

---

**NATIONAL REHABILITATION BOARD  
BORD ATHSHLÁNÚCHÁIN**

---

---

**Annual Report 1989**

---

**NRB**

---

## **The Primary Goal of the Board**

**TO PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND FULL  
PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

---

## **Contents**

<b>Corporate Information</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Goals of the Board</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chairman's Statement</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Review of the year</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Statement of Expenditure and Sources of Finance</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Analysis of Expenditure by Service</b>	<b>19</b>

23rd Annual Report to the Minister for Health for the  
period 1st January 1989 to 31st December 1989  
pursuant to Article 21 of the National Rehabilitation  
Board (Establishment) Order 1967.

## **CORPORATE INFORMATION**

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr E Doyle, (Chairman),  
Ms M Aylward,  
Dr C Barry,  
Mr J Bermingham,  
Mr M Bruen,  
Mr T Connors,  
Mr J Dennehy,

Mr D Doherty,  
Mr F Flannery,  
Mr O Freaney,  
Dr A McNamara,  
Mr B Malone,  
Ms I Russell,  
Mr M Sinnott,  
Mr P Treanor.

### **MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Chief Executive Dr A P O'Reilly  
Manager, Vocational Service Mr E Casey  
Principal Psychologist Mr T James  
Manager, Research and Planning Ms A Lyons  
Administration/Personnel Officer Mr B McKean  
Finance Officer Mr A O'Daly

NRB has a staff complement of 154. It is an equal opportunity employer and is a participant in the Network of Equality Officers. 8% of NRB staff are people with disabilities.

## **The Goals of the Board**

- To promote equality of opportunity and full participation in society for people with disabilities
- To promote the development of policies and services which will meet the needs of people with disabilities
- To co-ordinate and regulate services in the best interest of people with disabilities
- To improve the process of consultation with disabled people, so as to ensure that policies and services are relevant to their real needs.
- To deliver those services which are appropriate to the Board's role as a public rehabilitation agency
- To undertake innovatory projects in the field of rehabilitation

## **Chairman's Statement**

The year under review may well prove to be one of the most significant in the history of NRB. A new Board was appointed by the Minister for Health for a four year term and began its work in the autumn. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to the outgoing Board members for their contribution to the work of NRB.

A new Chief Executive was appointed in the person of Dr A P O'Reilly who has our assurance of support and best wishes for a successful service with NRB.

Another development in 1989 of major significance for NRB was the initiation of the Strategic Planning process. This is an exercise of profound importance for NRB, involving every aspect of its activity. It should result, through clear prioritisation of objectives and targeting of resources, in an increase in NRB's effectiveness as the State body promoting the interests and rights of people with disabilities.

The introduction of a Public Service Quota Scheme some years ago to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities was rightly welcomed as a positive intervention by the State in this important area. It is regrettable to have to note that the Scheme has failed to live up to its promise. The time is now opportune to re-examine the concept of a Quota Scheme and, drawing on experience elsewhere in the European Community and beyond, to introduce a Scheme which will effectively promote the vocational prospects of citizens with disabilities.

The body established by the Minister for Health to review the provision of audiology services nationally, continued its work throughout 1989. NRB participated in the review which is now drawing to a close with the preparation of a report for the Minister.

Meetings were held during the year with the umbrella organisations representative of the voluntary bodies active in rehabilitation and with FAS. Continuing regular contact of this nature is a valuable, and indeed essential, element in enabling NRB to discharge its role.

The Challenge of identifying and promoting the needs and rights of citizens with disabilities is one which calls for an effort which is both sustained and imaginative. The various actions and initiatives reported on here, reflect NRB's continuing response to that challenge. As we enter a new decade, it is a challenge we intend to meet with increasing vigour.

## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank the many individuals and organisations whose co-operation and support make NRB's work possible. In particular I acknowledge the importance of NRB's specialist committees on Access, Technical Aids and Spina Bifida, and the officials of the Departments of Health, Labour, Environment, Social Welfare and Education. The co-operation of all is greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, I thank the members of the Board and the staff of NRB for all their work in the past year.

E. Doyle  
*Chairman*

## Vocational Service

### Review of the Year

During the year 2,128 people with disabilities were referred to the Vocational Service for the first time. In addition, 1,047 people who had previously received a service returned for further assistance, giving a referral number of 3,175.

