

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

CARMICHAEL HOUSE
DUBLIN 7

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2014

DEVELOPED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING TEAM

Development Support provided by
Nuala Crowe Taft, Development Options

To All Members,

This plan builds on the past and current aspirations and achievements of the members of the Center for Independent Living, Carmichael House.

We would like to thank Directors and Staff, current and past, for the inspiration they gave during the planning period. We also thank the members that contributed both their knowledge and experience of Independent Living, to inform the vision of a rights based model for Independent Living, which now underpins the goals set out in this plan.

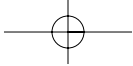
This plan recognises the need for a fresh approach to co-operation and collaboration with the wider Independent Living movement, both nationally and internationally, in order to ensure that we are truly prioritising issues that are of importance to all leaders. In order to achieve this, one of the proposed actions in this plan is the development of a shared policy subgroup (CIL Ireland) for the Center for Independent Living, Carmichael House and the CIL Network. This group will be chaired by the Center for Independent Living, Carmichael House and will include elected representatives on behalf of all CILs. One of the outcomes of this action will be an improved voice for CILs around the table at national policy decision level.

It is our pleasure to serve you as elected Directors of the Center for Independent Living, and we look forward to working with you and representing your voice during the implementation of this plan.

Slán,

Michael McCabe (Chair) and Tom King (Vice-Chair).





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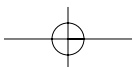
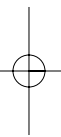
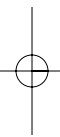
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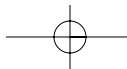
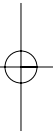
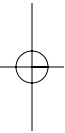
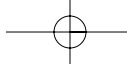
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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

What do we mean by 'Independent Living'?

Independent Living is the right of all persons regardless of age, type or extent of disability to live in the community, as opposed to living in an institution; to have the same range or choices as everybody else in housing, transportation, education and employment; to participate in the social, economic and political life of their communities; to have a family; to live as responsible respected members of their communities with all the duties and privileges that this entails, and to unfold their potential (Adolf Ratzka).

'It is about creating choices and identifying solutions. It is a way of life that grows as you grow and develops as you develop' (Adolf Ratzka)¹

The above for many people with significant disabilities can best be achieved by the employment of personal assistants.

What is a Leader?

A person with a disability who employs personal assistants is commonly known in Ireland as a 'leader'. A Leader does not have to be able to 'do everything for themselves' to achieve Independent Living. A leader takes full responsibility for the instructions he/she gives to their personal assistant, and for the actions and consequences that follow from these. This includes the taking of any medication or drugs by the leader.

What is a Personal Assistant?

A personal assistant, during the time that he/she is on duty only takes instruction from the leader. A personal assistant can be legally employed by a service provider, but does not take any instruction from any of the service provider's personnel while on duty with the leader. A personal assistant does not report a leader's activities to service provider personnel.

¹ Adolf Ratzka, Director of the Independent Living Institute, Sweden. www.independentliving.org/ratzka.html

Nor does a personal assistant write in any ledger or notebook, information about their leader to be viewed by others unless instructed by the leader to do so.

Personal assistants do not work in day centres or nursing homes or any other similar establishment where they are responsible only to management of the said establishment.

We believe the above distinguishes a personal assistant from a carer or care assistant. We recognise and respect carers and the need for them in certain circumstances, but the role of carer is very different to the role of personal assistant, and therefore carers should not be called personal assistants.

The right to live independently and to be included in the community is an internationally recognised Human Right (specifically referred to in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007, Article 19).

About 'The Center for Independent Living'

We at the Center for Independent Living, are a grassroots organisation, established in 1992, for and by disabled people. Our purpose is to

empower and enable people with disabilities to achieve Independent Living as a human right. Our organisation was the first Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Ireland.

Our organisation has successfully helped many disabled people to live independently in the community over the past 16 years. We have also supported the development of 23 of the 26 other Centres for Independent Living around Ireland and also the development of a CIL network. The CIL network brings representatives from all the CILs together, so that we can work together and support each other, as we all work towards ensuring that all people with significant disabilities in Ireland can have the choices and supports necessary, to enable them to live independently in the community.

In more recent years, we have worked hard to support the development of 'leader forums' that are independent of service providers. When leaders come together they can offer each other support and information, and discuss any problems that may exist with their services.

We also have a significant track record in

piloting innovative projects to promote and support Independent Living. For example: Our first action research project was the pilot Personal Assistant service in Ireland, through the 'INCARE' programme. The success of this programme was to empower people with significant disabilities to have independent lives with all the choices and responsibilities that this entails.

We supported many individuals to leave institutional care and to obtain supports to live independently, specifically through our project 'Operation Get Out' which began in 1994.

We set up Vantastic, an accessible door-to-door transport system, which has gone from strength to strength since, working to a viable business model.

We provided development support to ENIL, the European Network for Independent Living.

We also initiated a variety of capacity building training programmes in co-operation with other organisations, for example working with local community development organisations, statutory service providers and academic institutions.

Many projects, once we have successfully piloted them, are then handed over by us to the organisations and individuals best suited to deliver them. This ensures that we can avoid getting overly burdened with day to day service provision, and can focus on monitoring services and social policy developments related to Independent Living.

We value working in partnership with others to progress our goals. As people with disabilities who live independently, we can share the lived experience of Independent Living with service providers, including statutory (government) organisations, and also voluntary and community groups who deliver services to people with disabilities. Our experience can help them to ensure that they plan services that are person-centred. Their experience can help us, and other members of the CIL network, to find ways of accessing mainstream and community supports to improve the quality of life and the participation of leaders in society.

We set up a National Advisory Group (NAG) in 2004 to improve the effectiveness of partnership working between the CIL movement and statutory agencies. There are



representatives from the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Citizen Information Board (CIB) and the Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) on the National Advisory Group, along with representatives from Disability Federation Ireland (DFI) and People with Disabilities Ireland (PwDi) the former Forum for People with Disabilities, the National Leaders' Forum (NLF) and five elected members from CILs in the East, South and North West of Ireland.

We are proud to be part of the wider countrywide and worldwide CIL movement, whose main aim is to empower and enable people with disabilities to achieve Independent Living and active participation as equal citizens in society, with all the choices, control and responsibilities that that implies.

History of Independent Living

The concept of Independent Living originated in 1973 in the United States, where three disabled students were empowered to attend university at Berkeley, California, with the support of personal assistants (PAs) provided

by the university (Evans, 1993). After graduation the disabled students established the world's first Center for Independent Living (CIL), to support other disabled people in taking control of their lives and services. Within ten years there was 200 CILs in America and the concept began to spread overseas. As the concept grows, so does our understanding of the various elements that enable a person to live independently, including societal attitudes and policies.

The Philosophy of the Independent Living movement is based on four key assumptions (Morris 1993, p21)²:

- All human life is of value
- Anyone, whatever their impairment, is capable of exercising choices
- People who are disabled by society's reaction to physical, intellectual and sensory impairment and to emotional distress have the right to assert control over their lives.
- Disabled people have the right to participate fully in society.

