



MAKE WORK PAY REPORT FROM REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

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Introduction

This is a report of the feedback from participants who attended the 4 Regional Consultation events.

The format of the Regional Consultations events consisted of a short presentation to introduce the topic being consulted on, followed by detailed work at tables with up to 8 participants. Each table had a Facilitator and Note Taker. Participants took part in discussions as well as being asked to express their individual opinion on a series of statements. The content of this report is generated from the reports by the Note Takers.

Words in italics are direct quotes from the Note Takers Handbooks, which in some instances were direct quotes from participants.

Early Engagement: Make Work Pay Recommendations # 9B and # 10 Principles of Early Engagement

Following a short presentation on the concept of Early Engagement participants were asked to undertake four activities at their tables:

1. Discuss the Principles of Early Engagement.
2. Rank the Principles.
3. Express their opinion on the statement: *I think the changes proposed about early engagement could help a person with a disability achieve their work ambitions.*
4. Express their opinion on the statement: *A person on a disability payment should be invited to meet an adviser in their nearest Intreo centre to discuss their work ambitions.*

Activity # 1: Discuss the Principles of Early Engagement

Feedback on the individual Principles

Detailed feedback was received on each of the 6 Principles. It is evident from the Note Takers reports that the discussion about the Principles was free flowing and the discussion moved between the Principles rather than discussion them separately and one at a time. This reflects the interrelated nature of the Principles.

1 Engagement will be voluntary

The main themes to emerge from the discussions included the following -

There was strong agreement that the process should be voluntary:

- *Strong opinion that it should most definitely be voluntary and most are worried that it would be mandatory.*
- *All agreed the agreement should be voluntary.*
- *Has to be, can't force people to do it under threat of suspending payment*
- *Important that people don't feel afraid to engage. All agreed that it should be voluntary.*
- *Participants wanted choice.*

There will be fear and suspicion of the process of early engagement:

- *Concerns about mis-information, scaremongering so that people will be afraid to access services.*
- *Fear is the biggest factor - fear of Intreo.*
- *Invitation to a meeting in the Department is scary.*
- *Many imagine it is not voluntary. Fear factor of DSP - reassurance needed*
- *Fear of being forced to work at unsuitable work.*

There were questions about how Early Engagement would work in practice.

- *How and when will people get the information?*
- *Important person understands what is involved from the start, simple language, have access to an advocate.*
- *Will it be in person meetings, can it be done via Skype.*
- *It is important that people are encouraged to ask for help.*
- *Unsure what engagement looks like.*

The question of when Early Engagement should begin was explored with suggestions that it begin during school years.

- *Engagement should be voluntary but that there needs to be encouragement from as early an age as possible.*
- *It is felt that engagement needs to be started earlier i.e. through career guidance/mainstream schools at age 13. As soon as these young adults are engaged with disability payments/sector they are part of the system.*

There were some suggestions that the process might not be offered on an entirely voluntary basis, because of the potential value it offer to people with disabilities.

- *Why voluntary? At least one meeting to explore option. Services from the Department should be offered but no penalty to payment if no engagement.*
- *Why voluntary? If someone is capable, the attraction should be there.*

Some expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work and the services provided by Intreo.

- *Great to see the Department focusing on early engagement.*
- *I am now working because I contacted Intreo and they supported me and found work that suited me and tailored the work to my needs.*

2 Engagement will encourage new recipients of disability income support to use the Intreo service and supports

The main themes to emerge from the discussions included the following -

The new process of Early Engagement should not be restricted to just 'new' recipients of disability income supports, but extended out to current recipients.

- *Is it aimed at new recipients - what about current recipients?*
- *Should be extended to those already on DA.*
- *All recipients not just new.*

The importance of Intro staff and service meeting the needs of people with disabilities was stressed, given people's current experience and expectations of the service.

- *The staff need training given the experience at the moment.*
- *Not convince people in DSP ready to work with people with disabilities.*
- *Going into Intreo office very negative.*
- *Issue of building up trust in social welfare services stemming from historical exclusion or negative experiences of people with disabilities in dealing with services.*

There was appreciation for this new service offering by Intreo service.

- *If done well this principle would solve the voluntary issue above.*
- *There is agreement this approach will encourage people with disabilities to engage with Intreo.*
- *Good, as you'll meet other people and get supports.*

There were lots of suggestions for how the process within Intreo might work with a particular focus on ensuring that the service is catering for the diverse and complex needs to people with disabilities.

- *Feels engagement should be one to one.*
- *Listen to access needs - plain English.*
- *Need to work with one case officer and not many officers.*
- *Some participants felt information on these services should be disseminated even more widely and at a younger age.*

There was some suspicion about whether or not the process would be genuinely 'voluntary'.