Vocational staff play a very important role in supplying health boards, voluntary organisations for the handicapped and NRB management with information on the unmet needs of disabled persons. In the year under the review, the Service continued to play an active role in planning the distribution of vocational training places to be funded through the European Social Fund. Vocational staff together with NRB's other specialist staff were actively involved in assessing disabled persons as to their suitability for entry to and continuation in ESF funded vocational training programmes. Vocational officers assist vocational training agencies by giving them information on the ever-changing demands of the labour market in terms of the training and skills which employers demand from potential employees.

Following vocational assessment and guidance, as many clients as possible are referred by the Service to education, training and job-placement in mainstream or non-specialist settings. Further education, including third level, was arranged for 79 and 1,633 were placed on vocational training programmes.

In 1989, just over 300 persons secured training opportunities in the mainstream. FAS provided 157 places of this total. Other agencies and organisations and professional training groups, together with on-job training provided by employers and funded by Health Boards, accounted for the remaining 150 mainstream training opportunities secured.

The vast majority of training opportunities, however, are provided in specialist vocational rehabilitation centres operated by regional Health Boards or Voluntary Organisations for the Handicapped.

#### **1712 persons placed to training/education**

#### **Placement to Employment**

Sustained canvassing of employers throughout the year led to 929 clients being placed in open employment. The number placed in employment under the Public Service Quota Scheme was 129. Included in this figure are 45 Social Employment Scheme placements. This is the lowest annual number recruited under the Quota Scheme since its introduction in 1981.

Job Clubs run by the Vocational Service continued to prove a highly successful and cost effective means of moving job-



## **Specialist Psychological Service**

seekers with disabilities into employment. The job-seeking skills imparted prove of lasting benefit to participants.

### **929 persons placed to open employment**

#### **Psychological Vocational Assessment.**

During 1989, 505 persons were referred to NRB's psychologists for psychological assessment of their vocational potential. This involved the assessment of aptitudes and abilities, psychomotor capacities, academic achievements or factors relevant to the creation of a vocational plan.

### **505 people assisted with Vocational Planning.**

#### **Educational Guidance.**

Children with physical or sensory impairments may be referred to NRB's Psychological Service for assessment of educational needs and guidance. Referrals are received from the visiting teacher services of the Department of Education, from school principals and through paediatric clinics. In addition, psychological services are provided to the majority of specialised schools and units for pupils with sensory or physical impairment. During 1989, 516 children and parents were advised on the child's educational needs. An important feature of the work with children was the contact with parents, to provide support and guidance on enabling their children to live full independent lives. As well as individual consultations the Psychological Service facilitated the organisation of parent groups.

### **516 children given Guidance Service**

#### **Counselling.**

As in previous years the demands for counselling exceeded the capacity of the Psychological Service to supply it. One response has been to develop training courses in peer counselling and, in 1989, four such courses were held, providing training in helping skills to disabled people and their families. Plans were developed to extend this service in the coming year.

#### **Professional Training.**

NRB is a recognised placement for the post-graduate training of clinical psychologists and has continued to provide training to these and other professionals in the field of disability.

## **New Technology Projects**

In August 1989, the TeAPot project was completed. This project, which was carried out under contract to the EC STAR programme in Ireland, examined the feasibility of home-based telework as an employment option for people with physical disabilities. The general conclusion drawn in the project report is available from NRB. As part of the dissemination of the project results, a video of the project was made, introducing the concept of telework and illustrating the TeAPot project from the viewpoint of the telework employers and employees. An Open-Day about the project was held in the Centre-Based Telework Unit in Ballindine, Co. Mayo, and presentations were made at several international conferences. In addition, a brochure has been produced for distribution to interested employers.

As an outcome of the TeAPot project, two further action-research projects were initiated in 1989. The first of these is the Home-Delivered Training project, a two-year innovatory pilot project dealing with applied information technology training. In the project, this training is delivered to home-bound disabled people using on-line and off-line distance learning methods. This project is aided by the European Social Fund and by the National Christina Foundation of America. The second action-research project, TELESHARE, has been set up to investigate ways in which small employers may use telework without high investment in telecommunications facilities. It is studying the feasibility of sharing telecommunications facilities in telework and other local computer-related initiatives. This project is also supported by the STAR programme in Ireland.

