

Easy Read Handbook on the Rehab Group **Pre-Budget Submission 2023**



Hard Words

This handbook has some hard words. The first time we write a hard word, the hard word is in **orange**.

We will explain what the hard word means.



What is a **Budget**?

Each year, the Government announces spending, tax and borrowing plans for the next year. This is called the Budget.

The Budget covers all the money that the Government spends and takes in in taxes.



What is a **Pre-Budget Submission**?

Each year, Rehab asks the people using its services about what would make a difference in their lives in the next Budget. Rehab takes that information and gives it to the Government to try and show them how and where they need to spend money in the Budget. This called a Pre-Budget Submission.

How do you make a Pre-Budget Submission?

This year, the Rehab Advocacy Team held 26 **focus groups** around the country during the month of June. The focus groups were made up of service users and students, who were asked of their experiences of living with a disability in Ireland. People from 21 counties took part. We asked them about services, supports, and other challenges they faced.



What is a **focus group**?

A focus group is when a group of people come together to talk about one particular topic or issue.

In our focus groups people who use Rehab services came together to talk about what issues they face in

their day-to-day lives.

Summary

There are seven main issues that the Rehab Pre-Budget Submission will highlight to Government:

Costs and Barriers



Transport



Housing



Education



Employment



Hidden Healthcare Costs



Section 39

Some Things People From the Focus Groups Had to Say:



Transport:

“I rely on public transport to get into the centre, there is only one bus into Galway in the morning at 7am, and one to go home at 6pm. It makes my day really long and I get very tired. It means I will only come in once a week. I feel like I’m going to miss out on activities and workshops because of this.”

“I’m very isolated. I live in rural Ireland, and the transport service is really bad. It would be great to have a better Local Link service that extended all the areas that need it or a voluntary group that would collect you and bring you home. Without such a thing, I have no social life.”

“I have a travel pass, but what’s the use? I can’t use it to go anywhere.”

“I can pay anything up to €24 one way for a taxi, on my income, how can I afford to keep paying that?”

“The reliability [of public transport] is another issue, sometimes it might come late, at times, it doesn’t turn up at all. The stress of this, imagine you were going to a job interview, they would just say sorry, the job is gone.”

“Some people come to the centre late in the mornings as that is the only time public transport will come in and some leave early in the evening again for the same reason. NLN are understanding. “Imagine that in a work situation, who will employ that person?”

Employment:



"It's hard to get back into the workforce."

"Employers have no interest in employing people with disabilities at the moment. They are shut down before they are even interviewed."

"When I lived at home years ago I got a job and my D/A was cut after six months. So I was let go and it took roughly six/seven months to get my D/A back and my parents supported me. It was so hard to survive, so I would be afraid to go into work again plus I live independently now."

"People on disability allowance have a little money and limited opportunities to earn more."



Hidden Healthcare Costs:



"I was charged €30 for blood tests from my GP that would feed me for three days."

"Services cost an arm and a leg. I needed a counsellor before coming into NLN it was so expensive my parents had to pay this for me."

"I only get the medication I really need, some months."

"Unexpected costs, such as extra doctors or dentist bills, are a huge challenge. "To have to pay to get my teeth cleaned, what if I hadn't saved up the money?"

What Rehab Has Asked the Government To Do In Budget 2023



Costs and Barriers



- Set up a **Cost of Disability Report** action plan and put it into action.

Cost of Disability Report: The Cost of Disability Report is a document that explains the extra costs people with disabilities have because of their disability. It makes suggestions of what the Government could do to reduce those costs.

- Increase Social Welfare payments by at least €30 per week.
- Set up extra payments on top of the basic Cost of Disability Payment. These payments would be bigger depending on the level of disability.

Transport



- Improve and add to the Local Link services and make sure those services are accessible to disabled people.
- Start a travel allowance for people who need more travel support.

- Make the Travel Assistance Scheme available to everyone across the country to help people with disabilities build confidence when using public transport.

Housing



- Pay for accessible homes and help for people with disabilities who have been given housing through the local authority. Give the same supports to those who want to rent privately.
- Make it easy to apply for support to live in your own home.
- Build accessible social housing units. Make a law that any new build housing for local authorities is accessible to everyone.

- 28,411 people are still living in homes or institutions. Give more funding to help them move to homes in the community with the right support in the next five years.
- Increase the amount of money given in supports for people living alone and open it up to include things like broadband.
- Stop means testing criteria and increase the maximum housing grant.



Education

- Invest more money in career guidance supports for students in special classes.
- Set up an official way to tell students about all the different options for further education when they are leaving secondary school.
- Deal with the funding issues so that more, and different, options can be offered to students.
- Make more funding available for both vocational and rehabilitative training.
- Give more funding for the Specialist Training Provider sector.



Employment

- Change **Public Procurement** policies so that Ireland has the same policies as the Scottish version of Public Procurement. This would increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Public Procurement:

- Make changes to the **Wage Subsidy Scheme** to include:
 - Lower the minimum hours per week (eight hours) to allow more people with significant disabilities to become employed.
 - Make the first job on the WSS a minimum of 3 months.
 - Give different levels of support depending on how much work the employee with a disability does and the support they need.

— WSS should be available to all employees to encourage employers to keep employees who acquire a disability.

Wage Subsidy Scheme: This is a scheme to encourage employers to employ people with disabilities. Under this scheme the employee will be paid the going rate for that job. Under this scheme the Government will give support to the employer to cover the costs of any work the employee is not able to complete.

- Encourage employers to take Disability Awareness and Diversity Training so they feel less anxiety about employing a person with a disability or mental health challenge.



Hidden Healthcare Costs

- Include more dentist charges and services under the Medical Card scheme to prevent sudden unexpected, and expensive healthcare costs.
- Encourage dentists to join the medical card scheme to help increase people's options for dental care.
- Produce an information campaign that makes it clear that you can keep your medical card for three years when taking up employment.
- Tell GPs to stop charging for essential letters and blood tests for medical card holders.



Employees in Section 39 Organisations

- Give the same pay for workers in Section 39 organisations as Section 38 organisations.
- Give enough funding in Budget 2023 to deal with waiting lists and other unmet needs that were highlighted in the Disability Capacity Review.
- Give enough funding for Day services and children's disability services.