



**Disability Federation of Ireland
Annual Report 2020**



Arun Asan from Galway Access For All

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Front cover image:
Lily and Katie Murphy-O'Dea enjoy a day at The Warren, Co. Cork. DFI staff worked to make this, and other beach wheelchairs available throughout the country.

A Letter from our Chairperson



2020 was the year of Covid for DFI and its organisations. It also brought a new government, commitments to implement the UN CRPD and an Oireachtas committee dedicated to monitoring the implementation of the CRPD. This was a ground-breaking achievement for DFI and something we had been seeking for some time.

Our organisations proved their worth as vital services to people with disabilities as the pandemic closed down the country. We supported them as they effectively responded by reconfiguring their services and assisting the national effort to address Covid 19. Renewing our relationship with our organisations and helping to ensure they have the skills, capability and resources to support people with disabilities is a priority for our new strategic plan.

The year ended with some pay restoration to Section 39 staff. This assists us in retaining skilled staff but falls far short of reversing the cuts imposed over the past decade. Restoration of funding for necessary services is urgently needed. A new relationship between the statutory health services and funded organisations, as recommended by the Independent Review Group in 2019, is absolutely essential.

The year was horrid, and the effects on staff, volunteers, people with disabilities and their families must be acknowledged and honoured. I thank the entire DFI team, staff and volunteers, and those across all our organisations for their unprecedented efforts in 2020. To those who lost a family member or a close friend I extend my deepest sympathy.

As Chairperson, I took over from Gary Lee and I wish to thank him for his dedication and service. In my new role I am fortunate to have the support of board colleagues who voluntarily give a great deal of their time and commitment to the work of DFI. I also thank the CEO, management and all the staff for their dedication and effort for our shared cause and the great flexibility they demonstrated in continuing the work of DFI in such a challenging year.

Fran Brennan
Chairperson

Innovation in the community

In response to COVID-19 we worked to ensure that people with disabilities and our member organisations were included in all local initiatives. A variety of challenges were identified and addressed, often through innovative solutions.

For example, we highlighted that many people with disabilities did not have the technology to access online supports and services. Wicklow County Council responded and introduced a technology grant to help people with disabilities get connected. These were the first grants of their kind. Since then, we have worked with other Councils, including Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford to replicate this project.

We also highlighted the many access issues following the reopening of towns and cities. In Galway we worked with the City Council to establish the COVID-19 Mobility Planning sub-group.

Throughout the year we brought attention to the issues facing people with disabilities due to the restrictions. In Kerry, DFI facilitated three online workshops with people with disabilities and our members. The workshops identified the key difficulties people were facing because of COVID-19 restrictions and identified solutions. They were funded by Kerry Education and Training Board.



Lily and Katie Murphy-O'Dea enjoy a day at The Warren, Co. Cork. DFI's community team, work with local authorities to make beaches more accessible

We developed some innovative projects in our ongoing community work.

For example, DFI continued to be part of the Changing Places Ireland campaign. This year new facilities were opened around the country, including Kilkenny, Wicklow, Limerick and Tallaght. An Oireachtas working group was set up to examine the facilities in certain buildings in line with building regulations.

DFI provided on-line training and participated in an anti-hate crime module for the Gardaí recruits training programme.

In partnership with Mayo North East Development Company, DFI is undertaking research into the key requirements of disability services in the area.

Make Way Day enjoyed the direct involvement of 27 County Councils, each hosted on-line meetings to discuss universal access and integration.

We worked with Universal Access Groups. We facilitated three Regional Network meetings and three workshops online with over 30 of the groups nationwide.

Wicklow County Council continued to fund a DFI Community Development Officer on a part-time basis for the county. A Disability and Inclusion Steering Committee was established for Wicklow. The committee, which is the first of its kind in Ireland, was formally ratified by the Council in December. All issues relevant to disability and inclusion pass through this group. We are working to share the learning from Wicklow with other councils.



Cork County Mayor, Cllr Mary Linehan Foley supporting Make Way Day 2020.

Supporting our members through the pandemic

In 2020, our focus lay with supporting our member organisations as they navigated their way through the pandemic. We facilitated collaboration and shared networks in response.