## **Development Projects**

### **Pilot Programme Evaluation Project.**

The Pilot Programme Evaluation project, which set out to develop and test a model of programme evaluation for use in rehabilitation training workshops in Ireland, was completed and a report was prepared for submission to the Board of NRB.

### **Day Centre Project.**

A Day Centre project was initiated in Autumn 1989 in association with the Eastern Health Board to examine the need for day activity and day care facilities for people with physical handicap in the Eastern Health Board area.

### **Beaumont Hospital Project.**

The Vocational Service has had significant involvement with Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, during 1989.

The hospital, in collaboration with NRB, commenced a project in June to establish the aims, policies and organisation of its rehabilitation services. The day-to-day running of this project is the responsibility of the NRB Vocational Officer based in the hospital.

### **Skillbase Programme**

NRB recently initiated the development of a basic training programme aimed at meeting the needs of disabled trainees who require an intensive developmental programme in preparation for further training or employment. The programme, codenamed Skillbase, will be run by training agencies throughout the country, and will be offered to over 2,000 trainees.

### **Aids and Adaptations Scheme.**

As in previous years, NRB operated an Aids and Adaptations Scheme which assists in funding the purchase or modification of tools, machinery and other work related equipment. Adaptations to premises can also be funded through this scheme.

Normally NRB will make a contribution to the total costs involved, sharing the cost with the local health board or a voluntary organisation for the handicapped. Evaluation of the precise modification to the premises or adapted work aid which is most suitable for the particular worker is carried out by the relevant Vocational Officer.

### **Green Apple/NRB communications course in television production.**

This is an innovative project, jointly funded by the ESF and the local health board and FAS, testing new methods of imparting vocational training to people with disabilities.

It is the first time NRB, in co-operation with FAS, has contracted training provision to a commercial company - Green Apple Productions.

There are seven hearing impaired trainees on the course. Support to the trainees is provided by a psychologist and a Vocational Officer from NRB and a teacher of the deaf from the Department of Education.

On completion of their training the NRB Vocational Service will provide assistance in job placement.

## **Library Service**

The facilities of NRB Library are made available to all those with an interest in the fields of disability, rehabilitation and health. It is regularly used by rehabilitation professionals, disabled persons and students. In 1989, over 1,200 such enquiries were received.

During 1989, the Library continued to develop its collection of materials relating to all aspects of disability and rehabilitation.

## **Independent Living Service**

The bookstock now numbers approximately 4,600 items. Nearly 200 specialist journals and newsletters are taken. The NRB Library is the only source in Ireland for many of these titles. The audio-visual collection is used extensively by voluntary and statutory organisations. A diary of forthcoming events and a listing of recent additions to the Library are circulated regularly. Listings of audio-visual material and recent journal articles may also be obtained.

The database of books, journals and audio-visual material is computerised and subject bibliographies, based on the stock of the Library, are supplied on request. There is a lending service for books and audio-visuals and a photocopying service for journal articles. An inter-library loans system is operated.

In the past year, the Library linked in to the BRS Search Service, which gives access to a large number of international computerised databases, including Rehabdata, Abledata, Medline, PsychInfo, ERIC, etc. While this service has been used mainly by NRB staff, it is also made available to other Library users; users are charged for the cost of these searches.

In 1989, the Library began the compilation of a database of research on disability and rehabilitation in Ireland. A questionnaire was circulated and nearly 150 responses have been received to date. This information has been computerised and listings by subject areas, organisations, researcher, etc. can be supplied. It is hoped that researchers will continue to forward information for this database.

The Library has been involved, in association with the School of Occupational Therapy, Trinity College, in compiling a databank of information concerning the provisions in third level educational establishments in Ireland for students with disabilities. Responses to the questionnaire, which was circulated to all such establishments, are now being analysed. The information will be made available to all interested parties, including prospective students and their families and all those involved in providing vocational guidance to people with disabilities.

### **Access.**

Significant progress was made on a range of Access projects during 1989.

The presentation of the Building Design Awards took place in February. This scheme had attracted a large number of entries and satisfaction was expressed by the jury at the improvements observed in standards of design for disabled people.

