

NATIONAL NEWS

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"We were born to make manifest the glory of god that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone"
(Nelson Mandela)

"Language is the source of misunderstanding"
(Antoine de Saint-Exupery)

The Education For Persons With Disabilities Bill 2003

The purpose of the Bill is to make detailed provision through which the education of children with educational disabilities can be guaranteed as a right enforceable in law. The central aims of the bill are to provide the structures to ensure that the education system meets the needs of children with disabilities, and in doing so allows them to leave school with the skills necessary to live independent and fulfilled lives. The main provisions of the bill are as follows:

- Parents to have a central role in all, important decisions concerning the education of their children.
- Integrated, inclusive education to be the general approach to education of children with special needs.
- Assessment of a child to be provided up to the age of 18; assessments to take a whole-child, holistic approach.
- A child with an assessed educational disability is to have a detailed and goals driven individual education plan, which is to be regularly reviewed.
- Health boards, in the case of pre-school child, and the National Council for special Education in the case of a school-going child, to have a duty in law to provide the services identified in an assessment or an education plan which are necessary for the child to access and benefit from education.
- The National Council for Special Education is to be established as an agency with primary ... cont pg. 2.

Freedom of Information Act

The Minister for Finance announced details of a Scale of Fees for non-personal information, from 7th July 2003 requested under the FOI Act. Under Section 17 (6) of the Act the new regulations provide rights for parents and guardians of minors and disabled persons and the next-of-kin and personal representatives of deceased persons to invoke section 17 of the FOI Act to have the personal information of their children/relatives amended where it is incorrect, incomplete or misleading. Section 18(5A))

Limerick Training Centre Scoops award for Environment Protection

As the drive to reduce the amount of waste we generate by recycling and other environment friendly measures continues, the initiative of the Limerick Regions Fairgreen Training Centre, has secured the prestigious An Taisce Green Flag Award. The Green Flag was awarded to the Training Centre in recognition of the work that the service and staff at the centre have done on behalf of the environment, particularly the management of waste. The centre has reduced the waste it produces by half over the last two years.

Staff and Service Users worked together on a "green committee!" to review waste management at the centre and developed an action plan to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste. Currently the Fairgreen Training Centre are working with An Taisce and the VEC to establish the project as a basis of a new environmental accreditation for service users.

Des Connolly, area manager at the Fairgreen Centre said "It is more usual for an area manager to be approaching staff with ideas to save money, but in this case the opposite is true. This is very much an initiative led by Eugene Geary and his team which not merely saves money but contributes so positively to the environment, both at the Fairgreen Centre and the wider community".

The National Director of Services would like to extend her congratulations to the Green Team at Fairgreen!

provide rights for the parents and guardians of minors and disabled persons and the next-of-kin and personal representatives of deceased persons to invoke section 18 of the FOI Act to obtain statements of the reasons for decisions affecting their children/relatives. The Minister of Finance will issue separate guidelines for both the above changes, these should be consulted in relation to the operation of these guidelines. Copies of these regulations will be posted on the FOI page of the Department of Finance website at:

www.finance.gov.ie/publications/foi/foi.htm.

National Standards Project

The second draft of the standards are now available. If you require them in alternative format contact NDA by telephone or minicom on 01-6609935 or email standards@nda.ie The National Disability Authority in partnership with the Department of Health and Children have developed draft National Standards for Disability Services. These draft standards were developed following an extensive consultation process which included two rounds of written submissions, a national conference and 7 regional meetings across the country. The standards will apply to disability services funded by the Department of Health and Children. This includes: day residential, respite, training and home support services for children and adults with physical and sensory disabilities; intellectual disabilities and/or autism.

The National Standards Pilot

Over the next 6-8 months twenty service providers across Ireland will pilot the implementation and monitoring of the second draft standards. The main objective of the pilot project is to test and evaluate the application of the assessment process of the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS), including the use of an audit tool. This assessment process includes an internal and external assessment aim to identify the level of compliance of services against the standards. Based on the findings of the pilot project, a time frame for the introduction of the standards and a monitoring system will be finalised in partnership with the statutory monitoring bodies such as the Department of Health and Children, the Eastern Regional Health Authority, the Health Boards, the Social Services Inspectorate and all relevant stakeholders.

