Comprehensive Employment Strategy: NDA Year-end Assessment 2020



Table of Contents

[NDA Year-end Assessment 2020 1](#_Toc66782868)

[List of Acronyms 2](#_Toc66782869)

[Introduction 4](#_Toc66782870)

[2020 Context setting 5](#_Toc66782871)

[COVID-19 Challenges 5](#_Toc66782872)

[Remote working 6](#_Toc66782873)

[Economic and social recovery 6](#_Toc66782874)

[Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 - 2025 8](#_Toc66782875)

[Specific data collection initiatives 8](#_Toc66782876)

[Key findings from 2020 CES activity 9](#_Toc66782877)

[Achievements during 2020: 9](#_Toc66782878)

[Actions advanced during 2020: 12](#_Toc66782879)

[Actions requiring further focus during 2021 13](#_Toc66782880)

[Key themes from 2020 14](#_Toc66782881)

[Theme 1: Transitions 14](#_Toc66782882)

[Career guidance 14](#_Toc66782883)

[School leavers 15](#_Toc66782884)

[Post-school options 15](#_Toc66782885)

[Further & Higher Education 17](#_Toc66782886)

[Disability Consultative Committee 18](#_Toc66782887)

[Theme 2: Supports to work and return to work 19](#_Toc66782888)

[Capacity of Intreo to support persons with disabilities 19](#_Toc66782889)

[Review of existing protocols 20](#_Toc66782890)

[Seamless pathways for those with high support needs 21](#_Toc66782891)

[Enhancing pathway to work through Early Engagement 21](#_Toc66782892)

[Review of the reasonable accommodation fund 22](#_Toc66782893)

[Vocational rehabilitation 22](#_Toc66782894)

[Return to work post pandemic 23](#_Toc66782895)

[Theme 3: Engaging employers 25](#_Toc66782896)

[Increasing employment targets for the public sector 27](#_Toc66782897)

[Theme 4: Public Transport 28](#_Toc66782898)

[Conclusion 30](#_Toc66782899)

## List of Acronyms

ABILITY Programme funds local projects that for young people with disabilities between the ages of 15 and 29 closer to the labour market.

AsIam national autism charity

CES Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024

CESIG CES Implementation Group

COVID-19 infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

CSO Central Statistics Office

DA Disability Allowance

DCC Disability Consultative Committees in relevant government departments

DCEDIY Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

DETE Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment

DoE Department of Education

DoH Department of Health

DSP Department of Social Protection

EmployAbility programme of supported employment

Enterprise Ireland government agency that supports Irish business trade internationally

FET Further Education & Training

HE Higher Education

HEA Higher Education Authority

HSE Health Service Executive

IDA Irish Development Agency supports foreign direct investment in Ireland

IPS Individual Placement and Support model of supported employment for people with mental health concerns

NDA National Disability Authority

NTA National Transport Authority

Not So Different disability organisation for neuro diverse people

ODI Open Doors Initiative supporting greater workplace inclusion

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OWL Oireachtas Work Learning programme for persons with intellectual disabilities

PUP COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment

Rehab organisation delivering training to persons with disabilities

SOLAS Seirbhisi Oideachais Leanunaigh Agus Scileanna (Further Education Skills Services)

Specialisterne Ireland autism supported employment programme

UNCRPD United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

WAV Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme

VR Vocational Rehabilitation

**Introduction**

The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 (CES) is at the end of the second year of its second three year action plan. This paper sets out the National Disability Authority’s (NDA) independent assessment of CES activity during 2020 and is the fourth such annual assessment paper produced by the NDA.

Following the formation of a new government in mid-2020 a new Department was created – the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEYID). Functions from the previous Department of Justice and Equality relating to disability were transferred to the new department. DCEDIY is now responsible for the coordination of disability policy and organises meetings of the CES Implementation Group meetings (CESIG).

For this independent assessment the NDA has considered a wide range of information from both disability specific and mainstream sources including:

* Annual departmental progress updates on actions committed to by departments and their relevant agencies provided in December 2020 to the CESIG. The NDA welcome the decision of the DCEDIY to publish these progress updates
* Presentations from relevant government departments and agencies on specific themes to members of CESIG
* NDA awareness of relevant issues and priorities through its ongoing membership and input to departmental Disability Consultative Committees (DCC)
* NDA analysis of data on the experience of persons with disabilities, specifically our research and policy work on retaining people with a disability in the workforce[[1]](#footnote-1)
* The NDA report on Indicators for monitoring progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for persons with disabilities which was developed during 2020.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* NDA advice and support to departments and agencies on specific CES actions and on their role in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) commitments relevant to Article 24 (Education) and Article 27 (Work and Employment)

Following a section below on context setting for 2020, this paper is then presented in two main parts. The first presents a summary of key findings from 2020 and provides activity highlights with a brief statement of relevant progress. The second part provides a contextual assessment of progress under four key themes: transitions, support to work and/or return to work, engaging employers, and public transport.

# 2020 Context setting

## COVID-19 Challenges

During 2020, many challenges affected the lives of persons with disabilities and the work of the CES. As the year developed, and services and supports responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, it became more apparent that CES progress was slower than previous years. The COVID-19 virus led to a sudden and dramatic shift in patterns of living, working and service delivery across the population. Large numbers of public sector staff were redeployed into areas of work that required immediate staffing, for example COVID-19 testing and contact tracing services and administration of increased social welfare payments. The impact of COVID-19 on employment at both national and international levels has been profound. In April 2020 over one million people in Ireland were accessing income supports from the State. At the end of December 2020, 335,599 of those whose income from employment has been affected due to COVID-19 were being facilitated through the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment which is administered by the Department of Social Protection (DSP).[[3]](#footnote-3)

In their Employment and Life Effects of COVID-19 report, the CSO found that 47% of persons aged 15 years and over indicated that COVID-19 had an effect on their employment situation. Of these, one third (34%) started working from home, while 12% have increased their hours working from home.[[4]](#footnote-4) Many workers have said they would like to continue working either full-time or part-time from home.

