
STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP 2005-2008

A national initiative to advance the process of social inclusion for people with disabilities in Irish Society through Independent living.

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NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP
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NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2008

Introduction

This plan outlines the first strategic plan of the National Advisory Group (NAG). The group in consultation with the Centres for Independent Living (CIL) and other stakeholders¹ developed the plan, which covers the period 2005 – 2008. The plan is rooted in a commitment to working for a more just and equal society.

The aim of the plan is to set out the direction, intention and activity of the NAG over the next three years. The plan includes the Vision, Mission, Core Values and strategic goals and intent of the NAG. An Operational Plan outlining the tasks, activities and timeframes for the operation of the plan over the first year had also been developed by the NAG.

Background and Process

In 2004 the process of the re-integration of the planning and development functions of Independent Living Centre Support Ltd. (ILCS) into the remit of CIL Carmichael House began. A key part of this re-integration was to initiate a National Advisory Group.

This group included Toni Gleeson (Disabilty Federation Ireland), Derval Sheridan (CIL), Michael Ryan (CIL), Susan Flynn (CIL), Helen Lahert (Comhairle) and Martin Naughton (CIL). The group was facilitated by Ann Hegarty, a consultant from Meitheal, the community development support and training organisation.

It was agreed that one of the first tasks of the group was to widen the participation of stakeholders. Subsequently, Ann Marie Flanagan (Disabled People of Clare), Don Bailey (CIL) and Kathleen Mc Cann (CIL) joined the group. Several attempts were made to broaden group membership from both the Statutory and Disability Sectors including an invitation to CIL stakeholders at the time of the presentation of the Terms of Reference to the National Meeting of CIL's in October. Whilst much interest and support for the work of the NAG was expressed, resource issues and previous committments amongst the individuals and groups approached prevented them from participating at this stage of the development of the plan. Subsequently it was agreed to proceed and develop the plan with the existing group and to ensure that a communication strategy be devised in order to keep stakeholders informed of the progress of the NAG plan.

¹Stakeholders listed in Appendix 1

The process to completion of the work included:

- The development of Terms of Reference (TOR) for the group
- The development and implementation of a communication strategy in order that CIL's could feed into the process if they so wished
- Presentation of TOR for approval to the National CIL meeting
- The development of Vision, Mission and core value statements for the Strategic Plan
- The identification of the goals and objectives of the plan
- The development of a one year operational plan
- The presentation of the plan to stakeholders for feedback
- Modification and finalisation of the plan as necessary

Independent Living is:

The right of all persons regardless of age, type or extent of disability to live in a community; to have a similar range of choices as everybody else in housing, transportation, education and employment; to participate in the social, economic and political life of our communities; to have a family; to live as responsible respected members of our communities with all the duties and privileges that this entails, and to develop their potential.

Independent Living (IL) therefore is not simply concerned with the mundane physical tasks of daily living. The IL philosophy expands the notion of independence from physical achievements to political and socio-economic decision-making. It is concerned with personal and economic choices that people with disabilities have to make, and from this CIL promotes its main goals of self-determination, choice, control, and responsibility.²

Brief History of Independent Living

The Independent Living (IL) philosophy originated from the first Center for Independent Living (CIL) established by a group of people with disabilities in California in 1972, to support people to leave residential care and live independently in the community. Up to then people with disabilities were passive, dependent, living solely in institutions or the family home. Part of a 'medical model' – they were viewed purely as a patient to be rehabilitated, or at least helped adapt in order to fit in with society.

²Ratzka, Adolf (2002)

The IL philosophy however promoted a 'social model' of disability, which held that people with disabilities have a right to actively participate in, and contribute to society as equals and without dependence on family or institutions. The social model recognised 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. The social model focus is not on rehabilitating the individual with a disability therefore, but on changing society and the environment, in order to make it accessible and include the person with a disability as a consumer rather than as a patient.