² Morris. J (1993), *Independent Lives: Community care and disabled people*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

The IL Philosophy promotes a 'social model' of disability, recognising that people with disabilities are prevented from achieving their full potential by society's attitudes and/or environmental restrictions in accessing public transport, entertainment, public places, education and employment etc. Prior to the IL movement, the predominant understanding of disability came from a 'medical model' whereby people with disabilities were viewed purely as a patient to be rehabilitated or at least helped adapt in order to fit in with society. The medical model resulted in the majority of disabled people living passive, dependent lives, quite often in institutionalised settings.

The 'social model' recognises that the real experts when it comes to designing services are those with most experience of the issues – people with disabilities themselves. The majority of the members of The Center for Independent Living and the wider CIL network are individuals with significant disabilities, and therefore they are best placed to inform the development of appropriate support and service structures that will meet their needs.

A Changing Environment

Mainstreaming: In 1992 the government committed to a policy of mainstreaming of services to people with disabilities. Mainstreaming requires that service providers ensure that they plan their services with the understanding the people with disabilities are part of the public that they serve. Therefore services must be accessible to people with disabilities. Many public service providers have a lot of work to do to make their services accessible, such as improving their buildings, training staff, and providing information in various accessible formats. The mainstreaming process is improving the way that service providers plan. In the past, services were considered sufficient if they met the needs of the majority of the community. Now service providers are aware that they must consider the needs of all the community. Mainstreaming is a process that will take time, and requires considerable commitment from the government, working in partnership with the community.

Equality Legislation: In addition, there is now legislation that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in regard to access to

public buildings, amenities and employment. This legislation requires that 'reasonable accommodation' is made to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

The National Disability Strategy: A National Disability Strategy to tackle discrimination against disabled people was launched in 2004 and includes legislative changes, restructured services and citizen information supports; all of which have contributed to improvements in cross departmental planning, and this is gradually contributing to a more inclusive society.

The **Education for People with Special Needs Act** (2004) has also brought positive inclusive educational policies. [The budget of October 2008 announced cutbacks on education spending and it is likely that these spending cut-backs will delay the implementation of this Act.]

Internationally, developments have included the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (2007), which recognises a disabled persons right to live independently in the community (Article 19) and the right to control their own financial

affairs (Article 12, Para 5). Ireland has signed this convention, indicating acceptance and support for the rights set out under the convention, and confirming that Ireland intends to ratify this convention in the future (hopefully in the near future).

The Independent Living movement has played a very significant role in influencing International and Legislative changes. The movement needs to be as vigilant now as ever, in order to ensure that disabled people are included in the development process, and to support the ongoing development of quality person centred services.

"Time to Plan" – The plan in context of the current economic environment

We, in the Center for Independent Living, have been proactively networking and co-operating with the many disability organisations and statutory and voluntary support agencies who are working hard to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected.

Nevertheless, individuals who are living independently with Personal Assistance in Ireland, and some who aspire to, are acutely

(and sometimes painfully) aware that there is a significant gap between the services that they know they need, and the services that are available to them.

During the last decade when Ireland was experiencing an economic boom, it seemed that the more challenging factors delaying the full implementation of rights for people with disabilities, were structural and organisational. We therefore put our energies into supporting collaboration and co-operation among disability and statutory service providers and encouraged them to listen to the grassroots movements and ensure that they were truly meeting the needs of the people they claim to serve.

We have taken this path, because we have been quietly aware that internationally it has been demonstrated that systems that give leaders control over their personal assistant services and budgets, can cost much less than the maintenance of large direct service provider organisations. We trusted that if statutory and voluntary service providers were working together that they too would come to

recognise this truth and this would lead to the necessary structural changes required.

As service users we have often been openly critical of the imbalance of power that has developed in Ireland, due to the level of control that large service providers have over resources. We acknowledged that the transition from a 'direct services' model to 'direct payment' model would require short term investment, before ultimately proving to be both a more equitable and economical system for the state³.

Now we are aware that the boom period has ended and that we need to be absolutely clear regarding the budget and service models that will give us rights based freedom to control our own lives. As a rights based organisation that embraces the social model, we also have an expectation that the current level of funding and support will be increased in line with inflation, in order to address the additional challenges the downturn will bring for people with disabilities. Whilst collaboration and co-operation is essential, we must be more proactive regarding showing the way, and

³ Direct payments are cash paid to individuals to enable them to employ, either directly or indirectly, individuals to assist them with their everyday tasks.

sharing our learning – as leaders, in every sense of the word.

We must continue to ensure that disabled people are empowered to contribute to the development of services to meet their personal assistance and support needs; - developments that respect the individual's right to choice and control.

CIL Carmichael House has a very unique role in Ireland. As the first Center for Independent Living in Ireland, we have always ensured that our research and projects have the potential to improve the lives of all leaders in Ireland. Directly and then through Independent Living Community Services, we contributed to the development of CILs nationwide. More recently we supported a collective voice for Centres for Independent Living (CILs) nationwide to network through the establishment of a Network Council. In October 2008, the Council representatives (2 from each CIL) made a unanimous call for CIL Carmichael House to be the conduit through which all Irish CILs can co-ordinate lobbying, - ensuring a cohesive and co-ordinated collective voice. This is needed now more than ever, given the period of recession that Ireland is

facing.

CIL Carmichael House has therefore developed this plan with a renewed energy, given the challenges of the economic climate and also to meet the call from the Council Network to provide a serving leadership, representing the needs of all CILs and CIL members when lobbying for change.

In addition to lobbying for all CILs, CIL Carmichael House Board and members will also continue to develop projects that enable leaders to pilot new ways of living independently, and we will continue to share the learning from these projects with the wider network and with policy makers. This ongoing work will reflect our belief that Independent Living is about creating choices and identifying solutions, that this process is continuous – and it will always be a learning process.

SECTION TWO: THE PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

In December 2007, we placed an advert in the Community Exchange Newsletter, inviting suitably qualified individuals and/or organisations to tender for the development of our Strategic Plan for 2009-2014. The advert stated that we had reached the conclusion of our current strategic cycle, and that the development of a new plan offered the organisation an opportunity to review our 'raison d'être' and to define the organisation's identity in order to effect social and policy change, with a view to realising our ultimate objective of making the choice of Independent Living a reality for disabled people in Ireland.

We engaged in a 'scoping exercise', prior to inviting tender, and this helped us to set out the objectives for this strategic planning process.

These objectives included:

- Articulating the vision of the Center for Independent Living, Carmichael House

- Identifying the organisations core purpose and function
- Clarifying its organisational structure
- Identifying possible funding strategies
- Identifying stakeholders and strategic partners
- Setting out a clearly defined two year operational plan

The tender invitation requested that the approach taken during the process be one that empowers its stakeholders. In particular it was requested that the process be one that engages the Board of Directors, management, sub-committees and staff of the Center for Independent Living.

Following assessment of tenders received, Development Options was commissioned to manage the Strategic Plan Development, working with and under the direction of a Strategic Planning Steering Team appointed by our Board of Directors. The Steering Team had

two Board Members, Siobhan Long and Don Bailey, and two staff members, David Egan and Susan O'Brien. Whilst Siobhan Long and Don Bailey's term of office as Directors came to an end during the planning period, they agreed, at the request of the Board, to continue as members of the Steering Team until the first draft of the Strategic Plan was complete. The final planning period was then steered by the Directors of the Board.

