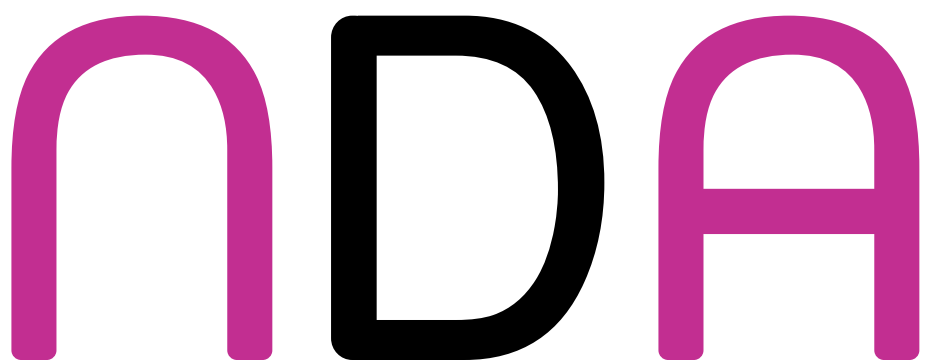


National Disability Authority
Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais

National Disability Authority 2000-2020

Twenty Years of Disability Policy
Development in Ireland



National Disability Authority
Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais



Ms. Siobhán Barron, Director (2006-2020), Ms. Helen Guinan, Chairperson, Mr. Finian McGrath, TD, Minister of State for Disabilities at the launch of the NDA Strategic Plan and autism guidance documents in 2018.

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Foreword

I am delighted to bring you this publication **National Disability Authority 2000-2020: Twenty Years of Disability Policy Development in Ireland** to mark the 20th year of the work of the National Disability Authority.

Founded in 2000, the NDA was born out of a clear commitment on the part of Government to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, following the 1996 report of the Commission on the Status of with Disabilities. I am very honoured to have been Chairperson of the Authority for the last 6 and a half years, and during that time I have seen the unique role played by the organisation in the disability landscape in its work to bring evidence-informed advice and guidance to government on disability matters.

The National Disability Authority throughout the Foreword is further unique in having within it a statutory Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, founded in 2007, and the only centre of its kind in the world. Universal Design promotes the design of the built environment, products, services, and information, communication and technology (ICT), so that they can be accessed, understood and used by everyone, regardless of age, size, ability or disability.

In my role as Chairperson, I have seen the way in which the work of the organisation has evolved over the years, from advising on the policies, programmes and standards that would be necessary to ensure quality supports and services for persons with disabilities, through to evaluating the outcomes associated with implementation of such policies and programmes. The NDA has also built relationships across government departments and agencies to become a trusted advisor on disability matters and Universal Design.

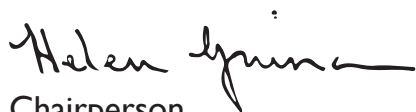
This has mirrored the overall changes and advancements within Irish society with regard to disability since 2000. Although there is much more to do, we now have a regulator for disability services in HIQA, a National Advocacy Service for Persons with Disabilities, a newly formed Decision Support Service, and increased awareness of the importance of providing supports to persons with disabilities to access mainstream services provided by our public bodies.

We have also seen a number of iterations of a National Disability Strategy, the development of a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with disabilities,

and the roll-out of the Transforming Lives programme within specialist disability services. The NDA has been pleased to play its part in informing the development of these strategies and programmes, as well as the independent monitoring of progress against their goals and objectives. More recently, we have welcomed the ratification of UNCRPD in Ireland, and continue to advise government departments on their work to realise its goals. We have also delivered an extensive body of research that informs our advice, often capturing and establishing baseline information for the first time in the Irish context. This publication is intended to offer a taste of some of this work, situated within the changing context of Irish society over the last 20 years.

The year 2020 has been a challenging one for many of us, and particularly for persons with disabilities and their families. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant sudden disruption to the way in which public services have been delivered and, in many cases, those with disabilities have been especially vulnerable to the impact of government restrictions and the associated economic hardships. However, the NDA has also seen evidence of adaptability and new ways of working that we hope might offer a sense of new direction and opportunity for those bodies charged with providing services and supports to all our citizens, including those with disabilities. The pandemic has also shown that it is possible to make changes rapidly, and this is encouraging, particularly when the change made is informed by meaningful consultation with all of those likely to be impacted. We will continue to play our part, through research and evaluating models of good practice, as well as hearing from the lived experience of persons with disabilities, in order to guide public bodies in the approaches they might take in the coming years.

The growth and development of the NDA has been supported over the past two decades by the commitment of previous board members and chairpersons, as well as the staff and management of the organisation, past and present. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge each of them, and the excellent work they have delivered. I look forward to the next decade of the NDA's journey, and hope you find much of interest in this review of our first 20 years.



Chairperson,

3 December 2020



Pictured above: Grainne Ryan, Senior Commercialisation Specialist at Enterprise Ireland with members of the Strydetech team (L-R Kevin Hayes, Muireann Hickey and Cian O’Leary), winners of the NDA CEUD UDGC 2019 Enterprise Ireland Universal Design Commercialisation Award

Introduction

Since its formal establishment on 12th June 2000, the National Disability Authority has been the independent State body with a statutory duty to provide evidence-informed advice to the Government on policy and practice, relevant to the everyday lives of persons with disabilities. Our work is guided by our founding legislation and by our vision of an Irish society in which persons with disabilities have equal rights and opportunities to participate in economic, social and cultural life and where they have choice and control over how they live their lives; and are enabled to reach their full, individual potential in a society that embraces and accommodates the range of human diversity.

We are committed to playing our part in advancing this vision, by ensuring that we focus our work on informing effective national policy. In particular, on how this policy can be implemented in practice, so that persons with disabilities can live the lives of their choosing.

Our role covers many policy areas and therefore, we engage bi-laterally and across most Government Departments and agencies.

Over the years, we have seen our advice translated into new policy approaches, strategies, and action plans. When implemented effectively, these can significantly transform the way in which persons with disabilities are empowered to make decisions about their lives and fulfil their aspirations.

While some of these national policies and programmes may take time to deliver in full, we continue to guide and shape progressive implementation of these ideas. It also helps to facilitate exploration of potential solutions for challenges that may present themselves. We have seen our role grow from advising on ideal policy directions, to guiding the tools and systems to implement such policy approaches on the ground. Our role also involves evaluating the impact of such approaches on the lives of persons with disabilities.

Over the years, we have grown our expertise to such an extent that we have become a trusted source of research and policy advice.

This document highlights the work and achievements of the National Disability Authority since its inception and covers the 20 years since its establishment.

How society itself is changing, in terms of education, cultural attitudes and expectations, can also drive change and priorities. National law, policy and practice continue to evolve from the historic medical model, with segregation and paternalistic

approaches, to a human rights model. This human rights model respects everyone's right to choose how they want to live their lives and achieve their goals.

Services, which grew from charitable and institutional arrangements, often provided by the voluntary sector focused on incapacity rather than ability, are transforming to a community-based support model. Disability must be a focus of all policy areas to ensure equality and human rights are realised. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) – ratified by Ireland in 2018 – provides a framework to guide and drive disability policy and implementation.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The purpose of the Convention is 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. It applies established human rights principles from the UN Declaration on Human Rights to the situation of people with disabilities. It covers civil and political rights to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination, and social and economic rights in areas like education, healthcare, employment, and transport. States which ratify the UN Convention commit themselves to delivering civil and political rights to people with disabilities and to progressive realisation of social and economic rights.

The National Disability Authority also has a role to independently assess how national strategies are being implemented. This involves examining the reasons for any barriers to implementation and advising on how they can be addressed. We have developed indicators to support the long-term measurement of progress and impact of these strategies. These help identify trends and issues, while informing ongoing priorities and improvements.

The National Disability Authority's role extends beyond disability. We contribute to the design of the built environment, services and information and communications technology, through our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD), established in 2007. The Centre promotes the Universal Design of the built environment, products, services, and information and communications technology, so that they can be accessed, understood and used independently to the greatest extent possible by everyone. This includes persons with disabilities.¹ Its work with national, European and international standards bodies, professional bodies and educational bodies supports the achievement of the goals of Article 4 of the Convention to

¹ Disability Act 2005, Part 6

progress awareness and adoption of Universal Design in practice.²

There are many Government decisions, policies and programmes that have shaped the progress of the National Disability Authority. In particular, four major developments have led to the establishment of the National Disability Authority as we know it today.

Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities

The 1996 report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities – **A Strategy for Equality** – marked a key step forward in the mainstreaming of disability policy, and in the move from a medical to a social model of disability. The report identified many key barriers to equality e.g. access to education, employment, and relationships.

The Commission set out 402 recommendations covering the legislative, infrastructural and policy changes necessary to address these barriers. This included a recommendation for the establishment of a National Disability Authority and the enactment of specific disability legislation. While the Commission envisaged a wider role for the National Disability Authority, the Government decided that we would not have any role in providing services and information to persons with disabilities. It was decided that these roles should be undertaken by the relevant mainstream service providers within the disability equality mainstream agenda.

National Disability Authority Act 1999

The National Disability Authority was established on 12th June 2000. Our mandate is set out in the **National Disability Authority Act 1999**, with additional functions assigned under the **Disability Act 2005**.

2 Article 4 of the UNCRPD refers explicitly to Universal Design. It states: 'f) To undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities, as defined in Article 2 of the present Convention, which should require the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disabilities, to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines'.

Disability Act 2005

The Disability Act is designed to advance and underpin the participation of persons with disabilities in society, by supporting the provision of disability specific services and improving access to mainstream public services. The Act places significant obligations on public bodies to make buildings and services accessible to people with disabilities. It provides for Sectoral Plans in key service areas, requires public bodies to take positive actions to employ people with disabilities, and provides for the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.

The overarching mandate of the National Disability Authority is to provide evidence informed advice and information to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on matters concerning policy and practice relating to persons with disabilities. The National Disability Authority also assists the Minister in the co-ordination of disability policy.

National Disability Strategy

Following the establishment of the National Disability Authority, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform published the **Disability Bill 2001**. However, this Bill was subsequently withdrawn. An extensive process of consultation was put in place to work towards the drafting of a new Bill. This included the Disability Legislative Consultation Group of disability stakeholders, and a Senior Officials Group to support the advancement of legislation given the broad coverage of duties in the planned Bill. This led to the publication of the **Disability Bill 2004** and the development of a National Disability Strategy.

The National Disability Strategy, launched on 21st September 2004, created a comprehensive infrastructure for planning and implementing disability policy and services which had not existed before. We have advised on the development and implementation of many versions of the National Disability Strategy, right up to the current **National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021**.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** was adopted in 2006. Ireland signed the Convention in 2007, and further to its ratification by the Government in March 2018, it entered into force from 19th April 2018. The purpose of the UNCRPD is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. It also promotes respect for their inherent dignity.

It applies established human rights principles from the UN Declaration on Human Rights to the specific situation of persons with disabilities.

Prior to ratification, we advised departments and agencies on identifying areas of policy and practice requiring specific attention. We guided Departments and agencies on what needed to be done to advance ratification. Since ratification, we have continued to support and advise on the implementation of the national strategies and programmes. Together, they can support the realisation of the rights enshrined in the UNCRPD.

The ratification of the UNCRPD represents a major landmark in Ireland's progressive realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities. We look forward to playing our part, through our continued advice to support implementation of the commitments in the UNCRPD. We will have a role to support the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's monitoring of Ireland's progress.

Conclusion

Over the last 20 years, the National Disability Authority has been committed to focusing its programme of work and resources towards supporting the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities.

We have worked to influence and impact change across many areas affecting the lives of persons with disabilities. We have also taken the opportunity to develop its unique role in advancing a Universal Design approach to the built environment, services and ICT, which is shown to have positive effects on society much wider than disability.

We look forward to continuing to play our part in monitoring how the strategies and policies are delivering and impacting change, to support Ireland in meeting its obligations under the UNCRPD.

We have evolved since our establishment in 2000. We have built on a track record of research, advice, and practical guidance and now engage more in the evaluation of policy implementation and monitoring of impact.

While we are not an advocacy body, it is hugely important to us that our advice is informed by the key issues faced by persons with disabilities and their families in their day-to-day lives. In our work, we have adopted a number of approaches to ensure this experience is captured and reflected in the advice prepared, for example consultations, round-tables, and conferences.

This publication is a summary of the key milestones in the founding and development of the organisation over the past 20 years. It allows us to take stock of achievements to date and highlights the importance of continuing to work to implement our vision in the coming years.

Disability Statistics

The definition of 'disability' varies and disability status can change over time. In Ireland the most common source of data on disability comes from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). CSO data on disability is based on the information provided by persons with a disability.

The information in this factsheet is taken from the 2016 Census and from work done by National Disability Authority researchers.

This factsheet looks at the number of people with a disability and some of their characteristics.



How many people have a disability in Ireland?

643,131

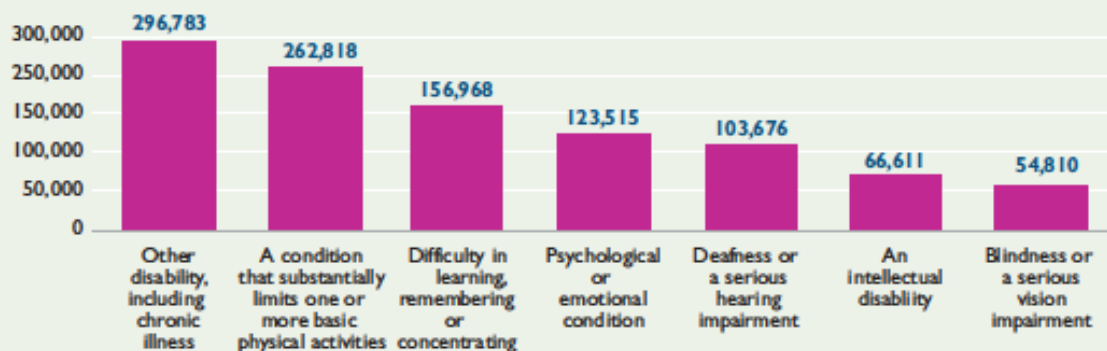
According to the 2016 Census



That's 1 in 7 people,
a slight increase since 2011

What are the most common types of disability?

The most common type of disability is 'other disability, including chronic illness'. This might include, for example, asthma, diabetes or heart disease. The next most common is 'a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities', like arthritis or a spinal injury. However, people can have more than one disability.



Chapter 1:

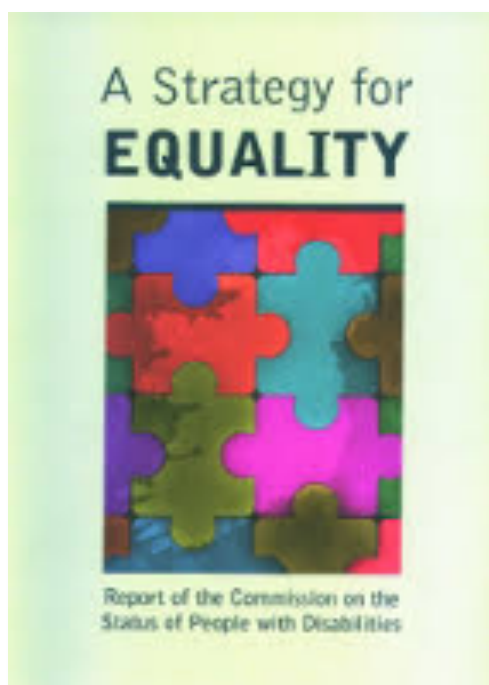
The development of disability policy in Ireland

Many strands of change

In common with many other countries, the history of how disability was considered and dealt with in Ireland was based on a medical model. Services were largely dependent on the voluntary sector. It was primarily dealt with and located in the health policy area. However, developments in the 1980s saw a change in language and understanding emerge. In the 1990s, there was a move to focus on disability from an equality perspective.

One of the key developments included the establishment of a Government Department with responsibility for equality and law reform in 1993. Following which, the Minister for Equality and Law Reform established an independent Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities on 29th November, 1993. This period of policy development culminated with the publication of **A Strategy for Equality: Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities**³ (1996).

Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities



3 A strategy for equality – Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities’
<<http://nda.ie/nda-files/Strategy-for-Equality-Overview-and-Commissions-Recommendations%2011.pdf>

The development of policy was viewed almost exclusively as a matter for the Department of Health, ensuring that the State response was driven through the health agenda. This link between disability and health has resulted in the belief in the dependency of persons with disabilities.

The Commission, under the independent chairmanship of Mr Justice Fergus Flood, set in motion a fundamental review of the conditions crucial to the participation of persons with disabilities, in economic, social, and cultural activities. The review was the most comprehensive examination of the needs of persons with disabilities undertaken in the history of the State.

The Commission concluded that:

“People with disabilities are the neglected citizens of Ireland. On the eve of the 21st century, many of them suffer intolerable conditions because of outdated social and economic policies and unthinkable public attitudes Whether their status is looked at in terms of economics, information, education, mobility, or housing, they are seen to be treated as second-class citizens.”

