



## Accessibility Work Programme

### Updates 01 January to 25 February 2022

#### 1. Background

- The Department of Transport (DoT) has responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to public transport.
- The National Transport Authority (NTA) has responsibility for promoting the development of an accessible, integrated and sustainable public transport network.
- Public transport operators, for example Dublin Bus, have responsibility for delivering and operating public transport services (with the NTA).

#### 2. What is the Accessibility Work Programme?

The Accessibility Work Programme contains actions from a range of “whole of Government” strategies which assist in progressively making public transport accessible for Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Reduced Mobility and Older People. The three most important strategies are,

- 1) the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022 (NDIS) – which is aimed at improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities,
- 2) the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 (CES) which aims to support Persons with Disabilities to work, and
- 3) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

#### 3. Further information on public transport accessibility

Additional information about the ACC and public transport accessibility is at <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/705a02-accessibility-in-transport/>

## 01. Public Transport over-arching (NDIS Actions 100 and 109 - PfG - SP Action 01 - NPAS 1.5)

### Review of Sustainable Mobility Policy

- From a policy perspective, the Minister for Transport has said there is a need for a fundamental change in the nature of transport in Ireland and the Programme for Government, 'Our Shared Future', commits to making public transport and active travel better and more accessible.
- The Department of Transport has been undertaking a review of sustainable mobility policy, which incorporates accessible public transport and public transport in rural areas.
- The new Sustainable Mobility policy is due to be finalised during Q2 2022.

### Lift refurbishment and replacement Programme

- Out of service lifts at train stations significantly impacts people who rely on properly functioning lifts to enable them to access rail services.
- Irish Rail has a four-year Lift Renewal and Replacement Programme from 2020 to 2023 with an allocation of €18 million covering 52 stations nationwide.
- 11 lifts and one escalator are currently being replaced or renovated with others to follow.

### Lift Call system project

- This project seeks to minimise the damage caused to lifts due to vandalism.
- The Lift Call system is currently being installed in five stations with more to follow.

### Luas Lifts

- A system-wide upgrade of Luas Lifts is planned, with a scoping exercise currently being undertaken.
- TII and Transdev met with Irish Rail to hear its experience of the Lift Call initiative, with a view to reducing vandalism across the network.
- Users, via the User Group meetings, have been invited to give feedback on their experiences.

## 02. Public Transport Services (NDIS Action 100 - CES Action 2.10, 2.12 & 2.15 – PfG - SP Action 02 & 19 - NPAS 1.5)

### COVID-19 impacts on overall public transport services – (for rural areas see below - Theme 03 PT in rural areas)

- The COVID-19 crisis had a profound impact on the Public Transport sector.
- Measures were introduced across the public transport system, guided by NPHET and the advice of the Chief Medical Officer.
- On 22 February 2022, the Government announced that with effect from 28 February 2022, the mandatory requirement to wear masks would be removed.
- The public health advice remains that masks should continue to be worn on public transport and in healthcare settings.

### **The Travel Assistance Scheme**

- The NTA continues to support the Travel Assistance Scheme, which is managed by Dublin Bus in the Greater Dublin Area.
- The scheme provides assistance for people who need it to access public transport/plan journeys on Dublin Bus, Luas, Go Ahead and DART.
- The NTA is planning to set up a Pilot Travel Assistance Scheme in Cork.
- The NTA has been in discussions with Bus Éireann about managing it and details of the Scheme.

### **Public Service Obligation (PSO) funding in 2022**

- PSO services are socially necessary but financially unviable services which are subsidised by the taxpayer.
- Most bus services currently provided by Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Go-Ahead are PSO services. Irish Rail provides PSO rail services.
- In addition to PSO, TFI Local Link rural services are provided for under the TFI Rural Transport Programme (RTP).
- The PSO programme represents a significant expenditure of taxpayers' money, and funding has increased in recent years to cater for additional services and growing capacity.
- In Budget 2022, the Department of Transport secured €538m of funding for PSO and TI Local Link services.
- This includes over €200m of COVID-19 emergency funding in 2022 to counter the continuing impacts of the pandemic.

### **Fare Reduction Measures**

- In Budget 2022, €25m was provided to introduce a young adult card (YAC) which will enable any person aged between 19 and 23 years old to avail of an average fare discount of 50% across all public transport services, including city, intercity and rural services.
- The YAC initiative will not only promote modal shift among this age group but should also contribute towards a reduced reliance on private transport with the associated benefit of transport emission savings.
- Further, as part of a suite of new measures being introduced by Government to help combat the rising cost-of-living being experienced throughout the country, a 20% average fare reduction on PSO services until the end of 2022 is also due to be introduced in early May. €54m will be provided to allow for these discounted fares.
- These discounted fares will benefit the hundreds of thousands of people across the country who use PSO public transport every day, including Persons with Disabilities who may not qualify for the Free Travel Scheme.

