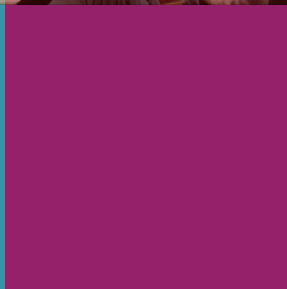
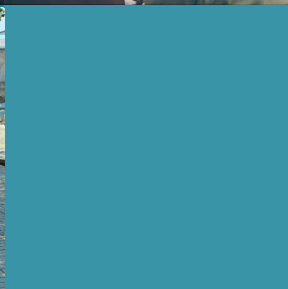




National Federation of
Voluntary Service Providers

Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)



Annual Report **2023**

fedvol.ie



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Chairperson's Statement

I am delighted to present this annual report statement as Chairperson of the National Federation. Firstly, I would like to extend my gratitude to Michael Hennessy for his leadership and commitment in his tenure as Chairperson. I am pleased to present in this report the achievements of the National Federation from the year that included Michael's tenure of leadership and I am eager to build upon the progress he has made and guide our organisation to new achievements in 2024.



Clare Dempsey, Chairperson
of the National Federation of
Voluntary Service Providers

The year 2023 was marked by significant changes in our political, operational, and legislative environment. This evolving landscape brought both new challenges and opportunities. The transfer of functions from the Department of Health to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, the commencement of the Assisted Decision Making Act and the Service Level Arrangement review were welcomed by our members as major advancements for the sector and for people with disabilities and autism in Ireland. However, issues such as recruitment and retention, inflation, and addressing unmet needs posed substantial challenges. Through collaboration, resource-sharing, knowledge exchange, and providing support to one another, we responded to new opportunities and addressed challenges and concerns as they emerged.

The unity of Federation members was showcased in the invaluable contributions of our extensive network of subcommittees and working groups. These groups have been instrumental in driving our initiatives forward, providing expert insights, and supporting the membership in areas of key importance, including Quality and Standards, Human Resources, Safeguarding and FOI and Data Protection. I give my sincere thanks to the Chairs and members of the Subcommittees and Working Groups; Area Federation Committees and the Trustees of the Pension Scheme for their outstanding work.

I would like to recognise the work of our Board members who give their time and expertise to ensuring the good governance and strategic direction of the organisation. I would also like to thank the secretariat team led by Alison Harnett. Their unwavering dedication, hard work, and professionalism have been essential to our supporting our initiatives, coordinating our efforts and ensuring the smooth operation of activities.

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud of what we have achieved and I am confident that with the continued support of our members, subcommittees, working groups, Board of Directors and secretariat team, we will continue to further our shared goals and priorities with the ultimate aim of ensuring the delivery of high quality, rights-based supports and services for people with intellectual disabilities and autism.

Yours Sincerely,

Clare Dempsey

About the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Supporting People with Intellectual Disability is the national umbrella body of not-for-profit organisations providing direct supports and services to people with intellectual disability in Ireland. Approximately 70% of disability support services in Ireland are provided on behalf of the State by Section 38 and Section 39-funded organisations. Across our 54 organisations, our members support approximately 26,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or autism and their families, providing services and supports throughout their lifespan. National Federation member organisations have community presence and connection across large urban centres and small villages throughout Ireland.



Our Mission

The work of the National Federation is guided by our Mission statement:

To provide the leadership and support that will enable voluntary organisations to adapt to a radically changing operating environment, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that people with intellectual disability live a life of their choosing.



Our Vision

The vision of the National Federation is that people are supported to live a life on their terms:

Above all people have a deep rooted desire to belong, to be in relationship, to live within the intimacy and security of their family and friends, to be included in the greater life around them with all its attendant possibilities for hope and fulfilment and to do so, to the greatest extent possible, on their own terms. The implications of this simple truth will determine our actions on behalf of all citizens with intellectual disabilities.

Our Structure

The work of the National Federation is governed by its Board, which consults with and represents the General Assembly and its five Area Federation Committees. This work is supported through our subcommittee, operational committee and working group structures, which include:

- **Two Standing Subcommittees of the Board:** Finance, Audit and Risk; and Governance and Nominations;
- **Operational Committees and Networks:** e.g., Human Resources; Quality & Standards; Housing; Finance; Safeguarding; Freedom of Information and Data Protection Network;
- **Working/Reference Groups:** e.g., Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (ADM) Reference Group; Section 38 group; Section 39 Pay Parity working group; Freedom of Information and Data Protection Networks;
- Under the **Policy & Research** function, relevant personnel from member organisations come together as needed to address policy areas arising for consultation, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Housing, matters relating to ageing and older persons with intellectual disabilities, etc.

Member Organisations: The National Federation currently has 54 member organisations, all of whom are HSE-funded Section 38 or Section 39 non-profit service providers to people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism.

General Assembly: Each member organisation nominates two people who may act as their representatives at the National Federation General Assembly. The General Assembly meets each quarter and at its Annual General Meeting.

Areas Federation Committees: There are 6 Area Federation Committees, (which reconfigured in 2024 to map on to the new HSE Regional Health Areas as these structures are being established). In 2023, there were five Area Federation Committees as follows:

- **Dublin North-East Area Federation Committee** (Chaired by Pat Reen, Prosper Group in 2023 and currently by Liz Reynolds, St Michael's House);
- **Dublin Mid-Leinster Area Federation Committee** (Chaired by Deirdre Murphy, KARE);
- **Southern Area Federation Committee** (Chaired by Claire O'Dwyer, St John of God Community Services in 2023 and currently by Michael Hegarty, St Joseph's Foundation)
- **South-East Area Federation Committee**, (Chaired by Joe Meany, Delta Services in 2023 and currently by Eimear Mannion, St Aidan's); and
- **Western Area Federation Committee** (Chaired by Eamon Loughrey, Brothers of Charity Services Western Region).

Each Area Federation Committee is made up of representatives from member organisations in the area/region(s) in which they are headquartered and provide services, and each is Chaired by a nominee of a member organisation from these regions. We are very grateful to the Chairs of the Area Federation Committees for their work in supporting the members in their regions in 2023.



Board of Directors: In accordance with our Constitution, the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers arranges for the election of its Board of Directors as follows:

Each Area Federation Committee has the power to elect two directors to the Board. In 2023 these were as follows:

- **Dublin Mid Leinster:** Clare Dempsey, St. John of God Services, Breda O'Neill, St. Margaret's Network (IRL-IASD)
- **Dublin Northeast:** Liz Reynolds, St. Michael's House;
- **Southern Area:** Gobnait Ni Chruaiaoi, Co-Action (resigned January 2023) Michael Hegarty, St Joseph's Foundation, Sean Abbott, COPE Foundation,
- **South-East Area:** Vincent O'Flynn, Carriglea Cairde Services, Fiona O'Neill, WIDA. Fiona also holds the role of Company Secretary;
- **Western Area:** Michael Hennessy (Chair from September 2021-2023), Brothers of Charity Ireland Services and Audrey Pidgeon, Ability West.

The above Directors have the power to nominate up to 5 co-options. The co-options to the Board in 2023 were as follows:

- **Dublin Northeast:** Lorraine Macken, Avista (resigned March 2024)
- **Dublin Mid Leinster:** Joe Mason, Walk
- **Southern:** Una Nagle, Brothers of Charity Services

Board Members 2023

Chairperson – Michael Hennessy, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland
(September 2021-2023)

Chairperson - Clare Dempsey, St. John of God Community Services
(appointed September 2023)

Company Secretary – Fiona O'Neill,
Waterford Intellectual Disability Association

Sean Abbott, Cope Foundation

Michael Hegarty, St Joseph's Foundation (elected April 2023)

Lorraine Macken, Avista

Joe Mason, WALK

Una Nagle, Brothers of Charity Services (co-opted September 2023)

Gobnait Ni Chruaiaoi, CoAction (resigned January 2023)

Audrey Pidgeon, Ability West

Vincent O'Flynn, Carriglea Cairde Services

Breda O'Neill, IRL-IASD - St. Margaret's Centre

Liz Reynolds, St. Michael's House

Michael Hennessy served as Chair of the National Federation until September 2023, when Clare Dempsey was appointed. The National Federation would like to sincerely thank Michael Hennessy, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland for his support, engagement and commitment as Chairperson from September 2021-2023, and Clare for taking on the role of Chair for the latter part of the year.

Key Priorities and Actions of the National Federation in 2023

The key priorities and actions of the National Federation in 2023 were developed in consultation with the Board of Directors and agreed at the Board's meeting in January 2023. Our wider membership fed into the development of these priority areas through the General Assembly and a consultation process undertaken through our various Working Group structures. Four key current issues were highlighted as specifically important at that time by the Board and membership. The ongoing priority areas include items such as the implementation of the UNCPRD, progressing common approaches to compliance challenges, and the development of strategic relationships.

Key issues identified for 2023



Ongoing Priority Areas 2023



1. Recruitment and Retention and Section 39 Pay Parity

Throughout 2023, members reported severe challenges in retaining existing staff and recruiting new staff to vacant posts. The National Federation pursued three strands of action simultaneously to deal with this issue during 2023. The first strand was to engage with key stakeholders with a view to collaboratively progressing this issue at a national level. The second strand was the development of a suite of media resources including videos and static images for a national recruitment campaign to support members. The third strand was to assist organisations at a local level by providing webinars and workshops on issues of key interest and one-to-one consultancy sessions with industry experts.

Engagement with key stakeholders:

Over the course of the year, there was substantial engagement with key stakeholders including senior HSE, civil servants and Ministers in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) on the recruitment and retention crisis. To support this work, a position paper was developed in January 2023 based on a data collection exercise completed by members.

In recognition of the crisis, a stakeholder group under Minister Anne Rabbitte was established to consider the supply of key staff groups and the workforce needed to respond to future needs as outlined in the Disability Capacity Review. In 2023 it was reported that the group was primarily looking at therapy grades and the supply of qualified graduates. The work of this Group will continue into 2024.



Section 38 Agencies - Responding to recruitment moratorium

For Section 38 member organisations, the moratorium on recruitment posed a significant challenge in the latter half of the year. In response, the National Federation, informed by liaison with the Section 38 working group, worked directly with key officials in the HSE and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) regarding the risks the recruitment freeze posed for disability service providers and the impact it would have on the quality of service for people supported; regulatory compliance; and overall risk management.

In response to these representations and others from across the sector, Bernard Gloster, CEO HSE, agreed to specific exemptions for disability services and initiated a separate derogation approval process. It is recognised that significant challenges remained in terms of the approval of posts and the absence of some grades from the exemption, but the derogation for disability services was welcomed and work in this area will continue into 2024.

Section 39 Agencies - Pay & Employment Benefits:

A crucial focus of the work of the National Federation during 2023 was to advocate for funding for Section 39 service providers to equalise the pay of staff members 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 as identified above, was already at crisis levels more generally 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'

identified significant levels of unmet need for disability services, and recognised 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 issue the National Federation:

- Progressed the issue of pay parity for Section 39's through the work of the Section 39 Pay Parity Task Group;
- Obtained shared legal advice from a Senior Legal Counsel regarding obligations under the Service Level Arrangement and Health Act;
- Continued to build strategic relationships and dialogue with key stakeholders, including the HSE and the officials in DCEDIY;
- Featured this issue in the National Federation's Budget 2024 Campaign;
- Drafted a position paper based on an extensive data collection exercise on the cost of implementing current pay scales in Section 39 Member Organisations.

This issue culminated in the last quarter of the year when strike action was threatened. On October 5th 2023 the National Federation also joined a coalition of voluntary health and social care service providers and representative bodies to issue an open letter to the Taoiseach (pictured below) requesting his intervention to address the threat of indefinite strike action. The outcome of the WRC talks that led to agreement on a pay uplift of 8% in October 2023 were welcomed, whilst the National Federation signalled the need for a response for remaining issues, including the pension element of the pay award and anomalies for various staff grades for whom the gap was significantly larger than 8%. The National Federation continues its engagement on behalf of members in this regard 2024.

Later that month, the representatives of the National Federation attended a Dail debate on pay parity for Section 39, Section 56 and Section 10 organisation. They supported calls for the Government to urgently intervene to resolve pay inequality and avoid the strike which would have caused untold disruption for people supported.

On 17th October the Workplace Relations Commission confirmed an agreement for workers in Section 39, Section 56 and Section 10 organisations. This agreement did not provide full pay parity but as noted above, an 8% pay increase which was an extremely welcome step forward. Through the Section 39 Pay Parity Task Group, the National Federation will continue to work towards pay parity in 2024.