Methodology

The Steering Team and Development Options developed an approach and methodology designed to maximise stakeholder involvement. Interim reports and ongoing scheduled communication between Development Options and the Strategic Planning team ensured that the methodology was a flexible one, allowing modification as indicated by the consultation findings.

The Consultation and Development Phase included:

- Twelve one-to-one interviews with Board Members, Staff and Subgroup Members and a small number of external stakeholders

- Four facilitated Board and Steering Team planning days
- Desk research and ongoing consultation and discussion to review the outcomes from previous strategies and to evaluate current organisational structures with the Board and Staff
- Presentation of draft plan (September 2008) to the Board
- A facilitated meeting in Ennis, Co. Clare to review and modify the draft plan with the new Chair and Vice-Chair of CIL CMH, an Officer of the Council Network and a Regional CIL Manager (October 2008)
- Review of draft plan with the Board (November 2008)
- Circulation of draft plan to members for approval (December 2008)
- Further consultation with external partners will take place during the first quarter of 2009 to inform the implementation of new structures set out in this plan.

SECTION THREE: GOVERNANCE AND ETHOS

The Center for Independent Living is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee and with charitable status. The registered name of the company is 'Center for Independent Ltd'. The American spelling of 'center' is used to reflect the origins of the IL movement, in Berkeley California. In documentation, the name of the organisation is sometimes followed by 'CMH', an abbreviation for 'Carmichael House' which is the location of the organisation's offices.

The Board of Directors discharge their legal responsibilities in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Board also sets the goals and devises policies for CIL in consultation with its members. At the time of preparing this plan, there are 43 registered members, and the Board intend to recommend at the next EGM that membership is extended to leaders nationwide, including members of other CILs.

The main object of the company in the Memorandum and Articles of Association is stated as follows:

'the empowerment of severely physically disabled persons through promoting the development of an appropriate range of personal assistant services aimed at removing attitudinal and material restrictions that unnecessarily limit the lives of such persons'

Further objectives included:

'To promote and develop the concept of Independent Living for severely physically disabled persons, and in particular, design and implement programmes aimed at:

Providing a range of appropriate personal assistance services and

Educating and Training both carers and disabled people in the acquisition of positive attitudes and skills pertinent to the realisation of efficient services.

To carry on any other trade or business, which can, in the opinion of the Board of Directors be advantageously carried on by the company in connection with or ancillary

to any of the above businesses or the general interest of the company, or further to any of its objects.

The Vision, Mission and Goals set out in this plan are consistent with the original objectives set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Board are however keen to review and update the Memorandum and Articles prior to implementing this plan, in particular to reflect the changing environment and to ensure that the organisation is open to also supporting independence for individuals with intellectual impairments and mental health challenges.

The Board of Directors commit to meeting a minimum of five times each year, and on average meet at least ten times per year. The board is supported by sub-committees. Each sub-committee includes a member of the Board, who acts in an advisory capacity to the group. Current operational plans set out new structures for board members advising or chairing subcommittees, including reporting structures between subgroup and board. The Chairperson of the Board may attend all or any subcommittee meetings. The most senior staff

member, usually the Development Manager, attends board and subgroup meetings at the Board's request.

The governance of CIL CMH combines voluntary ethos and partnership values. In addition the Board ensures that the organisation adheres to national professional standards and is compliant with all relevant company, employer and equality legislation.

Organisational policies are approved at board level. A management team is responsible to the Board of Directors. This team, working closely with the Board, ensures that all funds are effectively managed and that the use of funds reflects effective value for money. CIL CMH publishes an Annual Report and files certified audited annual accounts with the Companies Office.

SECTION FOUR: OUR STRATEGIC VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

VISION

CIL CMH looks forward to the full development of rights based choices to enable Independent Living for all people with disabilities.

MISSION

CIL's purpose is to empower and enable people with disabilities to achieve Independent Living as a Human Right. We will strive to ensure that people with disabilities can actively participate as equal citizens, with all the Choices, Control and Responsibility that this implies through action research, support and advocacy.

CORE VALUES

Our core values are underpinned by the Philosophy of Independent Living and all activities are aimed towards promoting:

Independence, Options, Rights And Empowerment

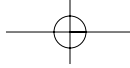
We value Equality, Inclusion, Solidarity and our commitment to critically reflecting on and learning from our experiences as disabled

people, and as a group, and sharing those experiences with others to inform the development of an inclusive society.

Introduction to Strategic Goals:

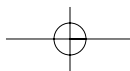
In the next section, the strategic goals are presented. Each goal is followed by prioritised objectives directly related to that goal. Each objective is followed by a list of the results the Board of Directors expect to see, once those objectives are achieved.

There are five themed goals. Goal one is about Research and Development. Goal two is about Education and Training. Goal three refers to the cross cutting theme of Communication and goal four is about Advocacy and Policy. The final goal refers to Organisational Development and Human Resources.



REELING IN THE YEARS – BECOMING CONSUMERS

As more and more people with a disability are now beginning to move out of the passive dependency culture, take control of their own lives and participate actively in social and economic life, the demand for accessible housing, personal assistance, accessible transport, mobility, education, training and employment is ever increasing. Simultaneously, in the area of social rights, legislation and service provision, people with disabilities are demanding change. We want to have the same rights and obligations which citizenship entails and equality of opportunity in all aspects of life. Furthermore, we want to be involved in all the decisions that affect our lives (quote from Partnership for Change, CIL Strategic Plan 1995 –2000).



GOAL ONE: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Context

Research is any original and systematic investigation undertaken in order to increase knowledge and understanding and to establish facts and principles. In the context of the Independent Living movement, research can be 'desk work' – involving the collation of facts and sourcing information about progress by the members of the movement nationally and internationally. It can also be about 'qualitative' research work, where we record the experiences and support needs of disabled people (such as our 'Extending the Boundaries' Case Study in 2006)⁴, and identify gaps in services, or engage in quantitative work, for example collecting statistical information to support our goals.

In the case of the Center for Independent Living, 'Action Research' has been the most effective research work we have engaged in. By 'Action Research', we mean that a group of

disabled people have engaged in an activity on a pilot or trial basis. Examples of 'Action Research' include piloting the first Personal Assistant Service in Ireland and founding Vantastic, an accessible door-to-door transport service. We have also recently piloted a Video-Networking system through the 'Anseo' project, a project aimed at enabling people with significant disabilities, who use Personal Assistant Services (P.A.s) to communicate and potentially mentor one another and/or facilitate access to expert advice online.

Action Research has been a successful strategy for The Center for Independent Living. The projects we have engaged in have informed the development of services. At the same time by engaging in action research, the project participants had opportunities to develop skills, personal and technical, which improved their individual employment and participation prospects. Therefore Action Research will continue to play a key role for the organisation

⁴ Extending the Boundaries – 'Our experience of Independent Living' (2006), researched by Rahaleen Ltd, with Sarah Dixon and Cathy McGrath.

going forward.

