



Ability West - Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

FOI Publications

Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. This allows for the publication or giving of records outside of FOI provided that such publication or giving of access is not prohibited by law. The scheme commits FOI bodies to make information available as part of their normal business activities in accordance with this scheme.

Each link below leads to a page of comprising of relevant information by category as well as links to relevant information on the [Ability West Website](#).

If the information you require, cannot be found here, you may wish to conduct a search on the [Ability West](#) website or contact Ability West at 091-540900 or enquiries@abilitywest.ie,

If the information is not currently made publicly available by Ability West, you may consider [FOI — Ability West](#)

- **General Information about Ability West**
<https://www.abilitywest.ie/>
- **Information on Functions and Services Provided**
 - [Adults — Ability West](#)
 - [Children — Ability West](#)
- **Information on Decision-making Procedures**
[Company Info — Ability West](#)
- **Financial Information**
[Company Info — Ability West](#)
- **Procurement Information**
[Company Info — Ability West](#)
- **Miscellaneous Information**
<https://www.abilitywest.ie/>

Ability West Publication Scheme

a. Information

b. Our Mission

To empower people with disabilities to live self-directed lives in an equal and inclusive society. Each person is supported and valued within an environment which promotes their overall autonomy, health and wellbeing and enables them to reach their potential.

c. Our Vision

Ability West is dedicated to enabling people we support to realise their goals and ambitions.

We will deliver on the vision by:

Placing the fundamental rights of the people we support at the centre of our activities and promoting those rights

Empowering each person we support to live self-directed lives and to play a meaningful role in all aspects of community life

Listening and then developing a variety of options that can be used flexibly to meet their identified needs

Developing the skills and dedication of our staff in a supportive and motivating environment

Working in active partnership with the people we support, families, staff, our voluntary supporters and the broader community

Campaigning at local, regional and national level to resource and realise our vision to achieve these aims

Established in November 1962, Ability West has been providing services and supports to children and adults with intellectual disability for over 56 years. We are a voluntary, not for profit, organisation, set up by parents and friends, that provides services and supports to over 590 children and adults with, intellectual disability and autism in 13 locations with 61 centres located across Galway City and County.

We are a grass roots organisation with local branches of Ability West located in communities throughout County Galway. The branches are voluntary fora and are a

wonderful asset to this organisation. The branch members have, since the organisation's inception, been instrumental in enabling their local communities achieve things for Ability West's services that just would not happen without them.

Branch membership mainly comprises of family and friends of service users, and the general public. The branches are the link to local people, businesses and communities and are vital in adhering to our ethos and vision which is to provide each person with opportunities, supports and services that will enable them to be an active and valued member within their community. The branches are also very important in that they are the link between the Board of Directors and the community.

BRANCHES AND REGIONAL COMMITTEES

Branches

Each branch can nominate two people to the Regional Committee on an annual basis. One of the two nominees must be a family member.

Regional Structures

There are currently four regions in the county; Connemara, Galway City, North Galway, South/East Galway. In total there can be eight representatives from the regions on the Board of Directors, four, at a minimum, must be a family member as defined earlier.

3.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Ability West's organisation chart reflects its structure (see Appendix 1).

The main structures are detailed as follows:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Number of Directors:

The number of Directors shall be no fewer than 4 and no more than 20.

The Board shall consist of the following:

- Not more than two representatives nominated by each region.
- The outgoing Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer (if not already elected) but so that no one shall serve as an Officer of the Company for more than four consecutive years.
- Other members can be selected by co-option provided that the total number of Directors shall not exceed twenty.

Directors are non-executive and offer their services on a voluntary basis.

Elected Regional Directors:

Each region will nominate 2 Directors to the Board, one of whom must be a family member which is defined as follows: *family member means the parent, grandparent, legal guardian, sibling, spouse of sibling, child of a sibling, aunt, uncle, spouse of an aunt or uncle, or child of an aunt or uncle of a service user.*

The maximum duration of the Regional Directors is four years.

