



Donegal Centre of  
Independent Living

# Strategic Plan 2025-2028





DCIL's mission is to support and *empower people* with **DISABILITIES** in Donegal

to achieve

*independent living*

and to **actively** participate as = **equal citizens** = in **sociiiiiiety**

by having choice and control over their own lives.

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SECTION 01

## A message from our CEO

Donegal CIL continues to operate successfully in a challenging funding environment for our sector. With tenacity, good working relationships and hard work we rise to these challenge every day. We take seriously our role in contributing to Ireland's responsibility under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. We will continue our persistence in pushing forward on change and reform in our sector where there is still much room for improvement in how services are made available to people with disabilities and how Independent Living can be truly valued and realised for the people we serve.



Donegal CIL is front and centre in delivering this change. As a registered charity we operate very differently to others who provide Personal Assistant services. We do not pay any profits to owners or shareholders but re-invest in providing other services and supports to meet the unmet need. We also have the capacity to apply for grants and raise funds to better serve our Leaders with additional supports and opportunities.

In this three-year plan we look to build an evidence base for the impact of our work. Through our close involvement of our Leaders, including as staff and board members, we are convinced about the changes our services create in the day to day lives of our Leaders as well as in more fundamental life-changing ways.

Our impact management approach in the next three years will formalise how we use feedback to improve and to prove our impact. This evidence base will help further build our team's confidence about our approach. It will demonstrate to funders how investment in a registered charity delivers so much more than the deliverables in our contracts. We are confident that our research will show that funding to DCIL delivers much greater social returns than the investment might suggest or what would be achieved in funding to commercial operations.

Our new strategic plan sees us continue to honour our Leaders' rights – their rights of freedom, choice and control – the very ethos of independent living. We also honour our staff and put forward our ambition to provide secure and fair employment.

As one of the longest-established and leading Centres for Independent Living in Ireland, we are committed to sharing knowledge and collaborating with others in our field. We look forward to joining voices with like-minded organisations to drive positive change at a national level.

I am delighted to introduce this plan and look forward with confidence, to working with our fantastic team of staff, board of directors and our broader community to execute it.

*Regards,*  
**Rosaleen Doherty**  
*CEO Donegal Centre for Independent Living*

# Foreword from our Chairperson



As chairperson of DCIL and as a leader supported by DCIL, it is a privilege to be part of our new Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

DCIL will continue in its role in facilitating people with disabilities to live truly independent lives of their own choosing which is underpinned by our philosophy of Independent Living.

We have a unique board of directors in that more than half of our board must be made up of people with disabilities. This means that the needs of our leaders and personal assistants are always forefront and centre stage in all decision making.

As chairperson I know what it takes behind the scenes to make our organisation grow and how hard our fabulous team in Ballymacool strive for more and better services for our leaders. We in the board are happy to support this Strategic plan and have every confidence that it will be implemented by Rosaleen Doherty, our hardworking and committed CEO and her dedicated team, with our full support.

*Kind regards,*  
**Kathy Gillespie**  
*Chairperson of Donegal Centre for Independent Living*



# About us

Donegal Centre for Independent Living (DCIL) was established on 01 October 1999. It is a company limited by guarantee, number 352126 and registered with the Charities Regulator, charity number 16580.

Providing a self-directed Personal Assistant (PA) service, which gives Leaders (service users) choice and control over their service enabling them to live a life of their choosing is our main focus.

DCIL is the leading provider of Personal Assistant Services in Donegal, and the organisation is enshrined by the philosophy of independent living. "Independent Living" means that people with a disability achieve the same life opportunities and choices as everyone else. That includes growing up with their families, attending the local school, using the same bus, gaining employment in line with their education and abilities, having equal access to the same services and establishments of social life, culture, and leisure.

**INDEPENDENT LIVING** means that people with a disability achieve the same life opportunities and choices as everyone else.

