



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Justice  
and Equality

# Mid-Term Review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021

January 2020



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## Foreword

### **Foreword by Minister Finian McGrath T.D., Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Disability Issues.**

I welcome the opportunity that this mid-term review has provided to refresh the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS), to consult stakeholders and to see how best to focus our work on disability for 2020 and 2021.

I am pleased that the consultation process on the mid-term review has acknowledged the progress that has been made so far and that the original vision remains valid for the coming years.

It is important that we acknowledge the achievements that have been realised since the launch of the Strategy in 2017. These achievements include the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, something which was an absolute priority for me and which I was delighted to work on and to help to get over the line. Other important achievements include the publication of the Make Work Pay report, with 24 practical recommendations, many of which have already been implemented; introduction of new ballot papers for referendums to facilitate private voting; introduction of the AIM supports for children accessing the ECCE scheme. In addition the report of the Task Force on Personalised Budgets was published; the development of the second action plan under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities; and the enactment of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.

While acknowledging these achievements, there is more work to do.

When the Strategy concludes in 2021, my aim is for Ireland to be a better place for people with disabilities to live in, a place where people with disabilities are involved and consulted with on matters and decisions that affect their lives. It should be a country where people with disabilities can enjoy full equality, participate fully in our society, and enjoy a quality of life on a par with the rest of the population. The NDIS provides a framework in which we can work to achieve this aim. Work must now begin to ensure that actions are implemented in such a way as to achieve the changes that are still needed.

The success of the Strategy will depend on the shared engagement with all of the stakeholders in building a fairer society. I look forward to working collaboratively with my Government colleagues and with people with disabilities in this important work to make Ireland a country that provides equal opportunities for its people of all abilities.

**Finian McGrath T.D.  
Minister of State with Special  
Responsibility for Disability Issues**

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# Chapter 1. National Disability and Inclusion Strategy (2017-2021): Progress to date

Significant progress has been made on key areas of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) since its launch in July 2017.

These include:

- The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (April 2018);
- The publication of the Make Work Pay Report;
- Introduction of new ballot papers for referendum to facilitate private voting;
- Implementation of AIM supports for children accessing ECCE;
- Enactment of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017;
- The publication of the Report of the Taskforce on Personalised Budgeting;
- Significant improvements in transport accessibility, including reductions in the notice period for DART and train users, together with improved accessibility in train and bus stations; and
- Reduction in the number of people with disabilities living in congregated settings.

## Implementation and Monitoring Mechanism

Implementation of the NDIS is overseen by the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Committee (NDISSG). The NDISSG meetings are held quarterly and are chaired by Minister Finian McGrath T.D., Minister of State for Disability Issues. The Steering Group includes representatives of Government Departments, the National Disability Authority (NDA), other agencies and members of the Disability Stakeholder Group. The Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG) comprises 24 individuals appointed by Minister McGrath to represent the interests of people with disabilities and to monitor the implementation of the NDIS.

A 'traffic light' reporting system is used by each Government Department to track the progress such Departments and agencies under their remit are making across the 114 actions. These 'traffic light' reports are then collated by the Department of Justice and Equality and presented bi-annually at every second NDISSG meeting. The 'traffic light'

system shows where actions are completed, are currently underway or are behind due to delivery issues.

The National Disability Authority offers advice and input through its membership of the NDIS SG, but also engages directly with Departments in relation to their NDIS commitments and to advise them on disability and Universal Design issues. The National Disability Authority conducts an annual independent assessment of progress on NDIS actions and periodically reviews a suite of NDIS indicators to provide an overall measure of progress in improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

Each Department has also established its own Departmental Consultative Committee (DCC) which meets in advance of each NDISSG meeting. Such Committees are comprised of the relevant Government officials along with representatives from the NDA and those with lived experience of disability. The DCCs have a mandate to monitor implementation by individual departments of actions under the NDIS.

## Progress to date under each of the themes

### 1 Equality and Choice

The most notable milestone under this theme to date was the ratification by Government of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in March 2018. The CRPD enshrines key rights for people with disabilities to be treated equally, to be consulted actively on policy and to have autonomy in life choices and decisions.

The Department of Justice and Equality has overseen the transposition of the EU Victims of Crime Directive (*Action 14*) with the enactment of the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017. This Act introduces a number of statutory rights to information for victims of crime including for victims with disabilities.

The EU Directive 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies entered into force in December 2016. The Directive requires public bodies to ensure their websites and applications are accessible to users and in particular to persons with disabilities by making them perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. It also requires Member States to regularly monitor and report to the Commission on the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications.

Furthermore, the Department of Education and Skills has carried out accessibility audits of its School Transport Appeals website and of its Student Grant Appeals website. Universal Design Principles were taken on board in the design of these sites. The School Transport Appeals website is now live and changes to the Student Grant Appeals website will be made once approved by the Appeals Board.

The NDA Centre for Excellence in Universal Design has promoted good practice through the Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Communication, which includes digital communications. The centre has also reviewed the Universal Design Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Sector to cover autism and the new EU Web Accessibility Directive 2018. A second edition was launched by DPER in December 2019. The NDA has delivered actions committed within the Action Plan on Autism, including the publication and dissemination of guides for justice professionals, housing officers, and line managers.

In relation to accessibility to public buildings (Action 25), the Department of Health's new headquarters in Miesian Plaza is fully compliant with all relevant building standards. IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) moved to new premises in Q3 2019 and ensured their new building is in line with Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 and Part M accessibility standards, in line with Action 27. In 2019, in furtherance of Action 26 of the Strategy, the NDA and OPW published their report on the review of effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005. The report was informed by a consultation process which took place between September and December 2018 and identified a number of recommendations which are now under consideration by relevant departments and agencies. The Department of Justice and Equality notes that a number of Public Sector organisations have recently refurbished or relocated to premises that are compliant with Part M.

Regarding Action 28, there have also been a number of improvements to the Irish Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS). The Irish Sign Language Act 2017 will come into operation during 2020. The Act provides for the recognition of Irish Sign Language and sets down principles to guide the operations of public bodies in the provision of services to those who use ISL. The operating hours of the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) have been extended to 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and Saturdays from 10 am-4 pm. Sunday services from 12:00-13:30 were trialled in Q4 2018 and commenced on a permanent basis from January 2019.