Coalition of Voluntary Health and Social Service Providers at Leinster House



National Federation Representatives at Leinster House

National Recruitment Campaign and Support for Member Organisations

In late 2021 the National Federation established a 'Recruitment and Retention Task Group' to begin work on addressing the challenges arising. During 2023 the National Federation engaged with two specialist marketing and recruitment agencies - Match Marketing and Conscia, to progress an ambitious workplan designed to assist member organisations with their recruitment and retention challenges. Over the course of 2023, under the oversight of the Recruitment and Retention Task Group and with the assistance of the Secretariat, the two agencies completed the following work:

Match Marketing:

- Began developing a national branding strategy for National Federation Members;
- Began producing branded assets for National Federation members to use including:
 - 6 videos
 - Multiple static images
- Planned a national recruitment drive / campaign for National Federation Members;
- Delivered a workshop on how to set up and effectively utilise social media in preparation for the campaign launch.



Conscia:

- Delivered 6 recruitment focused webinars on areas of specific interest to members as identified by the Task Group;
- Hosted 1:1 Consultation Sessions with individual members to discuss their specific recruitment and retention issues.



In addition, the Recruitment and Retention Task Group met a number of times to share information on initiatives aimed at supporting staff retention and developing staff retention policies.

Recruitment & Retention Events 2023



Recruitment and Retention Webinar Series in collaboration with Conscia

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 27 th June | Retention Masterclass: Best Practices in the Disability Sector |
| 26 th September | Breaking Barriers: Innovative Talent Acquisition Strategies |
| 10 th October | Global Connections: Navigating International Recruitment |
| 24 th October | Leveraging Tech & IT Solutions for Recruitment Success |
| 7 th November | Navigating Legal Landscapes for Recruitment |
| 21 st November | Optimising Impact: Workforce Management |

"Very informative and interactive session. Switched between slides, Q&A's and videos so audience was kept engaged for the full 2 hours..."

"Really interesting – huge amount of action items taken away from the webinar..."

305 Registrations



November 27th 2023

Workshop on Setting up Social Media Accounts & Effectively Growing Your Online Presence -

40 members attended this workshop, delivered as part of the National

Federation's initiative to build a national profile and support the recruitment efforts of member organisations. It covered:

- **Benefits of Social Media**
- **Live Setup Instructions**
- **Building Your Social Media Following**



1:1 Consultancy Sessions with Experts Conscia

13 Member Organisations attended 1:1 consultancy sessions with industry experts to discuss specific 'recruitment and retention' related challenges they are experiencing and get advice from expert consultants.

"It has helped us develop a recruitment and retention strategy for 2024. We couldn't have afforded to use Conscia ourselves so it was great to get access to their expertise as part of the Federation."

2. Non-Pay Inflation

Inflationary pressures on the cost of delivering front line services have been significant over the course of 2022 and continued into 2023. The once-off inflationary funding allocated in the early part of 2023 was welcome, but long-term measures are necessary to ensure the sustainability of services in an uncertain economic climate. These issues are further exacerbated by increased agency costs in many organisations due to the recruitment and retention crisis, increased cost of multiagency regulation, and changing needs within services.

During 2023, the National Federation supported member organisations through the process of accessing the inflationary funds assigned in Budget 2023 by answering queries where possible and escalating issues to key stakeholders as required. The Secretariat also issued a data request to estimate the scale of the non-pay inflation costs faced by members in 2023. The need for another allocation towards inflation was raised during the Budget 2024 Campaign.

3. Changing Needs

As the lifespan of people with intellectual disabilities has lengthened, which is a hugely positive trend, there is a rise in the number of older adults with intellectual disabilities 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 Intellectual Disability Supplement to the TILDA study on ageing carried out by the Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability in Trinity College Dublin 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, oral 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 were delighted to announce that the Health Research Board approved funding for a joint research project led by the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability and the National Federation entitled 'Addressing Age-Related Complexity in Intellectual Disability (AARC-ID): an economic analysis of available support models'. It is expected that work on this important research topic will get underway in 2024. This project complements the National Federation's ongoing collaboration with the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability to translate research findings into policy and practice.

4. Responding to Unmet Need and Demand

Responding to unmet need and demand were two major challenges highlighted in the research conducted by the National Federation in 2022 and these issues continued into 2023. It is recognised that service providers' capacity to respond to unmet need is affected by complex factors, as service providers are under increasing strain financially and due to the current staffing shortages affecting organisations.

Over the course of 2023, the National Federation:

- Advocated for the publication of the Action Plan for the Disability Capacity Review which identified significant levels of unmet need and changing needs within disability services. This action plan was published in December 2023;
- Continued to raise the issue of unmet need and demand in National Forums including the National Economic Dialogue Forum and with relevant parties such as the HSE, Government Departments and Ministers;
- Highlighted unmet need in the Budget 2024 Campaign;
- Participated in media engagements to speak to the issue of unmet need. For instance, on August 6th 2023, Alison Harnett National Federation CEO appeared on RTE News to speak to the issue of unmet need in respite and residential services.



Budget 2024 Campaign

Each of the four current key priorities identified in the National Federation Service Plan featured in the National Federation's Pre-Budget 2024 Submission. The messaging was supported by a data collection exercise with our membership, consultation with the wider membership, and consultation with people with lived experience. The following resources were produced to support the campaign:

- 2 page summary of the budget messages
- Easy-read budget messages
- PowerPoint presentation template
- Letter template inviting TDs and Senators to meet with our members
- Collection of case studies showing the impact of the lack of residential places



WHAT IS NEEDED TO UPHOLD FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS?

We are calling on Government to make a serious commitment to people with intellectual disabilities and their families in Budget 2024:

- Providing 200 additional multi-disciplinary therapy staff.
- Publishing, resourcing and implementing the overdue Disability Capacity Review Action Plan.
- Investing in a significant programme of residential support, beginning in 2024. A minimum of 315 places is immediately required to meet emergency need. Increasing respite supports is needed to meet urgent requirements.
- Providing additional funding to support the changing needs of older adults with intellectual disabilities.

SUSTAINABILITY OF SERVICES

The State provides 70% of disability services via the voluntary sector. However, the sustainability of services is facing unprecedented threat due to challenges around recruitment and retention; inflationary pressures and resourcing of regulatory requirements. These challenges are having an impact on the quality of life of people supported.

We are calling on Government to **safeguard the sustainable future of disability services** in Budget 2024:

- Appropriately fund the true cost of service provision - provide 538 and 539 providers with the required funding to meet nationally agreed pay awards and inflationary pressures. Inflationary pressures funding provided in 2022 was very welcome and continues to be needed.
- Address the unsustainable pay gap in Section 39 organisations as a matter of urgency – the current disparity is causing an immediate threat to the viability of key essential services.
- Support the cost of compliance with multi-agency regulation.
- Assess and appropriately fund historic day service funding deficits; supported employment; and transport.

With the publication of the *Time to Move on From Congregated Settings* report in 2011, the Irish State correctly rejected segregated, institutional settings in favour of supporting people with intellectual disabilities to access their rights as equal citizens to live an included life in the community.

However, whilst moving forward with dismantling the unsuitable congregated model of residential support, the State has not resourced new, planned residential supports in the community. This has left people with intellectual disabilities and their families without any route to plan their future.

Instead, the responsibility for support has been left with elderly family carers. People with intellectual disabilities are left with no choice or control in planning where and with whom they will live.

Currently, this only changes for most people when their situation becomes an emergency – when their family carer dies, or their distress becomes so acute that there is a risk to their physical safety or that of their loved ones. This is traumatic, expensive and provides the worst outcomes for the person and the State.

Last year we highlighted the fact that over 1500 people with intellectual disabilities were living with family carers over the age of 70, more than 450 of whom were over 80 years old. Many more people with intellectual disabilities and autism have a need for residential support and no pathway to access this. However, Budget 2023 provided just 43 places to address emergency needs, in spite of the many hundreds needing planned access to residential support.



2024 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

EQUAL CITIZENS

People with intellectual disabilities and autism are equal citizens. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) confirms the equal citizenship of people with disabilities, and places explicit responsibilities on the Irish State to uphold their rights.

Article 19 places a responsibility on the State to ensure:

“that [...] persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion...”

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities people with intellectual disabilities and their families need to access are clear:

- for children to be supported to reach their full potential;
- for adults to live at home in the community with appropriate supports (and not in congregated settings or with their parents unless mutually chosen);
- to have pathways and support to find work, education and opportunities to contribute to society;
- to have the necessary and appropriate supports for the changing needs of older adults.

EQUAL ACCESS

People with intellectual disabilities and their families are struggling to access essential services:

- Children with intellectual disabilities and autism need timely access to early intervention to reach their full potential. Young adults need access to transition planning and career guidance to support them to plan their lives after leaving school. Families are facing significant challenges to access these supports.
- A spectrum of residential support options is needed – from those who need a small amount of support to maintain independence, to those whose needs require full-time residential supports. There is currently no application process and no system-wide funding or pathway to housing supports, other than through emergency provision.
- This creates an additional acute need for respite services to support individuals and families. Some existing respite supports are unavailable as they are currently needed full-time by people awaiting emergency residential support.
- There are key challenges in accessing supported employment and transport.
- Responding to the changing needs of older adults with intellectual disabilities is critically challenging the sustainability of services, whom are not currently funded by the State to meet these needs.

EQUITY OF RESOURCES

To meet its obligations to uphold the rights of people with disabilities to participate in life's opportunities as full citizens, the State urgently needs to commit to providing access to the required supports, through a significant resourcing programme in Budget 2024.





Budget 2023 did not address the urgent and critical needs of people with intellectual disabilities:



- The Capacity Review of Disability Services highlighted an unmet need for residential support of up to 2,300 places.
- The implementation plan for this report is more than a year overdue.
- Last year we reported over 1500 individuals living with a parent over the age of 70, more than 450 over 80 years.
- A consistent requirement of the HSE in recent years has been the out-turn of 90 residential places just to respond to emergency need. An immediate emergency need for 315 places was identified by HSE in December 2022.
- However, in spite of this evidence and with increasing distress being experienced by individuals and their families, only 43 emergency residential places were provided in Budget 2023.

Two Page Pre-Budget Submission

Budget 2024

Messages to Government from People with Intellectual Disabilities

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Equal Citizens</p> <p>People with ID in Ireland are Equal Citizens with equal rights Under UNCRPD</p> <p>As Equal Citizens people with ID Should have the same opportunities as other Irish citizens (article 19)</p> |
|  | <p>Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Without Services opportunities to live an equal life are out of reach for people with intellectual disabilities.</p> |
|  | <p>Equal Access</p> <p>To be able to live Equally People with ID need support</p> |
|  | <p>Equity of Resources</p> <p>People with ID find it hard to get the services they need to access opportunities</p> <p>Like: Housing, Work, Education</p> <p>So the Government should make Funding & Staffing a priority in Budget 2024</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Keep Services Going</p> <p>People with ID Rely on Services so Services need to be Supported by Government</p> |
|  | <p>Government must make life Equal for People with ID</p> <p>Government Should make the right Decisions in Budget 2024</p> |

Easy to read budget messages developed in consultation with the Inclusive Research Network

Sharing the Key Priorities of the Membership and the Pre-Budget 2024 Messages

- On June 12th 2023 the key messages identified by members were directly communicated to Minister for Finance Michael McGrath and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Paschal Donohoe at the National Economic Dialogue Forum.
- On July 3rd Alison Harnett, National Federation CEO and Michael Hennessy, National Federation Chairperson discussed the messages in detail with Bernard Gloster, HSE Chief Executive, and Bernard O'Regan, Head of Disability Operations during a meeting at the National Federation Office.
- On July 4th Alison Harnett and Michael Hennessy met with Colm O'Conaill, Assistant Secretary General Disability and Youth Division in DCEDIY. During this meeting, they spoke through the current priorities of National Federation members and the Pre-Budget 2024 messages.
- On July 17th, Michael Hennessey, Chair; Alison Harnett, CEO; Pat Reen, National Federation Section 39 Task Group Chairperson; and Fiona O'Neill, National Federation Board Member met with Minister Roderic O'Gorman. Key issues raised included threats to the sustainability of Section 38 and Section 39 organisations, pay parity for Section 39 organisations, and key asks in relation to Budget 2024.
- On October 5th, Clare Dempsey, National Federation Chairperson, Alison Harnett and Fiona O'Neill met with Minister for Disability Anne Rabbitte to discuss the need to safeguard the ability of services to continue to deliver essential disability services, inflationary funding, pay parity and joint planning to implement the UNCRPD.

Social Media was also utilised by the National Federation in the Pre-Budget Campaign to bring political and public attention to the Campaign.



Alison Harnett, National Federation CEO, Minister Anne Rabbitte, Clare Dempsey, National Federation Chairperson and Fiona O'Neill, National Federation Company Secretary.