# History of DCIL

1972

1992

1999

2002



## Berkeley, California

The Independent Living Movement grew out of the disability rights movement, which began in the 1960s. The first Centre for Independent Living was established in Berkeley, California in 1972. Its establishment was motivated by individuals seeking to leave residential care and live independently in the community, as part of the community.



## Dublin, Ireland

In Ireland the first Independent Living seed was planted in Dublin in 1992. The movement was brought to Dublin by a core group of individuals with disabilities. The first Centre for Independent Living was incorporated as CIL Carmichael House in March 1992. Our CEO, Rosaleen Doherty, commenced work with the initial group in 1993.



## DCIL established in Donegal

DCIL was first established on 01 October 1999 through the operation of a Community Employment Scheme. The scheme originally obtained funding of £25,000 for 1 year and commenced with 14 Leaders. Rosaleen Doherty, at this time, resigned her post in Dublin to develop the organisation here in Donegal.



## The Growth of DCIL

The Donegal Centre for Independent living (DCIL) was incorporated on 15th January 2002. From its humble beginnings the organisation began to quickly grow and were soon providing PAs services throughout Donegal. The positive impact of independent living on people lives was quickly evident. Numerous people had only ever experienced residential care, were for the first time afforded the opportunity to participate in real independent living.

# History of DCIL

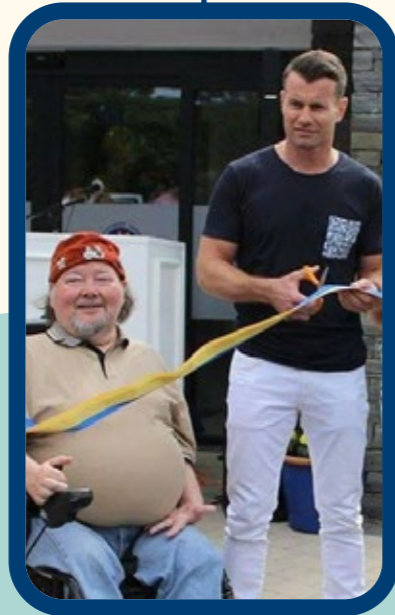
2008



## Strengthening Commitment

Despite a period marked by financial challenges and inadequate funding, DCIL continued to grow and strengthen its commitment to Independent Living. This year saw the organisation expand its range of services, introducing new supports designed to empower people with disabilities in their daily lives. These were all key steps in promoting inclusion, autonomy, and participation across Donegal.

2015



## DCIL opens its new premises

In the earlier years DCIL moved from various rented accommodation as the organisation continued to grow. In 2015, DCIL moved into its own purpose-built facility in Ballymacool Letterkenny. The building was officially opened by Irish football legend Shay Given and Martin Naughton, one of the founding members of the Irish independent living movement.

2023



## Empowering Independence

DCIL received funding from Rethink Ireland to support people with disabilities in gaining greater independence and to enhance accessibility across Donegal. DCIL also conducted accessibility audits in a variety of public and private spaces, leading to positive changes and increased awareness in the community. Additionally, tailored guidance was offered to support disabled people through the social housing application process.

2025

## DCIL Today

DCIL today continue to be the Leading provider of self-directed PA services in Donegal. We are also the leading provider of educational support workers to student with disabilities in third level education in Donegal. Today DCIL offer a range of supplementary independent living services, including:



Accessible Transport



Peer Support



Accessibility Assessment



Independent Living and Disability Awareness Training

**€2.8m**  
turnover in 2024.

**78%**  
of our income is from the Health Service Executive (HSE) with whom we are contracted to deliver services to people with disabilities across the county of Donegal.

**100**  
leaders across all corners of the county.

**120**  
personal assistants support our leaders. Both groups in turn rely on the small team of core staff located in Letterkenny at Ballymacool House.

**80,800**

hours of PA supports delivered to Leaders – transforming lives based on those Leaders' needs and wants.

## We do more!

Beyond the core service of Personal Assistants, we deliver a suite of programmes to our Leaders and PAs .

