

Donegal Centre for Independent Living

Monthly News Bulletin

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Donegal Northwest 10K This year we are inviting everyone to get involved and take part in the northwest 10K. The 10K can be walked, jogged, wheeled or run and everyone can take part. So please get your family, friends and neighbours involved to show their support for DCIL.

To book your place, please return the completed **registration form together with the fee** to DCIL office no later than **Tuesday 1st May 2012** as numbers are limited. For details and forms go to our website. You can also e-mail Pat at patdcil@eircom.net or telephone the office directly on 074-91-28945. If you can't take part on the day, any sponsorship for PA's/Leaders who will travel to Letterkenny for the event would be greatly appreciated.

FUNDRAISING DANCE!!!

Venue: Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town Date: Thursday 31st May 2012 Music: Country Traditions

Draw and Prizes on the night!!!

Admission: €7 including refreshments

Tickets available from Laura Mangan, Donegal Town, Tel No. 087 984 9197, the DCIL office or at the door on the night.

Funding Cuts/Salary Reductions The new salary reductions will come into effect from this month. We would like to thank people for their understanding on this issue. We have worked hard to minimise the effect of these cuts on employees. As we are unable to predict any cuts we will receive in the future, we realise that we must embark on further fundraising campaigns and raise our profile as a charity within the community. We are committed to doing this with the support of our leaders and PA's to ensure that we can meet future cuts with minimal impact on staff.

Meet and Greet CIL Carmichael House, other CILs nationwide and the leaders alliance are inviting you, TDs and senators from all over the country to attend a meet and greet. They would like you to speak to your local politicians directly and tell them what cuts to PA services would do to the lives of people. We don't want to return to the dark days before PA services!

There will be tables around the edge of the room to set up stalls so that your politician can come straight over to you. Bring your banners to show the politicians in one glance that the Centres for Independent Living cover the four corners of the country. The event will be held from 11.30 - 14.30 on the 25th of April in the Oak Room of the Mansion House, Dublin.

Please get in contact with DCIL to let us know if you can make the trip!

Meeting with Minister Joan Burton Michael McCabe, Tom King and Gary Lee met with minister Burton on the 2nd of April, as part of CIL CMH's on-going campaign in relation to the CE schemes. The meeting was very positive and echoed what was discussed in our prior meeting with Mr. Oliver Egan, Assistant Secretary General at the Dept. of Social Protection.

We are very optimistic of a good outcome for the CIL CE schemes.

Minister Burton announced her intention to appoint CIL CMH to the new Dept. of Social Protection Consultative Forum which is scheduled to be set up this June.



◀ *Congratulations to Catherine & James Coyle who recently celebrated their marriage. The couple were married in John the Baptist Church, Carrigart with a reception afterwards in the Silver Tassie. Catherine works as a receptionist in DCIL office. Board of Management, Colleagues, Leaders & PA's all send Catherine & James their best wishes for their future.*

Rosaleen Bradley manager of DCIL presenting a bouquet of flowers to Margaret Gallagher on her leaving DCIL. Also in the photo Marian O'Donnell, Marie Rafferty and Madeline Wilkinson. At the back Michelle Murphy, Vanessa Callen and Catherine Coyle all enjoying a great night out. ▶



Chairperson of DCIL Frank Larkin reports on Hearing in the European Parliament “Defend the right of Independent Living-How the EU’s Austerity Policy is Undermining the Lives of People with Disabilities.

As chairperson of the Donegal Centre for Independent Living I travelled to Brussels on Tuesday of last week for a series of meetings with Irish MEP’s and to attend the above named hearing.

The hearing on Thursday was a 3 and a half hour event which consisted of two sessions with different panels of speakers. The first session was entitled “Understanding the impact of austerity measures on persons with disabilities. The moderator of the panel was Kartika Liotard MEP. The speakers were Cecilia Wikstrom MEP, John Evans OBE advisory board member of the European network on Independent Living. Michael Mc Cabe chairperson of the Centre for Independent Living Dublin. Kapka Panayotova director of the Centre for Independent Living in Sofia and chairwoman of the European network for Independent Living. The final speaker of this panel was Professor Alan Roulstone, expert on Global and European disability policy.

The second panel discussion was entitled “addressing the threat of cuts to the rights of persons with disabilities at European level. The moderator on this panel was Paul Murphy MEP. The speakers were Simona Giarratano Policy Officer at the European disability forum, Sian Jones Policy Officer at the European anti-poverty network and the final speaker was Peter Lambrechts of the European network of Independence Living.

In setting out the theme of the day the early speakers spoke of the importance of EU member states needing to exchange ideas around good practice because with the continuation of austerity measures people with disabilities are continuing to be an easy target. Governments are reassessing disability in order that they can continue with austerity policies and this is happening without consultation or dialogue between government and disability organisations.

Policy changes are determining that people who were considered to be people with disabilities are now being redefined as not having a disability yet these changes are not evidence based. This is having a devastating effect on the lives of people with disabilities. In Ireland for instance there are 22 Centres for Independent Living and of those 19 which are running Community Employment Schemes have seen their FAS Community Employment funding reduced by 66%. This coupled with a cut of 11% of core funding for all CIL’s over the last two years is having a devastating effect on the lives of people with disabilities, some of who are afraid to be identified when talking of the impact the cuts are having on their lives.

There are no impact assessments on the effects of the austerity measures on the lives of people with disabilities and the reality is that people with disabilities are being moved back into poverty and there still is a very real link between disability and poverty. Re-institutionalisation may become a reality for many people with disabilities but an even greater worry is a significant rise in disability hate crime within the member states.

The EU convention on the rights of people with disabilities is not being ratified by all member states and this is difficult in the current financial crisis as the lack of consultation goes against the EU convention. People with disabilities are even having their right to freedom of movement between member states infringed upon because there is no joined up thinking in relation to Independent living services in member states. Education and working rights need to be given greater focus as people with disabilities need to be listened to in finding the solution.

Sian Jones from the European anti-poverty network stated that public policy and not the financial crisis was found to be the problem and poverty and disability were inextricably linked. On a very practical level it was stated that the austerity measures also meant that some people with disabilities had been unable to attend the event in the European Parliament because their Personal assistant hours had been cut, inaccessible transport and lack of accessible accommodation.

According to economic experts the austerity measures to disability services are counterproductive. It is imperative that funding is made available for policy research into the effectiveness of independent living.