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers @NatFedV · Oct 5, 2023 ...
Thank you @AnneRabbitte for meeting with us as #disabilitybudget24 is finalised.



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers @NatFedV · Oct 10, 2023 ...
National Federation v concerned re level of funding for residential supports and inflationary pressures in #DisabilityBudget24.
#UNCRPD rights need resourcing.

Funding also required to ensure urgent resolution of pay parity in Sec providers.

More at:
fedvol.ie/National_Feder...



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers @NatFedV · Sep 18, 2023 ...
What is needed in #DisabilityBudget2024 to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are upheld as #equalcitizens ?
See our graphic below or click to get the full information:
fedvol.ie/National_Feder...

@Paschald @leovaradkar @mmcgrathtd @MaryLouMcDonald @ivanabacik



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers @NatFedV · Sep 27, 2023 ...
As #Budget2024 approaches, our full National Federation met together today & we are asking all TDs to make sure #Equalopportunities for people with disabilities are a key focus of the final #disabilitybudget2024 to support the rights of people with intellectual disabilities

← Post



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers
@NatFedVSP

People with intellectual disabilities are #EqualCitizens who require #EqualAccess to supports to be fully included

We are calling on Govt to provide Equality of Resources in #Budget2024
#DisabilityBudget2024

fedvol.ie/National_Feder...

of SERVICES

via the voluntary sector. However, the sustainability of services is facing ongoing recruitment and retention, inflationary pressures and resourcing of are having an impact on the quality of life of people supported.

Regard the sustainable future of disability services in Budget 2024:
their provision - provide 128 and 129 providers with the required funding for all necessary premises. Inflationary pressures funding provided in 2022 was 100%.

Section 39 organisations as a matter of urgency - the current state of the viability of key essential services:
multi-agency regulation
day service funding deficits, supported employment, and transport.

For from 10 each State
residential settings
intellectual
and citizens in line
that of their loved ones.
This is traumatic, expensive and provides the worst
outcomes for the person and the State.

Let's not forget the fact that over 1500
people with intellectual disabilities were living
with family carers over the age of 70, more than
400 of whom were over 80 years old. Many more
people with intellectual disabilities and autism have a
need for residential support but no funding to access it.
However, Budget 2022 provided just 48 places
to address emergency needs, in spite of the many
hundreds needing planned access to residential
support.

Our members played an essential role in communicating the Pre-Budget messages during their engagements with politicians and state agencies. For example, Reach Ability hosted a meeting between families of people supported, and Minister James Brown, TD Verona Murphy, Senator Malcolm Byrne and Alison Harnett to discuss significant challenges being experienced by people with intellectual disabilities and autism, their families and service providers. Multiple other members also attended and hosted events with key politicians.

Having reported on the 2023 key priorities of the National Federation in this section, the next section of this report sets out the ongoing priorities which form a significant portion of the work of the Federation.



Pre-Budget Event hosted by WALK



CEOs of Muiriosa Foundation Siobhan Bryan, and KARE CEO Deirdre Murphy meeting with Minister Michael McGrath and Senator Fiona O'Loughlin

Ongoing Priority Issues 2023 – Member Priorities

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.

Board of the National Federation

During 2023, the Board of Directors met six times: January 18th, March 8th, April 26th, June 7th, September 6th and November 8th. During these meetings, the Board discussed issues relevant to members and considered matters raised by Subcommittees and Working Groups to ensure the work of the Federation aligned with its mission and purpose as outlined in the Constitution.

In addition to the role the Board plays in ensuring the organisation's governance obligations are met and supporting the secretariat team, Board members had a particularly active year in representing National Federation members at a range of engagements with key stakeholders. This included as noted above, attendance at the National Economic Dialogue forum in the run up to Budget 2024 and crucial meetings with Ministers, department officials and HSE officials.

Supporting the development of a cohesive National Federation

An important function of the National Federation is to support the development of a collective and cohesive membership by facilitating networking and shared learning. This is accomplished through the work of the Board, Subcommittees, Working Groups and Area Federation Committee Structures. In 2023, four General Assemblies were held. Area Federation Committee Meetings were also held on the same day as the General Assemblies to facilitate regional networking and shared approaches.



General Assemblies 2023

National Federation Secretariat team

The National Federation is supported by a small team of eight staff members (6.1 WTE) dedicated to its smooth functioning and ongoing success. Despite its small size, the team aims to achieve a broad range of outcomes on behalf of members and to foster a supportive environment of shared learning and collaboration that is beneficial for the people supported by all of our members.

Submissions on a range of key priorities

A key outcome of the work of the National Federation is its engagement in national consultation processes, in collaboration with and on behalf of its members. During 2023, the National Federation consulted with members to complete a wide range of submissions relating to policy, quality and standards, and human resources related matters.

National Federation Submissions on behalf of member organisations 2023:

Paper on Recruitment & Retention Crisis in Voluntary Intellectual Disability Service Providers (January 2023)

Submission on the Review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (March 2023)

NFVSP Statement in Response to NASS Report July 2023

NFVSP Submission to the Seanad Consultation on the Future of Local Democracy (Sept 2023)

National Federation Paper on Section 39 Pay Costings (October 2023)

NFVSP Submission on the Review of Occupations List for Employment Permits

Submission to the Consultation on Home Support Regulations

National Federation Document regarding Schools Leavers

National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Submission to Central Bank Consumer Protection Code Review - Phase 1

2. Support the implementation of the UNCRPD

The commitment of the National Federation members to supporting people with intellectual disabilities and autism is deeply rooted in its support for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Over the past year, we have continued our efforts to promote the principles of the UNCRPD, advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Our initiatives span a wide range of activities designed to eliminate barriers, enhance accessibility, and ensure equal opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities and autism. This section highlights key achievements from 2023 and ongoing projects dedicated to advancing these rights.

Inclusive Research Network

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the views and voices of people with intellectual disability, the National Federation continued to support the work of the Inclusive Research Network (IRN). Secretary of the IRN, Brian Donohoe, provides a report below of the extensive work of the Network that took place during the year.



Brian Donohoe,
IRN Secretary

Report from IRN Secretary: Brian Donohoe

The IRN had another busy year in 2023. Dr. Eilionoir Flynn, NUIG and self-advocate Joe McGrath spoke to Inclusive Research Network members about the Assisted Decision Making Capacity Act and also gave IRN some advice about the new Research Project - **Support to Make Decisions**.



Alison Harnett came to the IRN meeting in February. She told members about the work of the National Federation and that an important part of that work is listening to the voice of the person supported - and making sure that the views expressed are reflected when the National Federation meets with policy makers.

IRN continued their work on their latest peer research project, called Support to Make Decisions, where people are asked about what support they receive in their lives to make decisions. The questions were role played and changed in line with the feedback received from the group. **A Researcher's Handbook** was developed which outlines the steps and documents needed to carry out the study.

The IRN Ethics Group continued to work on the Ethics application. There were a lot of meetings throughout 2023.

IRN members agreed to start the pilots of Support to make Decisions Study in the summer of 2023 and the 4 pilots of the interviews were organised in Galway, Clare, Athlone and Kildare.

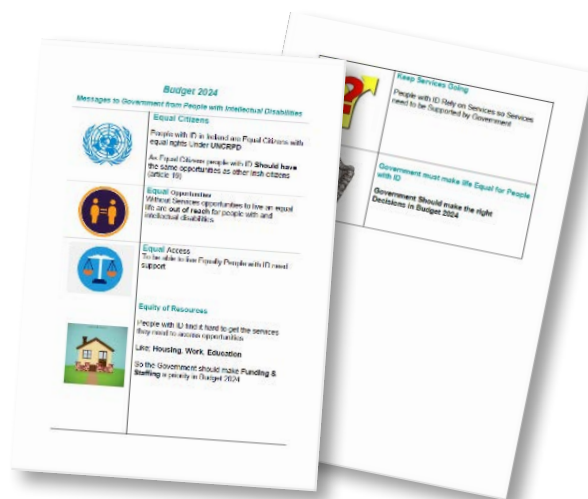


James Delaney presenting the Martin Dooher award to Ger Minogue

IRN Member Ger Minogue was awarded the Martin Doohar Inclusive Research Network Award.

Secretary of the Network, Brian Donohoe, gave feedback from the views of IRN members to the National Federation Budget 2024 Campaign Group.

Brian Donohoe also represented the IRN on an Ethics Committee for Wards of Court Research.



IRN Group Photo 2023

Work Experience in the National Federation Office

In 2022, the National Federation, member organisation Ability West and the National Gallery of Ireland came together to explore the opportunity for the Gallery to hear directly from young adults with intellectual disabilities on how to enhance accessibility of the Gallery's exhibitions and spaces, in addition to providing a work experience placement which creates an opportunity to explore cultural and working life. This led to a project in 2023 where a trainee from St Joseph's training centre undertook a joint work experience placement with the National Federation and the National Gallery of Ireland. Work experience included supporting the Gallery to create accessible videos of the temporary collections and consulting with peers on the accessibility of videos. An arts facilitator from the Gallery also linked with St Joseph's training centre so that while the person undertaking the placement travelled to the gallery to carry out work experience, the rest of the group visited the Gallery at the same time for guided tours and sketching classes. The Gallery and Ability West have plans to continue building on their collaboration. In October 2023, Alison Harnett, National Federation CEO participated in the National Gallery of Ireland's consultation on the Gallery's Next Strategic Plan to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disability and autism in the range of activities and plans of this national cultural institution.

Wards of Court NDA research Ethics Committee

In December 2022, National Federation Secretariat Staff Member Brian Donohoe was invited to join the National Disability Authority Research Ethics Committee, whose purpose was to review the application for ethical approval for a research project entitled ***Leaving Wardship: An examination of the transition to a system of supported decision making.***

Over the course of 2023, Brian Donohoe assisted the NDA in working through the rigorous ethical approval process and aided in ensuring the project met the necessary ethical requirements.

The next step in this project will be for the NDA to seek participants to take part in the study in 2024.

Helena Connors, National Federation Policy and Research Officer is the National Federation representative on the Research Advisory Group for this project.



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority



Attendance at the Brothers of Charity National Advocacy Conference

Members of the National Federation Secretariat and representatives from the Inclusive Research Network were honoured to be invited to attend to the 2023 Brothers of Charity National Advocacy Conference held on 19th October in Cork. The conference provided an excellent platform to connect with self-advocates and gain new insights into the evolving landscape of advocacy. Overall, the conference was a tremendous success, leaving those who attended inspired and better prepared to support the implementation of the UNCRPD.

Keep My Teeth – Oral Health Project

As planning for the scope of the Keep My Teeth project continued in 2023, links were established with the HSE National Oral Health Office (NOHO), through which work was also underway for the development of an National HSE Oral Care Support Guideline (Supporting Smiles) and accompanying oral care education programme for all health and social care workers providing oral care for adults in all HSE and HSE funded settings, in line with the Department of Health National Oral Health Policy - Smile agus Sláinte (DoH, 2019).

In August 2023, Helena Connors, as the National Federation representative, joined the Steering Group for the HSE's National Oral Care Initiative in order to ensure alignment between the two projects. Collaboration continued apace with the Trinity School of Dentistry and the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability to ensure the project can deliver the desired outcomes.

Throughout 2023, a Community of Practice representing health and social care professionals from intellectual disability service provision and Special Care Dentistry (SCD) across Ireland, came together to design a mouthcare plan for people with an intellectual disability. The intention is that the mouthcare plan can be drawn up by either a dental professional or frontline staff in disability services.

In November 2023, Alison Harnett was a panelist at the IDS-Tilda Wave 5 Launch in Trinity College Dublin and spoke about the Keep My Teeth project with stakeholders from across the disability sector.

3. Progress common approaches to compliance challenges

Member organisations are bound by an extensive range of legislative, regulatory and policy requirements which place significant accountability and governance-related responsibilities on organisations.



Representation in Forums

At a national level, the National Federation has participated in highlighting issues relating to compliance challenges at the Health Dialogue Forum, set up 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'. Under the auspices of this Group, and using the Partnership Principles, a review of the Service Arrangement between the HSE and voluntary service providers is currently taking place. The National Federation are represented in this process by Alison Harnett and Clare Dempsey. In 2023 a small number of changes were agreed and were piloted in 2023 for roll-out in 2024. The work on the SA Review will continue into 2024 with more extensive changes planned. The National Federation was also engaged in supporting members in meeting the requirements of the Health Care Act 2007 and HIQA regulations through its representations at the HIQA Providers Forum meetings.

