



This sector earns the bulk of its income by delivering public services.

OVERVIEW

There are **291 organisations** in the voluntary and community sector which are involved in disability sector. Total income for 2003/04 is estimated to be **£37.54 million**.

Just under one quarter of all the organisations in the disability sector are part of a UK or an international organisation. The self contained nature of the voluntary and community sector is not necessarily applicable to the disability sector. Equally, the predominance of stand alone organisations is not significant when compared to the sector as a whole (35.6% as compared to 62.5%).

There are approximately **1,356 paid employees** working in the disability sector with a further **3,867 volunteers** directly involved on a formal basis (management committees etc).

ROLE

One in five people in Northern Ireland has a disability. People with disabilities are entitled to equal rights and opportunities in society but unfortunately, despite legislative changes designed to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, many find themselves living on the margins of society. For this reason the disability sector exists to ensure that people with disabilities attain their full rights as citizens by supporting inclusion, influencing government policy and working to change attitudes in partnership with disabled people.

Work carried out by these organisations includes the provision of information, policy development, capacity building, training, community development and mobility, access and transport assessment.

FUNDING

Government sources are a significant funder of the disability sector accounting for 51.5% of this sector's total income. Like the health and social care and children's sectors, the most common form of funding is earned income through the **delivery of public services**. Over half of all government funding of the disability sector is received by this method.

Statutory and non-departmental agencies are the largest provider of grants and donations, accounting for £6.35 million of total public sector expenditure in this sector.

The **public** also make a significant contribution to the disability sector, providing just under one quarter of its income. The way in which this funding is donated is significant as 78% of the donations are unplanned (voluntary income) or spontaneous.

Just over a fifth of organisations which receive funding from government sources are dependent on it for 75% or more of their.

PEOPLE

The disability sector employs **1,356 paid individuals**.

The disability sector is dominated by females (seven out of ten employees are female). This gender split is fairly consistent with the voluntary and community sector as a whole.

Those individuals employed in the disability sector represent **4.6% of the total sector's workforce**.

There are **3,867 volunteers** involved in the disability sector.

Proportionally the disability sector has the lowest levels of volunteers for a sector of this size. It is difficult to know why this is, but the professionalisation of the sector through increased public service delivery and the specialised nature of the care that volunteers would be expected to deliver, may mean that volunteer figures are proportionally lower in than in other sub sectors. Another factor that may be that the contribution of volunteers is limited because this field of work requires a high staff client ratio and expertise.