DFI supports two CEO Peer Networks. These Peer Networks have proven to be an invaluable resource for those involved. The current networks moved to become an online “Virtual Lunch” throughout 2020 due to Covid. They focused on problem solving issues arising from the pandemic. Plans to create a third Chief Officers Network were put on hold due to the pandemic.

SOLA offered courses in Quality Management and Problem Solving in 2020 with the University of Limerick. The courses are tailored to those working in health and personal social services. They were successfully moved online with the support and co-operation of University of Limerick and the participants.

The SOLA Alumni Expert Panel was established in 2020. Its aim was to explore and aid problem solving across organisations. The expert panel are drawn from the SOLA Alumni working within our member organisations. They will report on their work through the Annual SOLA Symposium on Quality.

The first months of 2020 saw 32 of our member organisations start their journey towards the Improving Quality, IQ standard. Waterford Centre for Independent Living, WCIL, achieved accreditation with IQ. Six other member organisations were on the same path, however these assessments did not proceed due to the pandemic.

A webinar on research into insurance costs in the community and voluntary sector took place in December. This highlighted the growing concerns about insurance costs from our member organisations.

In collaboration with Adare HR Management, we held two webinars in 2020 on HR and employment law.

The SOLA Symposium was postponed due to the pandemic.



New addition to our membership team in 2020, Catherine Harrington



Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard and Orla Platten from Quin, Co. Clare supporting Make Way Day 2020.



Pictured at Waterford Centre for Independent Living, Elena Guiney, Administrator and John McDonald, Manager holding their accreditation of Improving Quality, IQ.



Members of the Oireachtas Disability Group, ODG, at the General Election campaign launch at Leinster House.

Policy in an election year

DFI works to influence government policy to make Ireland a better place for people with disabilities. In 2020, we did this through;

- submissions, research and reports.
- committees that we sit on at local, national and European levels.
- engagement with Oireachtas members, including through the Oireachtas Disability Group.
- work with government departments, public bodies and the HSE.
- the monitoring of UN CRPD implementation.
- The holding of events and webinars with people with disabilities and DFI members to hear their views.

2020 began with a general election. DFI published an election manifesto and lobbied parties and politicians. We used social media to highlight our message. We worked closely with the other organisations in the Oireachtas Disability Group, ODG, and published a joint election manifesto. We ran a National Disability Hustings collectively in the Mansion House, enabling people with disabilities and organisations to question representatives from political parties. We also developed an email tool and template so that people could contact their local candidates about disability issues.

DFI were also active throughout the government negotiation process to influence the eventual Programme for Government. The final programme contained commitments DFI had been advocating for. Including commitments to end the practice of housing people under-65 in nursing homes and establishing the Disability Matters Committee in the Oireachtas.

We worked to influence Budget 2021 and worked jointly with the Oireachtas Disability Group on this.

COVID-19 dominated DFI's policy work in 2020. We raised issues affecting people with disabilities and services through engaging intensely with;

- the HSE,
- the NPHET Vulnerable People Sub-Group,
- and through lobbying government ministers and departments.

We worked closely with the other disability umbrellas to strengthen our collective voice in response to COVID-19. We supported the HSE in their development of the disability-specific COVID-19 guidance for the sector.

DFI were active in monitoring implementation of the UN CRPD. We successfully submitted a funding application to be a grant-funded member of the new Disability Participation and Consultation Network. We also ran webinars on the UN CRPD for people with disabilities, disability organisations and the general public. This included webinars on the shadow reporting process.

We continued to raise issues facing disability organisations, including deficits and wider funding issues. Thankfully, the 1% cut imposed in January was eventually reversed following extensive advocacy. Budget 2021 also saw some investment in disability services, although still falling short of what is needed.



MC for the Oireachtas Disability Group National Hustings, ex-RTE Social Affairs Correspondent, Joe Little; Social Democratic Cllr, Dave Quinn, Jack Chambers, Fianna Fail T.D., Cllr Úna Power, Green Party; Dermot Lacey, Labour Party Cllr; Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Sinn Féin TD and Bernard Mulvany, People Before Profit candidate.



Minister of State with responsibility for disability, Anne Rabbitte, addressing our virtual AGM in Fumbally Court, Dublin. Also, in the photo our CEO John Dolan and Gary Lee, outgoing Chairman of the Board.