# Vision, Mission and Values



## Our Vision

DCIL’s vision is to see people with disabilities both in Donegal and throughout Ireland, finally realising their potential through the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities enabling people’s freedom and choice to live independently with adequate supports in a truly inclusive society.



## Our Mission

DCIL’s mission is to support and empower people with disabilities in Donegal to achieve Independent Living and to actively participate as equal citizens in society by having choice and control over their own lives.



## Our Core Values

Our core values are underpinned by the philosophy of Independent Living and all activities are aimed towards promoting:

- **Independence**
- **Options**
- **Rights**
- **Empowerment**

# How do we do it?

The delivery of our service is fundamentally different to the commercial services who offer in-home supports. As a registered charity we do not pay any profits to shareholders, and we supplement our traded income with grants and fundraising to better serve our Leaders.

Our fundamental beliefs around independent living make this model dramatically more beneficial to the Leader but it is not without its challenges. The requirement for more flexible rosters within a self-directed service, can lead to staffing challenges. This coupled with the pause in funding when a Leader is in hospital or respite and the constraints with social welfare on part time PA staff are obstacles the organisation must overcome on a regular basis.

Despite these challenges we firmly believe that our approach is superior, and we are determined to continue to offer this flexible Leader-led approach. Elements of our strategic plan look to address these challenges so we can continue to offer the high-quality service our Leaders rightly expect.

## Our approach to Service Delivery is:



The social model sees society and the barriers it places to the aspirations and progress of people with disability to be a fault. These barriers tend to be in three kinds: environmental, attitudinal and organisational.



We don't believe in evoking a sense of pity and charity towards people with disabilities. Instead, we want to encourage change and advance the rights of people with disabilities.



No policy should be developed or decided upon by any representative without the full and direct participation of people with disabilities



Striving to provide equal access and opportunity, fully participating in every aspect of DCIL to the best of their abilities and desires.