A sub-committee of the Access Committee was established to examine the needs of hearing-impaired and profoundly deaf people in relation to the built environment. The final report of that Committee has been prepared and submitted to the Access Committee.

"The Accommodation Guide for Disabled People" was launched in 1989. While this is a slim volume it is hoped that its publication may increase awareness among hoteliers and guest house owners and lead to better facilities for disabled tourists.

NRB assisted the National Association for the Deaf in setting up and launching an assisted purchase scheme for T.D.D.'s (Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf). It is hoped that by developing an increasing network of such devices the daily lives of deaf people will be enhanced and their isolation lessened.

Work was completed on the guide to Dublin for disabled persons.

In 1989 the HELIOS Access Dublin project continued. This project involves the drawing together of the many strands involved in providing access for disabled people in Dublin, in order to develop a coherent, planned strategy for access in the city.

Much progress has been made in the area of transport mainly as a result of the work of the Minister for Tourism and Transport's Special Inter-Departmental Committee which is examining transport for disabled people. NRB is represented on this Committee.

The majority of main line rail stations are now accessible and improvements were carried out by Iarnród Éireann to many of the DART stations to ensure that disabled people could benefit as far as possible from this service. A policy decision has been made by Dublin Bus which ensures that all new buses acquired by the company will conform to DIPTAC standards and allow better access for ambulant disabled people including the visually impaired.

NRB representatives continued their involvement with the European Conference of Ministers for Transport's Ad Hoc Working Group on Transport for Disabled People (ECMT). This group has been successful in having resolutions to improve facilities for disabled people brought before and subsequently adopted by the European Conference of Ministers.

A most significant step forward in the development of an accessible environment was the unanimous decision taken by the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland at their Annual

Conference to adopt the motion 'that each Local Authority adopt the Criteria for Access for Disabled People to buildings recommended by the National Rehabilitation Board in Access 1'. This most welcome decision is an indication of the major changes taking place in attitudes to and awareness of the needs of disabled people.

In 1989 NRB's access service provided on-going advice and information for a wide variety of building projects. Advice was given both on individual developments and on projects affecting an entire town or county. Examples of individual developments include:-

- Financial Services Centre.
- Conrad Hotel, Dublin.
- Tallaght Town Centre.
- Tara Street Centre, Dublin.

Projects wider in scope include:-

- The Carrickmacross Access Programme,
- The Newbridge 'Town-Friendly' Project,
- The Donegal Access Programme.

Local groups and individuals with a keen interest in the access issue, as well as local authorities, have been active in initiating, promoting and contributing to the area projects.

#### **Technical Aids.**

During the year, the Technical Aids Information Service dealt with 2,300 enquiries in a wide range of areas, including communication, bathroom and toilet equipment, wheelchairs, housing modifications, supportive seating and anti-pressure products. Information concerning the services offered by voluntary organisations was also provided.

#### **EC Handynet System.**

The Technical Aids Information Service continued its involvement with the Handynet project in relation to the development of a European database on technical aids.

Work on the software for the Handynet culminated in a demonstration of the work to date on the system in Brussels in June 1989 to members of the Commission, representatives of Member States, Non-Governmental Organisations and other interested persons. In 1989 NRB was appointed as the National Co-Ordination Centre in Ireland for the collection of data on technical aids for motor disabled persons. During 1990 data collection will commence within each of the Member States.

#### **Computerisation of Technical Aids Information Service.**

The software development for the NRB's Rehabilitation Information System is now complete. The data entry

## **Hearing Aid and Audiology Services**

organisations and suppliers has commenced. The entry of product information is the next stage to be implemented. The manual system of recording new information will continue for some time until all information is computerised.

In 1989 NRB continued to provide a National Audiology Service for all children and for eligible adults referred by Health Boards.

Clinics were held in NRB offices and at Health Board centres throughout the country on a regular basis. Despite shortages of permanent staff, services have been maintained and waiting times for clients have been improved.

During the year, NRB Audiologists held 633 clinics for children. 9,307 appointments were arranged, 3,594 new referrals were tested and 3,260 reviews were carried out. 464 Hearing Aids were prescribed and fitted.

