TRANSPORT ACCESS FOR ALL

(2012 Edition)

The Sectoral Plan for Accessible Transport under the Disability Act 2005

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

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Foreword by the Minister of State for Public & Commuter Transport

Welcome to the 2012 edition of *Transport Access for All*, my Department's Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005 which is the outcome of an extensive review process.

The provision of accessible, affordable and acceptable transport can make a very big difference to the quality of life for people. People can feel cut off from wider community life, and can have serious difficulty accessing basic services, due to a lack of access to transport. This is particularly true for older people and for people with disabilities, although of course it applies to many others as well. One of the core principles of the Sectoral Plan is that through accessibility improvements to the public transport system for people with disabilities, access for all people will be improved.

I am pleased, therefore, to note that since the last review in 2008, there continues to be steady progress towards the objective of increased public transport accessibility. There have been significant increases in the numbers of accessible vehicles together with improved access to much of the public transport infrastructure. Changes have occurred in the way transport services are delivered as well as in the research and consultation necessary to provide the groundwork for further accessibility measures to be planned and progressed in the coming years. Many targets have already been achieved and significant progress has been made towards the realisation of several others. Even so, much remains to be done.

For many people with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, a lack of accessible transport remains a major barrier to independent living. In that regard I am pleased to note that this edition of *Transport Access for All* is mindful of the on-going work to progress the better integration of local and rural transport services together with recommendations of the 2011 Taxi Regulation Review.

We are living in very tough economic times and progress towards our goal of improved accessibility may not be possible as quickly or as comprehensively as we would like. However, there are steps that we can take, even in these difficult times, that will make a real difference to people's lives. In the development of this Plan, careful note has been taken of feedback from people with disabilities which was a key part of the review process.

I am grateful to the members of the Public Transport Accessibility Committee who are working closely with my Department in guiding actions towards further accessibility improvements. My Department and I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee and indeed all stakeholders to achieve further progress in the years ahead.

Alan Kelly T.D.
Minister of State for Public & Commuter Transport
October 2012

Executive Summary

Transport Access for All, the Transport Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005, was first published in July 2006 and contained a commitment that it would be reviewed on a regular basis.

The reviews are intended to assess progress made and to take account of technical advances and other developments that might impact on the delivery of accessible public transport in Ireland. The first review was undertaken in 2008 in line with that commitment.

The second review, commenced in 2011, has followed the same process of an extensive consultation involving a wide range of stakeholders including the public, representative disability organisations and transport providers.

This updated Sectoral Plan reflects the significant changes that have taken place in accessible transport provision over the past three years, in terms of tangible improvements to public transport accessibility. It also identifies areas in which further work is needed.

Policy Context and Progress

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's high level policy goal for accessible public transport is embodied in the concept 'Transport Access for All'. This policy is based on the requirements of the Disability Act 2005 and related public policy and strategies. The Department will continue to promote the development and introduction of accessible public transport services for the greatest number of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in the shortest possible time.

However, the current very difficult economic circumstances will have an impact on investment in accessibility as in all other sectors of the economy. While the commitment to achieving the goal of comprehensive accessible public transport services remains, restrictions on investment will mean that some accessibility improvements will, of necessity, take longer to deliver.

Since the last review in 2008, there has been significant progress towards an accessible public transport system in Ireland. For instance, in 2008 74% of the Bus Átha Cliath fleet was low floor and accessible. That figure has now risen to 91%. Bus Éireann had already reached its target of 100% low-floor wheelchair accessible buses for its city fleets in Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford by 2008. They have continued to invest in accessible coaches and wheelchair accessible services are now operating on four routes. Improvements to the accessibility of stops and bus stations are being rolled out in parallel.

Iarnród Éireann's intercity fleet operating from Dublin and serving stations on lines to Sligo, Westport, Galway, Limerick, Tralee, Wexford and Cork is now fully accessible. By the end of April 2012, 76 out of the 143 stations on the network had received significant accessibility upgrades, including most of the busiest stations.

The National Transport Authority (NTA), a statutory body established by the Minister of Transport in December 2009, has introduced a number of improvements to the licensing and accessibility of taxis and hackneys. These include an on-line register which allows passengers to confirm the status of any taxi, hackney or limousine in Ireland and a consumer guide, available in a range of formats explaining rights and responsibilities as well as fare information. The NTA's Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Aid Scheme aims to encourage the upgrading of existing wheelchair accessible vehicles and assist in the introduction of new accessible licences.

The National Transport Authority has also put in place a mandatory skills development programme for all new entrants to the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) industry. This includes a core element of disability awareness training.

Following a review of the Disabled Parking Scheme, new Regulations came into effect on 1st June 2011 which will help to ensure both that permits are issued to those most in need and that spaces are available for more people.

Smartcard based integrated tickets are now being rolled out together with real time passenger information systems, with accessibility features that should greatly enhance public transport travel experiences for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

Detailed reports on progress against the Plan's targets were prepared periodically for consideration by the former National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group. The Department is now participating in the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group established towards the end of 2011 and chaired by Minister of State Kathleen Lynch T.D. Stakeholders are also represented on this group.

The Review Process

The review of the 2008 Sectoral Plan comprised consultation with transport providers and with key stakeholders in the disability sector directly and through the Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC). In addition, a survey of people with disabilities was carried out to obtain their views on the present degree of accessibility of public transport and to assess the impact of the implementation of the Sectoral Plan on their quality of life. The results help to identify both the improvements that have been made and the problems that remain and provide a benchmark for future measuring of the performance and impacts of the Plan.

Scope of the Sectoral Plan

This Plan sets out a series of time bound and measurable targets and a number of policy objectives for making all modes of public transport more accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. The Plan promotes the principle of mainstreaming by requiring accessibility to be an integral element of the public transport services.

The Department will continue to reflect the requirements of the Disability Act in its strategy statements and business plans. Objectives will be defined in such a way as to allow subsequent assessment of whether or not they are achieved.

Strengthening the Implementation of the Sectoral Plan

Monitoring and review of progress is key to the successful implementation of the Plan and will involve the co-operation and participation of all the stakeholders. To facilitate this, a number of targets together with timelines for delivery and an indication of which organisation(s) is to progress associated action(s), are set out in Section 7.

Co-operation on Cross-Cutting Issues

This 2012 edition of the Plan reflects the significant structural and organisational changes that have taken place in Government in recent times and focuses on the importance of joint working between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and other Departments and Agencies in delivering the common goal of accessible public transport as well an accessible built environment, including transport infrastructure, roads and the pedestrian environment.

Policy Options

Careful note has been taken of the comments received in response to the consultation on the Sectoral Plan both from people with disabilities and from local authorities, transport providers, disability organisations and other stakeholders. Although economic constraints are a major factor, there are still areas in which progress can be made to tackle some of the outstanding problems.

A number of options are proposed for policy measures that could be introduced both in the short and slightly longer term. These include a review of the content and quality of training given to front line transport staff both in general disability awareness and in specific areas such as securing wheelchairs in vehicles.

A number of measures to increase monitoring and enforcement of existing accessibility provisions are also proposed as well as possible initiatives to improve the availability and accessibility of travel information available to people with disabilities.

The Department will also work with local authorities, agencies such as the National Transport Authority, National Roads Authority, Roads Safety Authority together with PTAC and an Garda Síochána on encouraging greater consistency of approach among local authorities to the delivery of access improvements.

Options for the role of door to door transport as a complement to accessible mainstream transport and the use of existing powers to promote greater take up of accessibility improvements by transport providers are also being explored.

Introduction

Purpose of Sectoral Plan Reviews

Transport Access for All contained a commitment to Review the Plan on a regular basis. This is the second Review since the Plan was first published in 2006. The purpose of these reviews is to look at progress to date, assess changes and developments in accessible transport, technology, economic and financial circumstances and to revise the Plan as necessary to ensure continued progress towards the goal of accessible transport for all.

The 2011 Review

The key purpose of the 2011 Review has been to:

- Reassess the 2008 edition;
- Evaluate progress to date;
- Revisit the targets and actions in the Plan with a view (having regard to tasks already completed) to setting up-to-date targets and timelines; and
- Consider what new elements might be incorporated.

The Department works closely with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee[1] (PTAC) to improve the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities. The Department discussed the preliminary findings of the public consultation and the first draft of this Report with the Committee. The process was facilitated by an external expert in public transport accessibility to ensure a sufficiently objective and comprehensive review.

The common themes and issues emerging from the public consultation process, both from individuals with a disability and from local authorities, transport providers,

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[1] The remit of PTAC includes a monitoring role in relation to progress made by the various transport agencies in implementing the Plan and in evaluating the impact of the Plan on people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. A list of the representative organisations on PTAC is contained at **Appendix 2**.

disability organisations and other key stakeholders, have been incorporated into the updated Plan.

The updated Sectoral Plan and the targets set in the document must be considered in the light of the current economic environment. The funds available for investment in public transport infrastructure and services will be constrained over the next few years and the targets need to be considered in that context.

However, it is important to note that accessibility can bring economic as well as social benefits. This applies, of course, to people with disabilities and their families who are able to travel and be more independent. There is also very significant revenue earning potential from inward tourism and increasingly those countries from which large numbers of tourists visit Ireland (such as the USA) require accessible transport and other accessible tourism facilities. The demographic trends worldwide also point to a growing need for tourist facilities to be accessible. Public transport has a significant role to play here.

A study from the German Federal Ministry of Economics & Technology in 2008[2] looked at the travel behaviour of German disabled tourists and established that the current net turnover generated at that time was 2.5 billion Euros and that some 65,000 jobs were sustained by it. The study estimated a potential additional economic impact from the buying power of this market sector of up to 4.8 billion Euros and a further 90,000 jobs.

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[2] Analysis of Success Factors & Action to Improve Quality in Accessible Tourism for All in Germany, Study Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economics & Technology, 2008

Section 1: Policy Context and Scope of *Transport Access for All*

High Level Policy Objective and Strategy

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport reaffirms its commitment to the objective of fully accessible public transport in its Statement of Strategy 2011 – 2014.

This objective involves the development of accessible public transport services to the highest possible standards for the greatest number of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in the shortest possible time, taking account of resource, technical and other constraints. The obligations arising from this objective apply to all operators of public transport services, both public and private.

As the Department has also assumed responsibility for roads policy, this transport objective now extends to ensuring that the roads and pedestrian environment are barrier free and that people with disabilities can access local services and facilities as well as reaching public transport stops and stations.

The approach reflects the requirements of the Disability Act 2005 and is determined by public policy on the mobility needs of people with disabilities in line with the National Disability Strategy.

Accordingly, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will:
- Be proactive in identifying and removing barriers that prevent people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and older people accessing the public transport system and in ensuring that no future barriers are created;
- Work in partnership with public, private and community-based transport providers to improve the accessibility of public transport services;

- Work in partnership with local authorities and transport operators to ensure that roads and footpaths are barrier free and that the environment around public transport stops, stations and interchanges is accessible;
- Implement and promote established best practice when developing policies and implementing plans;
- Continue to consult with the representatives of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and older people;
- Pursue Value for Money, through targeting available resources at initiatives that are affordable and sustainable and that maximise benefits to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and others whose quality of life can be enhanced by accessible public transport.

The "Transport for All" Concept

The benefits of improved transport accessibility extend to all transport users, even to the most able-bodied, and issues relating to transport accessibility go far beyond the needs of people with disabilities. They impact on the transport needs of the entire population because most people, at some point in their lives, are likely to acquire a physical or other impairment or be impeded in some manner, that will make travelling difficult, if not impossible on conventional transport vehicles. This is particularly the case as people get older.

The concept of 'Transport for All' will remain the cornerstone of the Transport Sectoral Plan. Within this concept the target beneficiary group of an accessible public transport system consists of:

People with physical, sensory, learning or cognitive difficulties (whether permanent or temporary) and others whose access to traditionally constructed transport vehicles, services and infrastructures is limited, to a greater or lesser extent, on account of age, because of accompanying children or because they are carrying luggage or shopping or are otherwise impaired in their use of the transport system.

This definition has been developed in consultation with the members of the Public Transport Accessibility Committee and accords with the 'Transport for All' concept that is now generally used within the EU and the International Transport Forum (formerly the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)) as the public policy objective when addressing transport accessibility issues.

The concept of 'Transport for All' broadens the focus from "special" provision for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments to all transport users, recognising that improvements to make transport more accessible to people with disabilities will also make it easier for the population as a whole, in particular the growing number of older people in the population.

The 'Transport for All' concept, therefore, embraces the objectives of the Programme for Government *"Government for National Recovery 2011-2016".*

> "We will ensure that the quality of life of people with disabilities is enhanced and that resources allocated reach the people who need them".

Mainstreaming of Accessible Transport

Accessibility must be an integral part of all policy-making and transport planning and of the provision of transport services so that wherever possible the needs of people with disabilities are met within mainstream services and facilities in so far as financial resources allow.

However, it is also vital to ensure that those people who, because of the severity or nature of their disabilities, will not be able to travel on public transport services (or may not be able to do so at all times) are provided for. For this reason, and although outside the scope of this Plan, door to door services provided by specialised accessible transport operators will continue to play an important role in the delivery of accessible services.

The results of the consultation process for the 2011 Review have emphasised the need for greater availability of accessible vehicles and infrastructure, particularly in

rural areas and for more effective monitoring of the delivery of improvements already in place.

The concept of mainstreaming of accessibility extends not just to transport vehicles and infrastructure. It also includes 'softer' transport delivery elements such as staff training in understanding and meeting passenger needs and information provision (both before and during journeys) in forms and formats that can be clearly understood.

Features of accessible mainstreamed public transport will include the following: -

- Full unassisted access for wheelchair users (and for people with prams and buggies) including, where appropriate, accessible toilets and lifts.
- Features to aid people with difficulties in walking, gripping, reaching or balancing, including slip resistant surfaces, handrails and handholds.
- Facilities to aid people with vision impairments, deafness or hearing loss, and other impairments. These include the consistent use of colour contrasts, clear signing and lighting, non-reflective surfaces, audio and visual announcements, tactile and audible guidance surfaces, warning systems and induction loops.
- Facilities to aid people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. These include clear oral and written information and consistent staff training in recognising and understanding the needs of people.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will continue to work closely with the National Disability Authority to ensure that the principles of excellence in universal design are integral to policy and plans for making the public transport system as accessible as possible for people with disabilities.

Scope of the Transport Sectoral Plan

The scope of this Sectoral Plan covers the following transport services and related issues:

- Rail services provided by Iarnród Éireann,

- Public Service Obligation and licensed public transport bus services provided by Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus and private bus operators,
- Light rail services,
- Taxi and Hackney services,
- Rural Transport Services and Integrated Local Transport Services provided under or in conjunction with the Rural Transport Programme,
- Air transport services,
- Maritime passenger transport services,
- Driver Training.
- Roads including parking facilities and the pedestrian environment.
- Accessible standards for large and small public service vehicles.

The Plan provides for on-going coordination in the implementation of the transport Sectoral Plan of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) and the Sectoral Plan of the Department of the Environment Community and Local Government (DECLG).

Accessibility issues relating to the tourism and sports remits of the Department are not required to be addressed in this Transport Sectoral Plan. They will, however be addressed by the Department in the context of the forthcoming National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability was formally adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006. Ireland was in the first group of countries to sign, subject to ratification of the UN Convention when it became open for signature on 31 March 2007.

A high-level cross Departmental working group was established in 2007 under the auspices of the then Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to advise on any changes to the Government's National Disability Strategy that might be required to enable the State to ratify the Convention. The Department of Transport, Tourism

and Sport participated in the work of the group as Articles 9 and 20 of the Convention relate, among other things, to requirements for accessible public transport – the relevant text is reproduced in Appendix 3. The consequential implementation responsibilities falling onto the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport are being advanced in the context of *Transport Access for All*. However, some responsibilities under Articles 9 and 20 of the Convention require measures that extend beyond the scope of this Sectoral Plan.

The transport provisions of Article 9 have been progressed in the context of the Public Transport Regulation Act of 2009. The 2009 Act came into force since the last Sectoral Plan review. It provides a new statutory basis for the licensing of public bus passenger services. The 2009 Act allows the National Transport Authority to attach minimum accessibility standards as a condition for the granting, amending or renewing of licences for public bus passenger services. This is a significant improvement on the previous legislation which dated from 1932.

Article 20 of the UN Convention deals with personal mobility, a concept that extends well beyond the reach of public transport. However, possibilities for integration with school transport, transport for health care and door to door transport are being explored as part of on-going work on improving the integration of local and rural transport services.

Section 2: The Review Process

Overview of the Review Process

The 2011 Review has taken account of changes to the economic context, developments in technology and changes to transport policy. It has also placed an emphasis on better measurement of the agreed targets and actions within the Plan as well as on how *Transport Access for All* can make a difference to people's lives and experience of public transport.

Public Consultation

The key questions for the consultation on the Sectoral Plan were:

- Is *Transport Access for All* making a difference to people's lives and how do we know?
- How can the measurement of progress under the Plan be improved?
- Are there gaps in the Plan? If so, how might these be addressed?
- Does the Plan cover the full range of disabilities in so far as it would be possible for public transport to address the needs arising?
- Are the compliance and redress procedures in the Plan robust enough?

In order to reach out to as many people as possible, a public consultation process was announced through an advertisement in the national newspapers and on the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport website. A guidance note for the public consultation was prepared to explain the focus of the review process and to assist people in making replies.

The consultation opened on 15th August 2011 and closed on 23rd September 2011.

A total of 32 responses were received from national agencies, local authorities, transport providers, disability organisations, etc. (list of respondents at **Appendix 1**).

The common themes and comments from these responses helped to focus the review of the plan.

The information on progress towards accessibility which is contained in this report was correct as at October 2011.

Survey of People with Disabilities

In order to assess the impact of *Transport Access for All* on the everyday lives of people with disabilities and their experiences of public transport, a survey questionnaire was drawn up. The aim was to establish whether the plans for making public transport accessible are working and if not, to identify where the gaps and problems lie.

The survey form was available from the Department's website and submissions could be made in hard copy or electronic format. It comprised a range of questions relating to satisfaction levels, obstacles and potential for improvement of the different transport modes including bus, train, taxi, air and sea transport as well as the pedestrian environment and parking. While many of the questions provided a multiple choice for responses, other questions allowed respondents to comment in greater detail concerning their own experiences and opinions of public transport. The questionnaire survey ran in tandem with the public consultation and 128 responses were received.

This is a much lower response rate than for a similar survey conducted as part of the 2008 review when 567 people responded. Nonetheless the responses are extremely valuable in giving a perspective on the current state of accessibility across the country and on the day to day experiences of people with a wide range of disabilities and living in both urban and rural areas.

The responses to the user survey identified some remaining problems in every area and clear evidence of people still unable to travel because of lack of appropriate or available facilities in their area. However, it is important to note that levels of satisfaction from those who do use public transport are generally positive and that

where problems are identified they often relate to issues such as information and training rather than to problems with accessible vehicles or infrastructure. Having said that there is clearly frustration with the slow pace with which accessible vehicles are reaching rural communities and with the apparent disconnect between accessible transport and removing barriers to mobility in the pedestrian environment.

Profile of respondents with disabilities

The charts below indicate the age and disability profile of respondents and their locations, by type of area and county.

Chart 1

Age Profile of Respondents

- Under 25
- 25 - 39
- 40 - 64
- 65 and over
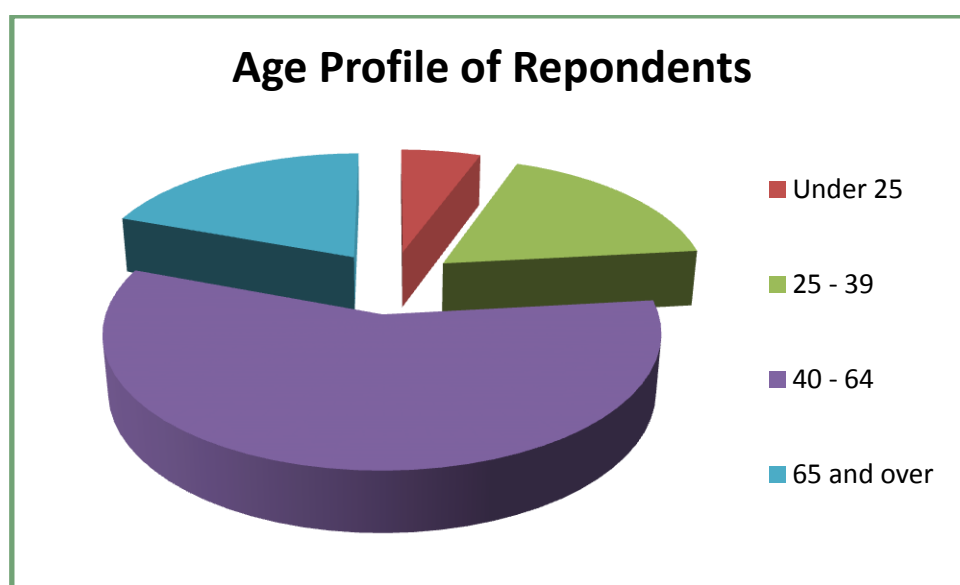
The age profile of respondents shown above is broadly in line with the data obtained from the previous survey.

