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independent ● ● ● ●  
living ● ● ●  
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# Impact Report

2024/25





## Message from the Chair

Welcome to our annual report for 2024/25 which I hope you find informative. The year presented challenges for the board over many areas, not least the transition into the 'digital' world. Presenting changes that were both accessible as well as easy to use. Representation of the disabled community, as our government began to acknowledge the slippage during the political vacuum. The passing of a founding board member, and past chairman, Mike Hendra MBE. The loss of a good friend as well as his great source of wisdom, knowledge and measured guidance was felt immeasurably. Beyond that the board have worked together diligently and have been a tremendous support and strength.



**Michael Holden**

## Message from the Chief Executive

I am delighted to report on our work for the year 2024/25. I would like to thank the SMT for their patience over the last twelve months as we completed a management re-structure. We saw our reach and voice on behalf of our members increase significantly across government through our campaigning work. We were also pleased to work with the university consortium (IMPACT) this year on a delegated tasks project. Our staff embraced new digital applications that were introduced to support the services we provide to our clients. Feedback from our service users was extremely positive and our annual survey indicated that over 95% of respondents who contacted us found our services valuable to them. We had a successful annual review of our Department of Health contract which is due to the incredible work carried out by all our staff across the organisation.



**Bryan Myles**

## Who We Are

We are a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) led by disabled people, for disabled people. We work to ensure that disabled people have independent living, choice and control over their own lives.

We follow the Social Model of Disability, which recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society, not their impairments.

## What We Do

Through advice, information and advocacy, we help people navigate Direct Payments and Self-Directed Support, employ and manage Personal Assistants, and understand their rights. We also provide employer and payroll support, raise awareness, and campaign for policy and practice that removes barriers and enables independent living across Northern Ireland.

- Advice and information on Direct Payments and Self-Directed Support
- Advocacy, ensuring disabled people's voices are heard and respected
- Employer and payroll support for those employing personal assistants
- Campaigning and engagement to influence policy and practice



# 53

**Awareness  
Raising and  
Info Events**

## OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**7,000**

Advice &  
Information  
Enquiries

**3,655**

Service Users  
and PAs  
Supported

**2,852**

DP Employers  
Using CILNI  
Payroll

**263**

Advocacy  
Support  
Requests

**912**

New  
Employer  
Meetings

**54**

Info and  
Awareness  
Events

**80**

Policy  
Development  
Activities



## Testimonials

“Working with the CILNI team has been an absolute pleasure. CILNI had identified a significant issue around the delegation of healthcare tasks. We were able to obtain specialist legal advice, through barrister Wesley McGrady, to clarify the law on this issue. The quality of that advice was enhanced by the depth of knowledge and understanding of the issue brought by CILNI. We’re happy to hear that having independent legal advice has given the campaign greater capacity, clarity and confidence.”

**Kate Barry, Director, Public Interest Litigation Support (PILS)**

“The Department of Health has worked closely with CILNI to address issues related to the delegation of healthcare tasks to PAs. These issues were significantly impacting many people, and CILNI’s input was essential in shaping our approach. Its active participation in the Oversight Group and related governance structures has ensured that lived experience and practical insights are embedded in decision-making. The Department found CILNI’s engagement to be professional, well-informed and strongly aligned with the concerns of those it represents. We look forward to continuing this partnership as we refine guidance and support implementation across Northern Ireland.”

**Chief Nursing Officer Group, Department of Health**

# Campaigning and Influencing

We recognise that being champions of independent living requires active participation in shaping policy and legislation that enable individuals to achieve and sustain independence. This year we have therefore allocated additional resources to deliver our campaigning objectives.

## Our campaign priorities this year

- 1** Delegation of Healthcare Tasks made available to all who need them in Northern Ireland.
- 3** Recruitment of Personal Assistants supported, simplified and the role attractive through the provision of high-quality training and funding for both PAs and their employers.

- 2** The full implementation of Self-Directed Support, including the implementing of holistic approaches to support planning.
- 4** Self-Directed Support utilised in the supported living and residential care home environments to ensure choice, control and independence with the appropriate support.



## Priority 1 - Delegation of Healthcare Tasks

The campaign on the **delegation of healthcare tasks** followed our observation of an increasing number of people in receipt of Direct Payments being unable to access delegated healthcare interventions across Northern Ireland. This was due to variations in practice across Health and Social Care Trusts and a lack of shared understanding of the legislation governing this area.

CILNI was subsequently appointed as a Demonstrator Site by the IMPACT research consortium for a twelve-month period, working in partnership with researcher Barbara Campbell and co-designer Brendan Casey. The project generated a number of evidence-informed insights and practical recommendations, including the need for a cultural shift away from managing clinical risk towards enabling good lives.