Support Networks, Information Sharing and Training Opportunities

The National Federation supported its members in meeting compliance challenges through the following support networks, information sharing activities and training opportunities:



- Providing a network of support and facilitating cooperation and learning between organisations through the work of our operational subcommittees, working groups, reference groups and task groups. In addition, the network of Area Federation Committees enables organisations to engage with organisations operating in their local area.

- Providing information to members regarding data protection & GDPR related policies and legislative requirements.
- Arranging presentations and guest speakers to attend general assemblies, subcommittee meetings and standalone events.
- Workshops to support information gathering and perspective sharing to feed into submissions and consultations.
- Delivering a further cycle of the Frontline Managers Training Programme 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.
- Coordinating specific training opportunities and webinars on topics of interest to members.
- Coordinating the delivery of training on the revised Dignity at Work Policy for the Public Health Service.

4. Respond to current Global Issues

The greater levels of globalisation and interconnectedness in the modern world have given rise to new challenges. Over the past number of years, the world has experienced two unprecedented crises in the form of Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine. These events have had significant effects on the global landscape which in turn affected service providers and people with intellectual disabilities in Ireland. These challenges include but are not limited to rising inflation, increased electricity and solid fuel costs, and delays in global supply chains. While the serious challenges posed during the early phase of the COVID 19 pandemic had significantly receded in 2023, the pandemic continued to feature on the work of the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee during the year. Issues relating to mask wearing, isolation requirements and access to the vaccine booster were addressed to ensure that people with a disability with an underlying medical condition were appropriately supported and unnecessary restrictions to their lives were removed. The Human Resources Subcommittee also continued to deal with HR issues related to Covid-19.

Inflationary pressures were identified by the Board as a key current priority in 2023. Therefore, strong representations on this issue were made at a national level throughout the year.

5. Sustainability of Services

Ensuring the delivery of services and supports to people with intellectual disabilities is dependent on the viability of Section 38 and Section 39 Disability Service Providers. It is essential that services receive sufficient, multiannual investment so they can continue to provide high-quality services to people with intellectual disability and autism. However, many services are not fully funded for the cost of frontline services, leading to precarious financial positions.

As a foundational concern, sustainability challenges influenced many of our strategic objectives and were integrated into various strands of work throughout the organisation. This was evidenced by the frequency with which sustainability was raised during engagements with key stakeholders and it reflected in the representations made by Federation members in many forums and Groups operated by the HSE and other state agencies.

There was also a specific letter sent to Minister Anne Rabbitte and Minister Roderic O’Gorman highlighting the sustainability issues facing services. These risks also featured prominently in the Pre-Budget 2024 Campaign with the pre-budget submission calling on the government to safeguard the sustainable future of disability services in light of the challenges presented by growing inflation, the unsustainable pay-gap in Section 39 organisations, the cost of compliance with multi-agency regulation and the historic day service funding deficits.

6. Build strategic relationships with key stakeholders

Building and maintaining strategic relationships with key stakeholders was a cornerstone of our efforts in 2023. The transfer of functions from the Department of Health to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth meant the National Federation began to effectively develop relationships with a set of new officials and politicians. Beyond this, over the course of the year we actively engaged with a diverse array of partners, including government agencies, other non-profit organisations, and advocacy groups to foster collaboration and impact the service provision landscape. Through these partnerships and engagements, we have been able to effectively utilise our resources, share expertise, and co-develop and advocate for measures that would address the needs of our sector.

Meetings and Engagements with Key Stakeholders

Over the course of 2023 the National Federation held numerous engagements with key stakeholders including:

- Meetings and engagements with officials and Ministers from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Department of Health on:
 - Funding and resourcing for the sector
 - Section 39 pay parity
 - Sustainability of Service Providers
 - Recruitment and Retention challenges
 - Inflationary funding
 - Timeline for payment of funding allocated in Budget 2024
- Meeting with Minister Kieran O’Donnell on the implementation of the Housing Strategy for Disabled people
- Engagement with officials from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on a Data Request for Section 38 Pensions Data
- Attendance of Liam Woods, HSE National Director of Health Regions Implementation, at the June General Assembly to introduce the HSE Health Regions and the work completed so far.



Alison Harnett at a meeting with Minister Kieran O'Donnell in relation to Housing



Liam Woods presenting to the June General Assembly

Representation on Sectoral Working Groups

The National Federation is represented on a wide range of sectoral working Groups. In some cases through Federation members who provide nominees to represent the wider membership, and in other cases, Secretariat staff take up these roles. The wide range of Working Groups and Forums on which the National Federation was represented in 2023 is outlined below:

Children's Disability Network Team Information Management System Working Group

Children's Disability Network Teams Task Group

Day Services Resumption Working Group

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's Disability Consultative Committee

Department of Health Disability Consultative Committee

European Working Time Directive Working Group

HIQA Provider's Forum

HSE / Disability Umbrella Groups Safeguarding Reference Committee

HSE ADMA Disability Reference Group

HSE Children First Reference Group

HSE Climate Action and Sustainability Procurement Working Group

HSE Disability Quality Improvement Forum

HSE Guiding Principles Working Group for Service User's Personal Finances'

HSE Home sharing Implementation Group

HSE National Umbrella Bodies Covid-19 Operations Group

HSE Patient Engagement Forum

HSE Under 65's Stakeholder Reference Group

Health Dialogue Forum

Integrated Financial Monitoring System and National Integrated Staff Records and Pay Programme

Joint Information and Consultation Forum

National Ability Support System Steering Group

National Child Disability Management Information System Implementation Group

National Children's Oversight Group

National Council for Special Education Forum

National Group for Addressing MDT Needs

National Joint Council

National Safeguarding Advisory Committee

New Directions National Steering Group

Nominated Health Agencies Superannuation Scheme (NHASS) Working Group

Oireachtas Disability Group – Voluntary Sector disability umbrella bodies working on disability related issues and highlighting and advocating the need for multi-annual investment and adequate resourcing of disability services.

Out of Hours Working Group

Project Oversight Group for development of IT system for the Children's Disability Network Teams

School Leavers National Working Group

National Implementation Steering Group for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027

Collaboration across not for profit organisations

Oireachtas Disability Group

In 2023 the National Federation continued its partnership with six umbrella bodies - Disability Federation of Ireland; Inclusion Ireland; Independent Living Movement Ireland; Mental Health Reform; and National Disability Services Association through the Oireachtas Disability Group (ODG). This Group, which is co-Chaired by Alison Harnett, seeks to collaboratively engage with key stakeholders and advocate on behalf of people with disabilities, their families and service providers on matters of key importance relating to disability and supporting an equality agenda in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



ODG at Leinster House

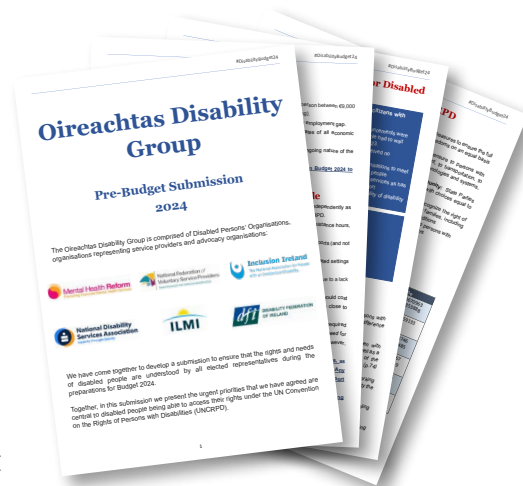
A highlight of the work completed in 2023 was on June 14th 2023, when the ODG hosted a pre-Budget Lobbying day in Leinster House. The ODG met with representatives from each political party to brief them on Budget Priorities from the Disability Sector. National Federation members were represented by Chief Executive Alison Harnett, and Megan Leahy, Administrative Officer.



Alison Harnett and Megan Leahy with politicians from various political parties and partners from across disability umbrella bodies

The group's joint priorities for Budget 2024 centred around:

1. Cost of Disability
2. Housing and Supports for Disabled People
3. Enabling Budget Decisions Work for Disabled People
4. Delivery on Promises Made in the Programme for Government



Joint work on Pay Parity

The National Federation joined a coalition of umbrella bodies led by The Wheel, which was formed to support action on pay issues for Section 39, 56 and 10 organisations. It was made up of community and voluntary sector organisations: the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers, the Family Resource Centres National Forum, the National Voluntary Drug and Alcohol Sector, The Wheel, Disability Federation of Ireland, the Coalition of Túsla-Funded Organisations, the Dublin Homeless Network and Simon Communities of Ireland.

7. Accountable 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 represented 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.

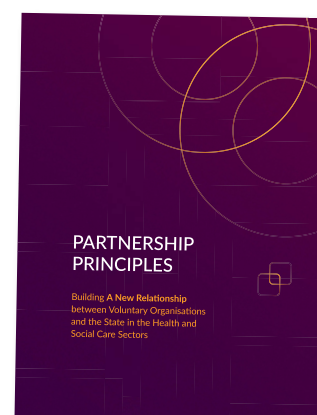
Launch of the Partnership Principles

The April 3rd 2023 marked an important moment in the relationship between the voluntary sector and the HSE with the launch of the Health Dialogue Forum's Partnership Principles. The National Federation was actively involved in the development of the Partnership Principles and chairperson Michael Hennessy spoke at the launch. These Principles aim to provide a valuable guide to the emerging interdependent partnerships between the State and the voluntary organisations to forge new paths to support people as full and equal citizens, guided in the disability sector by the rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The shared and agreed Partnership Principles call upon all actors – State and Voluntary, to place the citizen at the centre of the decisions made; and in doing so to work on the basis of trust and mutual respect so that coherent planning and good decisions are informed by engagement and participation - harnessing the strengths of the respective sectors for the benefit of the people using the services.



Bernard Gloster HSE Chief Executive and Michael Hennessy National Federation Chairperson at the launch of the partnership principles



8. Promote shared learning and respond to member queries and requests

Throughout the year, the National Federation Secretariat sought to promote a responsive, evidence-based, and collaborative approach to supporting its membership. A key aim is the promotion of shared learning and ensuring that member queries and requests are addressed promptly and effectively. Our commitment to supporting our members is reflected in the various channels through which we handle communications and the diverse formats of meetings we conduct.

Queries received via phone and email

Supporting our member organisations is a central role of the National Federation Secretariat. We understand the importance of being accessible and responsive to our members. This year, we have efficiently managed a high volume of requests via both phone and email. Our team has worked diligently to provide timely and accurate responses, in addressing the broad range of enquiries received from members and key stakeholders.



Meetings

To facilitate shared learning and collaboration, we held numerous meetings throughout the year. These meetings were conducted in various formats to accommodate the differing needs and preferences of our members. We hosted several in-person meetings, providing opportunities for direct interaction and networking. We also conducted fully online meetings to ensure all members could participate regardless of their location.



Information and Communication

The sharing of information and facilitation of communications is a key role played by the National Federation. Some examples of meetings of the National Federation in 2023 that brought members together to share information and discussion:



March 2023:

Workshop to prepare a NfVSP Submission to the Central Bank's Consumer Protection Code Review

May 2023:

Joint webinar between the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers and the HSE National Safeguarding Office 'Making Safeguarding Personal: Exploring User Engagement, Experiences from Services'

June 2023:

Targeted consultation with NfVSP members on the amended draft regulations for providers of home support services

June 2023:

Webinar - Retention Master Class: Best Practices in the Disability Sector with speakers from Conscia Recruitment Specialists

June 2023:

Workshop on the Draft Regulations for Providers of Home Support Services

August 2023:

Joint workshop with the Housing Agency to inform the development of the Information and Communication Strategy of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027

September 2023:

Workshop to collect feedback on the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People: Information and Communication Strategy

September 2023:

Webinar - Breaking Barriers: Innovative Talent Acquisition Strategies in the Disability Sector with speakers from Conscia Recruitment Specialists

September 2023:

National Federation interactive session on repurposing vacant properties

October 2023:

Webinar - Global Connections: Navigating International Recruitment in Voluntary Organisations with speakers from the HR Team Legal Recruitment Specialists

October 2023:

Webinar - Leveraging Tech & IT Solution for Recruitment Success with Michael Blakley, Recruitment IT Specialist

November 2023:

Webinar - Navigating Legal Landscapes for Recruitment with speakers from the HR Team Legal Recruitment Specialists

November 2023:

CORU briefing on the Registration of Social Care Workers for National Federation members with Catherine Byrne, Head of Strategy and Policy at CORU

As part of its information and communications role, the National Federation also maintains a comprehensive website www.fedvol.ie and a website on good practice for informing Families of their child's disability at www.informingfamilies.ie. The National Federation can be found on Twitter at [@NatFedVSP](https://twitter.com/NatFedVSP).

