According to the Government Press Release, the bill will deal with key issues affecting the lives of people with disabilities. This bill’s core focus is a range of measures designed to remove barriers and support access for people with disabilities to everyday activities. Much of the change envisaged is infrastructural, covering areas like, transport, access to public buildings, advocacy & assessment of need.

Curiously, missing from this bill is any “Right” to needs assessment or service, funding details, direct payments are not mentioned, nor does this bill include any mention of adult care orders.

- Public Services: Puts the Government policy of mainstreaming services for people with disabilities on a statutory footing. This policy will be fully implemented by 1-1-2006.

- Public Transport: to be disability accessible. This policy will be phased in most buses and taxis to be accessible by 1st January 2010 and all rail by 2015, with interim dates for partial implementation in specific sectors.

- Assessment of Need: Provides for an assessment of need and related services. These services will be available from 1st January 2003.

- Advocacy Services: Establishes an advocacy service through Comhairle from 1st January 2006.

- Sign Language: Statute based sign language interpretation and videophone interpretation services facilities for people who are deaf will be available from 1 January 2006.
The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies (providing services to people with intellectual disabilities) is a National Umbrella organisation for voluntary non-statutory agencies that provide direct services to people with intellectual disability. The National Federation is serviced by a full time Secretariat based in Oranmore, Co.Galway.

The National Federation consists of 52 member organisations throughout the Republic of Ireland. Between them they provide services for in excess of 20,000 people with intellectual disability and employ some 13,000 people. They account for annual revenue expenditure of some 379 Million Euro. The Current Chairperson of the National Federation is Winifred O’Hanrahan, National Director, Brothers of Charity Services.

The National Federation is governed by its members through the Chairperson and Board of Directors. There are ten area committees who elect one person to become a member of the Board of Directors. The Chief Executive of the National Federation, Brian O’Donnell, also sits on the Board of Directors.

Further information on the National Federation and its Membership can be found on: www.fed-vol.com. This web site is also very useful for information about Intellectual Disabilities generally and international contacts.

The National Directorate is the national executive which shares the responsibility for the overall day-to-day running of the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland. It is composed of the Regional Directors of Services and the National Director, and reports to the Brothers of Charity Regional Team.

The role of the National Director, is to ensure that the organisation as a whole is well managed and operates within its agreed objectives and priorities, within the law and within allocated budgets. The role is a national one and is not involved in the direct running of the regional services, except insofar as there is cause to do so because, there is concern that a particular region is not operating according to the ethos of the Brothers of Charity and/or to the policies set down by the Regional Team.

The Standing Committees are made up of representatives from each of the Regions and a Co-ordinator is appointed. Each Committee operates under agreed terms of reference. Working Groups are formed to make recommendations in relation to certain key areas of service development. A list of the various committees and their appointed Co-ordinators follows for your information.

The National Secretary, consists of the National Development Officer, Gina Magliocco and the National Directors’ Personal Assistant, Mary Comer. The purpose of the National Secretariat is to support the National Director.

Various National Standing Committees have been set up over the past couple of years by the National Director to investigate current practice, develop national policies and to examine a way forward for Brothers of Charity Services in very specific areas.

Mary Hurley
National Designated Persons Group
Gobnait Ni Chrualaoi
Planning for Service Users

Sean Conneally
Evaluation.
Tony Collins
Finance.
Patrick McGinley
Web Site.
Mary Hehir
Human Resources.
Denise Shaw Kelly
Good Practice on Abuse Investigation and Treatment

Eddie O’Dea
National Abuse Treatment Group
Ann O’Connor

Eddie O’Dea
National Abuse Treatment Group
Mary Hurley
National Designated Persons Group
Gobnait Ni Chrualaoi
Planning for Service Users
Please note that Governance Statements have issued on the following:

**Financial Reserves**

The Brothers of Charity Services and its Governing Body, the Regional Team is responsible to its stakeholders to account carefully for all funds both public and private, to manage the Service’s finances wisely and to plan for the adequate funding of services desired by the service users, including the provision and maintenance of facilities. The finance policies of the Governing body are designed to establish guidelines for the security of services provided to service users and to provide guidelines for the Service Regions’ chief executive officers, the Regional Directors of Services.

**Admissions, Transfers & Discharges.**

The Regional Team is the governing Body of the Irish Brothers of Charity Services for People with an Intellectual Disability and as such is the legal owner of the services and is responsible for all admissions, transfers and discharges across its services. The Regional Team designates the Regional Director of Services as the person responsible within his/her functional area for sanctioning decisions on the following:

New people who are offered a service; the movement of an individual to a different part of the service; and a service user leaving the service.

