



# ÁISEANNA TACAÍOCHTA

## Overview of Áiseanna Tacaíochta's Direct Payments Model

**Conference: Promoting Independent Living and Participation in Society for People with Disabilities.**

**European Parliament**

**6<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Presenter: Jessica Gough (ÁT Leader)**





## Background

“Áiseanna Tacaíochta” translates to “Supported Facilities” in English.

Áiseanna Tacaíochta (ÁT) is emerging as a leading organisation in the Independent Living movement in Ireland by offering a **Direct Payments model** to people with disabilities for the first time.

Founded in **2010** as a pilot project by the late Martin Naughton and three colleagues with the lived experience of disability.



# Our Role

We provide leadership and support to **empower** people with disabilities to live with the **independence, choice and freedom** that they are entitled to.

Our role involves:

- Leadership
- Research and evaluations
- Governance and accountability
- Training
- Advocacy
- Peer support

Our **goal** is to make Independent Living accessible to everyone and to establish it as a recognised right for people with disabilities



# Who We Are

## Our Leaders

- ÁT was **founded by** and continues to be **guided by people with disabilities**.
- We currently have **35 members who avail of the direct payments model** to set up their own company and employ their own personal assistants.

## Our Staff

- ÁT staff are committed to the **philosophy of Independent Living**.
- ÁT hopes to take on more regional staff to provide strong and local support to our Leaders as we grow.

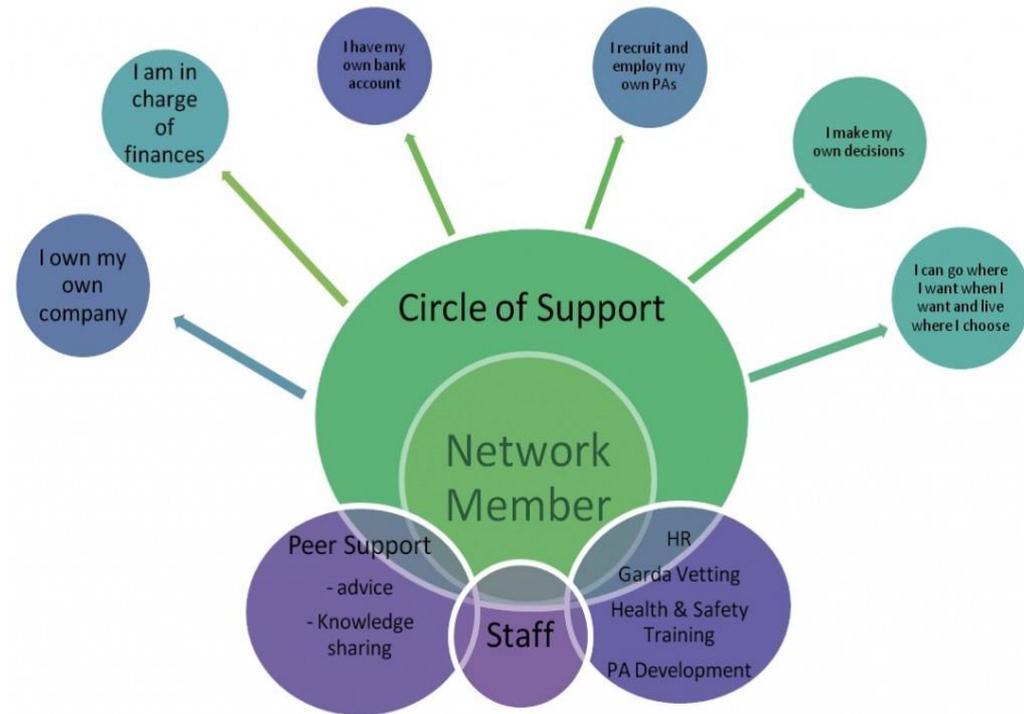
## Circles of Support

- Every member of each Leaders' Circle of Support brings their own **skills and experience** to the role, ensuring **full support** in everything that the Leader does.