Development, in the context of the Center for Independent Living refers to adapting multiple strategies to ensure that the principles of Independent Living, - Choices, Rights, Empowerment and Control, - are intrinsically rooted in the thinking, policies, strategies and actions of all stakeholders (See NAG Strategic Plan – Mission Statement)⁵

In addition, to specific action research projects, we have engaged in wider development work, using community development principles to promote The Philosophy of Independent Living. The ongoing objectives in relation to wider development work are addressed under this and several other goals, including goals on communication, policy and advocacy, and research and training.

Independent Living does not mean that we do not need anybody, - that we want to live in isolation. "Independent Living" means that we want the same control and the same choices in every-day life that our non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbours and friends take for granted. We want to grow up in our families, go to the neighbourhood school, use the same bus, work in jobs that are in line with our education and abilities. Most importantly, just like everybody else, we need to be in charge of our own lives, think and speak for ourselves (quote from the European Network of Independent Living website).

⁵ Strategic Plan of the National Advisory Group, 2005-2008, Center for Independent Living. www.dublincil.org.

GOAL ONE:

To engage in Research and Development Activities that contribute to the development of a national understanding of the right of all persons with disability to live in the community. This includes having choices equal to others, and opportunities to contribute to the development of appropriate measures to facilitate their full inclusion and participation in the community. (As per Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

Objective 1.1: We will explore and develop new ways of supporting independence (working co-operatively and in partnership when appropriate).

Results:

- Action research goals are prioritised and progressed using a partnership approach, and we secure funding for research supporting our goals by working in partnership with the CIL network, Leader Forums, NAG, National Disability Organisations and other national and international partners.

- Specific Action Research goals are achieved, including a brokerage service for leaders to access services associated with Independent Living and the availability of quality leader and personal assistance training programmes.
- Campaigns are initiated and facilitated on specific issues as identified through partnership working, in order to promote a wider awareness of the right to Independent Living and the Independent Living Philosophy. (Actions are co-ordinated through our Policy and Advocacy subgroup).
- Funding streams are identified and funding is sourced for research projects, and projects are implemented in the most advantageous way, including in some instances, by other CILs, recognising common goals and maximising the use of experience, resources and interests of network members.

Objective 1.2: We will work with the CIL Network to identify, document, share and promote good practice in both policy and services.



Results:

- The CIL Council and Network members are clear on the purpose of each organisation in the network, understand and support the different types of organisations in our network, and have considered benchmarks and criteria to assist with clarifying the roles and functions of Centres for Independent Living and/or User-Led Organisations in Ireland.
- There is a database of shareable 'good practice' guidelines for CILs available or signposted through our website. Good Practice examples are sourced where possible through CILs and the CIL network.
- Working with network members, we directly engage in activities that promote and support the right of each individual to dignity and respect. (For example by contributing to the development of a confidential service for disabled people to report abuse).

Objective 1.3: We will contribute, as service users, to the development and improvement of existing services.

Results:

- Direct Payment systems are piloted (through the National Leaders' Forum), the outcomes are evaluated in terms of improved quality of life for leaders, and the findings are shared with National Policy makers.
- Quality national information systems are developed on Independent Living services, in particular information that contributes to improved planning. We continue to support the ongoing development of information systems by working closely with relevant statutory partners, including the Health Research Board, the National Disability Authority, and the Central Statistics Office, and sharing our views on the types of information that may prove most useful for forward planning.
- Community development principles are adapted to support the ongoing development of local and regional leader peer groups, to build the capacity of leaders to participate in planning processes, and to promote integration and participation in the community through an I.L. perspective. This work is conducted in co-operation with (and sometimes led by)

the CIL Network, existing leader forums, DESSA, NAG and other Community Development partners, as appropriate.

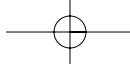
- The National Leader Forum is supported, developed and resourced to give a voice to leaders on service and policy issues that they identify for progression.
- We proactively develop links with key personnel in the Equality Authority, National Disability Authority, the Health Research Board, and other government agencies, including through the membership of the NAG, in order to ensure that leaders are recognised as the primary stakeholders in the development of services and policy relating to Independent Living.
- The recommendations of the Training Needs Analysis conducted in 2007 are progressed, and we continue to promote the ongoing development of strategies to address the training needs of Leaders and Personal Assistants (This action is progressed through our Education and Training subgroup).

Objective 1.4: We will continue to collaborate on an international basis to reflect best international practice.

Results:

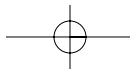
- Designated members of CIL CMH (including one Board Member) keep abreast of International linkages, and maintain quality communication flow between our international partners and the Board of CIL CMH, relevant subgroups, the CIL Network and other stakeholders.
- Leaders are empowered and resourced to provide professional representation for the Center for Independent Living and the CIL Network at international events, including the European Network for Independent Living (ENIL) conferences.
- We exploit opportunities to engage in international collaborative research appropriate to the goals of our organisation.

“Because I have personal assistants, I am no more dependent on my partner than if I was able-bodied. For the CIL movement the future won't be easy, especially when faced with the contracting Irish economy. In its future direction the CIL movement will have to become more politically active”. – Founding Member of CIL CMH



REELING IN THE YEARS – STAYING TRUE TO OUR LONG TERM GOALS

“CIL programmes are never “something for nothing”, but rather an opportunity to be part of a “learning curve”. Nor are they a “means to an end”. CIL programmes are designed to act as a springboard for disabled people to take control of – and create – their own future roles in Irish society”
(quote from Partnership for Change, CIL Strategic Plan 1995 –2000).



GOAL TWO: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Context

The Independent Living Philosophy is relatively new to Ireland and our board and our members and partners in the CIL Network are aware that The Philosophy of Independent Living is not always clearly understood by those providing our services. We are aware of this because of the negative impact that some services can have on our quality of life, in particular when services are structured with a high focus on our care rather than on our independence.

To uphold The Philosophy of Independent Living, the organisation has engaged in the development of education and training programmes on Independent Living, including e-learning modules, modules for inclusion in accredited equality training programmes and mainstream social care training programmes, along with specific Personal Assistant Training courses.

To further this work, we commissioned a major Training Needs Analysis in 2007, to assess the current needs of Leaders and Personal Assistants in Ireland (Open Training College 2007)⁶. The recommendations from this research shall assist us to prioritise actions in relation to Education and Training in our operational plan.

The Center for Independent Living also has an historic role in supporting the wider CIL Network, and has assisted with identifying the training needs of directors, staff and members of CILs around the country. We aim to progress this work through the NAG, and by developing mechanisms to support the sharing of best practice among CILs.

From 2006 to 2008, activities associated with Education and Training were progressed by a sub-committee known as 'The Study Board'. In August 2008, the Study Board members recommended to the Board that the Study

⁶ National Training Needs Analysis , for The Center for Independent Living, Carmichael House and The Open Training College, (November 2007), prepared by Chanel Content Ltd.

Board be renamed as 'The Education and Training Sub-Committee' from 2009 onwards. This recommendation was based on feedback from members during the Strategic Planning process.

GOAL TWO:

To identify and address by working in partnership, with appropriate stakeholders, the educational and training needs of leaders, personal assistants and the wider community. To do this in order to enhance awareness and understanding of the Independent Living Philosophy, and ultimately improve the quality of life and independence experienced by leaders.

Objective 2.1: To evaluate and progress the work and status of 'The Study Board'.