- *Does encourage mean pushed?*
- *Opinion that it always keeps going back to money and a general feeling that the government are trying to save money.*

3 Engagement will focus on your needs

The main themes to emerge from the discussions included the following -

There was strong agreement that the approach needs to reflect the different work ambitions, capacity and circumstances of people with disabilities. They may have different interests in the type of work they want: full-time, part-time; depending on their particular disability they may require different supports in the workplace.

- *This approach won't suit everyone. There is not one size fits all.*
- *Yes, very important since we are all different.*
- *Emphasised - many participants focusing on the needs of individuals, their circumstances and requirements will be of paramount importance.*
- *In arguable - has to be tailored to individual needs.*
- *Needs are baseline - focusing on needs limits. How about wants?*
- *People need different supports physical and mental.*

Some expressed a fear that the approach might coerce people with disabilities into work.

- *Push people into failure.*

- *Focus on what jobs are out there rather than a career.*

Some concerns were expressed about the capacity of Intreo to provide a 'needs' based service because of insufficient trained staff.

- *Prejudice in DEASP. Not enough awareness of disability.*
- *Only if people talking with people with disabilities are trained.*
- *How well will participants be known to Case Officers so that their individual needs might be recognised.*

4 Engagement will be effectively resourced

The main themes to emerge from the discussions included the following -

A strong sense that significant additional resources will be required in order to ensure that the process is effectively resourced. Many different types of resources were named: opportunity to develop a 1-2-1 relationship with a named person in the Intreo Centre so that a relationship can build up; an opportunity for the person with a disability to be provided with an advocate; training for Intreo staff in working with people with disabilities; accessible buildings; specialist supports to work with different types of disability e.g. autism, deaf.

- *Enough staff to help you. Get to know the person, have a 'mentor' build up a relationship with one person, continuity re staff.*
- *Continuation of supports to individual e.g. same person dealing with the person with a disability, and if their link person changes then have a proper handover.*
- *Important that staff are properly trained and that targets for advisors are qualitative rather than quantitative.*
- *Need to have accessible buildings. Will need extra time for appointments. Ensure caseworkers are aware of the person with disabilities individual needs.*
- *Specialist supports - e.g. autism, mental health, deaf (sensory).*
- *Will Intreo provide advocates?*

Effectively resourced not only applies to the Intreo centre and the DEASP but extends to all other government departments and agencies working with people with disabilities to support them into employment.

- *Effectively resourced across all departments.*
- *Needs to be an holistic approach.*

5 Engagement will be joined up

The main themes to emerge from the discussions included the following:

There was strong support for this principle which was informed by participants' experience of the current system which is not joined up in any meaningful way:

- *'Joined up' is critical.*
- *All services working together.*
- *Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection only one player.*

- *Too much left to the individual with regard to learning what supports are available. Different advice even within the same organisation.*
- *Huge challenge - no one is happy with the level of joined up currently.*
- *Huge gap between child and adults services.*

Key components of a 'joined up' approach is the education system and employers. No meaningful progress can be made without 'joining up' with both of these sectors.

- *Starts with employer.*
- *More initiatives to employers, to take on PWD - through TV ads, papers etc. 'Help employ people in your community'. Information is power.*
- *Seminar for employers as an incentive to take people on. Some employers' think they will have to change their whole workplace, just because someone may have a disability, however this is not always the case, people with disabilities have lots to offer as well.*
- *Should start in schools.*
- *There should be career guidance in Secondary School for people with disabilities.*
- *The Department of Education is key to this.*

Other stakeholders who need to be 'joined up' to the process are families because of the role and influence they play in the lives of their family members who have disabilities.

- *Importance of engagement with family. Concerned that family members will not be addressed.*
- *Families may need to be consulted and their involvement facilitated to assist with the process and to act as a point of contact for services.*

6 Engagement will address barriers to work faced by people with disabilities

The main themes to emerge from the discussions included the following:

A range of barriers were named which could actively frustrate people with disabilities accessing employment. These barriers included: transport, loss of medical card, loss of disability payment, rural isolation, the need for an advocate to support and represent the rights and interests of the person with a disability, lack of flexibility in the work place to facilitate the needs of a person with a disability, and lack of awareness among employers. Stress and anxiety of the person with the disability as they face into a new workplace was also named as a barrier.

- *Transport barriers, access, connecting rural areas will have to be addressed.*
- *Medical card a huge barrier.*
- *Must be able to get back on original payments if job doesn't work out.*
- *Will people's needs be accommodated. Example: time off for medical appointments.*
- *Needs to be tailored to individuals.*
- *Advocacy is hugely important. Enable people to speak up for themselves.*
- *Stress going into a new employer.*
- *Lack of confidence as another barrier.*

The attitude of employers was repeatedly named as a barrier.