## **2 Joined-up Policies and Public Services**

In order to consider how best to build on work completed to date to facilitate smooth transitions into, within and out of education on a cross-departmental and agency basis (Action 31), the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, has established two reporting templates, entitled Mo Scéal. These have been developed to support the transfer of information between preschools and primary schools and provide a mechanism for preschool practitioners to transfer appropriate and relevant information relating to a child's learning and development to their junior infant teachers. These have been published on the NCCA website at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood>.

### 3 Education

In order to further the aim of ensuring the full implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) of supports for children with disabilities (*Action 34*) the Department of Children and Youth Affairs has a number of new AIM Initiatives underway. AIM is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with a disability can access and meaningfully participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. AIM is a child-centred model, involving 7 levels of progressive support, moving from the universal to the targeted, based on the needs of the child and the early learning and care (ELC) setting. Since its introduction in September 2016, over 12,500 children with a disability have benefitted from 26,460 targeted supports in 3,390 ELC settings provided under AIM.

The fourth year of the Leadership for INClusion (LINC) Programme, funded by DCYA, commenced in September 2019. Up to this point, a total of 2,532 early learning and care practitioners have graduated from the LINC Programme (847 in 2017, 798 in 2018 and 887 in 2019).

Additional training being rolled-out in 2019 under AIM includes training in Lámh Sign Language (334 participants completed to end September 2019) and Hanen Teacher Talk (468 participants completed as of end of September 2019).

The Department of Children & Youth Affairs also commissioned the development of online introductory training in “Sensory Processing and Early Learning” and this training was launched in September 2019 to pre-school practitioners.

Training has also been rolled out across the country to early learning and care (ELC) settings in relation to the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines. To date over 500 training courses have been run, with over 6,200 practitioners from over 3,000 ELC settings completing this training.

There is also a Demonstration Project in Early Learning and Care Therapy Supports in operation. The purpose of the demonstration project is to develop and test a model for the delivery of in pre-school and in-school speech and language therapy and occupational therapy support. The project engaged a 3-tiered model of service delivery to 75 pre-schools and is being designed to provide a focused level of in pre-school and intervention depending on the severity of the child’s need. The project is now in its second year.

In line with *Action 36*, the Department of Education and Skills policy requires that, from the 2015/16 school year onwards, all new applications for Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support must include a copy of the student Personal Pupil Plan which must be clearly linked to the individualised planning in place for each student and specifically refer to the student’s identified care needs. The plan must also focus on the pro-active development of students’ independence skills and set out the programmes and strategies that are being used to meet the child’s needs.

In order to progress [Action 37](#) of the Strategy, The Department of Education and Skills has convened an Implementation Group with representatives of the NCSE, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Inspectorate and external representatives to ensure that the Report's recommendations are fully and appropriately considered and that a timetable for implementation is prepared. A number of the recommendations in relation to school aged provision have been substantially implemented, including those on the development of additional primary and post primary provision, admissions to schools, operating of special classes, additional release days for teaching principals and the use of evidence-informed interventions.

Regarding access to third level education ([Action 42](#)), the National Access Plan (NAP) 2015-2019 sets an overall target for entry by people with disabilities. The target represents an increase in the region of 1,200 in the number of undergraduate new entrants with disabilities and there are specific targets for students in particular categories of disability. A progress review of the National Access Plan was completed in 2018. The review has shown that there has been significant increases in participation rates since work began on implementing the National Access Plan in particular to the participation in higher education by people with disabilities. The target of 8% for students with a disability that was set for the lifetime of the Plan has been exceeded by the Progress Review stage. The overall participation rate has increased to 10%, and targets have equally been surpassed in respect of two of the three categories of disability. There has been a 71% increase in participation by students with physical or mobility disabilities, while participation rates by deaf students or those hard of hearing has increased by 46%. Participation by students that are blind or that have a vision impairment has increased by 24%. The term of the National Access Plan has been extended to 2021 with a new target of 12% for the disability group.

#### **4 Employment**

The revised Action Plan 2019-2021 under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (2015-2024) has been developed with commitments from across Government departments and this covers a number of actions designed to increase support for entry into and sustained participation in the labour market. The publication of the Make Work Pay Report in 2017 provided 24 practical recommendations, many of which have already been implemented. These recommendations enable those who enter or re-join the workforce to maintain key benefits. The loss of benefits, including the medical card, was acting as a barrier to work.

#### **5 Health and Wellbeing**

In furthering [Action 57](#), Get Ireland Active! - The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (NPAP) has worked since 2016 to increase physical activity levels across the entire population, with specific actions aimed at people with a disability. Actions include providing guidelines, support materials and referral pathways to promote physical activity for

organisations providing mental health services and disability services as well as extending existing and developing programmes for physical activity for people with disabilities and their families.

## **6 Person-centred Disability Services**

In line with [Action 66](#), the HSE Transforming Lives programme is continuing to improve services and increase supports for people with disabilities, with a particular focus on supports at key transition points such as going to school, progressing to further training or education, or moving into a new home. Work has also progressed on quality assurance systems, person-centred planning, adult day services and children's therapy teams under the Transforming Lives agenda and such research and frameworks have now been made available to HSE for implementation.

In relation to [Action 75](#), the Sport Ireland National Sport Campus provides opportunities to people with disabilities to take part in sport. The Sport Inclusion Disability Charter was rolled out in 2019 and 224 organisations, clubs and centres have signed onto the charter, with a target of 250 by year end.

In the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network, the recruitment of new Sport inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs) continues with the aim of having one in each LSP. This was part of the National Sports Strategy 2018-2027.

Part of Creative Ireland's National Creativity Fund, the Royal Irish Academy of Music's (RIAM) inclusive initiative Le Chéile developed music ensembles for young disabled musicians in every province that culminated in the founding of the Open Youth Orchestra of Ireland, the EU's first national youth orchestra for musicians with disabilities.