Co-opted Directors:

The Board can from time to time co-opt any person to be a Director either to fill a vacancy or as an addition to the existing Board, but so that the total number of Directors shall not at any time exceed the number fixed in accordance with the Constitution, i.e. 20. Directors so appointed will hold office only until the next annual general meeting and shall then be eligible for re-election.

Further details are contained in the Constitution which can be accessed via Ability West's website – www.abilitywest.ie.

Term of office:

The term of office for an Elected Director and Co-opted Director are as outlined above. All directors are eligible for re-election, no Director may serve for more than four consecutive years as a member of the Board.

For details regarding rotation of Directors, refer to the Constitution, which can be accessed via the company's website –www.abilitywest.ie.

□ **Meetings of Board of Directors:**

The Board of Directors meet at least 9 times per year.

□ **Responsibilities and further information:**

Ability West is a company limited by guarantee (No. 41317) and is a registered charity (No. 20011161). The Board of Directors is responsible for the overall governance of the organisation. The Directors delegate certain powers to the Chief Executive consistent with the day to day management of the organisation. The Chief Executive delegates some responsibility to the Director of Human Resources, Finance and Client Services to ensure that services are managed efficiently and effectively within the organisation's directorate structure. The Chief Executive has overall authority and responsibility for the management of the organisation and implementation of the strategic plan.

The Board of Directors have a number of subcommittees in place, including

- Finance Subcommittee
- Nominations Committee
- Visiting Subcommittee
- Audit and Risk Committee and
- Quality and Safety Board Committee

The members of these subcommittees are generally determined annually and subcommittees work to a specified brief.

The organisation has a Constitution which outlines the regulations in relation to its Board of Directors, Regional Structure, Branches, Annual General Meetings, Accounts and Audit. This document can be accessed via the company's website www.abilitywest.ie

The composition of the Board of Directors and subcommittees is contained in the Annual Report, which can be obtained as per publications on www.abilitywest.ie