- *Address employers fears around employing people disabilities - engage with employers.*

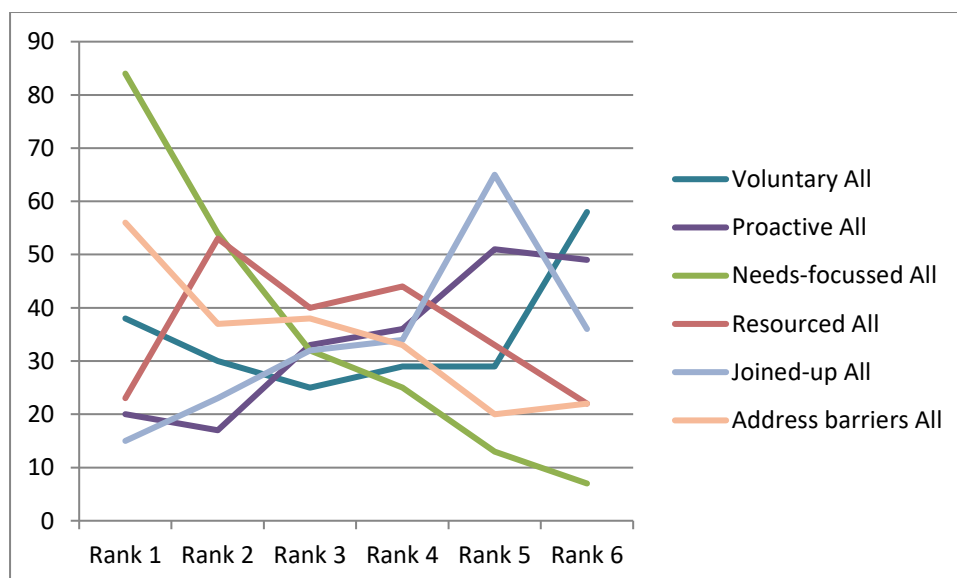
- *Discrimination - will employers be accountable.*
- *Employers look at the risks and not the person – Intreo need to look at this.*
- *More initiative to employers to take on people with disabilities.*
- *Needs to be a targeted information an education campaign for employers which shows that people with disabilities with supports in place can adequately do a job without employer incurring extra costs.*

Activity # 2 Rank the Principles

The feedback from the Facilitators and Note Takers was that participants found the task of ranking the principles challenging. All of them were described as being equally important, interlinked and combine together to contribute to a holistic and balanced process of Early Engagement. This was evident in the work sheets, where several participants ranked all the Principles as # 1, or gave a # 1 to more than one Principle.

Results of ranking of principles are summarised¹ in Figure 1. It shows a line graph for each of the six principles according to the number of times it was selected for each ranking level during the regional events. The greater the number of times that a principle was selected as Rank 1 together with a downward sloping line to the right “\” suggest that those attending consistently considered this principle as consistently significant. Conversely, those with less significance showed low numbers at Rank 1 rising to the right “/”. For principles ranking that showed a “U” shape or “n” shape demonstrated significant differences in opinion around these principles that might need to be borne in mind in how results are interpreted.

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY RANKING OF PRINCIPLES OF EARLY ENGAGEMENT (ALL LOCATIONS)



In order of the highest numbers of Rank 1, the main results are that

- **Needs-focussed (“\” shape):** A focus on the needs of the client was identified as having the highest priority by the largest number of persons. This was relatively consistent as the numbers who identified it at lower rankings fell consistently.

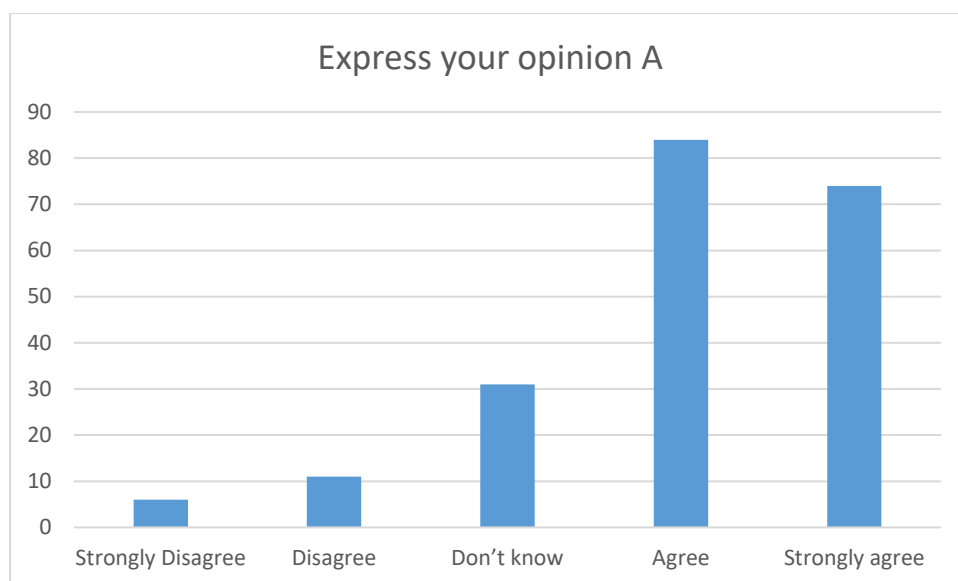
¹ Detailed figures are included in Appendix 1

