

National Federation *of*
Voluntary Service Providers

Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)



Annual Report 2025





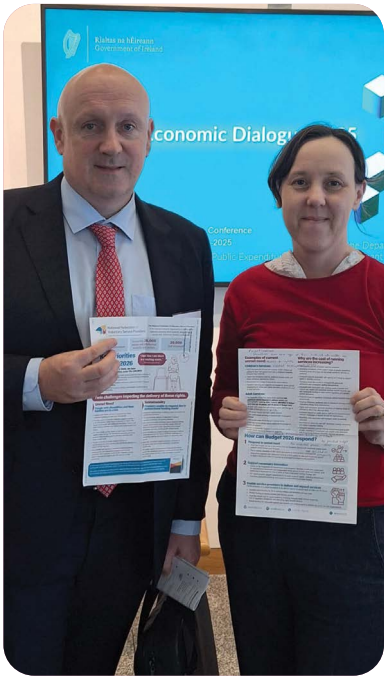











Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary – 2025 at a Glance 1

Message from the Chairperson 2

Section 1: About National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers 4

Section 2: Our Priorities in Action 6

2.1 Sustainability of Rights-Based Quality Services 6

2.2 Representation of Key Priorities of Our Members 9

2.3 Supporting Members and Shared Learning 14

2.4 Support Self-Advocacy and the Voice of Lived Experience 27

2.5 Innovation and Shared Learning 29

2.6 Pension Scheme 35

2.7 Governance and Accountability 40

Section 3: Annual Financial Report 43

Appendices 48

National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers
www.fedvol.ie
info@fedvol.ie
Charity No. 20045500

Executive Summary – 2025 at a Glance

OUR MEMBERS



PRIORITIES in 2025

1. Progressive Realisation of the Rights Contained in the UNCRPD
2. Sustainability of Rights Based, Quality Services
3. Representation of Key Priorities of Our Members
4. Direct Ssupport to Members
5. Support Self-Advocacy and Listening to the Voice of Lived Experience
6. Innovation and Shared Learning
7. Section 39 Pension Scheme
8. Governance and Accountability

53 Member Organisations

Supporting **26,000** people with intellectual disability and autism

Representing a Significant Proportion of the Disability Budget

HIGHLIGHTS of 2025

- National Recruitment Campaign with an audience reach 2.5 million
- Launch of **www.disabilityjobs.ie**
- Chairpersons Network established
- Member structures remapped to new HSE Health Regions
- Four employees joined the NFVSP team to support new innovation initiatives
- Self Advocacy Network established
- Bridge to Community commenced
- Keep My Teeth pilot began

OUR WORK in NUMBERS

19 Written Submissions and Consultations

34 Meetings of Working Groups & Task Groups

18 Working Groups Coordinated

4 General Assemblies held

22 Shared learning events for members

6 Ministerial Meetings

58 Reps on External Committees

3 Innovation Initiatives to Support Members

Message from the Chairperson



Figure 1: Michael Hennessy, Chairperson of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

On behalf of the Board of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers (NFVSP), we are pleased to present this Annual Report, reflecting on a year that was both challenging and significant for our Federation members and for the voluntary disability sector.

Throughout 2025, our member organisations continued to operate in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. Sustainability pressures across voluntary disability services remained a defining feature of the year. Services faced growing challenges associated with unmet need, persistent financial deficits, workforce shortages, increasing regulatory requirements, and the rising complexity of the supports required by the people who rely on our services. These pressures tested organisations across the country, while reinforcing the essential role voluntary providers play in delivering high-quality, person-centred supports within local communities to enable the rights enshrined in the UNCRPD.

Throughout the year, the National Federation continued to provide strong collective representation on behalf of members, ensuring that the realities facing services were clearly articulated to our funding agencies and government, supported by robust evidence. Through our advocacy, engagement, policy work and practical support, we sought to influence decision-making and highlight the urgent need for sustainable funding that will enable services to continue meeting current and future demand.

The operating environment also evolved significantly in 2025 with the implementation of new HSE structures which have created challenges and opportunities for service providers. NFVSP worked actively with members, the HSE and other stakeholders to ensure that the voice of the voluntary sector remained central to ongoing discussions.

A key strength of the Federation continues to be the commitment and engagement of our members. The active participation of member organisations through the General Assembly, Area Federation Committees, Working Groups and Networks provides the foundation for our collective work. These forums enable members to shape the Federation's priorities. The willingness of members to contribute their expertise and leadership throughout the year has been invaluable. I would particularly like to acknowledge the establishment of the NFVSP Chairpersons Network during 2025. This initiative has created an important forum for Chairs of member organisations to contribute to strategic discussions affecting the sector.

Engagement with Government departments, the HSE, elected representatives and a wide range of stakeholders remained a continual part of the Federation's work during the year. While progress has been made in a number of areas, long-term, sustained investment is still required to address structural funding pressures, workforce challenges and growing demand. The continued viability of services and the achievement of national disability policy objectives will depend on a strong partnership approach and a sustained commitment to investment and reform.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the work of the National Federation during the year. In particular, I wish to acknowledge:

- My fellow Board members for their leadership, guidance and commitment.
- The Chairs of our committees and working groups for the considerable time and expertise they dedicate to advancing the Federation's agenda.
- Our member organisations, whose ongoing engagement locally and via general assembly are the National Federation's greatest strength.
- The Secretariat team for their professionalism, dedication and tireless efforts in supporting members.
- The Pension Scheme Trustees for their important stewardship and oversight responsibilities.
- The people supported by member organisations, and the self-advocates who helped to inform and strengthen our work throughout the year.

As we look towards 2026, the challenges facing the sector remain significant. The National Federation will continue to focus on securing the sustainability of voluntary disability services, advancing rights-based approaches to services and addressing workforce challenges. Above all, we will continue to advocate for the resources and structures required to ensure that people with disabilities can access the supports they need to live full lives in their communities as equal and valued citizens.

Michael Hennessy

National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Chairperson

Section 1:
About National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers



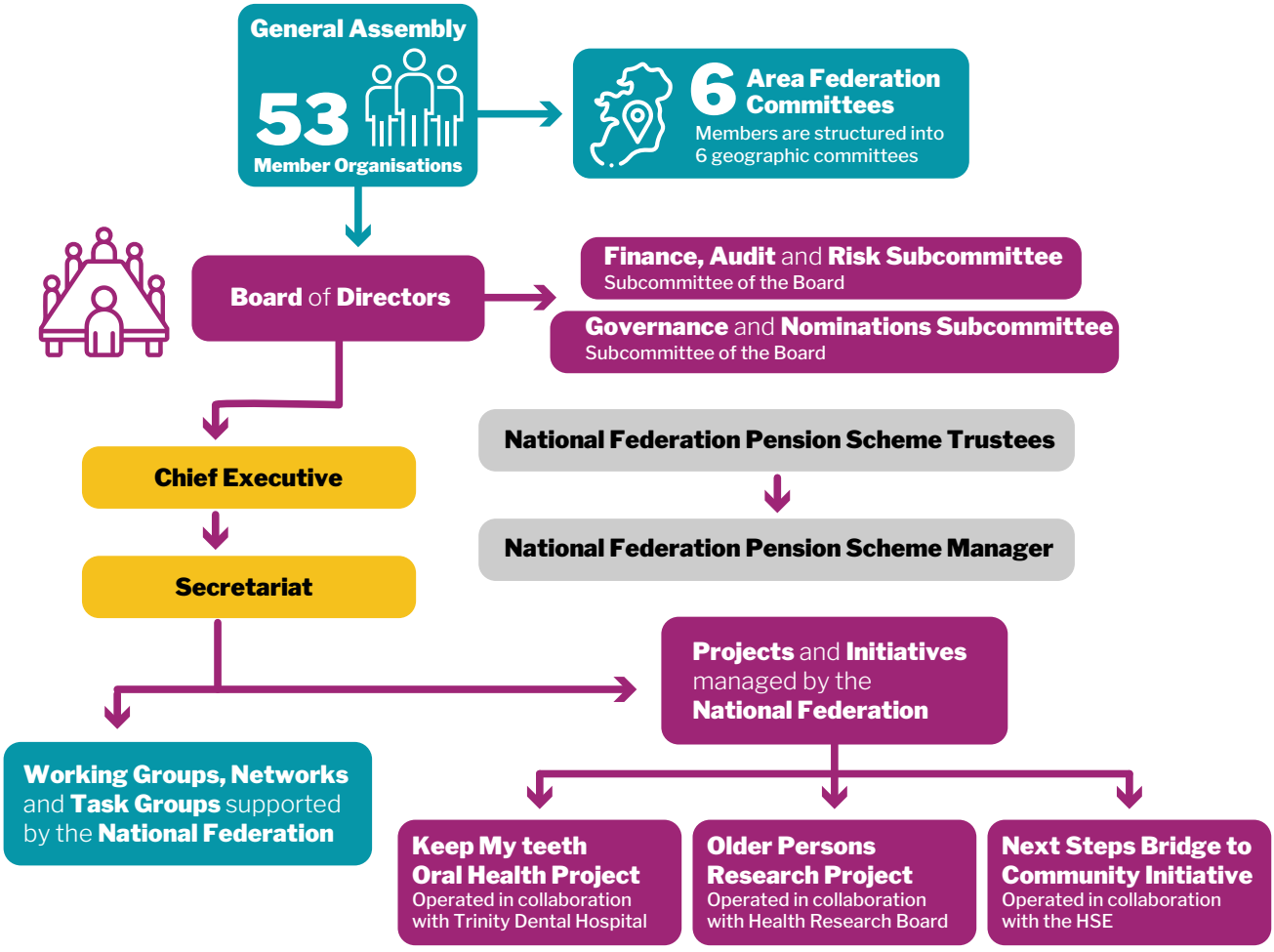
Who We Are

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers *Supporting People with Intellectual Disability* is a national umbrella organisation of not-for-profit agencies providing direct supports and services to people with intellectual disability in Ireland.

Across our 53 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 a community presence and connection across large urban centres and small villages throughout Ireland. The member organisations of the National Federation together account for a significant proportion of HSE funded disability services.

The National Federation provides a central point of contact for stakeholders including the HSE and Government Departments to engage in consultation, information dissemination, co-production of collaborative projects, and partnership working with our members. As a representative body of service providers, the National Federation works across a wide range of areas of service including supporting providers and wider stakeholders in relation to innovation, HR matters, quality and standards, policy and legislation; matters involving the sustainability and funding of service provision, engagement with Government Departments, the Oireachtas and national budgetary processes; participation in the Health Dialogue Forum and a wide range of sectoral forums and structures.

Our Structure



The National Federation Secretariat

The National Federation structures above are supported by a small Secretariat team dedicated to the smooth functioning and ongoing success of the organisation. During 2025, the team expanded with the appointment of Pamela Mansell and Eimear Allen, both in full-time WTE roles to support the Bridge to Community initiative. The Keep my Teeth Project also expanded with the appointment of Alan Byrne, Keep my Teeth Coordinator and Pedro Soares also joined the Keep my Teeth project as a PhD student researcher in September 2025 and as a part time Federation employee in December 2025. The Secretariat provides a central point of coordination, administration, and support across the Federation's governance structures, operational groups, policy work and member engagement activities.



Figure 2: Secretariat Team (unpictured Mary Barrett, Alan Byrne, and Pedro Soares)

Our Mission

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 Values

Above all people have a deep-rooted desire to belong, to be in relationships, 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.

The services and supports provided to people with intellectual disabilities and autism by our members are grounded in a shared commitment to inclusion, choice, dignity, respect, participation and contribution, as reflected in the O'Brien principles, and in the rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. National Federation members are united by a rights-based understanding that people with intellectual disabilities have the right to live full, active and meaningful lives, and to participate as valued members of their own communities.

The progressive realisation of the rights contained in the UNCRPD is a shared commitment that grounds, unites and underpins the Federation's work across each of the priority areas outlined below:

Section 2: Our Priorities in Action

2.1 Sustainability of Rights-Based Quality Services

Sustainability was the first priority of the National Federation's 2025 Service Plan and was therefore central to engagements throughout the year. Across meetings and correspondence, the National Federation representatives consistently highlighted the scale of existing deficits, the impact of sustainability pressures on the ability of services to maintain financial viability, the consequences for the quality and continuity of supports, and the limited capacity of voluntary service providers to respond to unmet and emerging need.

Chairpersons Network

A major development in 2025 in response to the sustainability challenges facing members was the bringing together of a Chairperson's Network made up of the Chairperson's of National Federation member organisations. The first meeting was held on 27th March 2025. On 16th May 2025, this Group wrote a letter signed by 28 Chairpersons addressed to Ministers Foley and Naughton, Senior Officials in the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, the Chairperson of the HSE Board of Directors and Senior members of the HSE leadership team. This letter outlined the serious sustainability challenges facing voluntary disability service providers. On 22nd July 2025, a delegation from the Chairpersons Network met with Minister Foley and other key stakeholders from the Department and HSE for a productive discussion on the issues emerging and possible solutions that could be pursued.