The pandemic has been particularly difficult for some persons with disabilities and their families, both in terms of adjusting to social distancing requirements, and to accessing information, services and supports necessary to remain safe and healthy. The NDA advised government that consideration be given to the impact of the pandemic on persons with disabilities beyond those related to health and social care.[[5]](#footnote-5) The advice paper noted that persons with disabilities may be particularly at risk of losing their job due to the higher proportion of persons with disabilities in lower paid jobs such as retail, catering and hospitality compared to the general population. [[6]](#footnote-6)

## Remote working

The sudden shift to remote working has also presented opportunities for some persons with disabilities. The concept and practice of remote working has been a feature of the working life of those persons with disabilities who have had access to reasonable accommodation measures that provide flexible and part time work. The NDA advises that a move to adopt a more widespread remote working strategy would mean more people with disabilities can be facilitated to work, as some often cite transport issues and the work environment as challenges to getting and retaining a job. The 2019 report on Remote Work in Ireland,[[7]](#footnote-7) developed under Pillar four of Future Jobs Ireland 2019[[8]](#footnote-8), is concerned with increasing participation in the labour force and recognised how remote working can increase inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce. This was followed by that National Remote Working Strategy, published in 2021 where the Government commits to facilitating increased remote work in the future in a way that reaps the many benefits and mitigates negative side-effects.[[9]](#footnote-9). This strategy recognises the potential benefits to persons with disabilities stating:

In the case of people with a disability or a chronic illness, remote work offers a substantial opportunity by removing a commute and allowing for a more flexible schedule. Widespread remote working has the potential to attract people with a disability to the workforce whilst creating a better opportunities for career progression.

It will be important to continue to include the particular needs of persons with disabilities as policies in this area are developed and to also measure the impact of these policies.

## Economic and social recovery

The NDA advises that all measures currently underway to address temporary or permanent employment lay-offs owing to COVID-19 and supporting people to return to work will need to address and prioritise the specific needs of the spectrum of persons with disabilities. It is only through supportive interventions that person with disabilities will gain employment.

As the country begins its recovery phase post COVID-19, and as the employment goals of the CES are achieved, the employment of persons with disabilities must become a priority action area. To achieve this of particular interest are national policy initiatives with a future focus, including strategies that collect and report on data captured in areas of social inclusion, skills attainment, poverty reduction, education provision, enterprise development and the future world of work.

The government’s post pandemic recovery plan is built on the delivery of longer term jobs and embracing innovation and technological change, improving productivity, increasing labour force participation, enhancing skills and developing talent, and transitioning to a low carbon economy. The recovery programme describes increasing labour force participation for persons with disabilities. The NDA recommends that to achieve its goals the recovery plan builds on the CES work accomplished to date and provides a coordinated approach with specific actions both from an employee and employer perspective. With an overall aim to create 200,000 new jobs by 2025, and to help those affected by the pandemic to get back to work, there is much of that building work already underway within the CES. The NDA notes there is an interplay between specific areas of the recovery plan which are set out below and the CES.

#### Regional Enterprise Strategy

The Regional Enterprise Strategy 2020[[10]](#footnote-10) outlines in objective five the aim to develop and communicate a pathway to economic activity for a selected cohort(s), including:

* People with Physical & Mental Disabilities
* People returning to the workplace who may have exited through choice or illness or other reasons

Fulfilling this action will be central to the government’s response to addressing the increased numbers of people with mental health difficulties because of COVID-19. There is now emerging evidence from the World Health Organisation that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people’s mental health are serious stating that

“…[mental health] is already extremely concerning, social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members is compounded by the distress caused by loss of income and often employment.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

The NDA advises that this specific action is aligned with CES Strategic Priority four which focuses on return to work for those who have acquired a disability or long-term health condition during their working life.

#### National Skills Strategy

The government is committed to supporting, through reskilling and training programmes, people who have lost their jobs to return to the workforce as soon as possible. These education, training and reskilling programmes will help workers in sectors unlikely to return to full capacity in the next year to avail of opportunities in other more sustainable sectors. CES strategic priorities one and two are directly related to obtaining skills required for work.

### Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 - 2025

In regard to social inclusion and poverty reduction the NDA welcomes the Department of Social Protections commitments ‘To promote active participation and inclusion in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services’. The Department’s targets in relation to poverty reduction and employment rates for people with disabilities offers routes to progressing this aim:

* Reduce the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate from 36.9% first to 28.7% (2025) and then to 22.7% (2030);
* Increase the employment rate from 22.3% first to 25% (2021) and then to 33% (2027)’[[12]](#footnote-12)

### Specific data collection initiatives

To support the work of the CES, the NDA prepared a report called ‘**Indicators for Monitoring Progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2024[[13]](#footnote-13)’**. This report measured CES progress against a suite of indicators that were devised by the NDA and agreed by the CESIG. The report offers a useful snapshot of CES performance at its mid-point, as the information provided was collected between 2019 and October 2020. The report contains information on 30 indicators across the six strategic priorities. Evidence from these Indicators is interwoven through this assessment of CES activity during 2020. A limitation of the report is that many of the indicators are process indicators and therefore don’t measure real change in terms of outcomes for persons with disabilities in relation to employment. The NDA also welcomes the initiative of an Equality Data Audit[[14]](#footnote-14) which was established to examine all data sets in public bodies and determine the extent of data available on one or more of the nine dimensions of equality[[15]](#footnote-15). This data audit identified a total of 107 datasets on dimensions of equality, 24 of which included a marker on disability. However, the key finding of the audit in relation to disability data was that a harmonised approach to collecting and classifying disability in public service data is currently lacking and should be considered. The NDA notes that there continue to be gaps in the manner in which data are collected and compiled in order to facilitate measuring the impact of policy changes.

