



National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)

The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers is the national umbrella body for non-profit organisations delivering direct supports to people with intellectual disability and autism.

53 Non-Profit Member Organisations

Supporting **26,000** people with intellectual disability and autism

30,000 Staff employed

Budget 2027

Commitments to people with disabilities

National Federation members are committed to working with the Government and the HSE to deliver on shared responsibilities to people with disabilities.

This shared model relies on the State setting policy and funding services, and providers working collaboratively with people with disabilities and their families, Government, State Agencies, and Communities to deliver rights-based supports.



However, significant unmet need for service provision means that many people and their families still do not have access to the supports and services they urgently need.



Unmet Need for Disability Services

Children

- 20,209 **assessments of need (AON)** are overdue.
- 8,648 children are waiting for their **first appointment with a Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT)**.
- There is a need for ongoing action to support the **recruitment and retention of posts in CDNTs** – the vacancy rate was 18% in 2025.
- There is significant unmet need for a **range of appropriate school places**.
- **Transition planning** in collaboration with families needs to begin early in a young person's life to support them moving to further and higher education, employment, and adult life.



Our members report many people and their families are in crisis due to unmet need for services.

The Impact of unmet need

- Many adults and children are waiting extended periods for services despite clear assessed needs.
- Residential and housing supports are extremely limited outside of emergency contexts, meaning support is often provided in crisis situations.
- The lack of access to respite and short break services is leading to crisis situations which ultimately require higher levels of intervention.
- The current model of adult day services does not capture clinical needs which leaves many adults without necessary MDT supports.
- A lack of planned transitions leaves many people and their families unable to plan their lives or futures.
- There is limited capacity to increase or adapt supports as needs change, including in response to ageing, illness, support complexity, or family circumstances.

Adults

- 1,300 people still live in **congregated settings**.
- 1,209 **people under 65 are living in nursing homes** due to lack of appropriate support options - 169 of these people are below the age of 50.
- The National Ability Supports System (NASS) intellectual disability bulletin reports:
 - 2,042 **residential places** are required
 - 1,651 people live with **primary carers over the age of 70** (438 of these are over the age of 80)
 - 3,482 adults require **therapeutic supports**
 - 2,796 **day service placements require enhancement** with additional supports
 - 1,235 adults and children need overnight **respite**

What is needed to support people to access their rights?

Planned investment is needed to enable:

Early Intervention
Planned Supports
Community Inclusion
Responsive Services

- Timely assessments and access to support services to enable targeted interventions before a crisis situations develops
- Availability of MDT supports for adults and children
- Planned and cohesive pathways to support
- Availability of a range of housing options in community-based settings
- Access to mainstream healthcare and dentistry
- Employment and educational opportunities
- Flexible services that can respond effectively to people's needs and interests
- Supports for changing needs and aging
- Alternatives in day supports, including retirement pathways
- Access to short breaks and alternative respite

"I want a break away from my parents..."

Self-advocate

"I want a job..."

Self-advocate

"I want to live independently..."

Self-advocate

How can services be expanded and strengthened to deliver these rights-based supports at the scale required?

The Government, the HSE, and voluntary service providers have a shared responsibility to address the level of unmet need that is presenting.

The investment into the sustainability of service providers in Budget 2026 was warmly welcomed. It was necessary and has provided increased stability for many of the organisations that received it. In Budget 2027, we are seeking a whole-of-government approach to addressing additional barriers to service delivery.

Barriers to service delivery and expansion



- Limited access of voluntary providers to capital
- Sustainability funding in 2026 has not captured all organisations facing intense cost pressures
- Impacts of historic deficits and underfunding
- Fragmentation and speed of decision making in relation to funding
- Non-pay costs, including: inflation, insurance, changing needs, regulatory compliance, necessary upgrades (e.g. IT and transport fleet), and maintenance.
- Pay costs, including pension costs, agency staffing and unfunded pay agreements



Address barriers to meeting need for rights-based services

Unlocking Service Innovation and Expansion

- **Re-open the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) funding scheme** to approved housing bodies (AHBs) delivering housing for people with disabilities.
- **Ensure the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) is fully responsive** to current requirements.
- **Enable housing innovation** by approving designs which will increase efficiencies.
- **Systematically address sustainability funding anomalies, non-pay costs and historic deficits** facing disability service providers.
- Keep providers on a stable financial footing by providing **funding that reflects the true cost of delivering rights-based responsive services.**
- Work collaboratively to **support and engage families** e.g. working with families and young people to enable flexible alternatives to early entrance into residential supports.
- Support community inclusion through policy change to **enable service providers to deliver supported employment and flexibility to provide supports** outside of a traditional 30 hour week day service.

Budget 2027 Asks:

1. Address unmet need

- Resource **targets in the Action Plan for Disability Services and the Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People** including:
 - Deliver on commitment to 222 MDT posts for adult disability services
 - Put in place 280 residential places, including an increase on the allocation of 72 planned places made in Budget 2026
- Support increased capacity for respite and alternative respite services to meet the needs of children and adults with ID and autism

2. Strengthen sustainability of service providers

- Sustainability funding in 2026 was welcomed and has stabilised many organisations. However, there are anomalies which need to be addressed in Budget 2027 to **ensure all organisations facing significant cost pressures are captured.** These include:
 - Organisations that did not run a deficit, but reduced services or delayed governance compliance in order to keep a balanced Budget
 - Organisations that did not receive funding / sufficient funding to cover deficit positions

3. Enable removal of barriers to innovation and service expansion

- Enable **responsive access to capital funding** through CAS and CALF to develop a pipeline of residential supports
- Open-up **support mechanisms for access to capital** including philanthropic incentives
- Introduce **index linked funding for inflation** to ensure ongoing sustainability
- Deliver on the Programme for Government commitment to examine **multi-annual funding** for the disability sector
- Provide **funding that reflects the true cost of service delivery** to put organisations on a stable financial footing, including designated funding for pay and non-pay costs, re-costing of day service bands, and costs associated with changing needs of people supported



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