NEW INITIATIVE 2025



Figure 3: NFVSP Delegation of Chairpersons, Minister Foley, and Alison Harnett

SPOTLIGHT

Budget Campaign 2026

Developing the messages

Budget 2026 priorities were informed by a General Assembly workshop held on 19th March 2025, alongside desk-based research, analysis of a member survey on sustainability challenges, and insights from relevant research and policy events. The submission was further shaped by the experiences of people supported by member organisations through the National Federation's Self Advocacy Network.

The National Federation developed a suite of Budget 2026 resources, including a two-page summary, a detailed research and policy paper, and an accessible version. **Together, these resources highlighted the need for Budget 2026 to address unmet need, support innovation, and provide greater sustainability for service providers.** The accessible version reflected the priorities of people with intellectual disabilities and autism, including access to supports, addressing loneliness, transport, housing, day services, personal assistance, and lifelong planning. These messages were shared with Oireachtas Members and key stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout 2025, the National Federation engaged with Ministers, senior Department officials and the HSE to highlight the sustainability pressures facing voluntary disability service providers, the level of unmet need, and the importance of planned investment in rights-based supports. Early engagements with Ministers Naughton and Foley in January, February and March established these messages. The Chairpersons Network continued this work through their letter in May. National Federation representatives attended a number of Budget specific events and engagements:

- **28th May 2025:** Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO attended a conference as part of the Wheel and had the opportunity to speak with An Taoiseach.
- **28th May 2025:** A delegation of members also attended the Department of Children, Disability and Equality's Budget Pre-Estimates Event.
- **16th June 2025:** Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO and Michael Hennessy, NFVSP Chairperson attended the Economic Dialogue Forum.



Figure 4: NFVSP engagements

- **30th June 2025:** Alison Harnett, CEO attended a meeting with Minister Chambers as part of a delegation from the Wheel.
- **22nd July 2025:** A delegation from the Chairpersons Network met Minister Foley and Senior Officials from the Department and HSE National Federation members also used the materials in their own local engagements with TDs and Senators.

Collaboration with other civil society and voluntary organisations

The National Federation continued to play an active role in the Oireachtas Disability Group (ODG) during 2025. The Group, comprises of six national leadership, civil society and umbrella bodies from across Ireland's disability movement, is co-chaired by Alison Harnett and Derval McDonagh, CEO of Inclusion Ireland, with Megan Leahy also participating as a National Federation representative.

Through the ODG, a joint Pre-Budget Submission was circulated to all Oireachtas members on 24th June 2025, followed by online meetings with representatives from People Before Profit, the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and the Social Democrats. The Group's advocacy also supported follow-up parliamentary activity, including an in-person briefing on key priorities with the Fianna Fáil Parliamentary Party in Leinster House on 24th September 2025.





Figure 5: NFVSP Member engagements with TDs and Minister



Figure 6: Members of the Oireachtas Disability Group

Media Engagement



The National Federation contributed to a three-part disability series highlighting key issues for children, adults living in the family home, Action Plan targets and lived experience. This series launched in the weeks preceding Budget and was effective in supporting public awareness of these key issues.

Figure 7: Alison Harnett interviewed on RTE News

Budget 2026

Budget 2026 marked an important recognition of the issues raised throughout the campaign. A record €3.8 billion allocation was made to the Department of Children, Disability and Equality for specialist disability services, representing a 20% year on year increase. The language used by Government reflected key themes advanced by the National Federation and its members, including the need for funding to support sustainability and for people to receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place. On Budget Day, Minister Chambers announced:

"The Programme for Government commits to advancing the rights and improving the lives of people with disabilities. To progress these priorities, I am allocating over €3.8 billion to the Department of Children, Disability and Equality for disability services in 2026. This includes funding for Community Based Specialist Disability Services to ensure people with disabilities receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place. ***It will provide permanent and predictable funding and deliver tangible impacts for people with disabilities****."*

Ongoing Work – 2027
Work will continue into 2026 to ensure all organisations facing significant cost pressures receive necessary funding. Moving forward, the Federation will also continue to work with key stakeholders through the Budget process to advocate for funding that reflects the true cost of service provision, supports planned responses to unmet need, and enables members to deliver sustainable, rights-based supports.

2.2 Representation of Key Priorities of our Members

A core role of the National Federation is to represent the priorities of member organisations through evidence-based engagement with Oireachtas members, Government Departments, the HSE, regulators, public bodies and sector partners. This work is informed by ongoing communication with members, including General Assembly discussions, hosting of workshops, discussions during working group and task group meetings, targeted data requests, feedback surveys, direct engagement with individual members and desk-based research. During 2025, this evidence was used to support meetings and engagements with key stakeholders, submissions and consultation responses, position papers, representations on sectoral working groups, and collective positioning on key issues.

Engagement with Government and Department Officials

Throughout 2025, the National Federation engaged with Government and Department officials to represent the priorities of member organisations, with a particular focus on sustainability, unmet need, housing, permanent and predictable funding, service planning, developing rights-based services, and innovation.

In addition to the Budget 2026 engagements outlined above, key in-person engagements included:

- **30th January 2025:** Disability Stakeholders Group Roundtable attended by Alison Harnett, CEO, with Minister Naughton and Minister Foley
- **19th February 2025:** Meeting with Minister Naughton, Leinster House attended by the Michael Hennessy NFVSP Chairperson, Fiona O'Neill NFVSP Vice Chair and Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO
- **28th February 2025:** Draft Disability Strategy / UNCRPD Implementation Plan challenge event attended by Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO
- **3rd September 2025:** Launch of the Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People – attended by Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO Michael Hennessy, NFVSP Chairperson and Fiona O'Neill, NFVSP Vice-Chairperson
- **12th September 2025:** Meeting with Minister Naughton at the National Federation offices, Oranmore following an invitation from Brian Donohoe, IRN Secretary.
- **24th September 2025:** Fianna Fáil Parliamentary Party briefing on Oireachtas Disability Group priorities attended by Oireachtas Disability Group representatives.



Figure 8: Disability Stakeholders Group meeting with Minister Foley and Naughton



Figure 9: Fiona O'Neill, Alison Harnett and Michael Hennessy

HSE Engagement

The National Federation engaged with the HSE throughout 2025 on the sustainability of voluntary disability services, unmet need, service planning and the development of new HSE structures. On 14th April, 30th May and 27th August 2025, Federation representatives attended meetings with Ray Bonar, HSE General Manager, on the establishment of Regional Voluntary Forums and the principles that should underpin voluntary sector representation within the new HSE structures. The Federation also raised members' concerns directly with HSE leadership, including writing to Bernard Gloster in April regarding the anticipated introduction of a Pay and Numbers Strategy.

The Federation also progressed a range of practical member issues with HSE officials and national offices during the year. Through the NFVSP Housing Group, the Federation engaged collaboratively on member issues on housing design and capital planning with HSE officials. The NFVSP HR Group represented members on workforce matters including HSE advertising, CORU, out-of-hours allowance, behaviour therapist grades, injury-at-work arrangements, and RNID/CNM1 implementation. Throughout the year, there was also engagement with the HSE on key themes such as quality, safeguarding, ADM and New Directions through ongoing engagement with HSE national offices and working groups.

Key in-person engagements with the HSE included:

- **17th April 2025:** Housing engagement with the HSE on housing models and design attended by Housing Group members, Anne Ennis and Gerry Tully, HSE.
- **3rd March 2025:** National Federation Recruitment Campaign Launch attended by Mary Doran, HSE Disabilities Workforce & Resourcing Lead.
- **26th May 2025:** Joint HSE–Voluntary Forum event, Castleknock attended by Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO, and representatives from member organisations.
- **4th September 2025**: HSE Integrated Healthcare Conference 2025: attended by Alison Harnett NFVSP CEO.



Figure 10: Alison Harnett, Mary Doran and Michael Hennessy

Cross-Sectoral Engagement

The Wheel Coalition – Section 39 Pay Talks at the WRC

The National Federation engaged with the wider community and voluntary sector through the coalition coordinated by The Wheel in relation to the Section 39 WRC pay talks. This provided an important route for raising the pay parity and sustainability issues affecting Section 39 organisations alongside other voluntary service providers. Through this coalition approach, the Federation supported collective advocacy on the implementation of the agreement, the need for timely funding, clarity on pensions and PRSI, and the wider impact of unresolved pay issues on recruitment, retention and service sustainability.

Coalition of Voluntary Representative Bodies

The National Federation also played an active role in the Coalition of Voluntary Representative Bodies (CVORB). This stakeholder's group is comprised of representatives from national representative groups, voluntary service providers, hospitals, hospices, home care, mental health, and charity and community sector. The National Federation is represented on this Group by Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO and Michael Hennessy, NFVSP Chairperson. In 2025, the work of this group included engagement linked to the Health Dialogue Forum and the development of new HSE structures. Alison Harnett also commenced the role of convenor of CVORB during 2025, supporting coordinated engagement with the HSE and other stakeholders on issues of common importance to the voluntary sector.

Oireachtas Disability Group

This Group is comprised of 6 national disability organisations and is focused specifically on engagement with Oireachtas members. As mentioned during the spotlight section on the Budget 2026 campaign, the National Federation is represented on this Group by Alison Harnett, NFVSP CEO and Megan Leahy, NFVSP Policy and Governance Officer. In 2025 the ODG developed a joint Pre-Budget Submission, circulated it to Oireachtas members, met with political parties and used the collective voice of the disability sector. In addition, with the new Dail coming into office following the election in late 2024, the ODG issued a communication on 5th February 2025 to Oireachtas Members introducing the ODG and providing a high-level overview of key issues across the disability sector.

Written Submissions and Consultations

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 2025, the National Federation consulted with members to complete a wide range of submissions relating to human rights, housing, safeguarding, recruitment, policy, quality and standards, HSE structure, and organisational sustainability matters. Significant consultation and research were undertaken by the Secretariat team to represent the views of member organisations and relevant data in the submissions outlined below.

Written Submissions & Consultations

- **February 2025:** – Mental Health Commission Public Consultation
- **March / April 2025**: Guidelines for Mental Health Service Providers Working with Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (Focus Groups)
- **March 2025**: Draft Disability Strategy / UNCRPD Implementation Plan feedback
- **April / May 2025**: Department of Children, Disability and Equality request on quality monitoring systems and measuring impact on people's lives and outcomes
- **May 2025**: National Housing Strategy Implementation Plan Workshop
- **May / June 2025**: Protection of Liberty Safeguards discussion paper
- **June 2025**: Feedback on H15 Social Housing Design to Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- **June 2025**: National Federation Pre-Budget Submission 2026
- **June 2025**: Oireachtas Disability Group Joint Pre-Budget Submission
- **August 2025**: Response to the Action Plan for Disability Services Monitoring Report
- **September 2025**: DCDE data collection on pension auto-enrolment for Section 39 organisations
- **September 2025**: HSE Regional Voluntary Forums proposal feedback
- **September 2025**: Draft Template SLA between Approved Housing Bodies and Disability Service Providers
- **October 2025**: HSE housing capital plan / site availability information request
- **October 2025**: Barriers to banking information gathering to IHREC

Position Papers

In 2025, the National Federation collated data from providers and drafted two key position papers on issues of
critical importance to members:

- **July 2025:** Strategic Planning and Resourcing of Disability Services
- **July 2025:** Concept Note: Tax Relief for Significant Donors to Charities and Not-for-Profits (The National Federation contributed to a paper developed by The Wheel, DFI and the Simon Communities of Ireland, submitted to the Department of Finance)

Representatives on External Committees

The National Federation is represented on a wide range of sectoral working Groups. In some cases, Federation members 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 2025 is outlined below.

We would like to sincerely thank all of the National Federation representatives sitting on external committees and groups.