James Cawley of ILMI with DFI CEO, John Dolan outside Leinster House at the launch of the #disabilityGE2020 campaign.

The year of working virtually

Effects of COVID-19

On the 16 March 2020 DFI switched to being a virtual organisation due to the measures imposed by Government in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. We had been using Microsoft TEAMS for several years and this greatly facilitated a relatively smooth transition.



Minister Roderic O’Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, addresses DFI’s virtual AGM at our Fumbally Court offices.

Human Resources

In 2020 a new role was created for Head of Fundraising and Development. This appointment builds on our Income Diversification Policy which recognises our need to diversify and expand our income generation.

Strategic Planning

A final report on the current Strategic Plan was compiled. Work is well underway to develop the next Strategic Plan with a consultant appointed to assist. A wide and extensive consultation with all stakeholders took place.

Risk

All DFI staff participated in risk management training and an Operational Risk Register was developed as a result.

Health & Safety

DFI’s Health and Safety Statement was updated in response to COVID-19. We provided training on the proper use of display screen equipment. We also supplied additional equipment to ensure workstations are setup to comply with current regulations.



CEO John Dolan pictured here with our tech supremo Aaron Browne. DFI had fully implemented Microsoft Teams ahead of COVID-19 disruption and this led to staff being able to smoothly transfer to remote working.

DFI Board 2020

Gary Lee – Chairperson (resigned 03.09.2020)
 Fran Brennan – Chairperson (from 04.09.2020)
 Alison McCallion – Vice Chairperson
 Gráinne O’Leary – Vice Chairperson
 Pat Clarke
 Iulia Crisan
 Michael Doyle
 Olga Estridge (resigned 03.09.2020)
 Anne Griffin
 Kevin Kelly (resigned 10.12.2020)
 Siobhán Long
 Julie Sharp
 Ann Marie Ellison (appointed 10.09.2020)
 Wendy McCarry (appointed 10.09.2020)

Company Secretary - Niall Keane
 Deputy Company Secretary – John Dolan



Beckett Bridge, Dublin taking part in #PurpleLights20 to mark International Day of People with Disabilities, IDPwD, on 3rd December.

DFI Affiliate and Associate Organisations 2020

Affiliates with Nominating Body Status

Affiliate
Ability West (formerly Galway County Associaton)
ACTS, Accessible Community Transport Southside
AHEAD, Association for Higher Education Access and Disability
Áiseanna Tacaíochta
Anne Sullivan Centre
Arts & Disability Ireland
Athlone Access Awareness
ASDI, Autism Spectrum Disorder Initiatives
Care Alliance Ireland
Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups
CIPD, Catholic Institute for Deaf People
Centre for Independent Living Carlow
Centre for Independent Living Cork
Centre for Independent Living Donegal
Centre for Independent Living Galway
Centre for Independent Living Kilkenny
Centre for Independent Living Longford
Centre for Independent Living Offaly
Centre for Independent Living Sligo
Centre for Independent Living Waterford
Centre for Independent Living West Limerick
Centre for Independent Living Wexford
Children in Hospital Ireland
Centre for Independent Living Donegal

Affiliate
CHIME (formerly DeafHear)
CoAction West Cork Ltd
Cork Deaf Association
Crosscare Cedar Programme
Diabetes Federation of Ireland Southern Regional Office
Dyspraxia DCD Ireland
Family Carers Ireland
Fibromyalgia Support Group
FICTA, Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Associations
Feach
GAP, Galway Autism Partnership
GROW
Heart Children Ireland
i.C.A.R.E
Inspire Wellbeing
Irish Electromagnetic Radiation Victims Network
Lakers Sport & Recreation Club
Lucan Disability Action Group
Mental Health Reform
Migraine Association of Ireland
Move4Parkinson's
Neurological Alliance of Ireland
North Tipperary Disability Support Service Ltd
North West Parents and Friends Association
Out and About Association
Peacehaven Trust
PWSAI, Prader Willi Syndrome Association of Ireland
S.T.E.E.R Ireland
Sharing the Journey
St. Hilda's Services