# Theory of Change: How DCIL creates change in the lives of Leaders

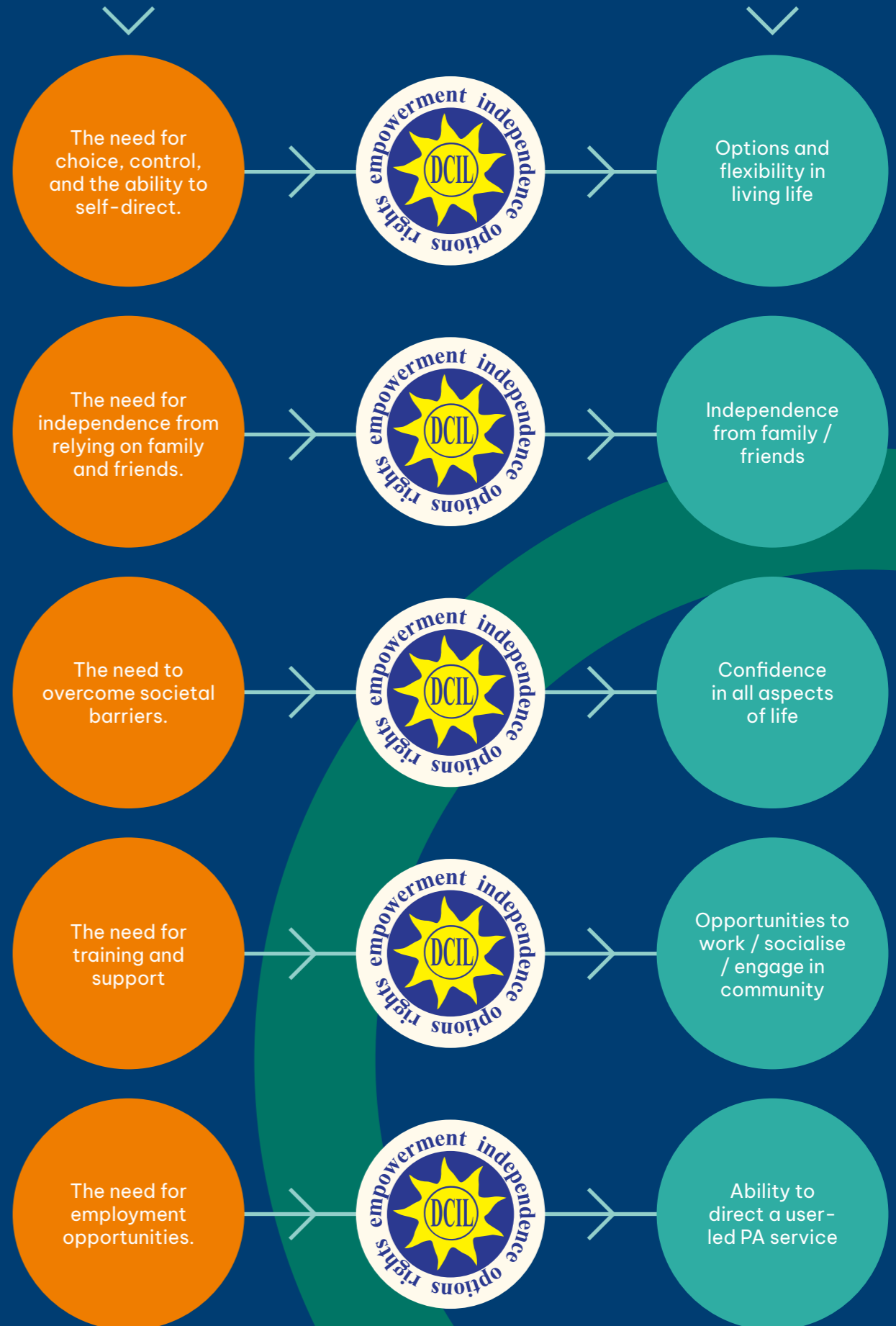


As part of the Rethink Ireland funding we have created a draft Theory of Change for how DCIL affects change in the lives of our Leaders. This theory has been created using the insights of our Leaders and describes how DCIL activities leads to outcomes they value and achieve.

We operate in a sector where there are many other providers who engage with people with disabilities. However, we believe and now seek to gather evidence to support our Theory of Change – detailing what makes our offer uniquely capable of meeting the needs of our Leaders.

## Needs of a potential Leader

## Outcomes enjoyed by Leaders at DCIL



# Demonstrating and Improving these Outcomes and the longer-term Impact



As a user led service, we incorporate our Leader's voice in everything we do. Anecdotally our Leaders tell us these are the outcomes they value and that they experience within DCIL.

We now aim to capture feedback more systematically to demonstrate to our leaders and funders the impact DCIL makes in improving people's lives. We take feedback from our leaders very seriously and will use this information to continuously enhance our services.

In our Leader review feedback loop, we will now explicitly ask our Leaders to indicate:

01. What has changed for you by having a PA service from DCIL?
02. What difference does that make for you?
03. How can these outcomes (above) improve your independence?
04. Are these outcomes achieved?
05. Are there situations where they are not achieved?
06. What do you believe is the biggest challenge in managing your user-led PA service?
07. What do we do well?
08. What can we do to do better?
09. Are you happy that you are getting enough hours?



Gathering this data will happen on an annual basis via our Leader reviews. Data analysis and reporting will contribute to our annual Impact Report and will be communicated to our existing funders, Leaders and potential funders.

In doing so we look to better serve our Leaders, build our reputation and become known for that unique service that contributes to independent living and enhances the lives of those with disabilities.

We know that specialising in self-directed PA services differentiates us from other service providers. We will continue to deliver for our Leaders, attract and retain our valuable Personal Assistants and create an environment where the philosophy of independent living is at the core of all we do.



# Context of this Strategic Plan

Demand for our services continues apace and the value we see delivered encourages us to do more and serve better. We know that when DCIL works for a Leader it is transformative as the Leader self-directs their own lives and uses the resources available to them for maximum impact.