Governmental:

- Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) Disability Strategic Stakeholders Group
- Delivery and Monitoring Committee for the National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People
- Disability Consultative Committee
- Disability Assembly

National Groups:

- Coalition of Voluntary Representative Bodies
- Health Dialogue Forum
- HSE Patient Engagement Forum
- Joint Information and Consultation Forum
- National Joint Council
- Oireachtas Disability Group

HSE Voluntary Health Forums:

- Dublin and Midlands
- Dublin and North East
- Dublin and South East
- Midwest
- South West
- West and North West

Children and Young People Services:

- Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT) Task Group
- CDNT Information Management System Working Group

Adult Services:

- HSE Under-65's Stakeholder Reference Group
- National Day Services MDT Review Group
- National Frailty Education Programme (NFEP) for the ID sector Steering Group
- New Directions Implementation Group
- Outcome focussed monitoring for Interim Standards for New Directions Steering Group
  - Outcomes-focused Monitoring Subgroup
  - Day Services – Voices Together Subgroup
- School Leavers National Working Group

Housing:

- HSE Networks of Care Working Group
- National Implementation Steering Group for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027
- NSAI Technical Committee 'Universal Design Standards' Consultative Committee

HR & Finance:

- HSE EWTD Working Group
- HSE Finance Reform Programme Steering Committee
- HSE Instructor Grade - Working Group
- HSE Out of Hours Working Group
- Integrated Financial Monitoring System Steering Group
- National Integrated Staff Records and Pay (NiSRP) Programme Steering Group
- NiSRP Working Group

Quality and Standards:

- EAG to Develop a Compatibility Risk Assessment (CRA) for Residential Disability Services
- HIQA Advisory Group to update the National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities
- HIQA Provider's Forum
- HSE ADMA Disability Reference Group
- HSE Children First Reference Group
- HSE Disability Quality Improvement Forum
- HSE Home sharing Implementation Group
- HSE National Clinical Programme for People with Disability (NCPPD) Disability Advisory Group
  - Children's Subgroup
  - Adults Subgroup
  - Older person's Subgroup
- HSE National Quality Improvement Team for Disabilities
- HSE's Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Promoting Healthy Relationships and Sexuality for Disabled People

Safeguarding:

- HSE / Disability Umbrella Groups Safeguarding Reference Committee
- National Safeguarding Advisory Committee

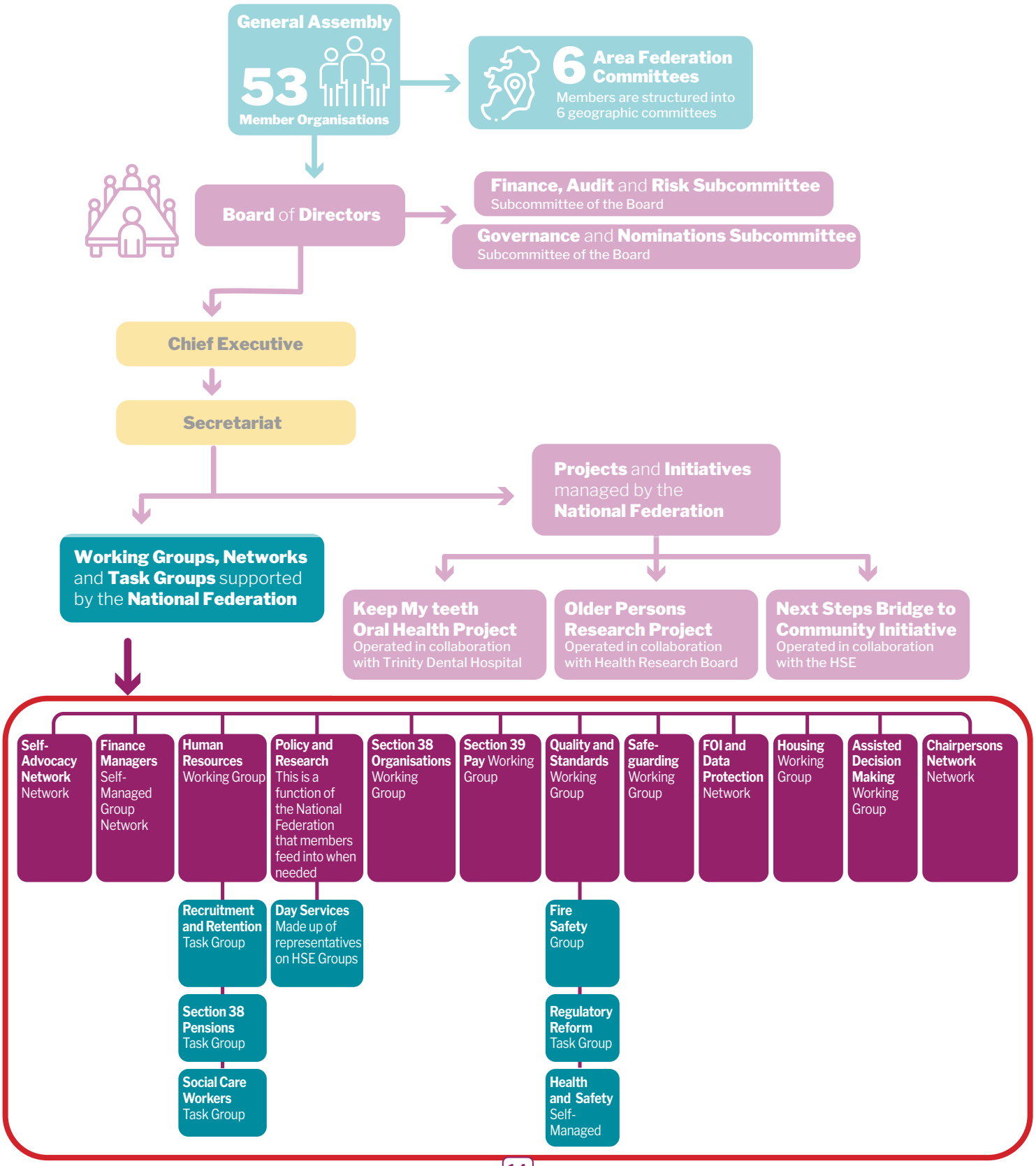
Other:

- Commission on Care for older People Reference Group
- Health and Social Care Advisory Committee
- NASS Steering Group
- National Council for Special Education Consultative Forum
- National Oral Health Office Supporting Smiles Steering Group
- Steering Group - education programme on "Ageing with An Intellectual Disability" as part of the National Frailty Education Programme (NFEP)

2.3 Supporting members and shared learning

Committees, Networks and Working Groups

To support members, the National Federation maintains and coordinates a large number of working groups, task groups and networks as listed below. These groups focus on issues of shared importance and provide opportunities for shared learning, information exchange, peer support, collaborative problem-solving, and the development of collective responses to sector challenges. The work of these groups has been reported on throughout the document under various priorities and we have included an update on the work of specific groups in this section.



We would like to sincerely thank all members for their engagement and contribution to these groups throughout 2025. We are particularly grateful to the Chairpersons of each group for their leadership, time and commitment:

Assisted Decision Making: Teresa Mallon, St John of God
Data Protection and FOI: Aine Forde, Aurora
Finance Managers: Tia Crowley, Western Care
Fire Safety: Sandra Burke, KARE
Health and Safety: Damien McCarthy, St John of Gods
Human Resources: Brian Leahy, Corlann
Housing: Michelle Thunder, St John of God
Quality and Standards: Carol O'Donnell, DARA
Recruitment and Retention Task Group: Lauri Cryan, Lauralynn and Michael Hegarty, St Joseph's Foundation
Safeguarding: Jacinta Barrett, KARE
Section 38 Group: TJ Duggan, Cheeverstown
Section 39 Pay Parity: Pat Reen, Prosper Group
Section 38 Pensions: Catherine Bowers, Avista
Social Care Workers: Siobhan Power, St Catherine's Association

Updates from each Group

Section 38 and Section 39 Groups

The National Federation is composed of both Section 38 and Section 39 members which work collectively towards advancing common priorities to serve all members. In some instances, there are challenges that are unique to Section 39 or Section 38 members. To ensure that the distinct needs of organisations are appropriately represented and addressed, we maintain dedicated mechanisms to respond to section-specific concerns.

Section 38 Group

Key areas of work included:

- **Service Arrangements and risk:** Members were supported to raise Service Arrangement issues locally with the HSE, particularly where organisations were struggling to sign Service Arrangements due to deficit positions. These issues were also raised through the Service Arrangement Review process and wider Federation engagement with the HSE.
- **Pay and Numbers Strategy:** The Federation raised concerns on behalf of Section 38 members regarding the imminent introduction of the HSE Pay and Numbers Strategy. Correspondence issued to HSE CEO Bernard Gloster, and the response received was circulated to Section 38 member organisations.
- **NiSRP:** The introduction of the National Integrated Staff Records and Pay Programme was identified as a significant operational issue for Section 38 members.
- **IFMS:** The Integrated Financial Management System remained an important national HSE development. The Federation continued to include IFMS within its representation on external HR and finance structures, recognising the need for members to be kept informed of implementation issues and the potential operational impact on financial reporting, governance and accountability processes.
- **Shared learning and representation:** Across the year, the Group provided a route for Section 38 organisations to share local experience, identify common risks and feed into Federation engagement with the HSE, Departments and wider voluntary sector structures.

Section 39 Pay Parity Group

Key areas of work included:

- **WRC pay talks and proposed agreement:** The National Federation attended WRC meetings and kept members updated as WRC talks resumed in March 2025 and a proposed agreement was reached between the Departments and unions. The Federation continued to highlight the importance of timely implementation, clarity on the implementation date, and confirmation of PRSI and pension arrangements.
- **Coalition engagement:** The Federation worked with coalition colleagues across the voluntary sector, including through The Wheel, to ensure Section 39 pay parity and related sustainability issues were raised collectively with the WRC, Departments and HSE.
- **Implementation and member supports:** Following acceptance of the WRC agreement by the relevant health sector trade unions, the Federation wrote to DCDE and the HSE seeking updates on funding allocation, the implementation process, data gathering and the establishment of the proposed Joint Monitoring and Implementation Group.
- **KOSI audits and funding process:** The Group supported information sharing among members involved in KOSI audit processes and gathered member feedback to identify issues requiring clarification.
- **Pension and auto-enrolment issues:** Pension provision remained a significant concern for Section 39 members. The National Federation gathered information for DCDE on the impact of pension auto-enrolment on organisations without pension schemes, highlighting the need for appropriate funding to support implementation from January 2026.
- **Recruitment, retention and sustainability:** Throughout the year, the Group's work was linked to the wider sustainability agenda, recognising that unresolved pay parity, pension and implementation issues directly affect recruitment, retention, service continuity and the long-term viability of voluntary disability service providers.

Housing

The National Federation's Housing Group continued to support members to respond collectively to the significant housing challenges experienced by people with intellectual disabilities and autism. In 2025, the Group focused on housing design, capital planning, engagement with the HSE, Department of Housing and DCDE, and the need for flexible, rights-based housing options that reflect people's individual support and environmental requirements. Key highlights of the work in 2025:



Figure 11: Michelle Thunder, Chair of the NFVSP Housing Group

- **Housing design and environmental requirements:** The Group examined the barriers members experience in delivering suitable housing and developed a matrix setting out environmental requirements, resident-specific risks and the benefits of appropriate design for people with disabilities, including people with autism and complex support needs.
- **Engagement on housing models and design:** Housing Group members met with HSE colleagues on 17th April and with the Department of Housing, DCDE and HSE on 13th June 2025 to discuss housing models, H15 design issues and practical barriers to delivering appropriate housing options.
- **Feedback on H15 design:** The Group sought practical changes to housing design so that accommodation can better meet the needs of people with disabilities, including people with autism and people with complex support needs. The Group's work provided an important evidence base on the need for flexibility in standard design approaches.
- **Housing and capital planning data collection:** In autumn 2025, the HSE requested information from the National Federation on potential sites, buildings or other development opportunities that could support future housing provision. The Housing Group and wider membership provided information on potential developments. Responses were received from nearly 30 members and returned to the HSE to support the development of its five-year capital plan.
- **Draft template SLA between Approved Housing Bodies and Disability Service Providers:** Following a request from the Housing Agency, the draft template Service Level Agreement between Approved Housing Bodies and Disability Service Providers was circulated to the Housing Group and the Board. Feedback was collated by the Secretariat and returned within the required timeframe, ensuring that member perspectives were reflected in the development of the template.

- **National Housing Strategy for Disabled People:** The Group contributed to national housing strategy implementation work during 2025. Helena Connors represents the Federation on the National Housing Strategy Implementation Steering Group. Work in 2025 focused on continued collaboration across government departments and agencies, creation of a training video to ensure a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each department and stakeholder and streamlining reporting structures.
- **Housing as part of wider sustainability and innovation work:** The Group's work was also closely connected to the National Federation's broader advocacy on sustainability, unmet need and rights-based supports. The innovative work on design and capital planning provided practical options to the Department of Housing, DCDE and the HSE on the type of investment and design flexibility required to begin addressing the shortage of suitable living options for people with disabilities.

Human Resources

The National Federation's Human Resources Group continued to provide an important forum for member organisations to identify and respond to shared workforce issues across the voluntary disability sector. The Group supports member organisations by sharing information, identifying common challenges, developing collective responses to national HR matters, and engaging with the HSE and relevant public bodies on issues affecting recruitment, retention, grading, workforce planning and employment conditions. Key highlights of the work in 2025:



Figure 12: Brian Leahy, Chair of the NFVSP Human Resources Group

- **Support programme for new HR professionals:** The National Federation initiated a programme of work to support newly appointed Senior Human Resources practitioners transitioning into the voluntary disability sector. Two workshops were held in February 2025, facilitated by external consultant Genevieve Tracy. The workshops explored the knowledge gaps and supports needed by HR professionals working in the sector. A proposal was subsequently developed on how these gaps could be addressed through existing resources and cooperation between member organisations. This proposal was approved and will be actioned in 2026.