The difference between the two models above has fundamental implications for people with disabilities with regard to policy formation and service provision. Under the 'medical model' services for people with disabilities are designed by people with no real experience of the issues involved. With the 'social model' it is recognised that the real experts when it comes to designing services are those with most experience of the issues - people with disabilities themselves.

Independent Living in Ireland

The first Irish CIL, CIL Carmichael House, was established in 1992 by and for people with disabilities, with the main aim of ensuring that people with disabilities achieved independent living and full participation in society. It offered an advocacy and campaigning representation role, striving to bring about a social model of service delivery, and to ensure policy decisions would include input from those whose lives were actually affected. It also held an action-research role in monitoring developments in the world of Independent Living.

Today there are twenty-seven CILs nationwide, all established and operated by people with disabilities at a local level. All CILs are committed to ensuring that the principles of Independent Living - Choices, Rights, Empowerment and Control are embodied in all aspects of their work. CILs have a vital advocacy role in representing members and supporting them into the mainstream in all areas - e.g., in Transport, Housing, Training and Employment. Part of their remit is to broaden lifestyle choices and build expectations of individuals with disability in all kinds of areas, from foreign holiday options or cultural exchanges, to career paths etc. Many CILs also offer Personal Assistance (PA) services, funded through Community Employment (CE) schemes and/or Health Board funding.

Development of NAG

As more people with disabilities became involved in the Independent Living Movement, CILs began to be established around the country. As they become autonomous from CIL Carmichael House, it was recognised that they needed practical support in terms of advice and help in day-to-day operations. In 1996, some funding was secured and Independent Living Community Services Ltd (ILCS Ltd) was set up to accomplish this and to ensure that each CIL, while keeping its independence and identity, benefited from the experience of others.

CIL recognised that a strong, collective voice was needed in relation to issues such as policy, and independent living services. A clear set of National priorities were required to ensure that the philosophy of IL was maintained and developed. To answer this need, the CILs came together nationally in 1998 to develop the Independent Living Network (ILN) – which operated without any dedicated resources.

Since then, over the years, many organisations with a strong interest in Independent Living and considerable strength in regional and community development, have emerged. It is felt that the future involves working closely with these key organisations that are now in a position to offer support and provide services ensuring that the principals and the philosophy of IL are intrinsic within them. In 2003/2004 it was proposed that for CILs to work cohesively, collectively and efficiently today, a recognised body must now be put in place, with dedicated resources and a process that would facilitate this. Through CIL networking and funding resources from the now dissolved ILCS, the National Advisory Group came about.

Challenges and opportunities in the current environment

The challenge of and to NAG in the rapidly changing, economically driven Ireland of the twenty-first century is to realise change in policies and legislation as they affect people with disabilities.

Continuing high unemployment rates amongst people with disabilities, benefit traps and lack of a 'costs of disability' allowance all conspire against the choices and options of people with disabilities. Limited options mitigate against the full realisation of rights.

People with disabilities have long held the maxim: 'Nothing about us without us' and disability organisations and advocates of people with disabilities say: 'design us in'.

Since 1992 the Government has held a policy of mainstreaming of services to people with disabilities; that is the provision of services to people with disabilities within the generic services that are available to all citizens. To implement this policy FÁS, the national employment and training agency, and Comhairle, the national information advice and advocacy body were mandated to provide mainstream services to people with a disability. The Health Services Executive is the new structure for health services delivery and replaces the Health Boards. In this new structure it is essential that the focus is on user led services that respect the autonomy and experience of people with disability. In addition there is now Equality Legislation that prohibits discrimination against people with disability in regard to access to public buildings, amenities and employment. This Equality Legislation demands that reasonable accommodation be made to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Cases supported by the Equality Authority, which have upheld disabled people's rights, are becoming more and more frequent.

The Education for People with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and the Disability Strategy 2004³, point towards significant positive changes for people with disabilities. To ensure that this legislation and the cross departmental planning and development of services are cohesive and responsive to the needs of people with disabilities it is proposed that NAG will be the committee to bring planners and policy makers together with the people who have direct experience. The non-homogeneity of the group that is people with a disability requires discussion and debate prior to planning rather than a presumption of awareness, knowledge and commitment. This partnership approach will enable cohesive and practical planning and implementation of policies and laws at a national level.