In line with [Action 81](#), a protocol between disability services and mental health services has been developed by the Department of Health/HSE to ensure appropriate access to mental health services for persons with disabilities. The HSE is now focussed on implementing the protocol. The Department of Health/HSE has also developed an implementation framework for the Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy.

In relation to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Department of Health/HSE has developed 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 ([Action 84](#)). The focus of the HSE is now on implementation of these protocols.

The report of the Personalised Budgeting Task Force was published by Minister McGrath in July 2018 ([Action 91](#)). The report sets out how personalised budgets could work as a funding mechanism for people with a disability, providing them with greater choice and control over

the services and supports they receive. The HSE has appointed a Project Manager, while documentation and communications are being finalised.

## 7 Living in the Community

Regarding the government's commitment under Action 93, in 2011, the Time to Move on from Congregated Settings Report identified approximately 4,000 people with disabilities living in congregated type settings. The 2016 Programme for Partnership Government made a commitment to reducing the number remaining in congregated settings by one third by 2021. There are now less than 2,100 people with a disability living in congregated settings.

## 8 Transport

The DART pilot project has been completed resulting in the reduction in advance notice from 24 hours to 4 hours. In addition, this reduced notice period has been extended to the commuter routes in the Greater Dublin Area and Cork commuter routes.

The Just A Minute (JAM) card was launched across the public transport network on 25 November 2019. Transport for Ireland alongside Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead Ireland, Irish Rail, Local Link and Luas are beginning the journey to becoming JAM Card friendly. The JAM Card helps people with a communication barrier tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily.

Action 109 contains a commitment to rolling-out accessible inter-city coaches and accessible regional/rural coach and bus stops. The NTA has set a target by end 2021 to have a wheelchair accessible bus stop (one stop in each direction) in 50% of main towns – with 43 towns with a population over 5,000 to be included. The NTA is liaising with a number of Local Authorities nationwide to develop designs and agree accessible bus stop locations and scope of works. Wheelchair accessibility enhancements have been completed at Sligo and Ballyshannon Bus Stations and at Cavan Institute. Bus Éireann has also commenced an Accessibility Audit of its Bus Stations.

Irish Rail is training Customer Service Officers (CSOs) who are being deployed on all Inter-city routes. This will mean that at all stops services with a CSO on board will be able to ensure ramp assistance is available Action 110. It is intended that this will eliminate the requirement for advance notice on all Inter-city routes.

In relation to Action 111, the Luas is fully accessible. Stop platforms allow level boarding for wheelchairs and others with mobility needs. On-board accessibility features comprise of low-floor LRVs; high-contrast grab rails for better visibility; on-board audio announcements; on-board LED passenger information displays; decal notices supplemented with braille;

designated seating with space for wheelchairs, and guide dogs; and on-board hearing induction loops.

The National Disability Authority continues to progress work on developing a monitoring approach for the transport sector under Part 3 of the Disability Act, 2005.

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## Chapter 2. National Disability Inclusion Strategy: the Focus for 2020 and 2021

The consultation process for this mid-term review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy has confirmed that stakeholders want the emphasis for 2020 and 2021 to be on implementing existing commitments within the Strategy and on fulfilling obligations that arise from Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2018.

In response, the focus for 2020 and 2021 will be on Strategy implementation and on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The approach to the National Disability Inclusion Strategy for 2020 and 2021 will be structured around the following strands:

- Raising awareness of the lived experience of people with disabilities;
- Strengthening rights;
- Expanding into new areas;
- Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and
- Improving services through better implementation and collaboration.

The Strategy works alongside the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, which has a specific employment focus. It is also in line with Future Jobs Ireland, the all of Government economic framework to 2025, which has put a specific emphasis on increasing participation in the labour market and improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

### Strand 1: Raising awareness

The findings of the consultation process on the mid-term review have indicated that many people with disabilities are unaware of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy or of the Comprehensive Strategy for the Employment of People with Disabilities. Equally, service providers and policymakers are not always sufficiently aware of the needs and interests of people with disabilities when developing policies or services.

In response to these findings, awareness raising initiatives will be developed to promote awareness among people with disabilities of the strategies and initiatives being advanced on disability. This can commence with the wider circulation of this review to all those who participated in the consultation process in addition to the standard practice of publishing the review on the Departmental website. Initiatives will also be developed to raise awareness and to build capacity among policymakers and public services of the needs and interests of people with disabilities so that disability proofing can be integrated more effectively into policy development and into service design and delivery. Specific initiatives will be developed to foster positive attitudes among the general public towards people with disabilities in line with the State's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Specific initiatives will be rolled out to promote greater awareness among employers and to provide targeted information and support to them when employing persons with disabilities or seeking to retain existing employees who acquire disabilities.

## **Strand 2: Strengthening rights**

Work will continue to finalise the legislation that is needed within the context of Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The legislation being advanced will include provisions to:

- Safeguard persons with capacity difficulties who are deprived of their liberty;
- Reform the Mental Health Act 2001;
- Increase the target for employment of people with disabilities in the public service to 6%;
- Improve access for people with disabilities to jury service;
- Improve protections for people with disabilities against hate crime as well as hate speech; and
- Remove outdated references to 'persons of unsound mind' from the statute book.

The commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 will consolidate the reforms arising from Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention by abolishing wardship and by providing supports that respect the person's will and preferences.

## **Strand 3: Expanding into new areas**

Work will begin on the issue of intersectionality to identify the particular needs of people with disabilities depending on their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or on whether or not they are migrants or of migrant origin. Links will be developed between the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, the Migrant Integration Strategy, the National Strategy for Women and Girls, the LGBTI+ Strategy and the National Traveller and Roma Strategy to consider

barriers faced by Travellers and Roma with disabilities, by refugees and asylum seekers, by women, by transgender, lesbian, gay and intersex people with disabilities.

The Equality Budgeting Initiative will expand to consider equality budgeting and disability, looking at outcomes of expenditure as they relate to people with disabilities.

There will be an increased focus on employment, with initiatives to support employers to employ and to retain people with disabilities in employment.