Figure 13: Workshop Group, February 2025

- **Engagement on HSE recruitment supports and advertising:** The Group continued to engage with the HSE on recruitment-related issues experienced by members. A joint webinar was hosted with the HSE in February 2025 on the process and benefits of advertising on the HSE website, and further engagement took place during the year on issues being experienced by organisations when advertising posts. The National Federation also maintained links with HSE recruitment supports, including the HSE careers portal, HSE jobs page and the HSE Recruitment Quality, Standards and Advisory Unit.
- **Social Care Worker registration and CORU:** The HR Group and the Social Care Workers Task Group supported members in responding to the introduction of CORU registration requirements for Social Care Workers. A member meeting was held in April 2025 to discuss the completion of the Employer's Opinion of Competency Forms, followed by a further briefing with CORU in May to address specific member queries. The National Federation continued to provide support and deal with ongoing queries from members in relation to registration up until the registration closing at the end of November 2025.

- **National Vetting Bureau engagement:** Following issues raised by members, the National Federation met with Superintendent Niall Featherstone and colleagues from the National Vetting Bureau in March 2025 to discuss vetting matters affecting member organisations. An online webinar for members was facilitated as a follow-up action to update organisations on relevant vetting developments.
- **Out of Hours allowance business case:** Work continued on the development and progression of a business case seeking the introduction of an agreed and standardised Out of Hours allowance for the disability sector. Engagement took place with the HSE and the Department of Health / Dept of Children, Disability and Equality during the year, with additional information gathered from members to support the case and discussions continued on securing related funding.
- **Workforce planning and grade-related issues:** The Group engaged with a range of wider workforce matters during 2025, including behaviour therapist grades and salary scales, the European Working Time Directive, injury-at-work arrangements, RNID/CNM1 implementation, local bargaining issues, HCA grade grouping and qualification pathways. These issues were progressed through engagement with the HSE, member feedback, briefings and relevant working groups.
- **Links with the HSE:** During 2025 the Federation continued to engage with the HSE via the work of the National Director of Human Resources, National Employee Relations Office and the Assistant National Director Disabilities Workforce Planning and Resourcing. Regular meetings took place to ensure that members needs were proactively addressed by the HSE.

Recruitment and Retention Task Group:

The Recruitment and Retention Task Group continued to support member organisations in responding collectively to recruitment and retention challenges across the voluntary disability sector. The Group provides a focused forum for sharing member experience, identifying practical supports, developing recruitment initiatives, and engaging with stakeholders on measures to strengthen the visibility of the sector and support workforce supply. Key highlights of the work in 2025 include:

- **National recruitment campaign:** The Task Group supported the development and delivery of the National Federation's recruitment and retention campaign, including shared campaign resources and the www.disabilityjobs.ie microsite. This is covered in detail in the spotlight section on the following page.
- **Evaluation and learning from campaign activity:** Following the launch of the recruitment campaign, the Group reviewed early feedback from members on engagement with the campaign and the response from potential jobseekers. A wider evaluation survey was issued to members in July 2025 to gather feedback on the campaign resources, member participation and learning for future recruitment activity. The feedback gathered will inform future collective recruitment initiatives.
- **HSE Virtual Career Fair:** The National Federation participated in the HSE Virtual Career Fair showcasing the disability sector in May 2025. The event provided an opportunity to raise the profile of Section 38 and Section 39 organisations with national and international jobseekers. The recruitment campaign materials developed by the National Federation were shared as part of the event, extending the reach and use of the resources beyond the initial campaign period.
- **Use of HSE recruitment platforms and supports:** The Task Group supported ongoing engagement with the HSE to ensure that members could access recruitment supports, including the HSE Careers portal, HSE recruitment/jobs page, HSE Career Hub and relevant recruitment guidance. This work aimed to maximise opportunities for member organisations to promote vacancies and access wider recruitment channels.
- **Links with third-level education and career pathways:** The Task Group identified the development of stronger links with third-level colleges as a priority for 2025/2026. This included exploring ways to promote careers in disability services to students and graduates and to support clearer pathways into the sector for key disciplines, including social care and social work.

SPOTLIGHT

National Recruitment Campaign

Materials Produced and Preparing Members for the campaign





Throughout 2024, the National Federation worked with expert agency Match Marketing to produce materials for us in a National Recruitment Campaign, and to be a suite of materials that members can use into the future. To prepare for the campaign, six videos and multiple still images were developed featuring staff and people supported by National Federation member organisations, a dedicated jobs microsite as a subsection of the National Federation website, and an audio advertisement for use on radio and podcasts.

The National Federation worked closely with members in advance of the campaign launch to ensure organisations were prepared to make best use of the materials. This included a workshop on setting up social media accounts and growing an online presence, a survey on members' existing social media activity, and an online workshop in November 2024 which supported members to prepare for the national recruitment campaign. Match Marketing also provided a further input at the General Assembly in December 2024, focused on supporting members to build their online presence and maximise the impact of the campaign when it launched in Spring 2025.

Campaign Launch and National Reach

The national campaign commenced on 17th February 2025 with a four-week sponsored social media campaign and the launch of the recruitment microsite. This was followed by two weeks of radio advertising from 24th February and three weeks of podcast advertising from 27th February.



Figure 14: Mary Doran, HSE

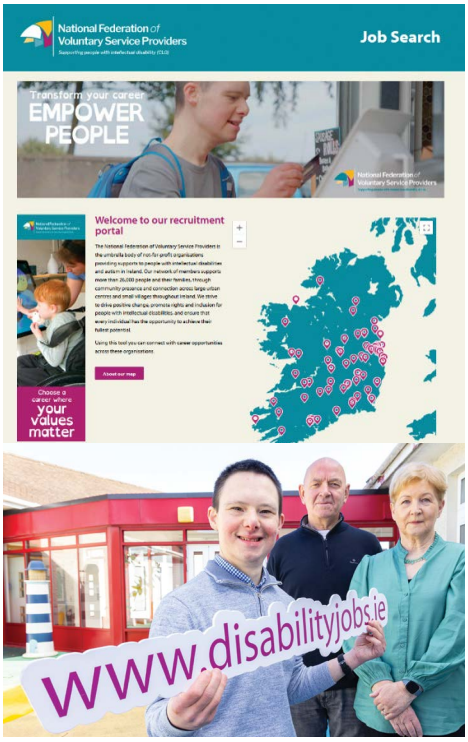
An in-person launch event was held on 12th March 2025 to celebrate the campaign and acknowledge the contribution of the people featured in the campaign materials, participating organisations, National Federation CEOs, Mary Doran, HSE Assistant National Director – Disabilities Workforce and Resourcing Lead, and officials from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.



The campaign delivered strong visibility for the sector. **Across all campaign activities, the overall reach was 2.5 million, exceeding the estimated audience reach of 2.1 million. Radio advertising reached an estimated audience of 988,000; podcast advertising reached 268,327; and social media and Google digital advertising reached 1.2 million.** The campaign materials were also used as part of the HSE Virtual Career Fair on 15th May 2025, extending the value of the resources beyond the initial campaign period.

Disability Jobs Microsite

A key legacy of the campaign was the development of the Disability Jobs microsite (www.disabilityjobs.ie), which provides a central online space for people interested in working in the disability sector. From 17th February to the end of March 2025, the site had 1,078 unique users. On average, each visitor undertook 4.2 actions on the site, indicating that visitors spent time exploring the available information and links to organisations' recruitment pages. The microsite will continue to be maintained by the National Federation and will provide an ongoing platform for promoting employment opportunities across member organisations.



Member Feedback and Learning

In August 2025, a survey was undertaken with National Federation member organisations to gather feedback on their experience of the campaign, including the activities they undertook locally and the extent to which the campaign supported their recruitment work. All organisations that responded had taken part in the campaign, and 72% indicated that they would like to participate in a future National Federation recruitment campaign. In relation to the quality of materials, 72% of respondents rated the campaign materials as good or very good.

Some organisations reported increased social media engagement and one organisation noted that a higher percentage of posts were filled from applications received. Another organisation, outside of the survey, reported an increased volume of applications during the campaign period. Importantly, members also identified ways that future campaigns could be further strengthened, including more localised materials, clearer scheduling of national advertising, regional targeting, interactive career pathway tools, staff testimonials, and stronger links with local colleges, schools and community employment pathways.

Supporting long-term recruitment capacity

The campaign also supported the development of longer-term recruitment capacity across the Federation and its membership. It led to the creation of high-quality shared resources, strengthened the National Federation's digital presence on LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, and encouraged several member organisations to establish or further develop their own online presence. The National Federation's LinkedIn page also supported the organisation's own recruitment activity and facilitated wider engagement with key stakeholders, including member organisations, Government Departments, HSE officials, recruitment agencies, applicants and other sectoral partners.



Figure 15: Alison Harnett with Staff Members from LauraLynn who were featured in the campaign

Overall, the Recruitment and Retention Campaign was a positive strategic and innovative response to a challenge consistently raised by members. By working collectively, the National Federation was able to reduce the burden that would have been placed on any individual organisation seeking to develop comparable resources alone. The campaign increased the visibility of member organisations as employers, created practical materials for ongoing use, and demonstrated the value of coordinated action in responding to workforce challenges. The learning from this first national campaign will inform future initiatives, as recruitment and retention remain central to the sustainability of rights-based, quality disability services.

Quality and Standards

The National Federation's Quality & Standards Group continued to be a very active forum for members with 5 committee meetings taking place during 2025 with Carol O'Donnell, CEO, Dara as chairperson. The Quality & Standards Group oversees a broad programme of work and provides a forum to drive quality improvement in service provision aimed at enhancing the quality of life of the supported people. Key highlights of the work in 2025:



Figure 16: Carol O'Donnell, Chair of the NFVSP Quality and Standards Group

- **Open Disclosure and Patient Safety:** The Group coordinated with the HSE National Open Disclosure Office to host a briefing session for National Federation members on Open Disclosure and the Patient Safety Act in February 2025. The session was well attended, with 77 participants.
- **Promoting Healthy Relationships and Sexuality:** The Group organised a national webinar on Promoting Healthy Relationships and Sexuality in April 2025. The event was coordinated by a small planning group and included presentations from member organisations and the HSE. It attracted 212 delegates.
- **HIQA Provider Forum engagement:** The Group continued to support ongoing engagement with HIQA through the Provider Forum. Member issues were raised for discussion with the Chief Inspector, and HIQA provided updates on regulatory activity and developments from the Office of the Chief Inspector. During the year, HIQA also sought feedback from providers on topics for planned in-person events and began piloting a more accessible approach to inspection reports for people supported.
- **Monitoring systems and measuring outcomes:** In response to a request from DCDE, information was gathered from members on the quality monitoring systems being used across organisations and their ability to measure the impact of services on people's lives and outcomes. A subgroup was formed to support this work and to feed back into Departmental planning in relation to monitoring the Disability Action Plan.
- **Protection of Liberty Safeguards:** The Group supported member engagement on the Department of Health's proposals for Protection of Liberty Safeguards. A member briefing session was held in May 2025 with the Department's Social Care Projects Unit to outline the proposals. The Secretariat collated member responses to a draft discussion paper and, following Board approval, a submission was returned to the Department.
- **Home Sharing Standards:** The Group supported engagement with the National Home Sharing Group on the development of draft Home-Sharing Standards.
- **New Directions and day service roles:** The Group engaged with HSE work on the use of Instructor grades in day services and the range of similar grades and roles currently used by organisations. Sample job descriptions were gathered and shared with the HSE to support work on ensuring that roles and job titles are fit for purpose and aligned with the New Directions Policy. Federation representatives met throughout 2025 to discuss the work of the relevant New Directions working groups and issues arising for members.
- **Frontline Managers Programme, University of Limerick:** Work continued on the National Federation's Frontline Managers Programme, delivered through the University of Limerick. The next cycle commenced in September 2025, with 19 students registered from across member organisations. The programme supports managers to apply learning to their role in a person-centred environment and to ensure that supports reflect the unique requirements and needs of each person.



Figure 17: Frontline Managers Programme Students 2025

Safeguarding

The National Federation's Safeguarding Group continued to provide a practical forum for members to share learning, identify common issues and develop collective responses on adult safeguarding. In 2025, the Group focused on implementation challenges, safeguarding policy and legislation, financial autonomy, Children First, and engagement with national safeguarding structures.