Many elements of our Strategic Plan 2021–2024 have been successfully delivered – others are outstanding and incorporated into this plan. For example, we were unable to complete our capital project as we did not receive the anticipated funding for its development. This remains a priority and we are ready, willing and able to deliver it and are actively seeking funding opportunities for this much-needed expansion.

As per our previous plan, for this iteration we formed a small team – the Strategic Plan Focus Group consisted of members of our staff and Board. Facilitated by a grant from Rethink Ireland.

### To develop the plan DCIL to the following actions:



We reviewed the actions from our previous strategic plan.



We considered feedback from our Leaders.



We consulted with the Board and staff.



We assessed the future needs and objectives of DCIL.

At the end of this process, we are committed to an ambitious strategic plan that will guide DCIL to 2028.

More person-centred support for people with disabilities to live full, independent lives.



The HSE, our largest funder accepts the need for a “more person-centred support for people with disabilities to live full, independent lives”.

DCIL goes further however, and will continue to advocate for person-led supports to be at the heart of what we do and what the sector does.

We are the best placed organisation in the Northwest to lead this change – change that is needed and is acknowledged as necessary by the sector.

We see many people with disabilities who are not afforded this level of control over the lives and we will continue to advocate for them, whilst also working closely with the HSE to implement plans and services that will create real impact on a person’s ability to live independently.



# Priorities and Actions



# Priority One: Self-Directed Personal Assistant Services

Support our Leaders – people with disabilities – so that they can live independently. Working to the agenda of the Leader, a Personal Assistant (PA) enables the disabled person to make their own decisions and be in control of their own life. A PA undertakes a variety of tasks under the direction of the leader (on a one-to-one basis), ranging from personal care, educational, workplace, family & social supports to household assistance etc. In this plan we commit to finding and serving people with disabilities who aspire to self-direct their supports, to enable them to live the life they want.



## What we will do:

1. Protect our ability to deliver our service with an adequately funded Service Agreement from the HSE – the current main funder of this core service, as well as our Direct Payment Leaders.
2. Continue to provide the PA service to our existing Leaders. As our core service this is also our most significant funding channel and where we position ourselves and the value we create for our Leaders and for the HSE.
3. Serve new Leaders (as referred by the HSE and others) effectively by making our service available to those who wish to self-direct their own PA service.
4. Advocate for and continue to serve our Direct Payment Leader Service and Individualised budgeting Service.
5. Educational support services to students at third level.

## How we will do it:

- We will communicate the benefit of our unique user-led service and how we fit within the portfolio of options available to the HSE for services to people with disabilities
  - We will protect the funding assigned to our existing Leaders
  - We will advocate for appropriate funding to realise the rights afforded within the UNCRPD
  - We will continue to support our Direct Payment clients.
- 
- DCIL will execute this plan, improving our ability to deliver the service our Leaders have a right to avail of.
- 
- We will guide Leaders to our service by communicating to referrers who is best served by our Leader led model.
  - We will create an on-boarding process to ensure Leaders are suited to and can maximise the benefits of the service. We will explain the role and responsibilities that come with managing self-directed PA service.
- 
- We will continue to provide services to Leaders outside the standard HSE funding model
  - Assist people to experience seamless transitions between supports.
- 
- We will continue to provide Educational Support Workers (ESWs) to students at Third Level Institutes

# Priority Two: Infrastructure, People and Funding

DCIL is a hardworking team in a small space – delivering high levels of service supporting Leaders and PAs across the county managed by a busy team, as well as on-site programming at Ballymacool House.

Hiring and retaining staff is challenging. This is a key challenge that this plan seeks to address for the benefit of our Leaders and our staff.

DCILs' funding comes primarily from the HSE at present as they fund the PAs for the Leaders they refer to DCIL. However, funding for all additional programming comes from grants and fundraising – which is a constant task for the small team.