### **Accessibility Requirements in Contracts**

- Any new DAward contracts include greater accessibility requirements with regard to websites and apps, format of information provided and the standard of disability awareness training for staff.
- The new contracts make a provision that Quarterly Accessibility Updates are submitted.

### **03. Public Transport in Rural areas (NDIS Action 100 – CES Action 2.9 & 5.11 – PfG – ORF Action 15 – ICA 2021 Action 128 – SP Action 15)**

#### **Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan**

- The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major national public transport initiative developed by the NTA to increase public transport connectivity, particularly for people living outside the major cities and towns.
- It will significantly increase both the number of routes and the frequency of existing services right across the country.
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- The NTA is proposing an overall increase of approximately 25% in rural bus services as part of the five-year Connecting Ireland plan.
- Hundreds of rural villages and areas will for the first time be served by a viable public transport link.
- Detailed planning and timetable design is underway by the NTA with Bus Éireann and with each of 15 TFI Local Link offices.
- The NTA are currently analysing the feedback received from the public consultation and will issue a report once this process is finalised.
- The NTA are also in the process of finalising proposals to rollout a network of new and improved services planned on a phased basis from 2022 to 2025.

#### **New Town services**

- The Department of Transport has secured additional funding for the starting of New Town Services in key rural towns across Ireland.
- The NTA has been progressing the work to develop new service in a number of towns with Carlow Town being the most advanced and in the procurement process.

#### **Accessibility of services**

- Approximately 90% of passenger trips across the Local Link network of rural transport services are accessible.
- Since Q4 2019, all vehicles contracted for the delivery of rural transport services must now be Wheelchair Accessible from commencement date, previous there was a two-year lead in period.

#### **New TFI Local Link services in Leitrim**

- Developed in close collaboration with the HSE, the revised network is designed to meet the needs of mainstream public transport users as well as the transport needs of passengers with disabilities, and those accessing (non-emergency) health care services in the county.
- All services will be operated using accessible vehicles, a significant proportion of which are low-floor buses.
- Positive feedback and performance results have been received to date.

- The pilot will continue for a period of three years with ongoing review meetings arranged with the relevant stakeholders to ensure best network is in place and gather learnings from the project.

#### **Community Transport Scheme Pilot**

- Five pilot community car schemes operated in Cork, Kerry, Offaly, Longford and Mayo.
- Due to COVID-19 this pilot was extended for an additional 12 months to the end of 2021.
- It is currently being reviewed by the NTA.

#### **04. Public Transport Fleets (Bus, Rail and SPSV) (NDIS Action 102 - CES Action 2.14 & 2.16 - SP Action 03, 04, 09, 14, 16 & 17)**

- All new trains whether DART, Regional commuter or Intercity will be fully accessible internally.
- All new coaches purchased or funded by the NTA for PSO services include wheelchair accessibility plus visual and audio announcements and information.
- All PSO urban bus services are 100% low-floor wheelchair accessible, together with Bus Eireann town services in Sligo, Athlone, Dundalk and Drogheda and the Bus Eireann PSO coach fleet (wheelchair accessible with the wheelchair lift).

#### **Regional Commuter Single-Deck Coaches**

- These have a dedicated wheelchair space (seats will not need to be removed) which allows a wheelchair to board with normal ramp access.
- These vehicles are intended for routes up to 50km, being regional commuter routes.
- 29 of 40 coaches from the 2021 batch had been delivered as of 31 Jan 2022.

#### **Regional Commuter Double-Deck Coaches**

50 coaches are on order and are currently programmed to begin arriving in Ireland in Q4 2022

#### **Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) / Taxis**

- Since June 2010, all new taxi and hackney licenses issued must be associated with WAVs
- The number of WAVs in the fleet increased from its lowest point of 4% in 2014 to over 17% of the SPSV fleet by end 2021
- The 2022 WAV Grant Scheme opened on 01 January 2022. 76 applications were received by the NTA by 31 January.

## 05. Commercial bus sector (NDIS Action 102 - CES Action 2.11 - SP Action 05)

- The NTA held a public consultation in relation to proposals for the incorporation of wheelchair accessibility conditions on commercial licensed services, specifically the regular category of licensed services.
- A report of the submissions was compiled but due to the severe impact of COVID-19 on commercial operators this has been delayed.

