



## **Press Release**

### **Post Polio Group meets Minister Kelly Hope that Funding Issue will be Resolved for Disability Groups**

For Immediate Release - 28 April 2015

The Post Polio Support Group (PPSG) yesterday met with the Minister for the Environment, Communication & Local Government, Alan Kelly, regarding the cessation of funding that impacted on 23 disability organisations in 2014. Last July Minister Kelly announced a bridging fund for 12 months. This funding is due to expire in June. The ongoing issue of the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) funding has been dominating the agendas of small charities and their representative organisations such as the Disability Federation of Ireland and the Neurological Association of Ireland. Some of their members are reliant on the funding to keep their doors open.

PPSG requires SSNO funding to ensure provision of information and development of self-help services within the community of Polio Survivors, of which there are 7,000 in Ireland.

Previously the Department of Environment, Communication & Local Government had cited that the target group within the Post Polio Support Group are not disadvantaged, yet it is known that people with disabilities are the socio-economic group with the highest risk of poverty. Polio and Post Polio Syndrome creates great adversity for those that the PPSG serves, with disposable income at an annual average well below the norm. A significant majority of PPSG members are totally dependent on social welfare payments or are on a low income.

CEO Fran Brennan said, "We welcome the Minister giving us the opportunity to meet with him and allowing us to express our concerns about the loss of this funding. Minister Kelly and his officials seemed to appreciate and understand the impact on organisations such as PPSG. They expressed their intention to find a long term solution that would maintain funding for the organisations concerned and hope to be able to make an announcement soon."

Polio Survivor and Chairperson of PPSG, Susan Dowling said "We are pleased that he is taking this issue so seriously and that he and his Department are dealing with the matter. During our discussions we emphasised that in our view disability is the concern of every government department. Our funding proposal was for community focused activities which are very much under the remit of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government."

7,000 Survivors of Polio are estimated to live in Ireland today, with many people still living with disabilities brought on by the disease. Others are suffering from the late effects of Polio, also known as Post Polio Syndrome, significantly increasing their disability and causing pain and fatigue later in life.

## **About the Post Polio Support Group**

The Post Polio Support Group was established for Polio Survivors by Polio Survivors in 1993. We are the only organisation in Ireland providing practical support (and sometimes more importantly a listening ear) to those unfortunate enough to have contracted Polio when babies or young children.

We provide stair lifts, callipers, bespoke footwear, electric scooters and wheelchairs. We also help Survivors access Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Respite Breaks, as well as other supports. The group works to raise awareness, provide information on Polio and its late effects and to ensure Polio Survivors can live with dignity.

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