Policy. Specific actions in this regard will include:
 - Facilitate interagency working and collaboration as appropriate to address the challenges arising for members in relation to adult safeguarding and the development of best practices in this area;
 - Work closely with key stakeholders including the HSE National Safeguarding Office and participating in the HSE / Umbrella Groups Safeguarding Reference Group;
 - Support the work of Safeguarding Ireland with a view to enhancing interagency working and collaboration on safeguarding issues as they relate to people with a disability;
 - Address challenges arising for Service Providers in implementing the revised HSE Adult Safeguarding Policy (2019);
 - Contribute to the development of the Department of Health's adult safeguarding policy for the health sector;
 - Participate in the National HSE Social Care Children First Oversight Group to support 'children first' related actions within member organisations;
 - Engage with Tusla and other key stakeholders to address child protection and welfare issues arising;
 - Work with the HSE to develop a project under the 'Strengthening Disability Services Fund' to develop an IT infrastructure to support the reporting requirements of disability services to various authorities e.g., NASS, NIMS, Health & Safety Authority, National Safeguarding Office, etc. This system should bring forward Person Centred Planning information for the individual and it is hoped that work can begin in 2022

following on from delays due to the cyber-attack on HSE in 2021. Work will begin through the development of a common data dictionary.

3.4 Respond to pressing issues in relation to Covid 19 and the conflict in Ukraine

The outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020 led to a significant shift in the focus of the work of National Federation members and Secretariat in ensuring all necessary actions and precautions were taken to protect the people we support from contracting the virus. The work that commenced in 2020 will continue as necessary in 2022. A new pressing challenge faces people with disabilities in 2022, through the outbreak of war in Ukraine. Article 11 of the UNCPRD alerts us to the importance of supporting people with disabilities in situations of conflict and humanitarian crisis. As it did in relation to the response provided in relation to Covid 19, the National Federation will seek to be a conduit of accurate and timely information to support the response to people with disabilities who are fleeing conflict in Ukraine and seeking refuge in Ireland.

Actions under this priority area will include:

- Ensure that in dealing with the challenges of Covid 19 and the response to Ukraine, the rights of people with a disability are fully respected and reflected in the development of guidance documents and how people are supported and access services;
- Facilitate a comprehensive flow of information between National Federation members and key parties including: HSE, HIQA, elected officials, etc in relation to both Covid 19 and the response to Ukraine;
- Participate in the HSE National Disability and Umbrella Bodies meetings to ensure the HSE is fully briefed on the key issues and concerns arising for Service Providers in relation to dealing with challenges associated with both crises;
- Contribute to the learning emerging from the pandemic e.g., how agencies have worked together in dealing with the challenges arising, lessons arising for service provision in terms of ability to deal with Covid 19 (IPC practices, staffing levels/arrangements, etc) and ensure that the learning is harnessed in responding quickly and comprehensively to the needs of people arriving from Ukraine who have a disability.

3.5 Promote ongoing, sufficient, multi-annual investment in services that support people with intellectual disability to live lives of their choosing.

Securing resources to support the delivery of services and supports to people with intellectual disabilities in alignment with is a key priority for the members of the National Federation. In this regard the National Federation will focus on the following during 2022:

- Actively engage in a pre-budget 2023 campaign as a Federation and in partnership with other national Umbrella bodies through the Oireachtas Disability Group;

- Gather evidence and undertake research as necessary to support our position and call for appropriate resourcing for the sector;
- Arrange for the HSE National Disability Team to present and discuss the significant elements of HSE Service Plan 2022 in particular the measures related to disability, to Federation members when published;
- Meet with the relevant Government, opposition, and statutory officials to ensure the concerns and resource needs of the sector are well articulated and understood;
- Facilitate meetings as required with the HSE and Departments of Health; and Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, to discuss operational and funding requirements of member organisations;
- Participate in the National Economic Dialogue Forum on behalf of members;
- Advocate for multi-annual funding; an agreed costing methodology for disability services and supports; and pay parity for Section 38 and 39-funded organisations;
- Research and present paper(s) where required to express the views and experiences of member organisations in relation to policy and funding of supports, including in relation to the future of day services supports in the context of the move to a will and preference model of support as required by the Assisted Decision-Making Act;
- Participate in national forums of discussion including the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's Disability Consultative Committee, HSE's National Consultation Committee and the Disability Stakeholder's Group.