The objective of Local Government Reform is to devolve some of the governing power to Local Authorities. With the setting up of County and City Development Boards the local involvement of people with a disability at Community and Voluntary Forum, Social Inclusion Measures Committees (SIMS) and directly as representatives on the Boards is crucial. This process can be greatly enhanced by strong and vibrant CIL's operating locally.

Many Local Authorities in the country have signed up to the Barcelona declaration; this commits them - theoretically - to making cities and towns accessible to people with disabilities. In addition, Part M of the Building Regulations (2000) and the move to make new dwellings "visitable" requires consultation and participation of people with disabilities in the planning process. Accommodation and housing for disabled

³ Comprising the Disability Bill 2004, the Comhairle Amendment Act, six Sectoral Plans for Government departments and the commitment to a multi-annual funding package.

people and its critical association with the local authority and social housing provision is another area where collaboration and awareness is key.

City and County development strategies, in which local health services, training, education and employment plans are required to be ratified against specific identified actions within the Social and Economic Strategy need to be promoted and monitored by people with disabilities. The use of existing budgets and plans to implement these strategies are co-ordinated by SIMS whose remit it is to develop an integrated planning and action mechanism to tackle all issues of social inclusion working locally. They will then feed into national structures in a constructive, informed and clear way that will impact on the development of the Sectoral plan – part of the Disability Strategy - at local level.

As society changes and develops in the 21st Century these are only some of the challenges and opportunities facing people with disabilities. By creating and supporting equal and active participation a way forward that is accessible and acceptable to all can be designed, developed and delivered.

The Economic Benefits of Independent Living to Ireland.

The philosophy and realisation of Independent Living means that People with Disabilities (PWD) experience life in the same way that all other citizens do. Where Independent Living is achieved:

- PWD have an opportunity to cease social welfare payment through their potential employment
- PWD can contribute more to the growing economy as both employees and employers
- Through employment PWD can obtain credit to purchase property etc., which in turn feeds back into the economy
- PWD can form loving relationships and families where their children will become the employees and employers of the future
- With the Personal Assistant Service, the spouse or immediate dependants of PWD has the option of entering employment - traditionally they were required to forgo such options to assist PWD.
- Personal Assistants also feed back into the economy with their taxes

- The expertise of PWD can be drawn upon by town planners and developers from the outset to design inclusive built environments - thus saving the state the considerable cost of having to adapt the built environment at a later stage. Many of these changes have positive effects for parents (with pushchairs) and elderly people in the community also
- PWD are no longer residents in homes or institutions at the expense of the state
- State owned residential institutions can be sold and the assets accrued deployed towards other uses.

VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

Vision Statement

According to the principles of Independent Living - Choices, Rights, Empowerment and Control - we, in all our diversity, will work in solidarity to realise justice, equality and respect across the whole spectrum of the lives of people with disabilities.

Mission Statement

The mission of the National Advisory Group is to bring about real change in the lives of people with disabilities in order to achieve true Independent Living. We will work 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.

Core values

We are committed to the principles of **inclusion, equality of participation, solidarity and ongoing development.**

Inclusion – a right to access: development of appropriate support structures to ensure inclusion: a commitment to transparent communication: sharing and development of knowledge: a respect and acknowledgement of diversity of representation

Equality of participation – a commitment to equality and a respect for difference

Solidarity – a belief in the power of collective action: a commitment to highlighting and celebrating achievements

Ongoing development – a commitment to evaluation and learning: the resourcing of ongoing critical reflection and analysis.