## What we will do:

## How we will do it:

### Infrastructure

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extension to Ballymacool House is designed and permission has been granted. Capital funding is being sought on an ongoing basis. Additional space will allow us to offer an additional range of support &amp; models of service that ensures services are needs based.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Business Plan &amp; Timeline to demonstrate the feasibility of the extension</li> <li>• Cost plan and obtain the necessary funding to construct the extension</li> <li>• Work with relevant statutory authorities in the construction phase</li> <li>• Design and build:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent living training area / replicated home environment</li> <li>• Accessible sensory garden</li> <li>• Additional office and training spaces</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Provide a dedicated practical Independent Living skills training programme in the extended purpose-built extension.</li> </ol>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure funding to design and deliver a structured Independent Living Skills training programme.</li> <li>• Engage a suitably qualified training facilitator to develop and implement the programme.</li> </ul>   |

### People

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruit and retain staff for the long-term benefit of staff and Leaders</li> </ol>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to be an employer of choice by advocating for equal terms and conditions with similar roles.</li> <li>• Offer good working conditions to attract and retain PA staff</li> <li>• Secure pension status in line with auto enrolment</li> </ul> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Continue to nurture our collaborative culture, supportive and positive working environment.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to staff and value their input</li> <li>• Support our PA s in the everyday issues they deal with</li> <li>• Continue to offer counselling for all staff</li> </ul>   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Provide support and additional training to up skill our staff</li> </ol>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support all staff with mandatory and additional training</li> </ul>   |

### Funding

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The majority of our funding comes from our Service Agreement with the HSE and this will continue over the coming years.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to operate our Service Agreement with the HSE to the highest standard</li> <li>• Target our service to those Leaders whom we are configured to serve best.</li> </ul>                                   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Raise funds to supplement our additional offerings and supports detailed in this strategic plan.</li> </ol>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be flexible and nimble to react to funding opportunities for programme and capital funds.</li> <li>• Use the evidence gathered from our impact management reports to make a case for ongoing funding.</li> </ul> |

# Priority Three: Independent Living Supports



Beyond the core service of Personal Assistant supports for independent living, we provide other training and supports to people with disabilities in Donegal. These programmes are currently provided to our Leaders from our premises in Ballymacool House with ambitions for a more comprehensive programme of activities in new premises on the same site as part of our longer-term capital project plans. (See Priority Two)

## What we will do:

## How we will do it:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Run a programme of workshops to improve inclusion and further engagement between Leaders with a focus independent living and personal development. (This will happen regardless of the capital project but will be significantly expanded once the new extension is built)</p> | <p>Deliver a programme of workshop for our Leaders to include:</p> <p><b>Independent Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights and Entitlements</li> <li>• Work Experience</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Online – Social Connectivity &amp; Online safety</li> <li>• Cooking &amp; Nutrition</li> <li>• I.T. Skills</li> <li>• How to manage your finances</li> <li>• Gardening</li> <li>• Housing support</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health &amp; Well-being</li> <li>• Confidence Capacity Building</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Woman's Day</li> <li>• Art/Drama/Writing/Music</li> <li>• Stress management</li> </ul> |
| <p>2. Continue to offer a counselling service for Leaders</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure funding to design and deliver a structured Independent Living Skills training programme.</li> <li>• Engage a suitably qualified training facilitator to develop and implement the programme.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>3. Create Leader Forum for Leaders to amplify their voices within the organisation and externally.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with our Leaders to uncover their abilities, discover opportunities, and respond as a forum.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for the Forum to meet and communicate their messages.</li> </ul>   |