Results:

- An active membership policy is developed for the Education and Training sub-committee, and continuity is assured through co-option/nomination of new members as required, maintaining and building the capacity of the E&T

sub-committee to implement the work plan.

- A review and evaluation of the programme of work commenced by the 'Study Board' in 2005 – 2008 has taken place and the new E&T sub-committee ensure the ongoing progression/development of projects commenced by the Study Board.
- The recommendations from the Training Needs Analysis (conducted in 2007) inform the operational planning by the E&T sub-committee for the period 2009 – 2011.
- The E&T sub-committee, working in partnership with other CILs, identify a market niche, in relation to Independent Living training (with a view to maintaining quality standards and also generating income).

Objective 2.2: To review current relevant academic and statutory commissioned research, promoting awareness and developing feedback to the appropriate research body or parent department to promote best practice and inclusion.

Results:

- The organisation has an up-to-date

catalogued database of all current research and service development that is taking place in the country, relating to Independent Living.

- The organisation has a structured communication and feed-in mechanism with research bodies and parent departments, and our input to them is informed and developed with the CIL Network, NAG, Leader Forums and appropriate partners.

Objective 2.3: To identify areas where there is a need for and absence of current research and to identify appropriate research bodies to carry out this research, either internally or externally.

Results:

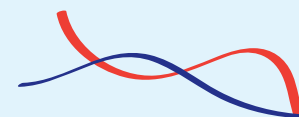
- We highlight gaps in current research and plan, commission and/or promote research; - directly, through the CIL network, and externally through appropriate bodies to address these.

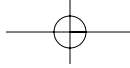
Objective 2.4: To review the current Terms of Reference of the Education and Training subcommittee (formerly the Study Board).

To expand these to instigate structures and methods for dissemination of information (internally and externally) and to develop protocols for transferring projects to appropriate agencies for progression as and when timely, to maximise long term impact and benefit.

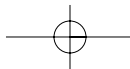
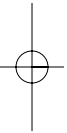
Results:

- The role and scope of the Education and Training (E&T) sub-committee is clear and consistent with the goals of CIL CMH. Members of the committee are recruited from organisations that have an interest in education and training, support the aims of CIL CMH, and/or have some common goals.
- CIL CMH and the E&T sub-committee's communication structures are conducive to improved information sharing and this improves the effectiveness of the committee members when working in partnership to progress common goals.
- Protocols are in place to empower the Board and the Education and Training sub-committee when making decisions regarding the long term ownership and management of projects/programmes.





The Independent Living movement must be a cross disability movement addressing the needs of all disabled persons. In order for this to occur we must rid ourselves of any prejudice we have towards persons with disabilities other than our own and encourage the involvement of disabled women and other under represented groups. Disabled children should be enabled by their families and society in general to become independent adults. (A principle we share with the European Network on Independent Living).



GOAL THREE: COMMUNICATION

Context

The Independent Living movement is a civil rights movement, endeavouring to bring long term change in society, and therefore by its very nature, must work in partnership with the wider community to progress and instil an understanding of The Philosophy of Independent Living.

We have a high profile as an organisation and are responsible for representing the views of stakeholders on several fronts, - e.g. with individual leaders, autonomous CILs, international partners, the media, statutory agencies and community and voluntary bodies. How effectively we communicate our mission and goals will impact on our success in achieving them.

In addition, information systems and Information technology is developing at a rapid pace. Access to technology has enhanced the independence of many of our members. It is important that as an organisation we keep

abreast of developments and share information in the most effective ways, ensuring information is accessible to and from members and other stakeholders who use assistive technology to communicate.

When The Center for Independent Living was founded, we saw the development of autonomous local Centres for Independent Living (CILs) as the most practical way of achieving our mission, and of ensuring that leaders could access personal assistant and other support services in order to become independent.

This strategy was effective at a time when the concept of Independent Living was unfamiliar to existing statutory and voluntary service providers. When more CILs were established throughout the country, our communication strategy focused on the development of a National CIL Network, a forum which creates a space for CILs to come together in a structured way, a National Leader Forum, a forum for leaders to discuss issues around accessing and

managing services associated with Independent Living, and a National Advisory Group, an interagency group to support and the work of CILs. We continue to provide financial, administrative and development support to the Network, the Network Council (elected representatives of the network), the National Leader Forum and the National Advisory Group (NAG).

We now plan to continue focusing on how best to further develop cohesiveness in the Independent Living movement in Ireland, to ensure that leaders have a stronger collective voice when articulating their current urgent needs. The organisation wishes to do this concurrently with promoting community development approaches to maximise the participation and visibility of disabled people at community decision making level.

In addition, the Center for Independent Living is one of the principal Irish links to the wider community in Europe, especially with the European Network of Independent Living (ENIL) and with countries outside of Europe. We have a long tradition of activism outside Ireland, including organising and participating in bi-annual 'Freedom Drives' to Strasbourg, to

deliver ENIL's key demands to the European parliament, supporting countries in Eastern Europe to develop Centres for Independent Living, and also partnering several European countries in research projects

The relationships and links we have built with international organisations have provided invaluable opportunities to share information, experiences, insights and opportunities to promote the Independent Living Philosophy. We intend to maintain and develop such linkages with positive action measures in the coming years, to further the prospect of realising the right to Independent Living in Ireland.

To do this we commit to communicating in a timely and effective manner, incorporating the values of the organisation and respecting the rights of the members and wider network of stakeholders that the organisation represents.

GOAL THREE:

To adopt a communication strategy that will enhance the organisation's reputation, raise its profile, and improve the quality of information

flow for the I.L. network, with statutory and voluntary service providers in Ireland and with the international I.L. community.

Objectives: 3.1. We will provide a high level of secretariat and resource support to the Network Council, working to the Council Officers, enabling shared learning and ongoing development of CILs throughout the country.

Results:

- A plan is in place that has been developed with the Council Officers and approved by the Network Members, to ensure that communication and reporting relationships are clear and effective.
- These structures are reviewed, evaluated and if necessary updated annually at a Council meeting, to ensure that they are contributing to improved communication and empowerment for members of the network.
- There is a clear separation between the role of CIL CMH as Council Secretariat, and the contribution the organisation makes as a member of the network, and when appropriate as representative for the

network.

3.2. We will represent the Council Network publicly for the progression of specific common goals

Results:

- In response to a clear mandate from the Council Network, - a subgroup comprised of members of CIL CMH Board and elected Council Representatives is established to prioritise policy and lobbying issues for CIL CMH to progress for all CILs.
- National Policy makers are clear on how and who to consult when they need guidance from service users in relation to Independent Living services, funding structures and supports.

3.3. We will proactively work with International Partners

Results:

- We maintain strong links and solidarity with international partners, including members of ENIL, NCIL (UK) and our partners in the North of Ireland.



- The progression of common goals and sharing of information is evidenced in our Operational and Work Plans, which contain commitment of staff, board and designated volunteer time and resources to structured participation and communication with our international partners.

3.4 We will continue to promote a positive image of people with disabilities as contributors in society and active members in community life

Results:

- A Media and Communications strategy is in place that includes training for members to enhance their communication skills.
- We engage with partners to progress opportunities for leaders to participate in local and national decision making fora.