The Commission was tasked to review the situation for persons with disabilities in Ireland. Then, advise the government on practical measures as to how persons with disabilities could exercise their rights to participate, to the fullest extent of their potential, in economic, social and cultural life. The majority of its members (60%) were persons with disabilities, carers, or family members.

The Commission’s guiding principles were:

- Equality
- Maximising participation
- Enabling independence and choice

The Report involved a fundamental review of the conditions necessary to allow persons with disabilities to fully participate in society. For the first time, an official publication was heavily populated with lived experience.

Chapter 2:

The establishment of the National Disability Authority

The **National Disability Authority Act 1999** came into force on 12th June 2000, when the National Disability Authority was formally established. A ‘shadow’ National Disability Authority board had been set up in 1998 prior to the adoption of the legislation.

The establishment of the National Disability Authority was accompanied by the Government’s adoption of a policy of mainstreaming services for persons with disabilities. This has been the guiding principle for disability policy and practice since then. In announcing the establishment of the National Disability Authority, the then Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, also launched the Government’s commitment to disability mainstreaming.⁴ The Taoiseach stated, that the providers of public services would

“...from today have the concerns of people with disabilities as part of their core work”.

The Taoiseach confirmed the Commission’s view that every public body should treat disability as its core concern.

One of the main vehicles for change was the dissolution of the former National Rehabilitation Board, and the redistribution of its functions. The National Rehabilitation Board was established in 1967, under the remit of the Department of Health, as a successor to the previous National Organisation for Rehabilitation. Its functions were to supervise, operate, or arrange for services for the welfare of persons who were disabled, including:

- co-ordination of the work of voluntary bodies engaged in the provision of rehabilitation and training services for disabled persons
- giving of medical treatment to disabled persons
- providing a service for the assessment of disability and the giving of vocational guidance to disabled persons
- training and placement of disabled persons in employment

The National Rehabilitation Board also provided advice, information, and assistance on disability services to the Minister for Health, or to any health authority.

Inspired by the Commission’s recommendation to review the role of the National Rehabilitation Board, it was eventually dissolved in 2000. Its functions were distributed among several other public bodies. In broad terms, the distribution occurred as follows:

4 Department of An Taoiseach, ‘Launch of the National Disability Authority’ <www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/News/Archives/2000/Taoiseach's_Speeches_Archive_2000/13-06-2000_Speaking_at_the_launch_of_the_National_Disability_Authority.html>

- National Disability Authority: policy advice, standards, research
- Intreo and SOLAS (formerly FÁS): training and placement of persons with disabilities in employment
- Citizens Information Board (formerly Comhairle): advice, information, and assistance on disability services
- Health Service Executive (HSE) (formerly represented by the Eastern Regional Health Authority): audiology, medical prostheses, and appliances

The Commission proposed that the National Disability Authority should be empowered to conduct and commission research on disability issues. It also proposed that adequate funding should be allocated to extend both the scope and volume of current research. The functions of the National Disability Authority are outlined in Appendix A.

It further recommended that membership of the board of the National Disability Authority should be balanced and representative. At least 60% of the membership should be persons with disabilities or their families. The members and chairpersons of the Authority are outlined in Appendix B.

The National Disability Authority has been funded by the Government Department with the responsibility for equality policy, since it was established in 2000. For the most part, this has been the Department of Justice and Equality (bar a brief period in 2010-2011⁵). This has been important in maintaining the drive towards mainstreaming and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream policy and services.

With the creation of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, for the first time there is a Senior Minister in Government with responsibility for disability, along with a Minister of State (pictures of current Ministers below). The upcoming period will be an exciting one for the National Disability Authority, as we continue to inform and influence policy at these senior levels. The names of Ministers and Ministers of State who have had responsibility for the National Disability Authority and for disability issues are listed in Appendices C and D.

5 Transferred to the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs



Roderic O'Gorman, TD, Minister for Children,
Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (from 2020)



Anne Rabbitte, TD, Minister of State with responsibility
for Disability (from 2020)

Chapter 3:

The National Disability Authority and Government

National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Authority has, since its formation, focused on key areas identified by the Commission for priority attention, including education and the need for disability legislation. In noting the need for a co-ordinated approach to addressing the policy issues that crossed many departments, in our Annual Report for 2002 we advised the Government to develop a National Disability Strategy:

“There is a need for the development of mechanisms to ensure Government Departments work effectively on crosscutting issues such as transport, income adequacy, training, and employment. The way forward is a comprehensive National Disability Strategy. This would draw together departmental policies to create an action plan for the progression of mainstreaming and the Government’s disability agenda.”

The hosting of the Special Olympics in 2003 had a big impact on the awareness of disability among the general public. The Games saw teams from competing nations hosted in towns and cities all across the country. This was also the European Year of People with Disabilities. The European Union’s Eurobarometer survey⁶ (February 2004) of attitudes towards persons with disabilities highlighted the fact that Ireland had the most positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities in the EU. This was attributed mainly to the impact of the Special Olympics.

It was against this backdrop of heightened awareness that, in September 2004, the Government approved publication of the **Disability Bill 2004** and the draft Sectoral Plans, as part of a national strategy on disability. On 21st September 2004, the Taoiseach launched the National Disability Strategy which comprised:

- the **Disability Bill 2004**
- the **Comhairle (Amendment) Bill 2004**
- six Sectoral Plans
- a commitment to a multi-annual Investment Programme for Disability Support Services over a five-year period
- and revised cabinet procedures to require that all memos to Government for new legislation and policies would be disability-proofed

6 https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_198_exec_sum.pdf



Number 14 of 2005

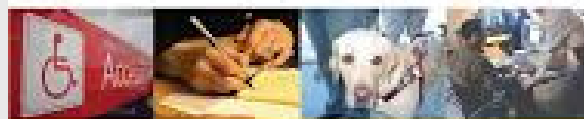
DISABILITY ACT 2005

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

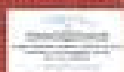
PART 1

PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL

Sectoral Plan under
the Disability Act 2005



Department of the Environment,
Heritage and Local Government



The **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004** was also adopted that year. It provided for the establishment of the National Council for Special Education. It set out a framework for the assessment of education support needs as well as the production of individual education plans for students.

The Strategy built on the strong equality framework of the **Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004**, and the **Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004**. These acts provide protection against discrimination and the infrastructure to process complaints.

A range of structures and procedures were subsequently established alongside the National Disability Strategy to support the implementation of the legislation and policies involved, and to monitor its progress. This included a national steering group to oversee progress under the Strategy. The group comprised officials from the various Government Departments, the National Disability Authority and the newly formed Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG),⁷ The **Disability Bill 2004** was:

“a key part of the National Disability Strategy being put in place... to underpin the equal participation of persons with disabilities in society.”⁸

The process of developing the sectoral plans meant there was detailed consultation, both within the Departments concerned, and with their main stakeholders.

7 The Disability Stakeholders Group comprises both disability service providers and persons with disabilities, who will bring their lived experience to bear on the work of the group. The purpose of the DSG is to provide a forum, within which disability stakeholders can work together to present one forum. Disability stakeholders can work together to present one voice to Government through the Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG) on strategic issues in relation to the National Disability Strategy. The Disability Stakeholders Group members are, in turn, nominated to sit on other Departments' consultative committees. The Group has an independent Chairperson and Secretariat. Services are provided by the National Disability Authority. Department of Justice and Equality, 'Minister McGrath appoints new Disability Stakeholder Group' <www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR18000269

8 Disability Bill 2004: Explanatory memorandum

Disability Legislation

When work on the Disability Bill commenced, on the basis of the 2002 Programme for Government, the National Disability Authority was best placed to support the establishment of an independent group of persons with disabilities, their families, carers and service providers. What became known as the Disability Legislation Consultation Group was chaired by the Chairperson of the National Disability Authority. The National Disability Authority also supported the work of the Disability Legislation Consultation Group, by acting as its secretariat. The Disability Legislation Consultation Group's extensive consultations and discussions were distilled into the publication, **Equal Citizens: Proposals for Core Elements of Disability Legislation**. This publication was submitted to the Government for consideration.

After the passing of the **Disability Act 2005**, the Disability Legislation Consultation Group established six consultation working groups on the Sectoral Plans – one for each Government Department involved. The National Disability Authority provided support to each of these working groups in the Disability Legislation Consultation Group's engagement with the individual Departments.

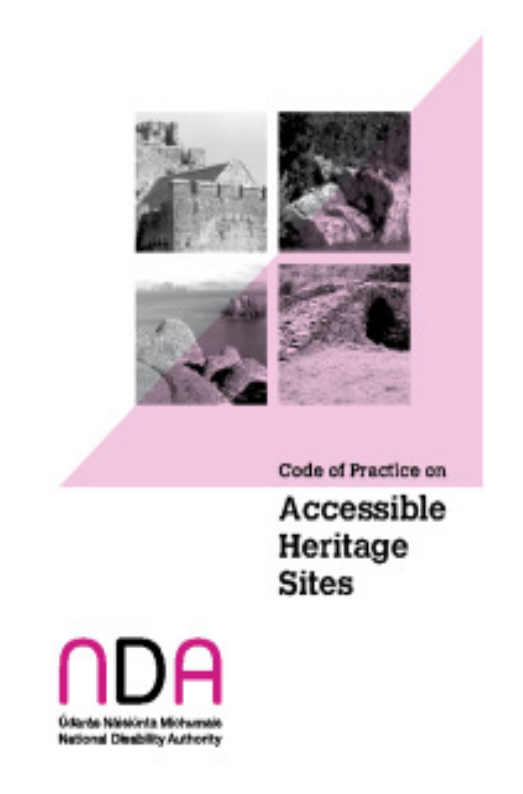
New Functions for the National Disability Authority

After the **Disability Act 2005** was signed into law, the National Disability Authority acquired a range of new statutory and non-statutory roles and responsibilities. These changes came about by way of amendments to the **National Disability Authority Act 1999**.

On a practical level, the number of board members was reduced from 21 to 13. We were also given responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Act under a number of sections. We:

- developed statutory Codes of Practice, under Part 3. This enables public bodies to comply with the provisions that require them to make their services and information accessible to persons with disabilities. It has also developed one for accessible heritage sites
- had a key role in the establishment and progress of the Part 5 reporting and monitoring process. The Authority drafted and circulated statutory and non-statutory reporting and guidance materials, to allow public bodies to fulfil their statutory obligation. The National Disability Authority also has an important statutory function, whereby it can assess non-compliance against any public body that has not complied with Part 5 for any two successive years

- were given additional functions, under Part 6 of the **Disability Act 2005**, to establish and operate a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design was established in 2007. It is the first statutory Centre of its type in the world. As set out in the Disability Act, Universal Design refers to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability.



Sectoral Plans

The **Disability Act** made specific provision (sections 32 to 37) for each Sectoral Plan, detailing key areas to be addressed. These were disability action plans setting out what Departments would do to progress accessibility of their services.

Over the course of 2005, while developing its advice to guide the Government on how the plans could best progress inclusion, we also provided independent and expert advice to the Departments, to support the further development of the draft plans.

The management of this process was a major undertaking for us at that time. It provided an early example of consultation with persons with disabilities, regarding

Government policy that would affect their lives. The outline Sectoral Plans prepared by Departments in 2004 were the subject of considerable further development, prior to being laid before the Oireachtas in July 2006.

After publishing our Response to the outline Sectoral Plans at the end of 2005, we continued to engage with, support and advise Departments on the content of the final plans. Formal written submissions, incorporating our advice on individual Sectoral Plans, were made to each of the Departments. For example, we recommended that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Sectoral Plan should have a comprehensive employment strategy for persons with disabilities as its central focus. This lay the ground-work for a Strategy ultimately published in 2015.

Our Response document consisted of an analysis of key issues for all six Departments, within a strategic framework approach. This was together with analysis and recommendations in relation to the outline Sectoral Plans of individual Departments. We recommended that each Department's Sectoral Plan should address the following common issues, among others:

- How the mainstream services of each of the six Departments, and of the agencies under their remit, plan to provide for persons with disabilities as part of their normal remit ("mainstreaming")
- How the Sectoral Plan on disability will be embedded in the Statement of Strategy and the business plans of the Department's units
- How the Plans will co-ordinate linked measures across Departments
- Targets and timeframes for delivery
- Resources required to deliver these target actions
- Performance indicators
- How policies and actions under each Department's brief are to be checked for implications for persons with disabilities, and compatibility with disability and equality laws ("disability/equality proofing")

We also facilitated regional briefings, in partnership with those Departments, to enable input from a range of stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, their families, carers and service providers. In addition, we advised on issues covering a number of Departments. The Taoiseach acknowledged our vital input at the launch of the Sectoral Plans, when he referred to the National Disability Authority's

"vital source of advice and support for the public service".

These Departments published their plans in 2006.

We worked to support the implementation of the Sectoral Plans, through our input as independent advisor on each of the six Departmental Sectoral Plan Monitoring Committees⁹ These six Departments were:

- Health and Children
- Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Social and Family Affairs
- Transport
- Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

The Sectoral Plan process gradually went into abeyance and was eventually replaced by the successive iterations of the National Disability Strategy. It incorporated a plan of action for delivery by all Departments and agencies, not just the six named Departments. For the NDA, this provided a route into regular contact and interaction with Government Departments on disability policy and practice.

Monitoring the National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Authority has continued to independently monitor the implementation of the National Disability Strategy, in its various iterations, since 2004. At the same time, we have engaged with Departments and public bodies on the specific committed actions and the potential to build on these to advance equality for persons with disabilities. We also delivered on projects within the Strategy to support its implementation.

Under the **Towards 2016** partnership agreement (2006), the Government established a National Disability Strategy Stakeholder Monitoring Group (NDSSMG). This Group's aim was to monitor progress on the overall implementation of the strategy. This document was clear in stating the role of the National Disability Authority¹⁰

“The National Disability Authority is a source of advice on disability practice and policy, and in the context of the life-cycle approach, will continue to contribute to the co-ordination and development of actions and priorities in this area.”

We continued to advise on the need to measure both outcomes and output of the Strategy. We conducted research to identify indicators based on robust datasets that could be applied in an Irish context, to measure the impact of the Strategy's goals. The

⁹ Department titles and responsibilities have changed on numerous occasions since 2006

¹⁰ Towards 2016, page 70

annual reports generated formed a key element in the NDSSMG's review of progress towards achieving full inclusion for persons with disabilities. We also supported the implementation of the National Disability Strategy through:

- evidence-based research
- independent advice and information, both on strategic issues and on individual actions
- partnering with Departments and agencies on developing specific guidance (e.g. on accessible voting; on accessible marine passenger transport,) in furtherance of specific commitments in the Sectoral Plans
- participation in specific task groups (adult day services; congregated settings; National Advisory Group on housing strategy for persons with disabilities), which advance commitments under the Strategy

Our involvement has continued, as it has had a significant role to play in the evolution of the National Disability Strategy during the recession and recovery.

National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan

The year 2011 saw a new Government appointed, leading to a change in functions of individual Government Departments. The programme for Government committed to publishing an implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy. The National Disability Authority advised on the framework for the Plan and continued in its role as an independent advisory body, against the backdrop of a country trying to make its way out a deep recession.

We continued to work bi-laterally with Departments and public bodies to guide on implementation, including participating in the relevant committees. We undertook a mid-term review of the **National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan** (NDSIP), which was published in November 2014. In this review, we advised on how the scope of the NDSIP could be broadened and highlighted where progress had been made. We also noted that structural problems could be alleviated if our advice, based on the Strategy being broken down into a series of annual action plans, were to be taken on board.

We chaired and provided secretariat support to the Disability Stakeholders Group that also sent its views and recommendations to the national steering group on the Plan. We also undertook work to provide guidance on how the Plan could more effectively meet the needs of those with autism. The Cabinet Committee on Social Policy adopted a Programme of Actions on Autism, informed by research and advice from the National Disability Authority through consultation, we had undertaken with

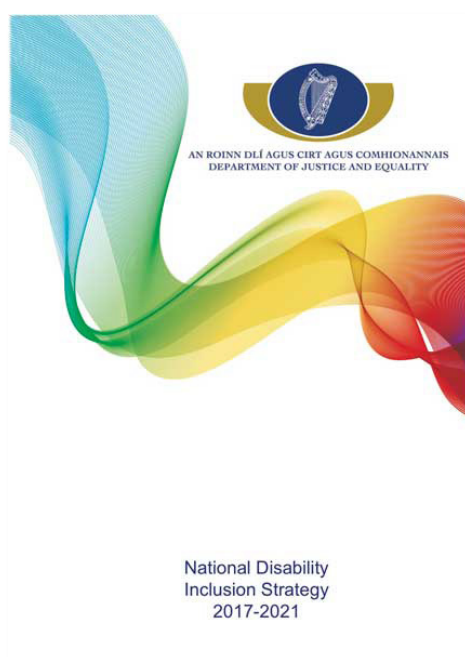
autism organisations and representatives of people with autism. The programme was designed within the framework of the NDSIP and strengthened it with regard to autism. Government Departments and public bodies were given responsibility to deliver specific commitments under this programme.