Frontline Managers in the Intellectual Disability Sector Course

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers in conjunction with the University of Limerick ran another successful programme for Front Line Managers in the intellectual disability sector which commenced in September 2023. This Certificate in Management Programme is a Level 6 Award on the National Framework of Qualifications (60 ECTS Credits). The programme seeks to ensure that service provision and supports are co-ordinated around the person in a holistic manner that reflects the unique requirements and needs of each person.

9. Fulfil Governance, Employment, Company responsibilities and statutory requirements

Standing Subcommittees of the Board

In support of the Board's governance of the organisation, and in accordance with its Constitution, the National Federation has two standing Subcommittees – the Finance Audit and Risk Subcommittee; and the Governance and Nominations Subcommittee.

The Finance Audit and Risk Subcommittee was chaired in 2023 by Vincent O'Flynn, Chief Executive, Carriglea Cairde Services. Its responsibilities include overseeing the development of policies relating to the financial management of the Company and monitoring their implementation; reviewing and recommending approval of the annual overall operating budget for the Company; reviewing management accounts, including the cash flow position of the Company and financial reports; and monitoring the integrity of the annual Financial Statements and recommending these to the Board.

Key funding sources for the National Federation include membership fees, grant funding from the HSE and funding from project work and training events. The Finance Audit and Risk Committee scrutinised and endorsed the annual budget, ensured alignment with the organisation's strategic goals and financial health.

In 2022, the HSE conducted an Internal Audit which was finalised in the early stages of 2023. The Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee supported the collation of materials as requested by the HSE Internal Audit team.

The National Federation's **Governance and Nominations Subcommittee** met five times in 2023 and was chaired by Clare Dempsey, Chief Executive Officer with St John of God Community Services. The Group had an ambitious workplan for 2023 that included continuing the review of the Constitution, completing a Board Evaluation process which could be used to inform succession planning, creating a Board Induction pack for new Board Members, beginning the review of the National Federation's operational policies, and ensuring adherence to regulatory responsibilities including those set by the Charities Regulator and the Lobbying Commission.

The Governance and Nominations Subcommittee has made significant strides in enhancing the governance framework and ensuring the effective composition and functioning of the Board. The work completed in 2023 has strengthened the organisation's governance practices, ensured the company meets its regulatory requirements and helped to ensure a diverse and skilled Board.

The Board of Directors of the National Federation

As noted earlier, the Board of Directors of the National Federation met on six occasions in 2023 for regular Board meetings. The Board is committed to ensuring it has robust governance arrangements in place to meet statutory and legal requirements as a company, employer and via its Service Arrangement with the HSE.

Work of National Federation Sub Committees and Working Groups in 2023

Operational Subcommittees, Working Groups and Pension Administration

The operational work of the National Federation is carried out through Federation-wide initiatives such as its annual budget campaign, and through the work of its Board, Subcommittees and by Working Groups; supported by the National Federation's Secretariat team. The following sections of this Annual Report provide an account of the critical areas of work in which a range of operational Subcommittees and Working Groups of the National Federation were active during 2023.

Quality and Standards

Quality & Standards Subcommittee: The National Federation is committed to continuous quality improvement in services, in support of the realisation of the NRVSP's vision that people with a disability "be supported to live a life on one's own terms". The work of the Federation's Quality and Standards Subcommittee is focused on supporting this aim and progressing service developments in a person centred manner in line with the principles of the UNCRPD. The Sub-Committee is a very active group with a broad membership drawn from across Federation members. The Committee met on 5 occasions during 2023 and Elaine Teague, Director of Adult Services, St. Michael's House, assumed the role of Chairperson in June 2023, following on from the tenure of the previous Chair, Margaret Glacken, Brothers of Charity Services, Ireland.

The 2023 programme of work completed under the direction of the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee included a focus on both regulatory/compliance related obligations and quality enhancement initiatives. The following is a summary of the work highlights:

1. Links with HSE Quality Improvement Team:

The Federation continued to liaise closely with Marie Kehoe O'Sullivan and colleagues from the Quality Improvement Division, HSE during 2023; with Marie attending 2 meetings of the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee to update members on the Quality Improvement Teams Action Plan, 2023.

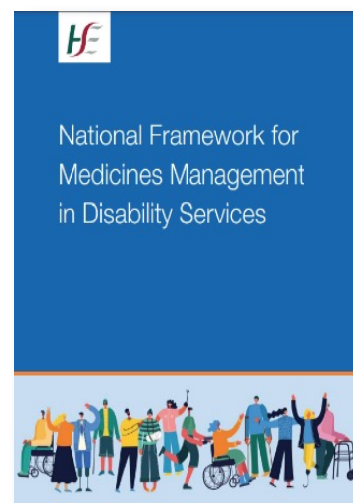
Medication Management Framework-Training Module:

Work on the development of a QQI Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Medicines Management in Disability Services was completed during 2023. An information session on the training took place for members on October 10th 2023 and this training will be made available to interested staff across National Federation member organisations.

Guiding Principles documents / Accessible Communications:

Work continued during 2023 on a number of guiding principle documents which National Federation members contributed to – available from the Quality Improvement Division at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/disability-quality-improvement/guiding-principles/>

Work was also undertaken on aligning existing Guiding Principles documents with the requirements of the Assisted Decision Making Act, 2015.



2. Regulation:

In supporting members to meet their obligations under the Health Care Act, 2007, and emerging regulatory requirements the Quality & Standards Sub-Committee were involved in the following:

The need for Regulatory Reform – Development of NRVSP Position Paper:

A significant Project commenced in early 2023 focused on the development of a National Federation position paper on the need for regulatory reform. The Project was supported by a small Advisory Group drawn from the Quality & Standards Sub-Committee membership who provided guidance on the consultation to be completed with people supported, CEOs, Directors of Services and PICs to identify the issues of concern and recommendations for the future. Jonathan Lerner and Jodie Healy, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, facilitated work on this Project on behalf of the National Federation. It is expected that this Project will be completed during 2024.

Health Information Quality Authority:

Regular meetings of the HIQA Provider Forum took place throughout 2023 with issues of concern to Service Providers being raised and regular updates provided by the Regulator. Thematic inspections which focused specifically on the area of 'restrictive practices' commenced in 2023 with a focused webinar event being hosted by HIQA on June 20th 2023. Through the work of the Quality & Standards Sub-Committee members shared their experiences of these thematic Inspections.

Draft Regulations for Providers of Home Support Services:

During 2023 the Institute for Public Health (IPH) published the summary findings of its consultation with stakeholders on the development of 'Regulations for Providers of Home Support Services' to which the National Federation had contributed. A workshop to develop the Federations submission on the amended Draft Regulations for Providers of Home Support Services took place June 1st with a presentation delivered by Dr Mary Foley and colleagues from the Department of Health, Home Support Reform Unit. A Regulatory Impact Assessment was undertaken by the Home Support Reform Unit in July 2023 and National Federation members were invited to input to same. HIQA standards for home support are expected to be issued for public consultation in 2024.



3. New Directions / Adult Day Services:

A significant programme of work in relation to adult day services was delivered throughout 2023. There are 4 core groups which inform the implementation of New Directions with national Federation members represented on all groups:

- ***New Directions implementation Group;***
- ***School Leavers;***
- ***Multi-D Development Group;***
- ***Monitoring–Day Services.***

4. Infection Prevention & Control:

IPC Link Practitioner Programme:

The HSE Disability IPC Group continued to develop during 2023 with an active membership drawn from across Federation organisations. The Department of Health published National Clinical Guideline No. 30, Infection Prevention and Control, in May, 2023 – the overarching reference document for regarding sector relevant IPC across health and social care settings. The HSE also sought to support Federation members with outbreak preparedness/planning and to promote vaccination. A survey of members IPC training requirements was completed in May, 2023 which focused on the need to tailor training to make it more appropriate to front line staff within disability services through the introduction of scenarios.

5. National Screening Service:



Maria Murphy, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, participated in a key stakeholder workshop on April 25th on cancer prevention for people with intellectual disabilities. A range of screening related resource materials developed by the National Screening Service and others were shared with Federation members. This is a significant area of work in enhancing peoples quality of life and the supports provided by the Screening Service for people with an intellectual disability are most welcome with accessible materials / video resources developed to support national screening programmes.

6. HSE National Group on Home Sharing:

The HSE National Group on Home Sharing was reactivated in mid-2023 and the National Federation nominated Audrey Reilly, Brothers of Charity Services, to join the group whose main focus is on what is needed to sustain, grow and develop Home Sharing in Ireland.

Human Resources

Human Resources Subcommittee: Members of the Subcommittee met on four occasions in 2023, taking a hybrid approach to meetings, two were held in-person and two were held online. The Subcommittee was chaired by Olive Leonard, Director of Human Resources, Muiriosa Foundation until March 2023. The National Federation is very grateful for Olive's enormous contribution over many years in chairing this committee. Following the end of Olive's term, Brian Leahy, National Head of Human Resources, Brothers of Charity was appointed Chairperson. The HR Group has a very engaged membership and the Subcommittee serves as an important platform for support, information, networking and shared learning.



HR Subcommittee Chairperson Brian Leahy and former Chairperson Olive Leonard

Key highlights of the work of this Subcommittee during 2023 included:

1. Presentations:

In June 2023, Paul Byrne & Claire O’Cleary from CORU presented to the HR Subcommittee on the upcoming Social Care Worker registration process.

In September 2023, Eithne Fox presented on the HSE’s Recruitment Reform and Resourcing Programme. The HSE’s Resourcing Strategy published in June 2023 formed the basis for Eithne’s presentation.

In November 2023, Mary Samuel, Portfolio Lead General Manager in the Office of the Assistant National Director, National HR Division attended a meeting to provide insight into the work currently underway concerning implementing the recommendations arising from the ‘Review of the Role & Function of Health Care Assistants’ 2018 report.



Brian Leahy, Paul Byrne, Claire O’Leary and Olive Leonard



Brian Leahy, Jillian Sexton and Eithne Fox

2. Dignity at Work Training for Section 39 Organisations:

In 2022, the HSE launched its revised ***Dignity at Work Policy for the Public Health Service.***

To support section 39 organisations to meet their obligations under this policy, the National Federation coordinated training sessions with the Health Management Institute. These sessions were held on 8th November, 14th November and 29th November 2023. They were well attended, with each session fully booked and the feedback received from participants was positive.

3. Submissions and position papers:

The below papers and submissions were produced by or with the assistance of members of the Human Resources Subcommittee:

Recruitment and Retention Crisis in ID Services, HSE, January 2023

This document was submitted to the HSE and examined the current impact the recruitment and retention crisis was having on organisations and also provided recommended actions to address the same. It was based on data collected from members in December 2022.

Review of the Occupations Lists for Employment Permits public consultation – Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, August 2023

The Department of Trade Enterprise and Employment opened public consultations on grades that should be included on Ireland's Critical Skills Occupations List. People with occupations on the critical skills list can apply for a critical skills employment permit that is designed to attract highly skilled people to the labour market. The National Federation submitted a contribution on August 21st 2023 advocating that Social Care Workers be added to this list.

Section 39 Pay Costings, DCEDIY, October 2023

The National Federation conducted a detailed costing exercise in relation to the funding required to implement the current pay scales in Section 39 Member Organisations. Based on the information received, a paper was drafted and submitted to Colm O'Conaill, Assistant Secretary and James Gibb, Principal Officer in DCEDIY and to other key stakeholders to call for the necessary pay related funding and alignment with future National Wage Agreements.

4. Out of Hours Business Case

The National Federation has been engaged for some time concerning the development of an agreed / standardised national rate for 'Out of Hours' Service in Intellectual Disability Services (as there was considerable variation across service in terms of the 'out-of-hours' rate being applied). The WRC oversaw a conciliation process regarding this matter and issued an agreement on August 3rd 2023. On foot of this agreement, the National Federation completed two data collection exercises. A business case was then submitted to the Department of Health seeking funding to cover the costs involved based on the data collected.

5. Supports for New HR Personnel

During 2023 it was noted that there has been a large turnover in staff in HR departments throughout the National Federation membership. It was proposed the National Federation develop training resources/ supports for new HR staff – with a training needs analysis being undertaken to identify the pack content. The work on this project will continue into 2024.



National Federation HR Group presentation to Olive Leonard, Director Of HR, Muiriosa Foundation on stepping down as Chairperson

6. Subgroups Update

Social Care Workers Task Group:

The National Federation first founded a Social Care Workers Task Group in 2018, but it had fallen dormant over the following years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The HR Subcommittee made the decision to reignite this Group in 2023. At their first meeting, Siobhan Power, St. Catherine's Association was elected as Chairperson. During 2023, this Group was focused on the upcoming CORU registration of Social Care Workers. In November this Group arranged an online briefing session for National Federation Members which featured a presentation from Catherine Byrne, Head of Strategy and Policy, CORU. The meeting was attended by 106 people and a recording was shared after the event.