Figure 18: Jacinta Barrett, Chair of the NFVSP Safeguarding Group

Key highlights of the work in 2025:

- **Adult Safeguarding Portal and HSE engagement:** The Group gathered member feedback on the HSE Adult Safeguarding Portal and used this to inform ongoing engagement with the HSE National Safeguarding Office on portal issues, training for designated officers, safeguarding events and wider implementation matters.
- **Member learning and shared practice:** Meetings during 2025 provided space to discuss the Adult Safeguarding Portal, the HSE safeguarding self-audit tool, safeguarding legislation and policy, the Social Work Employers Forum and Children First Awareness Week.
- **Financial autonomy and self-guarding:** The annual HSE / Disability Umbrella Groups safeguarding webinar focused on Financial Autonomy, and planning also began for a National Federation conference on "self-guarding", to share learning on supporting people to recognise risk, speak up and take an active role in their own safety.
- **Safeguarding legislation and national developments:** The Group progressed planning for an event on safeguarding legislation and policy, and the National Federation engaged with the HSE Chief Social Worker on legislative developments, implementation of the McIlroy report recommendations, and the implications of new HSE regional structures.
- **Children First and workforce links:** The National Federation continued to liaise with the HSE National Children First Office and circulated information on Children First Awareness Week. A National Federation representative was also nominated to the Social Workers Employers Forum, providing another route for engagement on workforce and professional issues relevant to safeguarding.
- **Self-Guarding Conference:** Planning for the hosting of a National Federation conference on the theme of 'self-guarding' commenced in late 2025. This event will provide an opportunity to highlight and share learning from some of the excellent work in the area of safeguarding being carried out across our member organisations.

Day Service Representatives

The Day Service Representatives group acted as a support and discussion forum in 2025 for NFVSP representatives participating in HSE day-service-related working groups. It enabled members to share experience, identify common issues and feed provider perspectives into national work on day services, New Directions, school leavers, multidisciplinary supports and outcome-focused monitoring. Key areas of work included:

- **New Directions and day service roles:** The Group considered national developments, including the HSE work on instructor grades and related day service roles.
- **Multidisciplinary supports:** Representatives contributed to discussion on the HSE research project on multidisciplinary supports, emphasising the need to stay aligned with the original terms of reference, include the voice of people supported and direct funding towards core clinical disciplines.
- **School leavers:** The Group discussed the need to review the current banding rates, the cost of supporting people with complex needs, and non-pay costs such as transport and insurance.
- **Monitoring and lived experience:** Updates were provided on outcome-focused day service monitoring and the Voices of Service Users Together work, with a shared emphasis on ensuring feedback from people supported informs monitoring and service development.
- **Sustainability and access:** Discussions highlighted staffing pressures, transport gaps and the need to advocate for the true cost of providing day services that support meaningful community inclusion.

Assisted Decision Making

The National Federation's Assisted Decision-Making Reference Group continued to provide an important forum for members to share learning, identify implementation challenges and develop collective responses to issues arising under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act. The Group supports member organisations around the practical implications of the legislation, with a particular focus on rights-based decision-making, access to financial services, discharge from wardship, family engagement, professional practice and barriers experienced by people with intellectual disabilities and autism. Key highlights of the work in 2025:



Figure 19: Teresa Mallon, Chair of the NFVSP Assisted Decision Making Group

- **Discharge from Wardship:** The National Federation hosted an online information session and Q&A on the discharge from wardship process in February 2025. Presentations from Marie-Claire Butler, General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court and Eleanor Leane, Assistant Director of Civil Operations, The Legal Aid Board provided practical information on the discharge from wardship process and accessing legal aid. The session was attended by over 100 participants.
- **In-person ADM Reference Group meeting:** The Assisted Decision-Making Reference Group met in person at the National Federation offices in April 2025. The meeting included an update from Joanne Haffey, HSE Senior Project Manager, Human Rights and Equality Office, and a presentation from a member organisation on supports developed to support decision-making in practice.
- **Barriers to banking:** Barriers to banking remained a key focus for the Group throughout 2025. Following the July ADM Group meeting, the National Federation gathered examples from members and progressed a number of actions to highlight the difficulties experienced by people with intellectual disabilities and autism in accessing banking services. This included seeking examples of potential discriminatory practices, circulating guidance on making complaints to financial services, and gathering information on the practical impact of banking barriers. The ADM group created and circulated to members a Guide to making a Complaint to a Financial Service & the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman.
- **Engagement with IHREC:** The National Federation engaged with Rosa Eivers, Senior Solicitor with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, in relation to barriers to banking. A request was issued to members to share information on their experiences; this information was shared with IHREC. In October, the Group also held an online information-gathering session with Rosa Eivers to share members' experiences and support IHREC's information gathering.
- **Engagement with the Decision Support Service:** Barriers to banking were also raised with the Decision Support Service in October 2025. The information gathered from National Federation members was brought to the DSS to support its engagement with Banking and Payments Federation Ireland and to inform a DSS webinar for banking staff, where examples from members were to be shared to highlight the barriers being experienced.
- **Safeguarding Ireland research:** A focus group for National Federation members was held as part of Safeguarding Ireland's research on the *Guide to Keeping in Control of your Money, Benefits and Assets*. This provided a further opportunity to bring member experience and the perspective of disability service providers into work focused on financial autonomy and safeguarding.
- **Family information and HSE engagement:** The Group identified the need for accessible ADM information for families and followed up with the HSE on this issue. Feedback from members was shared with the HSE, and the National Federation sought to participate in relevant HSE work on family information and supports.
- **Ongoing member support:** Throughout 2025, the Group continued to support members by identifying shared challenges, gathering examples of practice, and escalating issues where a collective response was needed.

Data Protection and FOI

The National Federation's Data Protection and FOI Network continued to provide a forum for staff with responsibility for data protection, records management and Freedom of Information matters to connect, share learning and discuss issues arising in practice.



Figure 20: Aine Forde, Chair of the NFVSP Data Protection and FOI Network

- **Ongoing peer support and shared learning:** The Network continued to provide an important peer forum for staff working in data protection and FOI roles across member organisations. This enabled members to share practical experience, discuss operational challenges and identify common issues arising in the application of data protection and FOI requirements.
- **Data protection and privacy practice:** The Network supported discussion on data protection practice across member organisations, including issues linked to personal data, privacy, records management and organisational responsibilities.
- **FOI and access to records:** The Network continued to provide a space for members to share learning on Freedom of Information and access-to-records matters, including how organisations respond to requests and manage related processes.
- **Shared issues and emerging questions:** The Network provided a mechanism for identifying shared questions or concerns arising for member organisations and for considering whether collective discussion, clarification or follow-up was needed. This peer exchange role was particularly important given the complexity of balancing transparency, privacy, rights, safeguarding and service-delivery responsibilities.

Health and Safety Group:

The re-established Health and Safety Group continued to operate during 2025. The Group hosted a presentation from Health and Safety Authority inspectors in February 2025 and continued to meet as a self-managed group, linking with the Secretariat as needed. The National Federation was also invited to nominate a representative to the Health and Social Care Advisory Committee.



Figure 21: Health and Safety Group

Section 38 pensions

The National Federation's Section 38 Pensions Group continued to provide an important specialist forum for members responsible for pension administration and related HR / finance processes within Section 38 organisations. The Group supports member organisations by enabling them to share information, identify common challenges, discuss technical and operational pension matters, and consider the implications of national HSE and public sector pension developments for Section 38 agencies. Key highlights of the work in 2025:

- **NiSRP and transfer to HSE SAP HR and Payroll:** The Group considered the implications of the rollout of NiSRP with regard to pensions administration.
- **HSE pensions engagement:** This Group provided a forum for members to identify questions that could be referred to the HSE working Group and share the operational impact of national changes.
- **Shared technical support and peer learning:** Throughout 2025, the Group provided a specialist peer forum for pension leads across Section 38 organisations. This enabled members to share technical knowledge, identify emerging issues, and support one another in navigating complex pension administration requirements.

Shared Learning Events

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 2025 that brought members together to share information and discussion:

Quality and Standards

- Open Disclosure and Patient Safety Act Briefing – 5th February 2025
- Promoting Healthy Relationships and Sexuality Webinar – 9th April 2025
- Protection of Liberty Safeguards Briefing / Consultation Session – 19th May 2025
- Home Sharing Standards Consultation – October 2025

Assisted Decision-Making

- Discharge from Wardship Information Session and Q&A – 27th February 2025
- Barriers to Banking Information-Gathering Session – 23rd October 2025

Human Resources / Workforce

- Advertising on the HSE Website: Process and Benefits Webinar – 10th February 2025
- HR Meeting – Disability Workforce and Resourcing Update – 26th February 2025
- Garda Vetting - National Vetting Bureau Update Webinar – March 2025
- CORU Employer's Opinion of Competency Forms Meeting – 30th April 2025



Figure 22: Presentation by Barry Philips, *Legal Island*

- CORU Briefing on Social Care Worker Registration Queries – 26th May 2025
- Out of Hours Allowance / Business Case Update – 27th May 2025
- RNID / CNM1 Implementation Briefing Session – 12th September 2025
- AI and HR in the not for profit / voluntary sector, delivered by Legal Island – 1st October 2025

Health and Safety

- Health and Safety Authority Inspection Presentation – 19th February 2025

Safeguarding / Children First

- Financial Autonomy Webinar – 28th May 2025

Housing

- Housing Models and Design Engagement with the HSE – 17th April 2025
- Department of Housing, DCDE and HSE Housing Design Meeting – 13th June 2025
- Housing Strategy Stakeholder Training Video Contribution – 9th May 2025
- Housing Strategy Implementation Plan Workshop – 28th May 2025

Older Persons:

- Gathering Evidence Around Access to Healthcare for Older Persons with Intellectual Disability and Autism – 6th November 2025

Policy / Consultation

- NASS Data Sharing Session – 25th June 2025

Over 2025, the National Federation Secretariat remained dedicated to fostering a responsive, evidence-informed, and collaborative environment in support of its members. A central focus has been encouraging shared learning and ensuring timely, effective responses to member inquiries and requests. This commitment is evident in the wide range of communication channels we utilise and the variety of meeting formats we offer to engage with and support our membership.

Queries received via phone and email

Supporting our member organisations remains a core function of the National Federation Secretariat. Recognising the importance of accessibility and responsiveness, we have effectively managed a significant volume of enquiries through both phone and email this year. Our team has remained committed to delivering timely and accurate responses, addressing a wide spectrum of requests from members and key stakeholders.

Meetings

To promote shared learning and collaboration, the Secretariat convened meetings throughout the year in a variety of formats to meet the diverse needs of members. These included in-person meetings, online meetings, hybrid sessions, webinars, briefings, consultation workshops, information-gathering sessions and peer discussion forums. This flexible approach supported strong member participation, enabled timely discussion of emerging issues, and allowed members from across the country to engage in ways that were practical and accessible.

General Assembly meetings continued to be a key mechanism for member engagement in 2025. Held four times during the year, they provided a collective space for members to receive updates, discuss shared priorities, contribute to the development of national advocacy messages and inform the Federation's work. In 2025, General Assemblies were held on 19th March, 18th June, 23rd September and 3rd December. The meeting in September also served as the NFVSP AGM.



Figure 23: NFVSP General Assembly

2.4 Support Self-Advocacy and the Voice of Lived Experience

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.



Figure 24: Brian Donohoe, IRN Secretary

The Inclusive Research Network had another busy year in 2025. We continued to work on our current Research Project Support to Make Decisions. In February the Interview Group had gone through the Transcripts from 11 interviews to pick out the themes and this work continued during the summer of 2025.

In April the IRN agreed to use drama to tell the stories from the interviews. This will help people to understand the findings from the research. In June IRN met in Dublin and worked on dramas from 3 interviews. Gardening, Getting a tattoo and photo exhibition. Plans were made to work on 3 more videos later in the year. In November we met again and did videos called, Being Treated Differently, Chair of an Advocacy Group and Parents Meddling in a Relationship. IRN will make more videos next year.

IRN sent a letter to the CEOs of member organisations to encourage support from organisations who have not yet been involved in supporting the work of the Inclusive Research Network. The purpose of this letter was also to thank organisations who already support IRN members and to encourage more organisations to do so to help recruit new members for IRN. In July Brian got replies from Ability West and St Michael's House and he arranged information sessions on behalf of IRN, with people supported to tell them more about IRN with a view to encouraging them to join.

IRN Secretary Brian Donohoe also set up information sessions with University College Cork, Down Syndrome Ireland & Special Olympics Ireland.

Also, in May IRN contributed to National Federation Budget Campaign. A meeting was held with both IRN Members and members of the Advocacy Network and some quotes from people with ID were added to the NFVSP Pre-Budget Submission 2026 document.

IRN Secretary Brian Donohoe met Minister Hildegarde Naughton T.D. Minister of State for Disability at the Pre-Budget Estimates Forum in Dublin on 28th May and spoke to her on behalf of the IRN and its Research Projects.