# What We Do: Direct Payments in Action

- We act as **intermediary** between the individual and the Health Service Executive (HSE).
- We support our Leaders in establishing their **own company so that funding can be channelled straight to them.**
- We assist our Leaders in setting up their **Circle of Support** in their own local communities.



# Why We Do It

- 68% of the people who use disability services in Ireland are **dissatisfied with the level of control they have over their own lives.**<sup>1</sup> We work to change this.
- By giving people with disabilities more control and independence, we are moving towards a fairer, more inclusive and progressive future for everyone.
- Our model creates strong outcomes not just for our **Leaders** and people with disabilities, but for the whole of wider **society** and also for **policy**.



“Direct payments are a means to an end; that end is Independent Living”  
(Frances Hasler, disability scholar)

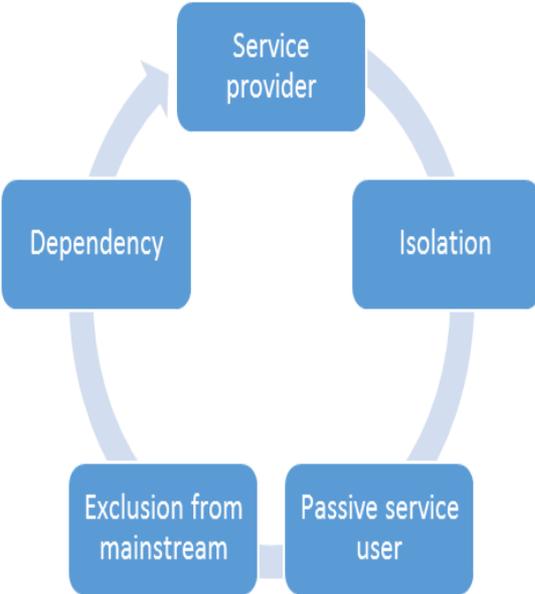
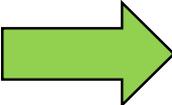
<sup>1</sup> Department of Health (2010) *Report on Public Consultation: Efficiency and Effectiveness of Disability Services in Ireland*. Dublin: Department of Health

# Outcomes for Leader

## 1. Personal Growth

**Cycle of Dependency**

**Cycle of Empowerment**



# Outcomes for Leader

## 2. Flexibility

- I own my own company
- I recruit and employ my own PAs
- I make my own decisions
- I can go where I want when I want
- I am in charge of my finances

## 3. Value for Money

- Maximise Personal Assistant hours
- Low administration costs
- Good Quality Service



# Outcomes for Society

- Circle of Support – Volunteerism ethos
- Changing attitudes and awareness
- People with disabilities leading change



# Outcomes for Policy

- By demonstrating the **positive impact** of Direct Payments in people's lives, as well as their **value for money**, we hope to establish **a simplified model** of Direct Payments for people with disabilities in Irish policy.
- The Government Taskforce has now recommended **demonstration projects 2019-2021**
- Government policy and UNCRPD – Article 19: **“recognise the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others”**
- Bridging the gap between policy and practice: Professor Theresia Degener, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities said of the NUIG research published 2018 into the ÁT Model of Direct Payments **“This excellent evaluation of ÁT Model of direct payment will help the Irish government to fulfil its duties under Article 19 CRPD”**



# The Future

The founder of ÁT, the late **Martin Naughton** wrote:

“We ... believe that every person with a disability should have a **choice** about the way their services are provided, and the right to ensure that the services they do receive are **uniquely personal to their individuality**. Our objective is that every Leader has **complete control** over their service.

In light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) we feel that the time is right to **forge forward with this work**, and hope that the Áiseanna Tacaíochta model will become **a model for Europe also**. This is our dream. We would like you to help us make it a reality.”



# Further information on ÁT and the Direct Payments Model

- For more information on ÁT and the Direct Payments Model, please refer to <http://www.theatnetwork.com/>

