

DOTCOM: The Disability Online Tool of the Commission

Ireland

D. Independent living

D1. Choice of living arrangements

There is no mandatory obligation for a person with a disability to live in a particular living arrangement. There is no absolute right to live in the community although a number of policies have made commitments to ensure persons with disabilities can live a full and independent life in the community. For example, Towards 2016- Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015 states, 'The parties to the agreement share a vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities have, to the greatest extent possible, the opportunity to live a full life with their families as part of the local community free from discrimination'. There is also the National Housing Strategy which aims to promote living in the community through targeted plans that address the specific needs of different groups of people with disabilities. In 2011 the HSE produced a Strategy on Community Inclusion which set out how best to move people with disabilities from congregated settings to the community using person centred approaches.

A person could legally be made live in an institution if they have become a Ward of Court, and where the committee formed to make decisions for them has decided this to be the best course of action for the individual in question. Additionally, a person could legally be detained to live in an institution if they have a mental disorder and meet the criteria for detention according to the Mental Health Act 2001.

Links

Towards 2016- Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015

http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/Towards2016PartnershipAgreement.pdf

Strategy on Community Inclusion

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/congregatedsettings/time-to-move-on-from-congregated-settings-%E2%80%93-a-strategy-for-community-inclusion.pdf>

National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities 2011-2016

<https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/migrated-files/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Housing/FileDownload%2C30737%2Cen.pdf>

Mental Health Act 2001

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2001/act/25/enacted/en/html>

D2. De-institutionalisation

The process of deinstitutionalisation of people from long-stay hospitals and large scale congregated settings has been underway since the 1970s.

There are three main strategies that inform deinstitutionalisation policies in Ireland, A Vision for Change which focuses on people who receive mental health services, Time to Move on

from Congregated Settings which pertains primarily to people with intellectual disabilities and The National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities in Ireland 2011-2016. The National Housing Strategy is designed to promote inclusion in the community and independent living for all people with disabilities in Ireland. The National Housing Strategy looks at the specific housing needs of different groups of people with disabilities in Ireland including people with mental health needs or psycho social disabilities. Through this needs assessment the National Housing Strategy sets out nine aims that are underpinned by a set list of actions.

Despite these strategies there are still people in Ireland who live in institutions or quasi-institutions. According to the Progress Report on the Time to Move on Strategy, in 2018 at least 2,370 people with disabilities are still living in congregated settings. The majority of people living in these congregated settings would be people with intellectual disability. It is important to note that the figures do not capture some people with disabilities living in residential centres for people with Autism and mental health facilities, as well as people with disabilities placed in nursing homes. The Independent Monitoring Group for A Vision for Change has consistently noted the progress towards independent living for mental health service users as being slow and inconsistent.

Links

National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities 2011-2016

<https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/migrated-files/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Housing/FileDownload%2C30737%2Cen.pdf>

Time to Move on from Congregated Settings: A Strategy for Community Inclusion

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/congregatedsettings/time-to-move-on-from-congregated-settings-%E2%80%93-a-strategy-for-community-inclusion.pdf>

Review of a Vision for Change

<https://health.gov.ie/blog/publications/evidence-review-to-inform-the-parameters-for-a-refresh-of-a-vision-for-change/>

Time to Move on from Congregated Settings, Annual Progress Report

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/congregatedsettings/time-to-move-on-annual-progress-report-2017.pdf>

D3. Quality of social services

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent authority responsible for setting standards and monitoring residential services for children, older people and people with disabilities in Ireland under the Health Act 2007. HIQA is responsible for the Social Services Inspectorate which registers and inspects residential settings. In 2013 HIQA published the National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities. The standards apply to all public, private and voluntary residential services and residential respite services including supported community living services. In December 2014 the national broadcaster aired an expose on an evening news program about extensive abuse of older people with intellectual disabilities in a residential service. This resulted in some discussion over the effectiveness of the HIQA inspections and subsequently HIQA in 2015 have found improved standard in the service. In February 2016 HIQA published a guidance document for services and health and social care professionals on supporting people's autonomy.