## What we will do:

## How we will do it:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>4. Continue to operate the Hardship Fund to support Leaders during difficult times</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and win funding, publicise the Fund, interview and award per our agreed criteria</li> </ul>   |
| <p>5. Continue to operate the Opportunity Fund to support Leaders to take an opportunity to fully participate in society</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and win funding, publicise the Fund, interview and award per our agreed criteria</li> </ul>   |
| <p>6. Continue to operate the DCIL Scholarship fund designed for students with disabilities in third level education.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and win funding for a three-year period to fund the scholarship.</li> <li>• Partner with the ATU in the delivery of the scholarship programme &amp; including other education providers.</li> <li>• Market the scholarship through recruitment activities and by promoting the successes of our awardees</li> </ul> |
| <p>7. Accessible van hire – maximise utilisation of the current vans under a subsidised rate to ensure we can meet demand from our Leaders</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding streams for sponsorship of van and / or revenue generating options.</li> <li>• Expand the fleet by acquiring an additional accessible vehicle to meet growing service demand.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>8. Disability Awareness &amp; Equality Training. The School Disability Awareness Training Program will promote positive attitudes towards disabilities among students in primary and secondary schools across Donegal.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding for this much needed training.</li> <li>• Design and deliver interactive workshops led by individuals with disabilities, with the goal of fostering empathy, understanding, and inclusivity in educational settings.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>9. Disability Access Audit</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ongoing funding for this service</li> <li>• Undertaking access audits of business and facilities</li> </ul>   |
| <p>10. Leader Mentor Programme</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support individuals and groups in understanding their role as a Leader</li> <li>• Facilitation of peer support groups and activities</li> </ul>  |
| <p>11. Continue to offer social opportunities to recognise and celebrate our Leaders. Annual presentation, garden parties &amp; Christmas party</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding for these important events of recognition and celebration.</li> </ul>   |



# Priority Four: Demonstrate our Unique Impact

The fourth strategic priority is to demonstrate and communicate our unique impact and the value we bring. We deliver our services with the objective of supporting Ireland's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

By actively promoting our services, we will highlight the positive outcomes achieved for our Leaders. We also aim to influence positive change by engaging in national-level discussions and building strong partnerships across the sector.



## What we will do:

1. Effectively communicate to selected key stakeholders our philosophy of Independent Living, to ensure they are fully aware of our values and vision.
2. Test our Theory of Change and incorporate it into our impact management and our communications.
3. Increase awareness of DCIL and our unique offering to our funders
4. Collaborate with like-minded organisations and sector partners to amplify our voice and drive progress in Independent Living supports.
5. Improve our profile and reach around the county

## How we will do it:

- Provide training sessions to keyworkers and relevant stakeholders of the true meaning of a PA service and independent living.
- Involve the Leader Forum in these communications
- Continue to input into the inter-departmental Steering Committee for Housing.
- DCIL will test and refine the Theory of Change shown above
- Refine our feedback mechanisms to capture our Outputs and Outcomes
- Gather data and analyse it for future iterations of programming and to reflect on lessons learned
- Communicate this body of evidence to our Leaders and funders - demonstrating how DCIL's self-directed programme supports independent living.
- Invest in the creation of a new user-friendly accessible website which showcases DCIL and its impact
- Increase DCIL's presence on social media platforms.
- Produce interactive videos showcasing our impact.
- Increase stakeholder engagement with like-minded organisations to promote the social model of disabilities.
- Share policies, processes, and ideas with our CIL partners to ensure greater cooperation
- Differentiate how the CIL model is different to other providers in the sector
- Support partners in collective political campaigning for equality for people with disabilities.
- PA service co-ordinators / staff to increase connectivity amongst DCIL Leaders.
- Engage with community groups throughout the county to create awareness of the services DCIL provide.

# Priority Five: Foster Trust and Confidence

This priority ensures that all the “back office” structures are in place to the highest standard. We are registered with The Charities Register and are confident of our ability to perform to all required standards, but we do not take this for granted as there is a constant need to update and upskill to maintain and surpass those standards.



To foster trust and confidence in our organisation, we ensure full accountability and compliance to our members and funders.