HEALTH SERVICE REFORM PROGRAMME

On the 18th of June the Government announced a radical reform programme. This is the most extensive reform programme of the Health System in over 30 years. The programme's priority focus is improved patient care, better value for taxpayers' money and improved health care management. The Minister for Health & Children, Mícheál Martin and the Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, said that "the central aim of the reform programme published is ultimately about providing an improved level of patient care for the increasing number of citizens availing of the Health Service each year". The reform programme includes measures which will impact on every element of the health system and will draw on the conclusions and recommendations of two reports which were published on 18th June also. The Commission on Financial Management & Control Systems in the Health Service (the Brennan Commission); and the Audit of Structures and functions in the Health System (Prospectus). Both these reports are available to view on www.doh.ie under health service reform programme. The measures announced include:

- A major rationalisation of existing health service agencies. This involves the consolidation and amalgamation of 32 agencies including the abolition of the existing Health Board Structures.
- The establishment of a Health Service Executive which will be the first ever body charged with managing and delivering the health service as a single national entity.
- The immediate establishment of an interim National Hospitals Office to take early action in reforming the hospitals sector. This Office will be one of three core parts of the Health Service Executive—the others being a Primary, Community and continuing Directorate to manage non-hospital services and a National Shared Services Centre.
- A Primary, Community and Continuing Care directorate with four regional health offices and 32 local health offices to deliver regional and local non-hospital services.
- The reorganisation of the Department of Health and Children, to ensure improved policy development, oversight and evaluation of service delivery.
- The establishment of a Health Information and quality Authority to ensure that quality and effectiveness of care is promoted throughout the system.
- The devolution of responsibility for budgets to the people actually in charge of delivering services.
- The complete modernisation of supporting processes (service planning, management reporting, etc) to improve planning and delivery of services.

Minister McCreevy endorsed the Brennan Commission conclusion that "there is scope to significantly increase the efficiency and productivity of the health system in Ireland—in effect to provide better services to those who require healthcare and to provide better value for the substantial investment in health services".

EDUCATION BILL CONTINUED...

responsibility to implement the legislation and with a membership drawn from a range of interests with a special interest in or knowledge of the education of children with disabilities, including people with disabilities.

- The Council will have the power to designate a school or centre for education which a child with a special educational need is to attend.
- An accessible and efficient appeals system is to be established.

The appeals process will not restrict any right a parent has to seek redress in the courts if the provisions of the bill are not implemented.

- A statutory duty is imposed on the relevant Ministers to make resources available to schools for the provision of adequate and appropriate education to children with special educational needs, with policy making in this respect based on key principles relating to respect

for constitutional rights and equitable treatment of all children in resource allocation.

- The policies and operations of the various agencies engaged in delivering education related services are to be coordinated and consistent.

Structural Change is only half the battle; People must buy into the change to ensure victory".

The NDA Research Database identifies research into disability in Ireland post 1996 across a number of research types and themes. There is a specific emphasis on more recent research initiatives. International research studies that included Ireland are also included.

Register of Researchers

NDA has created a register of researchers with experience in disability research. The register aims to provide a picture of Irish-based practitioners in the area of disability research. The register also provides a circulation list for restricted tenders for research work that NDA Research Department must commission.

Funding

The NDA seeks to promote research on disability and related issues of benefit to people with disabilities in Ireland. To this end, NDA provides two schemes to fund research in the disability field.

The research scholarship scheme is awarded in each academic year to a small number of post-graduate researchers.

The Research Promotion Scheme is to facilitate disability groups and community/voluntary groups working on disability issues to undertake research.

NDA also commissions research via a tendering process.

NDA Library

NDA Library is the largest library in Ireland dedicated solely to the topic of disability. The collection covers issues like employment, education, health, accessibility, government policy and the arts. People can visit the library or request items by post.

Refunds may be due in respect of the Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS). Where persons did not obtain their full entitlement under the scheme between 1 July 1999 and 28 February 2001. If your expenditure, or your family's expenditure, under the DPS exceeded £32 (€40.63) for any month from July 1999 to February 2001 you may be eligible for a refund of up to £10 (€12.69) for that month(s).

To make a claim you must complete a claim form. Completed claim forms must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documents and the applicants PPS number. Claim form and details on making claims are available on the web site of the General Medical Services (Payments) Board, or directly from the Payments Board as below:

Drugs Payment Scheme Refunds Claim Form

Claims for refunds should be made by 5.00pm on 30 September 2003. Please note that queries can only be dealt with at the addresses listed below. 'DPS Refunds PO Box 9263, Dublin 11, or email: dpsrefunds@gmspb.ie Telephone: 1890 564025 Normal office hours)

CONFERENCE SECTION

The 12th World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities takes place in Montpellier, France from the 14th to the 19th of June 2004. The title of the Congress is "Towards Mutual Understanding: Person, Environment and Community". For more information contact:

Prof. David Felce, Chair Programme Committee, Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities, Meridian Court, North Road, Cardiff, CF1 43BG, Wales.

Or e-mail: felce@cf.ac.uk.

Meetings

Meetings are gatherings of people who discuss and come to conclusions on particular issues.