- **Address-barriers (“\” shape):** This was identified as the second highest priority and while not a consistent as needs-focus, fell off with the lower rankings.
- **Voluntary (“U” shape):** The interpretation of the views of participants is difficult for this principle. It was identified by almost 40 participants as most important but by almost 60 as least important.
- **Resourced (“n” shape):** This principle was ranked relatively lowly for first principles but as second ranking for over 50 participants.
- **Proactive (“/” shape):** The principle around early engagement being proactive (on the part of the Intreo service) was relatively less important for those attending
- **Joined-up (“/” shape):** Similar to proactive.

Activity # 3: Express your Opinion A

Participants were asked to express their opinion on the following statement: *I think the changes proposed about early engagement could help a person with a disability achieve their work ambitions.*

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Cork	0	5	12	37	25	79
Dublin	4	4	9	16	18	51
Sligo	1	0	2	9	14	26
Limerick	1	2	8	22	17	50
Total	6	11	31	84	74	

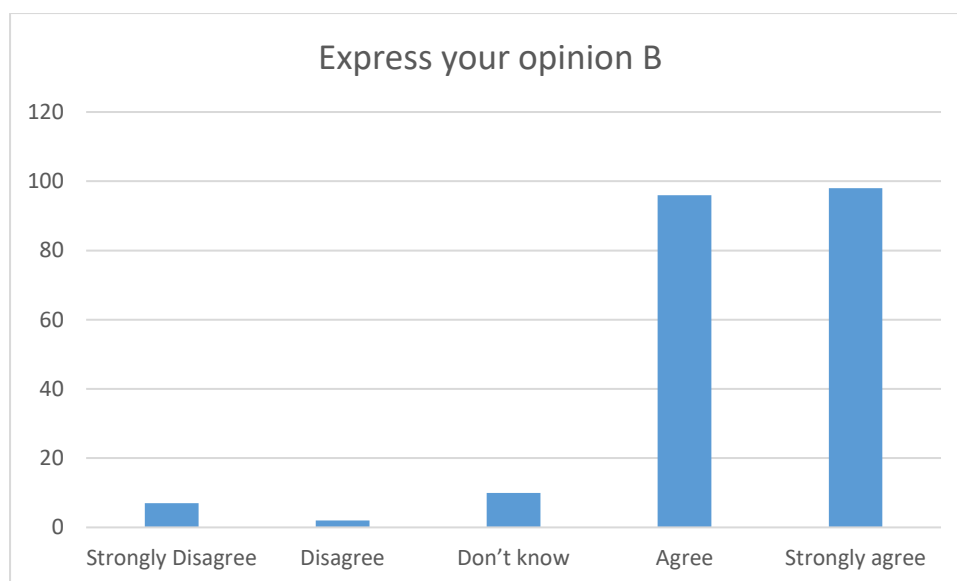


There was a strong level of support for the process of early engagement with 76% of participants either Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with the statement.

Activity # 3: Express your Opinion B

Participants were asked to express their opinion on the following statement: *A person on a disability payment should be invited to meet an adviser in their nearest Intreo centre to discuss their work ambitions.*

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Cork	0	1	3	43	32	79
Dublin	5	0	2	22	25	54
Sligo	0	1	1	9	19	30
Limerick	2	0	4	22	22	50
Totals	7	2	10	96	98	



There was a strong level of support for the proposal that a person with a disability would be invited to meet an advisor with 91% of participants either Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with the statement.

Provisional Findings

It is possible to draw some conclusions from the feedback from the Regional Consultation process on Early Engagement.

- The 6 Principles capture what is required of and expected from a process of Early Engagement. While there was lots of feedback on the individual principles and there was difficulty in ranking them there was no significant gaps identified in terms of an additional principle that needed to be added. In affirming the importance and validity of the 6 Principles people with disabilities and their parents/guardians were drawing heavily on their experience of the absence of these principles in their lived experience and not just in relation to employment: services and supports do not accurately or adequately respond to their multiple and complex needs; they face significant and persistent barriers when trying to access services and supports which are inadequately resourced; and they experience a lack of 'joined-up' thinking and practice between the range of departments and agencies which impact on their lives.
- The exercise of ranking the Principles identified that for the Early Engagement process to meet the expectations of people with disabilities and equally importantly, to have their confidence, the two most important elements are that it meet their needs and address the barriers to employment that they face.