There will also be an increased focus on the needs of people with disabilities living in rural areas. In this context, there is a renewed commitment to supporting the employment of people with disabilities in rural areas and considering how remote working options can support this objective.

Building on the work already undertaken to improve the accessibility of the public transport system, transport bodies will undertake new actions to improve the accessibility of bus and train stations.

Another new area will be that of culture, where the focus will be on facilitating greater participation by people with disabilities in culture and heritage-focused programmes and facilities.

Departments will also continue to work to ensure that a disability perspective is integrated into mainstream policy development. The Teaching Council's revised Standards for Initial Teacher Education, for instance, will be informed by NCSE research findings on inclusive education. Similarly, Junior Cycle Reform and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy will be informed by a disability perspective.

## **Strand 4: Implementing the Convention**

The implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will impose additional obligations on most Government departments and agencies. Effective implementation will require a cross-government approach. With this in mind, the Department of Justice and Equality will develop a CRPD implementation plan, that will include monitoring structures and metrics as appropriate. Government Departments and agencies will be requested to develop their own plans for implementation of the Convention that will link with the national plan being developed by the Department of Justice and Equality.

The major change arising from the UN Convention is the obligation to actively involve people with disabilities in the policy development process. A consultation and participation model has been developed (see Appendix A) which will be implemented in early 2020. Its objectives are to build capacity within the NGO community and within government

departments and agencies so that people with disabilities can be actively included in consultation and policy development processes.

The Department of Justice and Equality will use its governance engagement with agencies under its remit to promote awareness of accessibility issues and of the obligations arising for agencies under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **Strand 5: Improving Services**

The focus under this strand will be on identifying how services can be improved through better implementation and collaboration. Priority will be given to developing mechanisms for better implementation of existing commitments within the National Disability Inclusion Strategy. This will include reviewing existing reporting practices and sharing best practices on implementation between Government Departments and agencies. Implementation will be assessed against indicators developed by the National Disability Authority. A data strategy will be developed to support better reporting on implementation of commitments.

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Committee will be mandated to review implementation of commitments against the indicators developed by the National Disability Authority at mid-year meetings in 2020 and 2021 and at the final Steering Committee meeting in December 2021. Targets will be set for relevant actions at the Steering Committee in mid-2020 and reviewed in mid-2021 and again at the end of 2021.

Governance structures will be used, where appropriate, to raise awareness and to monitor the performance of agencies in making services more accessible to people with disabilities. The Policing Authority, for instance, will be requested by the Minister for Justice and Equality to monitor An Garda Síochána's performance on making its information and services accessible to people with disabilities.

There will be a focus on promoting collaborative approaches to cross-cutting issues. The working group on transport (*Action 104*), which will be convened by the Department of Justice and Equality in February 2020, will focus on identifying opportunities for collaboration between transport and other public bodies to promote greater mobility for people with disabilities. Similarly, the working group on assistive technology (*Action 53*), which will be convened by the Department of Justice and Equality in early March 2020, will examine how collaborative approaches can enable assistive technology to be developed and used more effectively to promote accessibility for people with disabilities. Collaborative projects will also be developed to support more streamlined transitions by young people with disabilities into further and higher education, into training and employment.

Where major initiatives were developed in the first years of the Strategy, the focus will be on implementing them. In this context, the Department of Education and Skills' focus will be on implementing the recommendations of its comprehensive review of the SNA scheme.

Similarly, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will continue to implement recommendations relevant to it contained in the Make Work Pay report. The Department of Health and the HSE will focus on implementing commitments on moving persons out of congregated settings and on the testing of the proposed model of personalised budgeting.

## Detail of Proposed Changes

The mid-term review process has provided the opportunity to refresh the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, to modify existing actions, to add additional areas and to remove actions that have now been completed. Not all completed actions have been removed as some actions, though complete in this phase, will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis or form part of ongoing mainstream actions.

The changes proposed to individual actions are set out in the tables below.

**TABLE 1: NEW ACTIONS**

Actions Added	Responsible Body
<b>Action 3A:</b> We will develop an implementation plan to coordinate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality; National Disability Authority; National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Committee.
<b>Action 3B:</b> We will develop plans to implement the obligations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	All departments and agencies
<b>Action 3C:</b> We will implement a consultation and participation model, in line with the UN CRPD, to facilitate participation by persons with disabilities in the policy development process	Department of Justice and Equality (lead); All departments and agencies
<b>Action 3D:</b> We will develop a data strategy to support the collection and use of data to identify outcomes for people with disabilities when accessing services and programmes.	Department of Justice and Equality; National Disability Authority; National Disability Inclusion Strategy

Actions Added	Responsible Body
	Steering Committee; Central Statistics Office
<b>Action 18A:</b> We will ask the Policing Authority to monitor the actions taken by An Garda Síochána to make its services and information accessible to, and supportive of, people with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality
<b>Action 18B:</b> We will integrate a focus on the needs of people with disabilities in our initiatives to enhance access to justice.	Department of Justice and Equality (lead); Relevant agencies
<b>Action 18C:</b> We will develop an advice paper to guide on an intermediaries support approach that could be considered to support persons with communication difficulties in the Irish justice system	National Disability Authority
<b>Action 115:</b> We will implement an awareness and support programme for employers to support the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities in employment	Department of Justice and Equality (lead); Comprehensive Employment Strategy Implementation Group
<b>Action 116:</b> Within the framework of the Second Action Plan of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, we will undertake initiatives to promote and support entrepreneurship and self-employment for people with disabilities, to support their employment in Foreign Direct Investment companies and to provide information on local enterprise opportunities.	DBEI; Local Enterprise Offices; Enterprise Ireland; IDA
<b>Action 117:</b> We will implement the Employer Disability Initiative to support employers in the employment of people with disabilities will identify a permanent location for employer awareness training materials to support employers when employing people with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality; National Disability Authority; Comprehensive Employment Strategy

