

NATIONAL NEWS

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“Creativity can be stimulated in everyone, its just a matter of practice, support and a bit of courage.”

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm”

“Money is like muck: no good except when spread”

Social Partnership

Sustaining Progress is the proposed new National Agreement between the Government, Unions and Employers, to follow on from the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. The agreement sets out ten special initiatives to be progressed during the lifetime of this agreement. The focus is on key issues in relation to economic and social policy. A Steering group will be appointed consisting of representative members of the partnership and its role is to agree how action is managed in respect of each of the special themes, taking account of existing structures and activities. The special themes are as follows:

- Housing and Accommodation
- Cost and Availability of Insurance
- Migration and Interculturalism
- Long-term Unemployed, Vulnerable Workers and those who have been made Redundant.
- Tackling Educational Disadvantage – Literacy, Numeracy and Early School Learning Waste Management
- Care- Children People with Disabilities and Older People.
- Alcohol/Drug Misuse
- Including Everyone in the Information Society
- Ending Child Poverty

A large proportion of the negotiations on this agreement were with regard to pay. The deal as it stands provides for a basic 7% pay increase spread over 18 months. The deal proposes a 3% pay rise after nine months, 2% after a further six months and another 2% at the end. It also proposes the full payment by June of next year of the benchmarking awards to the public service which averages out at 8.9%.

Practice for the Employment of People with

A Committee representative of Government Departments, the Social Partners and relevant interest groups dealing with people with disabilities was set up to monitor the commitment in Partnership 2000 to a 3% target level of employment in the public service. The Committee found that the active promotion of codes of practice in relation to the employment of people with

disabilities is a major factor in guiding and informing the public service employers.

The Department of Health & Children asked the Health Service Employers Agency (HSEA) to prepare guidelines which will:

- Raise awareness of the issues involved among health service employers;
- Identify the issues which each individual health service employer needs to address when developing/reviewing their own policies and codes of practice;
- Reaffirm the Government's commitment to the employment of people with disabilities in the health services; and
- Assist in progressing the achievement of the 3% target in the health service.

The purpose of these guidelines is to set out a framework that should outline the development of Codes of Practice by individual health service employers covering the employment of people with disabilities. It sets out policy and best practice to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to access employment in the health service and are assisted to achieve their full potential in their working life.

The guidelines aim to do more than meet the requirements set down under the Employment Equality Act 1998. They are aimed towards increasing the pool of applicants for health service job opportunities by specifically targeting the employment of people with disabilities and increasing access for all people with disabilities to the full range of career opportunities within the health service.

These guidelines will be launched in the near future.

(Article reproduced from a HSEA publication)

Freedom of Information Act

FOI training opportunities were announced at the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies FOI consultation day on 27th February 2003. Please contact your Regional FOI co-ordinator for details. The Department of Health have invited an expert from Australia (Megan Carter) to undertake another round of training. All Decision Makers and Reviewers who were unable to attend in the first round should sign up. I highly recommend Megan Carter as a trainer (Ed)

The Brothers of Charity Services Merseyside— From Residential Services to a Domiciliary Provider.

With the support of their commissioners and with the impact of the White Paper 'Valuing People—A New Strategy for Learning Disabilities for the 21st Century', the Merseyside Service made a major decision that would change the way they deliver services in Liverpool in the future:-

In August 2001 the Trustees for the Charity made a decision that they no longer wished to be the owners or have owner responsibility for the properties in the Liverpool area. The Service entered discussions with a housing association in Lancashire to discuss the transfer of ownership of the properties to a housing association. It was agreed that all properties would be leased to Progress Housing Association and that they would replace or upgrade each property within 5 years.

During the Summer of 2001 Merseyside piloted and tested the housing benefit process to secure rent levels and counselling and support payments. These pilots proved successful and they then wrote to the Registration and Inspection Unit to advise them of their intention to relinquish the registration of 20 properties in the Liverpool area. In April 2002 Progress Housing Association issued tenancy agreements to 60 individuals and officially acknowledged them as tenants of Progress Care.

The roles that existed within a registered care setting were no longer required, therefore job appraisal took place resulting in new job descriptions. Staff embraced the new philosophy for the enabling and support of tenants. By the end of 2002 the Commission indicated that they were satisfied that the service provided by Merseyside at the 20 locations met the identified criteria for the provision of supported Living environments. This meant that the move from a Residential Service to a registered Domiciliary Agency was complete.

Disability Legislation Consultation Group

ADVOCACY.....

Allow yourself to act on a person's behalf.

Don't be intimidated.

Vocalise your concerns.

Opinions on a service users' rights should be stated.

Continue to monitor all aspects of a service users medical and social needs.

Anticipate resistance while striving for excellence.

Count on your instincts for a service users welfare.

You can make a difference.

