



**AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY**

**National Disability  
Inclusion Strategy  
2017-2021**



## Foreword

I am delighted, in my capacity as Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability Issues, to present the National Disability Inclusion Strategy for the years 2017 – 2021 inclusive. This Strategy is a whole of Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities both in a practical sense, and also in creating the best possible opportunities for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

One of my key priorities when I became Minister of State was to meet with as many people with disabilities as possible. For me, it was essential to learn first-hand about the challenges and practical difficulties that they face. It was also vitally important to hear about what people's real needs were, and to get advice on what things would make a measurable difference in their lives. I have been inspired by the goals and achievements of the people I met, and am more determined than ever to realise the priorities agreed by the Government and make the changes that are needed.

Disability is an issue that will affect us all in our lifetimes. According to the 2011 census, there are almost 600,000 people living with a disability in Ireland. Many of us have family members, friends or colleagues with disabilities, and in an ageing society we are all likely to live to an age when we will experience disability ourselves. Disability is about all of us, and the Strategy should be of interest to everyone. It is underpinned by a vision of an Irish society in which people with disabilities enjoy equal rights and opportunities to participate in social and cultural life, can work if they want to do so, have choice and control over how they live their lives, and can reach their full potential.

Since my appointment as Minister of State, I have said that ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is one of my key goals, and even though the process is taking longer than I had hoped, I remain completely committed to this outcome. Before we ratify the Convention, enactment of new legislation and amendment of existing legislation is required to ensure obligations will be met upon entry into force for Ireland. Ratification of a Convention before we have amended domestic legislation that contradicts it makes no sense and does nothing to ensure compliance or to protect the people for whose benefit the Convention exists. Considerable progress has already been made - the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016, the primary purpose of which is to address the remaining legislation barriers to Ireland's ratification of the CRPD was published prior

to Christmas and completed Second Stage in February 2017. The work that remains to be done is outlined in the Strategy, and I am working closely and determinedly with all of the stakeholders to ensure that the remaining barriers are removed without unnecessary delay.

This Inclusion Strategy is the outcome of a broad and comprehensive consultation process that comprised three distinct phases. Phase one included an initial round of consultations, the aim of which was to identify the priority themes to be addressed in a new Strategy. A second phase was then commenced to identify and agree specific objectives under each of the themes identified in Phase one. Phase three focused on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of each of the objectives that emerged from Phase two. For the last 12 months, I have been working with the National Disability Authority (NDA) and senior officials across multiple government departments to identify which of the actions generated in phase three can be implemented over the next four years. These actions have the full backing of the Taoiseach and ministers through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. All of the identified initiatives have been developed to have the maximum beneficial impact for people who have disabilities. However, to my mind, there are a number that are clear priorities, not just because of the potential that they have to transform people's lives when fully implemented, but because when taken together they have the power to promote a fundamental culture shift in relation to disability. By this, I mean that the initiatives, when they have moved off the pages of a document and become the established way of doing things, have the capacity to significantly impact on the way in which services support people with disabilities. All of us – people with disabilities and people without disabilities – will be the beneficiaries of this. Individually, I believe the following initiatives will in their cumulative effect be life-changing for very many people:

- Extension of Irish Sign Language remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends;
- Resourcing of the Sign Language Interpretation Service to increase the number of trained Sign Language and Deaf Interpreters, the establishment of a quality-assurance and registration scheme for interpreters, and on-going professional training and development;
- Legislation that will ensure that all public bodies provide Irish Sign Language users with free interpretation when accessing or availing of their statutory services;
- Examination of the recommendations of the Make Work Pay Working Group

with a view to introducing meaningful reforms that make it financially worthwhile for a person with a disability to take up employment;

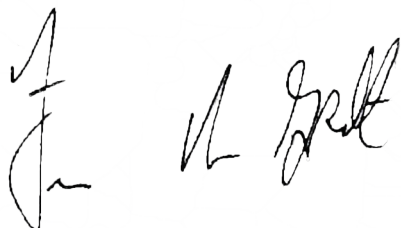
- Implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, including an increase of the public service employment target from 3% to 6%, the arrangement of special public service competitions and the opening up of alternative recruitment channels;
- A review of transport supports to determine the type of cross departmental transportation options that will best help people with a range of disabilities to get to work, and implementation of the most viable proposals;
- Development of proposals to address access to, or affordability of, necessary aids, appliances and assistive technologies required for everyday living, for those people with disabilities whose entry, retention or return to work could be jeopardised due to being unable to afford these items;
- Introduction of a scheme that will significantly reduce the notice time for travelling for mobility-impaired customers requiring assistance;
- Development of proposals in relation to attaching conditions regarding wheelchair accessibility on passenger licensed services;
- Examination of the recommendations of the report of the Personalised Budgets Task Force, with a view to introducing the option of availing of a personal budget as one approach to individualised funding;
- Development of Codes of Practice to support implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015;
- Full implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model of supports for children with disabilities to allow every child to participate meaningfully in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme; and
- Full implementation of the Transforming Lives programme, with particular reference to advancing the Time to Move On agenda (decongregation), the New Directions programme (reforming adult day services), and the move towards person centred planning for residential and day services.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to and participated in the consultative process, including civil society organisations across the Disability Sector, individuals with lived experience of disability, the Disability Stakeholders

Group (DSG), the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group (NDISSG), the NDA, the National Disability Strategy Interdepartmental Committee and officials from a range of relevant government departments. Through my chairing of the NDISSG, I was able to observe first-hand how the Strategy improved and took shape as a result of the collaboration and collegiate approach of stakeholders, and the incorporation of their incisive inputs and suggestions.

Disability is the responsibility of every government minister, and that is why I have been working to ensure a whole of Government approach is taken. However, it is not just the Government that can be an agent of change. Organisations in the Disability Sector have a critical role to play in ensuring the Strategy is a success. As individuals, there is an onus on us all too, to care about and engage with the issues and to be proactively involved in positive changes to the world we live in.