**Key findings from 2020 CES activity**

This section summarises some of the highlights in relation to the CES in 2020, while noting that work is ongoing, and that some actions will require a more concerted effort in 2021. While COVID-19 gave rise to significant delays to some CES activities the NDA notes that in a number of cases the delays were exacerbated rather than caused by the pandemic.

## Achievements during 2020:

* DSP figures available in October[[16]](#footnote-16) 2020 indicate that approximately 3,570 people have taken up employment whilst on disability allowance since the Make Work Pay Report was launched in April 2017. This modest increase in numbers from 2019 indicates that people on welfare payments such as Disability Allowance (DA) are interested in employment.

DSP, through a budget 2021 measure, have increased the Disability Allowance and Blind Pension earnings disregard[[17]](#footnote-17) by €20 each per week from €120 to €140.[[18]](#footnote-18).DSP, through a budget 2021 measure, have provided additional funding to contractors delivering Employability services on its behalf. This will see a grant being available of up to €1,000 for jobseekers engaging with the services / a Job Coach.

* The HSE Mental Health teams working on the Individual Placements and Support (IPS) model of supported employment continued to deliver training programmes and national network days. These days provide an opportunity to share learning from the different IPS sites. Each site involved in the IPS programme commenced a fidelity review[[19]](#footnote-19)[[20]](#footnote-20) during 2020.
* The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) have commissioned research on post-school education and learning for adults with special educational needs which will provide further information to raise the awareness of training and education options for school leavers. This research is due Q3 2022.
* During 2020 SOLAS published a conceptual framework on Universal Design for Learning in further education and training (FET).[[21]](#footnote-21) This framework is consistent with the FET sectors commitment to tailored learning and appropriate supports, in order to meet the needs of all learners. An accompanying guide UDL for FET Practitioners: Guidance for Implementing UDL in Irish Further Education and Training, providing practitioners with the knowledge they need to implement universal design for learning will be published by SOLAS in 2021.SOLAS developed a new [FET course hub](https://www.fetchcourses.ie/) website[[22]](#footnote-22) which describes requirements for apprenticeships, traineeships, post leaving cert courses, community and adult education as well as core literacy and numeracy services. This website is a useful resource for students examining and planning for their post school options or returning to education.
* The SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit collated and published their annual report on the numbers of persons with disabilities involved in FET. [[23]](#footnote-23) Data shows that in 2019, there were **13,098** learners enrolled in further education and training programmes who reported having at least one type of disability, an increase of just over 4,000 on 2018 figures.
* The Higher Education Authority (HEA) reported
* An 88% increase in participation by students with physical or mobility disabilities in higher education.
* Participation by students that are blind or who have a vision impairment increased by 53% and
* Participation by students who are deaf or hard of hearing increased by 48%.

There has also been continued growth in the number of students in specific disability categories:

|  | **2018/19 academic year** | **2019/20 academic year** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Number of students with physical/mobility disability | **827** | **867** |
| Number of students who are deaf/hard of hearing | **358** | **364** |
| Number of students who are blind/have a visual impairment | **221** | **234** |

* The HSE reported that many young persons with disabilities continued to defer their adult day service places and take up mainstream options in education and training[[24]](#footnote-24). This gives school leavers the opportunity to access and explore the suitability of mainstream progression options before deciding on taking an adult day service place.
* 2018 – 51 deferrals – seven returned and commenced is service
* 2019 – 73 deferrals – four returned and commenced in service
* 2020 – 73 deferrals
* With grant funding from the NDA, four organisations, Not So Different, Walk, [Rehab Group](https://www.irishtimes.com/special-reports/careers-2021/employers-urged-to-tackle-low-recruitment-of-people-with-disabilities-1.4433268) and AsIAm, collaborated to create and launch an online training programme to support employers in becoming “disability confident”[[25]](#footnote-25).
* In Quarter 4 2020, DCEDIY commissioned the Open Doors Initiative to develop a programme of awareness raising among employers of the benefits to business of recruiting and retaining staff with disabilities. The Employers for Change information service was launched on 11 March 2021.
* A joint Enterprise Ireland/IDA Ireland webinar entitled “Recruiting for Ability” was held in December 2020. This event focused on highlighting opportunities to recruit people with differing abilities, and shared examples of the work of Specialisterne Ireland and two client organisations from EI & IDA.
* In collaboration with the Houses of the Oireachtas and DPER, and drawing on the experiences of the Oireachtas Work Learning (OWL)[[26]](#footnote-26) Programme, the Public Appointments Service has published a Guide to Promoting Inclusive Employment.[[27]](#footnote-27)
* The National Transport Authority (NTA) has introduced a number of improvements in public transport accessibility in recent years, including the introduction of apps to make journeys for those with disabilities easier, improvements to the accessibility of transport stops, and an increase in the number of wheelchair accessible taxis. During 2020 they reported that additional accessibility options were introduced including:
* The Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) 2020 Grant Scheme had issued 263 grants: 220 new WAV licences, five change of vehicles (i.e. from an existing standard vehicle to a WAV) and 38 upgrades to older WAVs in the fleet.
* 168 new WAV licences, which were not grant aided, brought into the fleet during 2020 brought the total increase to **393** to mid-November 2020. The percentage of WAV’s has now increased to 16% of the fleet compared to 4% in 2014.
* Six pilot community car schemes for local link were approved for 2020 in the following counties Cork, Kerry x two, Offaly, Longford and Mayo.

