

# OIREACTHAS DISABILITY GROUP PRE BUDGET 2020 ASKS

## Introduction

The Oireachtas Disability Group, ODG is a cross-party/non-party group of Dáil Deputies, Senators and representatives from the disability sector. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) enshrines the civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of persons with disabilities. It does not create any new rights, rather formulates existing rights in a disability compliant prism. Ratification of the UNCRPD means that there is a legally binding international instrument to guarantee, for the first time ever, that the State must promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities. Ratification on its own will not change the lives of people with disabilities, unless this is underpinned by the joined up thinking and resource allocation across all government departments.

**Funding is required to enable the implementation of UNCRPD and of Government policies related to services for people with disabilities.** Government must assess

the funding requirements and implications of a systemic implementation of UNCRPD across all Government departments and public bodies, and for all disability service providers. This was part of the Oireachtas Disability Group, ODG's Budget 2019 document and remains a priority. Too often, policy is developed without funding being allocated to the transition or ongoing costs of policy implementation, related service reconfiguration and the delivery of individualised services to which Government is committed. The list below outlines some of the policy areas where lack of funding has already resulted in delayed implementation of policy.

In relation to UNCRPD provisions, e.g. housing (Article 19), transport (Article 20) and Assistive Technology (various articles), there is a real and urgent need to provide adequate funding to enable people with disabilities access housing, transport and education or work.

## Department actions

Set out below are the departmental and inter-departmental actions needed to address a wide range of barriers faced by people with disabilities, from disability services to transportation and employment. They are a reminder that every part of government, not just the Department of Health, must be involved in the goal of full equality.

Many of the actions identified below are also reflected in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, NDIS. These actions should be complemented by the Departmental Statements of Strategy and the Public Sector Duty which oblige state departments to consider the impact of their work on the human rights and equality of anyone impacted by their programmes of work.

Accessibility		
<b>Assistive Technologies</b>	Introduce Assistive Technology, AT Passports under the National Digital Strategy at a cost of €1.5m. This will assist people to access training and supports they need across education, work and independent living.	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
	Fund Assistive Technology to enable people with acquired disabilities in the agriculture and marine sectors to return to work.	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
<b>Housing</b>	€300,000 to commission an assessment and costing of unmet housing and social care needs.	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Department of Health
	Restore Housing Adaptation Grants funding to 2010 levels with an additional €28.38m. <sup>1</sup>	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
	Commit a minimum of 7.5% of all social housing in 2020 to provide appropriate housing for people on the social housing waiting lists because of disability. <sup>2</sup>	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
	Provide a minimum of €100m funding for the Capital Assistance Scheme in 2020.	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
	Ring-fence a €15m CAS budget for accommodating people moving out of congregated settings, through new build or acquisition, with enough funding available for necessary adaptations.	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
	Increase the payment of Housing Assistance Payment and make HAP Place Finders service is available and accessible to all people with disabilities seeking to avail of HAP nationwide.	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

1 To restore the funding to 2010 levels per Minister Eoghan Murphy, 11th June 2019, response to PQs [23645/19] and [23646/19] <https://bit.ly/2Xn3X7u>  
2 Based on Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2018 <https://bit.ly/2Zvpbxo>