Although departments and statutory bodies are responsible for implementing the actions in the Strategy, I view the Strategy as a collaborative effort. The best chance of success lies in us working together, and not letting up until each disabled person in this country has the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential, and lead a full and active life that is valued by society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Finian McGrath', written in a cursive style.

Finian McGrath T.D.

Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability Issues  
July 2017

## Disability in Ireland

According to the 2011 Census, 595,355 people reported having a disability in Census 2011 which is equivalent to 13% of the population of Ireland. However, the National Disability Survey (2006), which uses a broader definition of disability and chronic illness, recorded a disability rate of 18%, comparable to other developed countries. As one would expect, disability is age-related and increases sharply with age. Three out of every five people aged over sixty years has at least one chronic condition.

Living with a disability poses many complex challenges. In 2005, people with disabilities in Ireland had an employment rate of 32%, according to the OECD (2010). In 2011, following a period of challenging economic conditions, the employment rate for people with disabilities had fallen to less than 30%.<sup>1</sup> More recently, an NDA commissioned analysis of data compiled under the Quarterly National Household Surveys 2010-2015 concerning employment transitions of people with disabilities shows that in the 20-59 age group, 31% of people with a disability are in paid employment, compared to 71% of those without a disability.

People with disabilities are also more likely to work part-time if they are in employment.<sup>2</sup> Among those at work, one-third of people with a disability are working part-time, compared to one-fifth of people without a disability. The chances of exiting employment are twice as high for someone with a disability compared to an otherwise identical individual without a disability. While those aged 20-24 are most likely to move into employment, those over the age of 45 with a disability have a considerably reduced opportunity of entering employment if not currently at work. All this being said, nearly half of all those with a disability in Ireland are either at work or are interested in work (NDA, forthcoming).

People with disabilities are more likely to live alone and 42% live in a jobless household, putting them at high risk of poverty. Overall, people with disabilities experience high levels of consistent poverty.<sup>3</sup> Families where the head of the household was not at work due to illness or disability, with the exception of students, had the lowest average annual disposable income in 2014. This was

<sup>1</sup>Since 2004 the unemployment rate for people with disabilities rose from 8% to 22% in 2010 (Watson et al, 2013) D.Watson, G Kingston, F. McGinnity (2013), *Disability in the Irish Labour Market: Evidence from the QHNS Equality Model 2010*. <sup>2</sup>F.McGinnity, H. Russell, D. Watson, (2014) *winner or losers? The equality impact of the great recession in Ireland. Equality & Authority & ESRI, P.35. SIL 2015, Cited Social Inclusion Monitor 2015, DSP*. <sup>3</sup>SIL 2015, cited in *Social Inclusion Monitor 2015, DSP*

€24,914 compared to €54,430 for those at work. This represents a 21% drop since 2009 compared to a 7% drop for those at work.

People with disabilities have poorer educational participation and outcomes, thereby further reducing economic prospects (NDA). For instance, just 24.5% of people with a disability have completed third-level education, compared to 38.7% of the general population (Census 2011 figures). In 2010, 50% of people with a disability had not completed full second-level education, compared with 22% without a disability. In fact, among people with disabilities generally, 43% have not progressed beyond primary education. This compares with 19% of all adults. About a third of people with disabilities have been found to leave education before they intended to, because of their disability or illness.

## Mainstreaming

For the last 15 years it has been established Government policy that mainstream public services include and serve people with disabilities. This is underpinned by the Disability Act 2005. Accordingly, a wide range of government departments are included in the Strategy, and mainstream as well as dedicated disability services are incorporated.

## Other Strategic Developments

In conjunction with the policy of mainstreaming, a number of other significant developments in the Irish policy landscape are also relevant to improving the lives of people with disabilities, and these are reflected in the actions contained in the Strategy. The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities is aimed at improving employment participation and outcomes for people with disabilities. The Transforming Lives programme is dedicated to improving the delivery of health and social care services to people with disabilities, arising out of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services in Ireland (2012), based on enshrining the principles of self-determination and autonomy in all service provision for those with disabilities. The Department of Health's report, A Vision for Change takes a similar approach for persons with mental health difficulties. These and other developments sit against the backdrop of the CRPD which will be ratified as soon as we have ensured that all the legislation on the statute book complies with the Convention. We are not waiting for ratification, of course, to advance the aims and principles of the CRPD, and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy provides the means for doing so on an operational level. The Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures programme contains a number of commitments from across Government that are relevant to children and young people with a disability. The

goal of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020 is that children and young people, particularly those who are seldom heard, have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives. The aim of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

## Development of the Strategy

The previous National Disability Strategy ran from 2013 to 2015, a period of time when the severest of economic and fiscal conditions applied, which frustrated implementation of the Strategy. We now have an opportunity - and an obligation - to make up the lost ground against a backdrop of renewed economic growth, and to ensure that we address the real needs of persons with disabilities.

Development of the new Strategy began in 2015 when the Department of Justice and Equality, together with the NDA and the Interdepartmental Group, launched a consultation process in order to provide interested parties with the opportunity to make recommendations in proposed key areas such as service provision, accommodation, health, employment, transport and education.

The consultations took the form of a three-stage process as follows:

Phase One – This phase commenced in mid-2015, and was an open call to people with disabilities, their families and disability organisations to respond to a suggested list of policy areas to be covered in the Strategy. The themes agreed for inclusion in the Strategy were:

- Education;
- Employment;
- Health and well-being;
- Person-centred disability services;
- Housing;
- Transport and accessible places;
- Equality and choice; and
- Joined-up services.

Phase Two – The aim of this phase was the identification and agreement of specific objectives under each of the themes identified in phase one. A provisional set of objectives was prepared by the NDA and again, people with disabilities, their families and the Disability Sector were invited to give an input on the priority objectives they would like to see achieved in the next four years. This stage of the



consultation, which took place at the end of 2015 involved several regional meetings and an opportunity to send in written comments or to comment on-line.