3.5. We will maintain State of the Art Information Technology Systems

Results:

- We enhance the level of participation by members and stakeholders in the activities of the organisation, by maintaining computer systems that are compatible with leaders' assistive technology tools.
- We maintain and raise the profile of the organisation, by ensuring that our information database on Independent Living issues is state of the art and actively monitored and updated (linking information sources among the CIL network).

Definition of Disability:

A disability exists, if essential, personal and social experiences are influenced by physical and mental limitations and their resulting discrimination. (European Network for Independent Living).

GOAL FOUR: POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Context:

Policy refers to the settled method by which the government and affairs of a nation are, or may be, administered; a system of public or official administration, as designed to promote the external or internal prosperity of a state.⁸

Advocacy is the act of pleading or arguing in favour of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy.⁹ An individual can advocate for their own entitlements and rights, or they can advocate on behalf of another person(s). A group can collectively advocate for the needs or rights of the members of the group to be addressed by specific service providers or government policy makers.

In the context of the work of the Center for Independent Living, we engage in activities that build the capacity of disabled individuals to self-advocate for their personal rights and support requirements. We also collectively

advocate (as disabled people) for policies that ensure that disabled people are treated equally to non-disabled people and empowered to live independently.

Advocacy is a core part of the work of the Center for Independent Living. All research, development, education and training projects undertaken by us are designed to advocate for awareness of the specific needs of leaders, and to go some way towards addressing those needs. In addition we support the recent appointment of advocacy officers to some CILs in the Council Network and also to some Citizen Information Centres around Ireland, - a resource for leaders and other disabled people who need support to self advocate to have their needs met.

We are aware that in countries where there are national policies that support Independent Living, leaders are enjoying a better quality of life. Therefore to influence the development of

⁸ This definition of policy is taken from Arddictionary.com

⁹ This definition of advocacy is taken from www.answers.com

Independent Living policies, we have initiated and participated in several political lobbying events, nationally and internationally, to promote equality and The Philosophy of Independent Living.

Advocacy and Policy Promotion shall continue to be a core part of our work. We have quite some way to go in Ireland before people with significant disabilities have access to the level of support they require in order for them to live independently in the community, with the same opportunities as non-disabled people.

GOAL FOUR:

To strategically promote, advocate, lobby and develop actions that encourage the full development of rights-based and leader-managed Personal Assistant services. This includes promoting an environment conducive to the development of multiple service models and market competition, ensuring maximum choice for service users.

Objective 4.1: We will encourage and support (directly and indirectly) the development of the interagency National Advisory Group on

Independent Living (NAG), to work towards making The Philosophy of Independent Living core to the service delivery models adopted by other service providers.

Results:

- As the organisation responsible for the early development of the NAG, we continue to contribute to the implementation of NAG goals, ensuring that the NAG has appropriate development and administrative support (from the Center for Independent Living and/or suitable partner agencies) to be effective in achieving the NAG mission 'to ensure that the principles of Independent Living, - Choices, Rights Empowerment and Control, - are intrinsically rooted in the thinking, policies, strategies and actions of all stakeholders'.
- The NAG, through its interagency membership, enhances the resources available to leaders and CILs at local level, through existing community development and statutory support structures.

Objective 4.2: We will establish a subgroup entitled 'CIL Ireland' with the Council Officers to prioritise issues that the network would like

CIL CMH to raise and progress with policy makers.

Results:

- The CIL Network has a mechanism to improve the effectiveness of their lobbying on behalf of leaders nationwide.
- More people with disabilities are empowered to live independently.

Objective 4.3: We will promote, support, initiate and participate in solidarity events, nationally and internationally.

Results:

- We promote and co-ordinate participation (by the CIL Network) in the bi-annual Strasbourg Freedom drive, joining our European partners to bring ongoing key demands to the European Parliament.
- We play an active role in the campaign that we initiated for Direct Payments and a National Policy on Personal Assistant Services in Ireland. This work is ongoing until such time as national policies that

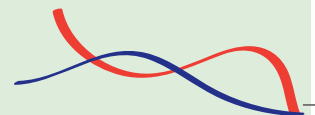
promote choice, rights, empowerment and control are in place.

- We support, organise and source funding for specific themed events, in a cost effective and timely manner, to encourage the sharing of new developments in relation to rights based research, policy, advocacy and service developments.

Objective 4.4: We will co-operate and share information with relevant policy makers, nationally and internationally to further our mission.

Results:

- Opportunities to work in partnership with relevant policy makers in the development of services and national policy are identified and progressed, - by our board and with the Council Network.
- We work with our European partners to influence European policy on Independent Living.
- Our members have clear guidance on how our organisation should work in partnership and communicate with government and



international partners, to best further our goals.

- We proactively encourage programmes that maximise the opportunities for disabled people to participate in local and national decision making structures.



GOAL FIVE: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES

Context:

Organisational Development involves organisational reflection, system improvement, planning and self-analysis. At the time of developing this plan, we are aware of the urgent need for effective organisational processes, so that we can maximise the effectiveness of our work, and improve our prospects of achieving our mission. During the strategic planning process, members put forward suggestions to improve the organisation's ability to monitor and evaluate our work, and to ensure that we can make timely changes to our plan, if our objectives are not being met. These suggestions shall be further developed in our operational plan.

Human Resource management refers to the management of our most valued assets - the people working in the Center for Independent Living who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives.

GOAL FIVE:

To develop a sustainable vibrant organisation, where the values of equality, integrity, quality, transparency and accountability underpin all activities.

Objective 5.1: We will ensure that CIL CMH reflects our core values, by developing an organisation that respects, values and is focused on the needs of leaders and aspiring leaders.

Results

- CIL CMH is an organisation that is confident on the basis of evidence and expertise about the support needs of members and existing and potential leaders nationwide.
- The management team ensures that our activities reflect the needs of our members, by ongoing consultation and communication with members.

- We have specific communication structures in place to encourage and facilitate discussion and debate on independent living related issues.

Objective 5.2: We will ensure a professionally run organisation, with a business plan, and clear management and communication structures.

Results:

- We have clear internal structures and decision-making processes. Changes to existing structures are reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.
- The organisation has a sustainable 'business model' approach to operations, supplementing core funding with income generated by our activities, thus improving value for money and accountability to members and funders.
- Our professional approach assists us to secure ongoing multi-annual funding, and supplementary sources of income to implement this plan.

Objective 5.3: As a Rights-Based organisation we will identify and secure core or programme funding to support the objectives of our plan.

Results:

- We secure ongoing funding to support our activities and further our goals, through core funding, corporate funding and other avenues.
- Our consistent and professional approach when making application to funding organisations brings understanding and support for our mission from wider circles of influence.

Objective 5.4: We will invest in and develop a staff team that is innovative, responsive and learning in its work.

Results:

- We retain a motivated and proficient staff within a supportive working environment.
- Independent Living training is part of the induction process for all new staff.

- There is evidence of enhanced team working between staff members and with volunteer committee members, and this leads to confident decision making.
- We have a flexible responsive organisation, capable of adjusting to avail of opportunities and to accommodate environmental changes.

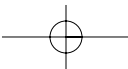
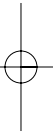
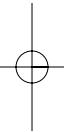
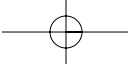
Objective 5.5: We will have an active performance management system, for the organisation, subcommittees and staff.