Actions Added	Responsible Body
	Implementation Group
<b>Action 118:</b> We will work with the OECD to research evidence on effective models of employer engagement across OECD countries to guide policy considerations on employer engagement.	National Disability Authority
<b>Action 120:</b> We will fully leverage the Equality Budgeting initiative to ensure greater efforts to identify and address inequality that impacts people with a disability	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform; Department of Justice and Equality; National Disability Authority; Relevant departments.
<b>Action 121:</b> We will develop programmes to promote awareness within the general public of the lived experience of, and to support more positive attitudes towards, people with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality; National Disability Authority; National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Committee
<b>Action 122:</b> We will ensure that all customer-facing staff in public transport companies receive disability awareness training and that such training is updated periodically.	National Transport Authority; Public transport operators
<b>Action 123:</b> We will develop an advice paper on national policy and practice on assistive technology to guide policy development and to support the Assistive Technology Working Group.	National Disability Authority
<b>Action 124:</b> We will explore learning from other jurisdictions on effective career guidance models for students with disabilities.	National Disability Authority
<b>Action 125:</b> We will develop links with other equality strategies aimed at identifying intersectional issues for people with disabilities relating to their gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or migrant status.	Department of Justice and Equality

Actions Added	Responsible Body
<b>Action 126:</b> We will support initiatives to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in cultural and heritage-related activities and programmes.	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
<b>Action 127:</b> Within the context of the rural development policy, we will work to improve accessibility for people with disabilities living in rural areas.	Department of Rural and Community Development (lead); Relevant departments and agencies
<b>Action 128:</b> We will develop initiatives to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities living in rural areas, including through remote working options.	Department of Rural and Community Development (lead); Relevant departments and agencies

**TABLE 2: MODIFIED ACTIONS**

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
<b>Action 8:</b> 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.	We will implement proposals, once agreed by Government, arising from recommendations of the Interdepartmental Group tasked to examine issues relating to people with mental illness who come into contact with the criminal justice system.	Department of Justice and Equality
<b>Action 12:</b> We will introduce statutory safeguards to protect residents of nursing homes and residential	We will refine the draft heads of bill in 2020 (preliminary entitled the Protection of Liberty (Capacity) Bill) and	Department of Health; Health Service Executive;

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
<p>centres, and ensure that they are not deprived of their liberty, save in accordance with the law as a last-resort measure in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>We will develop related guidance and training for staff and carers.</p>	<p>continue to engage with stakeholders, as we identify and address potential implementation challenges.</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Equality</p>
<p><b>Action 15:</b> 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.</p> <p>This will include the development and implementation of guidelines for Gardaí and other relevant personnel in relation to engagement with people with disabilities.</p>	<p>We will ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are central to our review of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 and in our development of legislation on hate crime.</p> <p>This will include the development and implementation of guidelines for Gardaí and other relevant personnel in relation to engagement with people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Equality; An Garda Síochána</p>
<p><b>Action 16:</b> We will promote accessibility and universal design principles in the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy</p>	<p>We will promote accessibility and universal design principles in the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy and of the Web Accessibility Directive.</p>	<p>All public bodies; Department of Public Expenditure and Reform</p>
<p><b>Action 23:</b> We will promote the design of public sector websites in accordance with universal design principles.</p>	<p>We will promote the design of public sector websites in accordance with universal design principles and in line</p>	<p>All departments and public bodies;</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
	with our obligations under the Web Accessibility Directive	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
<p><b>Action 28:</b> 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 development 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>We will provide further resources to 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 development and development.</p>	<p>Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>
<p><b>Action 30:</b> 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</p>	<p>The Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive, along with the Department of Health, 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</p>	<p>Department of Education and Skills (Joint Lead); Health Service Executive (Joint Lead); [Joint lead responsibility has been changed.]</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
appropriate with existing local inter-agency vehicles.	inter-agency vehicles. [Action unchanged]	Department of Health
<b>Action 31:</b> 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.	Action 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. [Action unchanged]	Department of Education and Skills (Joint Lead); Health Service Executive (Joint Lead); [Joint lead responsibility has been changed.]  Department of Children and Youth Affairs; Relevant agencies
<b>Action 35:</b> We will continue our review of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme, and issue a report and recommendations in relation to the current scheme.	We will implement the recommendations of the comprehensive review of the SNA scheme	Department of Education and Skills
<b>Action 37:</b> We will develop an implementation plan for National Council on Special Education policy advice on autism.	We will continue to implement the Implementation Plan on policy advice on autism.	Department of Education and Skills.
<b>Action 38:</b> 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	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.	Department of Education and Skills; The Teaching Council

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
<p>with special educational needs.</p> <p>Teachers and schools will 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>Teachers and schools will 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 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>	
<p><b>Action 44:</b> 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</p>	<p>We will support all schools to initiate a dynamic Wellbeing Promotion Process by 2023, encompassing a whole school / centre approach. Schools and centres for education will be supported in this process through the use of the Wellbeing Framework for Practice and Wellbeing Resources, which have been developed by the Department of Education and Skills.</p>	<p>Department of Education and Skills</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
existing mental health difficulties.		
<p><b>Action 46:</b> Ensure that training courses offered to people with disabilities provide real value, are worthwhile, motivate and challenge participants and support each individual – within their specific disability – 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>We will ensure that all training courses offered to people with disabilities offer real value, are worthwhile, motivate and challenge participants and allow for support for each individual – within their specific disability – 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 of students with special education needs.</p> <p>Implement relevant recommendations arising out of the Review of Career Guidance provision as they relate to SEN learners, progression and participation in further education and training and higher education. Establish a Working Group to determine how to implement the recommendations relevant to learners with a disability in</p>	<p>All relevant departments and agencies</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
<p>Increase participation by under-represented groups, including students with physical, sensory and multiple disabilities in further / higher education.</p>	<p>schools (including special schools) arising from the Review on Career Guidance published in 2019.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for work experience across the Senior Cycle in line with the outcomes of the Senior Cycle Review process currently underway by the NCCA.</p> <p>Increase participation by under-represented groups, including students with physical, sensory and multiple disabilities in further / higher education.</p>	
<p><b>Action 47:</b> We will fully implement the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.</p>	<p>We will support persons with disabilities to enter and to remain in employment, in particular by implementing the Second Action Plan of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Equality (lead); Relevant departments and agencies</p>
<p><b>Action 51:</b> We will implement the actions set out in Pathways to Work 2016-2020 including in particular:</p> <p>Promote Employer Support Services and Schemes such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme;</p> <p>Restructure First Steps Programme to improve take-up; and</p>	<p>We will implement the actions set out in Pathways to Work 2016-2020 including in particular:</p> <p>Promote Employer Support Services and Schemes such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme;</p> <p>Implement the Youth Employment Support Service, specifically targeted at young</p>	<p>Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
Offer opportunities to engage with Intreo supports	<p>jobseekers (including persons with a disability)</p> <p>Offer opportunities to engage with Intreo supports</p>	
<b>Action 52:</b> We will implement when agreed by Government the reforms proposed by review of the Partial Capacity Benefit Scheme.	The recommendations of the Partial Capacity Benefit Review will be considered in the context of the early engagement implementation and communications planning process being undertaken in conjunction with stakeholders	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
<b>Action 57:</b> We will continue to coordinate the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework	We will promote initiatives to support healthy living for people with disabilities within the context of the Healthy Ireland Framework, including through the Healthy Ireland Fund supported initiatives at national and local level	Department of Health
<b>Action 60:</b> 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.	We will roll out a Pilot Youth Mental Health Information and Advocacy Service is being rolled out nationally to all CAMHS services in Quarter 1 2020.	<p>Department of Health</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p>
<b>Action 63:</b> 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,	We will continue to develop services. In common with previous years, the Health Service Executive's Service Plan emphasises recovery as central to quality, evidence-based and person-centred services.	Health Service Executive