## Financial Governance

### What we will do:

1. Ensure that all plans are costed and reflected in the annual budget before projects commence. Cost plans and seek appropriate resources to deliver all aspects of the strategic plan.
2. Governance Policies and Procedures: establish and maintain robust governance policies and procedures to ensure transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance within the organisation

### How we will do it:

- Identify suitable resources of expertise and funding to facilitate the proposed objectives.
- Create a business plan including timelines, keys to success and financial projections to ensure that identified plan can be realised.
- Develop an action register to ensure constant progression.
- Establish a recurring timetable for policies to undergo regular updates and reviews, aligning them with any changes in regulations and procedures.
- Ensure effective communication of policies to relevant stakeholders and provide training as needed for comprehensive understanding
- Review agreements and partner contracts to ensure full understanding of all stakeholder’s responsibilities.

## Capacity Building and Continuous Improvement

### What we will do:

1. Ensure the ongoing strength and effectiveness of the Board for the future through proactive skills assessment and succession planning
2. Prioritise robust risk management and regulatory compliance to safeguard organisational integrity and ensure sustainable operations.
3. Establish a collective commitment to the organisation’s vision and mission by ensuring alignment and buy-in from the board, staff, and management towards the strategic plan’s objectives and goals

### How we will do it:

- Review Board Composition
- Identify and recruit new Board members as required.
- Develop a succession plan for the Board.
- Develop appointment, resignation, and retirement procedures for board members.
- Maintenance of board terms of reference.
- Develop a skills audit to identify areas of expertise.
- Implement an Internal Board review process.
- Develop capability through ongoing support and training.
- Maintain and regularly review the risk register.
- Implement a risk management policy.
- Ensure that risk management and compliance are standing items on the Board agenda. Adherence to compliance and reporting requirements made by funders and regulatory bodies.
- Communicate the organisation’s vision and mission clearly and regularly to all stakeholders.
- Celebrate the successes when goals are achieved.
- Involve board members, staff, and management in the actions to achieve the priorities within the strategic plan.

# Financial Plan for our Strategic Priorities

We will continue to serve our HSE Leader and ATU students which are funded by Service Agreements. We will continue to serve our Direct Payment Leaders who are funded from their own arrangements.

However, we will need additional funding to support all other activities and to fund our capital project ambition. In 2025/2026 we anticipate planning and executing our new extension and committing to the additional time investment and programme expenses that will result in bringing this plan to completion. DCIL will actively seek funding opportunities for this project. Fundraising and grant applications are time consuming and require skills being built by the team in terms of identifying opportunities, creating applications and engaging with grant-making organisations.

Type of Funding	Project	Timing	Estimated Requirements	Potential Sources
Capital Outlay	Infrastructure extension. Development of DCIL Head office.	2027	€350,000	Capital Funding Grants
Educational Support Programme	Practical Independent Living Skills	2028	€100,000 pa	Funding Grants
Educational Programme	Disability Awareness training	2026-'28	€30,000 pa	Funding Grants
Community Programme	Disability Access Audits	2026-'28	€30,000 pa	Funding Grants
Support Programme	Leader Mentor Programme	2026-'28	€30,000 pa	Funding Grants
Continued Support	Hardship Fund to support Leaders and staff during difficult times.	2026-'28	€15,000	Philanthropy / Sponsorship / Donations
Continued Support	Opportunity Fund to assist Leaders to fully participate in society	2026-'28	€15,000	Philanthropy / Sponsorship / Donations
Continued Support	Scholarship Fund for students with disabilities in third level education	2025-'32	€18,000	Philanthropy

# Conclusion

The Donegal Centre for Independent Living is excited about this next stage of development. This strategic plan will see us continue to support our Leaders, demonstrate our impact, and resource our ambitions for the future. We will expand the range of programmes available to meet the needs of our Leaders within our new and enhanced centre. We invite our team, Board, and the wider community to engage with and support the delivery of this plan.

Looking to the bigger picture, we are committed to creating more and better opportunities for people with disabilities to live independently. Through collaboration with like-minded organisations and active advocacy, we will strengthen our voice and drive positive change across the sector.





# Nothing about us without us

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