WORKING PARTIES, PROJECT TEAMS AND TASK GROUPS

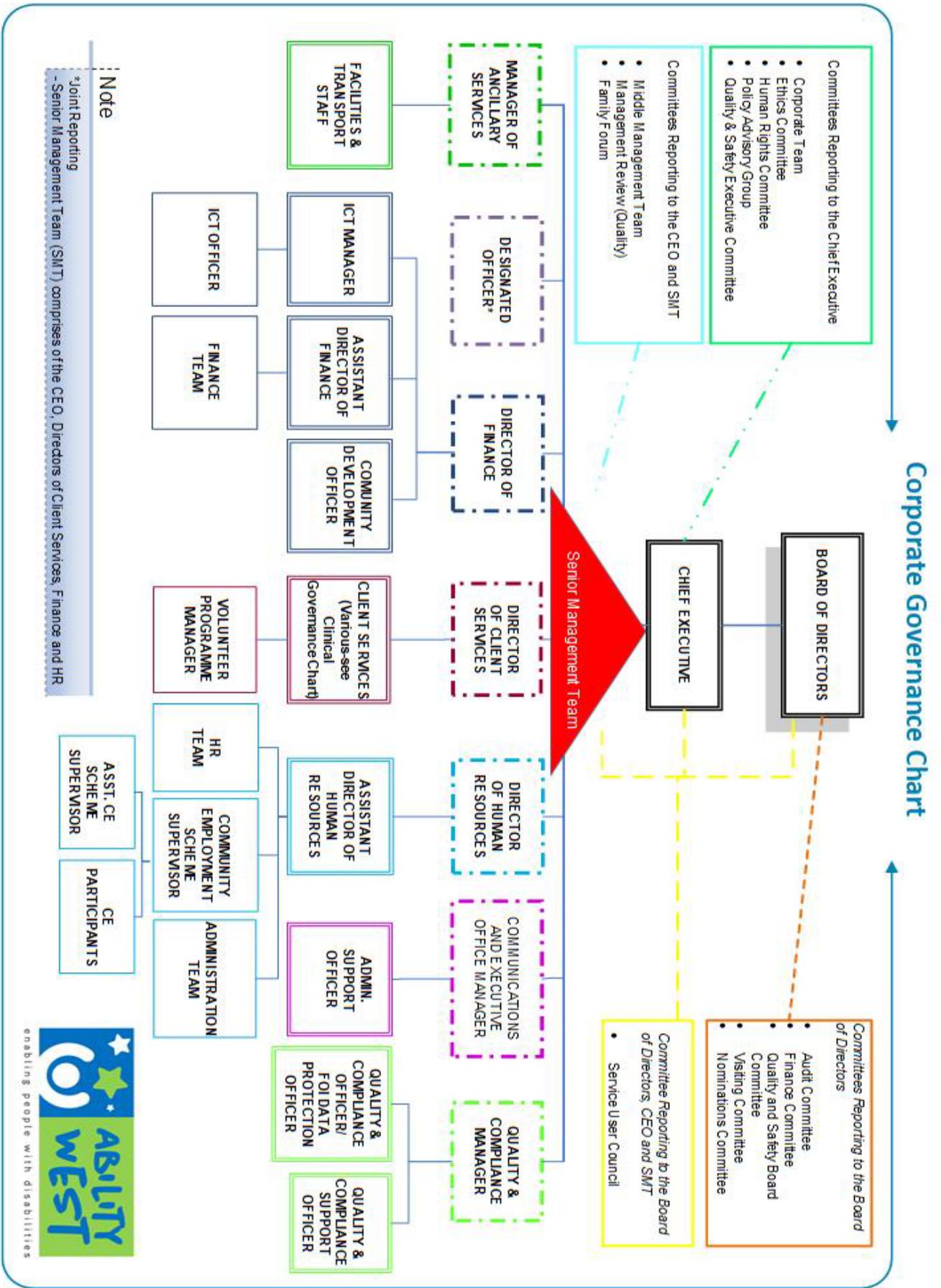
Working Parties/Groups, Project Teams, Task Force Groups are established in Ability West from time to time to oversee developments such as - building projects, relocation of an existing service, and developments in a particular service area, etc. The groups are given a definite brief from the Chief Executive with relevant membership and terms of reference as appropriate.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Ability West works with a number of organisations, including -

- Health Service Executive
- Health Information and Quality Authority
- Health and Safety Authority
- National Treasury Management Agency
- National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Department of Education and Skills
- IBEC
- National Standards Authority of Ireland
- The Wheel
- Other Voluntary/Non Statutory Organisation

APPENDIX I ORGANISATION CHART



Note

*Joint Reporting

- Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises of the CEO, Directors of Client Services, Finance and HR



Appendix II: ‘Key Personnel

Location, contact and address details for the organisations departments covered by FOI are shown below. Contact details for the provision of information to the media and to the public are via www.abilitywest.ie and enquiries@abilitywest.ie.

Title	Name	Phone	Email address
Ability West	Blackrock House Salthill Galway H91 R254	091 540900	enquiries@abilitywest.ie
Chief Executive	Breda Crehan-Roche	091 540900	ceo@abilitywest.ie
Director of Finance	John McHugo	091 540900	john.mchugo@abilitywest.ie
Director of Client Services	Audrey Pidgeon	091 540900	audrey.pidgeon@abilitywest.ie
Director of Human Resources	Cathal Esler	091 540900	cathal.esler@abilitywest.ie
Internal Reviewer	Breda Crehan-Roche	091 540900	ceo@abilitywest.ie
Quality & Compliance Manager	Eileen Costello-Conneely	091 540900	eileen.costello@abilitywest.ie
Freedom of Information Officer	Emer Power	091 540900	foi@abilitywest.ie
Decision Makers	Audrey Pidgeon John McHugo Cathal Esler	091 540900	audrey.pidgeon@abilitywest.ie john.mchugo@abilitywest.ie cathal.esler@abilitywest.ie
Complaints Officers	Mary Foyle Gerry Haslam Brian Hehir Theresa Hendley David Joyner Orla Haddigan	091 540900	
External Appeals	Information Commissioner	01 6395689 or 1890 223030	info@oic.ie