3.6 Continue to build strategic relationships with key stakeholders

It is important that the distinctive role of the voluntary sector and its contribution to meeting the needs of people with an intellectual disability is fully valued and understood. It is essential that we work in collaboration with sectoral partners to ensure the central role of not-for-profit service providers in the delivery of services and supports; our role in advocacy on behalf of the people we support; and the innovation of the sector is communicated to key stakeholders, whilst in turn we understand and engage with stakeholders across the policy, funding and regulatory landscape to keep our members informed on key developments. In promoting this objective in 2022 we will:

- Collaborate with partners across sector through the work of the Independent Review Group and the Oireachtas Disability Group to raise the key issues for voluntary sector;
- Bring a coherent approach / position forward from the sector and represent the interests of member organisations in key fora;
- Continue to represent our members in relation to the Integrated Financial Monitoring System and National Integrated Staff Records and Pay Programme (NiSRP);
- Participate in a range of HSE Working Groups with the aim of ensuring programme initiatives, HR policies and procedures are reflective of the needs of the voluntary sector and are resourced for implementation by HSE Funded agencies;

- Facilitate meetings with elected officials to build an understanding of the role of the voluntary sector and the contribution we make as service providers;
- Continue to build our social media profile with the aim of enhancing public understanding of the voluntary sector and our specific role as a National Federation.

3.7 Promote Shared Learning and Respond to member queries

In supporting its members, the National Federation Secretariat seeks to provide a responsive, evidence-based, collaborative approach. A significant proportion of the work of the Secretariat is focused on responding on a daily basis to the varied queries members bring to our attention. We bring these to national forums and bodies for clarification and to represent member's needs. This work also helps us to understand our members experiences, which in turn enables us to represent their requirements at national level. A shared-learning focus is applied to facilitate partnership between members and across the disability sector. In responding to member queries in 2022 we will continue to:

- Consider the queries put forward and identify the key issues to be progressed;
- Explore the best route to resolve the query which can include consultation with all members; consultation with state bodies or Departments or other umbrella bodies; advice from previous queries that have been resolved; and advice from existing policy or legislation;
- Provide adequate information to key stakeholders to ensure the query can be understood, seeking clarification or additional data where required;
- Provide the requesting member with feedback on the query;
- Share learning across member organisations where relevant;
- Advise national forums where relevant, of key issues that have emerged through the queries process.
- Provide a resource bank for members with the sharing of policies and information available via the National Federation's website: www.fedvol.ie
- Host shared learning events / research seminars on areas of interests to members aimed at enhancing service provision.

3.8 Fulfil Governance, Employment, Company responsibilities and statutory requirements

The Board of the National Federation is committed to ensuring it has robust governance arrangements in place to meet its statutory and legal requirements as a company, employer and via its Service arrangement with the HSE as a funder of the National Federation Secretariat. During 2022 we will:

- Update policies and procedures as required to ensure we are compliant with relevant legislation, companies' law, and the Charities Code of Governance;
- Ensure that the Board of Management has the necessary structures in place to support its work e.g. Governance & Nominations Committee; Finance Audit & Risk Committee and that such groups meet as required to fulfil their terms of reference;
- Implement relevant employment law requirements and the nationally agreed WRC pay restoration process for secretariat staff;
- Fulfil company law requirements including Annual Financial Statements, and revenue returns;
- Fulfil HSE Service Arrangement requirements and undertake bi-annual reviews;
- Ensure that the National Federation office meets its obligations in terms of lobbying returns, complaints returns and FOI requests;
- As noted above, we will also complete the work set out in the review of National Federation structures, to ensure the company is well governed and well placed to meet the challenges of the coming years.

3.9 Support our members in developing responses to changing needs

As the lifespan of people with intellectual disabilities has increased, which is a hugely positive trend, there is a rise in the number of older adults with ID who have significant support needs and changes in their presentation. People with intellectual disabilities experience many health inequalities (as outlined in the findings of the IDS TILDA studies to date) when compared with the general population. In particular, a higher level of dementia is present in this population, along with challenges with mobility, bone health, obesity levels, and significantly less favourable mental health outcomes than the general population. As a result, many individuals with intellectual disabilities experience changing needs that require adaptations and/or additional supports in their day and residential services. The National Federation Board has identified Changing Needs as an area of particular importance and focus for members; and therefore for the work of the Secretariat in 2022.