In March 2002, following the withdrawal of the disability bill, 2001, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform set up an Expert Consultation Team with the task to consult all stakeholders and report to Government. At the same time the Minister of State invited the Chairperson of the National Disability Authority to facilitate meaningful dialogue at the national level with people with disabilities, their families, carers and service providers. This led to the formation of the Disability Legislation Consultation Group, made up of umbrella groups and organisations in the disability sector.

The Disability Legislation Consultation Group have produced a document summarising consultations, recommendations and discussions. It sets out what should be included as core elements and underpinning principles in any new disability legislation. The document is split into four main parts which contain fifteen core elements.

Part 1 contains, Context, Purpose and Principles and Definitions.

Part 2 contains, Rights and Provisions contained in the Legislation.

Part 3 contains, Implementation, Monitoring, Review, Complaints and Redress.

Part 4 contains, Areas Outside of the Legislation.

The report sets out definitions for disability, mainstreaming, access and accessibility, equalisation of opportunities, positive action, reasonable accommodation and advocacy. Part 2 calls for the Rights of a person with a disability to be enshrined in legislation., and for an inde-

pendent needs assessment and service coordination. This section also states that legislation should provide for the Right to the full range and types of advocacy for all people with disabilities and in all settings and provided through an independent advocacy agency.

The task of monitoring the legislation should rest with the Equality Authority. The Disability Legislation Consultation Group also suggest that when the EU Framework Directive on equal treatment is fully transposed in Irish law, expected sometime in 2003, the government should bring the disability legislation in affect alongside this. The Group also suggest that there should be a Minister for Disabilities with cross-departmental responsibilities. This would promote mainstreaming in a very real way.

Rights based legislation requires effective means of enforcement and remedies and for this reason the legislation should provide for enforcement of the provisions outlined, ensure that the rights are justifiable and contain no provision that precludes the right of people with disabilities to take legal action. A failure to comply with the provisions of the legislation should be construed as 'discrimination' under the Equal Status Act and therefore under the remit of the Quality Authority. These are the proposals of the Consultation Group and it remains to be seen how much is taken on board by the Minister.

Quality and Costs of Residential Supports for Irish Adults with Intellectual Disability

A study of the quality and costs of residential supports for adults with intellectual disabilities was commissioned by the Department of Health & Children from the Centre for the Study of Developmental Disabilities, N.U.I. Dublin. The report summarises the aims of the study, the methodology used and the main findings. The findings relate to service processes, where service resources and costs are presented in terms of outcomes for individuals. In addition, factors found to predict variation in quality are presented in table format. The report also makes recommendations for policy, practice and further research in light of the evidence presented. Companion reports focus on:

1. The Quality of Residential Supports Provided in Campus Settings and Group Homes for people with a disability.
2. A Comparative Analysis of Quality in Residential Support.
3. Findings Related to a Direct Observational Study of the Behaviour of a Sample of 27 Residents in Both Campus and Group Home Settings.

All these reports are available from the Centre for the Study of Developmental Disabilities located on the National University of Ireland, Dublin.

FROM CHARITY TO RIGHTS

Prof. Gerard Quinn, National University of Ireland, Galway, compiled a report on 'The Evolution of the Rights-Based Approach to Disability: International and Irish Perspective'.

The report states that a rights-based perspective denies that people are problems and takes seriously the assertion that all persons are born equal and with inalienable rights. At the heart of this perspective lies a revolutionary new approach to human difference—the so-called 'social construct' idea. According to the 'social construct' idea people are not born different. Difference is not inherent in a human being. It comes into existence—or is socially constructed—when one person is compared to another or to an average or benchmark. The real problem is not the difference of disability but the way in which that difference is constructed. The real question is not how people differ but why that particular average was selected in the first place. At one extreme under this model it is often asserted that it is society that disables people.

Prof. Quinn's paper can be found on: www.enableireland.ie/accesswest/intros/essay.

CONFERENCE SECTION

CNEASTA—Spring Seminar

Person Centred Planning—A Practical Guide for Service Providers in Drawing-up and Implementing a Person Centred Plan.

Speakers: Ms Ann marie Frizzel, Project Manager, North Western Health Board
Ms Caroline Dench, Co-ordinator, The Callan Institute, Dublin.

Date: Thursday 1st May 2003 from 10.30am to 4.00pm

Seminar Fee including Lunch: 50 euros.

Venue: Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Contact: Sheila or Cathy, Donegal Cheese, IDA Industrial Estate, Lisfannon, Buncrana, Co. Donegal. 074-9363690

*Physical Interventions Conference 2003
BLD—8th & 9th May 2003 in Birmingham.
For further information contact the Learning Services team at Bild on 00 44 1562 723023 or e-mail: z.tibbetts@bild.org.uk.*

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LINGO

Attachment—document, picture, video or audio clip, or any type of file sent by e-mail.

Browser—Software that allows you to access information and navigate the Web.

Download—The receiving of data sent to you over the Internet.

E-mail—Message sent electronically over the Internet.

Hard disk—The storage area for a PC's data.