National Disability Strategy Inclusion Plan 2017-2021

With the General Election in 2016 came a new Programme for Partnership Government, and a new set of policy priorities. The Programme focused on removing barriers that impact on access to services, education, work, transport, or healthcare for persons with disabilities. The Programme also set out a path towards the introduction of personalised budgeting for persons with disabilities. One of the key commitments was to ratify the UNCRPD. The Minister of State with special responsibility for disability issues, Finian McGrath, TD, was given a place at Cabinet meetings for the first time.

Over the course of 2016, the Department of Justice and Equality led the development of a new National Disability Inclusion Strategy and a three-year implementation plan. The National Disability Authority advised on key areas that needed to be progressed, engaged bilaterally with Departments to advise them on actions they could advance in line with UNCRPD, and advised Minister of State McGrath on the overall plan and the targets set out within.

This new Strategy has been framed as a living document from the start. This has given it a flexibility allowing it to be refreshed over time.



We took on the role of facilitating independent consultation to guide the strategic priorities and objectives. This entailed regional meetings, focus groups and online submissions. The current **National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017–2021** sets out actions committed to by Government Departments and public bodies, to facilitate the progressive realisation of the UNCRPD. This should inform their annual business planning and activities.¹¹

The Strategy's goals are focused on removing barriers to equality, accessing housing, education, employment, transport and services. It incorporates the commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol¹² to the UNCRPD, as well as commitments to deliver on national strategies and programmes. This covers:

- actions to enhance employment opportunities
- the transformation of disability services
- specific actions to make websites and services accessible, to enhance access to education and employment, and to health services, housing, and transport

A steering group chaired by the Minister of State, comprising Senior Government Department officials, the HSE, the Disability Stakeholder Group and the National Disability Authority, monitors the implementation of the Strategy. We also independently assess and measure progress and the outcomes for persons with disabilities. To do this, we have developed a further set of indicators to reflect the changing goals and priorities in the new Strategy. They are regarded as playing a vital role in the identification of trends and issues, while contributing to the process of priority setting, policy formulation and the evaluation and monitoring of progress.

11 The National Disability Inclusion Strategy is a whole Government approach to improving the lives of persons with disabilities. Department of Justice and Equality, 'National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021' <www.justice.ie/en/JELR/dept-justice-ndi-inclusion-strategy-booklet.pdf/Files/dept-justice-ndi-inclusion-strategy-booklet.pdf

12 The Optional Protocol establishes an individual complaints mechanism for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, similar to those of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. But this Protocol also accepts individual rights on economic, social, and cultural rights like the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Parties agree to recognise the competence of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to consider complaints from individuals or groups who claim their rights under the Convention have been violated. The Committee can request information from and make recommendations to a party. In addition, parties may permit the Committee to investigate, report on and make recommendations on "grave or systematic violations" of the Convention. Parties may opt out of this obligation on signature or ratification.

The indicators are used to assess the level of progress being made through the implementation of the Strategy, to improve the lives of persons with disabilities over time. Our work on the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Indicators has been acknowledged by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency and included in a compendium of good practice on equality data.¹³

The Strategy will assist Ireland towards the delivery of many of the goals of the UNCRPD. This Strategy recently underwent a mid-term review, which was completed in January 2020.

We have welcomed the progressive realisation of the aims and objectives of these transformational strategies, and the continued commitment of all relevant stakeholders to their implementation. While some progress has been made, we continue to guide on areas where further focus is required.

In June 2020, the new Government published a Programme for Government called **Our Shared Future**. This document is committed to overseeing the implementation of the UNCRPD, backed up by a range of other commitments across the disability spectrum. These commitments are supported by the appointment of the first senior cabinet minister with responsibility for disability, and the establishment of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters. This Committee considers all disability matters, including monitoring the implementation of the UNCRPD.

We will continue to work with these new structures to advise and inform the disability agenda.

The National Disability Authority has already been advising the Minister and Government Departments on matters relevant to the UNCRPD for several years. We have provided guidance to the Department of Justice and Equality on what legislation should be repealed and enacted. This informed their **Roadmap to Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**¹⁴. We also advised the Department on the monitoring framework to be used, and this has since been adopted. In addition to these activities, we ran seminars and facilitated workshops to identify actions required to support implementation of the UNCRPD.

¹³ <https://fra.europa.eu/en/promising-practices/indicator-set-monitor-national-disability-inclusion-strategy-2017-2021>

¹⁴ <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Roadmap%20to%20Ratification%20of%20CRPD.pdf/Files/Roadmap%20to%20Ratification%20of%20CRPD.pdf>

We have also provided advice on various pieces of legislation, the passing of which aids the implementation of the UNCRPD in Ireland. This includes the **Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act 2015**, the **Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017**, and submissions on planned protection of liberty legislation.

It is expected that the **Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill**¹⁵, when enacted, will further facilitate the implementation of the UNCRPD. Under the Bill, we will have a role in providing information and advice to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, in its role as the official monitoring body for Ireland's compliance with the UNCRPD. Our work will include the development and provision of statistical information, as required, to assist the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in its monitoring function.

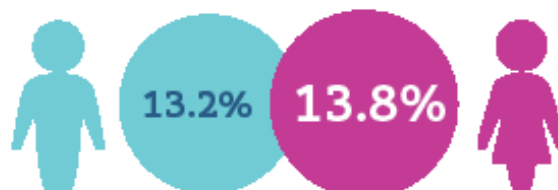
From the outset, we focused our programme of work and advice to influence strategic areas of public policy. These areas include education, health, income adequacy, training and employment, communications, housing, transport, Universal Design and on crosscutting inter-Departmental issues of relevance to persons with disabilities. Our Strategic Plans have given a framework for these strategic objectives over successive three-year periods. They have been guided by consideration of stakeholder input, Government programmes, the National Disability Strategy, and the UNCRPD.

The following chapters set out some of the key pieces of work we have delivered to influence policy and practice in progressing equality for persons with disabilities. They also sets out some of the key pieces of work we have delivered to advance disability mainstreaming and to guide the adoption of Universal Design in practice. The outputs are presented under specific areas that we have worked to influence over the years.

¹⁵ <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2016/119/>

Men and Women

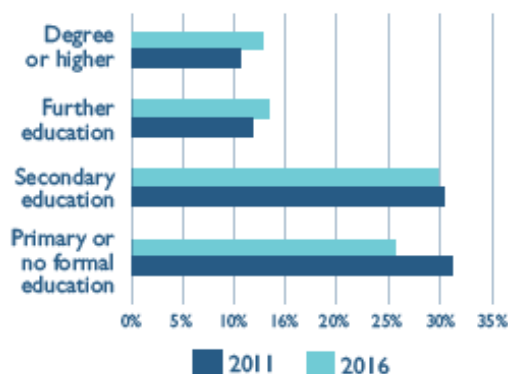
Slightly more females than males have a disability, mostly because women live longer than men.



Education



The education level of people with a disability is increasing. This graph shows the education level of people with disability in 2011 and 2016.

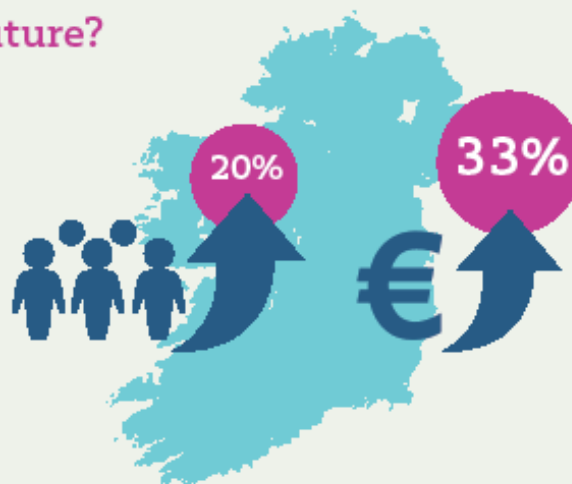


What will happen in the future?

The Irish population will grow to 5.2 million by 2026. Because there will be both more people and more older people, there will be more people with a disability. By 2026, we expect that the number of people with a disability will have increased by 20%.

The 2018 budget for disability services is €1.8 billion. The NDA estimates that by 2026 this will need to increase by up to 33% to support the increased number of people with a disability.

See <http://nda.ie/Publications/Disability-Supports/Transforming-Lives.html>



For further information on any of the statistics in this factsheet visit www.nda.ie/Resources/Factsheets

nda
 Oireachtas Na hÉireann
 National Disability Authority

Chapter 4:

Research evidence

The UCD Centre for the Study of Developmental Disabilities was established in 1996. In 2000, the National Disability Authority gave £500,000 (€635,000) to fund a Chair of Disability Studies in UCD, up to 2005. In giving this funding, the National Disability Authority stated that one of the main aims of this chair was to help all students understand and work to overcome barriers to full participation in society of people with disabilities.

The National Disability Authority has a statutory function to undertake, commission or collaborate in research projects and assist in the development of statistical information in relation to disability. Our programme of research is designed to identify issues that may require policy attention, to explore practice, learning, and evidence to guide our independent analysis and advice on policy, practice, and implementation. Our advice is also informed by our independent evaluation of the implementation of strategies, programmes, policies, and standards. In addition, we also operate a Research Promotion Grants Scheme, where research proposals, under a broad theme, are invited and assessed.

A number of the National Disability Authority's research publications since 2000 are set out in Appendix E.

Research Promotion Grant Scheme

The National Disability Authority's Research Promotion Grant Scheme was established in 2003, to facilitate disability groups and community and voluntary organisations working on disability issues to undertake research. The scheme aimed to broaden and deepen knowledge of specific disability issues. It acted as a means to help inform policymakers, and service providers, of disability needs and issues at a local level. It also aimed to promote more research on disabilities in academic institutions and to build capacity for disability research across organisations. The scheme evolved over the years, as we sought to target its focus on specific, relevant policy areas for attention.

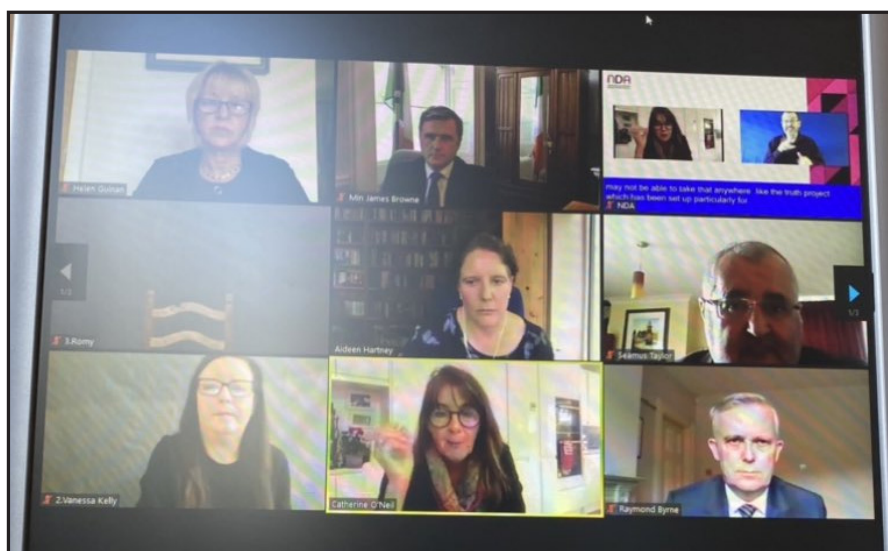
Themes for the Scheme, over the years, are set out in Appendix F, and include a focus on transitions to employment, the experiences of family carers, successful strategies to support independent living in the community, and most recently, homelessness. The themes have always been chosen with an eye on the public policy requirements of the time and the priorities set out in our Strategic Plans.

The research has primarily been awarded to academic institutions and has resulted in a number of peer-reviewed publications, as well as strong relationships between the

National Disability Authority and these academic bodies. A number of seminars have been held over the years to share the findings. More recently, we have been pleased to fund a small number of projects where persons with disabilities themselves have co-designed or co-produced the research. We look forward to seeing this continue to evolve in the future.

Annual Conference

The National Disability Authority has held a conference every year since 2002, to share learning from Ireland and abroad on disability policy and practice around a particular theme, with a view to influencing national policy considerations. The conference shares learning from national and international practice. It is attended by policymakers, practitioners, persons with disabilities and their families, and researchers.



A screen grab from our first virtual annual conference in 2020.

Between 2002 and 2009, the Conference focused exclusively on research and research methodologies.

Since 2010, the Annual Conference has featured many themes relevant to guiding policy and practice transformation towards empowering persons with disabilities to live independently in the community and how they can best be supported to do so. In recent years, the Conference has focused on the UNCRPD and its implementation, including the use of data and access to justice. A list of conference themes are presented in Appendix G.

Statistics

One of the National Disability Authority's functions is to collect and assess data that allows it to carry out the other activities set out in section 8 of the **National Disability Authority Act 1999**.

We have been working consistently over the years to measure the outcomes of the various policies and programmes that have been developed to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Consistently reminding people of the numbers of persons with disabilities in Irish society brings home just how many people live with a disability, or a mental health difficulty, on a daily basis.

National Disability Survey 2006

In 2002, our Research Unit reviewed existing data, including national surveys, mainstream administrative databases, and the new Health Research Board's disability databases. This was done in order to establish what information was available and what new information needed to be generated to fill any gaps. In recognising the need for more comprehensive information from the perspective of persons with disabilities in terms of their life experiences, we advised the Minister of the value of a national survey of persons with disabilities.

We commissioned research in 2003, to obtain more detailed information on the lives of persons with disabilities and the impact of living with a disability in Ireland. This pilot study and discussions we held with government officials formed the basis for the Government decision for the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to conduct a National Disability Survey¹⁶ after the 2006 Census. The main purpose of the National Disability Survey was to gather rich information to inform national policy and planning across a wide range of Government Departments and public bodies.

We participated in the Advisory Board for the National Disability Survey and in the questionnaire sub-committee. We also provided advice on:

- shaping materials for the survey field staff
- contributing to the training session for the field staff
- debriefing field staff when their field work was completed

¹⁶ <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/health/nationaldisabilitysurvey/>

We had been supporting the CSO in its membership of the UN Washington City Group on Disability Statistics (WCG). This Group was established by the United Nations in 2002, to enable the international community to develop an agreement on the nature of a general measure of disability for use across the world. The WCG adapted and used the interviewer guidelines, developed during our 2002-03 pilot for the National Disability Strategy, in its field trials in Uganda and other sites.

Two questions on disability were included in the Census for the first time in 2002. In 2006, two more detailed questions on disability were included on the Census form. The National Disability Survey sample was selected based on responses to these questions. The National Disability Survey questionnaires were based on the social model of disability, which defines disability as the outcome of the interaction between a person with an impairment, and the environmental and attitudinal barriers s/he may face.

In cooperation with the CSO, we have been able to use the data from the National Disability Survey to conduct more detailed analyses. This provides a more comprehensive picture on the situation for persons with disabilities across this very significant sample size of 16,000. We are now recommending a successor to the National Disability Survey, to provide detailed data to allow monitoring of the UNCRPD in Ireland and to inform policies relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities

The NDA continues to engage with the CSO in relation to the five-yearly censuses. We have been on working groups and have advised on amendments to the disability questions to make them more comprehensive and to improve understanding of the questions.

One way of achieving empowerment, inclusiveness and equality is through greater awareness and understanding of the experiences of persons with disabilities, supported by data. In recent years, we have started to produce our own series of disability factsheets – with infographics - on a range of topics, in order to help a wider audience understand what the data shows. The first few factsheets have concentrated on the demography of persons with disabilities and employment outcomes.

We have advised that a variable on disability be included as part of the Growing Up in Ireland Study and the rich data from that project has been incorporated in our work. We have also worked closely with The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA).

National Disability Strategy indicators

The National Disability Authority developed a suite of indicators to monitor the achievement of the five high-level goals for the National Disability Strategy, as set out

in the **Towards 2016** partnership agreement. As not all indicators were readily available from existing data sources, we commissioned surveys in 2009 and 2011. We wanted to hear from persons with disabilities on their experience in areas not covered by the established regular surveys.

We also completed work in 2018, building on previous data to develop a suite of indicators, to enable the measurement of progress in implementing the **National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021**. We are on the Steering Group for the National Disability Inclusion Strategy and also publish an annual independent report on progress.

We recognise the importance of data in guiding policy and practice and its continued improvement. Data are also important in measuring outcomes for persons with disabilities, and particularly in terms of measuring Ireland's performance under the UNCRPD. For this reason, it was decided that the theme for our annual conference in 2018 would be 'Achieving Better Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities: Using Data as a Tool to Guide Policy and Practice'.

Chapter 5:

Health and personal social services

The primary supports to persons with disabilities, that is health and social care supports, have been funded through the HSE (and its predecessor bodies) for many years and have been guided by policies from the Department of Health. These supports have been delivered on the ground, mainly through the voluntary sector, through the traditional model of funding, and mainly centre-based services for many years. Since 2000 our work programme has been focused on advising policy change to transform the supports model.