Phase Three (September 2016 – December 2016) focused on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of each of the objectives that emerged from phase two. Following this phase, a draft proposal for a revised Strategy was prepared by senior officials, in collaboration with the DSG and was submitted to Government for approval on 30 May 2017.

The NDISSG comprises key government departments, the NDA, and the DSG. The Group is chaired by the Minister of State, and the Department of Justice and Equality provides secretariat functions to the group.

The NDA is an independent statutory body with responsibility for providing information and advice to the Minister of State, and to assist him in the coordination of national policy.

The DSG comprises an independent chair, individuals with lived experience of disabilities and representatives of the key disability umbrella bodies, including:

- Centre for Independent Living;
- Disability Federation of Ireland;
- Federation of Voluntary Bodies;
- Mental Health Reform;
- AslAm Autism Spectrum;
- Brothers of Charity Services;
- Cheshire Ireland;
- Deaf Hear;
- Inclusion Ireland;
- Irish Association of Supported Employment; and
- National Council for the Blind Services.

## Monitoring and Implementation

The Strategy sets out key actions under each theme and objective, and indicates the relevant government department(s) responsible along with the timeframe for delivery. Where an action has a cross sectoral or cross departmental aspect, the lead department and other departments that have shared responsibilities are also identified. In addition, departments will include actions to be delivered via the agencies under their remit where appropriate. For example, many actions under the Department of Health will be undertaken by the Health Service Executive. The

Strategy can be regarded as a living document that will be reviewed periodically and will incorporate additional and revised actions as progress is made on the initial set of commitments it contains.

The NDISSG will monitor the implementation of the Strategy based on annual work plans and will meet four times a year, or as directed by the Minister of State. Departments will progress the implementation and monitoring of relevant actions of the Strategy at local level through their departmental consultative committees. In advance of each meeting, these consultative committees will submit progress reports to the NDA, which in turn will develop a briefing paper based on information received to help identify key themes and issues to inform discussion. In particular, information received will highlight areas of difficulty in implementation or cross-departmental issues, solutions to which will become the focus of discussions at the NDISSG meetings.

The Minister of State will, through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform, keep the Taoiseach and his cabinet colleagues informed in relation to the work of the Group, on a regular basis. The Strategy will therefore have the involvement of the Taoiseach and other ministers with social policy and public service reform functions, whenever such involvement becomes necessary to remove blockages, and keep all relevant parties informed. This will be particularly useful where there are cross-sectoral issues, as the Minister of State will be able to discuss the issues with his Cabinet colleagues, ensuring cross-sectoral co-operation on issues from the top down.

The Department of Justice and Equality will continue to provide the secretariat function to the NDISSG and will also continue to chair the NDISSG, where issues arising can be discussed and resolved.

The voice of people with disabilities will continue to be heard throughout the monitoring and implementation process. Since the Strategy is a living document their continued input will be sought and recorded on an on-going basis. A midterm review and consultation meetings where departments will report on their commitments will also form a key part of the implementation process.

The NDISSG will publish an annual report on progress made in each year and a revised iteration of the Strategy will be prepared following the mid-term review at the end of 2018.

## Outcome indicators

Implementation of the Strategy will also be monitored in terms of outcomes for people with disabilities through a suite of indicators developed by the NDA and agreed by the NDISSG. The indicators will enable measurement of change in key areas addressed by the Strategy and have been determined by data that is available at regular intervals. This includes longitudinal surveys such as Growing up in Ireland and other statutory reports, complemented by periodic surveys carried out by the NDA.

The suite of outcome indicators will capture outcomes for people with disabilities under the high level themes and broad objectives, insofar as that is feasible, rather than outcomes under each of the different actions to be taken in the annual Implementation Plan. For example, the outcome indicators will measure the employment rate of people with disabilities at the start and the end of the Strategy period, and measure how that has changed relative to employment rates for non-disabled people over the period.

## Further Information

Further information in relation to issues arising from this Inclusion Strategy may be obtained from:

Equality Division  
Department of Justice and Equality  
Bishop's Square  
Redmond's Hill  
Dublin 2  
D02 TD99

Or via email to: [disabilityinbox@justice.ie](mailto:disabilityinbox@justice.ie)

A copy of this Inclusion Strategy is available on [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

Tá leagan Gaeilge den Stráitéis seo ar fail.

## 1. Equality and Choice

Persons with disabilities are recognised and treated equally before the law. They have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
1.	We will progress the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to enactment so as to address outstanding obstacles to ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).	Department of Justice and Equality	2017
2.	The National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group will review and advise on progress on implementation of the Convention in the State.	Department of Justice and Equality	Ongoing, post ratification
3.	We will ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRPD as soon as possible following ratification of the Convention itself.	Department of Justice and Equality	Post ratification
4.	We will commence the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, develop the associated Codes of Practice, and promote and provide training for both.	Department of Justice and Equality  National Disability Authority  Department of Health  Health Service Executive  Mental Health Commission	Early 2018
5.	We will establish the Decision Support Service.	Mental Health Commission	2017

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	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
6.	We will embed and promote presumption of capacity into the way services are designed and delivered.	All departments and agencies	Ongoing
7.	We will proof all new Government policies and programmes against their potential impact on women with disabilities. As a first step, consideration will be given to whether a new Impact Assessment should be developed to support this action, or whether the current (separate) Disability and Gender Impact Assessments are sufficient.	Department of Justice and Equality	Q4 2017
8.	We will complete our examination of the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Group tasked to examine issues relating to people with mental illness who come in contact with the criminal justice system, and prepare proposals in that regard for consideration by Government.	Department of Justice and Equality	Q4 2017
People with disabilities make their own choices and decisions.			
9.	We will run an accessible public information campaign and raise awareness among persons with disabilities about their options for supported	Decision Support Service (DSS) Health Service Executive	The Health Service Executive will work with the DSS once the Act is