Figure 25: IRN members with Rob Hopkins (Supporter from Brothers of Charity in Clare) who is retiring but will continue as a volunteer with IRN





Figures 26: Brian Donohoe with Minister Naughton; and Brian Donohoe presenting to NFVSP General Assembly

In September Secretary Brian Donohoe, academic Supporter Edurne Garcia and supporter Rob Hopkins began writing a chapter for a book on inclusive Research and inclusive research methods and how IRN brought people along and gave them ownership of the research.

Also in September Brian Donohoe gave a presentation to Minister Hildegarde Naughton T.D. minister for State for disability on the work of the IRN and gave her messages from IRN members. On the day Brian also presented Minister Naughton with printed copies of the 4 IRN Project Reports. Brian gave an update to members about the meeting with the Minister at the NFVSP General Assembly on 23rd September 2025.

In October 2025 IRN secretary Brian Donohoe and IRN Members Helen O'Regan & Kathleen McMeel hosted a stand to promote IRN at the National Advocacy Conference in Ballinasloe Co Galway. They told the delegates about IRN to recruit new members.



Figure 27: IRN Stand at the BOCSI Advocacy Conference

Self-Advocacy Network

In 2025, the National Federation continued to strengthen its commitment to supporting self-advocacy and ensuring that the voice of lived experience informed its national policy and advocacy work. Building on ongoing work to develop a network of self-advocacy groups across the National Federation membership, the Self Advocacy Network held its inaugural meeting on 8th May 2025. The meeting was chaired by Mary Barrett, with inputs from Brian Donohoe and Alison Harnett, and brought together advocacy coordinators and self-advocates from member organisations.

NEW INITIATIVE 2025

The first meeting was held to gather feedback on the National Federation's proposed Budget 2026 messages. Twenty advocacy coordinators and self-advocates attended, and additional feedback was submitted by advocacy groups by email. This input helped shape the National Federation's Pre-Budget Submission by ensuring that the priorities and experiences of people supported by member organisations were reflected directly in the document. Quotes from people with lived experience were included throughout the submission, strengthening the Federation's advocacy by connecting policy asks on unmet need, sustainability and rights-based supports with the real-life impact on people and families.

The Network's contribution was also brought into wider stakeholder engagement. Brian Donohoe attended the Department of Children, Disability and Equality Pre-Estimates event on 28 May 2025 and shared the findings of the budget consultation with people supported through the Self Advocacy Network.

Through this work, the Self Advocacy Network became an important route for connecting the National Federation's policy and advocacy priorities with the direct experiences of people supported by member organisations. Its establishment in 2025 marked a significant step in ensuring that lived experience is not treated as a separate strand of work, but as a central part of how the Federation develops messages, informs submissions and engages with decision-makers. The Network will continue to provide an important foundation for strengthening self-advocacy, participation and rights-based engagement across the Federation's work.

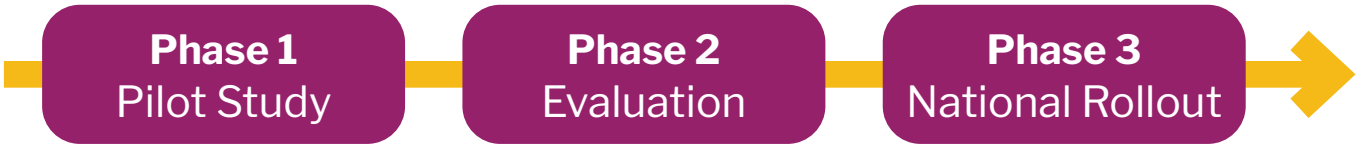
2.5 Innovation and Shared Learning

The National Federation has been involved in several innovation projects designed to promote and support the development and maintenance of rights-based disability services in accordance with the UNCRPD.

Keep My Teeth – Oral Health Project

Keep My Teeth is a national oral health project led by Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Dublin Dental University Hospital (DDUH), and the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers (NFVSP). The project aims to improve oral health outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities by supporting staff, families, and services to deliver effective daily mouth care.

The project combines training, practical resources, implementation supports, and research to build awareness, confidence and skills in oral health promotion, mouth care planning, toothbrushing support, and the prevention of oral disease. Through a train-the-trainer approach, co-designed resources, and collaboration with people with lived experience, Keep My Teeth seeks to embed sustainable oral health practices within disability services and improve health, wellbeing, comfort, dignity, and quality of life. KMT is split into three phases:



Phase 1 of KMT began in October 2025, and saw TCD, DDUH, and NFVSP partner with St. Michael's house for phase 1 and 2 of the project.

The aim of the Keep My Teeth project is to improve oral health for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism in Ireland. To achieve this aim, Keep My Teeth adopts a series of interlocking objectives:

1. To improve the outcomes of mouthcare by promoting healthy mouthcare behaviours
2. To improve mouthcare skills like toothbrushing
3. To enable people with intellectual disability and/or autism and those who support them to plan their own mouthcare
4. To develop resources that support the achievement of better mouthcare and mouthcare planning
5. To develop a community of practice amongst intellectual disability service providers that will sustainably support good oral health for people using their services, and which proactively aims to translate into outcomes the important research available from IDS-TILDA, Dublin Dental University Hospital and the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability, in relation to oral health for people with intellectual disabilities and autism, thereby promoting evidence-based practice
6. To engage with key stakeholders nationally to promote the adoption of practices that address inequalities with regards to oral health for people with intellectual disabilities and which promote healthy mouthcare.

Keep My Teeth Governance Structures

Operational Steering Group

The KMT steering group was established in Q4 of 2025 to provide direction and oversight, ensuring the project aligns with the KMT goals and objectives. This included approving plans and deliverables, ensuring accountability, identifying and mitigating risks, and promoting and fostering a culture of support and collaboration for everyone involved in the KMT project.

Staff Advisory Group (SAG)

The KMT staff advisory group is a multidisciplinary team made up of disability service staff – speech and language therapists, support staff, nurses; and dental hygienists. This group continues to build on work delivered in 2024, including the development of mouthcare plans, which have been incorporated into the KMT project. Along with providing differing perspectives from different types of services, this group will ensure resources and training developed is adaptable and workable in their organisations.



Partner Advisory Group (PAG)

The partner advisory group ensures people with disabilities have the opportunity to advise and share their perspective as the project is developed and feed into the evaluation as each phase of the project is completed. The PAG's aim is to ensure KMT will be useful, easy to understand, and fair to everyone.

Champions

The KMT Champions are a group of volunteers who are supported by St. Michael's House. They held their inaugural meeting in December 2025. This group will promote Keep My Teeth and spread awareness on the importance of good oral hygiene, and KMT Training. They will do this by creating art, talking about KMT, and other initiatives next year.



Figure 28: Keep My Teeth Champions

Train-the-Trainer

Part of phase one of the project saw the development and delivery of the 'train-the-trainer' training. Staff who have received this training are known as SuperUsers, they will in turn train the people using their services and their staff teams. This model of training was chosen for sustainability and value for money purposes.

On 28th November, the first Superuser training was carried out by the Keep My Teeth team along with 9 Superusers from St. Michael's House. The four core modules of the training were:

- Why mouthcare matters
- Toothbrushing
- Building a mouthcare plan
- Putting learning into practice

Feedback was obtained from the Superusers through surveys and interviews after they conducted training in their services, delivering training to over 100 staff in St Michael's House and a website was set up to provide information and resources needed in training for participants.

Post training surveys and interviews with the Superusers at St. Michael's House were held as part of the evaluation and will be incorporated into Phase 2 of the KMT project due to take place in 2026. Focus Groups were also conducted with SAG members and staff from National Federation member organisations to determine suitability of KMT across various services. The PAG also fed into the evaluation process by reviewing the training booklets for people supported by services.



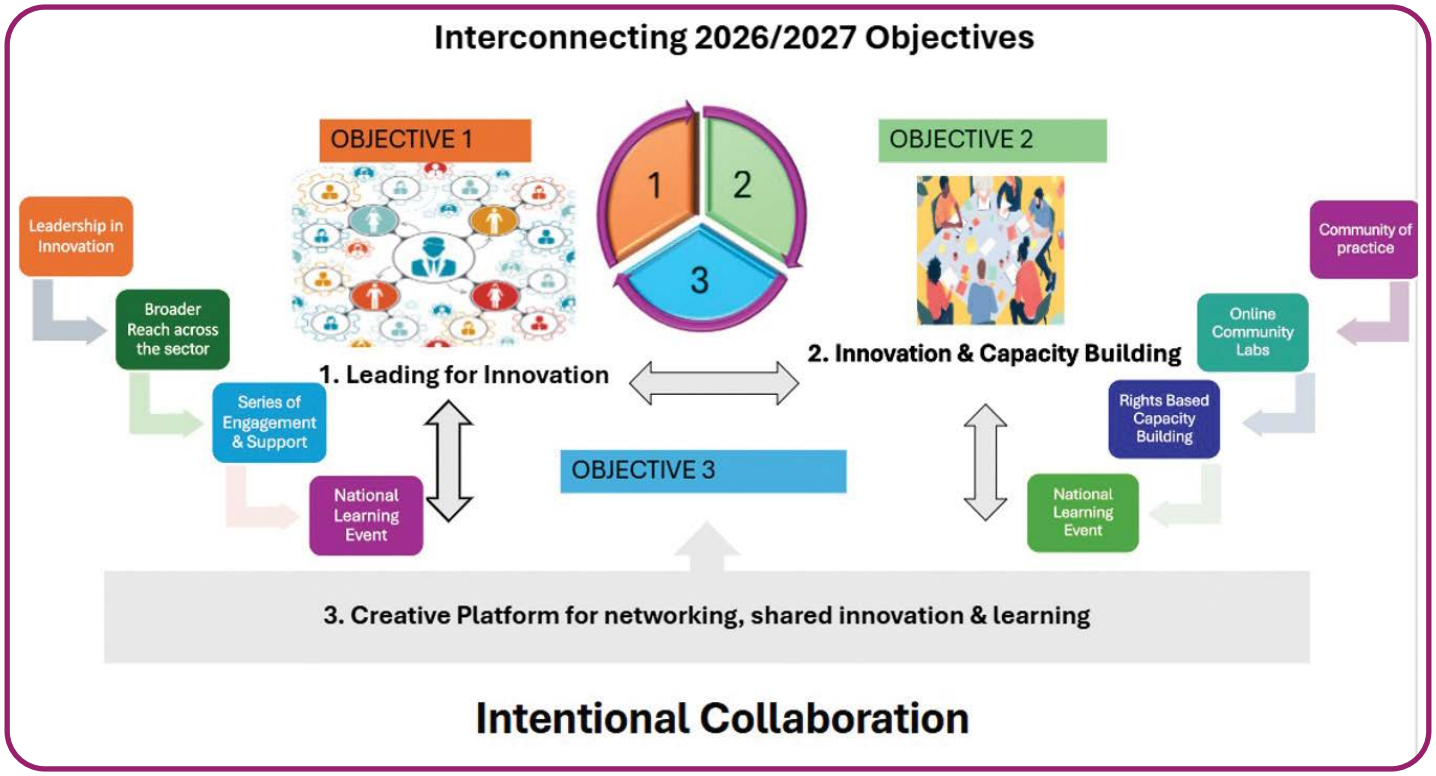
Figure 29: First Group of Superusers

Bridge to Community

Introduction to the Initiative

The Bridge to Community Initiative is a national, strategic programme led by the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers, in partnership with the HSE, over the period 2025–2027. It aims to support innovation, shared learning, and leadership in developing rights-based, person-centred, and community-integrated supports for people with intellectual disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities, and autism in Ireland.

The initiative seeks to foster innovation in practice and leadership to support the full inclusion of people as equal and valued citizens, through the progression of a rights-based model of support. It brings together organisations with a shared commitment to reflective practice, person-centred approaches, and systems change.



Structures Established

A defining feature of the Bridge to Community Initiative is its flexible and evolving design. The vision, structures, and outcomes are being co-designed with participants, ensuring that collaboration and shared learning remain central. Participants are not only contributors but co-creators, working together to reimagine how supports are delivered and experienced, and to build a community that champions dignity, inclusion, and possibility.

To support delivery, a number of key structures have been established. The design of the initiative is intentionally flexible and co-designed, with participants actively shaping its development and outcomes through collaboration and shared learning.

Governance Group
Providing oversight and strategic direction

Community of Practice
Creating a collaborative space for shared learning and co-creation

Community Lab Programme
An online reflective learning and capacity-building initiative

Connection Point Platform
A sector-wide online space for collaboration, networking, and resource sharing

Meetings, Events and Trainings

The Bridge To Community Initiative was presented at a range of governance, engagement, and learning events throughout 2025:

- Ministerial Visit – 12th September
- DCDE Shared Learning Day – 15th September
- Blue Sky Event (DCDE) – 13th October
- CEO Design Thinking Day – 4th November
- 9 NDIG meetings across CHO regions to support the rollout of Community Labs
- Community of Practice:
- In-person session – 26th November
- Virtual check-in – 18th December



Community of Practice, November 2025

The Community of Practice in-person session included structured engagement focused on building the foundations of the community, co-creating rights-based supports, and mapping the journey towards system change.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

Community of Practice

A key milestone was the establishment of the Community of Practice, which convened its first CEO Design Thinking Day on 4th November, the participating members in-person session on 26th November 2025, followed by a virtual check-in on 18th December. The Community of Practice provides a collaborative space for organisations to explore innovation, share learning, and develop practical approaches to rights-based supports.