Because of our commitment to these core values the NAG representative role will be confined to this agreed Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP INTERLINKED AND MUTUALLY REINFORCING

- 1.** Promote the philosophy of Independent Living (IL) by learning, practising and sharing
- 2.** Support CIL's to achieve aims at local level
- 3.** Effect change in policies and actions of all Stakeholders
- 4.** Strengthen, support and promote solidarity
- 5.** Develop and support the National Advisory Group

IN RELATION TO GOAL 1

Promote the philosophy of Independent Living by learning, practicing and sharing

NAG will:

- Launch this strategic plan
- Undertake action research and discussion on IL
- Agree and promote a definition of IL / autonomy
- Undertake a Public Relations campaign – highlighting the philosophy and achievements of IL
- Gather and communicate information re models of good practice
- Organise the design and delivery of a Training Programme to promote understanding of IL
- Organise a Conference on the philosophy and experience of IL

IN RELATION TO GOAL 2

Support CIL's to achieve aims at Local Level

NAG will:

- Consult with all CIL's to develop an appropriate model of support and devise same
- Provide technical support and training as required by CIL's to include training in governance, IT, networking, development of strategic plans, the role of volunteers and accessing funding
- Support the establishment of a CIL youth movement
- Support CIL's to undertake local promotional work, highlighting the achievements of those experiencing IL
- Support the National Leader Forum
- Support requesting CIL's to widen participation of Leaders with a diversity of impairment

IN RELATION TO GOAL 3

Effect change in policies and actions of all Stakeholders

NAG will:

- Agree the policy position of the NAG
- Promote an understanding of the policy position of the NAG representative group
- Support stakeholders to feed into, evaluate and critique changes in local and national policy in relation to IL
- Contribute to relevant policy debates relating to the IL movement
- Monitor and evaluate how stakeholders currently engage with people with disabilities
- Devise and implement lobbying strategies to engage at National level
- Learn from and contribute to world disability policy and disseminate that learning in the Irish context, locally and Nationally

IN RELATION TO GOAL 4

Strengthen, support and promote solidarity

NAG will:

- Develop and support solidarity events – both new and those which CILs already have in place
- Ensure that the achievements of IL are celebrated
- Research, devise and promote successful models of solidarity
- Build relationships and strategic alliances
- Work with stakeholders to understand the long term effects of internalised oppression of people with disabilities on individuals, the community and the wider society

Develop and support the National Advisory Group

NAG will:

- Put a structure in place for the continuation of the NAG from the current planning group to the long-term NAG
- Identify and recruit new members
- Develop and deliver a training and development programme for all new members
- Ensure that there is a transparent effective communication strategy in place
- Undertake an audit of the entire resources required for the implementation of the plan
- Oversee, monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of this strategic plan
- Develop relevant policies to ensure good practice

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The NAG is committed to continuous monitoring and evaluation of this strategic plan. This commitment requires a broader commitment to openness, transparency and possibly constructive criticism from within the group and from stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation offers an opportunity to be responsive, flexible and actively involved in the development of corrective measures quickly and effectively.

Learning through evaluation is one of the core principles of community development. It encourages participation, development and responsibility amongst participants. The action reflection model of: planning actions, evaluating both the tasks against outcomes and stated targets and the processes with regard to efficiency and validity against stated values and mission, will be an intrinsic part of the NAG.

Monitoring will be a consistent feature of the day-to-day work of the NAG and any staff thereafter employed. It will be the responsibility of any future staff member and the Group itself to ensure that it is built into all tasks associated with the plan and to document its occurrence through reporting and target attainment.

Evaluation will be a planned exercise carried out annually. This will enable the NAG to evaluate its own effectiveness and the agreed programme of work as detailed in its yearly operational plans.

In the latter part of the final year of the Strategic Plan an independent evaluation will evaluate the processes, the commitment to the Independent Living (IL) values, tasks, outcomes and the overall value of the plan. It will also point the way forward for the next Strategic Plan.

REPRESENTATION ON NAG

Representation will be drawn from a broad geographical base and there will be a membership of fifteen people. Where possible people with disabilities will be represented in each of the following categories:

- Seven representatives from the statutory sector
- Three from the disability sector
- Five representatives of CIL's, three of whom will be Leaders
- At least 33% of the membership will be people with disabilities
- There will be a 60 / 40 gender balance
- A support structure will be developed to enhance equal participation on the NAG
- In the case of voluntary members an agreed alternate may attend a meeting should members be unable to.