STRUCTURE AND CLASS OF RECORDS HELD

The structure and types of records held by Ability West are in accordance with our Records Management Policy including the following:

ORGANISATIONAL RECORDS

- Ability West maintains records on the general operation of its services in Central Administration.
- Records in relation to the Quality Management System in operation are maintained in the Quality and Compliance Department.
- Financial records are maintained in Central Administration.
- Documentation/records required under Statutory Instrument 367 for example. Statement of Purpose, Residents Guide, Directory of residents. These records are maintained in individual services and some records are also maintained in Central Administration.

Type of records – Quality Management System records, quality manuals, operating procedures, guidance documents, quality records, audit records, financial records, insurance records, health and safety statement and associated records, records/files on the operation of services, correspondence files, Board of Directors minutes and records, policy documents, reports from committees/groups, Senior Management Team minutes, other relevant minutes of committees/groups, internal memoranda, accident/incident records, complaints, compliments and feedback records, risk management records, records with regard to compliance, e.g. HSE, HIQA, NSAI (ISO). This list is not exhaustive.

SERVICE USER RECORDS

- Records are maintained on each service user receiving or who received a service and supports from the organisation
- Records are located for each service user in the individual unit which the person attends and
- A main file is also located in Central Administration.

Type of records which inter alia include: service user case notes, individual unit notes on service users, person centred plans, circle of support notes and action plans, reports on – case reviews, case conferences, Individual Programme Plan meetings and progress reviews. Social work records, psychology records, physiotherapy records, speech and language therapy records, occupational therapy records, medical records, specific care plans, health notes, medication prescription sheet and administration records, service user's personal property records, service users' financial records, risk assessment records, admissions documentation, contracts of care (residential/respice). This list is not exhaustive.

HUMAN RESOURCES RECORDS

- Records are maintained on staff members and former staff members, whether full time, part time, permanent, contract, temporary, records are retained in line with legislation
- Staff training records are also maintained in the Administration Office and in the individual unit where the staff member is usually or most frequently contracted.
- Individual checklist of specific records on file for each staff member is maintained in the individual unit where the staff member is usually or most frequently contracted.
- Recruitment files for vacant posts.

Type of records which inter alia include: Individual personnel records which may include application form/c.v., references, medical reports, probation reports, personal development reviews, general correspondence; training records, recruitment records, attendance records, payroll, garda vetting reports and salary records. This list is not exhaustive.

- **Strategic Plan 2019-2023** www.abilitywest.ie
- **Annual Reports and Financial Statements** [Ability West](#)

Ability West salaries are aligned to the Department of Health Salary Scales.

Ability West has partnerships with the following agencies:

- Link Galway
- Blue Teapot Theatre Company
- Brothers of Charity Services Ireland – Western Region
- Western Care Association
- Muintearas
- Carraig Dubh Housing Association
- Right at Home

- **Details of Service Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding.**

Details of Service Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding, between two or more public bodies e.g. parent department and agency in relation to the provision of services

- Health Service Executive
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Social Protection
- Link Galway
- Blue Teapot Theatre Company
- Brothers of Charity Services Ireland – Western Region
- Brothers of Charity Services Galway
- Western Care Association
- Muintearas
- Right at Home
- Tusla
- St. Joseph’s Special School
- St. Oliver’s Special School
- St. Teresa’s Special School
- Tigh Nan Dooley Special School

- **Customer Charters/Codes of Practice or Guidelines.**

- Charter of Rights for Service Users
- Complaints Policy
- Donor Charter

B. Services provided or to be provided to the Public

Ability West provides multidisciplinary and administration services and supports to over 590 children and adults with intellectual disability across 13 geographical areas in Galway. Since establishment in 1962 we have been to the forefront in developing community based services for people with intellectual disability.