Recruitment and Retention Task Group:

The Recruitment and Retention Task Group is co-chaired by Lauri Cryan, HR Manager Laura Lynn and Michael Hegarty, Chief Executive St Joseph's Foundation. This Group worked with two external agencies to develop 6 webinars, 1:1 consultancy sessions, and branding materials for the sector. Full details of this programme of work can be found under the priority area recruitment and retention under the Board Priorities. In addition to this work, this Group met to discuss the recruitment and retention crisis in disability services and fed into the January 2023 paper on Recruitment and Crisis in ID Services.

Section 39 Pay Task Group:

The Section 39 Pay Task Group is chaired by Pat Reen, Prosper Fingal. The purpose of this Group is to advocate for equal pay of staff working in essential disability services. As covered under current priorities of the Board, 2023 was a busy year for this Group. Some key achievements included:

- Becoming an approved Body of the Direct Professional Access Scheme under the Public Affairs Committee of the Bar of Ireland so our members can apply directly without the necessity of a solicitor for non-contentious/advisory legal assistance. This access was utilised to get shared legal advice regarding obligations under the Service Level Arrangement and the Health Act with respect to Section 39 pay

- A paper was produced on the costings of pay parity which was submitted to key stakeholders to support the National Federation's objective of equalising pay
- Collaborated and shared information on various pay related issues
- Representatives from this Group also collaborated with other umbrella bodies as part of the work of the voluntary sector coalition led by the Wheel and represented Section 39 organisations at forums such as the IRG and the Health Dialogue Forum

Section 38 Pension Task Group:

National Federation members received a data collection request from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to Section 38 Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) Data. In response, a meeting was called and Catherine Bowers, Pensions Manager in St. Michaels House chaired the session. As an outcome of this meeting, Jillian Sexton and Catherine Bowers met with John Pender (Actuary - Work & Pensions, Data Collection Team, DPER), Aine Chambers (Actuary - Work & Pensions, Data Collection Team, DPER) and Aishling Gregory (Finance Manager - Work & Pensions, Data Collection Team, DPER) to obtain clarifications on the precise data required and raised the key concerns of members.

Housing

Housing Subcommittee: This Subcommittee was established in late 2022 to provide: 1) a forum for discussion and organisational support, 2) conduct advocacy on behalf of members and those supported, and 3) to lead the National Federation's response to the implementation plan for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027. There were 2 meetings of the Group in 2023.

Key highlights of the work of this Subcommittee during 2023 including:

1. Finalising the terms of reference

The terms of reference were finalised and approved by the Board.

2. Advocacy Work:

On September 28th Alison Harnett joined a delegation from disability organisations across Ireland who met with Minister Kieran O'Donnell. The Housing Subcommittee identified key challenges and points of consideration that were raised with the Minister in follow up from the meeting. Chair of the National Federation's Housing group, Michelle Thunder, spoke at the plenary session of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) National Housing Conference held in October 2023.

3. Consultations / Submissions:

National Federation's Integrated Services Paper

The Housing Working Group was chosen as the forum for a workshop on updating the National Federation's Integrated Services Paper so that specific housing and residential issues could be incorporated. Under Slaintecare, the 9 Community Health Organisations will be restructured into 6 Regional Health Authorities. Significant concerns were identified during this planning process regarding the relative focus on acute services and potential for community services (disability, mental health, older persons) to experience challenges in this regard. The revised paper on the need for integrated supports highlights the need for integrated structural and funding mechanisms in order to deliver holistic person centred services.

Submission on the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) Technical Standard on Universal Design Dwellings

The Housing Group was invited to provide feedback on the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) Technical Standard on Universal Design Dwellings: Requirements and Recommendations. The National Federation would like to thank Bruce Barclay, The Rehab Group's Head of Property and Facilities and Nicola Ryan, Architect and Co-Director of Studio Red Architects for their work as National Federation representatives on the Universal Design Standards Consultative Committee.

Information and Communication Strategy of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027

Members of the National Federation Housing Subcommittee were invited to take part in a Workshop led by the Housing Agency on the Information and Communication Strategy of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027. The completed Strategy which reflected many of the National Federation's comments was launched in December 2023.

4. Session on Repurposing Campus Setting

To support information sharing between members de-congregating services, an online session was held under the auspices of the Housing Subcommittee to share learning and ideas on the appropriate repurposing of former campus settings. The session was attended by 31 members.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information Networks

Data Protection

The Data Protection Network is made up of representatives from member organisations who work in the area of Data Protection. The purpose of this Network is to support organisations in understanding and implementing the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The Network acts as a source of information exchange and support in relation to Data Protection for its Members. The Network meets quarterly (more frequently if required) and organises presentations from vendors or experts on various topics of interest. The Network also convenes smaller Working Groups to manage specific, time-bound projects as required.

Niall Rooney, Rehab Group was Chair of this Network until November 2023 when the Data Protection Network and the Freedom of Information Network merged and Aine Forde, Aurora Kilkenny, assumed the role as Chair. We are grateful to Niall for his extensive work and dedication to this Network during his tenure as Chair.

During 2023, the Data Protection Network met four times to review and discuss the following topics:

- Data Retention
- Subject Access Requests
- Legal Basis
- New Regulations & Statutes
- Case Law
- Data Protection Commission (DPC) / European Data Protection Board (EDPB) guidance updates
- Ad hoc communications between Data Protection Network members on specific issues or queries

In October 2023, a delegation from the Network and the National Federation met with David Murphy, Deputy Commissioner, Consultation Unit (Health and Voluntary Sector), DPC and Georgeta Botas, Assistant Commissioner, Consultation Unit (Health and Voluntary Sector), Data protection Commission. A variety of issues were discussed including:

- Section 38/39 Providers as Controllers,
- Article 9(2)(g) GDPR – Substantial Public Interest,
- Article 9(2)(h) GDPR & Section 52(2) DPA 2018,
- Vital Interests,
- Section 41(b) DPA 2018,
- CCTV Signs,
- Explicit Consent outside of Health and Social Care Context,
- Data Protection Health Regulations & Data Protection Social Work Regulations,
- Breach Form,
- Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015,
- Suggested Issues for DPC Guidance.

Freedom of Information Act (FOI) Network

The FOI Network is made up of representatives from member organisations who work in the area of Freedom of Information. It is chaired by Deborah Gleeson, Muiriosa Foundation, who replaced Marie Grimes McGrath, Avista clg, as Chair at the start of 2023. In November 2023 the Freedom of Information Network and the Data Protection Network merged; with Aine Forde, Aurora Kilkenny, assuming the role as Chair and Deborah Gleeson as Vice Chair. We are grateful to Marie for her extensive work and dedication to this Network during her tenure as Chair.

The purpose of this Network is to support organisations in understanding and implementing the requirements of the FOI Act. The Network acts as a source of information exchange and support in relation to FOI for its Members. The Network meets quarterly and organises presentations from vendors or experts on various topics of interest and convenes smaller Working Groups to manage specific projects if needed. A member of this Network represents the National Federation on the Public Sector User Network (PSUN). The Network dealt with ad hoc queries and supported FOI officers who often work in isolation. Where complex requests are received, it allows for confidential discussions on the processing of the request.

Safeguarding – Children & Adults:

National Federation Safeguarding (Adults and Children) Group: The role of the National Federations Safeguarding Group is to support member organisations in meeting their obligations in respect of the adult safeguarding and children's first policies / programmes of work. The work of this Group is vital in ensuring there is a safeguarding culture and safe practices in place across National Federation member organisations and a clear commitment to addressing all safeguarding related issues and concerns that arise. The Federation Group is chaired by David Tuomey, Principle Social Worker, Western Care Association, with 4 meetings of the Group taking place in 2023. The following are some of the key highlights from the work completed:

1. Collaboration with HSE:

HSE Funded Safeguarding Reference Group:

The HSE, National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers, the Disability Federation of Ireland and the National Disability Services Association are members of the Safeguarding Reference Group. The aim of the Group is to foster interagency collaboration and communication between the HSE National Safeguarding Office (NSO) and Service Providers at a national level and to provide leadership and direction in safeguarding adults from abuse and promoting their rights. The Safeguarding Reference Group met on a bi-monthly basis during 2023 to progress the safeguarding issues of concern to National Federation members.

'Making Safeguarding Personal' Webinar:

A webinar event was hosted by the National Federation in conjunction with National Safeguarding Office on May 25th entitled 'Exploring User engagement - Making Safeguarding Personal' which aimed to showcase examples and hear from services that have developed and co-produced initiatives on safeguarding with people supported. A recording of the webinar is available: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLamkbjLfX-IVkulfd6_Q7YISiPmqbdYau

Safeguarding Policy Review:

In July 2023, the HSE commissioned Ms. Jackie McIlroy to complete an independent review of the HSE Adult Safeguarding Policy and a series of dedicated consultation sessions for HSE Funded Agencies took place in autumn 2023 which National Federation members contributed to. The report / recommendations arising from this review will be published in early 2024.

2. Safeguarding Ireland:

Safeguarding Ireland was established to promote the safeguarding of adults who may be vulnerable, and develop a national plan for supporting peoples welfare by facilitating inter-sectoral collaboration, developing public and professional awareness and education, and undertaking research to inform policy, practice and legislation – www.safeguardingireland.ie



During 2023 the National Federation continued to actively support the work of Safeguarding Ireland with the aim of collaborating on safeguarding issues as they relate to people with a disability. Key highlights of the work completed in 2023 include:

National Adult Safeguarding Day:

Supporting National Adult Safeguarding Day which took place on November 10th 2023 – a range of resource materials were developed and circulated to National Federation members highlighting the theme of the day which was that planning ahead reduces the risk of adult abuse, and that ‘go to’ actions that all adults can take are to:

- Make an Enduring Power of Attorney
- Nominate a Health Representative
- Choose who can Assist with Decisions.

Legislative & Policy Development:

The National Federation supported the important work undertaken by Safeguarding Ireland in relation to legislation and policy development in key areas e.g. wards of court, deprivation of liberty, implementation of the ADM Act, 2015.

Research Project:

A meeting took place with Safeguarding Ireland in September 2023 to inform a proposed research project on the area of ‘peer-to-peer’ safeguarding concerns. An invitation to tender was issued in December 2023 to complete a scoping study in this area.

Safeguarding Charter:

Safeguarding Ireland has developed a voluntary Charter which sets out how organisations, across a wide range of sectors, promote a culture that seeks to uphold the rights and freedoms of all people who engage with their organisations. The Charter aims to promote a raised awareness of Adult Safeguarding and progressive realisation of the human rights of all people by all of its signatories. A review of the Safeguarding Charter which organisations were asked to sign up was completed in 2023.



3. Children First:

During 2023 the National Federation continued to work closely with the HSE and the Children First National Office to support the children first related obligations of member organisations. Regular meetings were held with the HSE Children First Reference Group which focused on the following:

Children First Training:

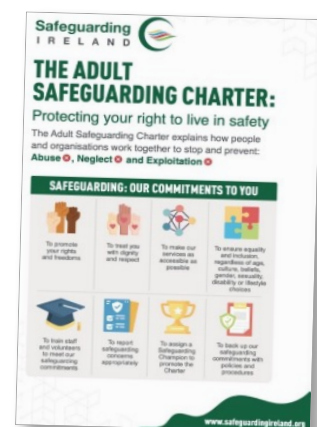
Sharing of children first training and resource materials which have been developed by the National Children First Office;

Mandated Persons Train the Trainer Programme:

Laura O'Neill, Stewarts Care, was the National Federation nominee on a Working Group established in 2023 to develop a Mandated Persons Train-the-trainer programme - the group sought to establish Federation members training needs and to ascertain the number of mandated persons requiring training.

HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy:

The Federation made a submission to the National Children Office on a review of the HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy which was being completed.



National Compliance Assurance Pilot:

In summer 2023 a Children First compliance audit was undertaken by the National Children First Office and a number of National Federation member organisations were invited to participate in the pilot. It is envisaged that further services will be audited in 2024.

Children First Public Awareness Week Sept 25th – October 1st 2023:

A national 'Children First Public Awareness Campaign' took place during the week commencing 25 September 2023. The campaign was sponsored by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and focused on clarifying:

- the requirement for all organisations working with children and young people to develop policies and procedures to create a safe environment for children availing of a service.
- the requirement for organisations working with children and young people to keep children safe from harm and to undertake Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments and develop and display Child Safeguarding Statements.
- Mandated Persons legal obligations under Children First.

A suite of resources for staff and services were developed by the National Children's First Office and circulated to National Federation members to help to promote Children First and raise awareness of the key messages.