Affiliate with Nominating Body Status
Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (formerly The Peter Bradley Foundation)
Alzheimer Society of Ireland
Arthritis Ireland
ASPIRE, Asperger Syndrome Association Ireland
Aware
Bluestack Special Needs Foundation
Bri, Acquired Brain Injury Advocacy Association
CASA, Caring and Sharing Association
CRC, Central Remedial Clinic
Centre for Independent Living Blanchardstown
Centre for Independent Living Mayo
Centre for Independent Living Tipperary
Cheeverstown House Ltd
Childvision
Cope Foundation
County Roscommon Support Group for People with Disabilities
Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland
DEBRA Ireland
Disabled Drivers Association
Down Syndrome Ireland
Dyslexia Association of Ireland
Enable Ireland
Epilepsy Ireland
Fighting Blindness
HAIL, Housing Association for Integrated Living
Headway Ireland
Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland
Irish Deaf Association
Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind
Irish Haemophilia Society
Irish Kidney Association
Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association

Affiliate with Nominating Body Status
Irish Society for Autism
Irish Wheelchair Association
KARE
Leitrim Association of People with Disabilities
Multiple Sclerosis Association of Ireland
Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
NCBI, National Council for the Blind of Ireland
National Federation of Arch Clubs
Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland
North West MS Therapy Centre
Parkinson's Association of Ireland
Polio Survivors Ireland
Rare Diseases Ireland
Reach Ireland
Rehab Group
Sophia Housing Association Ltd
Special Olympics Ireland
Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland
Spinal Injuries Ireland
St. Catherine's Association
St. Gabriel's School and Centre
St. Michael's House
Vantastic
WALK
Western Care Association
Associate
Alcohol Forum
Bloomfield Health Services
Extra Care
Fionnathan Productions
Homefelt Private Nursing Services
Livability Ireland (formerly John Grooms)
Plan Ireland
Positive Futures. Achieving Dreams. Transforming Lives
Respond!
Voluntary Service International

Extract from 2020 financial statement

Full financial details available on our website www.disability-federation.ie

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating Income and Expenditure) for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	2020	2020	2020	2019
	€	€	€	€
Note				
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	-	51,342	51,342	92,688
Charitable activities generating funds	134,910	1,216,112	1,351,022	1,512,582
Other income	6 96,662	8,557	105,219	112,607
Total income	231,572	1,276,011	1,507,583	1,717,877
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	7 168,184	1,191,927	1,360,741	1,804,341
Governance costs	80,152	-	80,152	63,375
Total expenditure	248,966	1,191,927	1,440,893	1,867,716
Net movement in funds	(17,394)	84,084	66,690	(149,839)
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	224,626	1,033,786	1,258,412	1,408,251
Net movement in funds	(17,394)	84,084	66,690	(149,839)
Total funds carried forward	207,232	1,117,870	1,325,102	1,258,412

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

Disability Federation of Ireland

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2020

		2020	2019
	€	€	€
Note			
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	132,694	172,276
		132,694	172,276
Current assets			
Debtors	14	91,714	122,586
Cash at bank and in hand		1,232,805	1,043,913
		1,324,519	1,166,499
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(132,111)	(80,363)
Net current assets		1,192,408	1,086,136
Total assets less current liabilities		1,325,102	1,258,412
Net assets excluding pensions asset		1,325,102	1,258,412
Total net assets		1,325,102	1,258,412
Charity funds			
Restricted funds	18	207,232	224,626
Unrestricted funds	18	1,117,870	1,033,786
Total Funds		1,325,102	1,258,412

The financial statements were approved by the directors on 13th May 2020 and signed on their behalf, by:

Michael Doyle

Francis Brennan



Ross Coleman talking to Maryam Madani at the Oireachtas Disability Group National Hustings at Dublin's Mansion House.

DFI is about making Ireland fairer for people with disabilities.

We work to create an Ireland where everyone can thrive, where everyone is equally valued.

We do this by supporting people with disabilities and strengthening the disability movement.

There are over 120 member organisations in DFI. We also work with a growing number of other organisations that have a significant interest in people with disabilities.

DFI provides:

- Information
- Training and Support
- Networking
- Advocacy and Representation
- Research, Policy Development and Implementation
- Organisation and Management Development

Disability is a societal issue and DFI works with Government, and across all the social and economic strands and interests of society.



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