The data on the type of area from which respondents come shows a majority of respondents live in urban areas.

Type of area	percentage
City	16.5
Town	47.2
Village	11.8
Rural area	24.4

The breakdown of responses by county of residence is shown below.

Chart 2
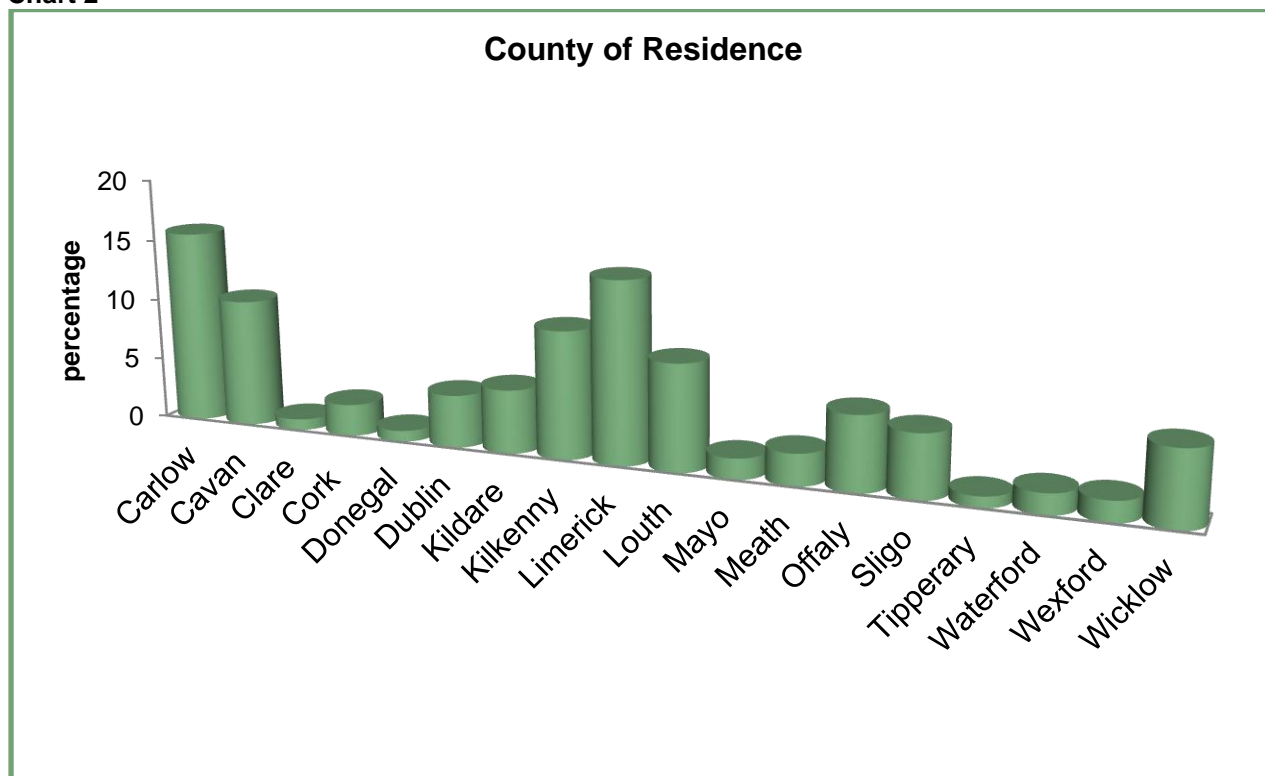
The Survey also asked respondents to identify the nature of their disability. The Chart below sets out the results.

Chart 3
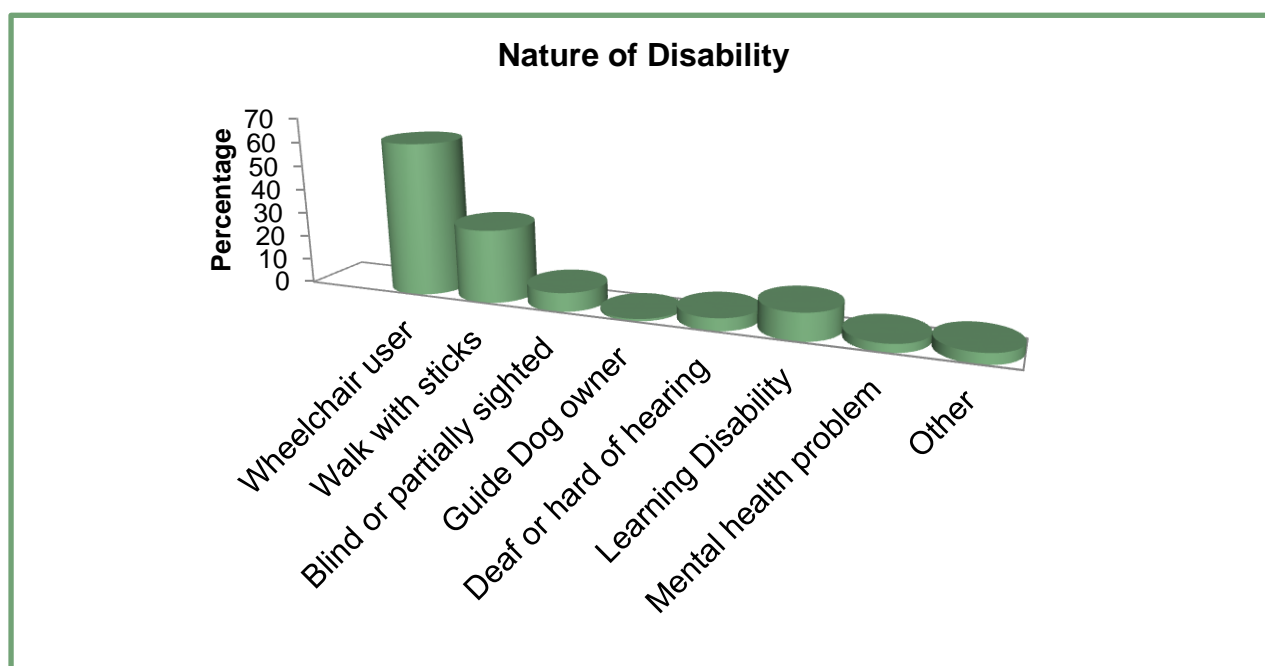
Under the "other" category, respondents noted:

- Brain injury
- Back pain
- Difficulty with speech and memory
- Epilepsy
- Poor balance
- Amputation
- Oxygen dependence.

It should be noted that many people have more than one condition that may affect their ability to use public transport or move about independently.

The Survey also asked respondents how often they currently use different modes of public transport. The results are set out in the Chart below.

Chart 4

Use of Public Transport & Pedestrian Environment
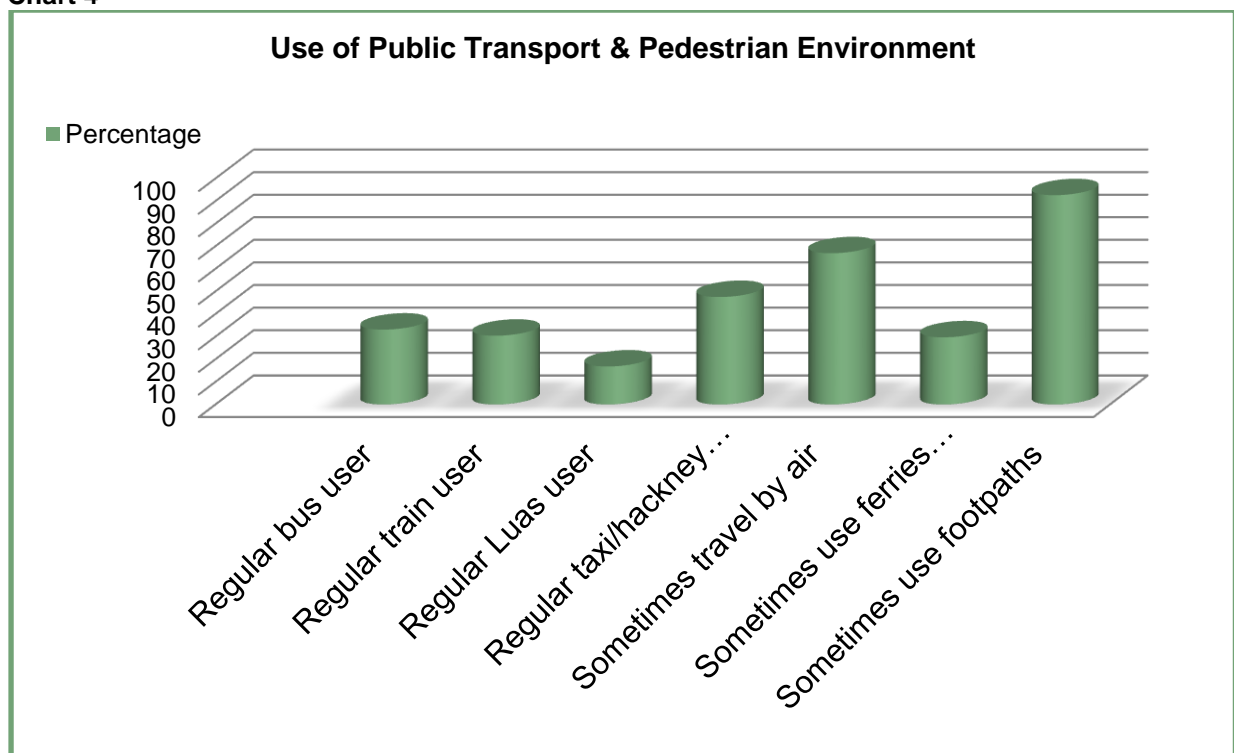
Finally, the Survey asked people with disabilities what source of travel information they were most likely to use. The results are shown below.

Chart 5

Sources of Travel Information

Travel Directory 3%

Other 1%

Text 4%

Telephone 25%

Internet 26%

Radio 10%

TV 13%

Teletext 6%

Newspapers 12%

- Internet
- Radio
- TV
- Newspapers
- Teletext
- Telephone
- Text
- Travel Directory
- Other
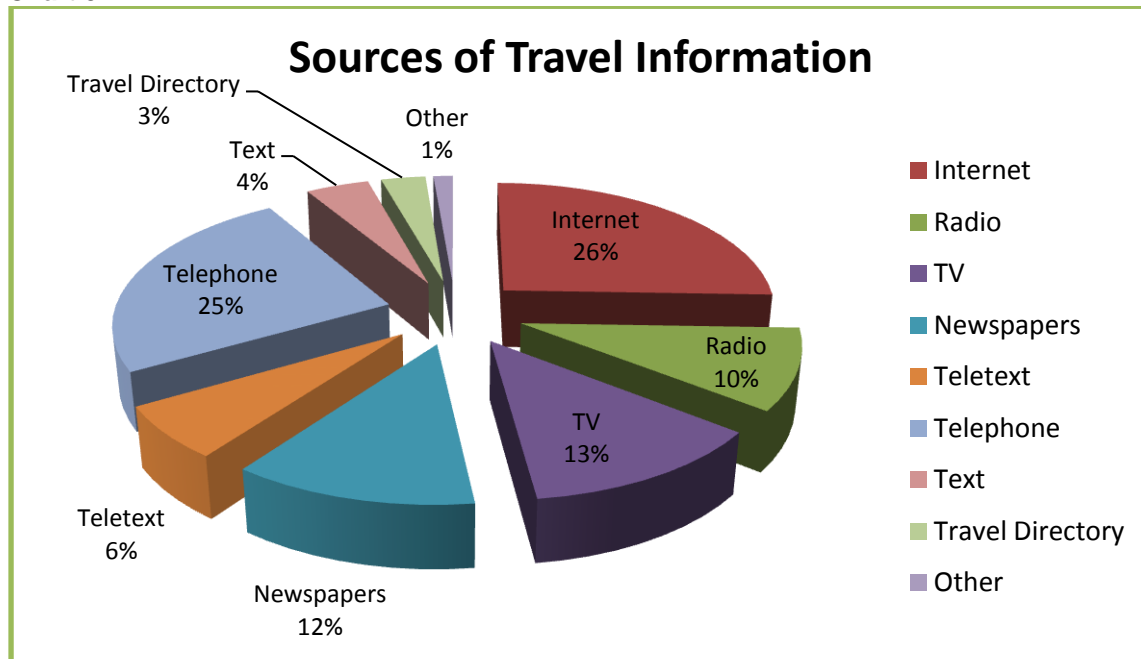
Details of specific transport mode responses are at the beginning of each transport sector area in Section 3 of this document.

Section 3: Accessibility Measures in the Transport Sectors

Since the last review of the Sectoral Plan in 2008, progress has been monitored regularly and periodic reports have been made to the Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC) and the former National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group.

Significant progress has continued to be made by the public transport agencies and companies in introducing accessible public transport vehicles and infrastructure.

3.1 Bus and Coach Services

User Feedback

The survey of people with disabilities asked whether respondents had difficulty with any aspect of travelling by bus or coach. The results are set out in the Chart below.

Chart 6
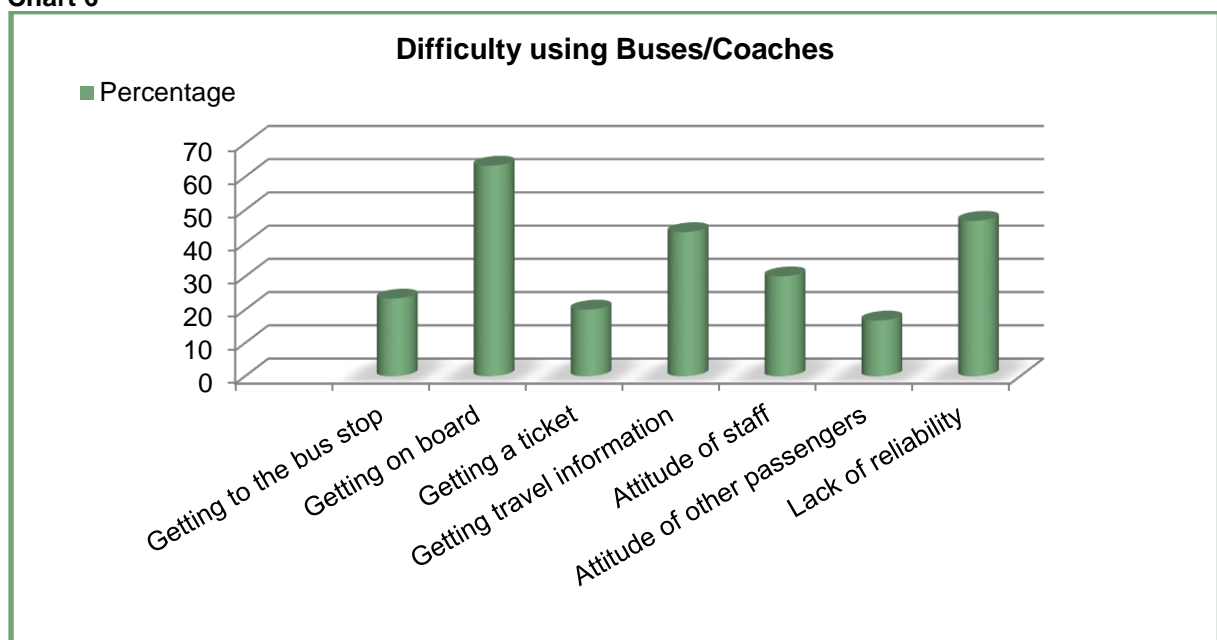
The responses to this question show some positive developments since the previous survey, in particular the lower number of people citing lack of reliability as the biggest difficulty suggests that there are more accessible vehicles available to give people

greater confidence that both the outward and return legs of a journey will be manageable.

There were also a number of very positive comments from people with disabilities about the accessibility of services and the helpfulness of drivers. However, it is clear from the results that there is further to go.

The biggest single problem reported is getting on board the vehicle. In some cases this is because accessible vehicles are not yet universally available. In others it is reported to be lack of assistance from drivers.

> "The coaches from my town have a very high step to get off the ground and also steep steps inside the coach". The handrail is usually not very user friendly."

Some people identified lack of facilities at bus stops as a reason why they were unable to travel by bus or coach.

> "I have difficulty standing for long periods and I frequently have to wait for up to 45 minutes for my bus".

Overall, however, as the Chart below indicates, the experience of travelling by bus and coach was quite positive for the majority of respondents.

Chart 7
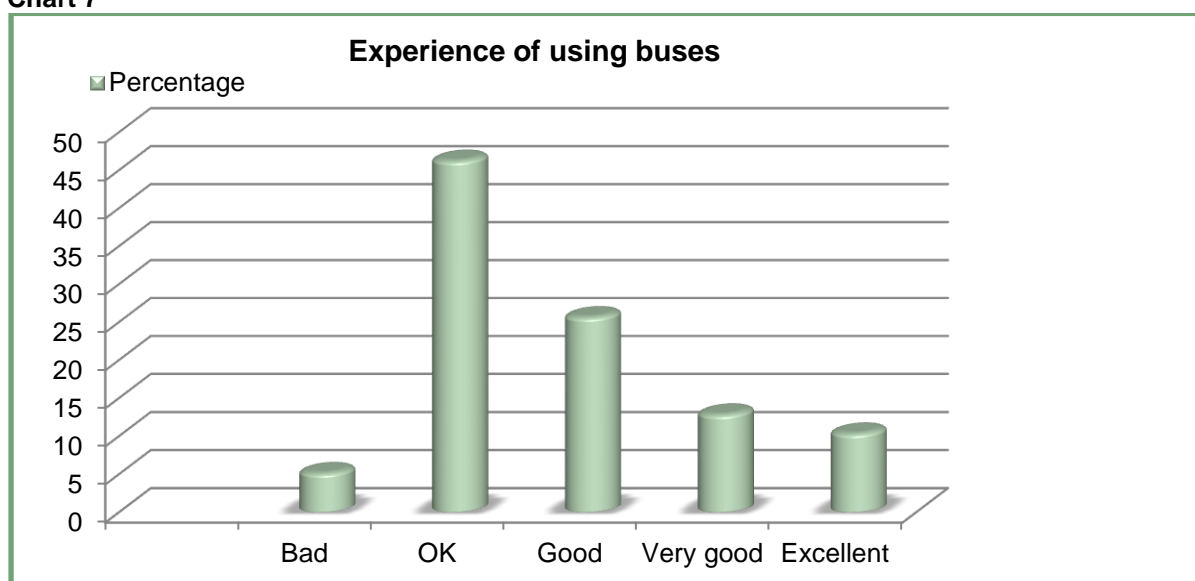
Experience of using buses

Scheduled urban bus services in Ireland, in the main, are currently provided by Bus Átha Cliath (BAC)/Dublin Bus in Dublin and by Bus Éireann (BE) in the provincial cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford as well as in other urban areas. A number of private licensed operators also provide urban bus services.

All 199 vehicles in Bus Éireann's urban fleet in Galway, Limerick and Waterford are low-floor wheelchair accessible. All their remaining urban bus services will be equipped with low-floor wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Currently the Dublin Bus fleet is made up of 980 buses of which 892 are accessible making the fleet 91% accessible. This has risen from 70% of the fleet being accessible in 2008.

Since the 2008 Review Dublin Bus has made many efforts to ensure its services are available to all customers.

Dublin Bus vehicles have a dedicated space for one wheelchair user. This space can also be used to accommodate a buggy occupied by a child if it is not required by a wheelchair user. However, wheelchair users have priority over other passengers for use of the wheelchair space, since this is the only place in which they can travel safely. If a wheelchair user wishes to board when there is a buggy occupied by a child in the wheelchair space, the driver will ask the passenger to fold the buggy and either put it in the luggage space or keep it by their side safely.

Both the ticket office and lost property offices have been made accessible by putting in ramps, wheelchair height counters and improved signage for all customers.

The Dublin Bus Travel Assistance scheme is progressing with an increase in the number of assists from 276 in 2008 to 726 in 2011. The Scheme provides an assistant to accompany a disabled person the first few times they travel and offers advice on planning a journey using Dublin bus, the DART or the Luas.

The Travel Assistance Scheme is free and is for people aged 18 or over. It is available Monday to Friday between 08:00hrs and 18:00hrs.

Dublin Bus produced a guide to accessibility in 2009. To find this information go to their website www.dublinbus.ie , at the end of the home page click on the word "accessibility".

They have also produced an internal book on accessibility and disability awareness for staff.

Bus stops

Dublin Bus report that 51% of the 4,776 bus stops in the Greater Dublin Area have been upgraded to improve accessibility and that work is on-going. Bus stops are also being upgraded on routes that form part of the Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) Programme.

Dublin Bus has also implemented a new bus-pole identification initiative to help visually impaired people. The idea for new bus pole IDs came from a meeting with blind and partially-sighted people which identified the difficulty they had in distinguishing between a bus pole and other pole signs, such as a stop sign. It was decided to identify the bus pole by putting the bus stop number in large text and in Braille onto the pole itself. This initiative was designed to coincide with the introduction of "Real Time Passenger Information" (RTPI), it is envisaged that passengers will be able to get RTPI on their mobile phones, and by entering the bus stop number they will be able to find out what buses pass that stop or when the next bus will arrive. The bus pole ID will, therefore, have a dual function. Firstly it will identify the bus pole for blind people; and secondly it will be used to get RTPI on a mobile phone, creating a win-win for all bus users. To get real time information about services at a particular stop, passengers can text the bus stop number to 53035. In addition, Dublin Bus has updated bus information at shelters and route numbers are now in large font.