## 06. Public Transport Infrastructure (NDIS Action 109 - CES Action 2.17 - SP Action 06, 07, 08 & 18)

### The Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme

- Accessibility features, such as wheelchair accessibility and audio/visual aids, are built into new public transport infrastructure projects and vehicles from the design stage.
- However, there are legacy issues in relation to older infrastructure and facilities, for example Victorian era railway infrastructure.
- To address these legacy issues, the DoT funds the multi annual ring-fenced Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme.
- It is managed by the NTA to enable the continued retrofitting of older (legacy) public transport infrastructure and facilities to make them accessible for Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Reduced Mobility and Older People.
- The allocation for the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme for 2022 is €15.35 million.

### Delays due to COVID-19, supply chain issues and construction inflation

- COVID-19 led to some issues.
- There are some delays due to supply chain issues.
- In addition, the increased cost of steel has led to some increased costs, for example with footbridges and lifts.

### 1. Rail station Accessibility

- Carlow Station lift footbridge and canopy opened to the public in January 2021
- Works are underway at Dalkey and Gormanstown on the installation of new footbridges and lifts.
- Works on accessibility upgrades at Ennis, including platform remodelling, are underway.

### 2. Bus station Accessibility

- Accessibility Audits were carried out externally and internally on 18 Bus Stations.

- Funding has been allocated by the NTA to Bus Éireann to develop a new project to upgrade Bus Stations to the required accessibility standards under Part M, building on the programme of accessible bus bays within stations.
- Construction of wheelchair accessible bus bays is nearing completion in Ballina Bus Station.

### **3. Accessible Bus stops in rural areas**

- All bus stops in Dublin, regional cities and towns are wheelchair accessible.
- The NTA carried out a nationwide survey of approximately 12,000 bus stops in Ireland to determine which ones require work to make them accessible and to declutter the area by removing multiple operators poles and having one Transport for Ireland (TFI) pole to service all companies.
- The NTA has set a target of having wheelchair accessible bus stops (one stop in each direction) in 43 towns with a population over 5,000.
- This would mean 50% of main towns would have a wheelchair accessible bus stop (1 in each direction).
- NTA is continuing to work with local authorities and Bus Éireann on the development of wheelchair lift-accessible bus stops in towns and at bus stations.
- The NTA provide specifications and funding for wheelchair accessible bus stops.
- The works are implemented by the Local Authority following an approval process.
- Local Authority wheelchair accessible bus stop schemes in the construction phase include Edenderry, Nenagh and Castlebar.
- The tender has been awarded for the construction of 7 wheelchair accessible bus stops in Co. Meath.

## **07. Public Transport Advance Notice (NDIS Action 110)**

- While all of the Irish Rail fleet is accessible internally, the main issue with accessibility for wheelchair users is the platform train interface (gap) at stations.
- A mobile ramp is required between the platform and the carriage.
- Advance notice is necessary to ensure that assistance is available.

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### **Irish Rail Accessibility App**

- The App has been developed with live testing underway.

### **Irish Rail Customer Service Officers (CSOs)**

- This will allow a representative from Irish Rail to be on every intercity train to assist passengers.
- 97 out of a total of 120 Customer Service Agents have been redeployed or hired to be on the Intercity routes to assist passengers.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the hiring of staff.

## 08. Public Transport Communications (NDIS Action 111 - CES Action 2.19)

100% on board audio and visual 'next stop' announcements are available on all Dublin Bus and Go-Ahead fleets.

### Next Stop Announcements project

- Bus Éireann fleet has, since 2015, been fitted with multimedia screens which show route progress and stop information.
- A project is underway to roll out next stop on-board audio and visual announcements for all 6,000 bus stops in rural and regional areas.

### DART Passenger Information System (PIS)

- All DART trains are equipped with Passenger Information Systems (PIS) audio/visual system.
- However, 47% of the fleet is in need of upgraded PIS.
- Work to replace the DART PIS was delayed due to COVID-19.
- Completion of the project is due in 2022.

### Luas on-board announcements

- TII committed to an upgrade of on-board announcements, including additional destination announcements, on both Red and Green Lines.
- To date, all of the Green Line fleet has been updated, including north and southbound trams, with the Red Line fleet to follow.
- This is on track to be completed Q3 2022.

## 09. Public Transport Disability Awareness Training (NDIS 122 - SP 34, 35 & 36)

### Just a Minute (JAM) Card

- Transport for Ireland (TFI) along with Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead Ireland, Irish Rail, TFI Local Link and Luas are continuing the journey to become JAM Card friendly.
- The Jam Card assists customers using the public transport system and make their experience as stress-free as possible.
- JAM Cards are available at transport hubs and Local Link Offices.