- There are high levels of support for an Early Engagement process for people with disabilities to be proactively engaged by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection through its Intreo centres.
- The shift in role for the DEASP with people with disabilities, from assessing and managing benefits to supporting and resourcing them to find work, is seen as a significant shift. Many people are unaware of Intreo and the services it provides. There were also concerns expressed about whether or not staff in the Intreo centres are sufficiently skilled and experienced to work successfully with people with disabilities.

Reconfiguring Domiciliary Care Allowance and Disability Allowance: Make Work Pay Recommendations # 9A

Following a short presentation on the recommendation from the Make Work Pay Report to reconfigure Domiciliary Care Allowance and Disability Allowance participants were asked to undertake four activities at their tables:

1. Identify the Pros and Cons of the recommendation that Domiciliary Care Allowance be paid to the parents or guardians until a child is 18 years of age, and the qualifying age for Disability Allowance for an individual change from 16 to 18.
2. Express their opinion on the statement: *The Make Work Pay report, recommended that Domiciliary Care Allowance be paid to parents or guardians until a child is 18 years of age, and the qualifying age for Disability Allowance would change from 16 to 18*, choosing from the following options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Don't Know, Agree, Strongly Agree.
3. Express their opinion on the statement: *The Make Work Pay report did not say when the recommended changes in the Domiciliary Care Allowance and the Disability Allowance payments for those aged 16 to 18 should happen*, choosing from the following options:
 - a. I don't. Do not make any changes to the current payments;
 - b. I would like to see the changes put in place as quickly as possible;
 - c. I would like to see the changes put in place in 5 years' time;
 - d. I would like to see the changes put in place in 6 or more years' time
4. Participants were asked to discuss what factors should be taken into account when considering the timing of the introduction of any changes to Domiciliary Care Allowance and Disability Allowance.

Activity # 1:

Participants were asked to identify the Pros and Cons of the Make Work Pay report recommendation that Domiciliary Care Allowance be paid to the parents or guardians until a child is 18 years of age, and the qualifying age for Disability Allowance for an individual change from 16 to 18.

Pros

The main themes to emerge from the discussions were -

16 years of age is too young for a person to be interacting, in their own right, with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and in receipt of a payment. Raising the age to 18 would align Disability Allowance with the qualifying age for other income support type payments:

- *Social welfare payments – too young at 16. Keep off social welfare payments till 18 years old.*
- *Falls in line with other adult payments.*
- *Equally treated to other 18 year olds receiving income supports e.g. job seekers allowance.*

Disability Allowance, at €198 a week, is too much money for a 16 to be receiving because they are not sufficiently mature to be able to make informed and wise choices as to how to use the money and increases their vulnerability because they may be exploited by others:

- *A lot of money for a 16 year old and a vulnerable person.*
- *Impossible to give children that amount of money at 16.*
- *Not good at 16 as still going to school. Spending money on wrong items. Too young to deal with money at times.*
- *Having DA not paid until 18 will assist in helping some PWD to stay on 'straight and narrow'.*

It keeps a focus on education, training and employment and the different possibilities which the young person might pursue. Whereas if they receive a payment at 16 they might lose interest in and leave school, and be less interested in accessing training and employment opportunities:

- *When given DA every week, less incentive to work and go on courses/ training.*
- *Encourage people to go into education as opposed to going onto a payment.*
- *16 year old may not finish education if they get a payment. Or no encouragement to take up employment or an apprenticeship.*
- *Feels that getting the payment (DA) at 16 stops people from availing from further education as they have money and don't need to go anything else.*

It promotes the independence of the young person because when they receive their own payment (DA) they are more mature at 18 than 16:

- *Financial responsibility good at this age.*
- *Could give independence to a child but family may not feel they are ready for Independent Living.*
- *At 18 encourages independence: receive payment and letter from Intreo*

It enables parents to exercise greater influence and control over their child's finances between the ages of 16 and 18, because they will be in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance until their child is 18. It was also suggested that in circumstances where Disability Allowance continues to be paid at 16 that parents would have greater control over the funds:

- *Parents keep control of the money.*
- *All agreed that it should remain at 16 years to apply for DA but parents would have control of it until 18.*
- *Parents can take charge of DA and give out allowance.*
- *Parent needs to have input in how money is spent.*
- *It (DCA) is still an income source so parents will still access it as required.*

Cons

The main themes to emerge from the discussions were -

If, after reconfiguring DCA and DA, the payments are paid at the same or similar rates to current levels then it would lead to a significant reduction in income to households which would have significant, negative consequences for the person with the disability and their family.