Results:

- We use result based planning tools, enabling us to monitor our performance (directors, staff, subgroups and overall organisational performance) in relation to achieving our strategic goals.
- We are empowered to revise, modify or tailor plans to respond to the changing environmental or organisational factors, as appropriate to our mission and the capacity of the organisation.
- Our directors and staff are sufficiently supported and resourced; their skills are valued and utilised; and the responsibilities

that directors and staff members undertake are reasonable and in proportion to their volunteer or paid status.





SECTION FIVE: ORGANISATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES

The **Board of Directors** conducts the business of the organisation in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The **Management Team** for the organisation includes the Chair of the Board, The Treasurer, the designated Director/Staff Supervisor (at the discretion of the Chair) and the Development Manager/Coordinator. This team is supported administratively by the Senior Administration and Policy Officer.

The **Company Secretary** is a member of the organisation.

In addition to a Chairperson, the Board appoints a Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. All internal subgroups will also be chaired by members of the Board. Stakeholders from partner or appropriate statutory and voluntary organisations will be invited to join the CIL subgroups. Each internal subgroup, and shared work groups (e.g. with the CIL Network and NAG) will be monitored and where appropriate 'chaired' by members of the CIL CMH Board.

CIL CMH will ensure that all working groups have specific work-plans, and will encourage subgroup members to be mindful of the organisations crosscutting objectives set out in the full strategic plan, bringing related issues to the Board for discussion as they arise. Subgroups shall be restructured during the first quarter of 2009 as follows:

- 1. Research and Development**
- 2. Education and Training**
- 3. Policy and Advocacy** (the chair of this team shall also Chair 'CIL Ireland')

Research and Development

The Research and Development subgroup will directly monitor and progress the implementation of Strategic Goal One. Objectives under Goal one include:

- Identifying, documenting and sharing good practice in policy and services (liaising with the Education and Training Subgroup).

- Exploring and developing new ways of supporting independence (working co-operatively and in partnership when appropriate), - including engaging in action research.
- Contributing, as service users to the development and improvement of existing services.
- Continuing to collaborate on an international basis, and communicating with the other subgroups re international developments, to ensure the organisation's activities reflect best international practice.

This group shall work closely with the Development Manager, and be mutually supportive.

In addition, the subgroup will be required to develop a Subgroup Action Plan, for approval by the Board, and to submit bi-monthly updates to the Board on progress and status of actions.

The group will be provided with support, including administrative support, by a Development Officer.

Additional support and resources will be sought through the membership of the group.

The Chairperson of the Board may attend meetings at any time.

Education and Training

The Education and Training subgroup (formerly 'The Study Board') will directly monitor the implementation of Strategic goal two.

Some objectives under goal two include:

- Evaluating and progressing the work and status of 'The Study Board' activities.
- Exploring, disseminating, and discussing the findings of the Training Needs Analysis, and agreeing on recommendations to be implemented.
- Reviewing current relevant academic and statutory commissioned research, promoting awareness and developing feedback to the appropriate research body or parent department to promote best practice and inclusion (liaising with the Research and Development Subgroup).
- Identifying areas where there is a need for

and absence of current research and identifying appropriate research bodies to carry out this research, either internally or externally (liaising with the Research and Development Subgroup).

This subgroup has established a programme of work that requires evaluation and progression.

In addition, the subgroup will be required to develop a Subgroup Action Plan, for approval by the Board, and to submit bi-monthly updates to the Board on progress and status of actions.

The group will be provided with support, including administrative support, by a Development Officer.

Additional support and resources will be sought through the membership of the group.

The Chairperson of the Board may attend meetings at any time.

Policy and Advocacy (National & International)

The Policy and Advocacy subgroup will monitor the implementation of Strategic Goal Four. Some Objectives under this goal include:

- Encouraging and supporting (directly and indirectly) the development of the NAG.
- Chairing an external policy subgroup comprised of Network Officers and CIL Board Members to progress and lobby on issues raised by the network members, (this is a new subgroup – proposed name is 'CIL Ireland' – to be discussed once group is established and Terms of Reference agreed).
- Promoting, supporting, initiating and participating in solidarity events, nationally and internationally (therefore this group will be involved in the Strasbourg Freedom drive preparations in 2009).
- Working with our European partners to influence policy on Independent Living.
- Focusing on bringing I.L. issues to relevant policy makers, working in a co-operative way with members, partners and stakeholders (using a pre-determined

communication strategy).

- Encouraging programmes/projects that maximise the opportunities for disabled people to participate in local and national decision making structures.

This group shall work closely with the Development Manager, and be mutually supportive.

In addition, the subgroup will be required to develop a Subgroup Action Plan that sets out the prioritised goals, for approval by the Board, and to submit bi-monthly updates to the Board on progress and status of actions.

The group will be supported administratively by a staff member.

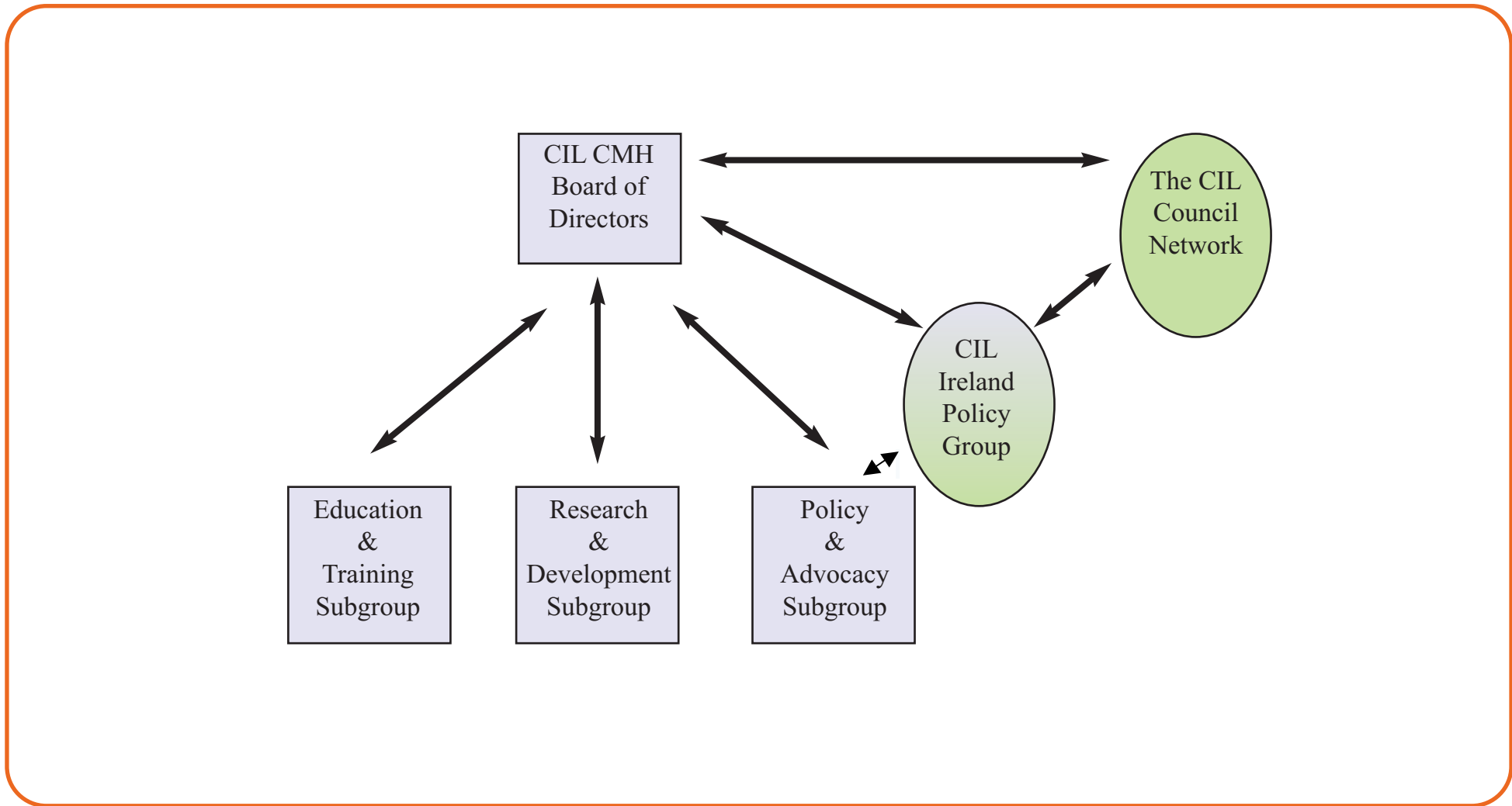
Additional support and resources will be sought through the membership of the group.