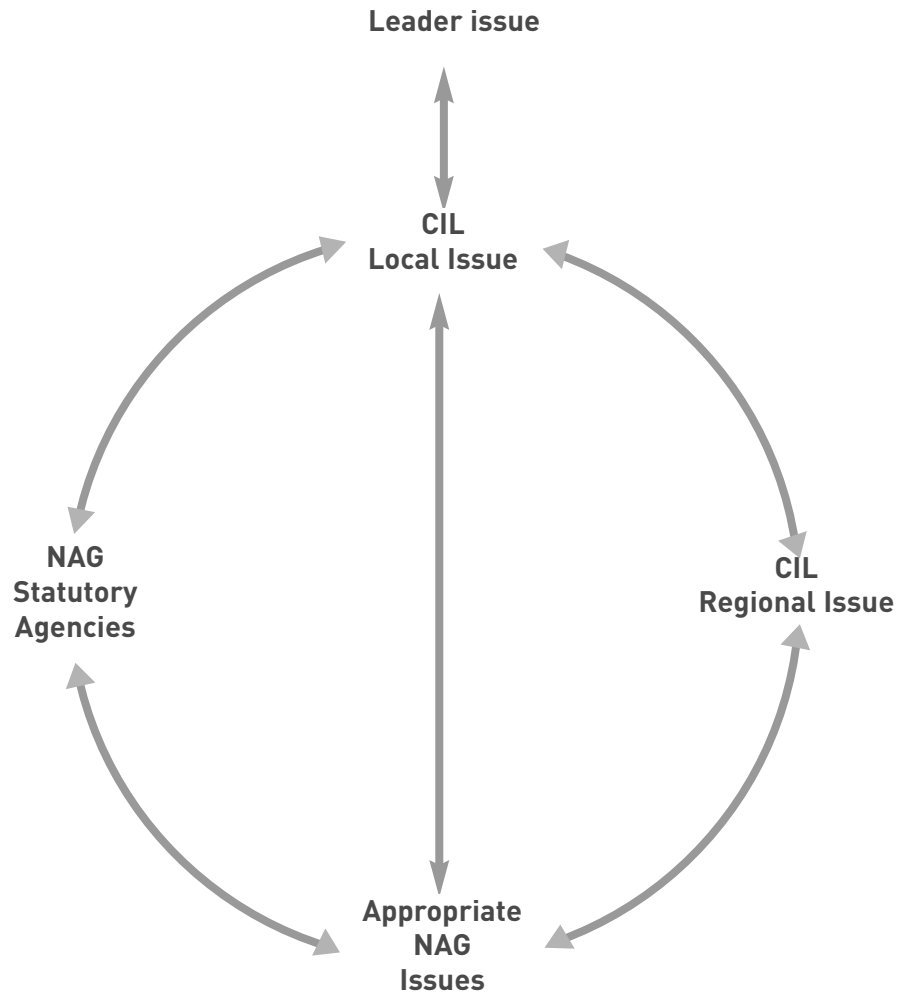
CIL representation

It is planned that of the five CIL positions one will be taken up by the National Leader co-ordinator.

Statutory representation

Members of state agencies will hold senior and appropriate positions within their organisations.

COMMUNICATION MODEL



Leader issues will be raised with a NAG liaison person at local CIL level. If the issue cannot be resolved locally it will be brought to regional level⁴. Prior to meetings of the NAG, regional representatives will meet, and issues that need to be progressed to the national level will be agreed upon and forwarded to the Leader Co-ordinator for inclusion on the NAG agenda. From this table relevant agencies will be asked to address the issue and any resolutions and actions will be reported back through this model to the Leader / local CIL. All meetings at every level of the communication model will adhere to proper protocol in terms of structure, minutes and procedures.