Our actions in 2022 in this area will include:

- Re-establish the Older Persons Working Group, which had been temporarily paused during the response to Covid 19, in partnership with Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability;
- As part of our ongoing partnership work, support the work of a study being carried out in Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability, focusing on the supports required by people with intellectual disabilities, when they have received a diagnosis of dementia;
- Examine the challenges presenting for organisations in relation to changing need that require staffing changes, environmental changes, and access to increased therapeutic supports
- Advocate for the required capital and revenue funding to sustain the ability of service providers to respond to the changing needs of people with disabilities;

- Advocate for a national system to capture changing needs within the sector and assist in forward planning for the needs of those we support who are ageing.

3.10 Influence change in the area of accountability and autonomy

Through its representation on the Health Dialogue Forum, established on foot of the *Report of the Independent Review Group established to examine the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health and personal social services* ('Catherine Day Report'), the National Federation will represent its members in proactively supporting and advocating for the development and implementation of an accountable autonomy model in the relationship between the State and the not-for-profit service provider sector.

Our work in this regard will include in 2022, to:

- Highlight, through the work of the voluntary sector collaborative work in the context of the Health Dialogue Forum, the range of compliance requirements currently mandatory for disability services, with the aim of streamlining these requirements and reporting responsibilities;
- Represent our members at the Health Dialogue Forum: (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fda1d7-dialogue-forum-with-voluntary-organisations/>) and keep members abreast of developments thereof;
- Participate on the working group established under the auspices of the Health Dialogue Forum to develop a set of Principles to guide the relationship between the voluntary sector and the State;
- Support the development of case studies under the Health Dialogue Forum process to illuminate areas of learning and opportunity in relation to accountable autonomy processes;
- Participate in the process to review the Service Arrangement in collaboration with voluntary sector partners, the HSE and the Department of Health.

3.11 Coordinate the National Federation response to the recruitment and retention crisis in disability services

In recognition of the challenges facing National Federation members in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff, the National Federation established a Recruitment & Retention Task Group in late 2021. During 2022 this Task Group will:

- Gather and share information on successful employee recruitment and retention initiatives undertaken by National Federation member organisations.
- Identify strategies aimed at effectively recruiting staff, including developing a recruitment strategy, building the sector profile, using social media and other options for recruiting staff, and considering IT systems to support and streamline the recruitment process.

- Establish links with relevant sections within the HSE, to gather information on current and future work plans, including:
 - Strategic Workforce Planning and Intelligence Unit
 - National Health and Social Care Professionals Office
 - HSE Social Care (Disability Action Plan 2022-2025)
 - HSE at CHO level to explore options in relation to staff recruitment;
- Build links with education authorities and third level colleges to promote knowledge of the sector and employment opportunities for graduates, discussing programme content as it relates to the needs of the sector and ensuring that students are familiar with job/role requirements (preparedness for work);
- Explore organisations' experiences and potential options in relation to overseas recruitment;
- Liaise with CORU in relation to the registration of key professional groups, particularly Social Care Workers, and the requirements and timeline for same;
- Advise the Board of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers on emerging recruitment and retention issues.

Section 39 Agencies – Pay & Employment Benefits:

A key focus of the work of the National Federation during 2022 will be advocating for funding for Section 39 service providers to equalise the pay of staff working in these essential disability services. It is recognised that without the resources to provide equal pay to staff working in these organisations, there is a significant risk to the sustainability of existing frontline essential services and supports; to the ability to meet future and unmet need; and to the ongoing existence of the relevant providers. Recruitment is already at crisis levels within the wider social care sector and specifically within disability services. The publication of the Department of Health's *'Disability Capacity Review to 2032 – A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032'* has identified significant levels of unmet need for disability services and that changes in the size and age profile of the disability services population will add to unmet need over the coming decade. Without adequate resourcing to recruit staff, Section 39 organisations will not be able to meet existing unmet and future needs. In response to this the National Federation will during 2022:

- Progress the issue of pay restoration/pay parity for Section 39's through the work of the Section 39 Pay Parity Task Group;
- Continue to build strategic relationships with key stakeholders e.g., National Disability Umbrella Groups;
- Engage with the HSE, specifically the Social Care Finance Division / S39 Pay Restoration Project Team to progress the issues of pay restoration and pay parity;
- Liaise with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on their national campaign 'Valuing Care – Recognising Work Campaign 2022';

- Develop and implement a strategy and action plan which will address Section 39 Pay Parity issues as part of the National Federation’s work in relation to:
 - Budget Campaign 2023;
 - Discussions on the transition of Services from the Department of Health to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth;
 - Health Dialogue Forum Process

