

Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

Who is ILMI?

ILMI was originally established as the Center for Independent Living in 1992 by and for disabled people. Its aim was to ensure that disabled people achieved Independent Living, choice and control over their lives and full participation in society as equal citizens.

We are a campaigning, national representative organisation that promotes the philosophy of independent living and seeks to build an inclusive society. Central to the way we work is to ensure that policy decisions that impact on the lives of disabled people have to be directly influenced by those whose lives are directly affected.

Our philosophy can be summed up as: 'Nothing about us without us!' and 'Rights Not Charity'

Our Vision

Our vision is an Ireland where disabled persons have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives and can fully participate in an inclusive society as equals.

Mission

We are working collectively to create an Independent Living Movement in Ireland which is led by disabled people and promotes a rights-based social model of disability, challenging the unacceptable charity / medical model of disability. We are working towards the removal of societal barriers that prevent active equal participation of disabled people, challenging the denial of people's rights and the promotion of the philosophy of Independent Living.

Core Values

Our core values are underpinned by the philosophy of Independent Living and all activities are aimed towards promoting: Independent, Option, Rights, Empowerment.

Our Principles

- We promote the active participation of Leaders in all aspects of the work of ILMI: locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- We are a DPO (disabled persons organisation) formed to ensure that the voice of disabled people will be heard in campaigns, research and policy development.
- We are committed to ILMI continuing to develop new innovative models to achieve equality of outcome, while recognising that people have a variety of abilities, needs and wants.
- We recognise and promote equality within our members, in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, marital status, socio-economic status and impairment.
- We will actively promote an understanding of disability as an interaction between a person's impairment and the societal and environmental barriers that disable people's participation in society - and actively lobby to remove these barriers to participation and challenge the unacceptable medical / charity model of disability.

Our Key Achievements

- As CIL we introduced the first personal assistance programme in Ireland thereby enabling people to take greater control of their lives. This has been the single most significant development for Independent Living in the history of the State.
- We established Vantastic - an accessible dial-a-ride, door to door transport service. Transport is a key accessibility issue and the introduction of Vantastic has offered many new opportunities to disabled people.
- We are recognised internationally and has established invaluable links with key organisations and individuals across Europe and continues to actively seek transnational partnership opportunities.
- We established the Certificate in Disability Studies in conjunction with Maynooth University.
- We are a founder and active member of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL).
- As a Disabled Person's Organisation (DPO), we are led by disabled people and their lived experience.
- ILMI has demonstrated that it can work effectively and in partnership with a wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies in order to bring about equality for disabled people.

A Message from the Chair

This Strategic Plan sets an ambitious set of objectives to bring about change for disabled people across Ireland and to build an Ireland where disabled people are empowered to live Independent Lives with control, choice and options. What we as ILMI are trying to do is build on the legacy of CIL and those that have gone before, to build a new and stronger Movement that will have an active membership which is part of collective strategies for change.

At the core of our work is the Philosophy of Independent Living and building a Movement around that, and that is so important that we make sure services are built around making this happen in our lives. I first got involved with CIL when I was eighteen after leaving the Central Remedial Clinic. I was given personal assistance hours in order to carry on with my education in Killester College, where I met the one and only Martin Naughton, who helped me build up my knowledge of independent living and its Philosophy.

Having been around the Independent Living movement for twenty plus years, I've been privileged to have known many of the founders of Independent Living in Ireland Martin Naughton, Florence Dougal, Dermot Walsh, Donal Toolan and of course the wonderful John Doyle all of whom I was honoured to call my friends. Each of them mentored me on all different aspects of Independent Living.

I am honoured to be elected Chair of ILMI by my fellow board members and I really hope that I and the new board can carry on the great work that they started and bring new blood and energy to the Independent Living Movement. As someone that enjoys the benefits of Assistive technology I am keen that we use technology in order to breakdown any barriers to disabled people from across the Island participating in our work to build a real, inclusive national Movement. I envision a world that all people with disability enjoy independent living and a life of their choosing. Together we can make this a reality.

I would like to thank all ILMI members who contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan and I look forward to working with everyone collectively to bring about change in our lives to build a genuinely inclusive

Irish Society.

Shelly Gaynor

Chair ILMI

A Message from the CEO

This Strategic Plan is based on consultations with leaders around the country in regional discussions in Dublin, Tullamore, Ennis and Sligo to generate a national collective strategy defining the aims and objectives of ILMI as a national representative organisation.

The energy from leaders in the process reaffirmed the role of ILMI and the plan represents the approaches we as a collective will undertake in the weeks, months, and years ahead. We will need new ideas, new ways of working and be ambitious in making this plan real.

To truly be a representative voice for Independent Living in Ireland we will facilitate dynamic and creative ways of developing policies and positions. We will need to build structures for ILMI members to collectively discuss our strategic campaigns, and ILMI will explore how technology can support virtual real time and non-real time discussions.

One of the things I bring to ILMI is a passion for bringing people together as a collective to campaign for social change. I want ILMI to build on CIL's legacy as a national representative voice and I want to strengthen ways that Leaders from across the country can become actively involved in and lead campaigns to bring about that change.

We need to make sure that representatives of ILMI are supported by evidence-based policies based on collective lived experiences and that members are informed on every part of the work of the organisation. Central to this is to inform and empower Leaders to be part of collective strategic campaigns to influence policy development in order to bring about equality and inclusion for disabled people. We also need to be strategic by working in partnership with those who share our values and vision in order to be effective and ensure that our work has a long-term impact.