Links

Health Information and Quality Authority

<http://www.hiqa.ie/>

Health Act 2007

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2007/en/act/pub/0023/index.html>

National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities

<http://www.hiqa.ie/standards/social/people-with-disabilities>

'Casual nature of Aras Attracta abuse most disturbing', Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/casual-nature-of-%C3%A1ras-attracta-abuse-most-disturbing-1.2031919>

Supporting people's autonomy: a guidance document

<https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2017-01/Supporting-Peoples-Autonomy.pdf>

D4. Provision of assistive devices at home

Holders of a medical card or long-term illness card may be entitled to get certain assistive devices free of charge through the health system. A housing adaptation grant for people with a disability is available on a means tested basis where changes need to be made to a home to make it suitable for a person with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability, or a mental health difficulty, to live in. The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme is also available to people with disabilities needed to make mobility related adaptations in their home. A person cannot apply for both the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme and the Housing Adaptation Grant. The Central Remedial Clinic, the National Association for Deaf People, Irish Wheelchair Association, the National Council for the Blind of Ireland and Enable Ireland are non-governmental organizations that also provide free assistive technology. Enable Ireland also provides courses on assistive technology. The IWA also operates an initiative that assists and supports people with disabilities to get social housing. The Citizen's Information Board runs a website that provides information about assistive technology, daily living aids and mobility aids.

Links

Housing Adaptation Grant

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing_grants_and_schemes/housing_adaptation_grant_for_people_with_disability.html

IWA Assistive Technology

<http://www.wheelchairsolutions.ie/>

CRC Assistive Technology

<http://www.crc.ie/what-we-do/for-teenagers-and-adults/assistive-technology-and-specialised-seating/>

DeafHear

<https://www.deafhear.ie/DeafHear/servicesAssistiveTechnology.html>

Medical Card information

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/medical_cards_and_gp_visit_cards/medical_card.html

Long-Term Illness Card information

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/drugs_and_medicines/long_term_illness_scheme.html

Mobility Aids Grant Scheme

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing_grants_and_schemes/mobility_aids_grant_scheme.html

Enable Ireland Assistive Technology Courses

<http://www.enableireland.ie/products-technology/at-training/courses-seminars>

NCBI Assistive Technology

<https://www.ncbi.ie/types-of-assistive-technology/>

Assist Ireland

<http://www.assistireland.ie/eng/>

D5. Availability of personal assistance schemes

Personal assistance (PA) services are mainly funded through the Health Service. Non-Governmental organisations such as the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) also provide personal assistance programmes through county level offices. The IWA provides two different types of assisted living services, self-directed or supported. Under the self-directed package the person with the disability is in charge of the provision of services rather than a service manager. The Centres for Independent Living in Ireland (CILs) also provide person centred PA services. There are 22 CILs throughout Ireland which are run by persons with disabilities and promote person centred service approaches. In 2014 the Disability Federation of Ireland published a report on PA services in Ireland. The report highlighted the importance of PA services to fully enable people with disabilities to live in the community and recommended recognising the PA service on a statutory basis as well as providing a dedicated funding stream.

In 2018 the Department of Health published a report which makes recommendations on a personalised budgets model, this model will give people with disabilities more control in accessing health funded personal social services such as personal assistance. The vision behind personalised budgets is to enable a person with disabilities to have choice and control over individualised supports in all aspects of their lives, to live an independent life and to be an active participant in their community. Legislative changes will have to be considered by the Department of Health before implementation of this model.

Links

Personal Assistance through the HSE

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/>

IWA Personal Assistance

<http://www.iwa.ie/services/assisted-living-services>

CIL Personal Assistance Services

<https://dublincil.org/>

DFI PA Services Report

http://www.disability-federation.ie/userfiles/file/DFI001_Access_to_life_report_.pdf

Information on PA services for students

<http://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/fund-for-students-with-disabilities/>

Task Force on Personalised Budgets

<http://health.gov.ie/disabilities/task-force-on-personalised-budgets/>

Task Force Consultation Document

<http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Introducing-Personalised-Budgets-for-People-with-a-Disability-in-Ireland-Consultation-Paper.pdf>

D6. Income maintenance

Payments for persons with disabilities are paid by the Department of Social Protection. Depending on a person's situation, they may qualify either for the Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) based Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension which require fulfilment of PRSI contribution conditions or payments and a medical assessment or means-tested benefits such as the Disability Allowance or Blind Pension. Recipients of the Disability Allowance and Blind Pension, in addition to the means-test, must also satisfy the habitual residence condition. From March 2018 on, the maximum rate for the Blind Pension and Disability Allowance was EUR 198 weekly. The independent agency, the Social Welfare Appeals Office, can hear appeals of social welfare decisions.