3.12 Pension

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers’ Pension & Life Assurance Scheme is a Defined Contribution Scheme established in 1996 to provide pension and life assurance benefits to the employees of participating organisations. The Scheme was established under Trust and has been approved by the Revenue Commissioners (SF 7346), and is registered with the Pensions Authority (PB 67866). The Trustees are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the Pension Scheme is responsibly managed and members’ benefits are secure. The Scheme currently comprises of 24 participating employers; 6,693 members (4,844 Active members and 1,849 deferred members) and the Scheme’s fund value under management is over €300m (as of 31st December 2021). The Trustees have agreed the following Workplan for 2022:

Develop a Work Plan with Irish Life:

The Trustees will develop with Irish Life a Work Plan for 2022, which will outline activities that will take place during the year – this will include organising webinars to cover key topics of interest for members; presentations at member’s place of work; retirement seminars; pension administrators workshops; record more videos and upload on www.fedvol.ie; all documents / agreements and booklets to be finalised to reflect the appointment of Irish Life as the Registered Administrator with effect from 1st January, 2022.

Carry out a Review of Pension Website:

The Trustees will carry out a full review of the dedicated pension page on the National Federation’s website www.fedvol.ie to ensure all documents reflect the Scheme move to Irish Life and all new and relevant pension material is uploaded.

Sustainable Investment:

The Trustees will engage with Irish Life Investment Managers to get a better understanding of their approach to sustainable investment and how they take Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors into account when selecting companies to invest in.

Tender Competition:

A tender competition for the Supply of Pension Audit Services will be conducted to appoint an external auditor to the Pension Scheme in respect of preparation of Trustees Annual

Report & Financial Statements for year ended 31st December 2022, and for a subsequent period of 3-5 years.

Implementation of Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision 11 (IORP 11) Directive and the Code of Practice published by the Pensions Authority in November 2021:

The Trustees will continue to review and implement all necessary actions to ensure the National Federation's Pension Scheme is compliant in respect of the above Directive and the Pension Authority's Code of Practice, including the following:

- Appointment of two new external Key Function Holders (KFHs) in respect of Internal Audit and Risk Management.
- Review existing Scheme policies and develop new policies where required (e.g., Statement of Investment Governance) to ensure IORP 11 and the Code of Practice requirements are reflected and adhered to.
- Establish if the Pension Scheme has to be set up as a Designated Activity Company (DAC) following further clarification from the Pensions Authority.

Review and Update Pension Scheme's Trust Deed & Rules:

The Trustees will engage McCann FitzGerald, who were selected following a previous tender process, to carry out a review of the Pension Scheme's Trust Deed & Rules and ensure they are up to date. This work will also take account of requirements under the IORP 11 Directive and the Pension Authority's Code of Practice.

Newsletters:

The Trustees will produce 2 newsletters in 2022 and issue to employers for onward circulation to members of the Scheme to provide an operational and financial overview.

Appointment of an Additional Trustee:

The Trustees will aim to appoint an additional Trustee to the Pension Scheme during 2022. The new Trustee will meet the "Fit & Proper" Pension Authority requirements and also complement the skills mix of the current Trustee composition.

Pension Administrator's Manual:

A Pension Administrator's manual will be drafted and circulated to all participating employers which will detail the various tasks that need to be carried out to safeguard the efficient and effective running of the Scheme and the procedures / deadlines that employers need to adhere. A copy of all schedules / templates used will also be included in the manual, together with stakeholder contact details.

Administration & Compliance:

The Trustees will continue to meet throughout 2022 and ensure:

- The smooth and efficient running of the Pension Scheme from the perspective of all parties i.e., Scheme Members, Participating Employers; Irish Life; Cornmarket; Auditor, Pension Authority etc.
- The Trustees' Governance Calendar is adhered to.
- All employers co-operate with the monthly return of pension contributions to both Irish Life and Cornmarket within the required timelines.
- All death claims, applications for retirement on grounds of ill health; pension adjustment orders, transfer applications and purchase of annuity forms etc. are processed in a timely fashion.
- All booklets and documentation are reviewed and up to date.
- Trustees Annual Report & Financial Statements for year ended 31/12/21 are prepared and circulated to members and relevant Trade Unions within the required timeframe.
- Relevant Trustees Training will be arranged during 2022.
- In line with Covid 19 restrictions, Retirement Planning Seminars; CEO / Pension Administrators' Workshop; engagement with pension scheme members to be facilitated and take place in a safe environment / medium.