	Introduce a tax rebate to incentivise private property developers to build universally designed housing for people, which would go beyond the Part M requirement of being visitable by people with disabilities. But make it conditional on registration with the disability extended HAP place finders and rental of the accommodation to people with disabilities on the social housing waiting list.	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
	Any tax rebate that is made available to landlords for improvement works include works which improve accessibility.	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
<b>Transport</b>	Funding to establish the Transport Support Scheme.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Department of Health
	Fund the installation in all public transport or publicly subsidised transport services of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fully accessible ticketing services and machines,</li> <li>audio and visual prompts for destinations and disruptions to services,<sup>3</sup></li> <li>full wheelchair accessibility of transport services, stations, stops,</li> <li>electronic-hydraulic ramps in at least one carriage per train.<sup>4</sup></li> </ol>	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
<b>Accessible public buildings &amp; services</b>	Install Changing Places at strategic locations, costing €14k each. For example, at Education and Training boards, universities, libraries, airports, train and bus stations, heritage sites.	All Departments
	Fund the universal design and adaptations to attractions and Heritage Sites, including they physical access and the provision of information. <sup>5</sup>	Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
	Fund the universal design and adaptations to attractions and Heritage Sites, including physical accessibility and the provision of information. <sup>6</sup>	Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
<b>Inclusion and Participation</b>		
<b>Funding crisis in the disability sector</b>	€40m minimum to address the disability sector funding crisis, to maintain existing levels of service.	Department of Health Health Service Executive
<b>Reform funding structures for community based social support services</b>	Commit to a Multi-Annual Investment Programme of €211 each year, for five years, 2020-2024 for community services for people with intellectual, physical, sensory and neurological disabilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal budgets</li> <li>Personal assistant services</li> <li>Home supports</li> <li>Other community services and supports</li> <li>Respite care</li> <li>Residential supports</li> <li>Day services</li> <li>Adult therapies</li> </ul> This is 'to enable voluntary organisations to plan better and to factor innovative reform ideas and capital investment into the services they provide. This will also provide greater certainty to the State, which relies on these organisations to provide essential services'. <sup>7</sup>	Department of Health Health Service Executive
	Require multi-annual reform of new funding - as well as 15% per year of existing funding to be used to transition to providing community-based services to comply with the UN CRPD.	Department of Health Health Service Executive
	Invest in prevention interventions and policies tailored to the specific needs of different groups of people with disabilities as part of the implementation plan for the Healthy Ireland Framework.	Department of Health Health Service Executive
	Provide the funding recommended by the Sláintecare report to expand primary care, mental health and social care services.	Department of Health Health Service Executive
	Provide a specific, flexible funding model that facilitates planning for increased, changing and complex needs. In recent years, funding focus has been given to planning for emergency need and to school-leavers. While the requirement to resource those areas of critical need is acknowledged, funding for complex, changing and unpredictable needs equal emphasis.	Department of Health Health Service Executive
	Profile and review the level and sources of funding for the New Directions programme and infrastructure to ensure that they are appropriate to the needs, preferences and ages of people using them.	Department of Health
	Provide capital funding for disability team locations, similar to the investment in primary care centres.	Department of Health Health Service Executive
	Introduce a model of resource allocation for children which includes consultation with parents of children with disabilities.	Department of Education and Skills
	There needs to be synchronization between funding sources for the provision services and supports to people with disabilities. For example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that person is not prevented from moving into community based housing due to the delay in providing personal assistant support services.</li> <li>To ensure joint-up and timely education supports.</li> </ol>	All Departments

3 Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport Report on accessibility of public transport for persons with disabilities

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5 NDA Accessible Heritage Sites Code of Practise

6 NDA Accessible Heritage Sites Code of Practise

7 Report of the Independent Review Group, January 2019

<b>Education – children and youth</b>	Fund 300 extra therapy staff for children’s services in 2020-2024. <sup>8</sup>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
	Provide 20 extra NEPS psychologists with €1.6m, to to progressively achieve the Department’s target of 238. <sup>9</sup>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
	Increase funding for the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People, aged 0 – 18 Years programme, to ensure equity of access to education settings and services: 1. Support the needs of children on the autistic spectrum. 2. Assessment of Needs.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
	Continue mainstreaming of children with disabilities. Ensure class sizes do not exceed 30 pupils. Increase Special Needs Assistant staffing levels. <sup>10</sup>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
	Introduce adequate pay for pre-school educators in line with Minister Zappone’s Access and Inclusion Model Programme.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
<b>Education transition points</b>	Introduce measures to reduce the pressures and difficulties for people with disabilities and their families around transitioning from: • pre-school to primary school, • primary to secondary education, <sup>11</sup> • education to employment or adult services. <sup>12</sup>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Department of Health
<b>Further Education and Training</b>	Establish Disability Expert Support Persons in Education and Training Boards, ETBs with €1.5m.	Department of Education and Skills
	Provide Accessible Technologies, AT for students in ETBs. Ensure swift provision to maximise efficacy for the students.	Department of Education and Skills
<b>Income and employment</b>	Grant Medical Cards based on a person’s medical needs, not on their income.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Department of Health
	As an interim measure, increase Disability Allowance by €20 per week pending publication of the Department’s ‘Cost of Disability’ research. <sup>13</sup> Because people in receipt of Disability Allowance are at a high risk of poverty.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Train Intreo staff to support disabled jobseekers according to their needs. Feedback from persons with disabilities using Intreo services will be a determining factor in how effective the staff training has been. <sup>14</sup>	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Ensure that cross-departmental responsibility for funding Personal Assistant hours in the workplace is clarified, to ensure that people who need PA support can receive it, and participate in work. <sup>15</sup>	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Department of Health
	Implement recommendations of the Joint Committee on employment affairs report on assistance for persons with disabilities transitioning to the workforce. <sup>16</sup>	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Implement the actions contained in Pathways to Work 2016-2020. <sup>17</sup>	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Train Intreo staff to support disabled jobseekers according to their needs. Feedback from persons with disabilities using Intreo services will be a determining factor in how effective the staff training has been. <sup>18</sup>	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	To achieve the ‘Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities’ employment rates targets, 1. Increase the Wage Subsidy Scheme for persons with a disability from 55% of the minimum wage to 70% of the minimum wage level, at a cost of €5 million. Commit to index it at that level over time as part of the Low Pay Commission process. 2. Reduce the minimum number of hours worked under the Wage Subsidy Scheme from 21 hours to 15 hours to reflect the needs of many persons benefitting from the scheme, at a cost of €2 million.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Establish protocols to fast-track reinstatement of Disability Allowance for people for whom a job does not work out. Promote such initiatives to incentivise employment.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
<b>Recreation</b>	Promote and implement the Charter for Disability Sport which was launched in November 2018 to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in local sports clubs.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
	Set a conditionality for receipt of public funding to make developments meet universal design standards in: • Cultural and heritage sites and events • Sporting facilities and venues • Tourist attractions • Irish Island sustainability developments.	Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

