

## PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2021

The National Disability Services Association (NDSA) represents the network of some of the largest national providers of disability services in the community across Ireland. We work across the widest range of community services - education, training, personal assistance, community day care, employment, residential, respite and rehabilitation, and work with and for people across all ages, abilities and backgrounds. We have a long and evolving legacy as leaders in the disability sector.

There is an ongoing crisis in the disability sector which is fundamentally one of funding and has led to what the HSE itself calls an unsustainable financial situation for the sector. But it is also a crisis which arises from the absence of an agreement, policy or strategy defining the role of the sector in the delivery of an important part of social care which the state is responsible for.

In Budget 2022, the NDSA are calling on the Government to commit to the following measures:

- Provision of funding for adequate clinical posts to support the implementation of Progressing Disability Services in order to reduce waiting lists - particularly for children transitioning from one care/education setting to another.
- Incorporate the findings of unmet need across all areas as identified in the *Disability Capacity Review to 2032 – A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity to 2032* in Budget 22
- Increase Disability Payments by €20 as an interim recognition of extra costs incurred by people with disabilities pending the publication of the Cost of Disability report
- Reform of the disability sector with meaningful consultation with stakeholders to enable Section 39 organisations to be adequately and sustainably funded in order to ensure continuity of vital disability service provision and pay parity for Section 39 workers.
- Section 39 of the Health Act of 2004 is no longer fit for purpose, as much of the services provided through Section 39 funding, especially those provided by national organisations, are not auxiliary to state services as such, but rather they are de facto state services. This is demonstrably the case where in some CHO areas the HSE provides a particular service, while in other CHOs the HSE may commission a Section 39 organisation to provide the same service.
- While these services may be equivalent in terms of service scope and provision, they are not equivalent in terms of funding and service sustainability. NDSA recommends that the 2004 Health Act be amended to ensure that essential services provided on behalf of the state by Section 39 organisations are funded on an equivalent basis to those provided directly by the HSE or Section 38 organisations. NDSA requests that the Government take on this challenge.
- Implementation of the HSE Corporate Plan 21-24 which sates the need for multi-annual investment and reform of the disability sector as one of their 6 key objectives.



Rosemary Keogh, Chairperson

28<sup>th</sup> September 2021.