## Actions advanced during 2020:

There are a few areas where committed actions were advanced but were not completed during 2020. The NDA recommends continued focus be given to delivering these commitments during 2021. These actions include:

* The Ability programme has seen over 1,560 young people with disabilities accessing various pre activation supports / providers services. The NDA welcome DSP’s commitment to continue funding these projects until August 2021. It is noted that COVID-19 had an impact both in terms of the providers and mid- term evaluation in 2020. However, the findings of a mid-term evaluation process, presented in early 2021, can be of benefit in ensuring that the learning from these initiatives is mainstreamed across the system and informs the future of the Ability programme[[28]](#footnote-28).
* SOLAS review of Specialist Training Provision (STP) commenced in 2019 in line with the SOLAS plan of continuous evaluation and development of all FET programmes. The review is well advanced with consultants visiting (online) each STP centre during 2020. A consultation exercise with current and past students should be completed in 2021 and this will further inform the review findings. This review will be an important contribution to the post school options for learners with disabilities.

## Actions requiring further focus during 2021

While COVID-19 has had an impact on the timelines for delivery of many actions, the NDA notes that there are also actions that have been delayed since before the onset of the pandemic. The NDA suggests that while there are many areas that require further consideration and focus in 2021, those requiring immediate focus include the following:

* As 2021 is the final year of the second 3-year action plan, there is an opportunity to consider progress and activity to date, in order to inform the next stage of implementation of this strategy. It is important that a third action plan is finalised and published by year end and that it is aligned with the post pandemic national recovery plan.
* Addressing the lack of progress on the provision of Career Guidance for learners with disabilities in special and mainstream school settings.
* Implementation of the agreed policy developed under CES action 5.1. to develop a national programme of coordinated employment supports for persons with disabilities who wish to work, including those who require a high level of support, to obtain and retain employment. Despite the policy being agreed across relevant departments and agencies, implementation of same has not progressed.
* Commencement of the early engagement process as recommended in the 2017 Make Work Pay Report. The national consultation process, with people with disabilities, their families and disability representative groups, to gain general agreement to the introduction of ‘early engagement’ was completed in 2018.
* Conducting a full review of the Make Work Pay actions, as per a commitment within the report.

**Key themes from 2020**

The purpose of this section is to present in more detail some of the developments during 2020, which may be helpful in guiding the next phase of implementation of the strategy. The approach presented this year is to examine activity under thematic headings. This allows for an analysis of actions in a cross cutting manner and in doing so describes the impact of these actions on the lives of persons with disabilities. Four themes are explored in detail below, Transitions, Supports to work and return to work, Engaging employers and Public Transport.

## Theme 1: Transitions

Young persons with a disability at school have similar employment and earnings aspirations as their non-disabled counterparts, but their experiences diverge when they have completed their full-time education.[[29]](#footnote-29) National and international research has highlighted that outcomes for adults with disabilities are poor across a range of domains, including employment and learning.[[30]](#footnote-30) Longitudinal data illustrates that students with disabilities are less likely to be prepared to progress beyond school into further education, training and employment than students without a disability, and are also less likely to actually progress to post-school options.[[31]](#footnote-31) Therefore preparing for post-school life as early as possible is key for learners with disabilities.

Over the course of 2020 many of those involved in education provision were focused on managing the response to COVID-19. Significant resources were diverted to keeping schools open and to deliver online education. To date the CES has had a collaborative approach with departments and agencies involved in preparing young people to transition from school to post-school options although progress has been slow in some areas as outlined below.[[32]](#footnote-32)

### Career guidance

The NDA has previously advised that the Indecon review of career guidance, commissioned by the Department of Education and published in late 2019, did not sufficiently address the particular needs of students with disabilities, particularly those in special schools in relation to career guidance and advised that the Department’s internal Taskforce should address these issues. The NDA would welcome an update on the work of this Taskforce. In addition the NDA is exploring options for a virtual workshop to take place in 2021, to showcase learning from other jurisdictions and to inform future considerations.

### School leavers

Within the CES, creating an awareness of post-school education and employment options for persons with disabilities has specific and targeted actions:

* A steering group comprised of HSE, NCSE and DoE, established to develop a new Transition Programme for students with special educational needs, met in November 2020 and **reactivated planning around this action**. This action will lead to the development of a transition programme for those requiring specialist support post-school. Terms of reference for the project have been established although these are currently being reviewed to ensure that this project is well linked with other transition activities across the strategy and that there is no duplication of effort. The NDA welcomes this coordinated approach.
* Action was also advanced between Department of Education (DoE), Department of Health (DoH) and HSE to address COVID-19 related issues. School Leavers that were due to commence HSE funded day services in September 2020 had been out of formal educational services since March[[33]](#footnote-33).The DoE supported their transition through the provision of a substitute teacher scheme. This enabled school staff to liaise with disability day service providers when these young people were commencing in service. The substitute teacher was able to share all relevant information and support a smoother transition for the student. The NDA advises that it would be helpful to see this innovation evaluated with learning for subsequent years.

### Post-school options

A smooth transition to post-school options requires a clear pathway for a student and should be offered in a person-centred way. To fully understand this landscape for learners with special education needs, the NCSE has commissioned two pieces of research focussed on their post-school education experience. These reports aim to reveal the actual post-school options for students with special educational needs. In doing so they will assist the development of pathways as they will capture where students go once they leave school, their reasons for choosing particular paths and their experiences of these paths. It is worth noting the focus of these projects:

* The first project examines educational provision and life-long learning in adult day services. The study developed a framework of principles and indicators of good practice. It then reviewed educational provision available to adults with disabilities accessing these services, how it was delivered, and the expected outcomes from this provision and whether they were being achieved by adults. The study report is expected to be finalised by the end of 2021.
* The second project will map what is known about students with special educational needs after they finish school and track a cohort into their post-school life. The study will map and examine existing data sources about young people with special educational needs when they leave school, identifying (a) who they are (b) what educational settings they come from (c) where they go after school and (d) why they go there. The tracking element will focus on a cohort of students about whom less is known as they leave school, identifying and examining the reasons for their post-school destination choices and their experiences of them. The study is at an initial stage with an expected completion date of mid-2022.