8 This needs to be coordinated with the Department of Education to ensure smooth delivery.

9 Budget 2019 allocated an additional 10 posts building on 21 posts from the previous two budgets.

10 All of the recommendations to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs should be coordinated with the Department of Health and the Department of Education.

11 Review of Supports Available to People With Disabilities Transitioning From Education or Training Into Employment

12 NDIS

13 <https://m.welfare.ie/en/pressoffice/Pages/pr190319.aspx>

14 Make Work Pay

15 National Disability Inclusion Strategy

16 Review of Supports Available to People With Disabilities Transitioning From Education or Training Into Employment

17 National Disability Inclusion Strategy

18 Make Work Pay

## Equal recognition in law and policy

<b>Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015</b>	€9m to implement the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015.	Department of Justice and Equality
<b>UN CRPD structures</b>	Adequately resource the recently appointed Disability Advisory Committee to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, IHREC.	Department of Justice and Equality IHREC
<b>Public Sector Duty</b>	Promote the implementation of the Public Sector Duty across all department and their relative public services. <sup>19</sup> (Section 42 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014) (Department of Justice and Equality)	Department of Justice and Equality IHREC All Departments
<b>Irish sign language</b>	Fund state agencies to implement their commitments under the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 by the legislative deadline of 2020.	All Departments
<b>Equality / disability proofing</b>	Consult people with disabilities and the disability sector to develop indicators for the Equality Budgeting initiative, or 'disability budget proofing'.	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Department of Justice
<b>International development, humanitarian aid and peace keeping</b>	International development and humanitarian aid and peace keeping missions must be inclusive of persons with disabilities and UN CRPD compliant. <sup>20</sup>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Irish Aid Department of Defence
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	The Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs are aimed to give effect to international human rights, including UN CRPD. SDGs initiatives must be UNCRPD compliant.	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment All Departments

<sup>19</sup> Section 42 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

<sup>20</sup> Department Statement of Strategy 2016-2019

## Conclusion

The Articles of UN CRPD are interconnected. In order to realise one right, the others must also be realised, and vice versa. The actions outlined here for each department similarly complements actions by other Departments. While one Department may take the lead on delivering an action under the NDIS and UN CRPD, collaboration from the outset of planning services across departments is required in order to be effective. The Department of the Taoiseach should lead, coordinate and ensure that there is effective progress across all Departments and Public Bodies. (Article 33 UNCRPD/ Disability Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2016). There is a need to provide a single focal point for monitoring the UNCRPD based within the Department of An Taoiseach. This would represent a commitment to persons with disabilities and ensure that the UNCRPD is given a cross-departmental focus.



\*The Oireachtas Disability Group, ODG, is a cross-party and non-party group of TDs, Senators and representatives from the disability sector. Chair: Senator John Dolan. Vice-Chair: Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin.

\* **The Oireachtas Disability Group, ODG** is made up of Members of the Oireachtas from all parties and none and Disability Organisations. The group was formed to collectively advance key issues with and for people with disabilities.

Representative disability organisation members are the:

- Disability Federation of Ireland,
- Inclusion Ireland,

and

- The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies providing supports to People with Intellectual Disability
- The Not for Profit Association.

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