Children at special schools for the handicapped in Dublin and throughout the country were tested, reviewed and fitted with hearing aids during a regular programme of visits. NRB Audiometricians visited the special schools for the deaf regularly to take impressions for earmoulds, which were manufactured for the schools in the NRB workshop in Dublin.

In 1989, NRB Audiometricians held 925 clinics for adults - 12,330 appointments were arranged, 2,661 new referrals were tested, and 4,421 reviews were carried out. 3,185 Hearing Aids were prescribed and fitted.

Elderly clients who are confined to their homes were visited by NRB Audiometricians during the year and services provided in their homes.

The technical staff of the Audiology Service manufactured and supplied 7,565 moulds during 1989 including 343 moulds manufactured with the softer monoplast material. 4,941 Hearing Aids were repaired for clients free of charge at the NRB workshop in Dublin.

**9307 Children and 12330 Adults provided with Service**

**AUDIOLOGY SERVICE  
1989**

**Adults**

**Children**

	Clinics	Called	New	Review	Hearing Aid Fitted	Clinics	Called	New	Review	Hearing Aid Fitted
<b><u>Health Board</u></b>										
Eastern	363	3,749	879	1,397	1,078	222	2,296	651	981	203
Midland	49	724	218	191	186	85	1,486	789	353	51
Mid-Western	72	1,380	298	442	379	39	719	260	246	25
North-Eastern	52	904	201	332	205	44	641	201	236	29
North-Western	74	767	169	226	205	35	580	228	203	21
South-Western	90	1,410	279	513	382	120	1,787	763	606	65
Southern	106	1,544	271	739	297	47	727	188	322	42
Western	119	1,852	346	581	453	71	1,071	514	313	28
<hr/>										
<b>Total 1989</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>2,661</b>	<b>4,421</b>	<b>3,185</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>9,307</b>	<b>3,594</b>	<b>3,260</b>	<b>464</b>
<hr/>										
<b>Total 1988</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>12,416</b>	<b>2,586</b>	<b>4,390</b>	<b>2,964</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>8,996</b>	<b>3,116</b>	<b>3,401</b>	<b>500</b>
<hr/> <hr/>										



## **International Relations**

The Chief Executive of NRB is the National Secretary for Ireland of Rehabilitation International and members of the NRB Board serve on various expert Commissions of that body.

It is through this link that the 5th European Regional Conference of Rehabilitation International will be held in Dublin in May 1990. This is an event of major significance in rehabilitation on the European scene and should have a very positive impact on rehabilitation practice and services here in Ireland.

## **European Community Affairs**

Along with the Department of Health, NRB represents Ireland on the EC Advisory Committee for HELIOS. This committee is made up of two governmental representatives from each of the EC Member States. In this capacity, the NRB is responsible, at the request of the Department of Health, for the co-ordination of the HELIOS programme in Ireland. The central elements of HELIOS are (a) a programme of local model projects, (b) the Community network of Rehabilitation 'Centres of Excellence', (c) the Handynet programme. Regular meetings of representatives of each of these elements were held during the year, in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience.

In 1989, an award scheme was initiated by HELIOS for projects which promote independence for disabled persons in the areas of mobility and transport, access and housing. The scheme was co-ordinated in Ireland by NRB. Four Irish projects received awards at a ceremony held in Brussels in December.

## **European Social Fund**

In 1989, plans for the Operational Programmes for training the handicapped in the period 1990-1993 were developed in association with the Health Boards and the voluntary bodies. The programme, drawn up in accordance with the new regulations and guidelines for EC Structural Funds, was approved by the Department of Health.

NRB continued to assist and advise voluntary organisations and Health Boards in the implementation of the regulations and guidelines of the European Social Fund.

ESF Aid approved for 1989 amounted to IR£21.3m (1988 - IR£16.6m) in respect of 5,400 disabled persons in training.

During the year, NRB distributed EC Funds amounting to IR£11.6m to Health Boards (IR£6.6m) and to Voluntary Organisations (IR£5.0m) providing eligible services for disabled persons.

**STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE AND SOURCES OF FINANCE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1989**

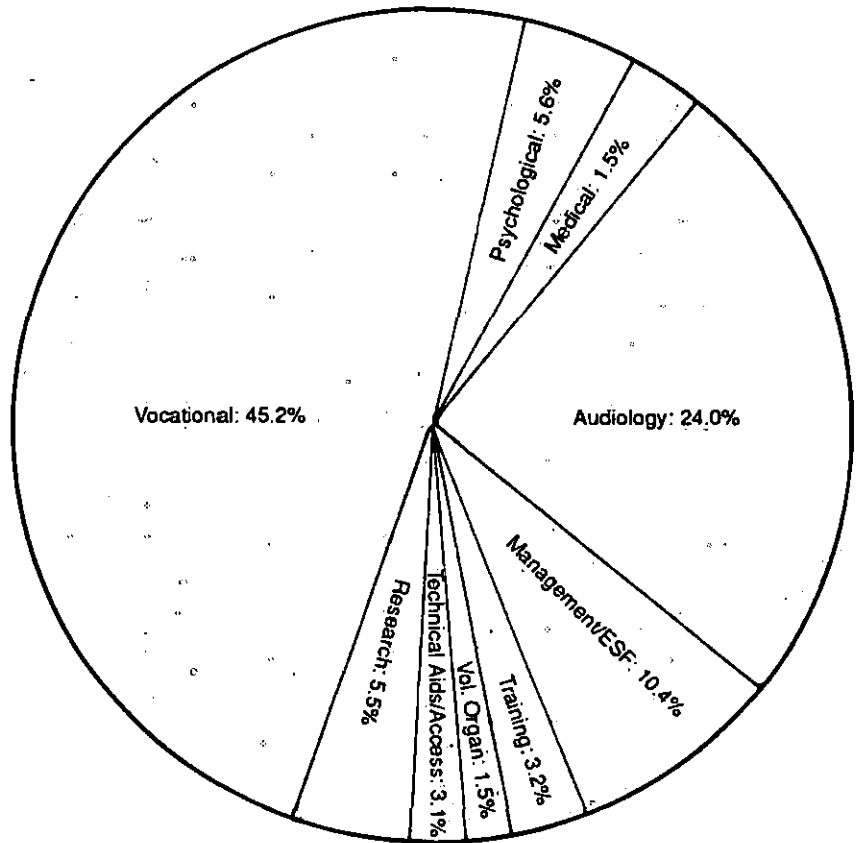
Expenditure	1989 IR£	1988 IR£
<b>Services</b>		
Vocational	1,780,950	1,721,297
Medical and Spina Bifida	59,535	80,161
Psychological	222,845	201,090
Research & Planning	215,082	166,883
Audiology	945,002	876,947
Technical Aid Information	40,042	56,026
Technical Aid for		
Visually Handicapped	15,755	5,345
Voluntary Organisations		
- Grants	57,500	64,900
Promotion of Access &		
Rehabilitation Services	63,118	131,739
Aid & Adaptions to Workplace	5,000	-
Training Courses for Rehabilitation	<u>125,260</u>	<u>141,459</u>
	<u>3,530,089</u>	<u>3,447,847</u>
Central Management & Establishment Cost	<u>410,245</u>	<u>316,187</u>
	<u>IR£3,940,334</u>	<u>IR£3,764,034</u>
<b>Financed by:</b>		
Department of Health Allocation	2,919,000	2,927,000
Special Development Grants	693,082	631,549
Department of Education	65,044	32,513
Department of Labour	68,497	60,749
Youth Employment Agency	-	12,000
Sundry Income	194,711	100,223
	<u>IR£3,940,334</u>	<u>IR£3,764,034</u>