Bus Éireann continues to work with local authorities on the authorities' upgrading of bus stops in provincial cities in conjunction with the construction of Quality Bus Corridors/Green Routes. The Company also works with the National Transport

Authority (NTA) and local authorities on new or upgraded wheelchair accessible stops outside the Greater Dublin Area generally. Funding for such works is now managed by the National Transport Authority who provide funding directly to the individual local authorities implementing approved projects.

Bus and Coach Services outside Urban Areas

There are a number of separate and distinct bus and coach markets for scheduled transport services operating outside urban areas. In the main, these can broadly be grouped as Inter-City and other Long Distance Services and Other Stage Carriage and Rural Services.

Inter-City and other Long Distance Services

In general, inter-city and other long distance services involve the use of coaches rather than buses. While some coaches are double-deck low floor vehicles, most are single-deck high floor vehicles to allow space for stowing luggage. This means that wheelchair access is by means of lift rather than ramp. This has implications both for the seating capacity of the vehicle and for the design and layout of infrastructure at bus stops and stations.

42% of Bus Éireann's coach fleet (193 out of 463 vehicles) is composed of wheelchair accessible vehicles. However, only 4 routes currently have wheelchair accessible services (including stops, bus stations, etc.):

1. 109a Navan to DCU, via the Airport with wheelchair accessible stops at DCU (Collins Avenue), the Airport and Navan (Fire Station);
2. Waterford to Cork with wheelchair accessible stops in Cork Bus Station, Castlemartyr, Youghal, Killeagh, Waterford Institute of Technology and Waterford Bus Station;
3. Galway to Athlone – this service operates end to end, bus station to bus station;
4. Galway to Ballina - this service operates end to end, bus station to bus station.

A wheelchair user wanting to travel on these coach services must book 24 hours in advance of the journey by telephoning the Bus Éireann local travel centre. This book ahead requirement is necessary to enable the company to remove two seats from the coach before departure to create a space on board.

It is Bus Éireann's policy to procure accessible vehicles as part of their continuing programme of fleet replacement and upgrading. The company follows best practice standards in improving the accessibility of its services and in procuring new vehicles.

Bus Éireann are planning to roll out further accessible coach services on a route by route basis subject to the availability of the required number of accessible coaches and any necessary accessibility upgrades by local authorities to the coach/bus stops concerned. The roll out will start from bus station to bus station while stops are being redesigned to make them fully accessible. In 2011 Bus Éireann upgraded facilities at Busáras, Limerick, Ennis and Killarney bus stations with wheelchair accessible bus bays to facilitate the safe operation of the accessible coaches.

Other Stage Carriage and Rural Services.

Buses and coaches are used for the provision of stage carriage and rural services and in some cases low-floor buses have been introduced on a number of routes that were previously served by inaccessible coaches.

Vehicle Standards

Since April 2009, a scheme of vehicle type approval has been introduced in Ireland on a phased basis. Under the scheme all new minibuses, buses and coaches registered since 29th October 2011 must have type approval before they can enter into service. In order to obtain type approval such vehicles must comply with the requirements of the bus Directive 2001/85/EC which includes requirements for passengers with reduced mobility.

3.2 Rail services

User Feedback

The Survey asked respondents to identify which type of train service they used most regularly. The Chart below indicates that the majority of experience is in using intercity trains and commuter train services.

Chart 8
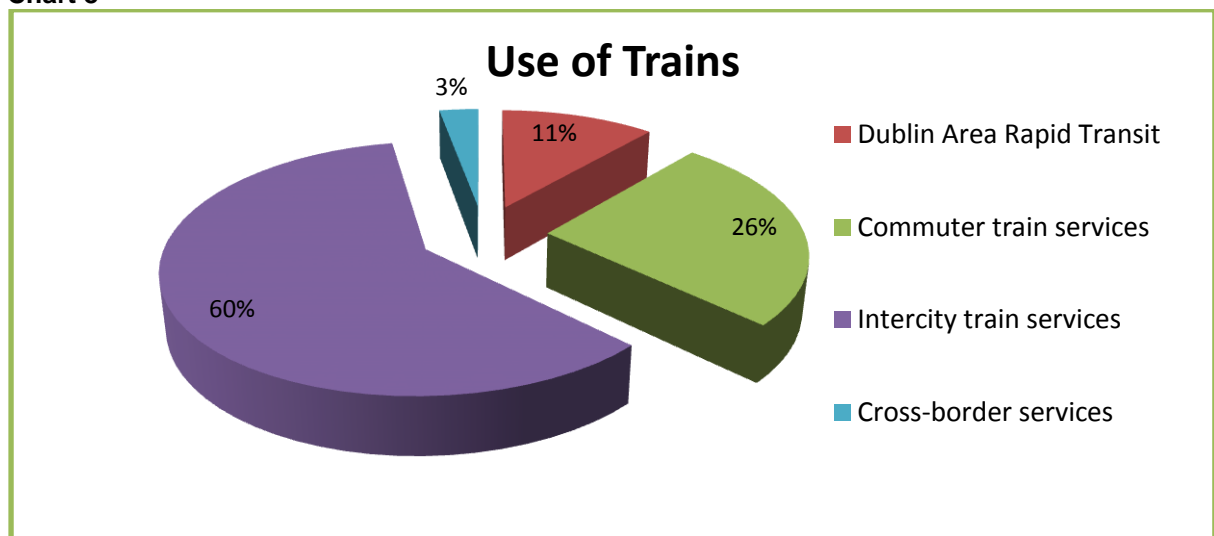
The question of difficulty in using trains identified a number of problems, as shown in the Chart below.

Chart 9

These responses show that the two biggest problems: getting to the station and getting on board the train remain unchanged from the previous survey.

Among the issues highlighted by respondents that they would like to see changed or improved were:

- More space for wheelchair users and better toilets on board;
- Automatic ramps so wheelchair users could board independently;
- A pass in place of tickets for disabled people because it can be difficult standing in queues;
- Signposting of wheelchair accessible routes.

A number of specific problems were described which give a clear indication of some outstanding challenges:

"I travelled to work by train for 12 years. However I had to switch to buses because I was frequently pushed over in the rush to get on the train. Despite being on crutches some people would not give up their seat."

"The stations locally have no permanent access to the train for wheelchair users. You have to rely on train staff remembering to load the temporary ramp. If they forget you cannot get on or off. You still have to give the operator 24 hours notice then if you change the time you want to travel the next train will not have access."

A number of positive comments were also made about rail travel including the design of new trains and the helpfulness of staff.

The overall experience of people using trains is shown in the Chart below.

Chart 10

Experience of using trains

■ Percentage

	Bad	OK	Good	Very Good	Excellent

(Chart values: approximately 30, 30, 30 for OK, Good, Very Good; ~12 for Excellent; ~3 for Bad, on a vertical scale of 0 to 30)

The survey asked separate questions about the use of the Luas and the Chart below indicates the areas where respondents found difficulty using the system.

Chart 11

Difficulty using Luas

■ Percentage

(Bar chart with vertical scale 0, 20, 40. Categories: Getting to the trams, Finding the right tram, Getting on board, Getting a ticket, Getting travel info, Attitude of staff, Other passengers)
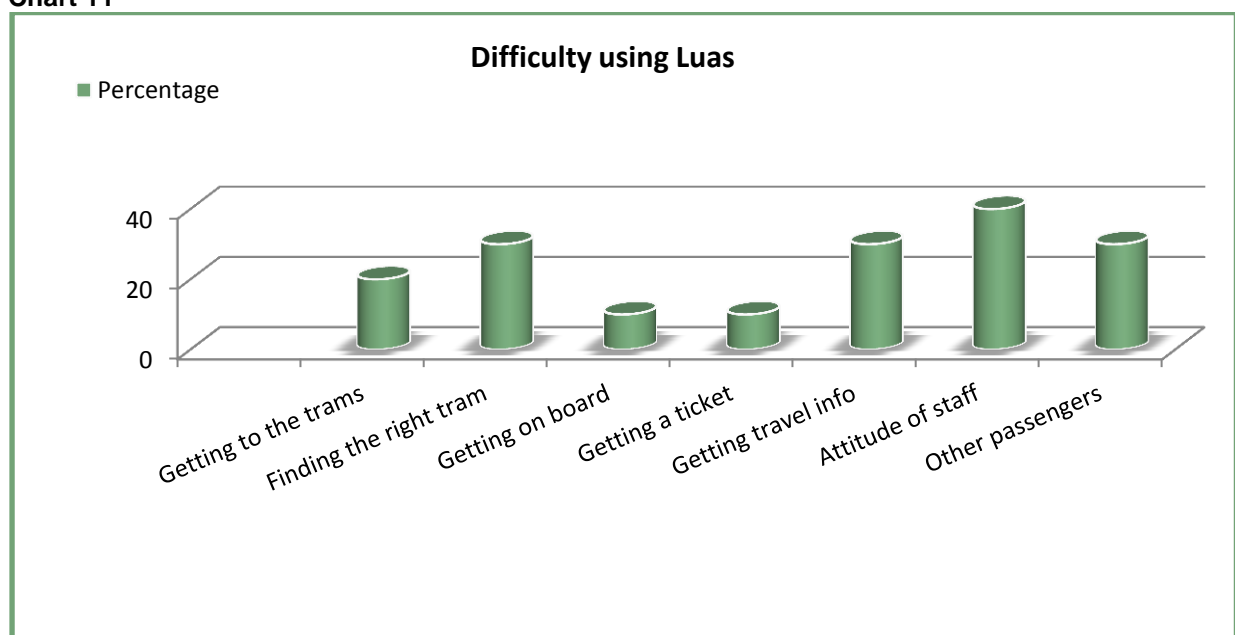
As the Chart indicates, problems remain for some people both in accessing the system and in the interface with staff and other passengers.

"The main contention is the use of buggies and prams and to a lesser degree the attitude of other passengers. When I board the wheelchair area is always crowded and instead of people moving as I get on the Luas, I have to ask people to move. The area is clearly marked for wheelchair users".

Overall, however, the experience of using Luas is positive as the Chart below indicates.

Chart 12

Experience using Luas

Percentage

Bad | OK | Good | Very Good | Excellent
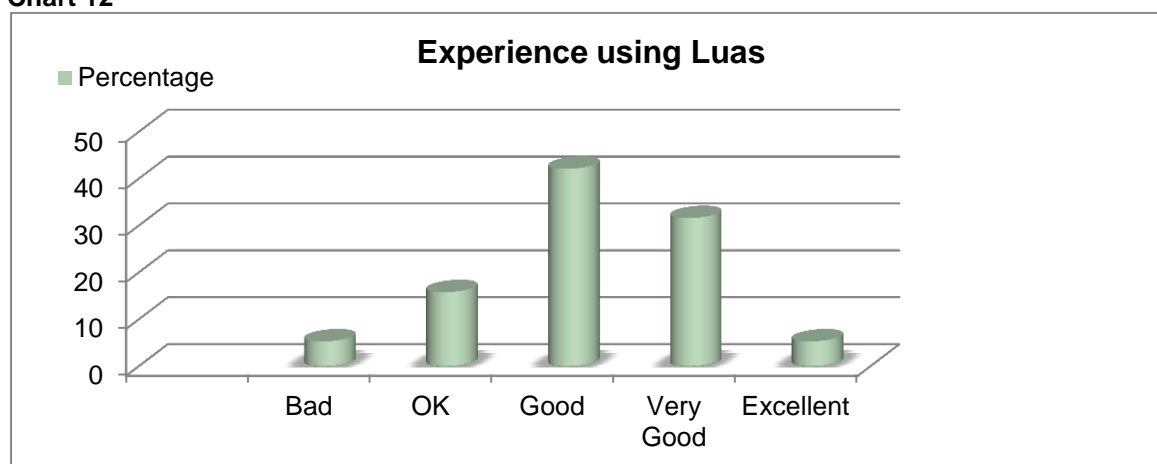
Heavy Rail Services

The three key areas which dictate the level of access to rail services are the infrastructure, including access to and within stations, the trains themselves (rolling stock) and the interface between platform and train.

Rail Infrastructure

In November 2008 Iarnród Éireann published a 'Guide for Rail Passengers with Disabilities' which provides information on the facilities available at each station and guidelines on planning your journey. This booklet is available in Braille and in audio and can be downloaded at http://www.irishrail.ie/your_journey/disabled_access.asp . The website information for each individual station has been updated to include the latest information on the facilities available at that station for mobility impaired people. The website is currently being updated to make this information more accessible to all.

Planned Railway Station Accessibility Improvements

In recent years, accessibility improvements have been rolled out on a line by line basis. To date all stations on the Dublin- Dundalk, Dublin – Galway, and DART lines (apart from Greystones where a lift installation is planned) have been completed.

On the Dublin-Cork line, all Intercity stations have been completed except Charleville and Cork. By end April 2012, out of the 143 stations on the network, 76 had received significant accessibility upgrades, including most of the busiest stations, while works were continuing at another 3 stations on the Commuter network. In addition, minor works had been carried out at many other stations.

Future investment will, however, have to be prioritised on a customer and operational needs basis, station by station, rather than on a line by line basis. Each station will need to be assessed on its current and likely future patronage, what facilities are currently available, what works would be essential and what works would be desirable.

As part of these assessments, there will also be consideration of future staffing levels at each station. This will include deciding whether the station will be staffed, unstaffed or only staffed at peak times and ensuring that adequate measures are put in place to deal with any issues that may arise when a station is not staffed, for example making customer help points available and clearly identified. At unstaffed stations, it may be appropriate to install ramps up to a footbridge instead of lifts as a means of getting from one platform to another.

A review of the remaining stations has started in order to assess, cost and prioritise works to be carried out at each station in line with affordability. While, the overall scope of the accessibility works for each station has not changed, it may be necessary to consider phasing the works that will give most benefit to the user for the available funding.

In planning and designing these works, consideration will be given to changes in appropriate standards including Part M of the Building Regulations (which deals with Access and Use of Buildings) and the Accessible Train Station Design for Disabled people: A Code of Practice published jointly by the UK Department for Transport and Transport for Scotland.

All works will also need to comply with EU Commission Decision 2008/164/EC 'Concerning the Technical Specification of Interoperability relating to 'Persons with Reduced Mobility' in the Trans-European Conventional and High-speed Rail System' otherwise known as PRM-TSI which has come into force since the last review of the

Sectoral Plan. It covers both rolling stock and infrastructure. In relation to Infrastructure works, the PRM-TSI considers the following criteria:

- Parking facilities
- Obstacle free route(s)
- Tactile guide paths where provided
- Toilets, including those accessible to wheelchair users
- Ticketing, information desks and customer assistance points
- Visual Information systems
- Ramps, escalators, lifts or travelators
- The height, offset, width and length of each platform
- Boarding aids and their description
- Level track crossings where these are available for use by disabled passengers.

Because of funding constraints it is likely that works will not be completed at each station by the target date of 2015. However, subject to the availability of resources, progress will continue to be made though this is likely to be at a slower pace than originally envisaged.

Carriage Fleet

The InterCity fleet operating from Dublin serving stations on the lines to Sligo, Westport, Galway, Limerick, Tralee, Wexford and Cork is now broadly accessible although some issues, notably consistent and clear announcements to assist people with vision impairments, remain to be fully addressed. Work in that regard is on-going.

All of the carriages concerned have been constructed in accordance with the UK Rail Vehicle Accessibility (RVAR) regulations which include designated wheelchair spaces, priority seating for disabled people, use of contrasting colours for visually impaired people, audio and visual passenger information systems, handrails and handholds designed for use by mobility and sensory impaired people and accessible toilets.

Commuter Rail services

All DART carriages and diesel railcars for the Dublin and Cork commuter rail networks are also broadly accessible. Passenger Information/PA systems are being upgraded on the original DART fleet due to obsolescence and unreliability of the electronic equipment and 75% of the fleet has been completed to date. The PA systems fitted to the later DART trains and some of the Commuter fleet (diesel railcars) have not performed satisfactorily and remedial action is being progressed on a phased basis in conjunction with the National Transport Authority[3]. It is planned to have the remainder of the Dart fleet completed in 2013.

Interface between Platform and Train

The platform extension programme has been completed and all platforms have been lengthened to accommodate the longest train serving them. For the physical access between platform and train, every staffed station has a mobile ramp (Portaramp) in place for the needs of people with mobility impairments and station staff will assist passengers in using these ramps. The portable access ramps have been approved to the European Standard 2008/164/EC Technical Specification relating to persons of reduced mobility (PRM-TSI).

Iarnród Éireann has put in place procedures (provision of alternative transport or staff assistance, if feasible) to cater for the needs of passengers with mobility and sensory impairments at unstaffed stations provided sufficient notice is given. Details on 'Planning your journey' have been published on the Iarnród Éireann website http://www.irishrail.ie/your_journey/disabled_access.asp .

Light Rail

From its introduction in June 2004, Luas has provided accessible services on the two lines currently in operation: the Green line from Sandyford to St. Stephen's Green and the Red Line from Tallaght to Connolly. While the existing service is already

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[3] http://www.nationaltransport.ie/

accessible, developments in technology and international best practice are being monitored with a view to enhancing the Luas system.

The Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) and Veolia Transport have implemented a number of accessibility initiatives related to Luas services including disability awareness training for all staff members, systems guides in accessible formats and a customer charter. The RPA also has a policy of continuous improvement informed, among other things, by the Luas User Group.

The Luas App, which contains RTPI and other mobility features, is already in place for Apple devices and is being rolled out in 2012 to include Android phones.

Induction loops were added to the tram vehicles in 2011.

RPA are currently implementing a number of NTA Grant Funded Minor Projects which address accessibility issues in and around Luas Stops. For example, in 2011, the road crossing between Busarus and Connolly was upgraded to provide a safer and easier connection between two key stops; In 2012, the median footpath at St. Stephen's Green is being re-surfaced to eliminate a potential trip-hazard and to introduce a direct ramped access from the west platform onto the median. In addition, the construction of footpaths from Cookstown to Cairnwood and from Amberley to Cookstown will commence on site over the coming months. It is hoped that similar works addressing access to the Luas Stops will follow in 2012, on the Saggart and Cherrywood Lines. Also, vehicular drop-off points are being constructed adjacent to stops at Rialto and Fatima, with further drop off points planned for the future. Finally, the interchange at Red Cow is being upgraded to provide better connectivity between transport modes, better signage and information and improved shelter and waiting facilities.

That said, difficulties have arisen, particularly for people with visual impairments, in identifying the correct Luas tram to board when a number of services are operating close together (for example Connolly Station interchange). Options to address this issue are being explored.

While the technology exists to relay destination announcements at stop platforms via the Public Address, the Light Rail Order prohibits continuous loudspeaker announcements (given the frequency of service) on the grounds of noise nuisance.

In the short term, therefore, the following options exist for patrons with a sight impairment and for whom the digital Passenger Information Display is of no use:

- The emergency help point can be used to get in contact with the central control room, which can provide real time passenger information on incoming trams, including final destination of each tram.
- For users with read-aloud technology on either an android or an i-phone, the Luas App provides real time passenger information including train destination.
- Visually impaired passengers can speak to the tram drivers, who have had disability awareness training and who have been specifically notified of the special difficulties encountered at line spurs.

RPA are examining the possibility of introducing additional on-board destination announcements at key locations, such as at Heuston, Smithfield, Blackhorse or wherever there is a crossover. While this won't solve the problem, it may provide passengers with more opportunity to disembark a wrong tram.

Meanwhile, RPA are working with Enterprise Ireland (assisted by the Waterford Institute of Technology) to source a suitable small to medium sized company for specific research and development in this area.

One possible solution might be use of a dongle/ fob or wireless device to determine the presence of a visually impaired passenger at a Luas platform. Once identified, a public or private audio message could be sent via either a local PA system or the wireless device. This solution has the benefit of minimum noise pollution to other passengers or nearby homes or offices. The announcements would mimic the information displayed on the Passenger Information Displays giving both the arrival time and the destination of the next expected tram. Another solution may extend to the development of a unique App.

The timeframe for the initial research and design for the project is December 2012.

All proposals will be investigated in consultation with visually impaired users via PTAC, the Luas User Group and other forums.

Historic and Heritage Railways

The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland makes a case that historic and heritage vehicles should be exempt from access requirements because of the difficulty of complying with modern access standards without compromising the historic value of the vehicle.

They emphasise, however, that they make every effort to make vehicles accessible in the course of re-building and refurbishment.

Passenger Rights

European Regulation 1371/2007[4] on rail passenger rights and obligations came into effect in December 2009. The Regulation extends rights to people with disabilities and reduced mobility very similar to those already available to air passengers. This includes the right to assistance at stations and on board trains, a requirement for information to be provided in accessible formats and provision for compensation if mobility equipment (such as wheelchairs) is lost or damaged.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has been designated by the Department of Transport as the national enforcement body for EU Regulation 1371/2007 on Rail Passenger Rights.

The need for action in this area is reinforced by the results of the user survey in which over 90% of respondents indicated that they were unaware of their rights under the Regulation. The NTA will undertake to assist in raising the level of awareness.