The Chairperson of the Board may attend meetings at any time.



SUBGROUP COMMUNICATION MAP

The communication structure between internal CIL CMH subgroups, the CIL Network Council, and the proposed shared policy subgroup 'CIL Ireland' is set out below:



Internal Management Structures

Detailed staff management structures are contained within the Staff Handbook. The following is a brief overview:

One person, not necessarily the Chairperson is designated as line manager to the Development Manager/Coordinator on behalf of the rest of the Board. On a day to day basis the line-manager is the person who approves the Development Manager/Coordinator's leave and work plans.

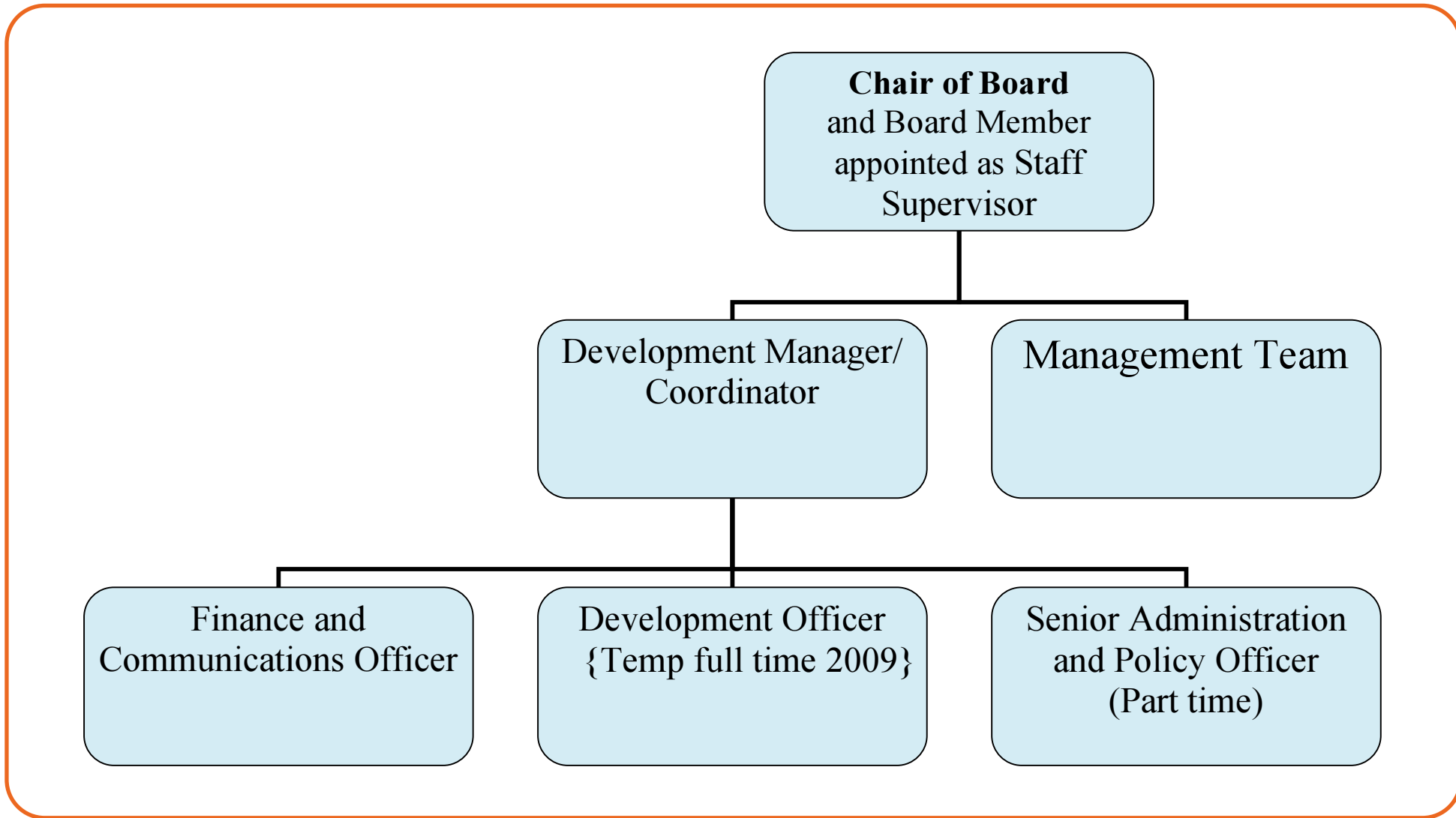
The designated line manager is also responsible for the supervision and appraisal of the Development Manager/Coordinator's work and progress.

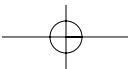
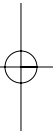
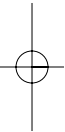
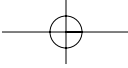
During the life of this plan, the Chair and Board may decide to retain the traditional arrangement whereby the Chair is the direct line manager for staff, in which case a deputy line manager shall be appointed.

All other staff members work to the Development Manager/Coordinator (or directly to the board appointed staff manager if this

post is not filled), and he/she assists and guides the staff on how to prioritise work. A draft organisational chart is overleaf, and this will be finalised once all posts are filled.

Management Structure:





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Board of the Center for Independent Living sincerely thank all the individuals who contributed to the development of this plan. Contributors included members, directors and staff past and present, along with members of the National Leaders Forum, the National Advisory Group and the Network Council and colleagues from niche organisations in the Irish disability sector and partners in the European Network on Independent Living.

We would also like to thank stakeholders from the wider statutory and community and voluntary sector who have indicated their interest in contributing to the development of our operational plan in 2009. We look forward to working co-operatively with you to further our common goal of making Independent Living a reality for many more disabled people in Ireland.

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