⁴Regions mirror the EU constituencies, North West (Connaght, Ulster), South (Munster), East (Leinster) and Dublin

KEY ACTIONS YEAR ONE

Goal 1

Promote the philosophy of Independent Living by learning, practising and sharing

- 1.1 Launch of strategic plan
- 1.2 Undertake action research and discussion on IL
- 1.3 Agree and promote a definition of IL / autonomy
- 1.4 Undertake a Public Relation campaign – highlighting the philosophy and achievements of IL

Goal 2

Support CIL's to achieve aims at Local Level

- 2.1 Consult with all CIL's to develop an appropriate model of support and devise same
- 2.2 Provide technical support and training as required by CIL's to include training in governance, IT, networking development of strategic plans, the role of volunteers and accessing funding
- 2.3 Support the establishment of a CIL youth movement

Goal 3

Effect change in policies and actions of all Stakeholders

- 3.1 Agree the policy position of the NAG
- 3.2 Promote an understanding of the policy position of the NAG representative group
- 3.3 Support stakeholders to feed into, evaluate and critique changes in local and national policy in relation to IL

Goal 4

Strengthen, support and promote solidarity

- 4.1** Develop and support solidarity events – both new and those which CILs already have in place
- 4.2** Ensure that the achievements of IL are celebrate

Goal 5

Develop and support the National Advisory Group

- 5.1** Put a structure in place for the continuation of the NAG from the current planning group to the long-term NAG
- 5.2** Identify and recruit new members
- 5.3** Develop and deliver a training and development programme for all new members
- 5.4** Ensure that there is a transparent effective communication strategy in place
- 5.6** Undertake an audit of the entire resources required for the implementation of the plan
- 5.7** Oversee, monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of this strategic plan

NAG Draft Strategic Plan sent to for comment:

- Area Development Management (ADM)
- CIL Chairpersons:
 - Fingal Awareness of Equality and Disability (FADE) CIL
 - Blanchardstown CIL
 - Carmichael House CIL
 - Dublin 7 CIL
 - Kilkenny CIL
 - Gorey CIL
 - Wexford Disability Development Ltd
 - Carlow CIL
 - Longford CIL
 - Offaly CIL
 - Laois CIL
 - West Meath CIL
 - Belfast CIL
 - Donegal CIL
 - Cavan CIL
 - Monaghan CIL
 - Disabled People of Clare (DPOC)
 - Clonmel CIL
 - Cork CIL
 - Tipperary CIL

- Waterford CIL
- West Limerick CIL
- Galway CIL
- Mayo CIL
- Roscommon Support Group of People with Disabilities (RSGPWD)
- Sligo CIL
- Leitrim Association of People With Disabilities (LAPWD)
- Combat Poverty Agency (CPA)
- Comhairle
 - CEO
 - Senior Managers
 - Regional Managers
- Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs
- Department of Health & Children
- Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
- Department of Social & Family Affairs
- Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency (DESSA)
- Disability Federation Ireland (DFI)
- Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP)
- Equality Authority of Ireland
- Family Support Agency (FSA)

- FAS
 - Disability Policy and Development Unit
 - Employment Services/Social Inclusion
 - Regional Directors
 - Local Employment Services Co-ordinators
- Forum of People with Disabilities
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
 - Representatives from all HSE regions, Disability Services, Strategy and Planning etc.
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
- National University of Ireland (NUI) Maynooth
 - Continuing Education Co-ordinator
 - Certificate in Disability Studies Trainer
- NDA
 - Director
 - Research and Standards Dept.

GLOSSARY TERMS

Area Development Management Ltd (ADM)

Area Development Management Ltd was established in 1992 to support local social and economic development. ADM Ltd. manages a number of programs through the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

Barcelona Declaration

The Barcelona Declaration made its first appearance at the 1995 conference 'The City and the Disabled' - a major event attended by people from throughout Europe. Many mayors and chairmen of European Municipalities signed the Declaration then, with many more agreeing since to adhere to what is the most important European convention on accessibility. The Declaration is a simple but powerful document. It has no legal force but, by committing municipal authorities to a wide range of actions, it is a major instrument of change.