In 2017 the Department of Social Protection published the 'Make Work Pay' report which sets out the government's plans to ensure that people with disabilities are incentivised to work and will not lose out on certain benefits or services immediately if they take up employment.

Links

General Information on Social Welfare Benefits regarding disability

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Pages/DisabilityIllness.aspx>

Disability Allowance

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/disability_and_illness/disability_allowance.html

Blind Pension

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/disability_and_illness/blind_persons_pension.html

Social Welfare Appeals Office

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/irish_social_welfare_system/social_welfare_appeals.html

'Make Work Pay' Report

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Make-Work-Pay-Report-2017.aspx>

D7. Additional costs

There is no specific cost of disability payment in Ireland, instead, a number of additional cash benefits are available to off-set the additional living costs of people with disabilities. The Free travel pass entitles the holder (and sometimes a companion) to freely travel on all state transport. This pass is slowly transitioning to the Public Services Card Free Travel. Carers Allowance is a means tested benefit paid to people who provide full-time care to someone over 16 years of age who requires 'full time care and attention'. The Domiciliary Care Allowance is available to a person caring for a child under the age of 16 who has 'severe disability, who requires ongoing care and attention' and they may also be entitled to an annual payment known as the Carers Support Grant. Disabled Persons Parking Cards can be used in public parking areas.

The Motorized Transport Grant, which was a means-tested Health Service Executive (HSE) payment for people in Ireland with disabilities who need to buy or adapt a car in order to earn or gain employment and the Mobility Allowance, a means tested monthly payment available to people who are unable to walk, were both closed to new applicants in 2013. The Motorised Transport Grant and Mobility Allowance have not been replaced since the cuts in 2013. Replacement of these supports would have a significant impact on the ability of many people with disabilities to travel to work or school. The Minister for Health is now tasked with producing a new transport support scheme and drafting the associated legislation for the scheme to assist those with a disability to meet their mobility costs. The Health (Transport Support) Bill is on the list of priority legislation for publication in the Spring/Summer session 2018. The Minister in response to a parliamentary question confirmed that work on the policy proposals for the new Scheme is at an advanced stage.

Links

Information on disability entitlements

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/disability_and_illness/benefits_to_people_who_are_sick_or_have_a_disability.html

Treatment Benefit Scheme

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/disability_and_illness/treatment_benefit_scheme.html

Free Travel Pass/ Public Services Card Free Travel

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/How-do-I-qualify-for-free-travel.aspx>

Domiciliary Care Allowance

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/disability_and_illness/domiciliary_care_allowance.html

Carers Allowance

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/carers/carers_allowance.html

Disabled Persons Parking Card

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel_and_recreation/traffic_and_parking/disabled_persons_parking_card.html

Government decision on Motorized Transport Grant and Mobility Allowance

<http://health.gov.ie/blog/press-release/government-decision-in-relation-to-a-travel-subsidy-for-people-with-a-disability/>

Dail debate, New Transport Support Scheme

<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2018-04-19/262/>

D8. Retirement income

People in receipt of the Disability Allowance and other disability related payments such as the Blind Pension move to a State Pension (Non-Contributory) at the age of 66. The State Pension (Non-Contributory) falls under the remit of the Department of Social Protection. Ireland also has a State Pension (Contributory) for those over the age of 66 who have enough social insurance contributions accrued. The Social Welfare's Appeal Office hears appeals related to the State Pension schemes.

The Pensions Authority is provided for under the Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 and regulates and supervises compliance with the requirements of the Pensions Act by trustees of occupational pension schemes, Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSA) providers, Registered Administrators (RAs) and employers in Ireland. The Pensions Authority has appointed Access Officers in accordance with section 26(2) of the Disability Act 2005, who are responsible for ensuring that the Pensions Authority's services are accessible to people with disabilities. A complaint can be made against the Pensions Authority if it does not comply with the provisions of Sections 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the Disability Act, 2005.

Links

State Pension (Non-Contributory)

http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/248_State-Pension-Non-Contributory.aspx

The Pensions Authority

<https://www.pensionsauthority.ie/en/>

The Pensions Authority - Access Officers

http://www.pensionsauthority.ie/en/About_Us/Access_Officers_under_the_Disability_Act_2005/

State Pension (Contributory)

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/older_and_retired_people/state_pension_contributory.html