From the early days drafting the first set of disability standards, to researching practice in other jurisdictions, to testing implementation tools in the field, and guiding the development of frameworks for change and evaluating transformation initiatives, health and social care support have been a significant focus in our work because the shift is so transformative. The following highlights some of this work over the years.

Transforming Lives

Whether with the Department of Health, the old health boards, or the HSE, the National Disability Authority has made a consistent contribution to policy development in this area. The National Disability Authority has contributed much evidence-based research to a number of policy areas that are designed to reconfigure the services offered by the HSE and to improve the quality of those services to persons with disabilities.

We participated in the HSE's Adult Day Services Review Group and Congregated Settings Working Group, and the Department of Health and Children's National Disability Advisory Committee. We also provided advice on the HSE's Review of Adult Day Services.

Research support was provided to the HSE Working Group on Congregated Settings, to profile the population of persons with intellectual, physical, and sensory disabilities nationwide, who reside in congregated settings.

We were represented on the HSE's Congregated Settings Working Group. This examined alternatives to institutional living for the 4,000 people with an intellectual, physical, or sensory disability, living in centres of ten or more people. We did significant work on a literature review and on analysis of a survey of these centres for the Congregated Settings Working Group's report (2010).

From this, we published **Models of Residential Provision for Persons with disabilities: Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper** (2010).

All of this work was progressed against the backdrop of the Department of Health's

major **Report on Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services**¹⁷. We provided a detailed policy advice paper to the Department of Health and Children to inform this report. The paper was based on a comparative study of the systems of disability services and supports. This included commissioned research on costs of disability services in six jurisdictions: England, Scotland, Norway, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Victoria (Australia).

This paper advised that the following values should underpin disability service provision. It also advised that the values should be incorporated as conditions for the award of funding, and embedded in mandatory service standards:

- person-centredness, inclusion, community integration, participation, independence, and choice
- support persons with disabilities to live the lives of their choosing in the mainstream community

The Report of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services set out an agenda for reform of disability services, to put persons with disabilities at the centre, with greater choice and control. It also set out measures to ensure more effective deployment of resources. At the heart of this, is a vision of persons with disabilities supported to be fully included in the community.

Among the recommendations were:

- a new model of resource allocation to better link resources to assessed needs
- progressive closure of residential institutions
- a common assessment method
- a changed skill mix
- a quality framework
- reconfigured governance and accountability
- better data systems and measures of outcomes

Implementation of the recommendations of this Review will be key to delivering models of support that enable persons with disabilities to live ordinary lives as part of the community. These changes will see the move away from living in large residential homes to living independently as part of the community. The changes will also see the move away from traditional adult day service models to opportunities to participate in the mainstream life of the community, including employment. Our research on resource allocation methodologies for disability services, and outcome measures

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ed3564-value-for-money-and-policy-review-of-disability-services-in-ireland/?referrer=/blog/publications/report-of-disability-policy-review/>

in disability services provision, was acknowledged as important in delivering on the major programme of change stemming from this Review. Our research on assessment of need, and advice and guidance on quality standards for disability services, are other areas where we have been supporting this change agenda.

We participated in the HSE's National Consultative Forum as the independent advisory body on matters of disability policy and practice. We also participated in the various working groups to support implementation of new policy directions for disability services.

Transforming Lives

The Minister of State for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older Persons appointed the National Disability Authority to a national steering group, to oversee the implementation of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services. The Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services was later renamed Transforming Lives.

Unlike other jurisdictions, social care supports in Ireland are delivered through the HSE and the voluntary sector bodies that it funds. The national Transforming Lives programme is designed to support the transition from the traditional means of services and segregation, towards enabling people to live lives of their choosing in the community. This comprises actions, which include:

- Transitioning from institutional living arrangements in large residential centres to supported living arrangements of choice as part of the community
- A move away from segregated day care service arrangements, to supports for inclusion in the mainstream community, with training and employment informed by each person's goals and choices
- A major transformation from the old models of providing services to groups, to tailored supports decided by the individual
- The development of individualised funding
- The development of frameworks to guide those in providing services on the implementation of person-centred planning and ensuring that supports provided are tailored to achieving an individual's quality of life
- Enhanced data systems to enable consistent monitoring of investment and the outcomes achieved

The progressive delivery of the Transforming Lives programme, and its constituent parts are important in complying with a range of Articles in the UNCRPD. However, it will also be important in how they dovetail with other relevant strategies, such as the National Disability Inclusion Strategy and the Comprehensive Employment Strategy.

With any significant change programme, effective transition-planning is required, ensuring persons with disabilities are central and involved in decision-making. We have emphasised the importance of engaging with key actors. These include families, staff, and the local community, given their experience and the contributions they can make to guiding policy and change implementation. However, the pace of progress can prove challenging, noting that Ireland has started a programme of deinstitutionalisation later than other jurisdictions, and given historical models of funding and model services. The pace of change can be challenging. It can require adequate resources, wider cultural changes, and effective local networks, use of tools and frameworks e.g. person-centred planning framework, as well as a requirement that other elements outside of disability funded supports are operating effectively. For example, availability of suitable housing is important, as is access to mainstream services in the community.

We advised of the need to move to a commissioning model, as opposed to continuing the traditional model where services are determined by service providers. Commissioning provides an opportunity to configure services around service user needs, rather than slotting service users into an existing service configuration. It provides an opportunity to involve service users (and their families and carers) in the different stages of the commissioning cycle.

We produced a significant briefing paper that set out how to manage commissioning. This paper has fed into the personal budgeting process referred to below.

We also delivered a series of projects to guide the implementation of Transforming Lives and to guide future planning in light of growing demand for supports. We carried out research and data analysis, in order to project the level of demand for a range of disability services in the future, which was published in 2018 and supported its further updating in 2019. This work supported the HSE's working group which was considering such matters.

The report analysed data on a variety of factors including:

- demographic trends
- current levels of provision and unmet need
- likely support needs for various disability types in the future

The report guides the HSE in planning future services, identifying the likely numbers of people needing services in 2026, and estimating the costs of providing these services based on current costs. This is the first time a comprehensive examination of this kind has been undertaken. It has since been further developed within the Department of Health, supported by our researchers, to become a Capacity Review of Disability Services, to inform the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's considerations regarding budgets.

Time to Move On

In 2010 we published **Models of Residential Provision for Persons with disabilities: Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper**¹⁸. It was from this research that we were able to demonstrate that a maximum of four residents is the optimum number for the purposes of accommodating those persons with disabilities who were to be moved to the community from congregated settings, with the aim of moving over time, to persons with disabilities being supported to live alone or in smaller households if preferred.

When the **National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-16** was published in 2011, about 4,000 persons with intellectual, physical, or sensory disabilities lived in disability care centres of 10 or more people. There was no inspection system in place for these centres. The HSE Working Group on Congregated Settings drew up proposals to replace these centres with community-based services, along with a timetable to close the centres.

We published research on the quality of life in institutional settings, and on the better outcomes achieved in dispersed opposed to clustered housing. We are now conducting a review of evidence on natural community supports and have facilitated seminars and workshops to explore these issues.

In partnership with the Department of Health, the National Disability Authority has undertaken a major project called the **Moving-In Moving-On Study**. This is a programme of evaluation of the costs and benefits of new, community-based models of service, in comparison to traditional institutionalised service provision.

This project has examined the models of service provided to 425 people and included an assessment of participants' support needs, as well as an evaluation of costs and outcomes. Participants include adults with a wide variety of disabilities.

This project includes a before-and-after evaluation of participants moving from congregated settings to live in the community. Participant profiles before-and-after their move to community settings are compared to identify benefits. Support costs before-and-after decongregation are also compared.

The project's findings emphasise the improvements in the quality of life for persons with disabilities that come with a shift away from institutional and congregated models of service provision. The work will inform the ongoing management of the decongregation process, and will also provide guidance on the supports and services

¹⁸ <http://nda.ie/Policy-and-research/Research/Research-Publications/Models-of-Residential-Provision-for-People-with-Disabilities.html>

required to ensure persons with disabilities can live the lives they choose.

Personalised budgets

Throughout its history, the National Disability Authority continued in its work to build research and learning, to inform the advancement of individualised funding arrangements for persons with disabilities, including personal budgets. Early on, we highlighted the importance of individualised funding as one route to transforming services – not necessarily direct payments only, but a ‘money follows the person’ model.

The **Programme for Partnership Government**, published in May 2016, committed to exploring and developing a national system for allocating personalised budgets to persons with disabilities who wish to avail of them. We were part of the Task Force established by the Minister of State to progress this commitment. We also conducted research and evaluation work to guide the considerations of the Task Force. In addition, the NDA Director chaired an Advisory Group that heard directly from persons with disabilities and their families.

We welcomed the publication and launch of the Task Force report by the Minister in July 2018. This marked the conclusion of extensive work on the part of the Task Force, to examine and consider a model for individualised funding for adults with disabilities availing of personal social services provided through the HSE.

We are currently advising the Department of Health and the HSE on the design, implementation and evaluation of a series of demonstration projects, to test the recommendations of the Task Force. We look forward to continuing to be involved in this important development in the disability funding landscape.

Independent assessment of need

A lot of advice has been provided to Government on the implementation of the independent assessment of needs process. We advised on the standards for the assessment of needs. We also provided advice in relation to a framework for implementation of the assessment process, through participation in the relevant working groups. This was supplemented with advice on the operation of section 13 of the Disability Act 2005 and quantifying the aggregate of assessed needs under the Act.

Independent assessment of need came into effect for children under five from 1st June 2007. Subsequent court action has clarified that children who were under five at this date are entitled to an assessment. The parallel system of statutory assessment of education needs of school-going children has not yet commenced.

In order to assist the introduction of assessment for five to 18-year olds, we

undertook a study of assessment of need of young children in other jurisdictions. This was alongside detailed analysis of the current Irish system, to inform its advice on how the current system could be improved.

Resource allocation

The Transforming Lives Programme signalled a major policy shift towards organising services and supports around individuals. This was opposed to fitting individuals into existing services, with a focus on supporting people to live ordinary lives in ordinary places. We gained a reputation for well-informed research through our independent work on resource allocation models and on outcomes measurement. Due to this, we were given specific roles in the implementation framework agreed by Government.

In 2011, the National Disability Authority published research which reviewed the literature on resource allocation models for social care, drawing on systems of assessment and resource allocation for adults in other jurisdictions. Such models were found to match resources to need in an equitable way and were also the foundation for systems of personalised budgets. To inform the practical choice of resource allocation model for Ireland, the National Disability Authority began a field trial of two of the most widely used needs assessment tools. This work expanded to testing two other models following which, advice was issued to the Department of Health on the appropriate preferred model for a person-centred disability service.

Natural Community Supports

Greater participation in the local community has benefits for persons with disabilities. This participation is enabled by a variety of supports, including the family, mainstream organisations and services accessed by the wider community. With this in mind, the National Disability Authority conducted research on the role of natural community supports, and how persons with disabilities can be supported to engage in mainstream community activities.

We have examined a number of models of community intervention in various jurisdictions, to support persons with disabilities and other persons with support needs, including Local Area Coordination (LAC). We continue to investigate ways in which community supports can be structured and strengthened in Ireland.

Standards in Disability Services

In partnership with the Department of Health and Children, the process of the National Disability Authority developing National Standards for Disability Services began with the presentation of Draft Standards at a national conference in January 2003. This was followed by seven regional consultation meetings, resulting in a second

draft set of standards which were issued in April 2003.

The National Standards for Disability Services were designed to ensure that health services were provided to an agreed level of quality and that the level of quality was consistent nationally. The Draft Standards were forwarded to the Minister for Health and Children for consideration in September 2004. The Draft Standards were forwarded by the Minister to the then interim Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), and they underpinned the development of statutory standards by HIQA, following its establishment in 2007. During 2005, we had successfully tested the Draft Standards in the HSE – in southern and mid-western areas, in community-based occupational therapy, and physiotherapy settings.

Since then, we have worked with HIQA and provided advice on all aspects of standards in residential and day services for persons with disabilities.

Adult day services

The National Disability Authority advised the HSE on the review of Adult Day Services (New Directions) and the new alternative model to support inclusion in mainstream activities. The trend is a move away from the current system of centre-based, segregated services, and from sheltered work, towards a model which is focused on supports to participate in mainstream community activities (including supports to employment). The emphasis of the new model is on independence, choice, and inclusion.

The review of HSE Adult Day Services entitled New Directions was published in February 2012. This envisages a new model of service, which emphasises support for persons with disabilities to engage in mainstream activities in the community. We were represented on the implementation group. Under the implementation plan, we were requested to develop Interim Standards for the new model set out in New Directions, in collaboration with a sub-group of the implementation group. In 2014, this work included a public consultation on Draft Interim Standards and they were ratified, in 2015, by the HSE, for implementation.

Standards and regulations for residential disability centres were introduced from November 2013, and the process of registration and inspection of services by the HIQA) began from that date. In November 2014, we were requested by the then Minister of State at the Department of Health to conduct an independent review of the process for the implementation of regulations and standards in residential services for adults and children with disabilities.

In May 2016, we presented our analysis of the HIQA inspection reports on residential services for persons with disabilities. The report sets out the results of our

engagement with various stakeholders. It also includes a detailed analysis of the HIQA inspection reports and recommendations on improvements in the delivery of quality residential services for children and adults with disabilities. This helped to inform our advice to the Minister on areas for improvement going forward.

Autism

The National Disability Authority undertook a consultation exercise to find out how the implementation of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan (NDSIP) could most effectively address the needs of people with autism. The NDSIP needed to be autism-proofed and enhanced as appropriate to progress autism relevant actions.

We then drafted a **Programme of Actions for Autism** in 2015. We were assigned various commitments within this programme. These commitments focused on the justice system, housing, and employment. These were identified as areas where people with autism would benefit from professionals having a better understanding of autism and a better understanding about how to communicate. We have published guidance for justice professionals, local authority housing officers and employers. Prior to the work around this Programme, we produced a paper that addressed the challenges people with autism can face and suggested supports to assist them. It focused primarily on educational and work environments.

The statutory **Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies** – first published in 2006 – has been updated, in 2020, to take account of the needs of people with autism. It will be published by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

One further piece of research, published in 2017, examined models of good practice in effectively supporting the needs of adults with autism, without a concurrent intellectual disability, living in the community. The paper noted the lack of research in the area, but highlighted that some low-level supports could make a difference. The paper also highlighted the importance of raising awareness. We have worked with autism organisations to develop training materials and content for customer-facing public sector workers.



Accessible health services

The HSE is obliged to ensure that its buildings, its services, the information it provides, and how it communicates with people, are all accessible to persons with disabilities.

Published in 2014 (updated in 2016), the **National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services** give practical guidance on how to plan and deliver health and social care services that are accessible to patients or service users with a disability. The guidelines were developed by the HSE in partnership with the National Disability Authority, following a comprehensive consultation process with persons with disabilities and with staff.

The guidelines will help all those working in health and social care services to understand:

- how to deliver disability-friendly services
- how to make premises accessible
- how to accommodate additional needs of persons with disabilities
- how to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that are appropriate to their needs

Person-centred disability services

This topic has been a subject long covered by the National Disability Authority in its work. It has evolved from an idea of person-centred planning to person-centred disability services. After extensive research, we first published Guidelines on person-centred planning in 2005. In many ways, this was a sign post towards the changes

in disability services that were started over the next decade. This model has been central to the change process.

The Department of Health asked us to assist in producing a draft framework for outcomes measurement for the proposed model of person-centred disability services¹⁹. This built on and extended previous work we had done in reviewing models of outcome measurement in other jurisdictions.

As part of this work, the National Disability Authority proposed nine high-level outcomes for disability services drawing on the available literature, the UNCRPD, practice in other jurisdictions and consultation with persons with disabilities who saw these outcomes as critical for their quality of life and wellbeing. The nine high-level outcomes were taken on board by the Department of Health.

¹⁹ <http://nda.ie/Publications/Disability-Supports/NDA-paper-on-outcomes-for-disability-services.html>

High level outcome measures for disability service users

	Outcome Disability service users	Sub-domains	Summary
1	Are living in their own home in the community	Ordinary housing • Suitable housing (e.g. adapted) • Choice of who lives with • The run of your home • Privacy	Living in the community
2	Are exercising choice and control in their everyday lives	Choice • Control • Everyday routines • Major life decisions • Positive risk-taking	Choice and control
3	Are participating in social and civic life	Social life • Socially connected/ not lonely • Community activities • Civic activities • Can access the community (accessibility/transport/mobility) • Attends church if so wishes	Social and civic participation
4	Have meaningful personal relationships	Family • Friends • Intimate relationships	Personal relationships
5	Have opportunities for personal development and fulfilment of aspirations	Education • Training • Education/training outcomes • Realisation of personal goals, both long-term and short-term	Education and personal development
6	Have a job or other valued social roles	Employment • Other valued social roles • Doing things for others	Employment and valued social roles
7	Are enjoying a good quality of life and well being	Satisfaction with life	Quality of life
8	Are achieving best possible health	Physical health • Mental health • Healthy lifestyle • Preventive care	Health and well-being
9	Are safe, secure and free from abuse	Safety • Security and continuity • Being respected, listened to • Freedom from abuse	Safe and secure

A range of factors were involved in developing an outcomes quality framework for disability services. The transformation of disability services into outcomes-focused services required a collaborative approach, where everyone engaged with what outcomes-focused services entailed and with the change process.