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[4] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:315:0014:0041:EN:PDF

3.3 Taxis and Hackneys

User Feedback

The main difficulty reported was simply a lack of accessible vehicles in many areas. Other significant concerns included cost, driver attitude and safety as the Chart below indicates.

Chart 13

Difficulty using taxis/hackneys

■ Percentage
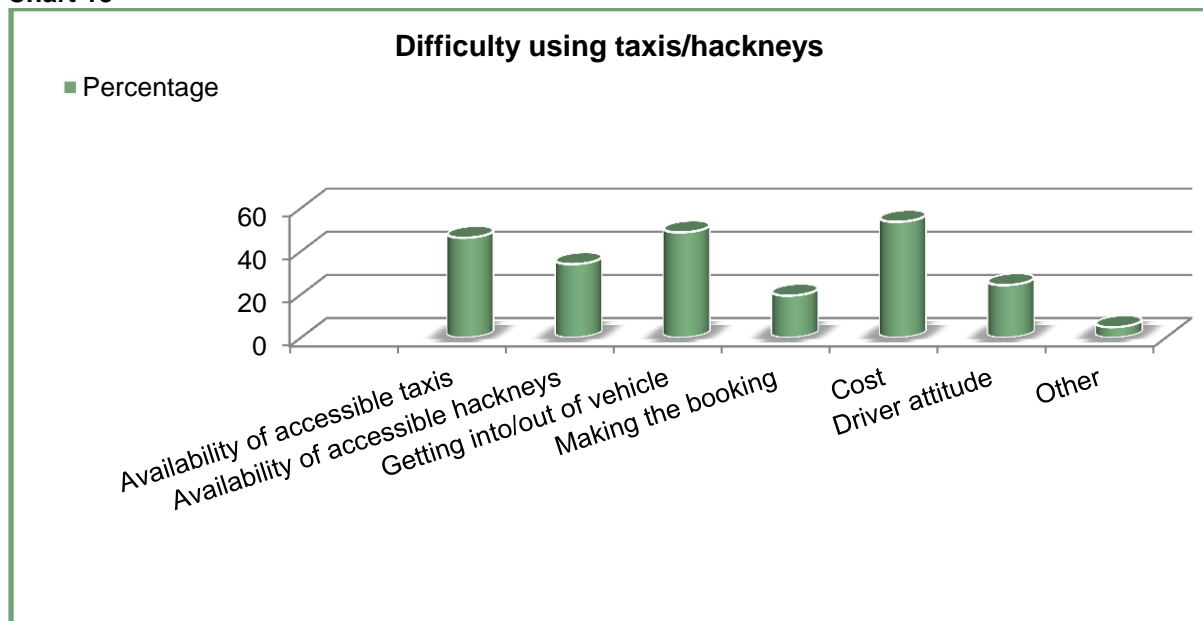
Other concerns were voiced by people who use large or heavy chairs which could not be accommodated. A common area of concern, shown by the comments below was driver attitude and competence.

"Drivers usually not willing to help but there are exceptions";

"I am seldom harnessed while travelling in taxis as they see it as too much of a chore";

"These people need to undergo training as part of getting a licence".

However, the overall feedback on experience of using taxis and hackneys is positive as the Chart below shows.

Chart 14

Experience using taxis/hackneys
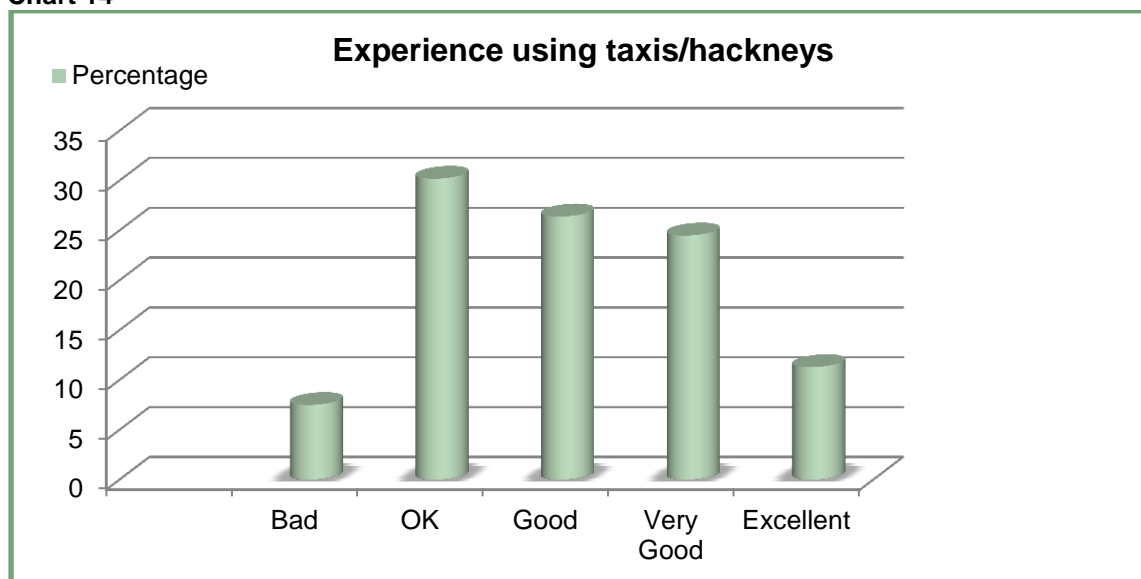
Policy on Accessible Taxis and Hackneys

On 1 January 2011, the Commission for Taxi Regulation was assimilated with the National Transport Authority (NTA) so the responsibilities of the Authority now cover those provided in the Taxi Regulation Act 2003.

The National Transport Authority has created a register of all Wheelchair Accessible Taxis throughout the country. This is to enable improved access to this specialised service for people with disabilities. The contact information for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle service that operates within an area is available by phoning the National Transport Authority information service (phone 1890 606090). The Register is also available to the Irish Wheelchair Association and other disability groups.

In September 2011, the NTA launched a Wheelchair Accessible Grant Scheme funded by the Department's Accessibility Grants Programme. This was a limited scheme to assist a proportion of existing vehicles to be upgraded voluntarily and encourage new vehicles into the market thereby increasing accessible fleet numbers nationally. A similar scheme was provided in 2012.

The National Transport Authority has indicated that the total number of active wheelchair accessible taxis as at December 2011 was 1227 and the total number of

wheelchair accessible hackneys was 3. This combined figure represented 5.16% of the overall fleet.

The National Transport Authority is committed to promoting an increase in the numbers of accessible taxis and hackneys as well as improving the standards of those vehicles.

2011 Taxi Regulation Review

The Taxi Regulation Review was carried in 2011. The review was chaired by Mr. Alan Kelly TD, Minister of State for Public and Commuter Transport. The Review Group included dispatch operators, drivers, consumers as well as Government Departments and regulatory and enforcement agencies. The aim of the review was to allow consumers to have confidence in the taxi system while also ensuring that legitimate and competent operators and drivers can be rewarded fairly by operating under a regulatory framework that is adequately enforced.

Among other things, the Review Report proposes a number of short-term actions to address the transport needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility as follows:
  − a booking 'contact centre' will be piloted and evaluated, and will assist in gathering better information on Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) utilization, travel patterns and transport requirements;
  − further analysis of the optimum usage of WATs by dispatch operators will also be carried out; and,
  − a website and smartphone application to facilitate self-ordering of WATs will be developed.

The Review Report also proposes the development of a new rural hackney licence which would allow for low-cost entry to the hackney market in rural areas with identified public transport requirements.

In tandem with the 2011 Taxi Regulation Review, the National Transport Authority carried out a public consultation on vehicle standards with a view to advancing new regulations to come into force in 2012 The NTA's examination of appropriate vehicle standards for the industry was examined and taken into account by the Review Group in the course of its work.

The Taxi Regulation Review report proposes a range of short-term measures with regard to vehicle standards and enforcement as follows:

− Revised age limit rules on taxi vehicles to encourage the movement to vehicles of 9-years or less

− Prohibition of unsuitable, altered vehicles and vehicle equipment and the introduction of inspection safety criteria in this regard

− To include on the tamper proof licence disc, a QR code (Quick Reaction barcode) containing core licensing information affixed to the windscreen and rear screen

− The design of a new taxi roof sign in consultation with the industry

The integration of revised inspection/testing arrangements for taximeters with the SPSV licensing process is recommended as a medium-term measure.
The vision for accessible services is that they should cater adequately for all regardless of the person's mobility.

In the medium-term, the existing specifications for wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys will be reviewed to facilitate the possible introduction of a wider range of lower cost accessible vehicles.

3.4 Local and Rural Integrated Transport Services

User Feedback

Although the majority of disabled people who responded to the survey were living in urban areas, there were a number of comments from those living in rural areas. The main issues raised were a lack of accessible buses in rural areas and a shortage of accessible bus stops or bus stops within reach of people's homes or destinations.

The Rural Transport Programme (RTP)

The Rural Transport Programme was established in February 2007 and thirty-five community transport groups around the country are being funded under the Programme to address social exclusion in their rural areas arising from unmet public transport needs.

From 1 April 2012, responsibility for the RTP has been assigned to the National Transport Authority (NTA) while the Programme is administered on its behalf by Pobal.

While services are open to the general public, older people and people with disabilities, many of them living in remote and isolated rural areas, have to date formed the core customer base of the RTP. In rural areas, older people and people with disabilities are probably at the greatest risk of poverty or social exclusion arising from lack of access to transport. The RTP provides a virtual lifeline for older people and people with disabilities and can enable them to extend their ability to maintain independent living at home.

The RTP was established to operate only in cases of market failure. Services funded under the Programme should complement and not compete with existing public transport services.

The RTP inclusive approach to local transport delivery includes a number of key principles;

- It enables people to join up all the different aspects of daily living from health care and shopping trips to education and leisure by providing appropriate accessible transport;

- Development of a partnership approach to responsibility at a local level is seen as essential;

- Diversity across the RTP Groups is an important element of the Programme as it is focused on the level of transport need in each community. Local knowledge helps understanding of the specific needs of the community including the variety of transport services required to meet these needs e.g. passenger assistance, accessibility.

- Door to Door and more demand responsive services are important for the delivery of many journeys in rural Ireland.

- Local co-ordination and delivery of integrated services is possible at local level but requires time, collective commitment and investment.

- Enhanced access to healthcare services is an outcome of the RTP services. Most projects are linked in with healthcare providers assisting individuals in making doctors' surgeries, hospital appointments and attending daycare services etc. More implicit health and well-being outcomes are also evident including a sense of freedom, empowerment and independence that passengers derive from using the services.

Key elements of the Rural Transport Programme 2008 - 2010

In the operation of the Programme the following key features have been recorded.[5]

Consultation

Each RTP Company operates on a not-for-profit basis. The Board of each Company is made up of representatives of the local community, voluntary sector, local development sector and public service organisations each of whom participate in a voluntary capacity. Working in partnership with local agencies and organisations encourages an integrated approach to identifying local transport needs and planning

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[5] *Rural Transport Programme Performance and Impact Report, Pobal, 2010*

and implementing services. Consultation happens through the management and advisory structures of the Groups and by formal/informal discussion with local/regional area representatives. Access requirements to a range of services e.g. social welfare, health, recreation, education is explored for all rural dwellers and prioritised in collaboration with local support agencies and organisations. Some companies continue to have representation at Board level by organisations representing people with disabilities.

Needs Analysis

RTP Companies assess needs in their locality to ensure that resources and budgets are targeted to those most in need of rural transport. The process includes data analysis and consultation. It can take a number of forms and usually includes public meetings, focus group meetings with representatives from local agencies/organisations, questionnaires distributed throughout the area, passenger surveys on existing services, socio-demographic analysis and stakeholder interviews.

Training

Training to a recognised standard has been in operation with RTP Companies from the beginning and is now a requirement under the programme health and safety management system. Training includes working with passengers who may have a range of mobility difficulties.

Passenger Assistance

The RTP trained drivers assist passengers by carrying shopping to their door, assisting them to alight the vehicles, buckling seat belts and generally being anticipative of their needs. Many services have trained passenger assistants on board to assist people with mobility problems. RTP services are unique in this way. The fact that the majority of journeys tend to be on a door to door basis is the single most important service feature for people with mobility problems.

Use of Accessible Vehicles

In 2011 a total of 960 vehicles were involved in the delivery of RTP services, 886 of which were contracted in from private transport operators. 85% of services were carried out in Large Public Service Vehicles (more than 8 seats), 10% in Small Public Service Vehicles (fewer than 8 seats) and 5% using community cars.

Due to availability, location, cost and whether the vehicles are community owned or procured, not all services are fully accessible. According to 2011 performance monitoring figures, approximately 69% of services were defined as either fully (35%) or partially accessible (34%). Fully accessible services are defined as the services with all-ability access, whereas partially accessible services have some accessibility features but may not be fully accessible e.g. steps and handrails but no lift. 19% of passenger journeys were made by passengers who required assistance in order for them to travel.

RTP Health and Safety Management System

Work continues to refine and implement the Health and Safety System designed for the Programme to ensure safety of passengers. The System was updated in 2010 and a total of nine health and safety audits were conducted.

Mapping of RTP services

A Geographic Information System (GIS) for the RTP was developed in 2010, allowing Companies to map their services against a range of local services and socio-demographic data. Using GIS to map RTP services allows better management of RTP services, illustrates and monitors transport models, highlights gaps in service delivery, examines linkages with key public services and helps ensure services are meeting the requirements of those most in need. This and other IT systems developed through the RTP are important components of day-to-day management of transport operations and can be further utilised and modified to meet the future requirements for integrated service delivery.

Performance Monitoring

The RTP Performance Monitoring Strategy is an integral part of the management and development of the Programme. It aims to measure the extent to which objectives have been achieved and to assess the overall impact of the Programme. Reports are produced annually and it can be noted from the 2010 report that the number of assisted journeys rose by 4%, slightly below the target of 5% while the target to increase the number of accessible services by 5% was exceeded (up from 91,055 to 124,523).

While some RTP Community Transport Groups have been successful in developing fully accessible services, a number of issues have emerged:

- Groups operating fully accessible services are generally those which have purchased accessible vehicles. However, there is no provision under the RTP to fund replacement vehicles and this could impact on future provision;
- The majority of RTP Groups contract in services from private operators. However, funding structures within the Programme are geared towards shorter contracts and do not facilitate more secure three to five year contracts which private operators would require to encourage them to invest in accessible vehicles;

These issues will be explored in the context of progressing wider local and rural integrated transport services by the National Integrated Rural Transport Committee.

National Integrated Rural Transport (NIRT) Committee

The Programme for Government 2011 notes the importance of the rural transport network as being "vital for rural communities as a reliable and sustainable transport service". Furthermore, the Programme for Government includes a commitment to "maintain and extend the Rural Transport Programme with other local transport services as much as is practicable".

In January 2012 a Government Decision approved a new policy approach for the integration of local and rural transport services which allocated responsibility for the

Rural Transport Programme (RTP) and the delivery of the integration agenda to the National Transport Authority (NTA). This has the effect of placing all State funded local and rural services in a broader transport context. This new role for the NTA coupled with its existing national remit for securing the provision of public passenger transport services, will enable the development of better links between local and rural services and scheduled bus and rail services which is something that is fundamental to a wholly integrated transport network. A wholly integrated transport network is of benefit to all public transport users but is of particular significance to people with disabilities.

This new approach will involve greater levels of transport integration and co-ordinated delivery across a range of exchequer funded local and rural transport services incorporating the RTP, HSE non-acute transport and school transport and voluntary transport initiatives.

A new National Integrated Rural Transport (NIRT) Committee was established in April 2012 to oversee this more focussed and coherent approach to the integration of local and rural transport. The new Committee which is chaired by the NTA is drawn from organisations representing key stakeholders in the local and rural transport integration process including rural transports groups, the HSE, Pobal, Local Authorities, Bus Éireann and policy makers from relevant Government Departments. The role of the NIRT Committee is to oversee and manage a partnership approach to implementing integrated local and rural transport in order to achieve greater synergies, better meet identified transport needs and deliver increased value for money for the Exchequer.

There are many complexities associated with effective integration of local and rural transport service provision. Consequently, the NIRT Committee established sub-groups to examine four key areas, (i) health related transport services, (ii) school transport services, (iii) logistics and (iv) appropriate structures to support integration, including local authority involvement in the delivery of integrated transport services. The sub-groups have involved other stakeholders in their work and sought input from relevant sources as appropriate.

The key area of work for the sub-groups is to identify constraints or high level impediments to integrated local and rural transport, along with recommendations on how these should be managed. Amongst the barriers to integration being examined is physical infrastructure including issues relating to accessibility.

The output from the sub-groups will also inform the design of model areas which will trial how integrated local and rural transport services can operate and how savings can be achieved across various transport services. The outcome of the model areas will inform the wider roll out of integrated rural transport services across the country on an incremental basis.

The sub-groups have reported their preliminary findings and recommendations to the NIRT Committee and these have fed into the Committee's first progress report submitted to the Minister of State for Public and Commuter Transport.

The ultimate goal is the delivery of quality local and rural transport services while achieving better value for the exchequer through the integrated planning and delivery of conventional and non-conventional transport, taking into account traditional public transport, the Rural Transport Programme, HSE transport, school transport and voluntary transport initiatives. Taxis and hackneys will also have an important role to play.

The provision of transport services for those most at risk of social exclusion, including older people and people with disabilities, will continue to be a central consideration in that work. It is envisaged that any new services introduced will be accessible in so far as possible.

Intermodal Journey Planner

The incorporation of RTP services in the intermodal journey planner being developed by the NTA (see page 72) is also being explored as part of the work of the NIRT Committee. The inclusion of RTP services in the Journey Planner will serve to publicise the full extent of transport services available in rural areas and will be a useful tool in identifying gaps in service provision for particular areas.

3.5 Roads

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has responsibility for determining roads policy. In relation to accessibility, the overall objective is to ensure that roads, streets, pedestrian crossings and footpaths are, as far as practicable, accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. The needs of people with disabilities are now specifically provided for, where appropriate, in the design and construction of new or improved roads and pedestrian facilities. Improvements to existing public roads and pedestrian facilities are being implemented on an on-going basis in line with identified priorities and available funding, to meet best practice in accessibility standards.

User Feedback

Footpaths

The pedestrian environment featured as a major source of difficulty in the responses from people with disabilities. The Chart below sets out the key issues identified.

Chart 15

Difficulty using Footpaths
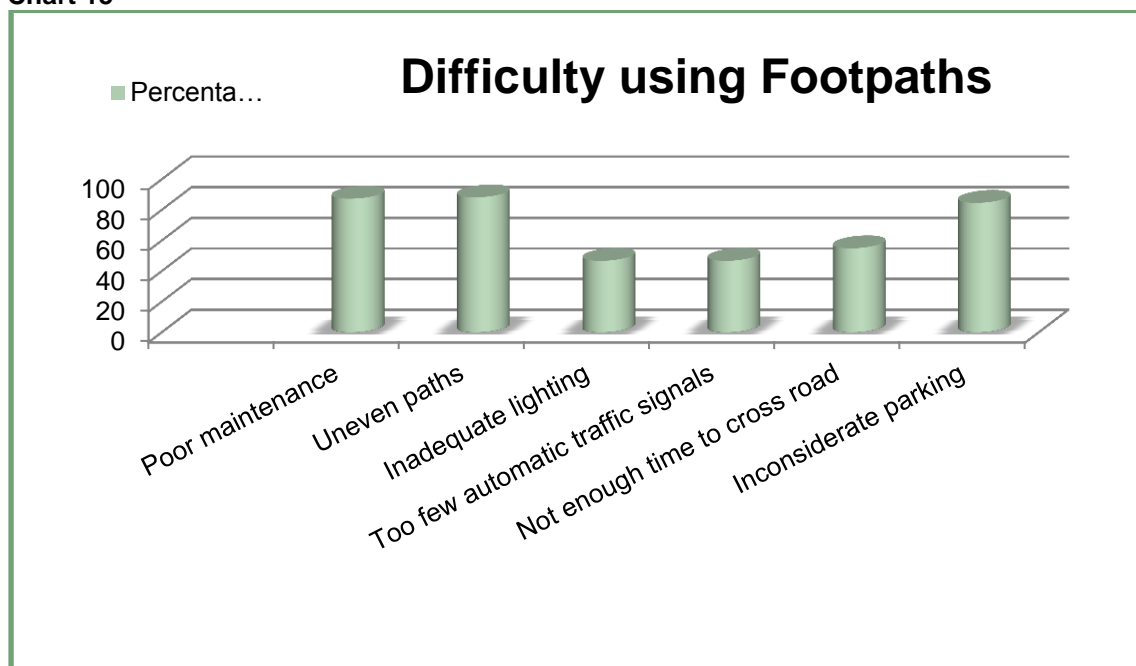
Poor maintenance, uneven paths and inconsiderate parking were all highlighted as major barriers to mobility. Poor pedestrian access not only prevents people with disabilities from going out in their own neighbourhood, it can also prevent access to public transport, even where the system or vehicle is accessible.

Accessible Parking

Just over half of those responding to the survey indicated that they had a disabled parking permit and the majority of those who did not have one indicated that they were aware of the process to obtain one if they were eligible.

