

Briefing Note to An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD, Minister for Health  
Leo Varadkar TD & Minister for Expenditure and Reform Brendan  
Howlin TD.

15/09/15

## Right to Reform

AT Network, Center for Independent Living and  
Inclusion Ireland



## **Right to Reform - Introduction**

Representatives from Inclusion Ireland, the AT Network, the Center for Independent Living and a cross-section of disability activists are currently taking part in a disability rights protest outside Government Buildings for over two days between 10.00am on Tuesday, September 15th and 2.00pm on Thursday, September 17th. Protesters are calling for key Programme for Government commitments to be met.

## **Programme for Government 2011-2015**

*...we will move a proportion of public spending to a personal budget model so that people with disabilities or their families have the flexibility to make choices that suit their needs best. Personal budgets also introduce greater transparency and efficiency in funding services.*

*We will reform the law on mental capacity to ensure the greatest degree of autonomy for people with intellectual disabilities or suffering with mental illnesses in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

## **Dept of Health Value for Money Report on Disability services 2012**

*"those using disability services do not participate in society in any meaningful way ... have little opportunity to self determine or to live full and independent lives."*

Next year will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of The Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities report 'A Strategy for Equality'. The strategy stated that Irish society excluded people with disabilities from almost "every aspect of economic, social, political and cultural life." This statement still stands today for many persons with a disability.

A Strategy for Equality called for many of the reforms activists are still seeking today;

- Direct Payments
- Mainstream Employment Strategy
- Independent living supports
- Advocacy supports

### 3 | Right to Reform – September 2015

Disability supports & services are undergoing significant reform. This reform programme is about moving towards a new model of person-centred, community-based supports. Key to reform is individualised models of support – a ‘money follows the person’ model

There is a small window of opportunity for this Government to initiate key reforms which would deliver meaningful change in the lifetime of the next Dail.

These are;

#### **Introduce Direct Payments**

##### **Key ask:**

- Introduce a system of direct payments; this will include the development of brokerage and intermediary models to enable persons with a disability and/or family members to manage a personal budget.
- Ring fence 8%-15% of the HSE disability budget governed by service-level arrangements (SLAs) to individualised and community-based models of supports.

#### **Personal Assistance (PA) Services**

##### **Key asks:**

- PA Services must be established on a statutory basis, in compliance with Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- Sustainable funding must be dedicated to PA Services.
- The current PA Services waiting list must be cleared.
- A Registered Employment Agreement must be available to all PAs with a minimum hourly rate of €13 enacted.

#### **UNCRPD & Assisted Decision-Making Legislation**

##### **Key asks:**

- Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) within first 100 days of new government.
- Make a commitment to expedite the enactment and commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making Bill.

## 4 | Right to Reform – September 2015

- As a matter of priority, commit to establishing Decision Support Service and introduce a code of practice for informal decision making with the involvement of self-advocates.

### **Employment Opportunities**

#### **Key asks:**

- Identify a lead minister from the Department of Social Protection or Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation for key responsibility for the employment strategy.
- Allow those in receipt of a disability payment access to all employment activation programmes.
- Allow those who are in receipt of a disability payment to keep their secondary benefits when accepting employment.