The national framework is important in supporting the culture change necessary for transforming practice, whereby the individual is empowered to follow their own wishes, needs and goals. It is intended to inform and guide how person-centred planning is implemented across services for people with a disability in Ireland.

Mental Health

Mental health is included in the definition of disability contained in the **Disability Act 2005**. Mental health has been consistently addressed across the years. Many persons with mental health difficulties also have another disability at the same time. In fact, a person's mental health difficulty can often arise from a pre-existing disability that has been acquired, or as a result of their life experience with a disability since birth.

We have devoted separate publications covering mental health and housing, and mental health and employment. We have also made submissions to the various reviews of mental health legislation.

For successive Governments, mental health policy has followed **A Vision for Change**, which was published by the Department of Health and Children in 2006. We have highlighted the potential benefits of better coordination between the monitoring of **A Vision for Change** and the monitoring of the National Disability Strategy. In particular, we have noted that in some areas – housing and employment – commitments under the National Disability Strategy offer considerable scope to improve service delivery for people with mental health issues. We have also emphasised the importance of resources for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, as better-resourced services at this stage can alleviate problems in later life.

The overall policy regarding mental health was refreshed in June 2020 as **Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone**.



Legal capacity

Compliance with the UNCRPD has required amendments to national legislation and the development of new legislation. This includes the enactment of the **Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015**, as relevant to Article 12 on equal recognition before the law to be supported by an independent Decision Support Service, under the remit of the Mental Health Commission.

To support implementation of the legislation, the National Disability Authority drafted and transferred 11 non-healthcare codes of practice to the Director of the Decision Support Service.

The Department of Health is also finalising legislation to address protection of liberty, in line with Article 14 of the UNCRPD. We are a member of the Department of Health's Advisory Group on Protection of Liberty Safeguards. We submitted a policy advice paper on the draft Heads of Bill in 2018.

Chapter 6:

Employment

Since its establishment, the National Disability Authority has guided a strategic approach to improving employment and training opportunities for persons with disabilities. This is in light of continued low participation rates of persons with disabilities in employment in Ireland and recognising that this required action beyond employment policy itself and into education and training.

In April 2005, we published a report, **Disability and Work: The Picture We Learn from Official Statistics**²⁰. The report found that persons with disabilities were two and a half times less likely to have a job than non-disabled people. Increasing participation in work would reduce the incidence of poverty and isolation and would open doors to wider participation in society. As the majority of disability is acquired between the working ages of 20-64, the report emphasised the importance of job retention and return to work strategies in achieving this target. All of this was taking place against the backdrop of an economic boom.

In 2006, we commissioned work to identify the key elements of a comprehensive employment strategy, drawing on national and international evidence. The outcome is set out in the report **A Strategy of Engagement - Towards a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities**. The report sets out the key pillars of a comprehensive strategy for employment of persons with disabilities, drawing on national and international research and best practice.

Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024.²¹

In 2013, the National Disability Authority was requested by the Minister of State for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older Persons to work with relevant Departments to develop a national comprehensive employment strategy for persons with disabilities. These included the Departments of Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation; Social Protection; Education and Skills; and Health. Consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders in the relevant departments and agencies, with disability representatives, and with employer and union bodies, to identify views on key areas for attention. The vision and high-level goals to achieve pathways to work for those who have or acquire disabilities were agreed. In Ireland, persons with disabilities are only half as likely to be in work as those without disabilities. Census 2016 figures show that only 36.2% of persons with disabilities were in employment,

20 <http://nda.ie/Publications/Employment/Employment-Publications/Disability-and-Work-the-picture-we-learn-from-official-statistics.html>

21 <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Comprehensive%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20FINAL.pdf/Files/Comprehensive%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

compared to 72.8% of the population without disabilities aged 20-64 years old²². This gap has remained consistent over time and is one of the more pronounced gaps in the European Union. Factors influencing lower employment outcomes for persons with disabilities include typically lower levels of educational achievement, lower expectations and ambitions regarding employment, and challenges in expanding employer engagement.

Recognising the integrated nature of these challenges, the Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) was launched in October 2015. The Strategy was launched as a whole-of-Government commitment to achieving better employment outcomes for those with disabilities. The shape of the CES was informed by research, carried out by us, on the core pillars for a strategic approach to addressing the various barriers to employment for persons with disabilities. The CES covers the period to 2024. It comprises six strategic priorities as follows:

- To build skills, capacity, and independence
- To provide bridges and supports into work
- To make work pay
- To promote job retention and re-entry to work
- To provide co-ordinated and seamless support
- To engage employers

In addition, it recognises the various pathways to work, diversity of ability, range of support needs and the role of different actors, such as Government Departments, State agencies, employers and unions, to address barriers to accessing, retaining and returning employment.

Delivery of the 10-year strategy is enabled via three-year action plans. This requires collaboration among Departments. This ensures effective links between education, training and employment, support for transitions, and access to supports for work and actions by employers to support future job opportunities, including for those with high support needs.

The National Disability Authority worked with the Department of Social Protection, as it built the capacity of the Intreo Service to support persons with disabilities who want to work, including support training for Intreo Case Officers.

We were part of the cross-Departmental working group led by Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, which published the **Make Work Pay** report in April 2017. This report presented a detailed analysis of some of the complex financial barriers and disincentives to taking up employment. It also set out clear recommendations for addressing these.

22 Central Statistics Office, Census 2016, Profile 11 – Employment, Occupations, and Industry

We advised government departments and agencies and supported the Department of Justice and Equality in coordinating the development of a second three-year action plan for 2019–2021. This included engaging employers to address barriers to employment and support growth of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

As part of the CES, we managed funding for an Employer Disability Information pilot project. During 2018, the project expanded to a conference for employers to promote disability confidence and ourselves. Contact from employers continued to grow. We will continue to engage with Government Departments on how such support needs can be met in the future.

As with the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, the National Disability Authority advised on the importance of using data and indicators as a way of measuring progress and outcomes under the Strategy. We conduct an annual independent assessment of the CES and advise on any necessary actions.

Monitoring Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Public Sector

Part 5 of the **Disability Act 2005** assigned new statutory function to the National Disability Authority to monitor employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector. It also details the reporting and monitoring obligations of public bodies and Government Departments in employment.

The Act does not set out any particular methods of counting or identifying employees with disabilities, although we have previously advised public bodies about various methods that may be used. We work to guide public bodies – via their Part 5 monitoring committees – and follow up with those public bodies that we have deemed non-compliant.

We welcome the achievements made by many public bodies in their work to achieve, and in some cases surpass, the target for employing persons with disabilities in the public sector.

We continue to work closely with Departments and agencies across the public sector, to advance the long-term goal in the CES to increase the statutory minimum public sector employment target. The **Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill** contains provisions setting out staged increases of the target to allow the public sector to achieve a minimum level of 6% by 2024. This legislation has not yet passed, and it is hoped it will be taken up by the current Government and pass all stages.

We have also done a lot of work around reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in the workplace. They are a crucial aspect of supporting employment policy.

Chapter 7:

Transport

Accessible transport is a key enabler of social and economic participation, and this has been a significant area of focus for relevant Government Departments and public bodies. The National Disability Authority has played its part in making guiding increased accessibility of public transport over the last 20 years. We have worked closely with the relevant Departments, the public transport providers and taxi stakeholders, to advise on how to improve accessibility of vehicles, as well as improving the accessibility of stations, stops, etc. The National Disability Authority, as an independent advisory body, has been a consistent member of the Department of Transport's various access committees.

The earliest activity by us in this area, was commissioning research on accessibility. Using the term "Transport for All" the report set out 24 short- and long-term recommendations to improve accessibility. This research fed into the **Recommended Accessibility Guidelines for Public Transport Operators**²³ launched in 2005. These Guidelines represented the first step in assisting and supporting Irish bus, rail, and light rail operators, in making their services more accessible to passengers with disabilities.

During 2007, in order to build capacity and to improve their effectiveness, we worked in partnership with the Department of Transport. Together, we developed guidelines for the user groups, established under that Department's Sectoral Plan, for bus, coach, rail, Luas, marine and air transport.

We also sat on the Marine Transport Forum from 2006. We provided advice on disability awareness training for vessel operators and audits of selected vessels and infrastructure. This advice was implemented by the Department of Transport. The Department of Transport and the National Disability Authority jointly developed **Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport in Ireland**²⁴. The Guidelines provide practical advice and information for those involved in the provision of maritime passenger transport services and covers all aspects of the passenger journey.

We have also worked closely with the relevant public bodies to try and improve the availability, accessibility, and affordability of taxis. We have worked hard to influence the debate on the Department of Transport's/National Transport Authority's Taxi Advisory Committee. We have guided on standards for taxis, guided on accessible taxis including grants and input on regulation of taxi drivers.

23 <http://nda.ie/Publications/Transport/Transport-Publications/Recommended-Accessibility-Guidelines-for-Public-Transport-Operators.pdf>

24 <http://nda.ie/nda-files/Guidelines-for-Accessible-Maritime-Passenger-Transport.pdf>

In 2017, we commissioned research to support the identification and testing of suitable monitoring mechanisms, to measure compliance with the **Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies** starting with the public transport sector. The primary objective of this research was to develop and pilot effective monitoring approaches and data gathering tools for public transport service providers in Ireland. This would mean they can capture and analyse data on the accessibility of their services.

As a next step, we are implementing a national public service monitoring and evaluation process, starting with public transport services. Once these monitoring approaches and indicators have been trialled in practice by the transport service providers, we will examine how this approach to monitoring the accessibility of public transport services can be further developed. We will also examine how this approach can be implemented more widely and regularly across all public services in accordance with Part 3 of the **Disability Act 2005** and the revised 2020 code of practice.

Chapter 8:

Attitudes

The Special Olympics and the European Year of People with Disabilities

Two major events coincided in 2003, and both contributed to the improvement in attitudes towards people with disabilities. The Special Olympics World Games were held in Ireland, the first time they were held outside the United States. Approximately 7,000 Special Olympics athletes, accompanied by 2,000 coaches and tens of thousands of family members and friends, attended. They were hosted in dozens of towns and cities across the country and supported by 30,000 volunteers. It was a hugely positive experience for everyone involved.

The European Union declared 2003 the European Year of People with Disabilities (EYPD), in order to raise awareness about the situation of its millions of citizens with disabilities. The National Disability Authority was designated as the National Co-ordinating body for the European Year of People with Disabilities in Ireland.

One of the major projects during the year involved collaboration between the National Disability Authority, the Equality Authority, and the Department of Education and Science, in the production of 'Shared the Feeling! Now Let's Share the Future', a publication for all schools highlighting issues about disability. The booklet was launched on RTÉ Network 2's The Den and over 50,000 copies were distributed throughout the country. A school focus week was held in November 2003, during which schools were invited to take action to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

The European Union released a Eurobarometer survey in February 2004, assessing the impact of the European Year of People with Disabilities' message across the 15 member states. Across a range of questions, Ireland consistently polled the highest level of positive attitudes towards disability. The Irish percentages were higher than any other country and at least twice as high as the EU15 average. The impact of the Special Olympics was noted.

The National Disability Authority has evidence to show that attitudes can be a barrier to participation, integration and social inclusion and has worked to measure this over the years. As well as researching this subject, it has also implemented measures to improve attitudes.

Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland Survey

The National Disability Authority has conducted a series of surveys, at regular intervals, on public attitudes towards persons with disabilities (2001, 2006, 2011 and 2017)²⁵.

25 <http://nda.ie/Publications/Attitudes/Public-Attitudes-to-Disability-in-Ireland-Surveys/>

Public attitudes largely improved between 2001 and 2006, and between 2011 and 2017. Between 2006 and 2011, the findings indicated a hardening of attitudes across all types of disability and areas of daily living, particularly with regard to mental health. The quality and depth of the data has improved continuously over the years.

The first survey showed strong support for inclusion, equality, and social change to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. It also highlighted some negative attitudes towards persons experiencing mental difficulties and noted the reservations expressed about practical implementation of mainstreaming policies in the areas of education and employment. This survey emphasised the importance of personal experience of a disability, or a mental health difficulty in shaping attitudes. This outcome has been a constant across all the surveys.

The 2006 survey demonstrated a general level of awareness that persons with disabilities were not being able to avail of the same opportunities as others in society. Physical disability was the most recognised disability, while mental health difficulties still faced, relatively, the most negative attitudes. A literature review on attitudes, also produced in 2006, concluded that the results of the survey were in line with the experiences internationally.

The 2011 survey indicated a reduction in the levels of positive attitudes across all types of disability and areas of daily living, compared to the previous survey in 2006. It is possible that a recession effect may have contributed to the more negative attitudes expressed in 2011, and this was consistent with research findings from other countries.

The 2017 survey data suggested that positive attitudes towards every kind of disability, including mental health difficulties, were increasing when compared to the 2011 findings, which largely returned to, or exceeded the 2006 findings.

We have made the data files for all these surveys available through the Irish Social Science Data Archive in UCD, thereby facilitating further academic research in this space.



Raising awareness

The National Disability Authority has engaged in a number of disability awareness-raising campaigns over the years. In 2006, our research on attitudes towards persons with disabilities highlighted how public attitudes to people with mental health difficulties are the greatest barrier to their full integration in various areas. These areas include education, employment, housing and relationships.

We also ran a national advertising campaign in 2007, aimed at influencing public attitudes to people with mental health difficulties. The advertisements were broadcast immediately after Christmas on television and radio and displayed at selected bus shelters throughout the country. The campaign was positive in its approach, focusing on the diversity of each person's character and their multiple roles and achievements.

Since 2015, we have delivered an annual disability awareness raising competition in primary schools. The competition is called Someone Like Me. The competition's aim is to raise disability awareness among primary school children to give them a greater understanding of what unites children of differing abilities. Someone Like Me allows children to learn about and discuss these topics, and creatively express what they've learned through art.



'Someone Like Me: Movie' (Megan Conneely & Cian Colgan, The Downs N.S., Weastmeath)



'How I See My Brother' by Maeve Allen (Ballinderry N.S., Galway)

The National Disability Authority's annual conferences are discussed elsewhere in this book, however, they are prime opportunities to raise awareness about wider disability issues in order to inform policy and practice.

We have produced over two dozen sets of guidance (Appendix E) over the years covering areas such as communications, disability training, and justice. 2020 will see the completion and roll-out of disability awareness/competency training for all employers, developed by a consortium funded by us. This is the latest in a number of initiatives that we have led regarding employment.

Chapter 9:

Communications

Television remains an important source of information and entertainment for many persons with disabilities. The National Disability Authority has emphasised to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) the opportunities for using the accessible features that already exist within digital television, i.e. audio description and subtitles.

We continue to advise on how the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland can improve the Access Rules for broadcasting.

We have also advised the Department of Communications on improving the accessibility of the Emergency Call Answering Services, particularly concerning access for people who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or vision impaired.

The National Disability Authority and the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) established an Industry Forum on Services for Persons with Disabilities in 2006. This Forum brought together disability organisations and the telecommunications companies on a regular basis, and assisted a range of initiatives including supporting the implementation of a quality billing initiative.

In 2007, the National Disability Authority and the Commission for Communications Regulation jointly launched a guide on telephone and broadband services for persons with disabilities and older people, developed in partnership with this Forum.

While the Forum is no longer operating, we have continued to advise on areas for attention and solutions, through our membership of ComReg's Consumer Advisory Panel since it was established in 2005. The purpose of the Consumer Panel is to advise ComReg on developments, innovations, and areas of consumer concern, relevant to the three main areas of ComReg's consumer policy:

- maximising consumer welfare
- protecting consumers
- raising consumer awareness

The Consumer Advisory Panel consists of four members appointed by the Commission. In appointing the members, the Commission has tried to ensure that the members have knowledge or experience of the telecommunications industry.

Chapter 10:

Children

Over the years, the National Disability Authority has worked to guide on how services can be improved for children with disabilities and focused on children's issues across health and education in particular. This included pre-school and school, health services and transitions from education. This has been done by engaging with other relevant bodies, including the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), National Council for Curriculum Assessment, the HSE and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

We have published research on areas covering the accessibility of schools, individual education plans for children with disabilities and parental educational expectations of children with disabilities.

While the establishment and growth of the NCSE, since 2004, has provided for a dedicated public body looking after special needs education, the NDA has also carried out research in the area of education. Prior to the enactment of the **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004**, we made a significant submission to the **Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)**, drawing particular attention to the need to integrate the health-funded services and supports around the proposed Individual Education Plans.