Access to services is in accordance with our Access, Referrals, Admissions and Transfers Policy

Ability West is requested, from time to time, to undertake research projects, these are undertaken in accordance with our Ethics in Research Policy.

C. Decision making process for major policy proposals

The Board of Directors approves all policies developed by the organisation. Policies are assessed as part of the HIQA inspection process, NSAI and through internal audit process. The Policy Advisory Group considers the development and direction of policies and prepares papers for consideration by the Board of Directors.

We endeavour to ensure that staff are recruited and appointed in line with best practice and legislative requirements. We do so in accordance with our Recruitment and Appointment Policy.

D. Financial Information

Financial Statements

- Our annual Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards, including Financial Reporting Standard FRS 102, Statement of Recommended Practice for Financial Reporting by Charities (SORP) and the Companies Act 2014.
- Our annual Financial Statements include details of major Capital Expenditure and information on planned major Capital Expenditure is available when such arises.
- Information on relevant purchase invoices for Goods and Services of more than €20,000 will be made available on a quarterly basis.
- The Directors do not receive any remuneration for services provided to the company but are entitled to claim reimbursement of expenses e.g. travel.

E. Procurement

Please click on the following links for details of Ability West's:

- Tendering Policy ([Ability West](#))
- Current tendering competitions and public contracts awarded ([Ability West](#))

E. FOI Disclosure Log and Other Information to be Published Routinely

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires Ability West to publish a disclosure log, which contains details of the types of requests received under FOI and the decisions made by the body in response to those requests.

Ability West maintains a FOI Disclosure Log of FOI Request and this is available by request to foi@abilitywest.ie, requests are subject to restriction of Data Protection legislation.

Disclosures are listed in order of the date the request was received by Ability West. Please note that, for privacy reasons and in line with EU General Data Protection Regulation, which came into force on 25th May 2018, identifying information such as the name of the requester, is not included in the disclosure log.

Other information required can be sought via foi@abilitywest.ie or enquiries@abilitywest.ie

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) provides that every person has the following legal rights:

- the right to access records held by FOI bodies (as defined in the FOI Act);
 - the right to have their personal information held by an FOI body corrected or updated where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading; and
 - the right to be given reasons for decisions taken by FOI bodies that affect them
- members of the public can seek access to:
- records relating to personal information held on them no matter when the record was created; and
 - other records created on or after 21st April 1998

• How does FOI work?

A member of the public can request access to records under the FOI Act by making a request to FOI body and stating that he/she is seeking the records pursuant to the FOI Act. The FOI Act requires FOI bodies to respond to such requests from the public. In most cases, FOI bodies must give their decision on a request within 4 weeks of receiving it.

• How can I make an FOI request to the Ability West?

You should send a request in writing (by post, hand delivery or email) to:

Freedom of Information Officer,

Ability West, Blackrock House, Salthill, Galway, H91 R254

Email: foi@abilitywest.ie

Your request should include the following:

- A statement that the request is being made pursuant to the FOI Act;
- As much information as possible about the records being sought; and
- Details of the format in which you wish to receive any records released (e.g. photocopies).

• Can I get access to any information that I seek?

Records that you can seek from Ability West include:

- I. all records relating to your personal information in line with GDPR;
- II. all other records created on or after 21st April 1998; and
- III. any records necessary to the understanding of a record referred to in (B) above even if created prior to 21st April 1998.

However, in order to allow FOI bodies to properly conduct their business, it will sometimes be necessary to exempt from release certain types of information in some circumstances. These exemptions are set out in the FOI Act and apply to all FOI bodies. Among the key exemptions are records relating to:

- law enforcement and security,
- confidential and commercially sensitive information,
- Personal information of a third party (GDPR) [i.e. someone other than the person making the request].

Requests for access to records may also be refused if they are deemed to be unclear or of such a volume as to substantially or unreasonably interfere with or disrupt Ability West's work.

• Is there a charge for getting information under the FOI Act?