The main concern expressed (95% of respondents) was that there was abuse of the Scheme.

About two thirds of those who responded indicated that they were unaware of the changes to the Scheme that were introduced in June 2011. Of those who were aware of the changes, about 70% thought that they were an improvement on the previous system.

These responses indicate clearly that the priorities now are to tackle abuse of the scheme and to increase levels of information and publicity to let people know about the changes that have been made.

The Department has concluded its review of the Disabled Parking Scheme which examined eligibility for the Disabled Parking Permit, the size and nature of the parking bays themselves and enforcement of the scheme. New Regulations[6] to implement the changes came into effect on 1 June 2011. The changes include revised eligibility criteria for the disabled persons' parking badge so that the focus is on level of mobility impairment rather than on diagnosis of particular medical conditions. This will help to ensure that the Scheme benefits those for whom it was originally intended.

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[6] Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The new Regulations also make a change relating to areas where parking has a time limit (e.g. parking for no longer than one hour, two hours, etc.). The general rule in these areas is that people who leave a parking space of this type are not allowed to park there again for at least one hour. Before 1 June 2011, this rule did not apply to holders of disabled parking permits. However, under the new regulations the rule does now apply to holders of disabled parking permits. The reason for this is that many people with permits have found it difficult to get parking places and the Review concluded that this change would help to ensure that spaces were available to more people.

The review of the Disabled Parking Scheme also recommended changes to the dimensions of disabled parking bays. These were incorporated into the new Traffic Signs Manual (TSM), published by the Department in late 2010. Regulations underpinning the TSM are currently nearing completion.

Road Authorities

In Ireland there are 88 local authorities being County Councils, City Councils and Town Councils (former Borough and Urban District) that are designated as Road Authorities and are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the road network.

Although local authorities operate under the oversight of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government oversight for Roads and Transport lies with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

National Roads

The role and functions of the National Roads Authority (NRA) are as set out under the Roads Act 1993 as amended, which is to secure the provision of a safe and efficient network of national roads for all road users. For this purpose, it has overall responsibility for planning and supervision of construction and maintenance works on these roads. National road design, construction and maintenance works are generally carried out by local authorities (Road Authorities) on behalf of the NRA.

The primary national road network has been the beneficiary in recent years of substantial State investment, as a result of which there is now 1,187km of motorway. This increase in motorway as a percentage of the national road network, allied to the fact that much of the national road network is located outside of urban areas, means that the national road network is of limited relevance when considering the special needs of people with mobility/sensory impairments in relation to access to roads, streets and pavements.

Regional and Local Roads

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport allocates State grants to local authorities to supplement expenditure from their own resources on regional and local roads. During 2009 the NRA assumed administrative functions on behalf of the Department relating to regional and local roads.

The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads, together with the selection and prioritisation of projects to be funded, is a function of local authorities in their role as road authorities.

As part of its regional and local roads investment programme, the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport provides discretionary and block grants to local authorities. Eligible works under the urban block grants include the provision of pedestrian facilities and access to public transport facilities. Local authorities may use their discretionary grants to fund improvement works on regional and local roads, including footpaths, traffic and pedestrian signs and signals and traffic management schemes in their functional areas.

The Department's *'Memorandum on Grants for Regional and Local Roads'* sets out the conditions governing the payment of grants to local authorities in respect of the improvement and maintenance of works on the regional and local roads network and specifically requires that account must be taken of the needs of

people with disabilities when designing grant schemes and that appropriate provision should be made for them.

The Department requires local authorities to carry out Road User Audits on Regional and Local Road upgrade schemes which are being funded or co-funded by the Department. The aim is to ensure that all road users including cyclists, pedestrians, people with mobility/sensory impairments, motorcyclists and public transport are provided for.

Guidance and Standards

National Roads standards and specifications are set out in the NRA's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and the Specification for Road Works.

For Regional and Local Roads, much use is made of NRA standards as well as other documents such as the Department's *"Traffic Management Guidelines"* (TMG). Requirements are set out in circulars as well as in the *'Memorandum on Grants for Regional and Local Roads'* which includes advice and guidance on, amongst other things, the facilitation of people with disabilities. The potential danger for mobility-impaired people of road works is acknowledged and authorities are advised to take special care regarding safety and also to consult with local representatives of people with disabilities, where appropriate.

The *'Memorandum on Grants for Regional and Local Roads'* is revised from time to time to reflect changes and developments generally. The Department will review the Memorandum with specific regard to developments on accessibility issues and revise it as necessary.

The Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB) has produced the publication '*Road and Street Design for All'*. The purpose of the guidelines is to support local authority staff in auditing and reviewing the accessibility of the streetscapes within their remit. The guidelines aim to ensure that all local authorities are making such assessments from an agreed standard to ensure a coherent

approach across all local authority administrative areas. They set out accessibility measures in line with current legislation and standards and have the approval of the National Disability Authority.

Road Safety Audits are mandatory in Ireland on all national road scheme designs. The National Roads Authority has published guidelines that outline the process to be followed together with issues to be addressed including *Does the proposed layout create hazards or obstacles to road users that could contribute to an increased risk of injuries?* The NRA guidelines are also used in relation to relevant non-national roads scheme designs.

The LGMSB guidelines will be assessed in conjunction with NRA road safety guidelines to ensure that they are up to date and cater adequately for all road users including cyclists, pedestrians, people with mobility/sensory impairments, motorcyclists and public transport.

Other documents include the Department's *"Traffic Management Guidelines"* (TMG). The TMG recognise that vulnerable road users including those with mobility/sensory impairment may require special consideration within traffic management schemes and the provision of specific facilities on the road. There is a chapter in the TMG dedicated to facilities for mobility/sensory impaired people which includes design, construction and maintenance issues such as footpath design and the design of crossing facilities, tactile paving and audible devices at controlled crossings. The needs of people with disabilities are also integrated into the other chapters of the TMG dealing with specific traffic management issues, such as junctions, bus stop design, street furniture and car parking. The TMG can be accessed through the Department's website <u>Traffic Management Guidelines</u> and the National Transport Authority website at <u>TMG Document</u>.

The Department, in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), is sponsoring the preparation of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). The overriding aim of DMURS is to set out design guidance and standards for both new and existing urban roads and streets, incorporating good planning and design practice, including for persons with

disabilities. It is intended to finalise the document and issue it for use in quarter four 2012.

TrinityHaus based in Trinity College is currently undertaking research on behalf of the National Disability Authority. The focus of this research is on 'Shared Spaces, Shared Surfaces and Home Zones from a Universal Design approach for the Urban Environment in Ireland'. This work is taking particular account of the needs of vulnerable pedestrians such as those with visual, mobility or cognitive difficulties, older people and children. The Department is supportive of this initiative and, arising from it, would envisage the development in due course of guidelines for the design and use of shared spaces. Cognisance of this work will also be taken in the preparation of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

3.6 Air Travel

User Feedback

It is clear from responses to the survey conducted in relation to this topic that for many disabled people and people with reduced mobility, air travel is still a stressful experience. Whilst improvements are recognised and appreciated, concerns and problems remain. In some cases these concerns are based on a lack of information about the assistance which is available to passengers who have additional needs when travelling by air. In other cases the difficulties arise from misunderstandings as to the actual level of assistance which will be received.

The Chart below sets out the principal difficulties when travelling by air reported by people with disabilities during the course of the recent survey. Sample quotes obtained during the survey process are also provided.

Chart 16

Difficulty using Air Travel

Percentage

Booking the flight, Finding out about available help, Getting to the airport, Getting help at the airport, Getting on board the plane, Getting help on the plane, Staff attitude at airport on or board, Getting off the plane, Other problems
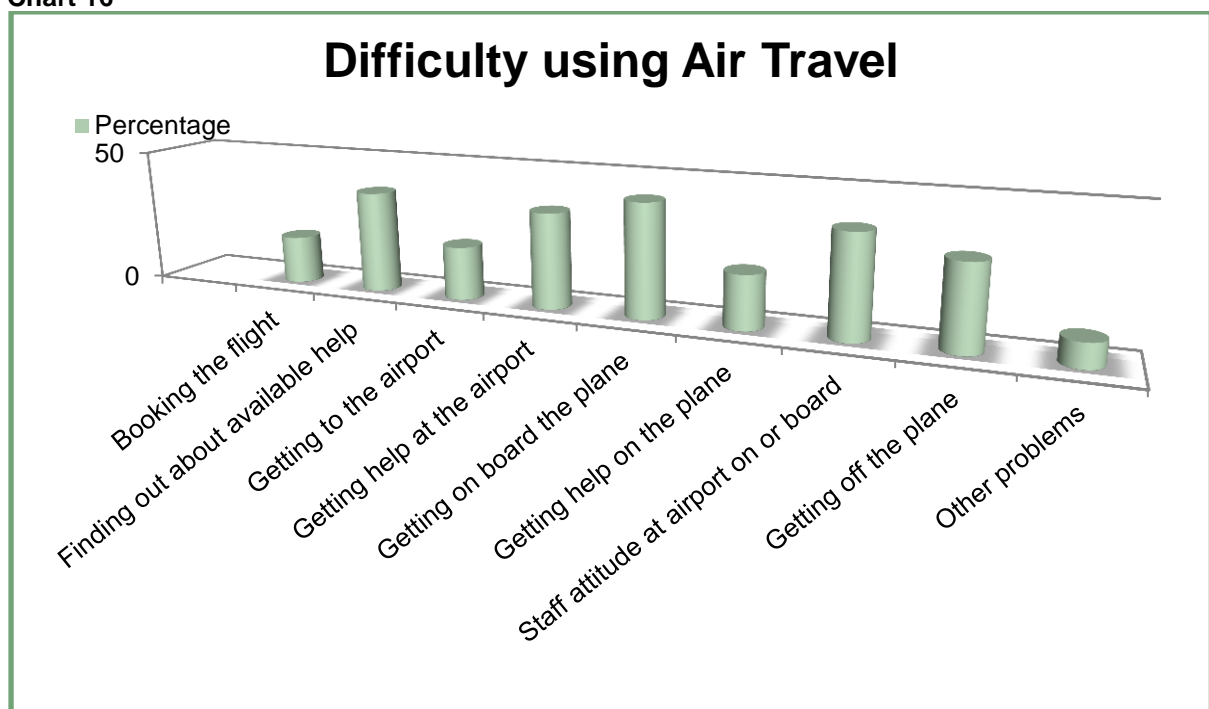
"I would like to travel by air, but I am apprehensive about the conditions and about getting on the plane."

Some of the items referred to in Chart 16 are covered by European Regulation 1107/2006 (further information below) e.g. receiving assistance at the airport, when embarking/ disembarking, on-board the aircraft etc. Their presence on the chart possibly suggests that many people with disabilities or reduced mobility are still unaware of the assistance available to them under the legislation.

> "With the new assistance getting on planes, it's a great help, but it's not always available."

Other difficulties – such as the attitude of staff – can be significantly improved with appropriate training. The Regulation requires that all staff providing direct assistance to people with reduced mobility have knowledge on how to meet their needs. Furthermore the legislation requires that all staff in direct contact with the travelling public receive disability –equality and disability-awareness training.

Whilst the survey did identify the most problematic aspects of air travel for disabled persons, it also indicated that in general the air travel experience for passengers with disabilities is a positive one. Chart 17 below illustrates how passengers with disabilities rated their experience of air travel.

Chart 17

Experience of using Air Travel
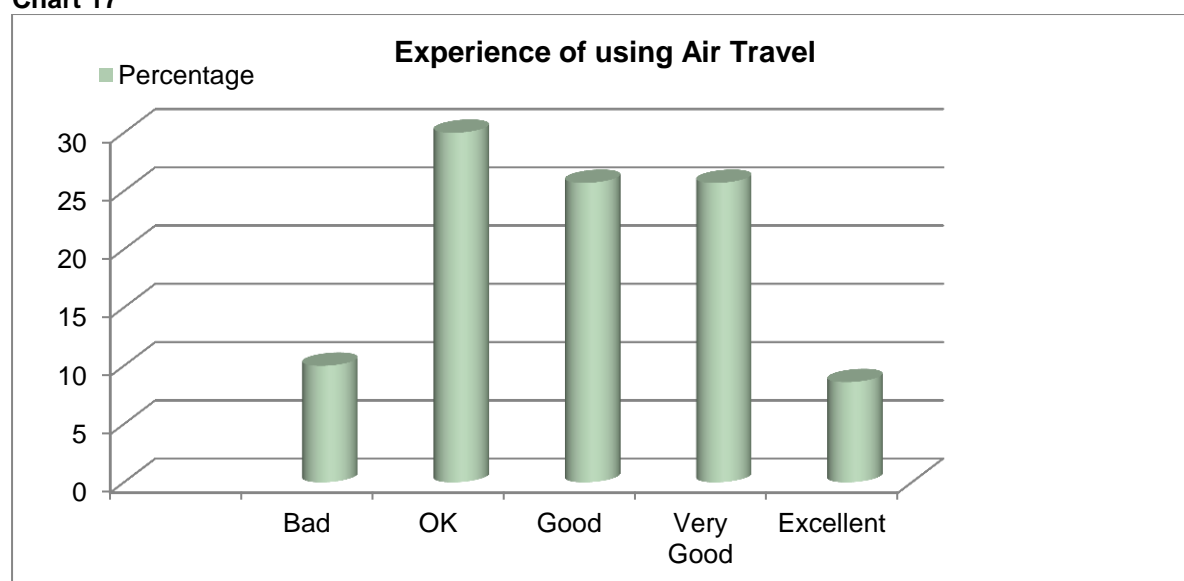
Accessibility in air travel is covered by European Regulation 1107/2006 which concerns "The Rights of Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility Travelling by Air"[7]. The intention of this Regulation is to ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities for air travel comparable to those of other citizens. It aims to standardise the assistance provided to people with disabilities in airports and on board aircraft.

The Regulation applies at all airports within the EU and on-board all flights departing from such airports. The Regulation also applies to on-board flights from third country[8] airports to airports located within the EU where those flights are operated by EU-licensed air carriers.

Disabled people and people with reduced mobility who require assistance under this Regulation are advised to notify the airline of their needs either during the booking process, or as soon as possible thereafter. Assistance is only guaranteed when the air carrier receives this notification at least 48 hours before the published departure time of the flight. The air carrier will forward the notification to the management bodies of the airports of arrival and departure concerned (and transit if necessary). Even if prior notification has not been received in due time, the airport managing body is required to make "all reasonable efforts" to provide the assistance necessary to enable the disabled person to board their flight. The assistance specified in this Regulation must be provided at no additional cost to people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

In summary the assistance provided by the airport management body should enable departing passengers with reduced mobility to move from a designated point of arrival within the airport boundaries, complete all necessary check-in and security processes and board their aircraft. Arriving passengers with reduced mobility should receive assistance which enables them to disembark the aircraft, retrieve baggage,

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[7] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:204:0023:003:en:PDF
[8] Third countries are countries which are not party to the Treaty establishing the European Union.

complete any security or immigration processes and reach a designated point of departure within the airport boundary. Transiting passengers should also receive appropriate assistance.

Among the obligations on an air carrier to provide on-board assistance, is a requirement to assist people with reduced mobility in moving to the toilet facilities if necessary[9]. The Regulation also requires air carriers to carry medical equipment and up to two pieces of essential mobility equipment (such as wheelchairs) free of charge. Loss of, or damage to, wheelchairs or other assistive devices is covered under the Regulation. Airport management bodies must provide replacements though not necessarily on a like-for–like basis. Compensation is available where loss or damage of mobility equipment or assistive devices occurs however the liability limits specified in the Montreal Convention[10] apply.

Complaints under the Regulation should first be made to the air carrier or airport management body concerned. If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at that point, then it may be escalated for the attention of the appropriate national enforcement body. Complaints relating to the assistance received at an airport should be referred to the enforcement body in the country where the airport is located. Complaints relating to the assistance received on-board an aircraft, should be referred to the enforcement body in the country from which the flight departed[11].

The Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) is the Irish enforcement body i.e. it deals with complaints about the assistance provided to people with disabilities at airports in Ireland as well as complaints relating to the care and assistance received whilst on-board aircraft which depart from Irish airports[12]. For further information about the Regulation and the rights afforded to passengers thereunder, please visit www.flightrights.ie .

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[9] The fulfilment of this requirement will depend on the on-board availability of the necessary equipment (not all aircraft are configured to accommodate equipment such as aisle chairs)..
[10] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/transport/air_transport/l24255_en.htm
[11] With the exception of flights which depart from third countries i.e. non EU countries: in such cases, the complaint should be referred to the enforcement body in the EU country of arrival.
[12] There are nine Irish airports: Dublin, Cork, Shannon, Ireland West (Knock), Galway, Sligo, Donegal, Waterford & Kerry.

Since the introduction of this progressive legislation in 2008, the CAR[13] has received 25 valid complaints[14]. These complaints spanned a variety of topics ranging from the carriage of assistance dogs, to damaged mobility equipment to refusals to carry mobility equipment. All complaints have been concluded. In the vast majority of cases no infringement of the Regulation actually occurred. In those cases where infringements did arise, matters were resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Such a small number can be viewed in a variety of ways:

- Compliance with the legislation is very high and people with reduced mobility and disabled people are receiving the services they requested;

- Air carriers and airport management bodies are successfully resolving the majority of complaints brought to their attention;

- Awareness of the rights afforded to people with reduced mobility/ disabled people remains low hence these passengers do not realise that they are entitled to complain if the assistance required by them is not received.

From the responses received to the on-line survey it seems likely that lack of awareness about rights remains a major factor.

Awareness of Passenger Rights

One way to ensure that air travel is a positive experience for people with disabilities is to raise awareness of the rights afforded by the Regulation. An understanding of these entitlements – and any related requirements an air carrier or the airport management body may have[15] – would undoubtedly help disabled people with travel preparations and consequently make the journey smoother.

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[13] The CAR is the Irish enforcement body for EC Regulation 1107/ 2006.
[14] The CAR also received approximately 30 additional queries which, whilst complex, arose in advance of the booking process and therefore did not constitute alleged infringements of the Regulation.
[15] Different air carriers will have different requirements as regards the carriage of mobility equipment and assistive devices. There are many possible reasons for this e.g. different cabin configurations, different hold dimensions, permission to carry dangerous goods (or not) etc. Air carriers must make information about any restrictions or safety rules it imposes on the carriage of persons with reduced mobility publicly available. Passengers can therefore carry out research to determine which carrier best meets their individual requirements prior to booking.

To this end, the CAR has developed information cards which it distributes to travel agents, tour operators and disability groups around the country. The CAR also hosts an information stand at the annual Holiday World Fair in the RDS with a view to increasing public awareness. In late 2011 the CAR also launched a new consumer focused website[16] www.flightrights.ie . This website is designed to facilitate easy access to information on the assistance that people with disabilities and reduced mobility are entitled to receive. The website also provides access to the CAR's on-line complaints system.

A further information initiative which might help to promote awareness of this Regulation is currently being considered by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

US requirements

In parallel, American legislation under the Air Carriers Access Act Regulation (14 CFR Part 382)[17] came into force in 2009 and applies to air carriers flying to and from the USA and air carriers on code-share flights with US carriers anywhere in world. Unlike the European Regulation which places responsibility primarily on the airport management body, the US regime requires the air carrier to take responsibility for meeting the needs of passengers with disabilities. Air carriers which operate services between the EU and the United States need to be aware of, and comply with, both sets of requirements.

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[16] The CAR's general website www.aviationreg.ie also provides detailed information about the rights and entitlements afforded to passengers under EC Regulation No. 1107/ 2006.
[17] http://airconsumer.dot.gov/rules/382short.pdf

3.7 Maritime Transport

User Feedback

The experience of travelling by passenger vessel or ferry reported by people with disabilities was predominantly ferry to France and the UK but a small number also made tourist excursions or relied on ferries to and from offshore islands. Use of these modes of transport is shown in the Chart below.

Chart 18

Use of Passenger Vessels/Ferries

- 6% Offshore islands
- 10% Tourist excursions
- 84% Ferries to UK & France
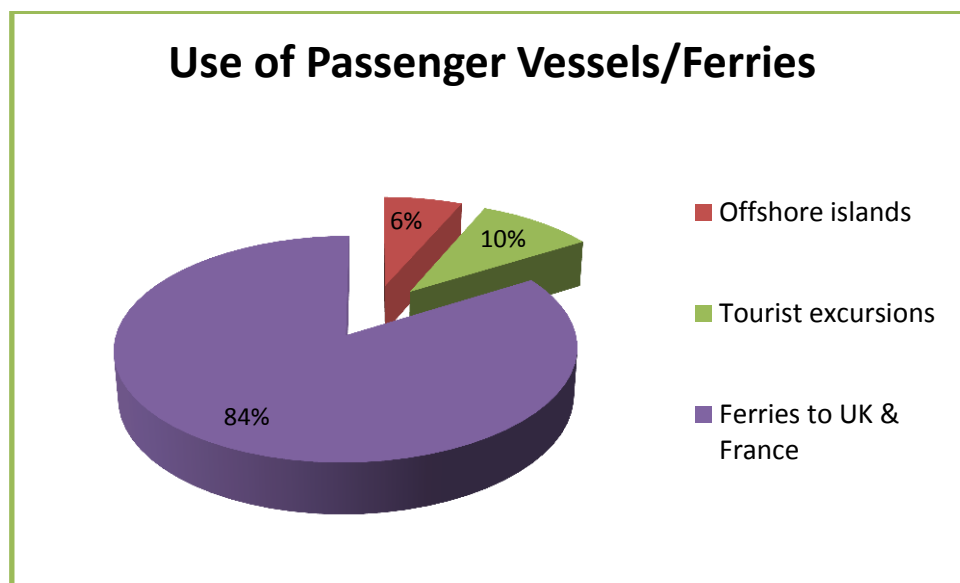
The difficulties reported generally mirror those identified for air travel and are shown in the Chart below.