Further developments in the post school landscape include pre-activation projects operating under the Ability Programme. The NDA recommends that the NSCE liaise with DSP on the evaluation of the Ability Programme and with SOLAS on their ongoing review of specialist training provision. Both initiatives will offer insights regarding local provision of post-school options for learners with special education needs. Similarly, the NCSE and SOLAS can provide DSP with good practice regarding early engagement as it implements relevant Make Work Pay commitments.

The NDA believes that in addition to the above, the Department of Education (DoE) could take the lead on the development of a suite of protocols that ensure persons with disabilities successfully transition from education to the next phase of their pathway to work. The NDA advises that in developing these protocols the DoE could examine the useful content of the UK Code of Practice for special educational needs and disability for those aged 0 to 25 years[[34]](#footnote-34). This approach ensures relevant stakeholders and providers of services provide age related support measures when necessary for the learner. Following such an approach in the Irish setting would ensure that clear transition protocols and necessary supports are delivered by the relevant stakeholders including HSE, NCSE, ETB’s National Council for Guidance in Education (NCGE), and others such as disability service providers.

### Further & Higher Education

During 2020, a new Department Further Higher Education Research Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) was established, with SOLAS as one of the public bodies under its remit. Apprenticeships, employer based training and FET continue to provide pathways to employment for persons with disabilities. SOLAS data for 2019 indicated that 13,098 learners enrolled in FET reported having at least one type of disability. This figure constitutes **7.3%** of all learners enrolled and is an increase of more than 4,000 when compared to 2018. While this could reflect increased sharing by students of their disability status rather than an increase in the actual number of learners with a disability is it still a positive development. In addition:

* Of the learners enrolled that reported a disability, 45.5% were men and 54.5% were women.
* The majority (66%) of these learners were older than 25 years of age,
* Approximately 49.2% of the learners had an education level of lower secondary or below prior to joining further education and training.
* The certification rate for those learners who reported a disability and completed certified courses **was 62.4% in 2019**, up from 56.4% in 2018
* 91.2% of learners that reported a disability partially or fully completed a course in 2019.

The NDA welcomes the SOLAS commitment to ‘address the needs of people with disabilities’ with more consistent support to this cohort of learners across FET. If SOLAS is to expand its approach to include these learners who are generally older and have a low level of education, it will need to review how its funding supports can be used by students with disabilities. Currently the funding available only covers post leaving certificate course provision and therefore is adding to the marginalisation of early school leavers who return to education later. Funding for post school provision requires adaptions that can support more part-time and flexible studying arrangements. The NDA welcomes the commitment of SOLAS in their new strategy to conduct ‘ongoing reform of the funding system, and roll-out of good practice guidelines, including those in relation to universal design for learning’.[[35]](#footnote-35) The NDA has previously advised that this commitment by SOLAS can be achieved through the inclusion of a target for persons with disabilities in accessing and progressing through apprenticeships and other FET options. The target of 1,000 women in apprenticeships was achieved in 2020, and is to be welcomed. However, it is important to establish a target for persons with disabilities. Such a target will require a clear and ambitious roadmap to ensure it is obtained. The NDA suggests that officials working to achieve the new apprenticeship action plan could provide an update to the CESIG in 2021.

An important new feature of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is the commitment to examine and develop transitions from FET to higher education. ‘A Further Education – Higher Education (FE-HE) Transitions Working Paper’ was published in June 2020. This paper highlights where further development is required to support FE-HE transitions under areas such as strategic approach, reviewing provisions, and developing consistent approaches.[[36]](#footnote-36) The NDA suggests that approaches that suit persons with disabilities include alternative access pathways and more streamlined funding to support part-time and flexible provision.

### Disability Consultative Committee

The NDA welcomes the progress made in the further and higher education settings and advises that DFHERIS establishes its own Disability Consultative Committee (DCC). The NDA notes the value of DCCs in the implementation, coordination and reporting of CES actions, and particularly those actions where inter-departmental or cross-departmental work is required to develop joined-up public services. The NDA advises that membership of the DCC should include engagement from all relevant units of that Department and agencies under its remit, as for example SOLAS, the Higher Education Authority, Adult Education Guidance Service, and departmental business units involved in governance and policy. The NDA also advises that representation on this DCC could also include membership from the NDA, the Disability Stakeholders Group and consideration should be given to including additional representatives from Disabled Persons Organisations.

Issues that will be relevant to this DCC include commitments agreed to in the National Disability Inclusion Strategy and the CES. During 2021 this newly established DCC should inform the department’s work in development of targets for persons with disabilities in apprenticeships, the emerging findings from the review of specialist training provision, support of people with disabilities in the national skills strategy, and the availability of funding for part time students in FET and HE. It would also be useful for the department to consider its responsibility with regard to the UNCRPD, specifically Article 24 to protect the right to inclusive education, Article 9 on accessibility, and Article 27 on work and employment which contains provisions on vocational guidance.

## Theme 2: Supports to work and return to work

### Capacity of Intreo to support persons with disabilities

The employment support options available to many different groups of people will be through their local Intreo office. This public employment service[[37]](#footnote-37) is the mainstream gateway for persons with disabilities and others who want to explore their employment options and find employment. During 2020 the actions to build capacity of staff to support job seekers with a disability in Intreo were delayed as staff were redirected to work on the upsurge in demand for social welfare payments arising because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the public employment system (PES) is preparing for its approach to services in the post-pandemic world, it can enact measures that ensure that its service is accessible and relevant for Intreo customers with disabilities. The public employment service and Intreo centrally will require in 2021 a concentrated proactive and deliberate effort to ensure that persons with disabilities are supported to access employment. The NDA recommend that the effort to support persons with disabilities is reflected in the prioritisation of this group in the PES system.