### WAV Grant Scheme and disability awareness training

A condition attaching to the WAV grant scheme is that all successful applicants must complete a disability awareness training programme with the Irish Wheelchair Association which is funded by NTA.



## **TII and Luas**

- TII and Transdev run an ongoing programme of Disability Awareness Training for both back of house staff and Customer Service Officers.
- The NDA's Online Disability Awareness Training forms part of the induction for all new TII staff.

## **10. Public Transport and Technology (CES Action 2.13, 2.18 & 5.10)**

### **TII (Luas) web updates**

- TII conducts regular accessibility audits of its websites and those managed by others on its behalf ([www.luas.ie](http://www.luas.ie), [www.tii.ie](http://www.tii.ie) and road toll sites )
- TII aims to bring them to as high a compliance level as possible, given the requisite map and image content. Feedback on all sites is welcome.

### **TFI Leap Card**

- The Card can be used for purchasing tickets on all state subsidised bus services and some commercial bus services, all Luas services and all commuter rail services allows for Tap & Go on those services.
- An additional feature, the TFI 90 fare, was introduced on Dublin metropolitan public transport services in Q4 2021 as part of BusConnects Dublin.
- Using a Leap Card customers pay the TFI 90 fare for travel across all Dublin metropolitan bus services, Luas and most DART services for any further legs of their journey that start within 90 minutes from when they tag-on at the start of their journey.
- This allows for seamless movement between different services and modes without a financial penalty.

### **The TFI Go mobile ticketing App**

- It is planned to extend the App coverage to other operators as well as TFI Local Link bus services.

### **Next Generation Ticketing**

- As part of the BusConnects Dublin programme, the procurement has commenced of the Next Generation Ticketing system which is a new ticketing system.
- It will support an account-based payment system for all public transport journeys and facilitate the use of mobile phones, bank cards etc. to pay for public transport trips.

### **TFI Local Link**

- The NTA are working with Local Link offices in the development of ticketing systems on the TFI Local Link service.
- This will allow passengers to avail of a number of different ticketing options including mobile ticketing.

## 11. Integration Measures (UNCRPD Article 09 – DoT SoS - SP Action 22, 33, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 & 88)

### **NDIS Steering Group and CES Implementation Group:**

- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) has lead responsibility for both the NDIS and CES.
- The next meeting of the NDIS Steering Group is scheduled for 29 March 2022.
- The next CES Implementation Group meeting is scheduled for 28 February 2022.
- A new CES Phase III Action Plan 2022-2024 is due to be finalised following that meeting.

### **NTA Customer Contact Centre**

- The NTA is in the process of setting up a centralised Customer Contact Centre which will answer queries on behalf of all the Transport Operators, or forward to the relevant Operator where required.
- It is hoped that this Centre can start operation in Q4 2022.

### **Department of Transport Equality Budgeting Metrics 2022**

- In March 2021, the Government agreed that Equality Budgeting was to be expanded to all Government Departments.
- This required all Departments to report at least one Equality Budgeting metric in R 2022.
- The Metrics for the Department of Transport relate to the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme (Subhead B5.3) and are provided below.

Measurable Activities, Outputs and Outcomes 2022 Capital

Input - €15.35m

Activities – Retrofitting of older (legacy) infrastructure and facilities

Outputs (Targets)

- o Number of rail stations with new accessible bridge crossings = 2
- o Number of rail stations with improved accessibility enhancements Part M and/or PRM-TSI (not including bridge crossings) = 3
- o Number of bus stations with Part M Building Regulations internal and external accessibility improvements = 2
- o Number of new bus stops with improved high floor coach accessibility = 10
- o Number of accessible bus bays at bus station = 4
- o Number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAVs) in the taxi fleet = 3,300

Outcomes – greater accessibility of public transport services for Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Reduced Mobility and Older People

## 12. Other accessibility/disability Initiatives by Agencies

### TII operations

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Transdev are currently working on an on-board decal, to be located at every internal tram door, to enable blind users to identify the tram number via raised numbering and braille.
- This arises from feedback from users with respect to the anti-social app.
- Text Service to report on-board anti-social behaviour in place on Luas. Text the word 'LUAS' to 51444. Also, out of service lift text notifications in place.