Chart 19

Difficulty using Passenger Vessels/Ferries

Percentage

Booking the trip – 30
Finding out about help available – 40
Getting to the port/harbour – 40
Getting around the port/harbour – 25
Getting help at port/harbour – 35
Getting on board – 40
Getting around on board – 30
Getting help on board – 25
Use of facilities on board – 30
Staff attitude on board or at port/harbour – 12
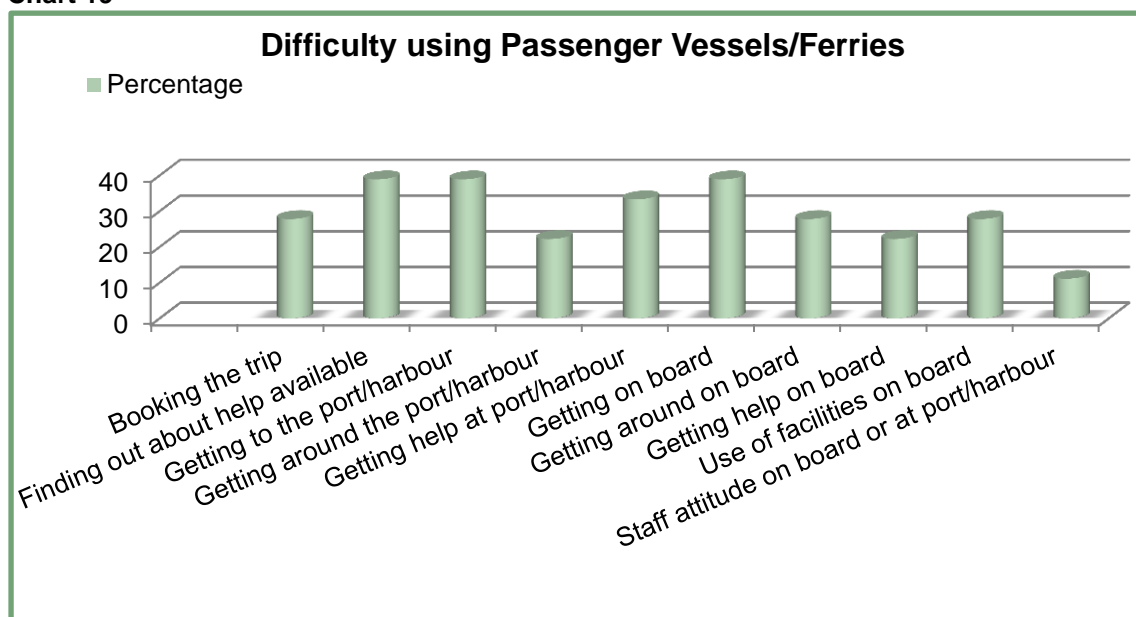
One criticism of this mode of travel came from a person with a disability who is dependent on ferries to travel to and from an offshore island.

> "The only way I can use the ferry is in a car, this is not only costly but also adds to my exclusion from society as I cannot sit in the passenger cabin with the other Islanders. The piers and ferries are not suitable for wheelchairs. They have ramps for the cars to get on but the passenger cabins are not accessible. The piers are very steep also at low tide".

Policy

The Marine Passenger Transport element of this Plan deals with passenger ships on voyages within the State or to and from the State, and international ferry ports which serve these passenger ships and, where applicable, regional ports and harbours. *Transport Access for All* promotes an integrated approach to the implementation of the accessibility measures under these two areas of marine passenger transport so that transport users will experience a comparable standard of accessibility at ports, on vessels and the interface between them.

There are widely differing types of passenger ships, which range from modern large international passenger ferries serving ports in Britain and France, to medium sized passenger ships serving our offshore islands as well as small vessels plying short voyages on inshore waters and lakes. Vessels are almost all in private ownership and none of the international ferries now operate under the Irish Flag. The facilities for passengers vary considerably between the largest and the smallest ships and reflect the length and nature of the trips which the various vessels undertake. This variation is also reflected in the different categories of harbours from large commercial ports serving international ferries to smaller regional and local ports from which passenger services operate.

Legislation

The European Communities (Passenger Ships) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 322 of 2011) implements Directive 2009/45/EC on Safety Rules and Standards for Passenger Ships. These include access requirements to board the ship and to move about on board as well as requirements for accessible signage and other features. The regulations apply to all passenger ships of Class A, B, C or D (as defined in Article 4.1 of the Directive) and all high-speed passenger craft used for public transport, the keel of which was laid on or after 1 October 2004.

The Merchant Shipping Act 2010 (No. 14 of 2010) was enacted in July 2010 and gives enhanced enabling powers to the Minister to regulate and develop codes of practice to improve accessibility on passenger vessels.

Passenger Ships engaged on international voyages

Both Irish flagged and foreign flagged vessels engaged on international voyages are governed by international agreements. Arising from these agreements, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) produced Circular MSC/735 of 24 June 1996 "*Recommendation on the design and operation of passenger ships to respond to elderly and disabled persons' needs."* The IMO Circular includes guidelines covering a range of topics including boarding, access, car parking, elevators, accommodation, corridors, handrails, toilet facilities, information and training.

Domestic Passenger Ships

Safety rules and standards for domestic passenger ships are governed by EU Directive 2009/45/EC which as mentioned above was transposed into Irish law by Statutory Instrument No. 322 of 2011. The Directive, which is aimed at certain categories of domestic passenger ships not engaged on international voyages, establishes standards of a general nature to assist passengers with reduced mobility.

Services to Offshore Islands

A number of ferry services to offshore islands are operated under contract with and subsidised by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Department

includes a requirement in all new contracts that operators must provide disability awareness training for all staff employed on their vessels.

Passenger Ports

There are four international ferry ports in the State: Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare. The passenger facilities in these ports are operated by state owned companies. These port companies recognise the importance of delivering a high quality service to all passengers including to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

In line with *Transport Access for All*, each of the four international ferry ports undertook an independent accessibility audit of their passenger facilities and has implemented an action plan for remedial works to improve the accessibility of their passenger facilities. Each port also appointed an Accessibility Officer. Implementation of the action plans commenced in 2008, and a number of projects received funding from the Department.

Maritime Passenger Transport Forum

The Maritime Passenger Transport Forum was established in December 2006 as a requirement of the Department's Sectoral Plan.

The Forum is made up of representatives of disability organisations, passenger ship and port service providers, relevant Government departments and the National Disability Authority. The Maritime Passenger Transport Forum Report was published on 24 November 2008.

The Forum continues its work today with new terms of reference, and concentrates on implementing the recommendations of its report.

Access Audits for Passenger Ships

Following the report of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum and its many recommendations, access audits were carried out in 2008 by a consultant engaged

by the Department on a representative selection of domestic passenger ships and the harbours/landing places to and from which they operate.

An access audit is the first step in identifying physical and other barriers that people with disabilities may encounter when using a service and provides the basis for an access improvement plan. In recognition of that fact, further access audits were offered to passenger ship operators/owners and carried out in 2009.

Approximately 50 passenger ships in total have been audited and the results of the audits distributed to the owners/operators of the ships and the local authorities with responsibility for the harbours/landing places from which the ships operate.

Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport

Arising from another recommendation of the Forum "Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport" was published jointly by the Department and the National Disability Authority in March 2010. The Guidelines are designed as a key support to all those involved in providing maritime passenger transport services, including passenger vessel owners and operators, port operators and local authorities. The Guidelines contain a range of practical advice and information.

The guidance covers all aspects of a journey, including advice on providing accessible information for planning the journey, improving access on board vessels, making shore side facilities accessible, disability awareness training for staff and improving communications with passengers.

A leaflet "10 Tips for Better Access" was also produced and the Guidelines booklet and the leaflet were widely distributed to those providing maritime passenger transport services. The leaflet continues to be distributed to passenger boat owners/operators when they receive their passenger boat licence from the Department. Both documents are available to view or download from the Department's website www.dttas.ie or the NDA website www.nda.ie

Recent Developments

A seminar "Get on Board with Maritime Passenger Transport Accessibility" was held in the National Disability Authority offices on 1 November 2010. It offered an opportunity for those involved in the maritime passenger transport industry to hear about recent developments in the area of maritime accessibility at national and EU level, to share experiences, information and explore ideas of best practice to benefit business. The seminar was attended by representatives of local authorities, port/harbour authorities, passenger ship owners and operators, Maritime Passenger Transport Forum members and other stakeholders.

Passenger Rights

European Regulation 1177/2010 on the "Rights of Passengers Travelling by Sea and Inland Waterway"[18] will come into effect on 18 December 2012. The Regulation is similar to those already in place in respect of air and rail passenger rights.

It includes provisions on non-discrimination and assistance for people with disabilities and reduced mobility. This includes an obligation to: provide assistance at ports or harbours and on board ships; carry recognised assistance dogs (subject to national regulations); carry mobility equipment (such as wheelchairs) free of charge and to provide information in accessible formats.

The Regulation applies to all passenger services where:
- The port of embarkation is within a Member State; or
- The port of embarkation is outside a Member State but the port of disembarkation is within a Member State and the carrier is a European Union carrier; and additionally
- Cruise trips where the port of embarkation is within a Member State (subject to some exemptions).

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[18] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:334:0001:0016:EN:PDF

The Regulation does not apply to vessels which are licensed to carry 12 or less passengers, or ships which have a crew of less than 4 persons, or where the overall journey for the passenger is less than 500 metres one way or on sightseeing/excursion tours other than cruises.

In 2011 the Department issued an easy to follow guidance document on the Regulation to all passenger ship owners/operators. The guidance document contains general information on the Regulation as well as a list of Questions and Answers to help the operators to understand what is required of them if they have ships or passenger services that have obligations under the Regulation. A copy of the guidance document is available to view or download from the Department's website www.dttas.ie.

3.8 Cross-Cutting and Cross-Sectoral Issues

Responsibility for certain accessibility issues under *Transport Access for All*, fall under the remit of a number of Government Departments, service providers and local authorities.

This part of the Plan identifies the broad areas where some degree of co-operative implementation will improve the Plan's effectiveness.

Public Transport Services Regulation

The National Transport Authority was established in December 2009. Its remit is to regulate public passenger transport services across Ireland and to direct and integrate the delivery of public transport services and infrastructure.

Among other things, the NTA is responsible for -

- Regulating small public service vehicles (i.e. taxis, hackneys and limousines) and their drivers,
- Entering into contracts for the provision of subsidised public bus and rail services,
- Licensing public bus services which are not subsidised.

A key objective in its Statement of Strategy 2012-2014 is to "Develop an accessible public transport system, which ensures that most people are within easy reach of a reliable public transport service and which enables people with a disability or mobility impairment to access those services". This will continue to be an objective of the NTA in its further strategies. In that regard, any buses purchased for the operation of public transport services that are in receipt of a subsidy from the NTA, will be accessible.

The NTA has public service contracts in place with Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Bus Éireann for the delivery of socially needed public transport services which require the operator to comply with the accessibility standards for members of the public with special needs set out in the Sectoral Plan for Transport. The contracted parties are

required to report annually on their progress in delivery of the targets in the plan in relation to improved accessibility. Quarterly performance reports in relation to the public services contracts are published on the NTA website www.nationaltransport.ie

In relation to licensed services, the NTA will engage with the representatives of the industry to progress the provision of accessible services by those operators.

The NTA also administers the Accessibility Grants Programme on behalf of the Department which notifies the NTA of the funding allocation for this programme at the start of each year. Based on proposals received from the NTA, the accessibility projects to be funded that year are agreed. The Department receives regular progress reports from the NTA on the Accessibility Programme and updates can be provided as necessary to the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. In any event, the NTA will, by the end of the first quarter each year, present PTAC with an Accessibility Plan for the year in question together with a progress report on the previous year's Accessibility Plan.

Integrated Ticketing

The National Transport Authority launched Integrated Ticketing in December 2011. In its initial stages, integrated ticketing is providing a single 'smart card' which enables transport users to pay fares electronically across all public transport providers in the Greater Dublin Area.

Initially, the new ticket will contain an 'ePurse' which can be topped up and used to pay fares across Dublin Bus, Luas and Irish Rail services. Following on from this, the project will extend to include Bus Éireann and private operators' ticketing on the smart card. In 2012, it will be further expanded to incorporate prepaid discounted products, such as monthly and annual travel tickets that are currently provided by the public transport operators.

The NTA has provided the Department of Social Protection with the information that would enable them to include the integrated ticket on their proposed smart card which will assist public transport customers with disabilities.

Passenger Information

A key objective of the National Transport Authority since its establishment has been to improve public transport services information. The projects being undertaking at present are:

Real Time Passenger Information

The NTA has managed the delivery of the Real Time Passenger Information System. The system provides real time arrival information for public transport services on street signs and on a web, app and SMS text service. By end 2011 there were 370 signs in place in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and a further 150 signs will be in place in the GDA by the end of 2012. The information is available for Dublin Bus services initially but this will be extended to include all other bus operators and LUAS. Street signs will be erected in Cork starting in spring 2012 and Limerick, Waterford and Galway will follow later in 2012. The web service for Dublin Bus Services currently shows whether a bus is accessible. The information is available by SMS text for visually impaired customers.

National Intermodal Journey Planner

The National Intermodal Journey Planner (NIJP) is under development. It will be a web-based system and will be hosted on the *Transport for Ireland* website (see below) which will allow the user to plan journeys in advance across all of Ireland on all modes of transport. The NIJP may also offer detailed information about journeys to, from and within Ireland as well as to any point in Ireland or Northern Ireland served by National Rail or Coach networks and to and from any point in Ireland or Northern Ireland served by ferry services originating within Ireland.

The NIJP will offer all available data about all journeys within Ireland and will facilitate journeys across multiple modes and operators. The NIJP will include all the services provided by the main public transport companies including a number of independent licensed operators throughout Ireland offering various frequencies of bus services.

The Journey Planner will provide journey plans for customers with accessibility requirements. Earlier this year, the Authority established a data acquisition programme which involved field surveying at all the major transport hubs in the country to establish an inventory of facilities in place. The aim of this programme was to improve the information that will be published through the journey planner.

In preparation for the London Olympics, the Department for Transport in the UK and Transport for London worked to establish a new standard for accessibility information in the London Journey Planner with their contractor. As the Irish system is based on the London system it is planned that the new standard will be implemented in Ireland as soon as possible.

Websites

The website of the National Transport Authority is compliant with current accessibility standards. The NTA is also developing a *Transport for Ireland* website to accessibility standards with a view to the provision of a 'one-stop shop' for public transport information.

Iarnród Eireann, Bus Éireann and Bus Átha Cliath, have upgraded their Internet websites in recent years. Each website now includes:

- Timetable information (with Real Time Passenger Information for DART as well as certain Dublin suburban services on the Iarnród Eireann website);
- Information on fares & promotional offers as well as the purchase & delivery of some tickets;
- A seat reservation service in the case of Iarnród Eireann;
- Information relating to the companies' accessible services; and
- Special features to assist visually impaired people.

In addition, the Bus Éireann and Iarnród Eireann websites contain journey-planning services. All three web sites are accessible through the CIE website at www.cie.ie or at www.buseireann.ie, www.irishrail.ie or www.dublinbus.ie.

The Luas Website can be accessed at www.luas.ie and is compliant with current accessibility standards, though not yet compliant with WAI and WCAG guidelines. A mobile version of the website was recently launched and is designed to deliver key information to customers in a quick and efficient manner. It is a lighter and mobile-adapted version of www.luas.ie. All the key features of the full Luas website are optimised so it is fast, accessible and easy to navigate.

A number of licensed private bus operators have dedicated websites that provide passenger information & fare information on scheduled services and, in some cases, facilitate the purchase of tickets.

While the work undertaken to date on all these sites represents significant progress, further improvements are required to facilitate journey planning particularly for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. As recommended by the National Disability Authority, the Department will encourage all passenger transport providers to achieve conformity with the Web Accessibility Initiatives (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for its HTML-based information and services, including public websites, HTML based e-mail and newsletters. The WCAG can be accessed at www.w3.org/WAI.

The Department will ensure that any future developments or enhancements to the Department's own website incorporate compliance with accessibility standards.

The Department will continue to consult with relevant bodies including transport operators and the Public Transport Accessibility Committee with a view to progressing improvements in website design and use.

Webpage for Ireland

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport continues to participate in the British-Irish Council (BIC) Working Group on Accessible Transport, which is chaired by the Department of Regional Development in Northern Ireland. This group is focussing on areas of possible co-operation between the various jurisdictions (Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales, Isle of Man, Jersey and

Guernsey) with an ultimate aim of facilitating seamless travel by people with disabilities throughout Britain and Ireland. Among other things, the Group has considered improving accessible travel information by developing a common webpage format to provide a range of information for disabled people travelling within an administrative area and from one administration area to another. A webpage for Ireland was launched in June 2012 and is currently hosted on the Department's website. In due course, however, it will be relocated to the Transport for Ireland website being developed by the National Transport Authority.

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) was established in January 2007 under the Disability Act 2005 and is an integral part of the National Disability Strategy. The Centre is part of the National Disability Authority (NDA) which is the lead state agency on disability issues, providing independent expert advice to Government on policy and practice. Ireland is the first country in the world to place Universal Design on a statutory footing, emphasising the Government's commitment to improving the daily lives of people with a disability.

The Centre's work is focusing on:
- The built and external environment (streets, spaces, etc.);
- Products and services provided in those places;
- Systems including information and communications technology (ICT).

The CEUD has produced IT Accessibility Guidelines - design guidelines that cover key components of the public transport information infrastructure including:
- Information displays
- Kiosks (for ticketing and information)
    - Locating and accessing the terminal (terminal environment)
    - Using the terminal (Terminal software and hardware)
- Written instructions and advertisements (posters and leaflets)
- Information published on the web
- Smart Card systems – design considerations for the wide variety of aspects to a service that uses Smart Cards, e.g.:

- How to apply for a card,
- Technology used in the card,
- Enabling customisation of interfaces used on terminals that interact with the card,
- Contact and contactless smart cards
- Potential of Near Field Communications (NFC) to improve service usability - contactless transactions.

The Department will continue to encourage transport companies and local authorities to consult with CEUD in meeting their accessibility requirements under the Disability Act 2005.

Accessibility Audits

Carrying out an accessibility audit can be an invaluable tool for a transport operator in measuring the extent to which their transport services are accessible. Accessibility Audits should be carried out in advance of all public transport infrastructure renewal projects to identify the remedial measures to be implemented as part of the renewal.

In addition, passenger surveys should be carried out after a programme of works to assess if the accessibility needs have been adequately met. People with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments will have a key role in such audits. Accessibility Audits have become a central feature of the assessment process for planning and works being carried out by all the transport providers engaged in the implementation of measures under *Transport Access for All.*

Local authority road user audits will help to enhance this process (see page 54) and the review of the associated guidelines in conjunction with road safety guidelines should also assist.

Public Transport Interchanges

Many journeys are made up of more than one stage and involve changing between vehicles or systems (for example from bus to train). This process can be particularly difficult for people with disabilities and unless the interchange facilities and services are accessible, the whole journey may be impossible. Common problems for people with mobility, sensory or cognitive impairments include changes of level between one

system and the next and poor signage and information to help people find their way between services.

The Department recognises that the difficulties are not confined to infrastructural issues but also encompass operational matters such as ensuring, for instance, that buses which serve train stations/ports are timetabled to take account of train/ship arrival and departure times.

Disability Awareness Training

Disability awareness training is essential for the proper delivery of transport services. Training is essential for all front-line staff, such as drivers and ticketing staff but it is also an important part of induction and refresher training for supervisors and managers.

The National Disability Authority (NDA) has provided guidance on disability awareness training for transport providers (Recommended Accessibility Guidelines for Public Transport Operators in Ireland) together with Guidelines for Purchasers of Disability Equality Training. Both documents are available on the NDA website at www.nda.ie. The NDA has also developed an eLearning course. The course, entitled Disability Equality Training for Public Service Staff, is available to anybody working in the public service in Ireland. It is available at elearning.nda.ie .

Disability awareness training is provided on an on-going basis by Bus Éireann, Bus Átha Cliath, Iarnród Éireann, the Railway Procurement Agency and Veolia Transport.

All Dublin Bus drivers receive disability and accessibility awareness training. Follow up accessibility days are held in depots and poster campaigns are used to reinforce the points covered in training.