From the data available we know that an Intreo system must be able to cater for people with disabilities that represent:

* Those not in employment, education, or training (NEET); the percentage of young persons with a disability that are NEET is 23 %, over twice the rate of young persons without a disability which is 10%.
* Those with a low level of education; 13.7% of persons with a disability aged 15-50 had completed no higher than primary level education, compared with 4.2% of the general population. In addition, 37.0% of persons with a disability had completed third level education compared with 53.4% of the general population.

A key factor in the success of supporting these different groups of persons with disabilities is the role of a case officer. Intreo had previously (2016) commenced training of case officers with a blend of internal training and development and commissioned delivery with the National College of Ireland. The NDA advises it would be helpful for the CESIG to have a practical update on this training and on how the post COVID-19 responses of these case officers is being shaped for clients with disabilities. In particular, a key question for the CESIG is how Intreo staff can refer persons with disabilities directly to employment opportunities and/or to the range of individual interventions required, be it supported employment options such as EmployAbility, the Individual Placement and Support model or other further education and training options. The local connections that can be made by Intreo case officer staff can lead to positive outcomes for persons with disabilities wishing to work. Of interest is the capacity of Intreo staff to develop plans with suggested activation measures and identified next steps suitable for the client with a disability to access employment.

Early in 2020 the DSP employer engagement unit presented on their activities to the CESIG. Briefly, these activities included the following:

* Provision of EmployAbility services. There are 3,000 jobseekers availing of the services at any one time (with 24 contracted providers) at various stages on their employment journey. Average placement rates[[38]](#footnote-38) into employment, across all providers is in the order of 40%;
* Continuation of the Youth Employer Support Scheme (YESS) with 19 out of 713 participants in receipt of a disability related payment.

The NDA notes the limited participation of young people in receipt of a disability payment in the YESS and recommends that consideration be given to how the scheme may be adapted to improve access for young people with disabilities, such as more flexibility in the hours of work required to participate. While YESS is one option as discussed in previous assessments DSP funding of the WAM programme has created opportunities for work experience in both the public and private sectors – in particular supporting graduates with disabilities in their transition from third level into the world of work.

### Review of existing protocols

For Intreo Case officers to support job seekers with disabilities they require a knowledge of local FET, higher education and other education and training avenues. The current CES action plan requests a closer referral mechanisms between Intreo and their local ETB, HSE and NCSE offerings. This action requires a review of existing protocols between DSP and relevant departments and agencies and, if necessary, the development and implementation of new protocols with the range of state-funded disability service providers to work in partnership with Intreo offices.

It is also worth noting that as DSP develops further measures to support persons with disabilities wishing to work, it will be important for the department to develop plans that provide for long-term sustainability for programmes that have demonstrated their efficacy such as the IPS programme or the Ability projects.

### Seamless pathways for those with high support needs

Collaborative working across government is necessary to ensure that the CES is delivered. In the first three year action plan (2015 to 2018) an interdepartmental working group was established to progress action 5.1. This action is:

To work together to develop an effective co-ordinated policy approach (and draw up an implementation plan based on that approach), to assist individuals with disabilities, including those who require a high level of support, to obtain and retain employment having due regard to the implementation of New Directions.

The report from this group describes the steps necessary to develop a coordinated approach to the provision of employment supports while recommending the introduction of a national supported employment programme. This recommendation echoes an OECD report that showed ‘unequivocal evidence’ of the effectiveness of supported employment in helping persons with disabilities gain and retain work. [[39]](#footnote-39) The working group report set out an agreed policy approach and an implementation plan was delivered to the Minister in Q1 2018. However, this action has not proceeded to an implementation phase. While the development of the policy by the working group illustrated that cross-departmental work is achievable[[40]](#footnote-40), a further impetus at senior official level in the relevant government agencies is necessary to ensure implementation of this intrinsic part of the CES.

### Enhancing pathway to work through Early Engagement

It is estimated that approximately one in every four students in the Irish education system has special educational or learning needs.[[41]](#footnote-41) This figure includes students with a wide range of disabilities and/or differing levels of need, and in different settings on the continuum of provision: mainstream classes, special classes in mainstream schools; and special schools. There were over 370,000 pupils enrolled in post-primary schools at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year (Department of Education and Skills, 2019).  Based on a 1:4 ratio, over 90,000 of these pupils have some form of special educational or learning need. In addition, there are approximately 8,000 students in special schools. Many students in these schools, who are approaching school-leaving age, will require an early engagement process to ensure that a post school life is one that involves education training and support.

As part of the 2017 Make Work Pay (MWP) report, DSP committed to developing a process that will invite young people (the MWP report identified those in the age group 18 – 22 yrs) to engage with the public employment service. This process is referred to as early engagement. To inform what this engagement process will look like, a unique consultation process was undertaken in 2018, although the results of same have not yet been published.

The NDA recommends that DSP could take learnings from some of its existing initiatives and expand them nationwide in order to develop a useful and effective early engagement process. Such as its third annual Progressive Pathways event in Tralee Co Kerry in Jan 2020 which was a collaborative exercise between the DSP regional Intreo office and it’s contracted local EmployAbility service provider. The day was proactively promoted to young persons with disabilities from across the region and provided information on post-school options in FET. Over300 people attended the panel discussion, with representation from both mainstream and special education students, parents and teachers.