Hardware—equipment such as the keyboard, monitor and mouse.

Internet—A worldwide network of computers with the ability to exchange information.

ISDN—Integrated Services Digital Network. It allows the digital transmission of information at much higher speeds.

Modem—The device that connects a PC to the Internet via a telephone line.

PC—Personal Computer.

Search Engine—A tool to help you locate relevant web pages using keyword searches.

Software—Programmes that tell computers how to perform certain applications.

URL—Uniform Resource Locator—A tool which points you to specific information on the Internet e.g. URL address, they mean the "address" of a particular website.

www—World Wide Web—The part of the Internet that is designed as a series of graphical pages for you to access information.

RECYCLE

Recycling saves valuable resources and energy thereby reducing our impact on the environment.

Everyone should try to:

1. Recycle paper—use the bins and shredders provided.
2. Activate the energy save on your PC
3. Reuse envelopes
4. Order recycled stationery products where possible.

If you are passionate about green issues

1. Take your mug to the water cooler when you get a drink, instead of using a disposable cup.
2. Use the stairs instead of the lift—going up one floor uses enough energy to power a light bulb for 36 hours.
3. Walk or cycle to work, or use public transport.

For the real hardcore 'ecowarriors'

1. Volunteer to be an energy warden, switch off lights and electrical equipment when you go home, and spread the green word!
2. Lobby
3. Set up your own recycling scheme and let us know about it, so we can promote it.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT Limerick Services

Cois Coillte

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We would love to hear from you—
suggestions/ articles

*Next Issue will highlight the
Roscommon Services*

NOTICE BOARD

*Draft National Standards for
Disability Services were published in
January 2003 by the Department of
Health & Children and the National
Disability Authority. For copies
email: standards@nda.ie*

NEWS

Agreement has now been reached on the implementation of revised salary scales for Assistant House Parents and House Parents employed in the Intellectual Disability Sector.

In July 2002 a Joint Committee formally recommended that a process of professionalisation for houseparent grades within the intellectual disability sector was appropriate and the salary scales which apply to Child Care Workers should therefore apply.

The one outstanding issue following this recommendation was the implementation date for the payment of the new salary scales. IMPACT sought an implementation date of 1st January 2001 in line with the original pay awards for Child Care workers and rejected management's proposal that retrospective payments should be made with effect from 1st July 2002.

The Labour Court recommended an implementation date of 1st February 2002 for the new salary scales. This recommendation was accepted by IMPACT following a ballot of its members.

Limerick's challenging behaviour service, known as "Cois Coillte" is part of the overall strategy of the Mid Western Health Board to develop services for young adults with a mild intellectual disability together with significant challenging behaviour. The other components of the service include the development of community outreach teams in Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary and high support "step down" community housing in each of these areas. The Clare outreach team is in operation since 2000.

Cois Coillte is an Assessment and Intervention Service for people with challenging behaviours. The service is for adults between the age of 18 and 35 who have a general intellectual disability in the mild range together with significant challenging behaviour as defined by Emmerson (1995). Two members of the staff team recommend admissions following comprehensive assessment. Prior to admission a contract of service is drawn up and agreed between the service provider and the referral agent. This contract will usually cover service provision during the period of stay and responsibility regarding post discharge care.

The Service became operational in November 2001 and can deliver service to six service users. Currently five individuals (two females, and three male) are receiving intervention in Cois Coillte. Staffing by day is usually 1:1 and at night 0.4:1 together with twilight cover. The staff team consist of:

Clinical Nurse Manager (2)	:1	WTE (Whole Time Equivalent)
Nursing Staff	:7.74	WTE
Care Assistance	:9.62	WTE
Clinical Psychology	:0.5	WTE
Social Work	:Consultation on request	
Psychiatric Registrar	0.5	WTE

The model of intervention is based on a futures plan for each individual service user. Positive programming together with psychopharmacology and individual or group psychotherapy is put in place as appropriate to reduce the frequency and severity of challenging behaviour. Each Service User has an individualised daily activity plan, which may include participation in the local day service programme, supervised work placement, and open employment.

Currently the service is engaged in the pre-discharge process in relation to three of the current service users. While this service is still in its infancy its contribution to the lives of those using the service has been significant.

Positive About Disabled People

Studies showing that people with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people have provoked claims that employers are prejudice. The question of disabled people's access to work is complex but not insurmountable. In the UK the 'Positive About Disabled People two-ticks' symbol is awarded by the Employment Service to employers who can show that they adhere to the following practices:

Interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum requirements for the job and consider them on their ability.

Ask the disabled employee at least once a year what you can do to ensure that they develop and use their abilities at work.

Make every effort to ensure that when employees become disabled they stay in employment.

Take action to ensure that key employees develop the awareness of disability needed to make these commitments work.

Review the commitments and what has been achieved annually, planning ways to improve on them and informing all staff about progress and future plans.

Further info: www.drc-gb.org

