Greetings,

Over the past few months I have visited thirteen county / city councils to address disability inclusion and to listen to the concerns of councillors. These visits will continue in the coming months, so that I can establish a clear view of the challenges faced by local councils as they meet their responsibilities in responding to the varying needs of citizens with disabilities.

My visits, which have been widely welcomed, support the work of councillors as they deal with the reality on the ground, especially in regard to budgets versus requirements. I always stress the fact that disabled people and their families live in a local authority area, not any government department.

I have also taken the opportunity to highlight the many issues impacting on the disability community, especially with regard to poverty, education, transport, housing and access to employment from the local to national perspective. I stressed my personal commitment to continually raising these issues at every possible level within the Oireachtas.

Budget ’19, had a number of welcome disability developments. Yet, as the first budget post ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) it was also an opportunity for measures to be taken across a wide range of Departments. Every Budget needs to be resourcing significant disability inclusions measures.

As was the case in 2017, I invited all newly elected Lord Mayors, Mayors, and Cathaoirligh of Local Authorities for a briefing in Leinster House on a range of disability issues. I thank all those who participated in a very positive and informing get together.

I also used the briefing as an opportunity to thank our county and city councils for their role in getting the UNCRPD ratification decision by Government over the line. At the briefing I was again able to highlight the significant role of county and city councils in supporting our citizens with disabilities. The Government can make decisions and decide on policy, however, it is the translation of these policies on the ground that enhances the lives of people in the disability community.

I again raised the range of barriers that continue to exclude and inhibit people with disabilities. These include poverty, housing, public transport, access to employment and education. We all have a responsibility to tackle these issues.

I invited Assistant Commissioner Dave Sheehan, Head of Roads Policing in An Garda Síochána to address the group on the abuse of disability parking spaces and permits. It was heartening for all to learn that the Gardaí are now taking a much stronger line with offenders in this area.

As a new initiative for 2018, I invited all party leaders to a photocall in the Oireachtas grounds to highlight the need for disability inclusion in the budget (photo above).
Offaly County Council


Galway County Council

With Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly and Cllr. Tom Healy

Cork County Council


Cork City Council


Monaghan County Council


To view or download the county disability statistics for each Local Authority go to http://www.senatorjohnndolan.ie/disability-issues/disability-profile
I am looking forward to continuing my visits to local authority members in 2019.

Louth County Council
With Cathaoirleach Liam Reilly and CEO Joan Martin

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Council
With Cllr Deirdre Donnelly

Carlow County Council
With Cllr Fintan Phelan, Cllr Jim Deane and Cathaoirleach Cllr Brian O Donoghue

Tipperary County Council
With Cllr Marie Murphy and Cllr Denis Leahy

Kilkenny County Council
With Cathaoirleach Cllr. Eamon Aylward at Civic reception for Harry and Molly Flynn
There are 643,131 people with a disability in Ireland. That is 13.5% of the population.

227,965 people living in rural Ireland have a disability.

22% of people with disabilities of working age are in employment, this compares to 53% of the general population.

26% of those not at work due to disability or illness live in consistent poverty.

Poverty is on the rise among people with disabilities, while it is decreasing among the general population.

27% of people with disabilities over the age of 15 had not progressed further than primary level education compared to just 11% of the general population.

People with disabilities are more than twice as likely to report discrimination relating to housing.

They are over 1.6 times more likely to live in poor conditions, such as living in damp housing, lacking central heating or living in an area with neighbourhood problems.

While people with disabilities represent 13.5% of the general population, they make up 27% of the homeless population.

According to census 2016 there were 195,263 persons (4.1% of population) providing unpaid assistance to others, an increase of 8,151 (4.4%) on the 2011 figure.

Women made up just over 6 in 10 carers.

The 195,263 carers provided an average of 38.7 hours of unpaid care per carer. This is up on the 38.3 average hours care in 2011.