Figure 30: CEO Design Thinking Day

- Initial participation included 32 organisations:
  - 27 member organisations
  - 5 external organisations (referred via the HSE National Day Opportunities Team)
- Engagement expanded to 48 participants, including:
  - Organisational representatives
  - HSE National Day Services team
  - DCDE Vision and Strategy representatives
- Representation was achieved across all six RHA regions, ensuring national reach and engagement.

Community Labs

- Engagement and presentations made to launch access to the Community Labs across
  - 9 NDIG Meetings
  - National Federation General Assembly
  - Poster created and circulated widely amongst National Federation members and the HSE national day opportunities team.



Figure 31: Community Labs Brochure

Engagement with External Stakeholders

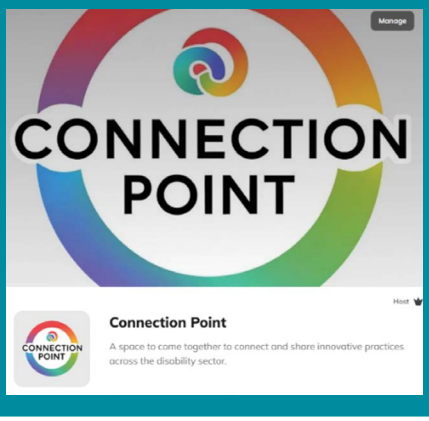
The initiative has also benefited from engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including the HSE National Day Opportunities Team, DCDE's Vision and Strategy team, and National Federation members. International expertise was incorporated through contributions from Dr Beth Mount and Hanns Meissner, who provided valuable insights to participants. These collaborations have strengthened the initiative's capacity to draw on best practice and drive meaningful systems change. These engagements have supported the sharing of national and international best practice and strengthened collaboration across the system.

Bridge to Community - Key Activities

- Delivered **Community of Practice sessions** (1 in-person, 1 virtual) to facilitate structured peer learning and collaboration.
- Developed and delivered **exploration sessions** for CEOs, senior leaders, and practitioners on human rights-based approaches.
- Designed and launched the **Community Lab: Building Everyday Bridges to Community**, a six-month themed online learning programme beginning in Jan 2026.
- Engaged nationally through **9 NDIG meetings across CHO regions** to support rollout and participation.
- Co-developed **draft guiding principles** for rights-based support through structured feedback and engagement processes
- Designed and implemented the **Connection Point online platform** (Mighty Networks), including dedicated spaces for learning, networking, and resource sharing.
- Provided **targeted mentoring and support** to participating organisations as required.

Bridge to Community - Outcomes

- Established a **nationally representative network** of participating organisations across all six RHA regions.
- Increased **engagement levels**, expanding from 32 organisations to a wider representative group of 48 cross-sector participants.
- Produced **draft rights-based guiding principles**, informed by sector-wide input and scheduled for finalisation in 2026.
- Enabled **practical application of rights-based approaches**, through structured learning and leadership engagement.
- Created a **sustainable digital infrastructure (Connection Point)** to support ongoing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and programme delivery.
- Strengthened **cross-agency collaboration** between Federation members, HSE, DCDE, and external organisations.
- Generated **shared insights on system change priorities**, identified through collaborative reflection and innovation activities.



Joint research project entitled 'Addressing Age-Related Complexity in Intellectual Disability (AARCID)

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. There is clear evidence that 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 Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability (TCAID), 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, and significantly less favourable mental health outcomes than the general population. As a result, many individuals with intellectual disabilities require adaptations and/or additional supports in their day and residential services. The National Federation and TCAID are carrying out 2 year joint research project, funded by the Health Research Board, to examine the changing needs of older adults with intellectual disabilities. This will support future-planning for appropriate supports that enable positive aging and will provide evidence-based research on the cost of changing needs.

The work on the AARC-ID project continued in 2025 with outputs expected in Q4 2026.

2.6 Pension Scheme

Overview of Size of Pension Scheme:

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Pension & Life Assurance Scheme has grown significantly since its establishment in 1996. As of 31st December, 2025, there are:

- 24 employers participating in the Scheme.
- 9,950 members (comprising 6,146 active members and 3,804 deferred members).
- Approximately €439 million in funds under management, with 99% invested in the Scheme's default investment strategy i.e., EMPOWER Personal Lifestyle Strategy (PLS)
- Monthly contributions amounted to approx. €3m.

Scheme Engagement with Employers and Members:

A workplan was developed between the Trustees and Irish Life in 2025 which aimed at increasing pension awareness and information for members of the Scheme. This was achieved in a number of ways including:

- **Continuing to update the Pensions Tab on www.fedvol.ie**. Members now have access to a full suite of Pension Scheme information available on the website, including Pension Booklets and forms; FAQs document; Videos; Webinar Recordings; Newsletters; Investment updates; TAR & Financial Statements, etc.
- The video library on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab) continued to grow in 2025. Irish Life produced a series of short FAQ videos covering a member's pension journey from joining the Scheme through to retirement. A separate video on Retirement Living Standards was also produced. The video compares planning for retirement to packing for a dream trip. A member might not know every detail of their journey, but they do know what they want to bring! Irish Life based their video on the Pensions Council's "Retirement Living Standards", a simple guide to help members understand the level of income they'll need in retirement.
- **Annual Pension Benefit Statements (PBS)** were issued to member's home address, which provided members with details in respect of their pension contributions paid; outlined the investment 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 check their fund value at any time via their Member Portal, very similar to reviewing their bank balance online! Further details on the Member Portal, including 2 videos on (a) how to register for the portal and (b) how to use the online member portal, are available to watch on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).

  The Member Portal has also been updated to include a "Projections" facility. This facility provides members with calculations in respect of their cash lump sum if they proceed on drawing down their pension fund via (a) service / salary route or (b) 25% of their fund value.

- **Online Group Presentations:** In 2025, 5 online group presentations were held for members of the National Federation's Pension Scheme which took place in March, April, November and December 2025.
  - The first 2 online presentations held in March 2025 re: "Is your Pension Fund on Track?", addressed the topics of: Pension Contributions and Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs); the Scheme's Default Investment Strategy & Other Investment Options, in addition to practical tips on how members can easily view and manage their pension fund via their mobile phone / laptop.
  - A webinar held on 27th April, 2025 was tailored specifically for people who were previously a member of the National Federation's Pension Scheme, but have since left that employment but their pension fund has remained invested in the Scheme (these members are referred to as a deferred member). Topics covered on this online webinar included: Importance of their Pension

Fund; Reviewing investment options and their pension portal; and the options available to deferred members re: accessing their pension fund?

- 2 further online webinars entitled *"Essential Guide to Retirement"* took place on 27th November and 2nd December, 2025, which addressed the topics members need to consider as part of their countdown to retirement, including: draw down options; key things to consider at this stage of their retirement journey; Retirement Living Standards; the retirement process and outline of the ongoing support and one-to-one meeting opportunities available to members.

  A recording of the above webinars are all available to view on **www.fedvol.ie** (click on pensions tab).

- The **Irish Life Engagement Team** reached out to all employers of the Scheme to offer on-site presentations. These sessions aim to inform and educate members about their pension fund.
- The **Irish Life Advice Team**, which consists of two points of contact assigned to each participating employer, made themselves available to all members for one-to-one meetings regarding their pension fund. The Advice Team point of contacts assigned to each employer and their relevant contact details are available on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).
- 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 and reminders of webinars taking place on different themes appropriate to them.
- **Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars** - The Pension Trustees, in association with Irish Life, organised Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars to support and provide valuable information to members of the Pension Scheme as they approach retirement. 4 Retirement Seminars took place during April – July 2025, one each in Mayo, Tullamore, Portlaoise and Cork, where a total of 107 people attended.

Pension Scheme Newsletters:



Two newsletters were published in March and October 2025. The March edition covered information in relation to the Scheme's Webinars and Retirement Planning Seminars; Pension Benefit Statements; Working beyond age 65; the Trustees' Workplan for 2025 and a review of 2024 activity.

The October newsletter covered Budget 2026 and its implications for pensions; auto-enrolment; the *Essential Guide to Retirement* webinars; information on how to make a lump sum AVC and reclaim tax before the October 2025 Revenue deadline; the 2024 Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Financial Statements.

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

Pension Scheme Workshop – November 2025

A Pension Scheme Workshop for all participating employers in the Scheme was held on 20th November, 2025, in the Tullamore Court Hotel. The purpose of the Workshop was to educate and upskill all personnel involved in the administration of the pension scheme and ensure they are fully aware of all their responsibilities in relation to the Scheme.



James Skehan, the Scheme's Chairman & Professional Trustee, welcomed members and opened the Workshop with an overview of the Pension Scheme; Auto-Enrolment and outlined the role & function of the Internal Audit and Risk Management Key Function Holders.

Cornmarket provided employers with an update on the Group Life benefits; late joiners procedure and the Salary Protection Scheme (SPS).

Aviva presented on their Aviva Care Benefits which is now available to all members of the Group Life Scheme. Further details on Aviva Care benefits are outlined on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).

Irish Life updated the employers in respect of Auto Enrolment Vs National Federation's Pension Scheme; Scheme's Administration procedures; investment update; importance of member education and members seeking financial advice and information on how members can access and use the online Member Portal.

Guest speaker on the day was **Paul Kenny, Retirement Planning Council (RPC) and former Pensions Ombudsman.** Paul outlined to employers the objective and importance of members attending a Pre-Retirement Seminar which is designed to increase member awareness re retirement and deal with things that change for members in retirement; address financial issues (State Pension and Federation Pension Scheme Pension); wills & inheritance and healthy lifestyle in retirement.



L-R: Bernard O'Regan, Trustee; Francis Coughlan, Trustee; Deirdre Herlihy, Trustee; Maria McMahon, Pension Scheme Manager; Paul Kenny, Retirement Planning Council; James Skehan, Pension Scheme Chairman and John McHugo, Pension Scheme Vice Chairman.

Trustees Meetings:

The Trustees convened 4 regular Trustee meetings; 1 investment review meeting with Irish Life Investment Managers (ILIM) and 1 strategic planning / training day in 2025. The Trustees also participated in other Team Meetings with Irish Life, Cornmarket, Key Function Holders for Risk Management and Internal Audit; the Scheme's External Auditor; legal advisors etc.

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 2025, prepared quarterly reports and submitted same to Irish Life. An annual review is also required to be carried out in respect of 2025, and this will be prepared following the presentation of Irish Life's Q4-2025 governance report scheduled for the February 2026 Trustees meeting.

Irish Life

Trustees Training:

Pension Trustees Training took place in December 2025, in line with requirements that the Trustees must undergo Refresher Training every 2 years. The Trustees of this Scheme have agreed to undergo training on a yearly basis having regard to the number of new requirements / regulations etc. This decision will be kept under review.

Legal Work:

The Trustees continued to engage with A&L Goodbody during 2025 in respect of **(a)** reviewing and updating the Scheme's Trust Deed & Rules and **(b)** work on the establishment of the Scheme as a Designated Activity Company (DAC) in line with EU IORP 11 Directive and the Pensions Authority Code of Practice requirement.

Policies Review:

The Trustees in 2025 continued to review existing Scheme policies in line with their review timelines; 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).

Trustee Annual Report (Tar) & Financial Statements:

As required by Pension Legislation, the Trustees prepared a Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Financial Statements for year ended 31/12/24 and circulated same to each participating employer and recognised Trade Unions in line with the 30th September, 2025, deadline for completion. That report, and those from previous years, are available on the National Federation's website www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab).

Key Function Holders:

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

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

Risk Management: On the risk side, key risk indicators were reported at each of the Trustees' quarterly meetings, the status of action plans identified in the Own Risk Assessment were tracked, and both the Risk Management Policy and the Risk Appetite Statement were reviewed.

Internal Audit: 2 audit tests were carried out in 2025 in conjunction with the Trustees, employers and Irish Life which covered the areas of (a) the Annual Renewals Process and Pension Benefit Statement and (b) Review of "Data Governance" Policies. The Trustees reviewed the outcome of the above audit tests and implemented relevant recommendations proposed by the Internal Audit Key Function Holder.

Group Life Scheme – Aviva Care:

In 2025, Aviva offered their Aviva Care Benefits, at no extra cost, to all group life members of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers' Pension & Life Assurance Scheme.