People with disabilities make their own choices and decisions.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	decision-making under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act.	Disability service providers	commenced.
People with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are free from all forms of abuse.			
10.	We will implement and monitor the Health Service Executive's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy.	Health Service Executive	Ongoing
11.	We will develop and roll out a reform and culture change programme.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing to Q4 2019
12.	We will introduce statutory safeguards to protect residents of nursing homes and residential centres, and ensure that they are not deprived of liberty, save in accordance with the law as a last-resort measure in exceptional circumstances.	Department of Health Department of Justice and Equality	Q4 2017
	We will develop related guidance and training for staff and carers.	Health Service Executive	Q4 2017
13.	We will develop proposals to reform mental health legislation to align it with the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act and the Expert Group report on Review of the Mental Health Act 2001.	Department of Health Department of Justice and Equality	General scheme of a Bill being prepared in 2017

People with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are free from all forms of abuse.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
14.	We will implement the EU Victims of Crime Directive. The transposing Bill will take account of the specific needs of vulnerable witnesses, and provide a framework for targeted actions to be developed (e.g. statutory guidance for assessment of vulnerable witnesses.)	Department of Justice and Equality  An Garda Síochána  The Prison Service  The Probation Service	Q4 2017
15.	We will ensure enhanced protection for people with disabilities against hate crime in our review of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, including support for reporting incidents.  This will also include the development and implementation of guidelines for Gardaí and other relevant personnel in relation to engagement with people with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality  Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service  An Garda Síochána	Q4 2018
Public sector information is available in accessible formats that are easy to understand.			
16.	We will promote accessibility and universal design principles in the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy.	All public bodies  Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Ongoing
17.	We will encourage compliance with the obligations set out under section 28 of the Disability Act 2005 regarding	All public bodies  Department of Justice and Equality	Ongoing

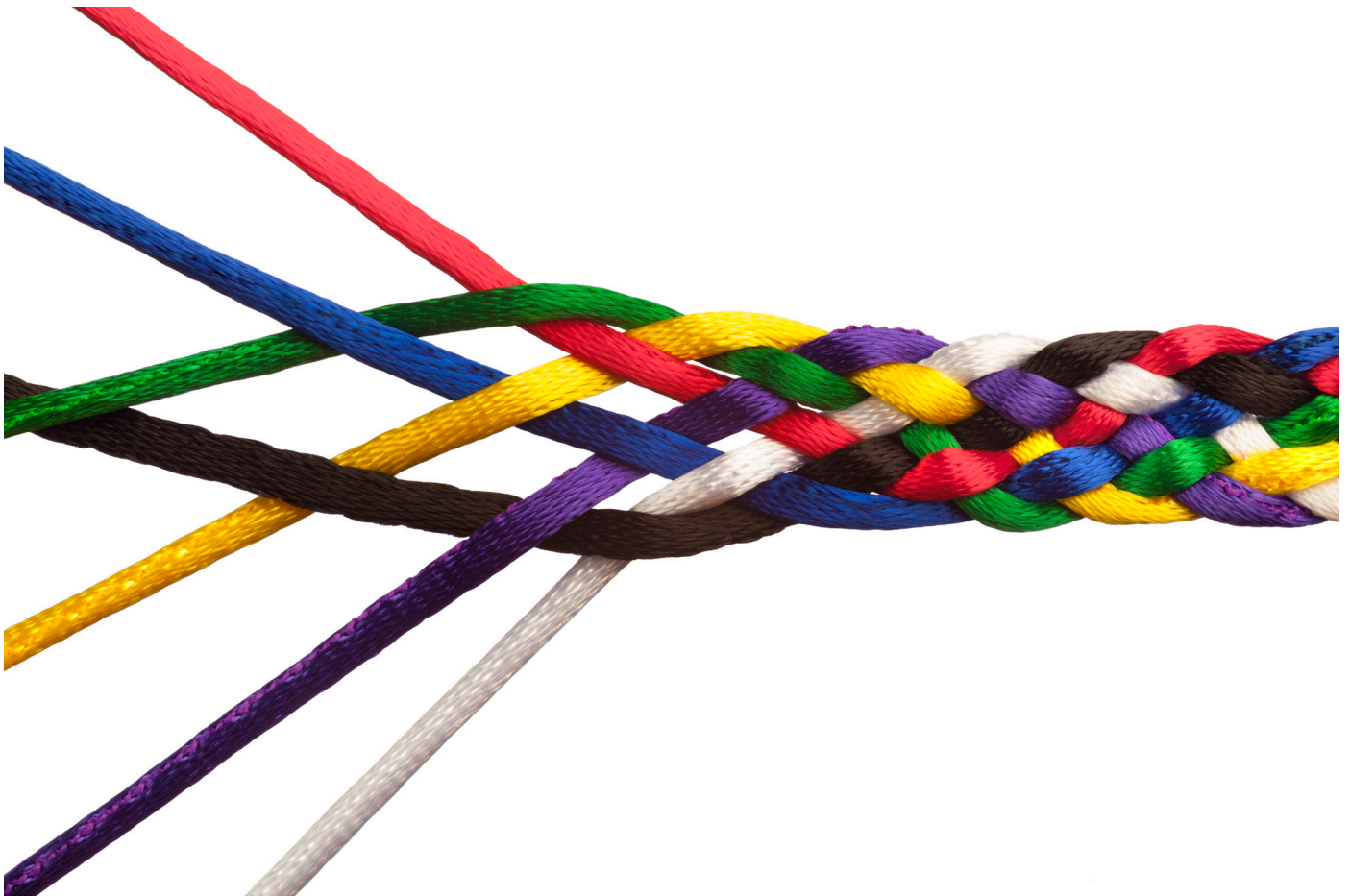
Public sector information is available in accessible formats that are easy to understand.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	access to information and communication including electronic communication.	Centre for Excellence in Universal Design	
18.	We will ensure courts, Garda services and information are accessible to and supportive of all users with disabilities.	An Garda Síochána The Courts Service	Ongoing
Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.			
19.	We will review and monitor progress by public bodies against the Code of Practice on Accessible Services and Information.	National Disability Authority	Ongoing as part of the National Disability Authority's statutory remit
20.	We will provide disability awareness training for all staff.	All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
21.	We will implement the Action Plan on Autism.	All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
22.	We will review the Accessibility Toolkit on our website including links to appropriate resources. We will also promote use of the toolkit by civil and public servants.	National Disability Authority	Q3 2017
23.	We will promote the design of public sector websites in accordance with universal design principles.	All departments and public bodies Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Ongoing
24.	Where not already achieved, we	The Office of Public Works	Ongoing



Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	will set out commitments in our strategy statements and business plans to ensure compliance with the obligations on public bodies to make their buildings and services accessible in line with Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005.	All departments and public bodies	
25.	We will bring all public sector buildings into compliance with the revised (2010) Part M accessibility standards by 2022.	The Office of Public Works All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
26.	We will conduct an operational review of the effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005 and make recommendations to facilitate the obligation for public bodies to bring their buildings into compliance with Part M 2010 by 2022.	The Office of Public Works National Disability Authority	Q3 2018
27.	We will ensure that public procurement of buildings, facilities, goods and services complies with the accessibility requirements of planning regulations including the relevant legislation in relation to the Planning Code and relevant EU Law and the EU Web Directive 2016.  We will ensure that commissioning or other funding of public services also comply	All departments and public bodies	Ongoing  Ongoing

Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	with these accessibility requirements.		
28.	<p>We will extend hours of Irish Sign Language (ISL) remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends.</p> <p>We will resource the Sign Language Interpretation Service to increase the number of trained Sign Language and Deaf interpreters, to put a quality-assurance and registration scheme for interpreters in place and to provide on-going professional training and development.</p> <p>We will support legislation to ensure that all public bodies provide ISL users with free interpretation when accessing or availing of their statutory services.</p>	<p>Department of Social Protection</p> <p>Department of Justice and Equality</p>	Over the lifetime of the Strategy
The participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life is improved.			
29.	We will progress the accessibility of voting and voter information, building on learning from National Disability Authority research and from experience and best practice.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	Ongoing

2. Joined up policies and public services



“ We will work together to ensure joined-up public services for persons with disabilities. ”

Different public services work together to ensure joined-up services for children with disabilities.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
30.	The Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health, along with the Health Service Executive will discuss opportunities for local health and education forums to facilitate improved co-ordination of services for children with disabilities at local level. We will link in as appropriate with existing local inter-agency vehicles.	Department of Education and Skills (Joint Lead)  Department of Health (Joint Lead)  Health Executive Service	Q2 2018

Children and young people with disabilities are supported to make smooth transitions from one stage of life to the next.

31.	We will consider how best to build on and progress work completed to date to facilitate smooth transitions into, within and out of education on a cross departmental and agency basis.	Department of Education and Skills (Joint Lead)  Department of Health (Joint Lead)  Department of Children and Youth Affairs  Relevant agencies	Q4 2017
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Public services actively engage with people with disabilities and their representatives in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of public services.

32.	Departments and agencies will actively engage people with disabilities through consultative committees and / or other appropriate fora.  The national steering group will elaborate on timeframes in relation to the actions in this	All departments  Department of Justice and Equality  National Disability Authority	Ongoing
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Public services actively engage with people with disabilities and their representatives in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of public services.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>Strategy.</p> <p>We will produce an annual report in relation to implementation of the Strategy.</p> <p>We will carry out a midterm review of the Strategy in consultation with disability interests.</p>		
33.	<p>We will embed a culture and process of early engagement with people with disabilities in mainstream service design and evaluation.</p>	All departments	Ongoing

## 3. Education

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
34.	We will ensure the full implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model of supports for children with disabilities to ensure each child has the opportunity to access and meaningfully participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs  Department of Education and Skills  Health Service Executive	Ongoing
35.	We will continue our review of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme, and issue a report and recommendations in relation to the current scheme.	Department of Education and Skills  National Council for Special Education	Q3 2017
36.	We will continue to require schools to link SNA support to individualised planning for each pupil.	Department of Education and Skills  National Council For Special Education	Ongoing
37.	We will develop an implementation plan for National Council for Special Education policy advice on autism.	Department of Education and Skills  National Council For Special Education	Q3 2017
38.	We will continue to develop and implement a systematic programme of initial teacher education, induction, probation and Continuing Professional Development to enable all teachers to teach all students, including students with special educational needs.  Teachers and schools will	Department of Education and Skills  The Teaching Council	Ongoing

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>continue to be supported in established and new ways to enhance teachers' skills and thereby enrich learning experiences and opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>We will ensure that ongoing developments in legislation (e.g. Teaching Council, School Admissions) and national priority areas including Junior Cycle Reform, Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, Digital Strategy and National Council for Special Education policy advice will influence and support teacher learning in inclusion, differentiation, and special educational needs across the continuum of teacher education.</p>		
39.	<p>We will expand the number of NEPS psychologists to the current sanctioned level of 173 whole-time equivalent psychologists. This will increase the capacity of NEPS to provide a comprehensive educational psychological service to all schools, to include case-work, consultation and support and development for teachers. This, in turn, will increase school capacity to support and intervene with children and young people in schools with special education needs.</p>	<p>Department of Education and Skills</p>	<p>Q3 2017</p>

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>In line with the commitment in the Programme for Government we will further expand NEPS psychologist numbers by 65, in order to further increase its capacity to provide a comprehensive educational psychological service to all schools. Initially, ten psychologists will be appointed in 2017 with the remaining 55 appointed over the period of 2018 - 2019.</p> <p>The remaining 55 psychologists will be appointed over the period 2018 - 2019.</p>		<p>Q3 2017</p> <p>Q4 2019</p>
40.	We will amend the Department's Technical Guidance Documents for school and educational buildings to ensure universal design principles and guidelines are fully considered in all designs for new building and, where possible, in the retrofit of existing buildings.	Department of Education and Skills	
41.	SOLAS will develop a social inclusion resource to enhance the capacity to support active inclusion of all people in further education and training including people with a disability.	<p>Department of Education and Skills</p> <p>SOLAS</p>	Q3 2017
42.	We will promote participation in third level education by persons with disabilities.	Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing



People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
43.	We will disseminate guidance on transitions to schools and parents.	Higher Education Authority	Completed
44.	We will support schools with the implementation of the Well-being in Post Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013) and Well-being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (2015) in order to build resilience among the younger population and improve mental health outcomes, including young people with existing mental health difficulties.	National Council for Special Education  Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing
45.	In line with the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 we will ensure that schools can use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a tool for inclusive learning through guidance, advice and support on the use of accessible ICT and digital learning tools for teaching, learning and assessment for students with special educational needs.	Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing 2017-2020

## 4. Employment



“ We will ensure that people with disabilities are supported to achieve their employment ambitions. ”

People with disabilities are encouraged and motivated to develop to the maximum of their potential, with a view to participating in further education and employment.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
46.	<p>Ensure that all training courses offered to people with disabilities provide real value, are worthwhile, motivate and challenge participants and support each individual to reach their full developmental potential.</p> <p>Raise awareness amongst persons with disabilities that further education and employment, post school leaving, are viable and potential alternatives.</p> <p>Coordinate Government policy to ensure the effective transition from school to further and higher education for students with special education needs.</p> <p>Assist persons with disabilities, by providing proper guidance concerning further education, training and career options.</p> <p>Create opportunities for persons with disabilities to experience training, work experience and employment sampling during their school years.</p> <p>Increase participation by under-represented groups, including students with physical, sensory and multiple disabilities</p>	All relevant departments and agencies	Ongoing

People with disabilities are encouraged and motivated to develop to the maximum of their potential, with a view to participating in further education and employment.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	in further / higher education.		

People with disabilities have the opportunity to work and have a career.

47.	We will fully implement the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for persons with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality  All departments and relevant agencies	Ongoing
48.	We will continue to support people with disabilities to access further training and employment opportunities through relevant programmes including the Employability Service, the Wage Subsidy Scheme, and the Reasonable Accommodation Fund.	Department of Social Protection	Ongoing
49.	We will increase the public sector employment target of persons with disabilities from 3% to 6% by 2024, and will embed this target into all public service workforce planning and recruitment.	All relevant departments	Ongoing to 2024
50.	We will work with Government and other interested parties to embed design, incorporating a Universal Design approach, in existing and future innovation and design-led programmes.	Enterprise Ireland	Ongoing to 2024
51.	We will implement the actions	Department of Social	Ongoing to

People with disabilities have the opportunity to work and have a career.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>set out in Pathways to Work 2016-2020 including in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Employer Support Services and Schemes such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme;</li> <li>Restructure First Steps Programme to improve take-up; and</li> <li>Offer opportunities to engage with Intreo supports.</li> </ul>	Protection	2020
People who become disabled are given the supports they need to remain in or return to work if they so choose.			
52.	We will implement when agreed by Government the reforms proposed by review of the Partial Capacity Benefit Scheme.	Department of Social Protection	Over the lifetime of the strategy
53.	We will develop proposals to address access to, or affordability of necessary aids, appliances or assistive technologies required for everyday living, for those people with disabilities whose entry, retention or return to work could be jeopardised due to being unable to afford these items. We will develop plans to implement the most viable proposals.	Department of Justice and Equality  National Disability Authority	Q3 2018

People with disabilities are financially better off in work.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
54.	The Make Work Pay Working Group will report to the Government by Q2 2017 and its recommendations will be considered by Government with a view to introducing meaningful reforms to ensure that it is financially worthwhile for a person with a disability to take up employment.	Department of Social Protection	2017
55.	We will develop a Ready Reckoner of net income in employment taking into account the interaction of benefits.	Department of Social Protection	Q4 2017
Employers can easily access information about employing a person with a disability.			
56.	We will raise awareness of and continue to support the Employer Disability Information service.	National Disability Authority	Q4 2018

## 5. Health and Wellbeing

People with disabilities are supported to achieve and maintain the best possible physical, mental and emotional well-being.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
57.	We will continue to coordinate the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework.	Department of Health	2013 - 2025
58.	We will invest in the development of early intervention services which specifically target the mental health needs of infants, young children and their families.	Department of Health Health Service Executive	Ongoing
59.	We will develop the intellectual disability and mental health service capacity as set out in Vision for Change.	Department of Health Health Service Executive	Ongoing
60.	We will examine the need to establish statutory, national advocacy services for children and adults with mental health difficulties in hospitals, day centres, training centres, clinics, and throughout the community, building on existing services.	Department of Health	Ongoing
61.	We will ensure through targeted measures that health services provide care on an equal basis to people with mental health difficulties.	Department of Health	Ongoing
62.	We will amend legislation under the review of the Mental Health Act 2001 to deal in a more complete and comprehensive manner with the operation of advance healthcare directives in the area of mental health in the	Department of Health	Text of amendment Bill to be finalised by Q4 2017

People with disabilities are supported to achieve and maintain the best possible physical, mental and emotional well-being.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	longer term.		
63.	We will continue to develop services. In common with previous years, the Health Service Executive's Service Plan 2017 emphasises recovery as central to quality, evidence-based and person-centered services.	Department of Health	Ongoing
Mainstream primary, specialist and hospital services provide accessible information, communication, and facilities for people with disabilities.			
64.	We will further develop the capacity of mainstream Health Service Executive funded services to provide accessible services and information to people with disabilities.	Health Service Executive	Ongoing
65.	We will develop policy advice for consideration by relevant Government Departments based on international research, to guide the development and implementation of a national programme for vocational rehabilitation, with due regard to the neuro-rehabilitation strategy and other medical rehabilitation programmes as appropriate.	National Disability Authority	Q1 2018



## 6. Person-Centred Disability Services



“ We will support people with disabilities to live a fulfilled life and enable them to participate fully in the activities of their communities.”