- *Families would be challenged with the delay of paying until 18. It would be the difference at €500 per month for a family.*
- *Concern from parents that family could lose €6,000 per annum, €13, 164 over two years. Loss to family – needs to be clarified.*
- *Financial penalty implication.*
- *Concerns that change may create a poverty trap. Households may have relied upon it.*
- *This would represent a reduction in money while costs remain the same.*

The potential loss of access to services and secondary supports, which are accessible when in receipt of Disability Allowance:

- *Barrier – Medical Card/bus pass. Will these be available to people aged 16-18.*
- *Will DCA give access to ETBs, Employability, NLN etc.*
- *Could gateway supports from DA be compromised?*
- *Financial and secondary benefits may be affected.*

It limits the independence of the young person with the disability:

- *DA enables person to be independent in managing their own money.*
- *Getting DA at 16 allows that person more time to save in their own right*
- *Loss of independence.*
- *May encourage parents to see their children as adults when DA (their own money) kicks in. Raising age delays this recognition.*
- *If DCA in payment till 18 it would prevent being able to live independently.*

Children in Care might be negatively affected by the changes

- *If a person does not have parents they may really need the DA at 16.*
- *Small group of children in residential services will lose out with age change.*

A one size fits all approach will not reflect the complexities, needs and subtleties of each situation therefore a 'case by case' approach is recommended:

- *Age limit – not cut and dried. Some people as mature enough at 17 to manage finances.*
- *Discriminated against – not all people with disabilities have same challenges.*
- *Giving child option – write to individual to give them the choice how they manage the situation.*

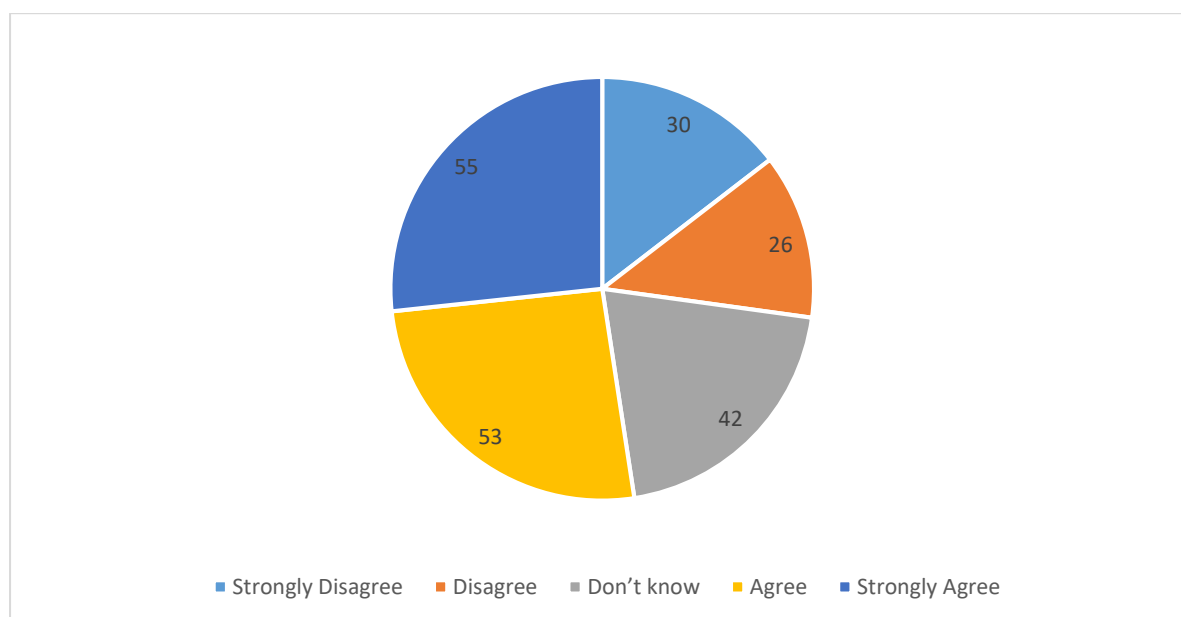
A change in age of entitlement to DA to 18 might eliminate the ability of parents to advocate on behalf of/with their child when they are applying for DA and accessing services and secondary benefits. This is because at 18 the young person is an adult and parents are no longer entitled to be consulted.

- Can parent sit in on DA interview at aged 18 if they cannot conduct their own business?
- Child of 16 – parents can assist and attend. At 18 parent does not and would be needed re applications etc.

Activity # 2

Participants were asked to express their opinion on the following statement: *The Make Work Pay report, recommended that Domiciliary Care Allowance be paid to parents or guardians until a child is 18 years of age, and the qualifying age for Disability Allowance would change from 16 to 18.* And to choose the option which best reflected their view: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Don't Know, Agree, Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly Agree	Totals
Cork	12	13	19	18	14	76
Dublin	9	7	6	13	16	51
Sligo	2	1	2	11	13	29
Limerick	7	5	15	11	12	50
Total	30	26	42	53	55	

