

Report from the Congress Disability Seminar,

October 19, 2012 (Clarion Hotel, Dublin Airport)

Some 40 trade union delegates disability group came together recently (18/19 October) to consider to consider the impact of the economic crisis on people with disabilities and how they can build effective alliances and fight back.

Delegates heard from a wide range of speakers, including Congress General Secretary **David Begg** who said that a 'threshold of decency' was needed to guide us through the economic crisis.

He said equality was about creating the conditions where everyone can lead a fulfilling life.

But people with disabilities faced threats to this basic right with services which enable them to participate on an equal footing in society - such as personal assistants - being cut and the quality of remaining services being compromised.

Delegates from **Northern Ireland** expressed grave concern about the detrimental impact of welfare reform on people with disabilities, their carers and families.

Michelle Gaynor from the **Leaders' Alliance** spoke about the group's protest outside Government buildings in September, which led to a reversal in cuts to PA services.

There was broad agreement that unions and people with disabilities and their organisations should work together to ensure respect for the rights of people with disabilities.

In addition, it was important to ensure that the services union members deliver are quality services that serve the real needs of people with disabilities while also respecting people's rights at work.

Sile Larkin from the **Equality Tribunal** relayed the experience of discrimination faced by people with disabilities at work, as evidenced by recent case law at the Tribunal.

Unions present pledged to work to ensure that the voice of union members with disabilities is heard within their unions and that the union would offer its full support where such discrimination exists.

More here: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2012/10/18/congress-disability-seminar-1/>

Ends