Disability services support individuals to live a fulfilled life of their choosing.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
66.	We will continue to implement the Transforming Lives Programme with a focus on supporting people with disabilities to live ordinary lives in ordinary places.	Health Service Executive  National Disability Authority  Disability service providers	Ongoing
67.	We will continue to support and monitor a new evidence-based framework for person-centred planning across residential and day services.	Health Service Executive  Disability service providers	Ongoing
68.	We will continue to provide guidance on person-centred planning, informed by research projects for Transforming Lives WG2.	Health Service Executive  National Disability Authority  Disability service providers	Ongoing
Achieve maximum independence.			
69.	We will strengthen the focus on culture change from the 'care' to the 'support' model.	Health Service Executive  Disability service providers	Ongoing
70.	We will roll out the 'Informing Families' guidance.	Health Service Executive  Maternity Units  Paediatricians  Multi-disciplinary teams  General practitioners	Ongoing

Achieve maximum independence.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
		Disability service providers	
71.	We will deliver a model of disability services that provides support for empowering people to make decisions in their own lives.	National Disability Authority Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing
Participate in the everyday life and activities of their communities.			
72.	We will roll out an implementation programme for the New Directions Personal Support Services for Adults with Disabilities.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing
73.	We will evaluate outcomes of Local Area Co-ordination pilots.	Pobal Health Service Executive Department of Health Disability service providers	Ongoing
74.	We will develop actions at community level to build and sustain for disability - competent and welcoming communities.	Local authorities	Ongoing
75.	We will ensure that new buildings and facilities for arts, sport or leisure are based on universal design principles.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Sport Ireland	Ongoing

Participate in the everyday life and activities of their communities.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
		Local authorities	
76.	We will foster disability awareness and competence in voluntary, sporting, cultural and other organisations. We will ensure that disability inclusion is fully integrated into funding programmes, monitored and linked to further funding.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht  Sport Ireland	Ongoing
Be an active citizen.			
77.	We will fully support persons with disability in the achievement of active citizenship and engagement.	All departments  Disability service providers	Ongoing
Children and adults with disabilities have timely access to assessment and early intervention, and the therapy, rehabilitation or mental health services they require.			
78.	We will complete the programme to provide area-based multi-disciplinary therapy teams for early intervention and school-age services in all areas.	Health Service Executive  Disability service providers	Q4 2017
79.	We will implement the Outcomes for Children and their Families Framework, which applies to all children and families accessing children's disability services, including children with autism.	Health Service Executive  Department of Health	Demonstration sites for implementation of the Outcomes Framework will be completed by 30 September 2017.
80.	When implemented, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the Progressing Disability Services	Health Service Executive  Department of Health	Q4 2019

Children and adults with disabilities have timely access to assessment and early intervention, and the therapy, rehabilitation or mental health services they require.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	for Children and Young People Programme in meeting the needs of children with disabilities.		
81.	We will agree protocols between disability services and mental health services to ensure appropriate access for people with disabilities and mental health issues to mental health services.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Ongoing
82.	We will develop an implementation framework for the Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy making links to National Clinical Programmes for Medical Rehabilitation and make a major capital investment in the National Rehabilitation Hospital.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Phase One (community services) of Implementation Plan to be finalised by Q3 2017.
83.	We will ensure full implementation of a Vision for Change.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Ongoing
84.	We will develop and implement effective national joint working protocols between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), disability services and education to ensure children and young people with disabilities can access CAMHS.	Health Service Executive Department of Health TUSLA	Q4 2017

Children and adults with disabilities have timely access to assessment and early intervention, and the therapy, rehabilitation or mental health services they require.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
85.	We will consider, in the context of the forthcoming review of mental health legislation, how best to support people within the system including the provision of an advocacy service.	Health Service Executive  Department of Health	Will be considered as part of the new Bill referred to under Action 11.

Disability services are delivered to high quality standards and in line with international best practice.

86.	We will ensure continued Health Information and Quality Authority registration, regulation and inspection of disability services against standards and regulations, and provide for the next round of inspections with particular focus on thematic inspections against key quality of life outcomes.	Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)	Ongoing
87.	We will undertake a review of the regulations in a consultative process, which will be informed by the National Disability Authority review of the first year of inspection process for disability residential services.	Department of Health	Q2 2018
88.	We will continue the work of the Quality Improvement Team in Health Service Executive Disability Services, and extend it to key non-Health Service Executive providers. We will also complete a review of quality frameworks and	Health Service Executive	Q4 2018

Disability services are delivered to high quality standards and in line with international best practice.		
Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
implement the findings.		
People with disabilities are involved in the planning, design and evaluation of disability services.		
89. The National Disability Stakeholders Group, which includes a number of individuals appointed in their own personal capacity to bring their lived experience to the table, will continue to have a central role in monitoring the implementation of the new National Disability Inclusion Strategy.	Department of Justice and Equality  National Disability Authority	Ongoing
90. We will progress proposals of the Reference Group on mental health service users' involvement.	Health Service Executive  Mental Health Services	Ongoing
Individualised funding to be introduced and the option of a personal budget.		
91. The Personalised Budgeting Task Force will report to the Government by Q4 2017 and its recommendations will be considered by Government in line with the commitment in the Programme for Partnership Government.	Personalised Budgeting Task Force (PfG Commitment)  Relevant departments and agencies	Q4 2017
92. We will adopt and implement a single needs assessment tool for disability services.	Department of Health  Health Service Executive	Q2 2017