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
evidence-based and person-centred services.		
<p><b>Action 67:</b> We will continue to support and monitor a new evidence-based framework for person-centred planning across residential and day services.</p> <p><b>Action 68:</b> We will continue to provide guidance on person-centred planning, informed by research projects for Transforming Lives WG2</p>	<p>Combine Actions 67 &amp; 68</p> <p>We will use the information arising from the Person Centred Planning Framework Demonstration Project completed by five provider organisations in 2019 to develop appropriate guidance and supports to prepare for the wider implementation of the Person Centred Planning Framework for all adults with disabilities in receipt of HSE funded services.</p>	<p>Health Service Executive; National Disability Authority; Disability service providers</p>
<p><b>Action 72:</b> We will roll out an implementation programme for the New Directions Personal Support Services for Adults with Disabilities</p>	<p>We will continue to reconfigure day services for adults with disabilities in line with New Directions policy by having continuous quality improvement plans in place in all day service locations.</p>	<p>Health Service Executive; Disability service providers</p>
<p><b>Action 78:</b> We will complete the programme to provide area-based multi-disciplinary therapy teams for early intervention and school-age services in all areas</p>	<p>HSE will align Children's Disability Network Teams to 96 Community Healthcare Networks by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>Health Service Executive; Disability service providers</p>
<p><b>Action 82:</b> 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</p>	<p>We will implement the National Strategy &amp; policy for Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland. As per the Implementation Framework, each HSE CHO will identify a named lead for their area for neurorehab and establish a local implementation team who</p>	<p>Health Service Executive (Implementation of Strategy); Department of Health (Capital Investment)</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
the National Rehabilitation Hospital	will validate the mapping exercises initiated at national level. We will continue to make a major capital investment in the National Rehabilitation hospital.	
<b>Action 83:</b> We will ensure full implementation of a Vision for Change.	We will ensure full implementation of a refreshed Vision for Change.	Health Service Executive; Department of Health
<b>Action 85:</b> 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	We will consider, how best to support people within the system including the provision of an advocacy service, as part of the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. The HSE will develop a Peer Advocacy service for adults and a CAMHS Advocacy model of care.	Health Service Executive; Department of Health
<b>Action 87:</b> 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	Building on the completion of the first cycle of regulation for residential centres for people with a disability and in the context of extension of regulation to other Social Care services, the Department of Health will give consideration to examining the potential scope of a review of the regulations.	Department of Health
<b>Action 90:</b> We will progress proposals of the Reference Group on mental health service users' involvement	The revised mental health policy will be published in quarter 1, 2020. The revised policy is service user centered and makes recommendations about service user involvement in care planning and additional	Health Service Executive; Mental Health Services

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
	key-working to support recovery.	
<p><b>Action 91:</b> The Personalised Budgeting Task Force will report to Government by Q4 2017 and its recommendations will be considered by Government in line with the commitment in the Programme for Partnership Government</p>	<p>The Report of the Personalised Budgeting Taskforce was published in July 2018. HSE will roll out two phases of the Personalised Budgets Project, involving 180 people between the two phases, across the three models set out in the report of the Task Force. The NDA will lead the evaluation of the project.</p>	<p>Health Service Executive</p>
<p><b>Action 93:</b> 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><b>Action 94:</b> 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>Combine Actions 93 &amp; 94</p> <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; HSE; Local authorities; Disability sector</p> <p>[Remove National Disability Authority as a responsible body for this action]</p>
<p><b>Action 96:</b> The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016</p>	<p>Provide housing through all available mechanisms under the National Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Department of Housing, Planning, Community and</p>

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
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.	for People with a Disability 2011- 2016 (affirmed and extended to 2020 under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness). In 2020 consult with all stakeholders and proceed with preparation of a new strategy from 2021.	Local Government; Department of Health; Health Service Executive; Disability Sector
<b>Action 100:</b> We will improve the accessibility and availability of public transport, especially inter-city buses and rural transport and accessibility of bus and train 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.	We will continue to progressively make public transport accessible for people with disabilities including the provision of accessible and integrated services, in both urban and rural areas. We will prioritise the maintenance, management and monitoring of systems and services which make public transport accessible.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; National Transport Authority; Public transport operators
<b>Action 102:</b> We will undertake a market consultation 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	We will continue to engage with public transport vehicle manufacturers to establish the feasibility and availability of certain wheelchair accessibility options suitable for use in Ireland to ensure the roll-out of accessible public transport fleets. We will develop proposals informed by Universal Design principles in relation to attaching conditions	National Transport Authority