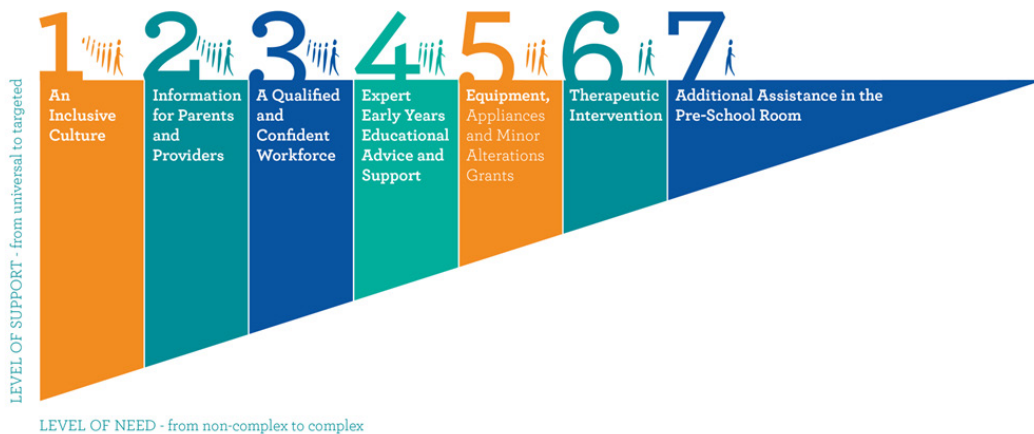
In 2015, following extensive research and analysis, we advised on the additional number of therapists in different specialities that are required to meet the needs of children with disabilities. This was followed by the allocation of funding and an increase in those numbers by the HSE.

In 2018, we undertook research to guide the NCSE's review of the Special Needs Assessment Scheme. The qualitative study provided learning on how well young persons with disabilities, and others including families and employers, felt they were prepared for life after school.

The creation of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2011 gave us the opportunity to focus on pre-school and early years' education, in addition to its work relating to primary, secondary and tertiary education.

We undertook a study of policy and practice in other jurisdictions in relation to Early Childhood Care and Education. A major project was undertaken to support and guide the implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) for Early Childhood Care and Education. The goal of the Access and Inclusion Model is to empower service providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, based on a child-centred model with seven levels of progressive support, ranging from the universal to the targeted.

A Model to Support Access to the ECCE Programme for Children with a Disability



The Access and Inclusion Model is supported by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design's **Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings** (2019). These guidelines set out the key Universal Design considerations and guidance for Early Learning and Care settings in Ireland. These guidelines apply to both new-build and retrofit projects and provide a flexible Universal Design framework. This ensures that settings are accessible, understandable and easy to use for all children, staff, families, and visitors. This guidance is now being used as a key reference for any new funding being provided by the Department to service providers who need to upgrade their facilities. We are moving on to next stage with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth developing a series of eLearning modules to promote this guidance among relevant professionals.

Chapter 11:

Housing

For a long time, the National Disability Authority has sought to work with the relevant Departments and public bodies, to advance the opportunities that persons with disabilities have, to live in a place of their choosing which meets their needs. Our approach has been to persuade the decision-makers that housing has to be planned with persons with disabilities in mind. This concept has been further expanded through the development of a Universal Design approach to housing that widens the audience to include all homeowners.

We have also examined the overall issue of access to housing, recognising that renting is an important option for persons with disabilities

National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-16

The National Disability Authority provided advice on the development of the **National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-16** and was part of a group that assisted with the drafting of the Strategy prior to its launch in 2011.

The issue of access to housing continues to present challenges for the population generally, including those with disabilities. We have advised on how Universal Design from the outset, can provide greater choice for individuals and enable people to remain in their homes when they age, or experience changes in their abilities.

A proposal from our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) led to a joint initiative between the CEUD and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government – the first Homes for Smart Ageing: Universal Design Challenge. This competition encouraged designers, architects, and engineers to consider innovative ways of planning for the housing needs of an ageing population, with the goal of supporting ‘ageing in place’, wherever possible. The winning project team completed a pilot project, whereby an existing two-storey house was redesigned into two separate units, with the downstairs unit for the owner occupier and the upstairs unit available for rent. This project was well received, and the Department of Housing provided funding for five more of these redesigns to be completed. The projects and learning from the competition were later captured in a publication.²⁶

26 <http://universaldesign.ie/Awards/Homes-for-Smart-Ageing-Universal-Design-Challenge/>

We advise that progressing new home design and construction from a Universal Design approach needs to be established policy. Recognising that the general population is getting older, persons with disabilities are living longer and are, in some cases, out-living their traditional care-givers, e.g. their parents/siblings, and this trend will continue to put pressure on traditional housing solutions, when someone can no longer live independently e.g. nursing homes. In tandem with the necessary health and social care support packages, homes built using a Universal Design approach, offer a solution that gives people the option to remain in their homes and communities for longer, thus, reducing their need for long-term and expensive care homes, keeping them connected to family and friends and as a result, helping their mental health and well-being.

Finding suitable and appropriate homes that can accommodate our changing needs over time can be difficult – whether for families with young children, a person with a temporary or permanent injury, someone with a disability, or an older person living independently. Universal Design can meet everyone's needs, through flexible homes designed to adapt to lifecycle and lifestyle patterns of people over time. Our CEUD and the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland are completing work on comparing the costs of a standard home and apartment to the cost of building from a universal design approach. This will be important to inform the government on its future policies on housing in Ireland.

We acknowledge that adopting a Universal Design approach to new housing will involve a more coordinated and integrated approach across Government Departments such as Housing, Health, Finance and Transport.

To support this work, our CEUD researched and published guidance covering the design of newly built homes and apartments. This also included guidance on retrofitting existing dwellings for people with dementia by their families and carers.

Chapter 12:

Income maintenance

Cost of Disability

In 2004, the National Disability Authority commissioned research to identify the extra costs of living arising from having a disability. We advised that correcting for the higher cost of living is a basic equality issue, and that a Cost of Disability Payment should be introduced.

While other studies on this issue have been carried out in the meantime, in 2019, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection tendered for research to provide quantitative estimates of the cost of disability using a number of approaches. This included data based on the direct experience of persons with disabilities. It is expected that the result of this research will be made available in 2020.

Review of Domiciliary Care Allowance

The National Disability Authority issued a report in 2012, with the output of research conducted by us on a number of tools used to assess and identify the care support needs of children with disabilities. This research was conducted within the context of a review of the Domiciliary Care Allowance underway at that time.

While there was no universally agreed tool for assessing the care and support needs of individuals, there was a consensus about attributes that a standardised assessment tool should have. Children have differing abilities at different ages, so the definition of special healthcare needs selected must take these factors into account. That is why tools are developed specifically for child populations. Our research findings were used to inform the Department of Social Protection's review of Domiciliary Care Allowance processes in 2012.

We advised on considerations on the Review of the Domiciliary Care Allowance that was undertaken by a committee appointed by the Minister for Social Protection in 2012. We participated in the committee and undertook research on assessment systems, to guide deliberations and also facilitated consultation with parents and other stakeholders.

The main outcome of this work is that since June 2017, all children who qualify for the Domiciliary Care Allowance are eligible for a medical card without having to undergo a means-test. They may retain the medical card up to their 16th birthday.

Chapter 13:

Access

The National Disability Authority has a role to advise and support mainstream service improvement to include persons with disabilities. We have delivered many projects for accessible services and environments, working with different sectors. This section highlights the diverse areas that have been covered.

The Barcelona Declaration

The Barcelona Declaration was the principal outcome of a European Congress entitled 'The City and the Disabled', which took place in March 1995 in Barcelona. The Declaration advocated the right of persons with disabilities to equal opportunities and recognised their contribution to the society and the environment in which they lived.

We were asked by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, in spring 2001, to establish a process for promoting the Barcelona Declaration among all local authorities in Ireland. By adopting the Barcelona Declaration, local authorities would be provided with the means to disability/equality-proof all policy decisions and services, thereby ensuring a more inclusive society.

By the end of 2002, further to our engagement with local authorities on piloting this initiative via regional workshops, 54 local councils had become signatories to the Declaration. Prior to our involvement, just six local authorities were signatories to the Declaration.

We developed guidelines on access auditing – and a handbook – in collaboration with the Office of Public Works and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, to support their work in improving accessibility of public buildings. These guidelines included background information on access auditing, steps to carry out an audit, and the typical structure of an audit report. The guidelines also offered advice for clients commissioning an audit of the built environment and advice for the auditor.

Built Environment

The National Disability Authority's first major initiative in this area, was the publication of **Building for Everyone**, which came out in November 2002. This is a source book and guide for architects, designers, building developers and managers, building control and planning personnel, local authorities, environmental activists, and everyone concerned with inclusion and access in Ireland.

The book, which included over 200 pages of text, checklists, drawings, and illustrations, expanded and updated a previous publication, *Buildings for Everyone*, produced in 1998 by the National Rehabilitation Board. A new edition of **Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach** was published in 2012 as a series of booklets. It remains the most searched and downloaded publication on our website.



We developed a significant submission on the development of the new Part M²⁷, to improve accessibility of new and, where relevant, existing building stock. We were represented on the sub-committee of the Building Regulations Advisory Board which drafted the new Part M technical guidance. The new Part M was approved in November 2010 to come into effect from 1st January 2012.

Excellence through Accessibility

In September 2005, the Excellence through Accessibility Award Scheme, developed by the National Disability Authority, was launched in partnership with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It arose out of a commitment in the **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness** 2000-2002, that stated each Government Department will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to make its services, and those of agencies under its remit, accessible to persons with disabilities. We researched and developed standards to measure performance by public bodies, and to guide them in planning for further improvements.

The awards programme ran from 2006 to 2010, with winners representing a range of public services including local authorities, libraries, and leisure centres, as well as the Revenue Commissioners.

The award encouraged the development of policies, practices and relationships, to ensure that achievements in accessibility are sustainable and meaningful to customers

Code of Practice on Accessibility

In 2006, the National Disability Authority produced a statutory **Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies**²⁸, further to wide scale consultation. The Code provides guidance and support for public bodies in meeting their obligations under sections 26, 27 and 28 of the Disability Act 2005. In 2008, we carried out an initial survey of the extent to which public bodies had implemented the Code of Practice and identified the need to develop a process to measure compliance. Further to research and consultation, a range of indicator models were identified, such as transport services. We have since reviewed and revised the Code of Practice in 2019 and 2020. At the time of writing, the updated Code of Practice is waiting formal approval by the Minister.

27 Part M (2010) of the Building Regulations requires that adequate provision be made for people to access and use a building, its facilities, and its environs.

28 <http://nda.ie/Good-practice/Codes-of-Practice/Code-of-Practice-on-Accessibility-of-Public-Services-and-Information-Provided-by-Public-Bodies-/>

Code of Practice on Heritage Sites

Following initial background research and consultation in 2007-2008, the National Disability Authority developed and submitted a draft code of practice to the former Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, to promote the accessibility of heritage sites as set out in section 29 of the **Disability Act 2005**. This draft code was supported by guidelines for heritage sites on how to achieve compliance. There was also a joint conference with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. This Code aims to support heritage site owners and managers in improving the accessibility of their heritage sites. This is to ensure that persons with disabilities can use such sites, wherever practicable, with ease and dignity. The statutory Code of Practice was published in 2011. We are currently reviewing its impact with a series of in-depth case studies of heritage sites across the country.

eLearning Module

Throughout 2011, the National Disability Authority piloted and formally launched a free eLearning disability awareness training module for public sector staff. The module is also now available to staff outside the public sector. The course offers practical advice on dealing with customers with different types of disabilities. This is available to download, free-of-charge, and takes about 90 minutes to complete. This training is a cost-effective way, in line with the public sector transformation agenda, to provide public service staff and others with the information and skills to improve services to persons with disabilities. It is a tool that can assist in changing attitudes. The tool has been used extensively across the public as well as take up in the private sector both nationally and abroad.

IT Accessibility

The National Disability Authority's first IT Accessibility Guidelines were launched in June 2002. These guidelines were unique in that they, for the first time, provided a comprehensive guide to the disparate array of existing international guidelines and standards, many of which were specific to varied and unrelated applications. They were designed to act as a signpost for service providers, explaining the issues and then directing them towards the solutions.

An online Accessibility toolkit was published in 2012, which brings together guidance on various aspects of accessibility in one place. This includes buildings, services, information and websites. This was followed in 2013 by a joint seminar with the European Disability Forum on making websites and online services accessible. They have provided the basis for advice that we have and continue to provide to government departments and agencies on the accessibility of their websites.

Accessible voting

Access to voting is a basic right of all Irish citizens. Working in partnership with the Franchise Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, in 2008, the National Disability Authority produced guidance on accessible voting centres and on communicating with voters. This was issued to all Returning Officers in a Departmental Circular, in 2009, and inserted into the Department's guidance for polling officers.

We held a seminar on civic engagement in 2013, to guide accessibility in elections and voting, as well as to promote participation by those with disabilities in political life. Following discussions with the Franchise Section of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, in 2014, we agreed to carry out trials of a number of alternative methods of voting for people with sight loss.

In a 2015 report, we recommended that the Department undertake an examination of the feasibility, logistical and security/integrity issues for electronic vote casting. We recommended that the Department explore these issues in partnership with us and relevant disability organisations. In the same report, we also recommended that a Ballot Paper Template be trialled at a forthcoming referendum, where voters have a simple 'yes/no' choice, and that the results be monitored and evaluated. This was done for the referendums on the Eighth Amendment and on blasphemy, in 2018. A larger version of the Template was also used for the six candidates in 2018's presidential election. Larger versions were used again at the local and European elections in 2019 and the General Election in 2020.

Telecare/Telehealth and Assistive Technology

The National Disability Authority recognises the role that telecare and telehealth could play in helping persons with disabilities to live independent lives and support the transformation of provisions under the remit of the UNCRPD. In 2018, we published a working paper based on a synthesis of previous work of exploring some of the main issues around telecare and telehealth provision, and examples of good practice in other jurisdictions.

The term telehealth includes the delivery and facilitation of health and health-related services including medical care, provider and patient education, health information services, and self-care via telecommunications and digital communication technologies. Live video conferencing, mobile health apps, and remote patient monitoring are examples of technologies used in telehealth.

Telecare is support and assistance provided at a distance using a range of information and communication technologies. It can be the continuous, automatic, and remote monitoring of people with disabilities or older persons in their own homes by means of sensors, to enable them to continue living safely in their own home. It does this while minimising risks such as a fall, gas and flood detection and relate to other real-time emergencies and remotely monitor risks, or early warning signs of changes in health conditions.

Assistive Technologies (AT) are important to empowering persons with disabilities to perform daily living activities. The National Disability Authority recognised the need for a national policy on Assistive Technology, to address gaps in practice and integrated systems. Research commissioned by us, published in 2012, indicates that Ireland has an underdeveloped AT infrastructure in comparison with other countries. Particular high-level issues, which have been identified in the Irish context, include:

- lack of a coordinated approach amongst the various stakeholders involved in the provision of AT
- lack of attention to AT in key policies concerning persons with disabilities and older people
- a lack of a coordinated approach across transitions and the stages of the lifecycle as well as a lack of standards and education in the field of AT

The UNCRPD places specific obligations on Ireland concerning AT, such as to provide accessible information and to promote the availability and use of AT suitable for persons with disabilities. This is of further concern with the closing down of the national information system on AT, that was provided by the Citizens Information Board, in late 2019. AT is also a key enabler in the realisation of the right to independent living and in the provision of reasonable accommodation in the education and employment sectors. It is also a key enabler in the promotion of the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society. We are further collaborating with key stakeholders on developing a policy advise paper on AT and associated technologies such as telecare and telehealth to present to the Government in 2021.

Chapter 14:

Universal Design

What is Universal Design?

Universal Design is the design of the built environment, products, services and information and communications technology, so that it can be easily used, accessed and understood to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Our statutory Centre for Excellence in Universal Design was formally established in 2007, as part of the National Disability Authority. It has functions to guide the development of universal Design, and promote its adoption in practice, by relevant professions. It also assists the development of the education curriculum for the relevant professions and occupations; and raising awareness of Universal Design. The CEUD engages with standards bodies, industry, professional bodies, and educational institutions. Since it was established, it has developed a range of resources and enabled the production of standards at national and European levels, including winning awards.

Universal Design in Education

The CEUD has delivered a range of projects to support the development of education modules on Universal Design at primary, secondary and third-level, as well as Continued Professional Development (CPD). This is guided by research and collaborative working with education bodies, and its role in delivering lectures in colleges and institutes to build an understanding of Universal Design.

In November 2015, the CEUD ran a conference in partnership with the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown, Dublin City University and the National Standards Authority of Ireland. The theme of the conference was based around education and Universal Design to mark Irish Design Year and – further to our statutory duty – to promote education on universal design among third-level institutions and standards bodies.

The CEUD hosted the Universal Design Higher Education in Transformation Congress at the end of October 2018, in collaboration with the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown and the Dublin Institute of Technology. More than 300 delegates from 27 countries attended the event in Dublin Castle. Here, the delegates exchanged learning and understanding of how Universal Design can improve access to buildings, products, services, and learning. This event was a significant gathering of Universal Design experts from a number of countries and was a critical opportunity to build profile and awareness of Universal Design in an Irish context.