Building Regulations 2000 (Part M)

In, 2000, the Minister for the Environment and Local Government signed into law, an amended Part M of the Building Regulations, 1997, dealing with access for people with disabilities. Part M came into effect from January 2001 and includes several provisions that apply to new dwellings (houses, flats and apartments) and extensions to ensure that they are visitable by people with disabilities.

Centre for Independent Living (CIL)

The first Center for Independent Living was established in Berkeley, California in 1972 by a group of people with disabilities. Its aim was to support the development of a new perspective on disability – one that gave empowerment and civil rights to people with disabilities.

Center for Independent Living (CIL) Carmichael House

The Center for Independent Living (CIL) Carmichael House is the first Irish CIL and was established in 1992 by and for disabled people. It is part of a 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 which that implies.

Combat Poverty Agency (CPA)

The Combat Poverty Agency is a statutory body, which advises the Minister for Social Community and Family Affairs on all aspects of social and economic planning in relation to poverty.

Comhairle

Comhairle is the national support agency responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy to members of the public on social services.

County/City Development Boards (C.D.B)

County/City Development Boards were established in each county and city in Ireland in early 2000. The CDBs are led by local government and are also representative of local development bodies together with the State agencies and social partners operating locally. For the first time, CDBs brought together the key players at local level to engage in a process of long-term planning for each county or city for the next ten years.

Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The Department has specific responsibility for community and local development, including coordination of the National Drugs Strategy, volunteering, programmes for Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID), and rural development, including Leader, CLÁR, INTERREG, the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and the Western Development Commission. It also retains the responsibilities previously held by the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands for both the Irish language and the Gaeltacht, and the development of the off-shore islands.

Department of Health and Children

The Department of Health and Children's statutory role is to support the Minister in the formulation and evaluation of policies for the health services. It also has a role in the strategic planning of health services. This is carried out in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, voluntary service providers, Government Departments and other interests.

Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

The Department's mission is to maintain and enhance community security and equality through the development of a range of policies and high quality services which underpin:

- The protection and assertion of human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with the common good
- The security of the State

- An effective and balanced approach to tackling crime
- Progress towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities and the accommodation of diversity

Department of Social & Family Affairs

It is the Department's mission to promote a caring society through ensuring access to income support and related services, enabling active participation, promoting social inclusion and supporting families.

Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency (DESSA)

DESSA is a Specialist Support Agency focusing on the promotion of Disability Equality issues in the CDSP and Family and Community Resource Centre Programme.

Disability Federation Ireland (DFI)

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is a national umbrella organisation for voluntary/non-statutory agencies who provide support services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

Disabled People of Clare (DPOC)

The main aim of DPOC's members is to achieve a greater say in the day to day running of their lives, through self organising and lobbying. Areas of concern include job creation, access for all, direct action, housing, education, training and civil rights and personal assistants.

Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP)

Dublin Inner City Partnership is an independent local development company operating with a brief of responding to long-term unemployment and socio-economic disadvantage in inner city Dublin. The Partnership opposes all forms of poverty, discrimination and exclusion, and promotes the participation of the resident community of the regeneration of their locality. It aims to enhance the quality of life for all inner city residents who experience deprivation and disadvantage.

Education for People with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 provides for the education of children under 18 with special educational needs. The Act focuses on children's education but there are references to further and adult education. 'Special educational needs' refers to a persons capacity to participate in and benefit from education being restricted due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability.

Equality Authority of Ireland

The Equality Authority is committed to realising positive change in the situation of those experiencing inequality by promoting and defending the rights established in the equality legislation, and providing leadership in:

- building a commitment to addressing equality issues in practice
- creating a wider awareness of equality issues
- celebrating the diversity in Irish society
- mainstreaming equality considerations across all sectors

Family Support Agency (FSA)

The Family Support Agency Act, 2001 provided for the establishment of a Family Support Agency to be the statutory body providing and supporting family mediation services, putting the Family Mediation Service on a statutory basis and bringing together the different schemes and programmes designed to support families.