This comprehensive support includes:

1. **Digital GP Service** – online access to a doctor anytime, anywhere and available to group life members, their spouse/partner, their children up to age 18 (23 if in full time education).
2. **Best Doctors Second Medical Opinion** – expert reviews of diagnoses and treatment plans.
3. **Bereavement Support** – compassionate help to cope with the loss of a loved one.
4. **Family Care Mental Health Support** – confidential mental health support with psychologists.
5. **Get Fit Programme** – Structured guidance for safe and sustainable weight loss and overall wellbeing.

Further details on the above services / supports are available on www.fedvol.ie (click on pensions tab). Members are requested to download the Aviva Care app on their phone to avail of the Aviva Care benefits. A code is required when members are registering for these benefits (the code can be obtained from their organisation's Pension Administrator).

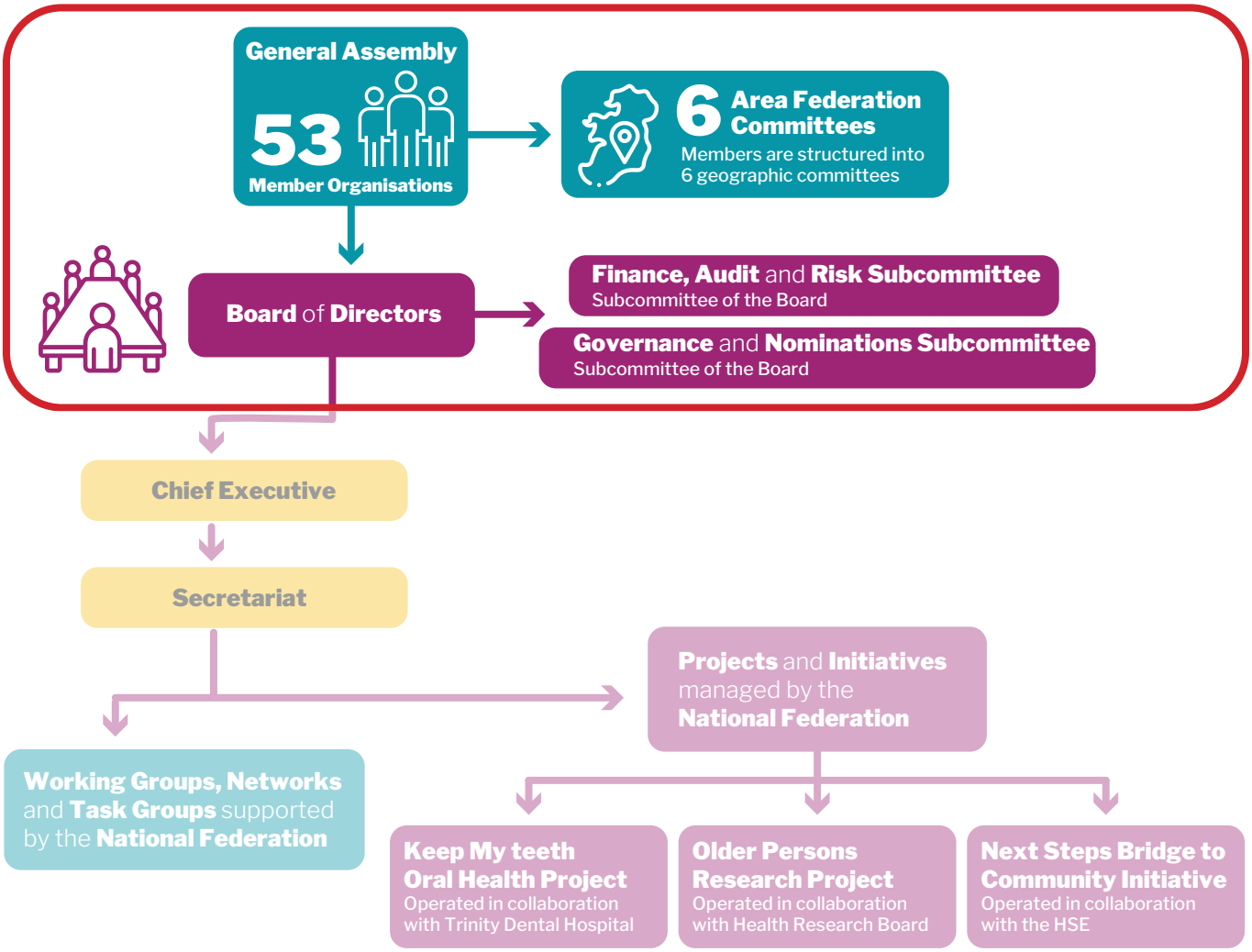
Administration & Compliance:

The National Federation Secretariat, via the Pension Scheme Manager, continued to provide administrative support to the Pension Scheme Trustees in 2025 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.

Employers co-operated with the monthly return of pension contributions to both Irish Life and Cornmarket by their required timelines. All death claims, applications for retirement on grounds of ill health; pension adjustment orders, transfers applications, retirement claims 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.

2.7 Governance and Accountability



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, oversight and governance for the National Federation, ensuring that the organisation remains focused on its mission, accountable to its members, and responsive to the changing operating environment for voluntary disability service providers.

We would like to sincerely thank all of our Board Members in 2025 for the time and dedication they have given to the National Federation. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the work of Annette Ryan and Deirdre Murphy who resigned from the Board during 2025 for their leadership and support which was invaluable to the organisation.

The Board of Directors 2025

Michael Hennessy, Brothers of Charity - Chairperson
Annette Ryan, Aurora (resigned December 2025)
Breda O'Neill, St Margaret's Network
Fiona O'Neill, WIDA
Grainne Sexton, Gheel
Joe Mason, WALK
Julie Silke Daly, Ability West
Liz Reynolds, St Michael's House
Michael Hegarty, St Joseph's Foundation
Deirdre Murphy, Kare (resigned March 2025)
TJ Duggan, Cheeverstown (appointed April 2025)
Una Nagle, Corlann

Governance and Nominations Subcommittee

The Governance and Nominations Subcommittee supports the Board in maintaining strong governance, compliance and succession planning arrangements for the National Federation. In 2025, the Subcommittee progressed its workplan by supporting Board processes, reviewing governance requirements, progressing Board training (held on 4th June 2025), and considering the skills, experience and representation (gap analysis) required to support the organisation's work. The Subcommittee also supported the recruitment and development of Secretariat roles, including work linked to the Bridge to Community posts and the wider consideration of staffing capacity in the Secretariat.

A key focus during the year was ensuring that the Federation remained well-positioned to meet its governance obligations and respond to the increasing scale and complexity of its work on behalf of members. This included oversight of matters relating to Board membership, nominations, succession planning, internal policies and organisational capacity. The Subcommittee also supported preparatory work on the review of the National Federation Secretariat's Employee Handbook and contributed to discussions on membership fees and resourcing needs, recognising the importance of strong internal governance in enabling the Federation to continue providing effective representation, support and leadership for member organisations.

Finance Audit and Risk Subcommittee

The Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee supports the Board in ensuring strong financial oversight, effective risk management and appropriate internal controls for the National Federation. In 2025, the Subcommittee reviewed the organisation's financial position, supported the development and monitoring of the Secretariat budget, considered proposals in relation to membership fees, and progressed policies and procedures to support sound financial governance. The Subcommittee also reviewed the 2024 audited financial statements with the Auditor in September 2025 before recommending them to the Board for approval.

Risk management remained a central part of the Subcommittee's work during the year. The Subcommittee reviewed the risk register and risk scoring in light of the approved Risk Appetite Statement and monitored progress on risk control actions. It also supported work on cybersecurity, insurance and legal matters, and the implementation of recommendations arising from previous governance and audit processes. Through this work, the Subcommittee helped ensure that the National Federation continued to meet its financial, audit and risk obligations while maintaining the governance structures needed to support the organisation's growing programme of work on behalf of members.

Area Federation Committees

The Area Federation Committees provide an important regional structure through which member organisations can connect, share information and raise issues arising within their areas. They also have a key role in electing the Board of Directors. They support communication between the wider membership, the General Assembly and the Board of Directors, and provide a mechanism for local and regional perspectives to inform the work of the National Federation. In 2025, these committees were remapped to match the new HSE Health Regions in order to further support local engagement.

Chairpersons of Each Area Federation Committee 2025

Dublin & Midlands: TJ Duggan, Cheeverstown
Dublin & North East: Liz Reynolds, St Michael's House
South West: Micheal Hegarty, St Joseph's Foundation
Dublin & South East: Eimer Mannion, St Aidan's Services
West & North West and Mid West: Eamon Loughrey, Brothers of Charity

Section 3:
Annual Financial Report

Audited accounts for Year Ended 31st December 2025 were prepared, independently audited and signed off by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 15th September 2026. 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 31 December 2025

	Note	2025 €	€	2024 €	€
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**11**	192,771		208,185	
			192,771		208,185
Current assets					
Debtors	**12**	132,455		139,562	
Cash at bank and in hand		864,544		616,810	
		996,999		756,372	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**13**	(607,208)		(316,255)	
Net current assets			389,791		440,117
Total assets less current liabilities			582,562		648,302
Net assets			582,562		648,302
Capital and reserves					
Restricted funds	**20**		-		-
General fund (unrestricted)	**20**		582,562		648,302
Members funds			582,562		648,302

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 15th September 2026 and signed on behalf of the Board by:

Una Nagle
Director

Grainne Sexton
Director

Statement of Financial Activities

Financial year ended 31 December 2025

	Note	Restricted €	Unrestricted €	2025 Total €	2024 Total €
Incoming Resources					
Generated funds:					
Voluntary Income					
Seminars/Conferences		-	-	-	22,969
Training course		-	-	-	1,450
Activities Income for generating funds					
Membership Fees		-	167,604	167,604	168,487
NFVB Pension Scheme		-	100,000	100,000	100,000
Other Income		-	3,663	3,663	11,613
Insurance Claim		-	-	-	15,682
Investment Income					
Other interest receivable and similar income		-	164	164	87
Charitable Activities:					
HSE Bridge to Community Project Income		56,732	-	56,732	-
HSE Oral Health Project Income		15,499	-	15,499	-
HSE Grants		-	306,720	306,720	291,704
Total Income Resources	8	**72,231**	**578,151**	**650,382**	611,992
Administrative expenses		(72,231)	(643,891)	(716,122)	(722,333)
Total Resources Expended	9	**(72,231)**	**(643,891)**	**(716,122)**	(722,333)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		**-**	**(65,740)**	**(65,740)**	(110,341)
Net movement in funds for the year		-	**(65,740)**	**(65,740)**	(110,341)
Transfer between funds		-	**-**	**-**	-
Reconciliation of funds					
Balances brought forward at start of year	21	-	**648,302**	**648,302**	758,643
Balances carried forward at end of year	21	-	**582,562**	**582,562**	648,302

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 15th September 2026 and signed on behalf of the Board by:

Una Nagle
Director

Grainne Sexton
Director

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 2025 which comprise the profit and loss account, statement of income and retained earnings, balance sheet, 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, issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council.

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 2025 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 24 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.

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.

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.

Grogans Accountancy Ltd
For and on behalf of Grogans Accountancy Ltd
Chartered Accountants
4/5 High Street Galway

Appendices

Ability West, Blackrock House, Salthill, Co. Galway

Ard Aoibhinn Centre, Belvedere Road, Co. Wexford

Autism, A Chara (formerly Autism Spectrum Disorder Initiatives), Block 1, Newtown Business & Enterprise Park, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow

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

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

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

Corlann Clare (formerly Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Clare), Banner House, Clare Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Corlann West (formerly Brothers of Charity Services Ireland West Region), Woodlands, Renmore, Galway

Corlann Limerick (formerly Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Limerick), Blackberry Park, Ballykeeffe, Dock Road, Limerick

Corlann South East (formerly Brothers of Charity Services Ireland South East), Belmont Park, Waterford

Corlann South (formerly Brothers of Charity Services Ireland South), 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, Co. Dublin

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

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

CoAction West Cork, Slip, Bantry, Co. Cork

Horizons, Blackpool Retail Park, Blackpool, Co. Cork

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

DARA, Main Street, Celbridge, Co. Kildare

Delta Centre, Strawhall, Co. Carlow

Drumlin House, Cootehill, Co. Cavan

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

Gheel Autism Service, Marino Mart, Fairview, Co. Dublin

Holy Angels Day Care Centre, Strawhall Industrial Estate, Co. Carlow

KARE, Newbridge Industrial Estate, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

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

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

Moorehaven Centre, O'Brien Street, Tipperary

Muiriosa Foundation, Moore Abbey, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare

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

Peamount, Newcastle, County Co. 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, Co. Dublin

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

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

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

St. Christopher's Service, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Co. 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 Network, (IRL-IASD) Priory Hall, Stillorgan Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

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

Stewarts Care, Palmerstown, Co. Dublin

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

WALK, 1 Longmile Road, Co. Dublin

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

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

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

Notes










National Federation of
Voluntary Service Providers
Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)
www.disabilityjobs.ie