In 2019, the Technological University of Dublin (TUDublin) was formally established from an amalgamation of all the Institutes of Technology in Dublin. The CEUD had

a decade-long relationship with these institutions. This culminated with the opening of the TUDublin as a universally designed campus demonstrating a commitment to several of the pillars that underpin a Universal Design approach covering areas such as the design of buildings, curricula, teaching and services.

In the interests of embedding Universal Design in the design of the built environment, the CEUD has worked closely with the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI), to research and devise a programme of CPD for architects in Ireland. This has been further progressed in the development of an eLearning programme of CPD for practicing architects.

Further CPD work, in relation to information and communication technology professionals, has also been progressed in partnership with the Irish Computer Society. This has included the development and delivery of courses on designing and publishing accessible documents that is now being followed up by a course on design and build of accessible websites.

The CEUD commissioned work in recent years to support the development of a Short Course on Universal Design for use in the second-level Junior Cycle. The project is in response to feedback from educators to introduce Universal Design to students prior to third-level. The Short Course emerging from this work is titled 'Creating Designs for our Tomorrows', and is designed to provide a complete set of materials for use by second-level schools. This is being integrated into a new programme being led by the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) called the "The Big Idea" on introducing design for good into second-level schools across the country.

The CEUD has also partnered with Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) and Dublin City Council (DCC) to integrate Universal Design curriculum material into the DCC Power of Design (POD) module. The JAI arranges for volunteers to visit primary schools to conduct one-hour POD workshops around Dublin. This has been rolled out to over 30 schools so far and continues to expand across Ireland.

Universal Design Awareness

Promoting awareness has been supported through the Universal Design Grand Challenge (UDGC). Students in the areas of design come to understand the diverse needs and preferences in our society by working with people representing the areas of age, size, ability or disability. The UDGC has taken place every year since 2014 and has been supported by Enterprise Ireland since 2015.

The CEUD also ran a series of 24-hour Universal Design Challenges/Hackathons between 2009 and 2015. The main value arising from these events was to bring different professions together, to work with end users of different abilities, in

understanding their needs and coming up with practical and attractive solutions to everyday problems.

In addition to these initiatives, the CEUD has succeeded in establishing Universal Design as an awards category in the RIAI awards, the IDI awards (including their graduate awards), the Spider and the eGovernment awards.

Universal Design in Customer Communications

The CEUD was centrally involved in the drafting of the world's first national standard on Universal Design in customer services, provided by public energy companies.



The National Disability Authority, in partnership with the National Standards Authority of Ireland, developed and launched a new standard on Universal Design in Energy Customer Services. This is the first such Universal Design standard, not only in Ireland, but also in the world.

The CEUD followed up this internationally recognised standard with a seminar and a launch of a new national standard and a supporting toolkit for universally designed customer services, focused on the tourism sector. This was developed as part of the Government's initiative the 'Year of the Gathering'. This highly successful event demonstrated how the standard and the toolkit were being effectively used across the tourism sector. Awareness was also enhanced through continued work with the tourism sector and promotion of toolkits to other service areas. Awareness

also came about from engagement with policymakers and industry in general, as the network of Universal Design champions has been expanded.

The publication of the **Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service – A Universal Design Approach** marked a big step forward for raising awareness of Universal Design. It was developed jointly with the quality customer services team in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and with the commitment to promote its implementation in all public services. This document has raised the profile of Universal Design across the public sector and has been further updated in 2020 to reflect changing practice and advice. It has been a part of an overall project from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to improve innovation across the public sector. In 2019, the Toolkit won an award for plain English from the National Adult Literacy Association.

This toolkit has been central to the development of a new European standard on Universal Design in customer communication for transport providers. It has also been adopted as an international standard in the area of accessible tourism.



Through its work with national, European and international standards bodies, the CEUD has ensured a focus on Universal Design in new standards covering procurement in information and communications technology. The CEUD has also ensured a focus on the culmination of four years' work on new guidelines, applying Universal Design across all new standards being developed at European and international level.

New work in 2014 included a role in chairing a European committee on a standard covering the design, development and production process of manufacturing goods. The focus of all this work supports the National Disability Authority's vision of a future where we will all have better services, products and built environments.

Two research projects carried out by the CEUD led to key elements being included in international standards and guidance publications. The first was how to apply the World Health Organisation, International Classification of Functioning, Health and Disability to the development of design guidance standards. This was carried out by using a set of linking rules, along with related classifications, to represent the interaction of human functions, activities, and environmental factors. The second was research on defining the anthropometric data (human size elements such as the length of an arm or leg) for Ireland. The result was the publication of size data sheets that are also being used as part of third-level education materials by lecturers and has been adopted as part of a new international standard by the International Standards Organisation.

Universal Design European process standard

New work in 2014 included a role in chairing a European committee on a standard covering the design process for the development and production process of manufacturing products and services. This resulted in a new European standard launched at EU and national level in 2019. Work is continuing on implementing this standard across both public and private sectors. Our CEUD personnel were recognised for outstanding contributions to innovation in standards development in 2019 by National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) and separately by the European Standards body on outstanding contributions to innovation in standards development in 2019.

The focus of all this work supports the National Disability Authority's vision of a future, where we will all have better services, products and built environments.

Universal Design in Housing

Informed by research, the CEUD published **Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland**²⁹. This sets out a Universal Design approach to building new homes, involving two levels of Universal Design to make a home more accessible, understandable and usable at each stage. There's also a third level for very individual needs that require extra space in the home. The Universal Design approach to home building has been adopted by a number of Approved Housing Bodies, such as Clúid, Circle, and local authorities, such as Westmeath and Wexford.

29 <http://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Housing/>

In addition to these examples, the Department of the Environment, Planning and Local Government, and the Department of Health, published a **Policy Statement on Housing Options for our Ageing Population 2019**. Action 4.6³⁰ states that:

“In partnership with industry, introduce measures to ensure that over a five-year period, delivery is increased to ensure that 30% of all new dwellings are built to incorporate Universal Design principles to accommodate our ageing population.”

This was a major breakthrough for the adoption of a Universal Design-approach, as it was the first clear endorsement for Universal Design in an official policy document. This has been followed up by a commitment in the 2020 Programme for Government to:

“Ensure that an appropriate mix of housing design types is provided, including Universally Designed units, and accommodation for older people and people with disabilities.”

The CEUD also conducted research and engaged with the relevant professions and other stakeholders, to inform the Universal Design Home guidelines, as well as the **Dementia Friendly Dwellings for People with Dementia, their Families and Carers** guidelines. The **Universal Design Home Guidelines** are informed by research of national and international best practice guidance, including an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders. Universal Design Homes build upon social and technological advancements in Ireland and internationally.



Dr Gerald Craddock, Head of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, at the Homes for Smart Ageing Universal Design Challenge Awards 2017

30 <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/special-housing-needs/older-people/housing-options-our-ageing-population-policy-statement>

The **Technical Guidance Document** to Part M (TGD M) sets out guidance on the minimum level of provision that meets the requirements of the regulations. The minimum standard required in the current TGD M for dwellings is that new dwellings can be visited by persons with disabilities.

In contrast, Universal Design homes are about reflecting homes that people can live in, over their lifetime, as their needs change.

In 2019, the National Disability Authority developed policy advice on a Universal Design approach to the planning development and construction of new homes and submitted the same for consideration by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and other relevant stakeholders. The policy advice paper emphasises the fact that Universal Design applies to everyone, not just persons with disabilities.

The focus of the paper incorporates both social and private housing, and all housing types, e.g. apartments, as well as traditional housing units. The recommendations cover regulations and policy changes at national and local authority level. The recommendations also cover a range of financial measures and incentives, designed to encourage developers and the building industry to follow a Universal Design approach to the planning, design and construction of new homes. The policy advice paper describes the dimensions and features of a Universal Design home, and discusses the costs associated with same. This information will be supplemented by a cost comparison being carried out by members of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland on behalf of the National Disability Authority.

It is the National Disability Authority's intention to work with the Department of Housing, the local authorities, and all other stakeholders, to help realise the objectives of this paper.

Universal Design in Tourism

In May 2013, Irish Standard (I.S.) 373:2013 **Universal Design for customer engagement in tourism services** was launched by the National Standards Authority of Ireland, the National Disability Authority, and the Equality Authority.

The voluntary national standard was developed in close collaboration with the tourism industry involving key leadership from Fáilte Ireland. The Irish Hospitality Institute, and over 15 other key stakeholder bodies, contributed to complete the standard project and launch it at an EU Presidency-associated event called 'The Gathering'.

Alongside the formal standard, there is a very useful toolkit, consisting of four brief booklets with clear illustrations, practical examples and checklists that help to apply

the guidance on customer engagement provided in the standard. The toolkit is based on research, consultation, and user trials.

The standard and toolkit work together to provide tourism service providers with practical and useful guidance on how to better engage with their diverse customers.

Universal Design and Information and Communications Technology

Since its formal ratification by Ireland in April 2018, Articles 4 and 9 of the UNCRPD require the promotion of access to information and communications technology for persons with disabilities and to promote Universal Design within information and communications technology.

The National Disability Authority has been to the forefront in promoting the highest standards of accessibility in information and communications technology. Our CEUD has published a suite of guidelines covering many aspects of information and communications technology, including public access terminals, smart cards, telecoms, digital TV, application software and web auditing tools.

Research was done in the access and use of everyday technologies by older people in collaboration with St James' Hospital. Assistance was provided by the South Inner City Community Development Association and a local community organisation in the Liberties in Dublin. This resulted in a assessment tool and how it can be applied not only in this context but in also in other studies relating to older people or persons with disabilities.

A research report on a study conducted by the CEUD, and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in Ireland focused on the accessibility of key public services for citizens in the EU Member States. The research was commissioned as an initiative under the Irish Presidency of the EU and as an action under Ireland's National Digital Strategy. A number of the findings were incorporated by the EU Commission in its formulation of the European Accessibility Act (EAA).

In the future, it will be important for the National Disability Authority to promote the Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26th October 2016 (Web Accessibility Directive, or WAD) on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. Under the Directive all public bodies are required to ensure their websites and apps are accessible to persons with disabilities. The Directive has been transposed into Irish law via Regulations in late 2020.

The National Disability Authority has now been assigned a formal role as the national

monitoring body on the implementation of the European Union's Web Accessibility Directive. The Directive sets out accessibility standards that have to be met by all public sector websites and apps by certain dates set out in the legislation. This will be both a significant undertaking and opportunity on ensuring all public websites and app developments in the future are accessible, understandable and easy to use particularly by persons with disabilities.

Universal Design for Energy Suppliers

Between 2011 and 2012, the National Disability Authority collaborated with the Commission for Energy Regulation (now the Commission for Regulation of Utilities) and the NSAI to implement an EU Directive. This EU Directive obliged all energy suppliers to include Universal Design in their customer service policies and practices.

In 2012, the recommendatory document SWiFT 9: 2012³¹ **Universal Design for Energy Suppliers** was published by the NSAI. This was the world's first standard, to enable energy products and services to be accessible and usable to more customers following a Universal Design approach. It includes all written, face-to-face, telephone and video communication, and all electronic and web-based communication.

To support the practical application of the standard, the National Disability Authority published the **Universal Design for Customer Engagement Toolkit**³². This provides comprehensive best practice guidance on achieving better customer communication. It provides practical and useful guidance on how to use Universal Design as a tool for better engaging with energy customers covering written, verbal and digital communications.

This SWiFT 9 standard became part of the Code of Practice of the Commission for Energy Regulation.

The Standard has been implemented by energy suppliers, to whom it provides advice and instruction on to the best way to communicate with 1.6 million energy customers. The Standard also received international recognition in 2014 as an Innovative Policy 2014 on Accessibility³³.

Technical Guidelines for the Universal Design of In-Home Displays

In 2012, the former Commission for Energy Regulation (CER, now CORU) first announced the planned deployment of electricity and gas smart meters across Ireland. It is expected that this project will be completed by 2024³⁴. As part of this smart meter rollout, all household customers are to receive an In-Home Display capable of displaying near real-time information on their energy consumption.

31 www.nsai.ie/about/news/nsai-develop-worldas-first-standard-on-universal-design/

32 <http://universaldesign.ie/Products-Services/Customer-Engagement-in-Energy-Services/Customer-Engagement-in-Energy-Services.html>

33 <https://zeroproject.org/policy/ireland/>

34 <https://www.cru.ie/home/smart-meters/>

The CEUD was proactive in seeking to guide new technology solutions following a Universal Design approach. Through its engagement with the CER, it recognised the opportunities to guide on such displays, so that they would be easy to use by everyone.

The National Disability Authority produced a set of **Technical Guidelines for the Universal Design of In-Home Displays**³⁵. They were developed following a strategic three-stage research process which comprised a Literature Review, Usability Testing and Stakeholder Consultations. The content provided in the Technical Guidelines is based on international standards, guidelines and best practice.

The implementation of these technical guidelines should ensure that In-Home Displays are easy to access, understand and use, by the broad range of people who will employ them to manage their energy budgets.

35 [http:// universaldesign.ie/Products-Services/Technical-Guidelines-for-in-Home-Displays/](http://universaldesign.ie/Products-Services/Technical-Guidelines-for-in-Home-Displays/)

Chapter 15:

Listening to the lived experience of disability

The National Disability Authority considers the inclusion of persons with disabilities in research, on issues which affect their lives, an essential element of ensuring that disability research accurately reflects the perspectives of persons with disabilities. It also helps to remain focused on the issues of greatest importance to them. To promote an inclusive approach to disability research, we published **Guidelines for Including People with Disabilities in Research**³⁶ (2002), which identify some of the key considerations for inclusion. It outlined models that researchers can use to include persons with disabilities in their research.

We have always recognised the importance of involvement by persons with disabilities in the design and delivery of services. Following the work of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, we continue the important process of consultation with persons with disabilities and their advocates, ensuring their involvement on an ongoing basis.

One of the earliest projects was the launch of **Ask Me – Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities**³⁷, in April 2002. These were designed to include persons with disabilities in discussions about decisions that would affect their lives. These will be reviewed and updated to help support meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the development of policy and practice, in line with the UNCRPD.

Under the remit of the **National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-15**, the then Minister of State for Disability asked the National Disability Authority to host a consultation event to facilitate a national forum for persons with disabilities and their families to express their views and experiences. This was in order to guide the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan. We created ‘Your Voice, Your Choice’, as a forum – in 2012 and 2013 – for those persons with disabilities who were not normally consulted on issues affecting their lives. We also provided the independent Chair and secretariat for the Disability Stakeholder Group.

The UNCRPD highlights the importance of persons with disabilities being empowered to participate fully in all aspects of life, including socio-economic, civic, and political activities. This includes ensuring that individuals are enabled to receive and understand relevant information, which is presented in a format, and method, suitable to their requirements. It also includes ensuring that they can advocate for themselves and their own needs, be this in the work place, in an educational or social care setting, or in any other area of life.

36 <http://nda.ie/nda-files/Guidelines-for-Including-People-with-Disabilities-in-Research.pdf>

37 <http://nda.ie/nda-files/-Ask-Me-Guidelines-for-Effective-Consultation-with-People-with-DisabilitiesI.pdf>

How persons with disabilities communicate and how they organise themselves is changing. Under the UNCRPD, Disabled Persons' Organisations are being created and some are coalescing into larger groups. This development has been recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as they are seeking to provide training to these Disabled Persons' Organisations to facilitate their input into Ireland's Country Report to the UNCRPD, due to be made in 2021.

These developments are important in ensuring persons with disabilities are central to supporting cultural change and have a voice in society. We will continue to support these by reviewing good practice both locally and internationally, and advising how this can be implemented in a consistent manner in the Irish context.

Conclusion

The National Disability Authority has grown from researching what models of good practice should look like (in order to guide policy transformation) to an organisation that can now evaluate impacts of these policy shifts. This ensures continued momentum in the transformation of disability services. It also ensures an overall improvement in the lives of persons with disabilities.

This has come about because we have developed strong relationships with the relevant stakeholders in Government Departments, as well as public bodies, disability organisations and professional bodies. These relationships have been underpinned by the respect and consideration for the role of the National Disability Authority as an independent public body and the quality of our research and policy advice. We have produced a number of important resources that will continue to inform the debate.

We have absorbed new functions and adapted to the changing political and economic environments and priorities that have occurred since 2000.

We first suggested the idea of a National Disability Strategy in 2002. The concept of a National Disability Strategy has been strengthened, due to its role as the primary mechanism for Government to deliver on its commitments under the UNCRPD. Ireland ratified the UNCRPD in 2018 and it will be the framework for disability policy in Ireland in the years ahead. This has seen the significant shift from a professional lead approach to a rights based and user centric approach to how services need to be designed and delivered now.

Ireland has had a range of the policies and strategies at national level in place for a number of years, many of them informed by our research and advice. These policies and strategies supported gradual change of culture and practice as required, to realise many of the aims and objectives of the UNCRPD.

Expectations of significant change on foot of ratification of the UNCRPD are high. But it is important to reflect on the extent to which change and improvement has been underway over the course of the last number of decades. This change will involve more structured consultation with persons with disabilities. We are ready for this change and want to be an important part of it.