Assisted Decision-Making Reference Group:

National Federation Assisted Decision Making (ADM) Reference Group:

The role of the National Federation's ADM Reference Group is to support member organisations in the implementation of the Assisted Decision Making Act. The Group met 8 times in 2023 and is chaired by Teresa Mallon, Director of Quality and Safety, St. John of Gods Community Services. This was a busy year for the Group with the commencement of the ADM Act on April 26th 2023.

Some key highlights of the Groups work in 2023 have been listed below:

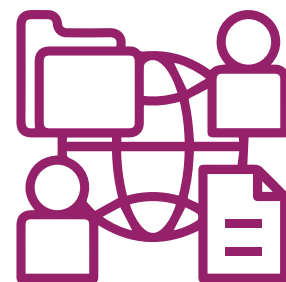
1. Financial matters:

Access to finances and the right to open a bank account was particularly relevant for service providers and the people they support in 2023. Throughout 2023 the Group collected case studies illustrating positive and poor practice in the banking sector with respect to access for people with intellectual disability. Following on from these case studies, the National Federation advocated for a roundtable discussion on banking. The session which was arranged by the HSE's National Office for Human Rights and Equality Policy included attendees from the HSE, Decision Support Service, the Banking and Payments Federation of Ireland, the Central Bank, Bank of Ireland, AIB, Safeguarding Ireland, Sage Advocacy, Inclusion Ireland, Disabled Person's Organisations and the National Advocacy Service. Helena Connors and Teresa Mallon attended on behalf of the National Federation. This event was the starting point to working collaboratively to resolve issues and there was positive engagement throughout. Some of the issues highlighted on the day included training and education of financial services staff, using least restrictive support options, reasonable accommodations, supporting decision making capacity, the structure of regulation and governance that service providers adhere to in relation to finances of the people they support.



2. Information sharing:

Throughout 2023, Group members shared resources, case studies and examples of good and bad practice. Information was also shared by this group to the wider Federation membership, including a collection of useful resources on the ADM Section of the National Federation website, a document to support engagement with financial institutions that reflected the main principles of the ADM, and an information resource document which services can adapt and personalise according to the type of services they deliver. A letter written by the Decision Support Service to family members that could be shared by our members was also circulated.



3. Submissions / Consultations

National Federation's Submission to Phase 1 of the Central Bank's Consumer Protection Code Review

Based on the feedback provided during a workshop on March 16th, the National Federation made a submission to Phase 1 of the Central Bank's Consumer Protection Code Review to ensure issues for people with intellectual disabilities were considered by the Central Bank when producing the Code which applies to all Banks operating in Ireland.

4. Advocacy and Engagement with external stakeholders

In March 2023, a letter was sent to Bernard O'Regan, HSE Head of Operations – Disability Services and Minister Roderic O'Gorman outlining the impact that ADM will have on service provision including additional costs associated with ADM. The letter also outlined some of the proactive work already being completed by members. The letter was received positively by Bernard O'Regan who acknowledged the work being undertaken by the National Federation in his response.

Members of the National Federation's ADM Group are part of the HSE's ADMA Disability Reference Group to facilitate the flow of information from the HSE to National Federation members and vice versa. One significant impact of the representatives on this Group was to advocate for the HSE to complete an ADM Impact Assessment. This assessment was completed over the course of 2023 and included focus groups with service providers, people supported, family members and Disabled Person's Organisations.

Members of the ADM Group reviewed the National Federation's Pre-Budget Submission to ensure it aligned with the principles of the ADM and took a rights-based approach to the challenges faced by members and the people that they support.

In 2023, the HSE launched a mentorship programme to support staff in their implementation of the ADM. This programme was welcomed by the membership but places in the programme were limited. Teresa Mallon and Helena Connors met with the HSE officials responsible for the programme. One of the outcomes of this meeting was the creation of 2 further mentor groups for National Federation members.

It was decided by the Group that engagement with other non-profit organisations in the sector would reduce the possibility of duplicating work and foster positive collaboration. Therefore, Helena Connors established links with the Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI) and the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT). Possibilities for collaborative working will be further examined in 2024.

Administration of the National Federation's Pension Scheme

Overview of the size of the pension scheme

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Pension & Life Assurance Scheme has grown significantly since its establishment in 1996, where, as at 31st December, 2023, there were:

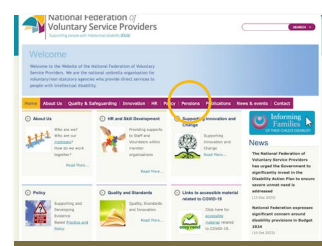
- 25 employers participating in the Scheme.
- 8,317 members (5,499 active members and 2,818 deferred members).
- Scheme's fund value under management was nearly €335m, most of which is invested in the Default Strategy for the Scheme i.e., Personal Lifestyle Strategy (PLS).
- Monthly contributions amounted to approx. €2m.

The number of participating employers in the Scheme increased from 24 to 25 during 2023, with the inclusion of Prosper Fingal joining the Scheme in March 2023.

Irish Life as Registered Administrator and Investment Manager

A workplan was developed between the Trustees and Irish Life in 2023 which aimed at increasing pension awareness and information for members of the Scheme. This was achieved in a number of ways including:

- Providing members with access to a full suite of Pension Scheme information available on the National Federation's Website, including **Pension Booklets and forms; Videos; Webinar Recordings; Newsletters; Investment updates; Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements**. The Trustees continued to update the content on the Federation's website to ensure it was accurate and easy to access for members.
- Annual Pension Benefit Statements were issued to member's home address, which provided members with details in respect of their pension contributions paid; outlined the fund(s), and its value, the member is invested in; provided the member with an estimate of the likely benefits that will emerge in respect of the member at their Normal Retirement Date i.e., their 65th birthday.
- Online Member Portal – members no longer have to wait for their annual Pension Benefit Statement to know the value of their pension fund, they can now view same at any time via their Member Portal. Further details on the Member Portal and a video on how to register is available at: www.fedvol.ie/Pensions/Default.2268.html
- The Trustees, in conjunction with Irish Life, hosted 3 online group presentations for members of the National Federation's Pension Scheme during March 2023. The presentations covered: Why save for Retirement; Pension Contributions and Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs); Investment Options, including Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations and Responsible Investing; Outline of how members can review their pension fund online via the Irish Life Member Portal. A recording of the online presentation content is available to view on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).



- Irish Life Engagement Team contacted all employers of the Scheme to offer their services and come and present to members in a group at their place of work. Engagement with employers is monitored by the Trustees at their quarterly meetings to ensure employers facilitate these presentations for members.
- Members can contact their Irish Life Advice Team point of contact for one-to-one meetings regarding their pension fund. [The Advice Team member](#) assigned to each employer and their relevant contact details is available on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).

In addition to all the above information / tools / advice available to all Scheme members, members with 15 years to retirement in 2023 were also:

- Invited to attend a **“Countdown to Retirement”** online webinar held on 6th December, 2023. Invitations were issued via employers and information on how to register was also available on the [Retirement Planning Seminars](#) section of the Federation website www.fedvol.ie. A recording of the [Countdown to Retirement](#) online webinar is available to view.
- Members received a “nudge” communication via email or when they were logged into their Member Portal to not forget to engage with their [Advice Team point of contact](#); reminders of webinars being organised for them on different themes appropriate to them etc.

Again, in addition to all the above information / tools, members with 5 years to retirement in 2023 were:

- Invited to attend a Retirement Seminar. The Pension Trustees, in association with Irish Life, organised Retirement Planning Seminars to support and provide valuable information to members of the Pension Scheme as they approach retirement. Employers were requested to invite Pension Scheme Members in their organisation who were due to retire over the next 5 years to attend. 3 seminars took place during May and July 2023, one each in Dublin, Tullamore and Charleville, where a total of 82 attendees participated.
- Issued with a personalised letter from their [Irish Life Advice Team](#) point of contact inviting them to engage with them so members have:
 - A clear understanding and expectation of what their pension fund will be at retirement.
 - Understand what way they will draw down their pension fund at retirement.



- On the Federation's website a dedicated [Approaching Retirement](#) Section was included and updated. This section provides members with a wealth of information for members approaching retirement including:
 - Approaching Retirement Video.
 - Approaching Retirement Booklet.
 - Pension Trustees summary document outlining how a member can draw down their pension fund at retirement.
 - Contact details for the Irish life Advice Team point of contacts.
 - Outline of what documentation / information a member will be required to submit to Irish Life to process their retirement claim.
 - Summary of what is an Annuity (pension for life) and an Annual Retirement Fund (ARF), and the advantages and disadvantages of each retirement option.
 - Document on why you need to ensure your salary figure held by Irish life is up to date, especially in your final 5 years to retirement.
 - Timeframe involved for drawing down pension benefits at retirement.



Trustees Monitoring of Irish Life as both Registered Administrator and Investment Manager

In accordance with the Pensions Authority Code of Practice (Chapter 2.40), the Trustees in 2023, were required to monitor Irish Life as Registered Administrator and Investment Manager on a quarterly basis. An annual review was also carried out and the contents of same were shared with Irish Life, who also provided feedback to the Trustees on the matters raised.



Appointment of an External Auditor

Following a tender process, Mazars were appointed as the Scheme External Auditor in 2023 for a 3-year period, commencing with auditing the Scheme's year end accounts for 31st December, 2022.

As required by Pension Legislation, the Trustees prepared a Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Financial Statements for year ended 31/12/22 and circulated same to each participating employer and recognised Trade Union in line with the 30th September, 2023, deadline for completion.

A copy of the TAR and Financial Statements for year ended 31/12/22 are available on the National Federation's website www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).

mazars

Key Function Holders

The Trustees continued to work with the Scheme's appointed 2 external Key Function Holders (KFHs) as follows:

- **Risk Management:** Mr. Frankie Cronin, Grant Thornton, 13-18 City Quay, Dublin 2.
- **Internal Audit:** Mr. Tom Gilligan, Align Advisory Limited, The Charlemont Exchange, Dublin 2.

The following work was carried out by the Key Function Holders during 2023:

Risk Management:

IORP II introduced the concept of a Risk Management Key Function Holder to assist the Trustees in:

- Preparing the Risk Management Policy.
- Preparing the Scheme's Own Risk Assessment (ORA).
- Gathering information necessary to identify risks to the Scheme.
- Organising, assessing and (where appropriate) the measuring and quantifying of risks.
- Identifying potential controls that may facilitate mitigation of identified risks.
- Advising on matters relating to risk management, and
- Monitoring ongoing management of identified risks and providing the Trustees with appropriate updates regarding same.



Having regard to the above, the Risk Management Key Function Holder carried out the following work during 2023:

- Shared the following draft documents for review/updating and sign off by the Trustees:
 - Risk Management Policy
 - Risk Appetite Statement (RAS)
 - Key Risk Indicator (KRIs)
- Grant Thornton provided feedback to the Trustees on their Risk Register.
- Grant Thornton provided a gap analysis on the Scheme's policies and procedures. The Trustees considered this feedback and incorporated any gaps into the different policies.
- Work commenced on drafting an Own Risk Assessment (ORA) for the Scheme. A workshop was held with the Trustees on 30th August, 2023, to assist in the initial drafting of the ORA. A first draft was considered by the Trustees in Q4 2023 and work will continue in 2024. The ORA is required to be signed off by 22nd April, 2024.

Internal Audit:

IORP II introduced the concept of an Internal Auditor Key Function Holder to complete the following key tasks:

- Assess whether governance and risk management are working effectively.
- Provide assurance that controls have been adequately defined.
- Identify control weaknesses and make recommendations for correcting problems.
- Monitor regulatory compliance.
- Challenge current practices when appropriate.
- Identify areas where training is required.
- Document and report on findings.

Having regard to the above, the Internal Auditor Key Function Holder carried out the following work during 2023:

- **Test 1:** Member Contributions & Contributions. The objective of this exercise was to ensure that there are no eligible employees who have been omitted from membership of the Scheme for Pension & Life Assurance purposes and that their correct contributions to Irish Life and Cornmarket were submitted.
- The test concluded that in the main members are included in the Scheme and correct payments are being submitted. Where this is not the case, or where eligible employees are not included in the Scheme in line with the Scheme's eligibility rule, the Trustees are continuing to follow up with relevant employers to ensure the matter is addressed.
- **Test 2:** Review Trustees' Agenda and Minutes to ensure they are run in accordance with paragraphs 5 to 12 of the Code of Practice ("CoP"). IORP II requirements are driving a change in the format of agendas and minutes. It was noted that overall, the current agenda and minutes were comprehensive and contained the required items, however, some additional recommendations were provided from the IA KFH, which the Trustees incorporated into the drafting of agenda and minutes prepared following the test.
- **Test 3:** Review Scheme's Governance and Compliance Calendar. A number of recommendations were provided to the Trustees, including the addition of various tabs to keep records of all the work that has been done by the Trustees and their advisors. Some examples of this include the Fit & Proper Tab; Trustees Training Tab; Communications Log Tab; Member / Employer Queries Log and decisions agreed at Trustees meetings etc. The Trustees incorporated the recommendations into a new Governance & Compliance Calendar for 2023.
- Review of all Scheme Policies to ensure the Scheme is fully compliant by having all the required Scheme policies drafted.
- Provided feedback on the Scheme's Risk Register.