**National Guidelines on Service Users Records and Files.**

This document outlines the principles of record keeping, which will be followed throughout the Brothers of Charity Services. It is important that the Services have an effective filing system in place. This system should ensure that there is careful supervision in respect of service users’ files, maintaining the right balance between the necessary level of confidentiality, and an appropriate level of availability to service users, their families and those who require access to the files for their work. Good records and files are an indication of good practice!

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**CONFERENCE SECTION**

**OFFICE FOR HEALTH MANAGEMENT**

Stephen Shortell, (Annual Maureen Dixon Lecture) entitled “Improving Quality of Care Through the Practice of Evidence Based Management” will take place on the 23rd May 2002 in the Great Southern Hotel, Dublin Airport. The OHM will seek nominations from employers for attendance at this event. For further details regarding participation please contact your Human Resource Office.

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**Training Opportunities**


The aim of these workshops is to increase awareness & knowledge of Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children in preparation for implementation. The target group is multidisciplinary staff working in Health Services, Community Services, Acute Health Services

Hospitals and Voluntary Agencies, associated with Health Board, and working with Children.

Workshops will be provided for a period of a month in each county for interdepartmental and interdisciplinary teams across the Health Board Services.

For further details about training in your area contact your Regional training officer.

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**AUTISM**

“High Functioning Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome—New insights and Practical Approaches” is a 2 day conference taking place in the Spa Hotel, Lucan, Co Dublin on 9th & 10th May 2002. It costs EUR 245. Contact: Hedgehog Training Consultancy, Derbyshire, England. Phone: 00 44 1433 631036 or e-mail them on: heg.hog@virgin.net.

Irish Society for Autism is hosting an Autism Study Weekend on 3rd, 4th & 5th May in Bellinter House, Navan, Co Meath. Phone: 01 8744684 for further details.

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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

To promote safety and comfort, follow these principles whenever you use your computer:

**Adjust** - your body position & your work environment. Find your comfort zone, and adjust within this zone.

**Move** - Vary your tasks so that you can move around.

**Relax** - Stay aware of physical tension such as clenching your muscles and shrugging your shoulders.

**Listen**—to your body, take action to relieve any tension or discomfort.
**REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT—GALWAY**

**Rosedale School**

Rosedale School, in Galway City, educates 51 children with a severe or profound learning disability, including pre-school education.

The development of special classes or schools for children with a severe or profound learning disability became a reality after the ‘O’Donoghue’ High Court judgement. This judgement required the state to provide education for children with a severe or profound learning disability. Over the years agencies like the Brothers of Charity Services provided education in Child Education and Development Centres (CEDCs).

The Brothers of Charity Services have contributed significantly, over many years, to the ongoing in-service training of staff working in CEDCs.

It was felt that it would be a great loss to the children involved to withdraw this pool of expertise when the centre was established as a special school. The Brothers of Charity Services kept its existing management structure within the school, the Team Leaders of the CEDC and pre-school section were also retained.

What is unique in relation to Rosedale School is that the educators from the Brothers of Charity Services work side by side with the teachers and special needs assistants. Recruiting teachers with expertise in this area proved difficult initially, requiring a considerable commitment from the educators who remain in post. This provided continuity in the educational programme of the children and assisted in the induction of the Department of Education and Science staff. As many of the educators have training including RNMH and Montessori, this partnership flourished, and the children, who have multiple needs, reaped the benefits of having those professions’ skills available to them.

**DISABILITY BILL continued..**

- Employment: Puts the 3 target for employment in the public service on a statutory footing with effect from 1st January 2003.
- National Disability Authority: Gives significant new powers to the National Disability Authority to oversee implementation of the legislation including powers of entry & inspection.
- Universal Design: Provides for the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design by 1st January 2003, with specific reference to I.T. telecommunications and built environment.

Members of Brothers of Charity Services are represented on the Disabilities Bill Task Group, this group have issued a response to the Bill through the National Federation. The Chairperson and Chief Executive of the National Federation met the Minister and have arranged for further consultation through the Task Group. It will not come as news to anybody that the National Federation Task Group have issues with the proposed bill, particularly as it does not confer an automatic right of access to an Assessment nor does it confer an automatic right to Services once need has been assessed.

A further more detailed submission is on its way to the Minister and we await a response.

**NOTICE BOARD**

**NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT 2001**

Please note that information needed for the publication of this report will be requested at the end of April 2002.

It is essential that we achieve a timely return on any information requested, also please put aside any photos you deem appropriate for the National Annual Report.