

Invest in Inclusion

Independent Living Movement Ireland Budget 2023 Priorities

Introduction to Independent Living Movement Ireland



Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) is a campaigning, national Disabled Person's Organisation (DPO) that promotes the philosophy of independent living and seeks to build an inclusive society. ILMI works with disabled people on a cross-impairment basis. Central to the way we work is to ensure that policy and legislative discourse and decisions that impact on the lives of disabled people have to be directly influenced by those whose lives are directly affected. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) at its core is framed through an understanding of disability known as the social model of disability. From ILMI's perspective, the social model and a human rights approach informs all aspects of the work of ILMI. As a National Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) ILMI meaningfully consults and engages with its members on key policies that impact on our lives on an ongoing basis. ILMI recently consulted our membership on the issues that are impacting on our lives as disabled people.

Ireland ratified the UNCRPD in 2018. It is vital that all budgetary measures proposed by political parties are in line with the State's obligations under the UNCRPD. ILMI is calling on all parties to invest in inclusion for budget 2023. This means moving away from outdated systems that segregate and marginalise disabled people. ILMI is calling on the Government to only invest in the supports and systems that disabled people want to ensure the full inclusion of disabled people in society, with choice and control over all aspects of our lives.

1. Cost of Living and Cost of Disability:

ILMI welcomed the cost of disability report (COD) however this Budget must address the extreme poverty and deprivation rates disabled people experience. The COD report did not provide for inflation, with many disabled people currently facing extreme financial pressure. This is on top of the dis-proportionate financial impact many disabled people experienced during the pandemic.

Recommendation: Our members believe that a "cost of living" or "equity payment" urgently needs to be introduced, in addition to an increase in core welfare rates. Such measures would allow many disabled people to exit the current economic poverty trap we find ourselves in and to participate in society on a more equal basis to others.

2. Investing and resourcing DPO's:

all Departments should endeavour to prioritise engagement with Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) including measures being developed in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in relation to disability equality budgeting.

Recommendation: Invest and resource genuine DPOs at all levels (local and national) to allow for the essential development of existing structures and the re-orientation of funding to ensure the real inclusion of disabled people. This development needs commitment to increase the funding and access of Disability Equality Training (by Disabled People) not disability awareness training. Disability Equality Training needs to be led by DPOs such as ILMI in cooperation with local structures.

3. Independent Living Supports:

Currently, there is no legal right to a Personal Assistance Service (PAS) in Ireland.

Recommendation: This Government needs to prioritise investment in the PAS and enact legislation to enable disabled people to live a life we choose. It is our members' recommendation that Budget 2023 should invest in PAS rather than in residential care or services that continually segregate us. Our PAS campaign (www.ilmi.ie) outlines our five asks to Define, Legislate, Invest, Standardise and Promote the PAS. In addition we are asking that assistive technologies and assisted decision making is recognised as independent living supports.

4. Housing:

Housing is not accessible or affordable for disabled people.

Recommendation: Housing investment needs to be based on both universal design and being "wheelchair liveable" to ensure disabled people can live and participate in their communities. The income thresholds and means tests need to be reviewed urgently for social housing and housing adaptations. There should be opportunities for disabled people who work to access housing in the private rent and buying market.

5. Transport:

Public transport and transport more broadly speaking is a major issue for disabled people to be able to participate in society.

Recommendation: We need to invest in a fully accessible transport system with direct meaningful consultation and engagement with Disabled people from the start. This would in turn reduce carbon emissions. Mobility grants need to be reinstated to give disabled people personal mobility back. The Disabled Driver and passenger scheme and tax relief scheme criteria is in urgent need of review. It excludes people based on their impairment. Our members recommend a transport access allowance, similar to that implemented in the UK. In addition to allow equity of opportunity for disabled people who work and do not meet the free travel pass criteria; their PA's should receive free travel when accompanying them on public transport.

6. Employment:

Accessing, retaining and progressing in employment for disabled people can be a challenge.

Recommendation: Budget 2023 needs to allocate specific resources in order to meet commitments to implement policies such as the Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) and targets set in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy. CES targets need to translate at all levels in employment to go in line with disabled people occupying "careers" and not just "jobs". Therefore supports should follow the person similar to the model in the UK.

More supports are needed for "working disabled people" who feel they are not supported i.e. don't qualify for social housing yet experience a higher cost as a result of their impairment. Private renting and buying is not affordable and mostly not accessible.

Recommendation: Affordable housing should be tied to what the disabled person earns not the market value to allow participation in the private market.

Some employment supports are very "impairment" focused i.e. the wage subsidy scheme asks disabled people to sign a piece of paper and agree that they are less productive than their colleague. In addition, self-employed disabled people need supports especially disabled artists.

Recommendation: Employment supports need to be immediately reviewed including employment schemes such as "employability". The Reasonable Accommodation Fund (RAF) should include Personal Assistance and must extend to voluntary work. Also, there should be equity in welfare payments i.e. some welfare payments have different criteria in relation to voluntary work and holiday periods.

If you require further information visit www.ilmi.ie or email info@ilmi.ie