FÁS

The Training and Employment Authority. Functions include operation of training and employment programmes, provision of a placement service, advisory service for industry, support for co-operative and community based enterprise and the operation of community employment programmes.

Forum of People with Disabilities

The Forum of People with Disabilities, founded in 1990, is a rights-based organisation of people with disabilities. It works as one of the national anti-poverty networks, and is a member of the community platform within the social partnership process. Forum's main focus involves the development of strategies to ensure the inclusion of disabled people's rights and identity within all areas of Irish life.

Health Service Executive (HSE)

The Health Boards Executive was established in February 2002 to enable the health boards, the Eastern Regional Health Authority and non-statutory provider agencies work together on an agenda to develop and modernise the health delivery system. The Board of the Health Boards Executive comprises the Chief Executive Officers of the seven health boards, three area health boards and the Eastern Regional Health Authority.

Independent Living (IL) Philosophy

The philosophy of Independent Living espouses living like everyone else - having control of one's own life, having opportunities to make decisions that affect one's life and being able to pursue activities of one's own choosing, regardless of disability.

Independent Living Centre Support Ltd (ILCS)

Independent Living Community Services Ltd was set up in 1996 to provide practical support to CILs nationwide, in terms of advice and help in day-to-day operations. Since then, many organisations have emerged that can now offer support and implementation services similar to those offered originally by ILCS, resulting in the re-integration of ILCS planning and development functions into the activities and roles of CIL, Carmichael House, and subsequently the forming of the NAG.

Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)

IBEC provides a wide range of services to over 7,000 member businesses and organisations from all sectors and of all sizes. It is the umbrella body for Ireland's leading sectoral groups and associations and the national voice of Irish business and employers.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

The ICTU is the largest civil society organisation on the island, representing and campaigning on behalf of some 770,000 working people. There are currently 56 unions affiliated to Congress, north and south of the border.

Leader

A Leader is defined as a Personal Assistant (PA) user. That is, a Leader employs a PA to provide them with physical assistance as needed in aspects of daily life from personal care, household tasks, assistance in college or the workplace, driving and interpretation. This allows the Leader, as employer, to make their own decisions and be in control of their own life, with many more options available in education, employment, socially and many other areas.

National Disability Authority (NDA)

Established as a statutory agency in June 2000, the NDA's aims are to develop, coordinate and advise on policy, promote equality, participation and inclusion, advise on and monitor the implementation of standards for programmes and services, prepare codes of practice, undertake and commission research and collect and disseminate information.

National Leader Forum (NLF)

The need for a National Leader Forum (NLF) has long been identified by CILs as vital to providing sustained leader support and peer advocacy independent of any one organisation or service provider. The NLF is also about ensuring that service-users,

Leaders, are actively involved in the management of PA services. Currently a NLF report is being finalised which reflects the views of leaders nationwide on the form that such a forum must take in order to best serve Leaders needs.

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators provide an organisation with ways in which to measure progress towards its goals and against its mission statement.

Personal Assistance (PA) Services

A PA is someone who provides a person with a disability (referred to as a 'Leader') with physical assistance to help them in all aspects of daily life from personal care, household tasks, assistance in college or the workplace, driving and interpretation. The PA works to their employer's - the Leader's - agenda. Their role is to assist, not to provide care for, or tell the Leader what is best for them. This allows the Leader to make their own decisions and be in control of their own life, with many more options available in education, employment, socially and many other areas.

Social Inclusion Measures Committees (SIMs)

County/City Development Boards (CDB) are in place throughout the country and their role is to promote co-operation and co-ordination among all agencies and development groups in their respective county or city. Within each CDB's 10 year strategy they are also committed to setting up social inclusion measures committees to drive the social inclusion aspect of their strategy.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are groups and organisations with an interest (stake) in what happens with a project, programme or development.