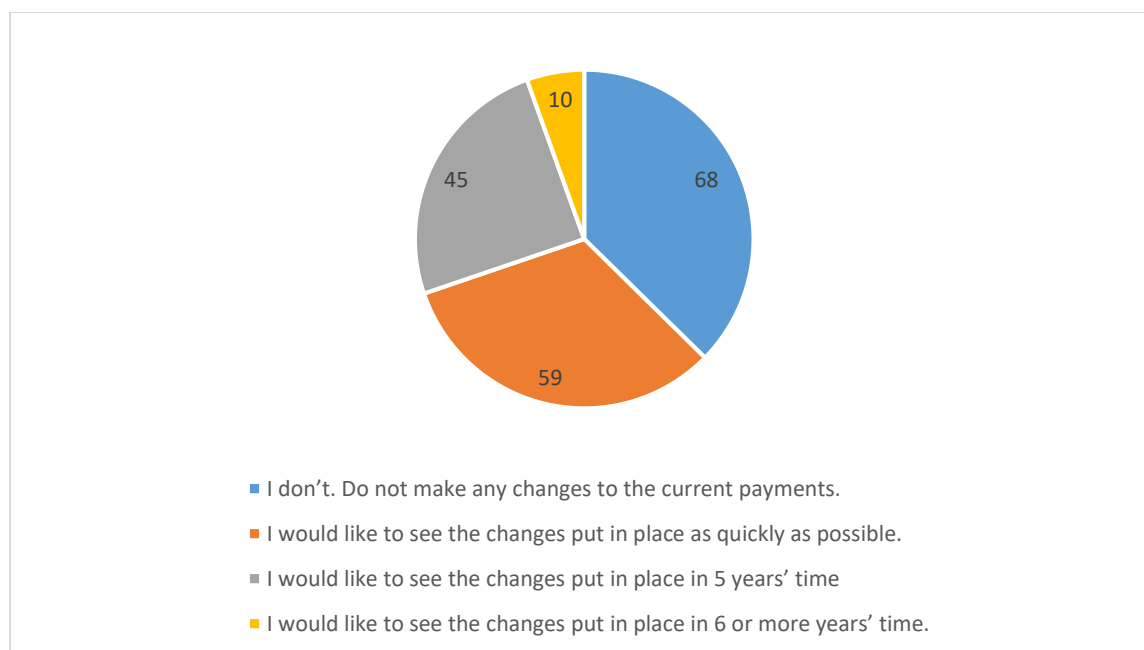


There are very mixed views about the proposal to reconfigure disability payments: while 53% either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with the proposal, 27% either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'. A further 20% 'Don't know'.

Activity # 3

The Make Work Pay report did not say when the recommended changes in the Domiciliary Care Allowance and the Disability Allowance payments for those aged 16 to 18 should happen.

Participants were asked to express their opinion on the following options, with the following results:



There were mixed views about the timing of the introduction of the changes. 37% do not agree with the proposal and opted for '*I don't. Do not make any changes to the current payments*'. The balance, 63% agreed with the proposal but had different views about when the changes should take place: 32% were in favour of 'as quickly as possible', and 25% for 'in five years' time.

Timing of the Changes – Activity # 4

The Make Work Pay report did not say when the recommended changes in the Domiciliary Care Allowance and the Disability Allowance payments for those aged 16 to 18 should happen.

Participants were asked to discuss what factors should be taken into account when considering the timing of any changes.

The main themes to emerge from the discussions were -

Early Engagement Process needs to be in place and working. A lot of the comments related to the need to have established the Early Engagement process, all its components which are covered by the Principles, and that it is working successfully. An emphasis was placed on

the need for the Early Engagement process to be ‘Joined up’, particularly in relation to the Departments of Health, Education and the HSE and its policy New Directions. Other issues named included: building the capacity of the staff in Intreo Centres to work with people with disabilities; ensuring that there is a budget in place to support and resources the process of Early Engagement; having sufficient job opportunities for people with disabilities to avail of:

- *Should happen when other supports are in place (supported employment, job experience etc.)*
- *Before any change the Dept. of Ed. must have created a transition to work plan for every young person before changes can take place. Guidance available.*
- *Put infrastructure in place first.*
- *Ensure that before a change is made that all relevant supports/services are in place.*
- *Is there a strategy for getting extra jobs/employment for PWD.*
- *Too many agencies in Ireland doing the same thing. Voluntary Charities/HSE ends up nobody does it and people are then falling through the cracks. Agencies should join up and work together. Not a duplication of agencies.*

The potential negative financial implications for households of reconfiguring disability payments needs to be addressed in advance of the introduction of any changes:

- *Change to DA could benefit in some respects but the loss over two years could create a poverty trap.*
- *Unintended hidden consequences could result in financial shortfall for families that may have to be address through other payments/schemes.*

There needs to be a proactive information and communications campaign well in advance of the introduction of any changes so that people with disabilities, their parents/guardians and service delivery organisations are fully aware of and understand the implications of the changes.