Legal Work

It was noted that delays were sometimes being experienced when dealing with death claims where a beneficiary was a minor and therefore a Trust had to be drafted. Accordingly, The Trustees engaged William Fry Solicitors in 2023 to draft a Trust Deed Template for minor beneficiaries which can be used in all future death claims where a Trust for a minor is required. The draft Trust template will be circulated to the solicitor who will be acting on behalf of the minor, and given their legal knowledge as a solicitor, they can either use the draft Trust Deed Template or modify same to reflect their situation.

The Trustees continued to engage with A&L Goodbody to carry out:

- a. A review of the Scheme's Trust Deed & Rules.
- b. Work on establishment of the Scheme as a Designated Activity Company (DAC) in line with EU IORP 11 Directive and the Pension Authority Code of Practice requirement. The Board of the National Federation were asked to be the sole Shareholder of the DAC and in turn they sought their own independent legal advice to clarify matters they needed to address.

It is expected that the above 2 pieces of legal work will be concluded in 2024.

Policies Review

The Trustees continued to review existing Scheme policies and develop new policies, where required, to ensure IORP 11 and the Code of Practice requirements were adhered to. Copies of the Scheme's policies are available on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab)

Pension Scheme Newsletters

The Trustees produced two newsletters in 2023 covering the following topics:

March 2023:

Scheme Webinars & Retirement Planning Seminars; Pension Benefit Statements; Trustees Workplan for 2023; Review of Trustees' activity undertaken in 2022 and other relevant pension information.

October 2023:

Budget 2024 – Implications for Pensions; Importance of Members Engaging with the Pension Scheme; Market Update to 30th September, 2023; Countdown to Retirement Online Webinar – 6th December, 2023; Employer Pension Workshop – 21st November, 2023; Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements for year ended 31st December, 2022; Outline of how members can make lump sum AVC payments into their pension fund and claim back tax for 2022 before the Revenue deadline of 31st October, 2023.

Copies of the above newsletters are available to view on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).



Trustees Meetings

The Trustees convened 7 meetings in 2023. The Trustees also participated in other Team / Zoom meetings with Irish Life, Cornmarket, Key Function Holders for Risk and Internal Audit; the Scheme's External Auditor; legal advisors etc.

Pension Scheme Workshop for Participating Employers

A Pension Scheme Workshop for all participating employers in the Scheme was held on 21st November, 2023, in the Tullamore Court Hotel. The event was attended by CEOs and personnel from both management and operational level to ensure employers are fully aware of all their legal and compliant requirements under relevant pension / employment legislation & regulations, and implications of same on the Pension & Life Assurance Scheme.

James Skehan, the Scheme's Professional Trustee, provided an overview of the Pension Scheme; Who's Who in the Pension Scheme; Implications of late joiner process in respect of Group Life; Working Beyond Age 65 and Implications on Pension Scheme; Outline of information available on Federation website www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab); Pension Scheme Administration Manual to be circulated to employers in 2024; Auto-Enrolment; Budget 2024 and Implications for Pensions.

Irish Life provided a review of the Scheme's Administration Procedures and outlined the new procedures for new entrants and leavers; Data Renewal Exercise 2024; Secure-Share; Overview of both the Engagement Team and Member Advice Team and what work both teams do; Outline of the Member Portal and online supports available to members.

Cornmarket presenters outlined details of the Group Life Scheme and in particular, the fact that only members who join the Pension Scheme on the same day they join their organisation for employment are covered for group life. Any member joining on a later date is deemed a late joiner and employers must follow and apply the late joiner procedures. Their life cover is not automatic until confirmed by the Group Life underwriter.

Cornmarket also advised that the Group Life Scheme is up for renewal and the outcome of same will be advised to employers in early 2024.



Administration & Compliance

The National Federation Secretariat via the Pension Scheme Manager continued to provide administrative support to the Pension Scheme Trustees in 2023 and acted as point of contact for all key stakeholders to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the Pension Scheme i.e., Pension Trustees; Participating Employers; Irish Life; Cornmarket; Risk and Internal Audit Key Function Holders; External Auditor and legal advisors etc.

Most employers co-operated with the monthly return of pension contributions to both Irish Life and Cornmarket by their required timelines in 2023. All death claims, applications for retirement on grounds of ill health; pension adjustment orders, transfers applications and purchase of annuity forms etc., were all duly processed in a timely fashion.

In this regard, the Trustees would like to thank all employers for their co-operation in assisting the Trustees in discharging their duties and ensuring the Scheme is run efficiently and in compliance with the Scheme Rules.

We wish to sincerely thank the Chairs, Pension Trustees and all of the Federation members who participate in the work of the National Federation through its Board, Sub Committees, Working and Reference Groups, Area Federation Committees and as Trustees of the Pension Scheme.

Audited Accounts

Audited accounts for Year Ended 31st December 2023 were prepared, independently audited and signed off by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 11 September 2024. The full set of accounts is published on the National Federation website at www.fedvol.ie. Below are some key extracts from the financial statements

Balance Sheet

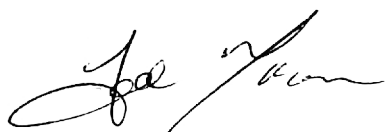
As at 31st December 2023

| | Note | 2023 € | € | 2022 € | € |
|--|------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Fixed assets | | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 10 | 221,723 | | 242,929 | |
| | | | 221,723 | | 242,929 |
| Current assets | | | | | |
| Debtors | 11 | 132,096 | | 132,686 | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 733,484 | | 758,478 | |
| | | 865,580 | | 891,164 | |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 12 | (328,660) | | (312,024) | |
| Net current assets | | | 536,920 | | 579,140 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | | 758,643 | - | 822,069 |
| Net assets | | | 758,643 | | 822,069 |
| Capital and reserves | | | | | |
| Restricted funds | 18 | | - | | (29,834) |
| General fund (unrestricted) | 18 | | 758,643 | | 851,903 |
| Members funds | | | 758,643 | | 822,069 |

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 11/09/2024

and signed on behalf of the board by:

Director



Director

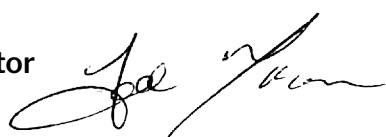


Independent auditor's report

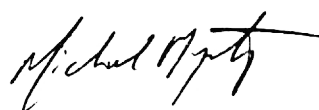
| | Note | Restricted € | Unrestricted € | 2023 Total € | 2022 Total € |
|--|-----------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Incoming Resources | | | | | |
| Generated funds: | | | | | |
| Voluntary Income | | | | | |
| Training course | | 3,750 | - | 3,750 | - |
| Activities Income for generating funds | | | | | |
| Membership Fees | | - | 168,404 | 168,404 | 168,404 |
| NFVB Pension Scheme | | 100,000 | - | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| Other Income | | 10,080 | - | 10,080 | 750 |
| Investment Income | | | | | |
| Charitable Activities: | | | | | |
| HSE Grants | | 264,096 | - | 264,096 | 271,903 |
| Total Income Resources | 7 | 377,926 | 168,404 | 546,330 | 541,057 |
| Resources Expended | | | | | |
| Administrative expenses | | (578,270) | (31,486) | (609,756) | (485,542) |
| Total Resources Expended | 8 | (578,270) | (31,486) | (609,756) | (485,542) |
| Surplus/(deficit) for the year | | (200,344) | 136,918 | (63,426) | 55,515 |
| Net movement in funds for the year | | (200,344) | 136,918 | (63,426) | 55,515 |
| Transfer between funds | | 230,178 | (230,178) | - | - |
| Reconciliation of funds | | | | | |
| Balances brought forward at start of year | 19 | (29,834) | 851,903 | 822,069 | 766,644 |
| Balances carried forward at end of year | 19 | - | 758,643 | 758,643 | 822,159 |

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors and signed on behalf of the board by:

Director



Director



**Independent auditor's report to the members of
National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers (continued)**

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the profit and loss account, statement of comprehensive income, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2023 and of its loss for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 22 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

**Independent auditor's report to the members of
National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers (continued)**

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- the information given in the directors' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements;
- the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, are necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the requirements of any of sections 305 to 312 of the Act, which relate to disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions are not complied with by the Company. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework that give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Independent auditor's report to the members of
National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers (continued)**

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Richard Grogan

For and on behalf of

Grogans Accountancy Ltd

Chartered Accountants

4/5 High Street

Galway

25 September 2024

Our Member Organisations, 2023

Ability West, Blackrock House, Salthill, Galway

Ard Aoibhinn Centre, Belvedere Road, Wexford

Autism Spectrum Disorder Initiatives, Block 1, Newtown Business & Enterprise Park, Newtownmountkennedy, Wicklow

Avista clg, St. Vincent's Centre, Navan Road, Dublin 7

Aurora Enriching Lives, Enriching Communities, Unit 11/12 Danville Business Park, Kilkenny

Beam Services, Barrow Haven, Regent Street, Bagnalstown, Co. Carlow

Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Clare, Banner House, Clare Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Brothers of Charity Services Ireland West Region, Woodlands, Renmore, Galway

Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Mid-West Region, Blackberry Park, Ballykeeffe, Dock Road, Limerick

Brothers of Charity Services Ireland South East, Belmont Park, Waterford

Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Southern, Lota, Glanmire, Co. Cork

Cairdeas Centre, Tullow, Co. Carlow

Camphill Communities of Ireland, Ballytobin, Callan, Co. Kilkenny

Carriglea Cairde Services, Carriglea, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford

Cheeverstown House, Templeogue, Dublin 6W

Children's Sunshine Home / Laura Lynn, Leopardstown Road, Foxrock, Dublin 18

Clann Mór Ltd., Clann Mór House, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath

CoAction West Cork, Slip, Bantry, County Cork

Cope Foundation, Blackpool Retail Park, Blackpool, Cork

Cumas New Ross, Butlersland Industrial Estate, New Ross, Co. Wexford

DARA, Main Street, Celbridge, Co. Kildare

Delta Centre, Strawhall, Carlow

Drumlin House, Cootehill, County Cavan

Gatehouse Services Drogheda, Fair Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Gheel Autism Service, Marino Mart, Fairview, Dublin 3

Holy Angels Day Care Centre, Strawhall Industrial Estate, Carlow

KARE, Newbridge Industrial Estate, Newbridge, County Kildare

Kerry Parents & Friends Association, Old Monastery, Port Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry

L'Arche Ireland Secretariat, "An Siol", 42 West Street, Callan, Co. Kilkenny

Moorehaven Centre, O'Brien Street, Tipperary

Muiriosa Foundation, Moore Abbey, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare

North West Parents & Friends Association, Holy Family Day Centre, Ballytivnan, Sligo

Peacehaven, 1-2 Hillside, Greystones, Co. Wicklow

Peamount, Newcastle, County Dublin

Prosper Group, Strand Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin

Praxis Care, Unit 18, Ardee Business Park, Hale Street, Ardee, Co. Louth

Reach Ability, Bellefield, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford

RehabCare, Park West Business Park, Park West, Dublin 12

SOS Kilkenny Ltd., Seville Lodge, Callan Road, Kilkenny

St. Aidan's Service, Millands, Gorey, Co. Wexford

St. Catherine's Association, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow

St. Christopher's Service, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford

St. Cronan's Association, Grange, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary

St. Hilda's Services, Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

St. John of God Community Services, Provincial Administration, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

St. Joseph's Foundation, Baker's Road, Charleville, Co. Cork

St. Margaret's, (IRL-IASD) Priory Hall, Stillorgan Road, Blackrock, Dublin 4

St. Michael's House, Ballymun Road, Ballymun, Dublin 9

Stewarts Care, Palmerstown, Dublin 20

Sunbeam House Services, Sothorn Cross Business Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow

WALK, 1 Longmile Road, Dublin 12

Waterford Intellectual Disability Association, 2 Belmont Road, Ferrybank, Waterford

Western Care Association, John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Windmill Therapeutic Training Unit, Larkins Lane, South Main Street, Wexford



**National Federation of
Voluntary Service Providers**

Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)



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