The National Transport Authority is putting in place a mandatory skills development programme for all new entrants to the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) industry. A core element of that programme will be disability awareness and training relevant

to the provision of a service for people with mobility, cognitive and sensory impairments. The National Transport Authority has also made it a condition of receipt of the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant for taxis that the grant recipient has undergone Disability Awareness Training.

The Department funded disability awareness training for passenger ship owners/operators over a three year period from 2007 to 2009. The training took place in Galway, Killarney, Letterkenny, Waterford and Athlone. In total, 70 passenger ship owners/operators have been trained in disability awareness.

Disability awareness training is also available to staff in the Department.

In conjunction with PTAC, the Department will give consideration to the development by the National Transport Authority and the National Disability Authority of common training guidelines for the delivery and implementation of disability awareness training.

Disability User Groups

User groups formed from regular public transport users with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments are invaluable in the planning, design and operation of successful public transport services. Guidelines for Disability User Groups have been prepared by the NDA in consultation with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee to provide guidance *inter alia* on terms of reference, meeting process and review mechanisms. See www.nda.ie.

Disability user groups have already been established by Bus Éireann, Bus Átha Cliath, Iarnród Éireann, the Railway Procurement Agency / Veolia Transport (Luas) and by the Dublin Airport Authority.

The Dublin Bus User Group for instance is made up of members from NCBI, IWA, St. Michaels House, Senior Citizens Parliament and Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind. The members of the User Group give invaluable help and information on accessibility and also on a wide range of other areas.

The Department's maritime disability user group, the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum, also includes representation from a number of organisations representing people with disabilities.

Driver Training

The development of driver training for disabled people falls within the remit of the Road Safety Authority as do related issues such as assessment standards, standards for adaptation of vehicles and for securing wheelchair passengers as well as use of lifts and ramps in vehicles by passengers.

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) has been working to improve access to driver training for those with disabilities. This includes a number of current and ongoing projects:

- RSA has consulted with the Irish Deaf Society and jointly prepared an information booklet for Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) to assist them with the teaching of deaf or hard of hearing learners.
- RSA's Access Officer has consulted with various advocacy groups with a view to developing a suitable list of accreditations that could be advertised on the RSA website so that learners with disabilities could select those ADIs who have appropriate special skills to help them.
- Driver training for drivers with disabilities is available through the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Disabled Drivers Association – both of whom use ADIs and experienced occupational therapists.
- The RSA has collaborated with the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland (RCPI) to establishing an Office of Traffic Medicine. This Office will have a number of functions to set out guidance for the standards of medical fitness for both car and other vehicles on our roads. The publication of formal guidance standards is being progressed and this will be supported by training for medical professionals and practical information for members of the public.
- This measure will improve the quality of information available to drivers and raise awareness of driver fitness issues. Guidance will also be available for

people with disabilities or older people and who may have particular issues that impact on their driving.

The overarching objective is to enable drivers to be mobile to the greatest possible extent consistent with safety on our roads.

Complaints and Redress Structures

In compliance with section 31(4)(b) of the Disability Act 2005, transport providers and relevant bodies are required to have adequate procedures and structures in place to deal with complaints of alleged non-compliance with the provisions of the Sectoral Plan. In the case of private transport companies and others providing passenger transport services, similar procedures and structures are to be established, either under the auspices of organisations representing private transport operators, or regulatory bodies with responsibility for individual passenger transport sectors or other bodies or organisations approved by the Minister.

These procedures and systems must have due regard to the guidance provided by the Ombudsman's Office. Anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint in relation to the accessibility of public transport services provided by these companies, to which a complaint should be directed in the first instance, is entitled to appeal the outcome to the Office of the Ombudsman. Section 40 of the Disability Act 2005 relates to the application of the Ombudsman Act 1980. It should be noted that the Ombudsman's role covers complaints about all bodies, organisations and other persons to which this Plan applies, including private passenger transport services providers.
(http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/OtherPublications/InformationLeaflets/TheOmbud smanandtheDisabilityAct2005/)

In addition, all organisations required to have complaints and redress procedures in place are also required to ensure as far as practicable that information on these procedures is available in alternative formats to enable people with disabilities to access them. It is the responsibility of the Senior Official for accessibility matters in each of the transport bodies, in the first instance, to ensure compliance.

Section 4: Policy Proposals

Context

The Minister and his Department remain firmly committed to delivering the goal of fully accessible public transport. The Department is also committed to ensuring that in so far as possible roads and the pedestrian environment are barrier free so that people with disabilities can get to and from stops and stations.

Careful note has been taken of the comments received in response to the consultation on the Sectoral Plan both from people with disabilities and from local authorities, transport providers, disability organisations and other stakeholders.

Those responses have generally indicated that services and facilities are continuing to improve and that the opportunities for disabled people to travel with confidence are increasing. But it is also clear that there are areas in which more needs to be done. While economic constraints remain a major issue, progress can still be made to tackle some of the remaining problems identified.

Short Term initiatives

Training

It was clear from the responses to the survey from people with disabilities and from disability organisations that training of drivers and other front line staff remains patchy and in some areas is clearly inadequate. This includes both general disability awareness training and technical training in areas such as correct operation of a lift or securing wheelchairs in vehicles.

The Department will take steps in partnership with PTAC to:
- Review the content and quality of disability awareness training given to all front line transport staff;

- Review the content and quality of specific technical training given to drivers in the operation of equipment such as lifts, ramps and wheelchair securing equipment.
- Make recommendations for necessary improvements in line with best practice both to raise standards and to achieve greater consistency of training across all transport modes.

Monitoring and Enforcement

There was also important feedback on a lack of monitoring and enforcement of access improvements already in place. Examples included:

- The use of audible and visual information systems on trains and buses. There is anecdotal evidence that these are often switched off so that vital information to blind or deaf passengers is unavailable.
- Stopping buses close to kerbs. Even where investment has been made in infrastructure such as accessible kerbs to enable the bus to pull up tight against the kerb, passengers report that drivers often pull in at an angle leaving a significant gap so that passengers with mobility problems have to step down into the road rather than straight onto the kerb. Bus operators report that the main reason for this is illegally parked vehicles at bus stops.
- Passengers with baby buggies taking up the space on buses and the Luas intended for wheelchair users and refusing to move to allow them to board the vehicle;
- Practices reported in relation to air travel (charging for the carriage of mobility equipment, for example) which is clearly in breach of the European Regulation (1107/2006) on Air Passenger Rights.

The following steps will be investigated as a means to tackle these problems:

- Mystery Shoppers: People with disabilities to act as "mystery shoppers" in the course of their normal daily travel and to feed back any problems or shortcomings observed, in the case of bus/train/taxi/hackney to the National Transport Authority and the operator concerned and in the case of air travel to

the Commission for Aviation Regulation. E-mail would be a simple way to facilitate this process;

- In consultation with transport operators and enforcement authorities, use of cameras fitted to the front of buses to record the registration details of illegally parked vehicles;

- Giving free travel to parking enforcement officers so that they are riding regularly on the buses and able to take immediate action on any part of the route to identify illegally parked vehicles.

Dissemination of Information and Awareness Raising

Initiatives will be explored to improve the availability and accessibility of travel information for people with disabilities including information on EU Regulations 1107/2006 (Air Passenger Rights), 1371/2007 (Rail passenger rights) and 1177/2010 (Sea and inland waterways passenger rights). The British-Irish Council webpage initiative may be of assistance in this regard.

Transport companies funded by the Department will be encouraged to ensure that their websites comply with accessibility standards and that they include comprehensive information on accessible services and facilities.

More Consistent Approach to Local Authority Accessibility Improvements

Comments made in response to the consultation process suggest that there is a lack of consistency of approach at local authority level in the way in which infrastructure improvements are made, for example to install dropped kerbs or make bus/coach stops accessible. It is clearly unhelpful to people with disabilities and potentially a poor use of resources if all work of this nature is not done consistently in accordance with established best practice.

Although the Department has taken significant and useful steps in the past to disseminate information on best practice in such areas to local authorities, there may be scope to strengthen the approach to ensure greater consistency. This matter will

be explored by the Department in conjunction with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee.

The National Transport Authority Is committed to integrating services at single bus stops, where feasible, no matter who the provider of the service is, as this will assist people with disabilities in reducing travel between stops.

Other Options

A number of issues were raised during the Review which require further detailed consideration.

Accessibility as a universal condition of funding/licensing

The Department either directly or through the National Transport Authority, has wide ranging powers to promote accessibility as a condition of state funding or the granting of licenses.

This "carrot and stick "approach is already being used to some extent and the scope for extending it, to provide an effective and cost-efficient means of delivering accessibility in areas where progress is currently slow and where problems have been identified, will be examined by the Department in conjunction with the NTA.

Procurement of Exchequer Funded Transport Services

The Department, in conjunction with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, will encourage the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group and the National Procurement Service to explore the possibility of having accessibility incorporated as a key element of tenders/contracts for Exchequer funded transport services.

Public Transport Accessibility Committee

The Department, in conjunction with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, will review the role and operation of the Committee with a view to making it more effective.

Section 5: Strengthening the implementation of the Sectoral Plan

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Programme for Government commits, among other things, to a whole-of-government involvement and monitoring of the National Disability Strategy in partnership with the disability sector. A National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG) has been established. It is made up of a comprehensive representation of Government Departments, the National Disability Authority, the County & City Managers Association, representative organisations of people with disabilities together with a number of individuals (experts by experience in living with disabilities) appointed in a personal capacity. The Committee is currently developing an implementation plan for the strategy which will be inclusive of but wider than the Sectoral Plans under the Disability Act 2005. Following publication of the NDS implementation plan, NDSIG will meet at least 4 times per annum to review progress and address any significant issues arising. The Cabinet Committee on Social Policy chaired by the Taoiseach will be kept informed of progress.

The Department continues to participate in the monitoring and reporting structures for the National Disability Strategy. Reports in that regard are reviewed in advance by the Department's Public Transport Accessibility Committee (Appendix 2). This Committee has a remit to advise the Minister on the accessibility aspects of public transport investment projects and on other public transport accessibility issues as well as having a monitoring role in relation to progress in implementing the Sectoral Plan and evaluating its impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

Oversight and Enforcement

The legal obligation to advance accessibility measures under the Transport Sectoral Plan is provided for in Section 34 of the Disability Act 2005. Oversight and enforcement of the implementation of measures under the Sectoral Plan is achieved by way of appropriate governance structures, reporting requirements and financial

controls. Given its key function for the better provision and integration of public transport services generally, including improved accessibility for people with disabilities, the National transport Authority has a key role to play here.

The Department has appointed a senior official with responsibility for oversight of the implementation of *Transport Access for All*. This oversight role is supported by the appointment by each agency/body under the aegis of the Department, of a senior official with specific responsibility for delivering on the commitments contained in this Sectoral Plan in respect of the company concerned and for reporting to, and liaising with, the Department in relation to all transport accessibility matters. In fulfilling their statutory obligations under sections 26, 27 and 28 of the Disability Act, public bodies must have regard to the NDA Code of Practice on accessibility of public services and information provided by public bodies (S.I. No. 163 of 2006 refers http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2006/en/si/0163.html).

Each state agency, regulatory body, company or representative organisation or other body or organisation that is comprehended by this Plan and required by statute to prepare and/or publish an annual report, must include therein a yearly progress report on how it is meeting its obligations under this Sectoral Plan. Furthermore, each company, representative organisation, regulatory body or other body or organisation that carries out a complaints investigation function under this Plan is required to report to the Minister annually in relation to complaints concerning alleged non-compliance with the provisions of this Plan, and the changes brought forward, or proposed, to ensure improved access to the services covered by the Plan. Updates will also be provided to PTAC as required.

Financial oversight and control mechanisms are in place for both current and capital expenditure made under the Plan. Compliance of the CIE companies with accessibility standards is included within the public service contracts in place between the National Transport Authority and each of the CIÉ companies. These contracts link performance standards and quality of services with subvention payments.

The terms for allocation and drawdown of capital funding for accessibility projects comply with best practice and the ECMT Charter on Access to Transport Services and Infrastructure. Such projects must be vetted for accessibility by competent authorities and experts in disability from the design and planning stages to the monitoring and evaluation stages. Funding for projects is provided in accordance with Department of Finance guidelines on public expenditure and EU obligations on such matters as public procurement and State Aid Rules etc.

In general, explicit enforcement measures for sectoral plans are not provided. However, the oversight and monitoring structures outlined in this review appear to be resulting in the implementation of the plan in line with the agreed timelines.

Accessibility Proofing of Transport Policy and Systems

It is the responsibility of the Senior Official for accessibility matters within the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to ensure that Transport Policy and Systems include provision for accessibility.

All new legal and regulatory proposals are developed mindful of the needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. Furthermore, regulatory impact analysis for all proposed primary legislation, statutory instruments, EU directives and regulations are accessibility proofed. The Department will incorporate disability proofing into any regulatory impact analysis and when developing new policies, practices and services and in its reviews of existing policies, practices and services.

All new overarching strategic and policy development by the Department will take into account accessibility considerations. This will extend to Policy Development by agencies and bodies under the aegis of the Department.

In line with the Public Service Management Act, 1997, which provides for the drafting of the Department Strategy Statements, due regard is given to cross-Departmental Government commitments to the Disability Act 2005 in respect of this Department's commitments under Section 34 and in respect of accessibility responsibilities of public bodies generally. Explicit recognition is given to the objective of making transport more accessible within the Department's Statement of Strategy. The Accessibility objective is defined in such a way as to allow subsequent assessment as to whether or not it is achieved, and it is supplemented by the setting of specific,

quantifiable targets or key performance indicators. The Department's Statement of Strategy is required to involve all relevant external and internal stakeholders in the development of Transport Strategy and Policy. This includes ensuring there is participation by staff with disabilities throughout the Department in the policy development process. The commitments, relevant to the Department in *Transport Access for All*, are included in the Department's Statement of Strategy, related Business Plans and in the Department's Annual Reports.

The obligations on public bodies in fulfilling their statutory obligations under section 26, 27 and 28 of the Disability Act extend to all bodies under the auspices of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, including the National Transport Authority, the National Roads Authority, the Road Safety Authority and the Railway Safety Commission. In establishing any new bodies with responsibility for transport matters, the Department will continue to ensure that each body will have a specific remit with regard to transport accessibility.

Local authority road user audits will be further developed and rolled out. These will ensure that all road users, including people with mobility/sensory impairments, are provided for in road transport infrastructure.

The contribution of people with disabilities to the development of accessible transport policy and to monitoring progress with the implementation of the sectoral plan for public transport is facilitated by way of their participation in the work of the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. Membership of PTAC is reviewed on an ongoing basis in the light of changes to the Department's responsibilities.

Data and Research Strategy

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport recognises the importance of comprehensive data and research across the Transport Sector and in particular on accessible transport. The Department has already contributed to a number of initiatives in that regard.

The questionnaire survey of transport users, which accompanied the public consultation for the 2008 review of *Transport Access for All* represented a first step in gathering baseline information concerning the impact of the accessible transport measures being implemented under the Plan. This approach has been welcomed by the Public Transport Accessibility Committee and by the National Disability Authority as a model of best practice. The 2011 Review incorporated a similar exercise in order to build on this baseline research and it is envisaged that subsequent reviews of the Transport Sectoral Plan will include a similar approach. This will help to provide an on-going indication of progress in terms of actual improvements to the experiences of people with disabilities in using public transport.

In 2013, the National Disability Authority will undertake research work on behalf of the Department relating to legal provisions for motorised personal transport including scooters and electric wheelchairs with a view to

a) Establishing the position in Ireland;
b) Establishing the position in other countries;
c) Identifying key issues and trends;
d) Recommending actions as required.

Section 6: Implementation across other Organisations

Central to the objective of integration is joint working across relevant sectors, Government Departments and other organisations to develop a coherent policy framework to address all modes and underpin the development of an integrated accessible transport system. The Sectoral Plan provides for such a co-ordinated approach in laying down a firm policy foundation for the longer term to deal with cross-cutting accessibility issues. A range of issues require co-ordinated action, particularly the connecting space between the built environment and transport nodes, insurance coverage for transport providers, driving standards and formal assessment for disabled drivers, accessible parking and accessibility awareness within quality customer service provision.

Given the degree to which initiatives in *Transport Access for All* depend on the implementation of measures in the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) Sectoral Plan, that Department and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) participate in the work of each other's monitoring committees (PTAC in DTTAS's case).

In addition, the City and County Managers Association is represented on PTAC and this facilitates communication, joint working and problem resolution between the Department and the local authority sector.

From time to time there will also need to be joint working on accessibility with other Sectors. This might involve the integration of transport policy with other policies in the area of social inclusion, e.g. the free travel scheme; school transport, rural social policy and grant aid schemes operated by other Government Departments. The Department will continue to engage with these and other Sectors on accessibility matters as they arise.

Co-ordinated action is also required vertically between Government, the Public and Stakeholders and other interest groups. Reviews of *Transport Access for All* will continue to provide for public input into the future direction and focus of the Plan. Structures in place via the Disability User Groups established under each transport

sector and via the Public Transport Accessibility Committee already provide for on-going joint working and co-ordinated action involving people with disabilities via their representative organisations. The role of the National Disability Implementation Group ensures an oversight and monitoring role for disability stakeholders and interest groups at the highest level of policy decision-making and development.

The Department will continue to work with the relevant transport accessibility authorities in Northern Ireland on matters of mutual interest relating to transport accessibility. It will also continue to work with other EU States together with national and international bodies to advance the public transport accessibility agenda.

An Integrated Accessible Transport Network

One of the most commonly cited difficulties experienced by transport users responding to the questionnaire survey for this review was the difficulty getting to and from the transport nodes including bus and rail stations, bus stops, airports and sea ports. Many responses to the public consultation proposed the inclusion in the Sectoral Plan of measures for door-to-door and specialist accessible transport particularly in urban areas, greater integration of rural transport with scheduled public transport services by the state companies and licensed private operators as well as with locally provided specialist healthcare and school transport services. A role was identified here also for integrated transport systems and technologies for passenger information before and during journeys. A related concern is the interface between private car and the public transport network requiring accessible parking provision.

Integration of public transport services is a key objective for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. In line with the inclusive approach reflected in this Plan, integration is being pursued in a way that will not differentiate between people with disabilities and other passengers. The provision of improved interfacing of infrastructure, services, information and payment systems is key to effective integration. The main strategies to deliver improved integration include the phased introduction of integrated ticketing and of real time passenger information systems by the National Transport Authority, better inter-modal links to seaports and airports and utilisation of intelligent transport systems.

Some of these integration issues are already being dealt with within the context of *Transport Access for All* such as improved passenger information systems and the introduction of new technologies.

A number of other integration measures are being explored in the context of work related to local and rural integrated transport services (see section 3.). These involve greater levels of co-ordinated transport delivery across a range of exchequer funded local and rural transport services including the RTP, HSE non-acute transport and school transport and voluntary transport initiatives. Provision of transport services for older people and people with disabilities is a key consideration.