Existing Action	Modified Action	Responsible Body
accessibility on commercial licensed services.	regarding wheelchair accessibility on commercial licensed services.	
<b>Action 109:</b> We will ensure further roll-out of accessible inter-city coaches and accessible regional / rural coach and bus stops.	We will continue to progressively make public transport infrastructure accessible, including train stations and bus stops and bus stations in regional and rural areas.	National Transport Authority; Local authorities
<b>Action 110:</b> 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.		Irish Rail; National Transport Authority  [Bus Éireann removed as a responsible body from action]
<b>Action 111:</b> 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.		National Transport Authority; Public transport operators  [CIE and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport removed as responsible bodies from action]

**TABLE 3: COMPLETED ACTIONS**

Actions Removed as Completed	Responsible Body
<b>Action 14:</b> 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	Department of Justice and Equality; An Garda Síochána; Irish Prison Service;

Actions Removed as Completed	Responsible Body
actions to be developed (e.g. statutory guidance for assessment of vulnerable witnesses).	Probation Service.
<b>Action 36:</b> We will continue to require schools to link SNA support to individualised planning for each pupil.	Department of Education and Skills
<b>Action 40:</b> 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
<b>Action 41:</b> 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.	Department of Education and Skills; SOLAS
<b>Action 55:</b> We will develop a Ready Reckoner of net income in employment taking into account the interaction of benefits.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
<b>Action 70:</b> We will roll out the 'Informing Families' guidance.	HSE
<b>Action 84:</b> 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.	The HSE recently published new CAMHS Operational Guidelines, which include Joint Working and Shared Care with other relevant services.
<b>Action 99:</b> 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 and Local Government; National Disability Authority
<b>Action 101:</b> 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

Actions Removed as Completed	Responsible Body

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## Chapter 3. Consultation Process on the National Disability Inclusion Strategy: Main Findings

### 3.1 Introduction

The Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) initiated a consultation process earlier in 2019 to inform the Mid-Term Review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS). On 27 June 2019, DJE commissioned *Connect the Dots*, an external consultancy firm, to design and deliver a facilitated session as part of its National Disability Implementation Steering Group (NDISSG) Meeting. *Connect the Dots* consulted with representatives of DJE, the NDISSG and the National Disability Authority (NDA) to discuss and agree the scope of the session. It was agreed that a brief report summarising the discussion points / recommendations would be submitted by *Connect the Dots*.

Following on from the above, two consultation events were held in November 2019 at which participants were invited to give their views on a number of questions.<sup>1</sup> The first event took place in Croke Park on 13 November 2019 and involved organisations representing persons with disabilities. The second event took place in Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 26 November 2019 when persons with disabilities and their family members were invited to give their views.

In addition to these two events, a survey was conducted online (through the surveymonkey application) in order to reach a broader audience and to capture a greater array of views as well as facilitating engagement with those who had not been in a position to attend either of the aforementioned events.

Overall there was a sense that services are improving slowly. Awareness is getting better across the board and there are more opportunities than there were years ago. The existence of the NDIS was seen as hugely positive and beneficial, although some people were not aware of its existence and felt more needed to be done to raise awareness of it. However, there had been a huge increase in communication and engagement with people with disabilities. There were many more opportunities to contribute than before.

Ratifying the **Optional Protocol to the UNCRPD** was seen as a very important step towards gaining more equity and justice and a space for complaints for people with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Consultation questions:

Q1. What is working best in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy?

Q2. What is not working in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy?

Q3. What are the priorities for the NDIS during 2020 and 2021?

Q4. Are there any actions that are no longer relevant and can be removed?

Q5. What are the top three actions that should be prioritised in order to facilitate compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

Q6. If you had the opportunity to include one additional action for the 2020-2021 strategy what would that be?

Participants stressed the need for a more rights based approach when talking about the disability sector, and moving the conversation away from health and illness. Related to this, participants repeatedly stressed the importance of the autonomy provided by personalised budgets. They also stressed the importance of greater representation on boards and in decision making by people with disabilities.

Other key points made related to the need for increased action around independent living, integration into the community, employment opportunities and education.

One of the key issues was that of implementation. Participants stressed the need for sectoral plans to underpin actions in the NDIS and for resources to underpin the implementation of actions. They also recommended that actions be made more concrete so that they could be monitored more easily and that they would have clearer targets, with indicators tracking progress.

## 3.2 Main findings from the Consultation Process

- There was a general acknowledgment from participants that having a ‘whole-of-government’ strategy in place is a good thing in itself as it allows for persons with disabilities to have their views heard and for them to be consulted by Government Departments on issues relevant to them. Participants recognised that there has been a huge increase in communication and engagement by Government Departments and public agencies.
- The overall structures and the feedback and consultation mechanisms in place were generally accepted as positive. The eight themes addressed in the NDIS were considered as amounting to a coherent overview of the actions necessary to improve the lives of those living with a disability.
- Overall there was a sense from participants that services are improving slowly.
- It was also noted that **Civil Service awareness** of disability issues has improved.
- Participants welcomed the enactment of the **Irish Sign Language Act** which brings recognition to sign language as a native language. They considered that this will ultimately place responsibility on public services to provide sign language options for people who need it.
- It was acknowledged that employment and career opportunities in the deaf community have improved but not all deaf people were benefitting from such opportunities.
- Strategic Objective 3 of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities **‘Make Work Pay’** was considered to be particularly important.
- The need for more of a focus on **transitions** for people with disabilities along with joined up, person-centred service provision and implementation of the NDIS and UNCRPD was noted.

