

Impact of cumulative disability cuts, Saturday, 05/10/2013

➤ When we talk about providing services to people with intellectual disabilities we are talking about

- ↳ Teaching a young man with Down's Syndrome who cannot read how to contact the key people in his life on his mobile phone when he feels unsafe;
- ↳ Staff spending the time setting up the initial contacts and supporting a young adult with spina bifida to cope successfully with work experience in their local *Centra* so that they have a chance of getting 5 or 6 hours employment;
- ↳ Giving somebody who cannot walk and who has limited use of their arms and hands the support and time to manage themselves in the bathroom in a way that leaves their dignity and self-respect intact.

These are the kind of things that are in play.

When we talk about the impact of these cuts on the quality of the services we can offer, we are not talking about the icing on the cake. It's the core essential things that need to be done that are at stake.

We're talking about

- ↳ Families having to live in an emergency zone because service providers can't respond to new crises;
- ↳ It taking longer *to get to* the person who is upset and distressed and being able to spend less time with them than they need to get the necessary level of comfort and support;
- ↳ Staff confined to supervising people in ever larger groups rather than having time to spend with people to connect them with other people in their neighbourhood;
- ↳ Retreating to supervision and *keeping the lid on things* rather than working actively and directly with individuals to help them hang on to the kind of life they had begun to experience as a result of the investments in the decade before 2008.

One of the great achievements of the *Celtic Tiger* years was that we had made real inroads in helping people with intellectual disability to get the kind of life to which all citizens of the State are entitled. We had begun to seriously address the human and civil rights of people with intellectual disability. They were visible and involved in our neighbourhoods and communities in a new and vibrant way. Do we really want to put all of that in jeopardy?

The taxpayer can be proud of what we achieved for people with intellectual disability especially between 1999 - 2008.

This is an achievement of Irish society. We don't now want to go backwards. We don't want that to happen. The taxpayer doesn't want it to happen. HSE don't want it to happen.

If a new round of cuts is triggered by this upcoming budget, we will be digging out the foundations of all that has been built from 1999 to 2008.

Signed:

Brendan Broderick
CEO