## 7. Living in the Community

People with disabilities are supported to live an independent life in a home of their choosing in their community.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
93.	<p>We will continue to implement Time to Move On to give people with disabilities who currently reside in institutions the choice and control over where and with whom they live, within the community.</p> <p>We will ensure the timely involvement of the individual and the family in managing the transition.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>National Disability Authority</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Disability Sector</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
94.	<p>The Programme for Partnership Government aims to reduce the number of people living in congregated settings by at least one-third by 2021 and to ultimately close all congregated settings.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Disability Sector</p>	Q4 2017
95.	<p>We will examine the need to extend the remit of the Mental Health Commission, including thematic inspections against key quality of life outcomes, to empower it to regulate community based services as recommended by the Expert Group on review of the 2001 Mental Health Act, and to require the Inspector of Mental Health Services to conduct annual inspections of 24-hour staffed community residences.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p>	Q4 2017



People with disabilities are supported to live an independent life in a home of their choosing in their community.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
96.	The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 has been affirmed and extended to 2020, to continue to deliver on its aims as part of the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.	Department of Housing Planning, Community and Local Government  Department of Health  Health Service Executive  Disability Sector	Ongoing to 2020
New homes are designed to Universal Design standards and can be readily adapted to people's changing needs.			
97.	<p>We will prepare policy advice on ways of achieving universal design solutions for new housing so that new homes can be accessed and used by all persons, irrespective of size, age, ability or disability.</p> <p>We will advise on any implications of same for stakeholders including designers, builders, homeowners and tenants.</p> <p>Our recommendations will be considered and proposals prepared for submission to Government as appropriate.</p>	National Disability Authority	Q2 2018
98.	We will review the suite of housing adaptation grant schemes, for the purpose of evaluating how the application process can be streamlined for older people and people with a disability.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government  National Disability Authority	Q4 2017

New homes are designed to Universal Design standards and can be readily adapted to people's changing needs.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
99.	We will engage local authorities and stakeholders in a review process in Q2 of 2017 and make any necessary changes to the application and approval process.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government  National Disability Authority	Q4 2017

## 8. Transport and Accessible Places



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We will improve the accessibility and availability of public transport for persons with disabilities.

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Persons with disabilities can get to and from their chosen destination independently (without driving a car) in transport that is accessible to them.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
100.	We will improve the accessibility and availability of public transport, especially inter-city buses and rural transport and accessibility of train and bus stations. We will focus on linking up the different forms of transport and make connections accessible as well as transport information, including audible announcements. We will prioritise the maintenance, management and monitoring of systems and services which make transport accessible.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  National Transport Authority  Local authorities	Ongoing
101.	We will introduce a pilot scheme on the DART for mobility-impaired customers requiring assistance that will significantly reduce the advised notice time for travelling, and ensure a better response when customers requiring assistance cannot give notice.	Irish Rail	Q3 2017
102.	We will undertake a market consultation exercise with bus vehicle manufacturers who engage with us to establish the feasibility and availability of certain wheelchair accessibility options suitable for use in Ireland, and develop proposals in relation to attaching conditions regarding wheelchair accessibility on commercial licensed services.	National Transport Authority	Q4 2017

Persons with disabilities can get to and from their chosen destination independently (without driving a car) in transport that is accessible to them.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
103.	We will monitor user experience of public transport and make recommendations as appropriate based on the findings.	National Disability Authority	Q4 2017
104.	We will lead a review of transport supports encompassing all Government funded transport and mobility schemes for people with disabilities, to enhance the options for transport to work or employment supports for people with disabilities and will develop proposals for development of a coordinated plan for such provision. This plan will have regard to making the most efficient use of available transport resources.	Department of Justice and Equality  Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  National Disability Authority  Department of Social Protection  Pobal  Revenue Commissioners	Q4 2017
105.	We will develop a code of practice for accessible public areas of public sector buildings.	National Disability Authority	2019
106.	We will keep the Code of Practice for heritage sites under review and examine recommendations for amendments made in the light of experience of its application.	National Disability Authority	Q4 2018
107.	We will develop access to outdoor recreation facilities especially footpaths and trails.	Local authorities  Sport Ireland	Ongoing

Persons with disabilities can get to and from their chosen destination independently (without driving a car) in transport that is accessible to them.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
108.	We will implement the programme of dishing of footpaths in urban areas, in line with guidance from the National Disability Authority's publication: Building for Everyone.	Local authorities	Ongoing
Public transport in both urban and rural areas is accessible.			
109.	We will ensure further roll-out of accessible inter-city coaches and accessible regional / rural coach and bus stops.	Bus Éireann Local authorities National Transport Authority	Ongoing
110.	We will review operational issues in relation to the need for advance notice of accessibility requirements for train travel with a view to removing barriers for service users with disabilities.	Iarnród Éireann Bus Éireann (coach travel)	Q4 2017
111.	We will commit to the implementation of consistent and reliable on-board audio and visual announcements on all public transport vehicles including buses, coaches DART, trains and trams and to monitoring and maintaining this aspect of accessibility.	Córas Iompair Éireann Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport National Transport Authority Public transport operators	Ongoing
Persons with disabilities are able to access buildings and their facilities on the same basis as everyone else.			
112.	We will introduce Continuous Professional Development on	National Disability Authority	Q1 2018

Persons with disabilities are able to access buildings and their facilities on the same basis as everyone else.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	Universal Design for architects, to encourage application of National Disability Authority guidance such as Building for Everyone and Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland.		
113.	We will promote and integrate ISO Guide 71/CEN Guide 6: 2014 Guide to address accessibility in standards, and ensure that terminology used is consistent with international best practice guidelines.	<p>National Standards Authority of Ireland</p> <p>Government Departments and agencies with a role in developing standards and guidelines</p> <p>National Disability Authority</p>	Q4 2017
Planning and design of public buildings and public spaces is informed by engagement with people with disabilities and other users across the spectrum of age, size, ability and disability.			
114.	We will ensure, as far as practicable, the promotion of accessible user engagement in design and planning, including public procedures under Planning Acts.	Local authorities	Ongoing

Note:

The Inclusion Strategy should be regarded as a 'living document' and revised iterations of it will be published periodically, that contain renewed and more ambitious actions in the light of progress to date. This document constitutes Version 1 of this Inclusion Strategy – July 2017.