### Review of the reasonable accommodation fund

The DSP have committed to reviewing the operation of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund. This review should outline what new measures will be implemented to ensure that the financial supports to employers, which are necessary to retain and recruit persons with a disability, will improve its delivery and effectiveness. Employers have described their experience of the funding package as one that is administratively burdensome i.e. obtaining quotes for purchases and the delay in receiving the funds. Innovative funding measures that could improve the fund were shared with the DEASP from the Employer Disability Information Service in 2018. The CESIG would benefit from a DSP presentation on the emerging recommendations from this review and whether employers were consulted on these recommendations, as the review is intended to identify ways to improve delivery and effectiveness and therefore improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

### Vocational rehabilitation

From the outset the CES has emphasised the importance of action to reduce the outflow from employment after onset of a disability and to encourage re-entry of those who have already left the workforce. It is recognised that age, education, and degree of illness or incapacity means that some of those who acquire a disability during their working life will leave the workforce permanently. The NDA has previously articulated the need for identifying ways of increasing the numbers who remain at or re-enter work.[[42]](#footnote-42) As mentioned earlier, through the work of the Employer Disability Information Service (2015 to 2019), we know that there is a lack of awareness amongst employers of supports available to assist the return to work of employees, and lack of provision of specific supports such as occupational health expertise and guidance on relevant supporting technologies.

In preparing its draft policy advice paper on vocational rehabilitation, the NDA recognised that an effective integrated system of vocational rehabilitation would support greater numbers of persons with acquired disabilities or long term health conditions to remain in employment or to return to work, and contribute to increased numbers of persons with disabilities in employment. It is proposed in this advice that a system of vocational rehabilitation would effectively culminate with a decision regarding the possibility of a return to work and the steps involved to support that return to work or the progression to a disability pension. A draft of this policy advice was shared with the CESIG during 2020 and will be finalised following targeted consultation with persons with disabilities as outlined below.

From the evidence gathered by the NDA, case management has been identified as the best collaborative process to coordinate the elements necessary for a return to work after acquiring a disability. Case management, awareness of options, and clarity around who is responsible for supporting the person back to work are two important mechanisms that can ensure the process of return to work operates in a synchronised manner. Case management is a collaborative process, including advocacy, communication and service coordination.[[43]](#footnote-43)

The NDA is currently advancing the completion of this advice paper with focused consultation with persons with an acquired disability and or long term health conditions about supports for employment, in order to understand people's views and experiences in relation to the proposed pathway outlined in the vocational rehabilitation policy paper. Once complete there will need to be a discussion on implementation of a vocational rehabilitation plan and a decision around which government departments and public bodies would be involved in delivery of same, including which should take the lead.

### Return to work post pandemic

A partial indication of the number of people requiring supports to work is reflected in the numbers of people who are in receipt of Disability Allowance or Illness Benefit. The Disability Consultative Forum hosted by the DSP reported that;

In Oct 2020, there were **151,902** people in receipt of **Disability Allowance[[44]](#footnote-44)** .This is just over 4% increase on the end of October 2019 figure of 145,544. Of interest is the number of applications received by the end of October 2020, which was 17,404.

However, these figures do not represent other persons with disabilities and are on Job-Seeker Allowance, or similar benefits such as the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment[[45]](#footnote-45) or the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme, which was replaced by the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme on the first of September 2020.[[46]](#footnote-46) While some people are likely to return to their original jobs following the end of COVID-19 restrictions, others are likely to transition to Job-Seekers Allowance.

Case management is not just important as part of the vocational rehabilitation pathway. It is through effective case management that persons with disabilities who have lost their jobs or been furloughed during the COVID-19 pandemic will be successfully supported back to work. The Scottish Government aims to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities to 50% by 2023 and 60% by 2030 using a case management approach. To do this they have funded Supported Employment staff across Scotland to gain the National Institute of Disability Management and Research qualification for the Certified Disability Management Professional. The NDA advises there may be learning for the Irish system from the Scottish experience.

People with newly diagnosed mental health conditions will be amongst those that will need to access mainstream employment supports. The National University of Ireland, Maynooth, in their publication the ‘High Road Back to Work’[[47]](#footnote-47) state that responding to the needs of the post COVID-19 labour force and re-igniting the economy will require a careful strategy. Businesses will have learned much about remote[[48]](#footnote-48) and flexible working during 2020 and these options should support more persons with disabilities into the labour market.

## Theme 3: Engaging employers

Successfully engaging employers is critical to raising the numbers of persons with disabilities in employment. While the role of the government in employer engagement is currently through the public employment service[[49]](#footnote-49), increasing employer awareness of supports and the abilities of staff with disabilities requires a persistent effort. Also relevant is how the State supports employers and connects with them in relation to supporting access to jobs seekers. Between 2015 and 2019 the NDA funded and oversaw the Employers Disability Information (EDI) Service which was evaluated in 2017 by the UK Business Disability Forum. The evaluation noted that employers still needed support and in particular specific ‘know how’ on targeted recruitment, reasonable accommodation and access to employer grants. In particular, the review highlighted the need for employer ‘peer to peer support’.

In December 2020, DCEDIY agreed a programme of work with the Open Doors Initiative (ODI) to create a successor to the EDI and to build on the learning from that initiative. ODI will develop an employer awareness programme and provide a dedicated helpline giving advice and information to employers about recruiting and employing persons with disabilities. Similar to EDI this initiative will host a central web-based information resource incorporating guidance and a FAQ section. The new service will also:

* Provide and participate in awareness raising and outreach activities
* Maintain links with employer stakeholders and disability stakeholders
* Promote the positive business case for the employment of persons with disabilities.