Section 7: Revised Targets and Actions

Note: Dates contained in this table were correct as at April 2012. Subject to the availability of resources, the general target for completion of actions in this Transport Sectoral Plan is end 2015 unless stated otherwise.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
		PUBLIC TRANSPORT	
General			
Improved provision and delivery of accessible public transport services	Section 48 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (No. 15 of 2008) requires that a public services contract under the Act shall, among other things, provide for accessibility standards.	National Transport Authority	The National Transport Authority contracts with Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus and Irish Rail include a requirement that those operators comply with the accessibility standards for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments set out in 'Transport Access for All'. The NTA will monitor and report on progress in that regard.
	Monitor the implementation of the Plan by transport operators under the Direct Award contracts with the National Transport Authority	National Transport Authority	Annual report on accessibility will be provided to DTTAS by the National Transport Authority with updates to PTAC as required.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Bus and Coach			
Urban Bus Services			
Make all urban public transport buses accessible for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Continue to replace existing vehicles and add additional vehicles to bus fleets using only low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses that have on-board features to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. Continue to provide additional accessible services on a route by route basis.	Bus Átha Cliath, Bus Éireann and Private Operators	• Dublin Bus hopes to increase its fleet to 100% low floor by the end of 2012. • The Travel Assistance scheme, which introduces people with disabilities to public transport, will continue. • A new sign is being developed for the wheelchair space in the bus, which it is hoped will help to avoid conflict between wheelchair users and buggy owners on Dublin bus services. • Disability training is ongoing and disability awareness campaigns are run throughout the company. • Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) is being rolled out in Dublin and work will commence in Cork in 2012. • Consideration is being given to possibilities for on-bus audio announcements. • Bus Éireann continues to purchase only low-floor wheelchair accessible buses for its provincial city fleets. • In other areas where Bus Éireann provides urban bus services, the Company will continue to replace buses with vehicles that are low-floor wheelchair accessible.
Inter-City Coach Services			
Provide scheduled	Continue to	NTA, Bus	1. 193 (42%) of Bus Éireann's total coach fleet of 463 vehicles is

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
coach-based services that are accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	replace existing coaches and add additional coaches to fleets using only accessible coaches. Continue to provide additional accessible services on a route by route basis.	Éireann and Private Operators	wheelchair accessible. 2. Bus Éireann hopes to achieve a 100% wheelchair accessible coach fleet on its public service obligation routes by end 2015. However, associated infrastructure upgrades (provision of accessible coach stops etc.) are also required to facilitate the introduction of accessible coach services.
	Attachment of conditions, including accessibility conditions, to the grant of bus licences.	National Transport Authority	In 2013, the NTA will undertake a consultation with the industry in relation to licensing conditions. A Regulatory Impact Analysis, which will take account of likely accessibility impacts, will be carried out in relation to any proposed changes.
Bus Stops			
All bus stops made compatible with accessible buses.	Install wheelchair accessible Hard Stands together with Kassel Kerbing as well as Shelters with seating and good	Local Authorities, An Garda Siochána, Bus Operators, the DECLG, NRA, NTA and	1. **BÁC:** Of a total of 4,776 bus stops in the GDA, 2,445 (51%) have been upgraded and work in that regard is on-going. Bus stops are also being upgraded on routes that form part of the Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) Programme. 2. **BÁC** is putting 2600 bus pole identification signs on bus poles to aid people with visual impairments. 3. **BÉ:** Bus Eireann continues to work with local authorities in

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	lighting. Ensure that the bus shelter and bus stop pole incorporate appropriate colour contrasts and are orientated to facilitate deployment of ramps and movement of wheelchairs.	DTTAS.	relation to the authorities' upgrading of bus stops in the provincial cities in conjunction with the construction of QBCs/Green Routes. The National Transport Authority now provides funding directly to the individual local authorities for new or upgraded Wheelchair Accessible stops outside the Greater Dublin Area. The NTA will undertake a review of existing coach stops nationally with a view to preparing an accessibility upgrade plan.
	With the assignment of responsibility for policy and funding measures for local and regional roads to the DTTAS, the Department will engage more directly local authorities about improving accessibility in the vicinity of public transport elements	DTTAS has already started a process of direct engagement with the Local Government Management Services Board and the County and City Managers Association, about advancing the	The National Transport Authority will engage with the local authorities to accelerate the completion of the programme of accessible bus stops & stations subject to available funding. The NTA has developed a public transport database of bus stops, routes etc. to support decisions on bus licensing applications and public service contracts. This database will be developed further in 2013/2014 to include all transport services to support the better integration of local and rural transport services.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	such as bus stops, bus stations, etc.	Sectoral Plan for Transport and will continue to develop these relationships with a view to expediting delivery of those aspects of the Plan that involve local authority inputs.	
Bus Stations			
Make all bus stations accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Retro-fit existing bus stations or completely rebuild them. Ensure that accessibility for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments is integral to the	Bus Éireann	Bus Éireann is upgrading bus stations on a progressive basis to accommodate coaches with wheelchair lift facilities. The NTA will undertake a review of existing bus stations nationally with a view to preparing an accessibility upgrade plan.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	design and construction of new bus stations.		
Taxis and Hackneys			
Improve the accessibility of taxis and hackneys for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Overall to ensure that there is adequate provision of taxi and hackney services that are: Accessible, Available, and Affordable. **Specifically**	National Transport Authority, DTTAS, Local Authorities, DECLG, Department of Finance and the Department of Social & Family Affairs.	The total number of active wheelchair accessible taxis as of December 2011 was 1227 and the total active wheelchair accessible hackney's is 3. That is 5.16% of the overall fleet. The NTA is committed to promoting an increase in the number of accessible vehicles and the standards of those vehicles.
	1. Usage of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis.	National Transport Authority	• A booking 'contact centre' will be piloted and evaluated, and will assist in gathering better information on Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) use, travel patterns and transport requirements; • Further analysis of the optimum usage of WATs by dispatch operators will also be carried out; • A website and smartphone application to facilitate self-ordering of WATs will be developed.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	2. Easier access to hackney market in rural areas.	National Transport Authority	Development of a new hackney licence which would facilitate low-cost entry to the hackney market in rural areas with identified public transport requirements.
	3. Improved SPSV vehicle standards and enforcement.	National Transport Authority	Short-Term Measures • Revised age limit rules on taxi vehicles to encourage the movement to vehicles of 9-years or less • Prohibition of unsuitable, altered vehicles and vehicle equipment and the introduction of inspection safety criteria in this regard • To include on the tamper proof licence disc, a QR code (Quick Reaction barcode) containing core licensing information affixed to the windscreen and rear screen • The design of a new taxi roof sign in consultation with the industry Medium-Term Measures • Integration of revised inspection/testing arrangements for taximeters with the SPSV licensing process. • Review the existing specifications for wheelchair accessible taxis to facilitate the possible introduction of a wider range of lower cost accessible vehicles. It is envisaged that this task will be completed by end 2012.
	4. Audit of taxi ranks and Taxi Rank Guidelines	National Transport Authority and Local Authorities	Guidelines for local authorities on the location and design of taxi ranks will be finalised and published in 2013.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	5. Wheelchair Accessible Subsidy Scheme	National Transport Authority	Where necessary and feasible, the NTA will introduce further grant schemes to encourage an increase in the number of wheelchair accessible taxis available for hire.
Local and Rural Integrated Transport Services			
Enhanced availability of local and rural transport services for all	Ensure that accessibility is a core criterion in the development of local and rural integrated transport services.	DTTAS, NTA, RTP Groups, HSE, Local Authorities, Department of Education & Skills, Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.	A National Integrated Rural transport Committee has been established to examine barriers to service integration and identify solutions. The public transport services provided under the Rural Transport Programme and by voluntary and community groups already have a high level of accessibility. The Committee which is chaired by the NTA will work to advance the integration of transport services while maintaining and, where possible, enhancing accessibility levels.
Heavy Rail			
Suburban Passenger Trains			
Make all suburban trains accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Only purchase wheelchair accessible trains that have on-board features to assist people with mobility, sensory	NTA and Iarnród Éireann.	PA enhancements - 75 % of the Dart fleet has been upgraded to date and it is intended that the PA systems on the remaining 25% will be completed in 2013.

The replacement/ upgrade of the PA system on the remaining vehicles of the Commuter fleet will also be progressed. |

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	and cognitive impairments.		
Inter-City Passenger Trains			
Make all Inter-City passenger trains accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Only purchase wheelchair accessible trains that have on-board features to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Iarnród Éireann	The intercity fleet operating from Dublin serving stations on lines to Sligo, Westport, Galway, Limerick, Tralee. Wexford and Cork is now accessible. All carriages have been constructed in accordance with UK Rail vehicle Accessibility (RVAR) Regulations.
Railway Stations			
Make all railway stations accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Ensure that all new railway stations are designed and constructed in accordance with accessibility standards/best international practice.

Retro-fit existing stations in accordance with | NTA and Iarnród Éireann | Belfast line complete, DART line complete apart from Greystones – lift to be provided. Galway line complete. Works on Cork line complete except for Charleville – proposed works at tender stage awaiting funding and Cork – works on hold awaiting yard rationalisation.

Feasibility study commenced to assess the remaining stations on the network in order to cost and prioritise accessibility works at stations where funding allows and where feasible. |

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	accessibility standards/best international practice.		

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<tr><td colspan="4" style="background-color:yellow">Light Rail</td></tr>
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What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Dublin's light rail service, LUAS, is an accessible service and has been designed from the outset to be so.		The Railway Procurement Agency and Veolia Transport.	In conjunction with visually impaired people, identify and implement workable solutions to assist them in identifying the correct Luas tram to board when a number of services are operating in close proximity (for example Connolly Station interchange).

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" style="background-color:yellow">Motorised Personal Transport</td></tr>
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What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Establish legal position for motorised personal transport including scooters and electric wheelchairs	Research	NDA/DTTAS	NDA to undertake research work in 2013 to: a) Establish the position in Ireland; b) Establish the position in other countries; c) Identify key issues; d) Recommend actions as required.

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<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">ROADS AND TRAFFIC</td></tr>
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<tr><td colspan="4" style="background-color:yellow">Accessibility in Vicinity of Public Transport Infrastructure</td></tr>
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What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Accessibility in the vicinity of public transport services is central to the overall accessibility of the	DTTAS will strengthen its cross-sectoral working arrangements to	Local Authorities, An Garda Siochána, Bus Operators, the	DTTAS and the DECLG are participating in the work of each other's monitoring committees (PTAC in DTTAS's case). In addition, DTTAS will participate on an on-going basis in the work of the Disability Steering Committee of the Local Government Management Services Board and where necessary, will also

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
public transport system.	ensure that the implementation of the sectoral plans of DTTAS the DECLG together with the accessibility plans of the individual local authorities are implemented in a co-ordinated manner.	DECLG, NRA, NTA and DTTAS.	engage with the City and County Managers Association in respect of public transport accessibility matters. DTTAS continues to liaise as necessary with the National Transport Authority, the National Roads Authority, Public Transport Providers and An Garda Siochána to progress accessibility improvements in the vicinity of public transport services.
Roads			
Make pedestrian facilities on roads more accessible for persons with disabilities.	Existing roads and pedestrian facilities will be covered by access audits and implementation plans of the local authorities, while new or improved facilities will be designed and constructed to meet accessibility	Local authorities with NRA oversight for National Roads and DTTAS oversight for other Roads	Implementation plans on a prioritised basis were put in place by mid-2007. The on-going prioritised programme to implement accessibility improvements to existing roads and pedestrian infrastructure will continue to be advanced in line with available funding. The design and construction of new roads and pedestrian facilities must follow the 'Traffic Management Guidelines' which incorporate specific provisions relating to persons with disabilities.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	standards.		
	Local authorities will develop joined-up proposals with local transport operators to improve accessibility of public roads, footpaths, streets, crossings leading to ground, air and	NTA, Local Authorities and transport operators	Co-ordination arrangements were developed between 2006 and 2007 with priority accorded to upgrading bus stops on public roads where wheelchair accessible buses are in service or are being phased in.

The Department continues to require local authorities to carry out Road User Audits on Regional and Local Road upgrade schemes which are being funded or co-funded by the Department. The aim is to ensure that all road users including people with disabilities are provided for. |
| | sea transport facilities and accessible routes to and from public transport. | | |
| | Local authorities to use continued funding from DTTAS, DECLG and their own resources to improve facilities on public roads and pedestrian facilities in urban areas to provide | Local authorities, DTTAS and DECLG | Phased implementation plans put in place, with resource requirements identified and allocated from available funds, over a cyclical three year capital works time frame. |

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	a high standard of access for people with disabilities.		
	Ensure a coherent approach to accessible National Roads and pedestrian facilities by reviewing, strengthening		The NRA design standards "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges" to be reviewed for approach to accessibility and revised as necessary to reflect appropriate conditions and guidance relating to people with disabilities. It is envisaged that the review will be completed by 2014. Local authorities will be encouraged to take account of the new guidelines.
	and developing guidelines and standards and implementing good practice amongst local authorities.		
	Ensure a coherent approach to accessible roads and pedestrian facilities across all local authority administrative areas by	DTTAS, DECLG and the LGMSB	In 2009, the LGMSB produced the publication '*Road and Street Design for All'* to support local authority staff in auditing and reviewing the accessibility of the streetscapes within their remit. These guidelines will be assessed with a view to ensuring that they are up-to-date and local authorities will be encouraged to take account of the new guidelines. The LGMSB has also developed a dedicated website to enable local authorities to network and share good practice in relation to

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	reviewing, strengthening and developing guidelines and standards and facilitating the exchange of good practice amongst local authorities.		access issues. The 'Memorandum on Grants for Regional and Local Roads' will be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect appropriate conditions and guidance relating to persons with disabilities. It is intended to finalise the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and issue it for use in quarter four 2012.
	Improved design and use of shared spaces to cater for the needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive disabilities as well as older people and children.	DTTAS, DECLG, LGMSB, NDA and TrinityHaus	Building on the NDA/TrinityHaus research initiative, it is intended that guidelines will be developed for the design and use of Shared Spaces, Shared Surfaces and Home Zones in Urban Areas.
Parking for People with Disabilities			
Review of the Disabled Parking Scheme.		DTTAS.	New regulations came into effect as of 1 June 2011 which place the eligibility focus for the disabled persons parking permit on level of mobility impairment rather than on diagnosis of particular medical conditions. The new regulations also remove the exemption of permit holders from the rule against parking again in a public space within one hour. This change should help to ensure

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
			spaces were available for more people.
	Better enforcement.	An Garda Siochána and Local Authority Traffic Wardens.	DTTAS will continue to liaise on an on-going basis with An Garda Siochána, Department of the Environment Community & Local Government and the National Transport Authority concerning improved enforcement.
MARITIME PASSENGER TRANSPORT			
Assess how the voluntary approach to accessibility improvements on passenger ships/boats is working.	Issue a marine notice to owners/operators of passenger vessels regarding the voluntary approach and reminding them of the low cost but effective changes that can be made to improve accessibility.	DTTAS.	By end April 2012.
	Monitor improvements during certain ship inspections through questionnaires and observation.	Marine Survey Office.	End 2013.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Review voluntary approach to accessibility improvements to passenger vessels and consider whether mandatory measures are required.	Review results of voluntary approach.	DTTAS.	End 2014.
Implementation of the Regulation of the European Council and the European Parliament setting out the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by sea and inland waterway.	Ensure that the Regulation is implemented in Ireland.	DTTAS	Regulation 1177/2010 shall apply in all Member States from 18 December 2012.
Improved information provision.	To establish a system for linking the Department's website to other websites providing up to date information on service improvements in the industry.	DTTAS	As part of a British-Irish Council initiative, a webpage for Ireland has been developed which includes links to relevant maritime passenger transport websites.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
CROSS-CUTTING AND CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES			
Procurement of Exchequer Funded Transport Services			
Promote accessibility as a key element of Exchequer funded transport procurement.		DTTAS and PTAC	The Department, in conjunction with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, will encourage the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group and the National Procurement Service to explore the possibility of having accessibility incorporated as a key element of tenders/contracts for Exchequer funded transport services.
Disability Awareness Training			
Maintain disability awareness in all agencies concerned with the provision of public transport	Continue to ensure that all providers of public transport services provide appropriate disability awareness training for both staff and management.	DTTAS, NTA and the providers of public transport services.	Disability awareness training is already provided on a continuous basis by Bus Éireann, Bus Átha Cliath, Iarnród Éireann, Railway Procurement Agency and Veolia Transport. Disability awareness training continues to be available for DTTAS staff. On-line Disability Equality Training for Public Service Staff is available to anybody working in the public service in Ireland. It is available at elearning.nda.ie and staff are encouraged to use this facility.
	The National Transport Authority to put in place a mandatory Skills Development	National Transport Authority	All new entrants to the SPSV industry must undertake the Skills Development test and all existing industry members can undertake the Industry Knowledge test and become a "Certified Driver" of the SPSV industry. Recipients of wheelchair accessible taxi grants must undergo

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
	Programme that will have as a core element disability awareness and training relevant to the provision of a service for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.		Disability Awareness Training.
	Improved consistency in the provision of disability awareness training.	PTAC, DTTAS, NTA and NDA	Possibilities for the development of common training guidelines for the delivery and implementation of disability awareness training will be considered.
Public Transport Accessibility Committee			
Strengthen the Operation of PTAC	Review the role and composition of PTAC with a view to making the Committee more effective	DTTAS and PTAC	End 2012.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Disability User Groups			
Providers of public transport services should be advised by Disability User Groups in the design and provision of their services.	Ensure that all major providers of public transport services maintain their disability user groups as pro-active fora and that they respond constructively to the concerns of users.	DTTAS, major public transport service providers, PTAC, National Transport Authority and National Disability Authority.	Disability user groups have been established by BÁC, BÉ, IÉ and the RPA/Veolia Transport (Luas). Effectiveness of user groups to be assessed with a view to strengthening their role as required.
Continue the work of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum.	Annual meetings.	DTTAS working with the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum.	Annually.
Websites			
DTTAS Website			
Accessibility upgrades to the DTTAS website.		DTTAS	The continued updating of the Department's web site now allows for all recently published documents to be more accessible. A planned new website strategy will enable the Department to produce website content easily and consistently while ensuring better compliance with accessibility requirements.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	General Comments and Target Dates
Transport for Ireland Website			
Provision of a 'one-stop shop' for public transport information		National Transport Authority	The Transport for Ireland website is being developed by the NTA to meet accessibility standards. It currently contains Taxi, Integrated Ticketing and Real Time Passenger Information together with a draft integrated journey planner. The British-Irish Council webpage for Ireland will also be hosted on this website in due course.
Monitoring and Enforcement			
Improved monitoring and enforcement of Transport Sectoral Plan actions.	Explore options for improving the Plan's monitoring and enforcement options.	DTTAS, PTAC, User Groups.	Explore options such as: 1. Mystery Shoppers 2. Use of on-board bus cameras, etc.

Glossary of Terms

BÁC	Bus Átha Cliath
BÉ	Bus Éireann
BIC	British Irish Council
CCMA	City and County Managers Association
CEUD	Centre for Excellence in Universal Design
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIÉ	Córas Iompair Éireann
DART	Dublin Area Rapid Transit
DCC	Dublin City Council
DCU	Dublin City University
DECLG	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
DoAHG	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EC	European Commission
ECMT	European Conference of Ministers of Transport
EU	European Union
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
GIS	Geographic Information System
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and Communication technology
ID	Identification
IÉ	Iarnród Éireann
IT	Information Technology
IWA	Irish Wheelchair Association
LGCSB	Local Government Computer Services Board
LGMSB	Local Government Management Services Board

NCBI	National Council for the Blind of Ireland
NDA	National Disability Authority
NDSS	National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group
NFC	Near Field Communications
NIJP	National Intermodal Journey Planner
NRA	National Roads Authority
NTA	National Transport Authority
PA	Public Address
PRM	Persons with Reduced Mobility
PSV	Public Service Vehicles
PTAC	Public Transport Accessibility Committee
PWD	Person with a Disability
QBC	Quality Bus Corridor
RPA	Rail Procurement Agency
RTP	Rural Transport Programme
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
RVAR	Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations
SMS	Short Message Service
SPSV	Small Public Service Vehicles
SURD	Street and Urban Road Design
TMG	Traffic Management Guidelines
TSI	Technical Standards for Interoperability
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WAI	Web Accessibility Initiatives
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Organisations responding to Sectoral Plan Review 2011

National Bodies

National Disability Authority
National Transport Authority
Pobal
Rural Transport Network

Local Authorities

Clonakilty Town Council
Donegal County Council
Dublin City Council
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council
Kilrush Town Council
Mayo County Council
Monaghan Town Council
Sligo County Council
South Dublin County Council
Wexford County Council (2 submissions)

Transport Providers

Bus Eireann
Dublin Bus
Irish Rail
KARE
Meath Accessible Transport Project
Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
Vantastic

Disability Organisations

Brainwave (Irish Epilepsy Association)
Citizens' Information Board
DeafHear.ie

Disability Federation of Ireland
Enable Ireland
Féach
Inclusive Enterprise
Irish Wheelchair Association
Lucan Disability Action Group
People with Disabilities in Ireland

Government Departments

Department of Education and Skills

Membership of the Public Transport Accessibility Committee

Bus Éireann

Citizens Information Board

Coach Tourism and Transport Council

County and City Managers Association

DeafHear

Department of the Environment Community and Local Government

Disability Federation of Ireland

Dublin Airport Authority

Dublin Bus

Inclusion Ireland

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Irish Rail

Irish Senior Citizens Parliament

Irish Wheelchair Association

Maritime Safety Policy Division (DTTAS)

National Council for the Blind in Ireland

National Disability Authority

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies

National Transport Authority

Not for Profit Business Association

National Service Users Executive

PTAC Secretariat, DTTAS

Railway Procurement Agency

Public Transport Investment Division (DTTAS)

Vantastic

Veolia Transport

Article 9 and 20 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability

Article 9.

Par. 1.

States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to people with disabilities (pwds)

access, on an equal basis with others, to

- physical environment
- transportation
- information and communications, including ICT –
- other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas. [This would include shops, banks, pubs, hotels, restaurants, the offices of private businesses open to the public (e.g. accountants, brokers, solicitors), libraries, marts, all public sector buildings and facilities open to the public, churches, etc. BUT SEE ALSO ARTICLE 9, PAR. 2 BELOW.]

These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers[19] to accessibility, shall apply to, *inter alia*

(a)   buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces

(b)   information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

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[19] See "definition" of disability in par. (e) of the Preamble and par. 2 of Article 1.

Par 2.

States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to

(a) develop and implement minimum standards ---- for the accessibility of facilities and services open to --- the public.

(b) ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services

which are open to the public take into account all aspects

of accessibility for pwds.

(c) provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues

facing pwds.

(d) provide in buildings and other facilities open to the

public signage in Braille etc

(e) provide forms of live assistance – including guides,

--- professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate---

(f) promote other appropriate forms of assistance – to pwds to ensure their access to information.

(g) promote access for pwds to new information and communications technologies etc.

(h) promote the design, development --- of accessible ICT --- at an early stage ---- at minimum cost.

Article 20.

States Parties shall take – measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for people with disabilities, including by

Par. (a) facilitating the personal mobility of pwds in the manner and at the time of their choice, and at affordable cost.

Par. (b) facilitating the access by pwds to mobility aids --- including by making them available at affordable cost.

Par. (c) providing training in mobility skills

Par. (d) encouraging entities that produce mobility aids to take account of all aspects of mobility for pwds.