There is no charge for submitting a request. However, in respect of non-personal requests, section 27 of the FOI Act provides that fees shall be charged for the time spent finding records and for any reproduction costs incurred by Ability West in providing you with the material requested (search, retrieval and copying fees). The legislation specifies the search, retrieval and copying fees that may be charged. There are also some rules that apply in relation to the charging of fees:

- Where the cost of search, retrieval and copying is less than €101, there will be no charge.
- Where the cost of search, retrieval and copying is greater than €500 but less than €700, the total charge will not exceed €500.
- Where the cost of search, retrieval and copying is greater than €700, an FOI body can refuse to process the request.

Where fees apply, a deposit must be paid before the search and retrieval process is begun. An estimate of the search, retrieval and photocopying charges relating to your request and the required deposit will be notified to you in writing. Payment should be

made by way of cheque. A list of relevant fees is set out below:

List of Fees

- There is no charge for submitting a request
- Search and Retrieval – €20 per hour
- €0.04 per sheet for a photocopy
- Internal review fee €30 (reduced fee of €10 for medical card holders or dependents of medical card holders)

Notes:

- (a) There is no charge if your request relates to records containing only personal information relating to you, unless there is a significant number of records.
- (b) If you are claiming a reduced fee, the request must be accompanied by the Medical Card registration number, issuing HSE name and your consent to the verification of these details with that HSE.

- **What if I am not satisfied with the decision on my FOI request?**

If you are not satisfied with the decision that you receive, you may ask for the decision to be reviewed. This will involve a complete review of the matter by the Chief Executive of Ability West and a decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. You may seek a review of any decision issued by Ability West, by making a request in writing (by post, hand delivery or email) to the Freedom of Information Officer, Ability West, Blackrock House, Salthill, Galway H91 R254 or to foi@abilitywest.ie.

You should state that you are seeking an Internal Review of the matter. A fee of €30 (reduced fee of €10 for medical card holders or dependents of medical card holders) may apply for such an appeal. There is no fee for Internal Review applications concerning only personal information relating to oneself or in relation to a decision to impose a fee or deposit. You should make your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of our response to you setting out our decision in relation to your initial request for records (although late appeals may be permitted in certain circumstances). When seeking an Internal Review you need to ensure that you refer to your initial request and decision and quote the reference number. You also need to include the grounds on which you are seeking this review and any additional information which you feel is relevant.

- **What if I am not satisfied with the decision on internal review?**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Internal Review, you may make an appeal to the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC). If you wish to make an appeal to the OIC, you must do so within 6 months of the date of our Internal Review decision. If you make an appeal the OIC, they will fully investigate and consider the matter and issue a fresh decision. All appeals should be addressed to:

The Information Commissioner,
18 Lower Leeson Street,
Dublin 2.
E-mail: info@oic.ie

A fee of €50 (reduced fee of €15 for medical card holders or dependants of medical card holders) may apply for such an application. There is no fee for appeals to the Office of the Information Commissioner concerning only personal information relating to oneself or in relation to a decision to impose a fee or deposit.

- **Can I get help in making a request?**

Yes. If you require help in formulating your request, the Freedom of Information Officer will be happy to assist you.

- **Do I need to make a FOI request to get information from Ability West?**

No. Ability West provides a great deal of information on the various pages of its website. This will continue. FOI provides an additional source of information by facilitating access to records not made routinely available.

- **Where can I get more information on FOI?**

Further information on FOI is available from:

The Freedom of Information Unit,
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform,
Government Buildings,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2.

Tel: +353 (1) 604 5388

Fax: +353 (1) 639 6281

E-mail: foi@per.gov.ie

The Information Commissioner, 18 Lower
Leeson Street, Dublin 2

Tel: +353 (1) 639 5689

Locall: 1890 253 238

Fax: +353 (1) 639 5674

E-mail: info@oic.gov.ie

More comprehensive information on Freedom of Information, including the text of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 is available at www.foi.gov.ie and www.oic.ie