During the year, CILNI staff and a number of service users also took part in a UTV documentary highlighting the challenges faced by disabled people and their families as a result of restrictions on the delegation of healthcare tasks in Northern Ireland.

Together, the documentary, IMPACT research findings and ongoing discussions with the Chief Social Worker and local advocates contributed to the establishment of a Department of Health-led workstream, chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer.

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### Further Reading & Viewing



Documentary



IMPACT Report

## Delivering Advice Services to Support Independent Living

We aim to deliver services that meet people's needs while ensuring they are both efficient and high quality. We are contracted by the Department of Health to provide advice, information and advocacy, supporting people to manage their own care and support through Self-Directed Support and Direct Payments across Northern Ireland.

*"They introduced me to the IMPACT research group and supported my position in person and online. We worked in partnership to attend meetings and CILNI also encouraged me to express my views."*

**Brendan Casey**  
CILNI Service User and  
IMPACT Co-chair



The service is delivered by a team of Independent Living Advisors working in partnership with individuals, their families and carers, and Social Workers. During the year, the service continued to grow while maintaining a high standard of support. Waiting times for appointments reduced, and response rates from the team improved.

Overall, the Independent Living Service responded to 7,000 enquiries from 3,655 service users and carers. Alongside an increase in advocacy cases, we delivered 60 information and training sessions for individuals, Personal Assistants, Social Workers and others across the community and voluntary sector. We also expanded our Outreach Service to increase face-to-face engagement and launched an online Social Worker Training Resource.



# Delivering Payroll Services to Support Independent Living

## *Payroll Service Overview*

Our payroll service offers a bespoke, specialist solution for employers of Personal Assistants, supporting them to meet their statutory payroll obligations. The team of Payroll Advisors provided a high quality service and responded to more enquiries than in previous years.

The continued move towards digitising our Payroll Service has been beneficial for our payroll clients, their employees and our operations, as it has made our service more streamlined and allowed us to provide faster responses. The level of satisfaction from our clients remains high. The service also provides accounting support to clients who need assistance in setting an appropriate pay rate within their personal budget.

## *Improving responsiveness and outcomes*

This year, through locally-led advocacy, the annual Self-Directed Support regional rate uplift was announced earlier than usual. This in part mitigated concerns that employees in receipt of means-tested benefits may lose their benefits due to late back payments.

**93%** Service users felt listened to

**91%** Service users found advice very helpful

## Summary of Financial Report

### CILNI Income 2024/25

**Advice Service Income 31%**

**Payroll Service Income 67%**

**Other Income 2%**

### CILNI Expenditure 2024/25

**Human Resources 81%**

**Administration 9%**

**Other Expenditure 10%**

A full set of the charity's audited accounts for the period is available on the Charity Commission NI website, however an overview of the organisation's financial position of the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 is provided below.

The charity's income exceeded its expenditure by £33,732 which is a satisfactory financial position in relation to previous financial years. The income from the payroll service continued to grow as more employers of personal assistants are attracted to the one-stop shop facility offered by the charity. The contract with the Department of Health for the provision of the regional advice, information and advocacy service, was secured at similar fixed price as the previous contract. In response to the growing demand for support to arrange direct payments by service users, the advice service continued to exceed its targets.

The Board continues to follow a strategic financial policy of maintaining a level of reserves sufficient to cover six months running costs. The operational surplus and a reasonable upturn in investments has resulted in accumulated funds at the end of the year increasing from £902,933 to £940,184. These investments are managed on CILNI's behalf by Evelyn Partners.



## Thank you to Our Supporters

We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals who have supported our work over the past year. Through their support we have been able to ensure many more disabled people have received answers to many of their questions and services to help them live more independently. We remain committed to living in a world where disability is not a disadvantage.

### Partners

Alex Wade, Mark Bates Insurance

Ann Marie Fox, Department of Health, SPPG

Barbara Campbell, IMPACT

Chris O'Neill, Smith & Williamson

Colin Lively, MyIT Department

David McDonald, Omnibus Project & ILF NI Stakeholders Group

Jane Fyffe, Harbinson Mulholland

John McNally, Lockton Insurance

Peter Scott, ILF Scotland

Stuart Bensusan, Surewise







### Eastern Area Office

Beechill Business Park  
96 Beechill Rd, Belfast  
BT8 7QN

### Northern Area Office

The Business Centre  
80-82 Rainey Street  
Magherafelt  
BT45 5AJ

### Western Area Office

64 Market Street  
Omagh  
BT78 1EL

### Southern Area Office

Ballybot House  
28 Corn Market,  
Newry  
BT35 8BG



028 9064 8546



[www.cilni.org](http://www.cilni.org)



[info@cilni.org](mailto:info@cilni.org)



[centreforindependentlivingni](https://www.facebook.com/centreforindependentlivingni)



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