



**East Limerick Children's Services**  
**Midwest Children's Disability Network Team**  
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Ballysimon Road, Limerick **V94 E179**  
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22th January 2020

Re: Election Campaign

Dear Family Member,

The Federation of Voluntary Bodies represents 60 Disability Organisations across Ireland, who supports 30,000 people and 22,000 staff. As a member organisation, Daughters of Charity developed with other organisations an election campaign, to ensure that Disability becomes a key focus in this upcoming election. Attached is some documentation, outlining the key asks, including a shorter laminated leaflet and the longer more detailed information.

As CEO, I have contacted candidates across our three regions, and asked to either meet with them with one or two family members, or that I arrange a town hall event where families would also be invited, to discuss key concerns. Unfortunately, to date I have either had no response, or have been told that there will be no meetings until after the election. I am therefore asking that you raise these key issues with any candidate that calls to your door or you meet. If you are on Twitter, if you could follow me on **@NJacksonCEO** and retweet any posts regarding this campaign, so as this funding crisis within the Disability Sector becomes a key issue for any new Government party.

There are three key asks and outlined below is more specific information in terms of how the current funding crisis affects our Service:

1. Address Unmet Needs

- a. Long waiting lists in Children's Services. This means children are missing out on early intervention, and key milestones are being missed. We need greater investment in multi-disciplinary support to address this need.
- b. Over 1,250 parents nationally over the age of 70 – 400 of which are aged over 80 - are primary carers for people with ID living in the family home. In Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services, this equates to approximately 20 in Dublin, 10 in North Tipperary/Offaly and 24 in Limerick. We need greater investment in this area, to develop transition plans for those we support so that they live their best life possible.
- c. School leavers. Funding for school leavers nationally in 2020 is the same as last year, however there are 200 more school leavers in the sector. Lack of funding in this area will result in our Service not being able to provide the support that is needed. There is also an urgent requirement in our Service for investment in additional buildings/hubs – we are currently at full capacity and want to continue to provide the best level of service to school leavers in a community setting.
- d. Respite. There is a need for Government to invest in current and alternative forms of Respite, so that we can help those we support and their families in this key area.

2. Invest in Supports. The Government's own report indicates the need for an investment of €211 million per annum over five years to address these unmet needs. However, this January, Disability Services were informed of a €20 million cut to their budgets. For Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services, this would result in a cut of approximately €1.2 million. We must have this cut reversed.

3. Uphold Disability Rights. To deliver on this key ask, we are asking that there is a Minister at Cabinet level and an Oireachtas Committee on Disability to oversee implementation across all departments. In addition, Ireland has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and we want this implemented. As voters, we are critical to candidates in this election campaign, and we want assurances from all political parties that strong Disability support will form part of their Party Manifesto.

Warm regards,



Natalya Jackson

Chief Executive.

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**Please review website frequently for updates re: upcoming events on**  
<https://www.mwcds.ie/general/> and <https://www.mwcds.ie/elcs-events/>

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