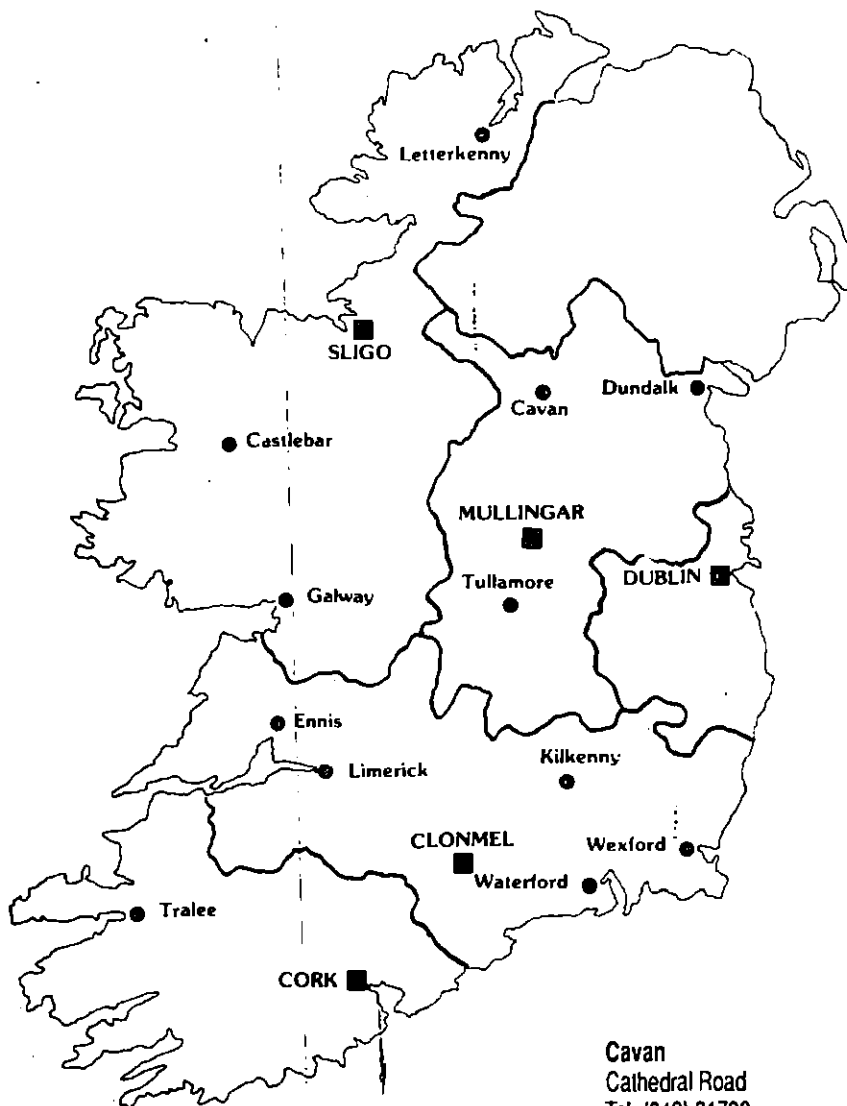
**Report of the Auditors**

We confirm that the above figures have been extracted from the accounts of the National Rehabilitation Board upon which we have reported without qualification.

Coopers and Lybrand  
Chartered Accountants

## Analysis of Expenditure by Service





**DUBLIN**

24/25 Clyde Road,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4  
Tel: 684181  
Fax: 609935

**Hearing Aid Centre,**  
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6  
Tel: (01) 964555/964864

**CORK**  
101 North Main Street  
Tel: (021) 270423/965727

**Tralee**  
21 Pembroke Street  
Tel: (066) 23292

**CLONMEL**  
Coolgreaney House,  
36 Queen Street  
Tel: (052) 23486/23211

**Ennis**  
Bindon Street  
Tel: (065) 20141/29834

**Waterford**  
4 William Street  
Tel: (051) 72431/765676

**Wexford**  
100 North Main Street  
Tel: (053) 24363/24354

**Kilkenny**  
75 John Street  
Tel: (056) 22377/65176

**Limerick**  
Glen House,  
Glenworth Street  
Tel: (061) 319779/314270

**MULLINGAR**  
The Manse, Castle Street  
Tel: (044) 40219/40256

**Cavan**  
Cathedral Road  
Tel: (049) 31780

**Dundalk**  
58 Anne Street,  
Tel: (042) 32913/37081/37080

**Tullamore**  
High Street  
Tel: (0506) 41262/51523

**SLIGO**  
Knappagh,  
Strandhill Road  
Tel: (071) 62459

**Castlebar**  
Anchor House,  
Humbert Mall, Main Street  
Tel: (094) 22169/22834

**Galway**  
10 Ely Place  
Tel: (091) 63567/62159

**Letterkenny**  
69 Ballyraine Road  
Tel: (074) 21103/23019