- *Informing people – people need a long lead in time i.e. 2 years or at start of secondary school – giving parents information at this stage.*
- *Information and communication has to be effective/Full information/ Information forums around the country.*
- *Send same information to services in advance of proposed changes.*
- *All those in receipt of payment need to be contacted by post with clear concise information on any changes.*
- *Transparency of implications. Open and transparent of what supports and services and improvement that are out there.*

People need a lead in time to prepare for any changes, yet there was not a consensus on what length of lead in time would be required:

- *5 years might be too long – immediately does not leave enough room 2 years, to get people used to it.*
- *12 – 13 year olds need to know DCA going on to 18.*
- *Long lead in time will allow families to budget for change.*

The transition between the existing system of supports and payments needs to be smooth and that it might include introducing the changes on a phased basis:

- *Must have transition period before full introduction.*
- *Would need to stagger in change – phase in – information phased in.*
- *Process needs to be trialled and working before being put in place.*

Linked to this is the point that people's circumstances are complex and therefore changes need to be introduced on a case by case basis:

- *All cases are individuals, all need different times to absorb the changes.*
- *Choice – individual and family choice.*

A concern was expressed that a change of government would not reverse the policy or negatively impact the change:

- *If a decision is made on change that this cannot be undone by future government.*
- *2 years is ideal – government changes every 4-5 years. So change of gov. could disrupt transition from one scheme to another.*

Further consultation is required before finalising the decision to introduce any changes to disability payments:

- *More dialogue before making any decisions.*
- *If it's to change we need another step in the process – parents should be consulted around what training and supports children need to get them in employment.*

There needs to be clarity about whether or not there will be continued access to secondary benefits, e.g. medical card, transport, which are currently available to DA recipients at 16, if DCA is to be paid until 18:

- *People were interested here in how this would affect their medical card and other secondary benefits.*
- *Access to travel allowance, medical card etc., with DCA?*

Provisional Findings

It is possible to draw the following conclusions from the feedback from the Regional Consultation process on reconfiguring Domiciliary Care Allowance and Disability Allowance.

- There are very mixed views about the proposal to reconfigure disability payments: while 53% either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with the proposal, 27% either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'. A further 20% 'Don't know'.

This diversity of views was also expressed in response to the question about the timing of the introduction of any changes where 37% did not agree with the proposal and opted for 'I don't. Do not make any changes to the current payments'.

- There is a lot of support for the proposal to reconfigure Domiciliary Care Allowance and Disability Allowance. Many reasons were cited: 16 is too young for a person to receive what can be considered an adult payment; there may be negative implications for the young person themselves; it helps to keep the young person

focused on training, education and employment; and offers more control over finances to parents.

- However, there was also a lot of opposition to the proposal. The reasons cited included: loss of significant income to the household; and loss of access to services and secondary benefits which are accessed through receipt of Disability Allowance.
- A significant 'precondition' is that the process of Early Engagement needs to be fully operational and successfully established before any changes to disability payments are introduced.
- Any changes to disability payments need to be well notified in advance so that people with disabilities, their parents/guardians and service delivery organisations can understand the implications and prepare for the changes

Appendix 1

Principle	Rank in order of importance (1 = most important, 6 = least important)						Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Engagement will be voluntary							
Cork	9	9	10	11	16	22	77
Dublin	11	7	8	13	2	11	52
Sligo	6	10	1	0	4	9	30
Limerick	12	4	6	5	7	16	50
Totals	38	30	25	29	29	58	
Engagement will encourage new recipients of disability income support payments to use the Intreo Service and supports							
Cork	9	6	14	15	15	19	78
Dublin	4	3	6	6	19	13	51
Sligo	1	3	5	3	8	9	29
Limerick	6	5	8	12	9	8	48
Totals	20	17	33	36	51	49	
Engagement will focus on your needs							
Cork	34	17	9	8	6	3	77
Dublin	20	14	6	5	7	2	54
Sligo	13	5	6	5	0	2	31
Limerick	17	18	11	7	0	0	53
Totals	84	54	32	25	13	7	
Engagement will be effectively resourced							
Cork	9	20	10	13	11	12	75
Dublin	6	20	10	10	12	3	61
Sligo	2	6	8	9	3	3	31
Limerick	6	7	12	12	7	4	48
Totals	23	53	40	44	33	22	
Engagement will be joined up							
Cork	3	8	12	14	23	12	72
Dublin	3	5	9	12	13	13	55
Sligo	4	5	2	3	11	4	29
Limerick	5	5	9	5	18	7	49
Totals	15	23	32	34	65	36	
Engagement will address barriers to work faced by people with disabilities.							
Cork	14	15	20	13	5	7	74
Dublin	18	7	9	7	6	6	53
Sligo	3	2	6	9	6	3	29
Limerick	21	13	3	4	3	6	50
Totals	56	37	38	33	20	22	
Overall totals	236	214	200	201	211	194	