Working Parties are set up to tackle a problem or a project.

Committees are groups of people who meet regularly to discuss policies and plans and come to decisions on actions.

Meetings are held because they bring together different experiences and points of view to discuss and resolve an issue. An effective meeting reaches a firm conclusion based on the contributions of its members.

Meetings need to be carefully planned.

Chairing a meeting is a demanding role which requires considerable interpersonal skills in controlling and progressing discussions to reach a firm conclusion.

Effectiveness at a meeting depends on preparation, clarity of expression, listening and taking part in discussions in a measured and careful way.

The National Service Users Conference will take place on 18th and 19th November in the Silver Springs Hotel, Cork. For further details please contact Beverley Smith, Chair Southern Region Service Users Council, Caritas Training Centre, Doughcloyne Ind. Estate, Sarsfields Road, Cork. Phone: 021 345439

Autism: from Theoretical Understanding to Educational Intervention—a one-day seminar with: Theo Peeters and Hilde de Clercq, Opleidingscentrum autisme, Belgium. 10th September 2003 from 9.30am to 4.30pm in Jury's Hotel Cork. Cost: Euro 125 for professionals and Euro 90.00 for parents of children with ASD. Contact 00 44 1433 631 036 or e-mail heg.hog@virgin.net. Visit the web site on www.heghog.org.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The use of the internet is expensive and each budget holder is required to authorise any staff member who wishes to use the internet and to agree the specific purposes for that access and to ensure that the cost of the level of access accessed to is within the budget holder's budgetary current provision. Anyone who accesses the internet using a Brothers of Charity Services computer or account number or telephone line takes personal responsibility that he or she does not break the law of the land for example in respect of the Data Protection Act, Copyright laws, or in respect of pedophile material. Where it is suspected that there is a breach of the law the services **have an obligation** to report the matter. National Guidelines will issue on the Use of the Internet within the Brothers of Charity Service, Please make sure that you have read and understood them when they issue.

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We would love to hear from you—
suggestions/ articles

*Next Issue will highlight the
South Eastern Services*

NOTICE BOARD

The National Web Site is currently being developed, please make sure your sector is represented, by forwarding a description as requested to your Director of Service in word format.

Please note that a Governance Statement has issued on the Purchase/Lease and Building of Property .

Reminder to Researchers to get your details back to the National Development Officer.

NEWS

See page 2 of this Newsletter for information on the Health Service Reform Programme.

Drug Payment Refund Scheme—see page 3 or www.doh.ie (Department of Health & Children Website) for further details.

FOI Act, Introduction of Fees for non-personal information—see front page.

Wednesday 16th July.

Minister launches Special Education Bill

Next issue— Result of the Audit of Personal Outcome Measures.

Peter Triest Centre

On January 28th 2003, The National Accreditation Committee (NAC) awarded the Peter Triest Centre, Roscommon with an “Approved Centre with Commendation Status”.

This was a very significant achievement for the Centre, being one of a very limited number of Centres to be awarded this prestigious certificate. Therefore outlining the background to the Award is important in its understanding.

The NAC, which operates under the aegis of FÁS, in conjunction with the Health Boards, accredits Specialist Training Centres against the Standard for Training and Development for People with Disabilities: QA 00/01. The process involved in gaining Accreditation was a prolonged challenge, with a major amount of groundwork required by Rehabilitative Training Staff in the Peter Triest Centre prior to the Application form being sent in to the NAC.

The Award demonstrates compliance with the standard, and was achieved by demonstrating a high level of compliance with all elements of the standard. The centre achieved 95% of available marks and was accredited with Commendation. Designation as an Approved Centre is valid for two years. During these periods the Centres is subject to the normal monitoring requirements, as deemed appropriate by FÁS, Health Boards and awarding bodies.

This application form took the form of a Self Evaluation Questionnaire incorporates the wording of Training and Development for People with Disabilities: Standard QA00/01. Completion of this questionnaire assisted the centre in evaluating its position in relation to the requirements of QA00/01 and helped identify strengths and areas needing improvement.

With the advent of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and in keeping with other service sectors, there is an increasing quality of service being offered by the Peter Triest Centre, and indeed throughout the training sector. People in training can, and do, expect that they will receive training which is effective and which enhances their ability to attain their personal goals.

This standard offers training providers a way to measure and have recognised, the quality of service offered. It draws its strength from the fact that it has been developed following widespread consultation among stakeholders and hence forms an agreed and respected mark of quality.

“Let us win, but if we do not win, let us be brave In the attempt!”

Congratulations to all the Special Olympians, their parents and coaches who took part in the World Games 2003. Congratulations also to all those who took part in the spectacular opening ceremony.