- However, participants also suggested that further action needed to be taken **to build awareness of the Strategy generally across society**. Societal attitudes/mind-sets towards disability/equality require further questioning and exposure and the visibility/lived experience of people with disabilities in the media needs to be heightened.
- The development of **Advocacy Support** is considered slow at a national level.
- **Mental health reform**. It was stated that the HSE Mental Health Engagement Office is working well. However, some participants suggested that mental health reform was slow to progress, particularly reform of the Mental Health Act 2001 and stigma continues to exist around mental health issues.
- **Personal Assistants** - the need for more personal assistants was raised repeatedly as the means of enabling people to get into employment and to live independently.
- **Personalised budgets** – This point was emphasised in the context of affording greater autonomy to individuals with a disability to live the life of their choosing.
- Participants indicated that the Government must tackle **discrimination in employment** for all forms of disabilities. More awareness is needed around accommodations to be made for mental health issues for both employers and employees
- **Transport**: Limited accessibility to public transport was raised. It was stated that more consultation needs to be held to get the perspective of people with disabilities on how they find public transport currently. Issues were raised regarding bus ramps not being available or the driver not being helpful and independent travel not being possible in all circumstances. It was stated that if there is no accessible public transport then the Government should provide transport to substitute for it. A need for increased frequency of services in rural areas was also highlighted. The need to ring ahead to be able to get a train or bus was not found to be very reliable according to those consulted.
- **Education**: SNA supports have improved but every school has different policies and there is no clarity on meeting physical needs.
- **Housing**: Slow progress was being made, as over 1000 individuals could live independently. Rebuilding Ireland, the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness only has one paragraph related to disabled persons.
- **Representation on Boards and in other decision-making fora** was also raised as key to improving the situation for persons with disabilities.
- **Disability Consultative Committees** – The question was raised as to their suitability. The argument was put forward that there is no transparency on who sits on these committees and no guidance on such. It was suggested that each Department should have people with disabilities on the committees.
- **Lack of ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention**– This means there is no access to a complaint mechanism once all domestic avenues have been pursued. Ratification was framed as a very important step towards gaining more

equity and justice. It is also consistent with a more rights-based approach when talking about the disability sector, moving the conversation away from the medical model.

### **Implementation issues**

- Participants emphasised the need to enhance implementation structures, person-centred service delivery and transition to employment. Attendees shared personal experiences of the problems encountered by themselves or by family members with access, isolation, increased cost, lack of knowledge and understanding particularly in relation to education, transport, housing, health and employment. On the whole, implementation was seen as crucial as it was not seen to be happening sufficiently at local level. Tackling this issue would include putting in the provisions and funding required as well as introducing a transparent approach for the future so that people could see what was being done. Participations requested more targeted information to enable those entitled to receive benefits to access them more easily.
- While attendees identified some actions that could be modified, participants requested further information and clarity on the quality, impact and implementation of actions. For instance, in relation to the 'traffic light' system in place for monitoring actions, what does "on track" mean? Further assignment of responsibility and integration with other strategies was deemed necessary.
- It was suggested that the **"traffic [light] plans need an action plan behind it."** The need to bolster the implementation architecture was further articulated as was the need for "sectoral plans," "joined up working," "specific coordinators to promote to agencies to build in work plans to report" and actions "linked to funding otherwise they may not be achievable." Best practice in other countries needs to be considered.
- Participants suggested that language be shifted from 'review/assess' to 'implementation' for certain actions. There are issues with incomplete actions and legislation delays. There is dissatisfaction with the traffic lights system and both qualitative & quantitative data is needed to measure actions accurately.

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## Appendix A: Proposed Consultation and Participation Model

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) imposes obligations in terms of consultation and participation of people with disabilities. Articles 4 and 5 require States Parties to ‘closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities’ in the development and implementation of legislation and policies concerning persons with disabilities.

The Department of Justice and Equality is developing a consultation and participation model within the context of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy in line with the obligations that arise under CRPD.

The purpose of the model will be to:

- establish mechanisms that can be used by Government departments and public agencies when consulting people with disabilities;
- undertake capacity building of disability representatives so that they can represent the voice of people with disabilities in diverse policymaking fora;
- provide support for people with disabilities participating in policy consultation or development processes;
- establish systems for feedback to people with disabilities on issues raised by the disability representatives in policy fora.

### What is needed?

People with disabilities need a mechanism to raise issues with public bodies and to have their perspectives taken into account in public consultations and policy processes. Such mechanisms can include Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs), representative bodies, umbrella organisations, and the perspectives of individuals.

The diversity of disability needs and situations need to be represented, often in complex policy processes involving difficult technical constraints.

Government departments and agencies need a mechanism by which they can seek engagement by disability representatives who have a mandate to represent particular interests and who have a network to feed policy proposals back to the groups that are likely to be affected by them.

## What is proposed?

It is proposed that a consultation and participation model will be developed that over time will support the emergence and ongoing operation of Disabled Persons Organisations in line with the Convention. In working towards this goal it will be important to take account of:

- the diversity of disability situations, recognising that needs differ depending on the type of disability or the intersection of disabilities experienced by the individual;
- geographic location, recognising that the person living in a rural area may have different needs, because of that location, than someone living in a major urban centre.

It is proposed that calls would be published seeking expressions of interest from groups representing people with disabilities to provide capacity building and support to specific categories of people with disabilities.

These categories could be defined either by type of disability (e.g. seeking support and capacity building of people with intellectual disabilities) or influenced by whether participation is intended to be at local level vs national level, with due regard to the different requirements in rural and urban locations.

Calls for expressions of interest would seek groups:

- To provide capacity building on an ongoing basis to those prepared to participate in policy consultation or policy development processes;
- To provide support for disability representatives serving on policy committees or policy development processes;
- To organise feedback to wider disability organisations and groups;
- To organise consultation processes for persons with disabilities so that their voices might be brought by their representatives into the policy development processes;
- To participate in a network of disabled people's organisations to exchange information on policy processes and on policy priorities;
- To provide information to Government departments and public agencies on disability representatives able to engage in specific policy development / consultation processes.

A call for an expression of interest would also issue for an organisation that would undertake coordination between the organisations and groups involved in supporting specific categories of representative and would organise the network of disabled people's organisations. That organisation would have responsibility for coordinating the shadow

report to CRPD and for agreeing common elements needed in the capacity building training provided to representatives.

In parallel, the National Disability Authority would be asked to provide guidance for and capacity building of Government departments and public bodies on engaging people with disabilities in policy development and consultation processes. It would also develop good practice tips for people with disabilities when engaging in policy development/consultation processes.