The strategic objectives are interlinked and cannot be worked on in isolation. Building representative structures will create authentic leaders that reflect the aims of the collective. Challenging inequality and promoting equality can only be done through the development and implementation of strong policies. In order for strong policies to be delivered, we will need to create supportive collective spaces to empower as many people as possible to become actively involved in campaigns.

I am looking forward to creating ways for ILMI members to be part of our aspects of this strategic plan and to continue to build on the work carried out by ILMI over the past 25 years

Damien Walshe, CEO

Leadership and Representation

Independent Living Movement Ireland's work will continue to be led and represented by disabled people at all levels. ILMI will create structures to generate evidence-based policies and expertise based on lived experience.

What we will do?

We will:

- Actively promote ILMI and the philosophy of Independent Living across the country through all forms of communication to ensure that disabled people are aware of and can actively become part of the Independent Living Movement.
- Create structures at a regional and national level for ILMI members to engage in dynamic and creative spaces to generate collective policies to represent the organisation.
- Promote active membership engagement in ILMI spaces through face to face group meetings and the use of technology to support virtual real time and non-real time participation.
- Share ILMI policy processes to ensure collective ownership.
- Provide training and supports to build the capacity of ILMI representatives.
- Ensure that those in leadership roles are supported by members through peer support to be authentic voices by creating structures to generate policy discussions.
- Create ways for those in leadership roles to provide feedback on ILMI's representation work locally, nationally and internationally.
- Develop specific strategies to engage and mentor young disabled people to ensure the active involvement of these future Leaders.
- Support ILMI representatives to increase the visibility of disabled people in discussions on equality and social justice through all forms of media.

Promotion of equality and accessing human rights

Independent Living Movement Ireland's work will be grounded in equality and a rights-based approach, working towards an inclusive Irish Society.

What will we do?

We will:

- Promote the social model of disability and challenge the medical /charity model through a human rights and equality approach.
- Promote awareness of the human rights and equality infrastructure through 'know your rights' workshops, training on human rights and equality and the development of appropriate online resources.
- Create links with Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC), Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA), National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) Centre for Disability Law and Policy in order to create a legal support structure for disabled people who face discrimination.

- Ensure that ILMI has strong links with the equality and human rights infrastructure such as the Irish Human Rights Equality Commission and the Workplace Relations Commission.
- Build allies across in all human rights, equality and anti-poverty struggles to ensure disabled people are involved and have their voices heard.
- Develop mechanisms for members to participate in and influence the delivery of genuinely inclusive public services based on commitments in the Disability Act 2005 and the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty.

Political Campaigning and Strategic Policy Development

ILMI will empower members to be active agents of social change by participating in collective strategic campaigns to promote independent living and ensure effective policy development and implementation.

What will we do?

We will:

- Coordinate and support collective political campaigns to bring about equality for disabled people in Ireland.
- Empower disabled people to lead all aspects of ILMI political campaigns.
- Ensure that ILMI representatives are supported on relevant Forums and Dáil Committees to bring the issues members face and propose solutions which meet their needs.
- Effectively communicate effectively ILMI's work to all relevant stakeholders, including our biweekly eBulletin, website, and social media.
- Over the course of this plan, prioritise strategic policy campaigns on the four pillars of Independent Living: Personal Assistance, Housing, Transport, and Employment.

Governance, Accountability and Transparency

We will maintain the highest standards of Governance, accountability and transparency to our members and funders and will develop a funding strategy to secure the sustainability of the organisation.

What will we do?

ILMI will:

- Meet all legal and financial requirements, such as under the Charities Act 2009, and the Lobbying Act 2015.
- With its board and staff, ensure that the organisation meets all obligations under the Governance Code.
- Support the ILMI board with relevant training to meet all legal, financial and HR requirements.
- Publish an annual report and audited accounts and present to members as part of the AGM.

- Cost, plan and seek appropriate resources to deliver on all aspects of this Strategic Plan.
- Update members regularly on all aspects of its work to make sure everyone has the information they need to participate in the organisation.

What is Independent Living?

Independent Living is the right of all persons regardless of age or impairment to live in the community; to have the same range or choices as everybody else in housing, transportation, education and employment; to participate in the social, economic and political life of their own communities; to have a family; to realise their own potential and have the freedom to live the lives they wish in an inclusive Ireland.

Members of ILMI are committed to:

- Learning about and promoting the philosophy of independent living
- Promoting Rights Not Charity for disabled people
- Ensuring that the Social Model of Disability is understood and adopted by all policy makers
- Being actively involved where possible in the work of ILMI
- Participating in discussions (on line, via email or in person) or campaigns
- Promoting the role of disabled people in the work of ILMI

How can I get involved?

If you want to get involved in our work, please sign up for our biweekly eBulletin. It will give you all the information on work that ILMI is involved in locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

What is a Leader?

A Leader is a disabled person who employs directly or indirectly (through a service provider) Personal Assistants. A Leader takes full responsibility for the instructions given to the Personal Assistant, for the actions and consequences that follow from these, for training and day-to-day management of the service. The Leader is in charge.

Disabled People

Independent Living Movement Ireland recognises that language is a very powerful and evocative tool. Therefore, the language and terminology used in this document has been carefully chosen to reflect the values of equality and empowerment which form the basis for the Strategic Plan. The term 'disabled people' has been used throughout the Plan in accordance with the UPIAS classification of disability and impairment which has been developed by disabled people themselves (UPIAS 1976). Where disabled people are referred to in the Plan this should be understood to include all disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and sensory impairments.