### TII Metrolink

- The next period of public consultation on Metrolink will commence prior to submission of Railway Order in Q2/Q3 2022.
- The Environmental Impact Team have contacted all participants of the LUG and other relevant advocacy groups and have sent the Metrolink Scoping Document to everyone on the list. See [www.metrolink.ie](http://www.metrolink.ie) for updates.
- To date, written feedback has been received from the NDA and from NCBI.
- Three specific Metrolink User Group meetings have been held to date, the most recent in December 2021.
- The Metrolink team have proposed a workshop format for Users to contribute to the drafting of Employer's Requirements with respect to ensuring that accessibility is fully incorporated into the project requirements

### TII Luas Finglas

- The non-statutory public consultation period is now officially closed.
- However, TII are happy to receive feedback on accessibility issues relating to the Emerging Route as the project advances to the preliminary design stage. [www.luasfinglas.ie](http://www.luasfinglas.ie) for contact details.

### CAR

- The Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) had intended recommencing physical inspections of the airports in November 2021.
- However as the COVID-19 situation deteriorated it was decided that in the interest of safety it would revert to online inspections.
- Meetings took place with Dublin Airport and Shannon Airport.
- Cork Airport, having been closed for 3 months due to runways improvements will be inspected in the coming weeks.
- CAR is planning to recommence onsite visits in March/April.
- Prior to the public health emergency CAR was accompanied by users of the PRM services.
- CAR would like to continue to draw on real life experience by inviting service users again, however it is conscious that personal circumstances may have changed.

- In the next few weeks, CAR will be reengaging with its Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) and seeking new members where necessary.
- Complaint submissions have remained low.
- However, CAR has encountered a recurring complaint relating to one particular airline which concerns the availability of aisle chairs which are used to move to toilet facilities on the aircraft.

#### **NDA Monitoring the accessibility of transport**

- The National disability Authority (NDA) is progressing with a project plan for monitoring the accessibility of transport.
- Currently it is focussed on user engagement and the NDA is working on designing a WCAG 2.1 compliant mobile application where service users can rate their transport and feedback on their experiences.
- Work on the mobile app is ongoing, it will shortly be progressing with user testing of the app.

#### **NDA Standard (EN 17478)**

- NDA, CEUD and NSAI are involved in development of a new EU standard on applying a universal design approach to communications in transport.
- As part of this work NDA, CEUD and NSAI held workshops with Irish stakeholders to get their views and input on the proposed standard
- Following the consultation process this standard (EN 17478) has been published at a European level.

#### **CCMA (examples of accessible, integrated and sustainable transport projects by local authorities)**

##### **Tipperary County Council**

Provision of footpaths in accordance with DMURS and NTA guidance to improve safety and comfort for persons with disabilities. One of the main objectives of the active travel funding is to provide access for all, which includes:

- Provision of widened footpaths
- Improved crossing facilities for all users
- Junction tightening: Dishing of footpaths at junctions, raised pedestrian crossings and reduced road width at crossings.
- Permeability measures to support improved access.

##### **Fingal County Council**

- Fingal County Council's Active Travel Unit in conjunction with the NTA has completed the construction of two segregated cycle lanes one in Hartstown/Huntstown, Dublin 15 and one in Rivervalley/Rathingle, Swords.
- This has resulted in cyclists no longer using the footpaths thus reducing conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.
- The footpaths are now more accessible for people with physical disabilities and those who are visually impaired.

##### **Monaghan County Council**

- Corcaghan Village, Cootehill Road (R188) - Installation of Traffic Lights and pedestrian crossing to aid the movement of pedestrians to, and from, Corcaghan National School and St. Michaels Church
- Wetlands Footpath, Clones Road, Ballybay (R183) - Extension of pedestrian footpath to Wetlands Centre on the Clones Road, including drop kerbs and public lighting
- Doohamlet Play Park, Doohamlet - Resurfacing of Doohamlet Play Park and extension of footpath to connect school to the play park and Cois Locha Housing Estate
- Latton Village, Castleblayney - Extension of pedestrian footpath to facilitate connection between the Church, Resource Centre, Community Creche, Latton National School and the Latton O'Rahillys GAA Club, including drop kerbs and public lighting
- Installation of Accessible Seating across Municipal District - Installation of Accessible Seating in Clones, Ballybay, Corcaghan, Tullycorbet, Smithborough, Threemilehouse, Drum, Newbliss, Aghabog, Rockcorry, Scotshouse, Lough Egish, Bawn, Cremartin
- Improved Access to Gortnawhinney Lake, Clones - Resurfaced access roadway and car parking at Gortnawhinney Lake Clones and provided seating
- Renewed Footpaths in Clone - Renewed and replaced defective footpaths in Clones at various locations throughout the town
- Clones Heritage Towns Initiative - Provided footpath through Round Tower Graveyard, improved access at Round Tower from Cara Street and Tower View, and improved and resurfaced access from Cara Street