We have worked through austerity and shifts in policy priorities. However, Covid-19 presents a challenge like we have not faced before. We are embarking on projects that can inform responses to this and to future pandemics.

We will face the challenges presented by the pandemic as it will be with us for a number of years to come, while its knock-on effects will resonate even further into the future.

We look forward to another 20 years, where we will continue to provide evidence-

informed advice to guide and inform development of policy. This will help to develop the vision where persons with disabilities participate fully and equally in Irish society.

Appendix A: Functions of the NDA

The principal function of the National Disability Authority is to advise the Minister for Justice and Equality regarding issues of policy and practice relating to disability. The National Disability Authority also acts as a central, national body which will assist the Minister in the coordination and development of policy in relation to people with disabilities.

Under section 8 of the **National Disability Authority Act 1999** there are additional functions set out:

- To undertake, commission or collaborate in research projects and activities on issues relating to disability and to assist in the development of statistical information appropriate for the planning, delivery and monitoring of programmes and services for people with disabilities
- To advise the Minister on appropriate standards for programmes and services provided, or to be provided, to people with disabilities and to act as an advisory body with regard to the development of general and specific standards in relation to such programmes and services
- To monitor the implementation of standards and Code(s) of Practice in programmes and services provided to people with disabilities and to report to the Minister thereon
- To liaise with other bodies, both corporate and unincorporated, involved in the provision of services to people with disabilities and to facilitate and support the development and implementation of appropriate standards for programmes and services for people with disabilities
- To prepare Codes of Practice for the purpose of achieving the aim of good standards and quality in the provision of programmes and services provided or to be provided to people with disabilities
- To recognise the achievement of good standards and quality in the provision of programmes and services to people with disabilities including through the provision of a disability equality awards system
- To prepare strategic plans to submit to the Minister in line with our statutory remit

Additional Functions of the Authority under the Disability Act 2005 include:

- To prepare Code(s) of Practice relating to the accessibility of public buildings, services, information, and heritage sites (section 30)
- To monitor compliance with statutory targets for recruitment and employment of

people with disabilities in the public sector, recommend actions to be taken where these targets are not being met, and prepare Codes of Practice where requested (Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005)

- To establish a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the built environment and information technology, which will promote the principles of Universal Design that may be accessed, understood and used to the greatest practicable extent by people regardless of age, size, ability or disability in the most independent and natural manner; in the widest possible range of situations; without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialised solution (Part 6 of the Disability Act 2005)

Appendix B: Chairpersons, Authority Members and Directors 2000-2020

Chairpersons:

1999 – 2009: Dr Angela Kerins

2009 – 2013: Mr Peter McKevitt

2014 – to date: Ms Helen Guinan

Authority members ('C' denotes current member)

Orla Barry	Tony Bates	Aidan Browne
Caroline Burrell	Helen Caesar	Brian Callanan (C)
Jack Callanan	Paula Carey	Jim Casey
Gráinne Collins	Kevin Condon	Matt Connor
Maria Cronin	Tara Cunningham	Frank Cunneen
Margot Davis	Renee Dempsey	Colm Desmond
John Dolan	Maisie Dooley	Fiona Duignan
John Finnerty	Noreen Gildea	Aisling Glynn (C)
Damian Gordon (C)	Linda Greal	Robert Grier
Martha Griffin (C)	Shane Hogan	Brendan Ingoldsby
David Joyce	Jack Kavanagh (C)	Des Kenny
Ruthann La Malfa (C)	Gene Lambert	Sylda Langford
Mary Lavelle	Christy Lynch	Jimmy Martin
Joanne McCarthy	Lottie McClure	Teresa McDonnell (C)
Seamus McNulty	Olive Moriarty	Cathal Morgan (C)
Deaglán Ó Bríain (C)	Deirdre O'Connor	Kathryn O'Donoghue (C)
Muiris O'Donoghue (C)	John O'Gorman	James O'Grady
Betty O'Leary	Donie O'Leary	Donie O'Shea
Dónal Rice	Diarmuid Ring	Alison Ryan
Sadie Tierney		

Directors:

2000-2001: Dr Arthur O'Reilly

2001-2005: Ms M. Claire O'Connor

2006-2020: Ms Siobhán Barron

2020-current Dr Aideen Hartney

Appendix C: Senior Ministers with statutory responsibility for the NDA 2000-2020

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform 1997–2010

John O'Donoghue	8 July 1997 – 6 June 2002
Michael McDowell	6 June 2002 – 14 June 2007
Brian Lenihan Jnr	14 June 2007 – 7 May 2008
Dermot Ahern	7 May 2008 – 23 March 2010

Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs 2010–2011

Pat Carey	23 March 2010 – 9 March 2011
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Minister for Justice and Equality 2011–2020

Alan Shatter	9 March 2011 – 7 May 2014
Frances Fitzgerald	8 May 2014 – 14 June 2017
Charles Flanagan	14 June 2017 – 27 June 2020

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Roderic O'Gorman	27 June 2020 – current
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Appendix D: Ministers of State with statutory responsibility for the NDA 2000-2020

Minister of State for Equality 1997–2008	
Mary Wallace	8 July 1997 – 6 June 2002
Willie O’Dea	19 June 2002 – 29 September 2004
Frank Fahey	29 September 2004 – 20 June 2007
Sean Power	20 June 2007 – 13 May 2008

Minister of State for Equality, Disability Issues and Mental Health 2008–10	
John Moloney	13 May 2008 – 23 March 2010

Minister of State for Equality, Human Rights, and Integration 2010–11	
Mary White	23 March 2010 – 23 January 2011

Minister of State for Disability, Equality and Mental Health 2011–14	
Kathleen Lynch	10 March 2011 – 15 July 2014

Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality 2014–16	
Aodhán Ó Ríordáin	15 July 2014 – 6 May 2016

Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability Issues 2016–20	
Finian McGrath	6 May 2016 – 27 June 2020

Minister of State for Disability 2020–	
Anne Rabbitte	1 July 2020 – current

Appendix E: Selected publications 2000-2020

In addition to publication of our Annual Report, since 2007 annual reports on compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 and the three-year strategic plans, below are selected publications from the last two decades.

2001-2005

- Review of Disability Related Research in Ireland 1996–2001
- Public Attitudes to Disability in The Republic of Ireland
- Ask Me – Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities
- Guidelines for Including People with Disabilities in Research
- Ageing and Disability Discussion Paper
- Disability Research Series: 1: Disability and Work: The picture we learn from official statistics
- Disability Research Series: 2: The experiences of people with disabilities in accessing health services in Ireland: Do inequalities exist?
- Disability Research Series: 3: Promoting the participation of people with disabilities in physical activity and sport in Ireland
- Disability and Sexual Orientation
- Disability and Social Inclusion in Ireland
- Educating for a Better Future: Summary of proceedings of the 2004 ‘Living, Learning and Working with special educational needs’ seminars
- Ethics in Disability Research
- Excellence through Accessibility: Guidelines and Criteria
- First Steps in Producing Accessible Documents
- Guidelines for Access Auditing of the Built Environment
- Guidelines on Person Centred Planning in the Provision of Services for People with Disabilities in Ireland
- Guidelines for Purchasers of Disability Equality Training
- How far towards equality? Measuring how equally people with disabilities are included in Irish Society
- International Experience in the Provision of Individual Education Plans for Children with Disabilities

- Oral Health and Disability: The Way Forward
- Recommended Accessibility Guidelines for Public Transport Operators in Ireland
- Building for Everyone
- Review of the Effectiveness of Part M of the Building Regulations
- Strategic Partnership Guide: Good practice in working with people with experience of mental health difficulties
- Student Journeys: The Special Education Routes
- Women and Mental Health: Promoting a Gendered Approach to Policy and Service Provision Conference Proceedings

2006:

- Capacity and the Convention
- Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies
- Research with Children with Disabilities
- The Dynamics of Disability and Social Inclusion
- Guidelines for Access Auditing of the Built Environment
- Guidelines for Purchasers of Disability Equality Training
- Person Centred Planning Guidelines
- Access Handbook Template – A Tool to Help Manage the Accessibility of the Built Environment
- Exploring the Research and Policy Gaps: A review of literature on women and disability
- First Steps in Producing Accessible Publications
- Guidelines and Criteria – Excellence through Accessibility Award
- Disability and Social Inclusion in Ireland
- Physical Activity and Sport Report

2007:

- At Least 3% of Public Service Jobs Are for People with Disabilities: It's the law
- Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) – brochure
- Draft Monitoring Questionnaire: The Implementation of the National Disability Authority Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies

- Exploring the Research and Policy Gaps: A review of literature on women and disability
- Literature Review on Attitudes to Disability
- New Disability Plans: What they mean for you and your family
- Phones and Broadband: A guide for people with disabilities and older people
- Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan

2008:

- Draft Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites
- Effective Leadership and Organisational Culture for the Recruitment and Retention of People with Disabilities in the Public Sector
- The Experiences of Students with Physical Disabilities in Second Level Schools
- Monitoring Questionnaire: On the implementation of National Disability Authority's Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies
- Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities

2009:

- Dispersed or Clustered Housing for Disabled Adults: A Systematic Review
- Ethical Guidance for Research with People with Disabilities
- Representation and Portrayal of People with Disabilities in Irish Broadcasting

2010:

- A Review of International Outcome Measures in Disability Service Provision. A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- Developing Services for People with Disabilities: A synthesis paper summarising the key learning of experiences in selected jurisdictions as of October 2010. A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport
- Health and Personal Social Services for People with Disabilities in Scotland. A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- Health and Personal Social Services for People with Disabilities in Victoria, Australia. A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper Progressing the Disability Agenda

- Independent and Community Living: the views of people with disabilities, families, and frontline staff. Focus Group Consultation Report
- Individualised Supports and Mainstream Services: Attitudes of people with disabilities and other stakeholders to policy proposals by the Department of Health and Children
- Literature Review on Provision of Appropriate and Accessible Support to People with an Intellectual Disability who are Experiencing Crisis Pregnancy
- Models of Residential Provision for People with Disabilities. A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- The Strengths and Weaknesses of Publicly-funded Irish Health Services Provided to Women with Disabilities in Relation to Pregnancy, Childbirth and Early Motherhood
- Women with Disabilities: Barriers and Facilitators to Accessing Services during Pregnancy, Childbirth and Early Motherhood
- Women with Disabilities: Policies governing Procedure and Practice in Service Provision in Ireland during Pregnancy, Childbirth and Early Motherhood

2011:

- Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites³⁸
- Guidance on retaining employees with a disability: Literature review
- Health and Personal Social Services for People with Disabilities in England: A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- Health and Personal Social Services for People with Disabilities in New Zealand: A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- Health and Personal Social Services for People with Disabilities in the Netherlands: A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper
- National Survey of Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland
- Retaining employees who acquire a disability: A guide for employers
- Safe Evacuation for All: A Planning and Management Guide (revised)
- Strategic approaches to employing people with intellectual disability: Lessons from the UK
- Strategic approaches to employing people with mental health issues
- The Introduction of Individual Budgets as a Resource Allocation System for Disability Services in Ireland: A Contemporary Developments in Disability Services Paper

38 S.I. No. 484 of 2011 Disability Act 2005 (Code of Practice) (Declaration) Order 2011.

2012:

- Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach
- Accessibility Toolkit for public sector staff
- Shared Space, Shared Surfaces and Home Zones from a Universal Design Approach for the Urban Environment in Ireland
- Access to Justice for People with Disabilities as Victims of Crime in Ireland
- Research on the provision of Assistive Technology in Ireland
- Universal Health Insurance systems and the provision of health services for people with disabilities
- Living in your own home with a disability
- Procurement and Accessibility
- Your Voice Your Choice 2012 report
- Universal Design guidelines for digital television
- Sexual violence against people with disabilities
- Preventing bullying of people with intellectual disabilities
- Bullying Information Guide aimed at People with an Intellectual Disability
- Resource Allocation Feasibility Study Phase 1 report

2013:

- Introducing personal budgets — what we can learn from other countries
- National Survey of Stroke Survivors 2013

2014:

- Consultation with people with disabilities on public attitudes — Your Voice Your Choice Report 2013
- Living with an acquired brain injury
- National Disability Authority Resource Allocation Feasibility Study Phase 2
- Post school education and training options for people with disabilities
- Reasonable Accommodation for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Survey on National Disability Strategy Indicators 2013
- Understanding Emotional, Psychological, and Mental Health disability in Ireland: Factors Facilitating Social Inclusion

2015:

- Case Studies: Better Tourism through Universal Design
- Children's Disability Services in Ireland
- Commissioning disability services – a discussion paper
- Educational and Employment Experiences of People with a Disability in Ireland: An Analysis of the National Disability Survey
- Exploring the factors related to return to work after stroke
- Exploring the Impact of Fatigue on Work Ability of People with Rheumatic Diseases
- How Walkable is Your Town?
- Insights into the Lives of Children with Disabilities: Findings from the 2006 National Disability Survey
- Local Area Coordination: Briefing paper
- National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services
- Preventing school bullying of children with special needs or disability
- Report on public consultation on the draft Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities
- Report on Voting Trials
- Retaining employees who acquire a disability: A guide for employers
- Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland
- Research and Recommendations on Universal Design of Dementia Friendly Dwellings for People with Dementia, their Families, and Carers
- Universal Design Guidelines, Dementia Friendly Dwellings for People with Dementia, their Families, and Carers

2016:

- Parental Educational Expectations of Children with Disabilities
- Outcomes for Disability Services
- Review of the Implementation of Regulations and Inspections in Residential Services for Adults and Children with Disabilities
- Understanding Family Strategies that Enable Long Term and Sustainable Home Environments for Older People with an Intellectual Disability
- Family Carers' Experiences of Caring for a Person with an Intellectual Disability
- Adult Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disability/Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Relationships, Roles and Support Needs

2017:

- National Survey of Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland
- Models of Good Practice in Effectively Supporting the Needs of Adults with Autism, without a Concurrent Intellectual Disability, Living in the Community,
- Employment Transitions among People with a Disability in Ireland: An Analysis of the Quarterly National Household Survey
- Research Promotion Scheme 2014: Transitions from Education and Training to Employment for People with Disabilities
- International Good Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation: Lessons for Ireland, WRC
- Research into the implementation of Resource Allocation Models
- National Disability Authority Synthesis of Research on Personalised Budgets

2018:

- A qualitative study of how well young people with disabilities are prepared for life after school
- Assisting People with Autism in Employment: Guidance for Line Managers and HR Professionals
- Research in Good Practice in the Employment of People with Disabilities in the Public Sector
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2017: National Disability Authority Year-end Review
- Report on Future needs for disability services (for WGI of Transforming Lives programme)
- Assisting People with Autism: Guidance for Local Authority Housing Officers
- Assisting People with Autism: Guidance for Justice Professionals in communicating with people with autism
- Staff Competencies and Skills Mix for a Community-Based Model of Disability Services
- Transport Accessibility Monitoring Study: Report on Phase I Pilot

2019:

- Exploring the Experiences of Users of Disability Respite Services in Ireland
- Reasonable Accommodations: Obstacles and Opportunities to the Employment of Persons with a Disability
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2018: National Disability Authority Year-end

Review

- An Operational Review of the Effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005
- National Disability Authority Independent Assessment of Progress under National Disability Inclusion Strategy

Appendix F: Research Promotion Grant Scheme Themes

Year	Theme
2006 – 2007	Evidence Based Practices in Health, Education, and Social and Family Affairs for Children with Disabilities (aged 0-6) in Ireland
2007 – 2008	Promoting innovation and good practice in services for people with mental health difficulties
2011	Promoting safety and freedom from abuse for people with disabilities
2013	Community supports to enable people with acquired or progressive disabilities live independently
2014	Employment and People with Disabilities
2015	Sustaining and supporting families where there is a disability
2017 ³⁹	The effective promotion and support of community integration of people with disabilities Progressing lifetime communities through Universal Design
2019	Persons with disabilities experiencing homelessness

³⁹ Two themes were chosen for 2017

Appendix G: NDA annual conference themes 2002-2020

Year	Theme
2002	Using Emancipatory Methodologies in Disability Research
2003	Ethical Framework for Disability Research
2004	Delivering Change through Disability Research
2005	Disability and Employment
2006	Civic, Cultural and Social Participation
2007	Evidence-based Practice in Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities aged 0–6 years
2008	Mental health and the criminal justice system
2009	Promoting Independent and Community Living for People with Intellectual Disabilities
2010	Independent Living and Community Participation
2011	Participation, independence, and safety, for people with disabilities living in the community.
2012	Natural community supports, hate crime, resource allocation, and personalisation of services, and supports
2013	Supporting transitions for people with disabilities
2014	Employing people with disabilities
2015	Inclusive Mainstream Public Services for People with Disabilities
2016	Ordinary Homes, Ordinary Places
2017	Making My Own Way: Supporting self-directed life in the community
2018	Achieving Better Outcomes for Persons with a Disability: using data as a tool to guide policy and practice
2019	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Past Lessons and Future Aspirations.
2020	Facilitating the effective participation of persons with disabilities in the Irish criminal justice system (Article 13 UNCRPD)

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