In response to the pandemic Ibec, the employers and business organisation, stated that the pre-crisis work on addressing structural challenges in the labour market facing persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups had identified the necessity of tailored solutions. Such solutions would help to avoid further distancing cohorts that may be even more marginalised by the crisis given their additional challenges (e.g. persons with disabilities, lone parents etc.[[50]](#footnote-50))

Throughout 2020, steady progress was made on a number of employer-led initiatives aimed at increasing employer awareness of the potential of employees with disabilities. Outlined below are actions that have the potential to have a long-term impact on employer engagement:

* With funding from the NDA four partner organisations, Not So Different, Walk, [Rehab Group](https://www.irishtimes.com/special-reports/careers-2021/employers-urged-to-tackle-low-recruitment-of-people-with-disabilities-1.4433268) and AsIAm, created an online training programme to support employers in becoming “disability confident”. Research has often identified that employer’s lack confidence in the areas of inclusive recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities. Anecdotally some employers have said that they often make no decision on recruitment rather than make the wrong decision. Through five modules in this new training programme, employers access a broad range of practical information and strategies. Topics explored include how to reach persons with disabilities in recruitment campaigns, how to run inclusive and equitable interview processes, how to discuss disability with a candidate or employee and how small adjustments to the workplace environment can make a difference for an employee with a disability. This tool was piloted by a number of employers in the public and private sectors and was launched at the end of 2020.
* In mid-2020 the NDA commenced a project with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This project is primarily focused on developing a better understanding of the needs of employers in Ireland and what government can do in engaging with employers to employ persons with disabilities. The project will be completed in 2021 and will report on international examples of good practice and policy which could be applied in an Irish context regarding effectively engaging employers.
* During 2020, DPER made further progress on actions to identify and develop the provision of permanent pathways into the civil service for graduates of the Oireachtas Work Learning (OWL) Programme and the DSP commissioned Willing Able and Mentoring (WAM) Programme[[51]](#footnote-51) (DSP contracts for the provision of the WAM and Getahead programmes to support graduates with disabilities in making their transition into employment). DPER with support from the Public Appointment Service engaged with stakeholders to create a pathway (at Clerical Officer Level) for OWL graduates to compete for permanent roles through confined competitions. The NDA welcomes the development of such a pathway and the creation of an alternative entry route to the Irish Civil Service. Through a presentation to the CESIG, DPER in conjunction with AHEAD and the Public Appointments Service advised of plans to progress engagement with stakeholders to put in place a similar permanent pathway for graduates of DSPs WAM Programme who successfully complete their Civil Service work placements. The NDA recognises that these initiatives will be part of a wider review by DPER of introducing an expanded range of internships / apprenticeships in general within the Civil Service as an action under the Civil Service People Strategy for 2021-2023, but welcomes the developments as being particularly relevant and helpful to persons with disabilities.

### Increasing employment targets for the public sector

The Disability Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (2016), which lapsed at the end of the previous Dail session, proposed increasing the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities in the public service from the current 3% to a proposed minimum statutory employment target of 6% by 2024. The NDA looks forward to seeing this underpinning legislation for Government’s commitment in this regard passed at the earliest opportunity.[[52]](#footnote-52) The NDA reports annually on compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act and advises that the public sector as a whole has achieved the 3% minimum since 2010.

The most recently published statutory report from the NDA on compliance refers to 2018, which was submitted to the Minister in November 2019.[[53]](#footnote-53) At the end of 2018, 7,585 **(3.3%)** employees working in the public sector reported a disability. Within the civil service there were 990 employees who reported a disability (4.7%). All Government Departments exceeded the minimum 3% target for 2018 - the seventh successive year that the target was exceeded by all departments.

Significant work is required across the public service to achieve the 6% target by 2024. During 2020 the NDA continued to work with public bodies that were experiencing challenges in meeting the minimum 3% target. This support provided public bodies with assistance to develop programmes of work to create more equitable, diverse and inclusive work cultures and in turn to improve their level of compliance with Part 5 and to improve the quality of their Part 5 returns. Since June 2020, the NDA has initiated and engaged with a designated team that has been appointed in the HSE to focus on improving this public body’s compliance with Part 5. This collaborative approach led to the development of a unique action plan that included in 2020 a joint workshop with the UKs National Health Service Workforce Disability Equality Standard.[[54]](#footnote-54)

In addition to the above, the NDA conducted a review of the operation of Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005. This review described both data and transferable learning that is available across the public sector. This review also served as source material for an NDA 2020 paper that outlines recommendations for implementation over a three-year timeframe for improving the Part 5 monitoring process, and providing guidance to public bodies to support them reaching the increased target of 6%.[[55]](#footnote-55)

## Theme 4: Public Transport

The NTA’s Dec 2020 update described very clearly how COVID-19 caused ‘…a profound and swift shock to the public transport sector’. This was highlighted by the immediate drop in passenger numbers across all forms of public transport by approximately 90% of normal levels. Public transport continued as it was designated as an “essential service”. This designation recognised the importance of keeping the system running especially for carrying essential workers and other passengers making necessary journeys throughout the crisis period.

During 2020, while transport provision continued, work stopped in other sectors such as construction due to COVID-19 restrictions and this had an impact on some commitments within the CES relevant to transport provision. In brief there were some delays in accessing materials necessary to improve or build, for example, footbridges and lifts, due to supply chain issues and the increased cost of steel. Construction delays impacted on the timeline of the wheelchair accessible bus stops.

Despite, delays due to Covid,

* new footbridges and lifts were completed in two railway stations and construction started in another station.
* Construction also started in Conolly Station for a Changing Place.
* There were lifts replaced in 8 stations and lifts renovated in 4 stations. A lift/call system were installed in 12 stations to prevent further vandalism.
* Accessible bus bays were constructed in four bus stations and 11 other bus stops despite delays due to Covid.

Accessibility Audits were also carried out in 18 Bus Stations nationally.

The NTA implemented specific measures to assist persons with disabilities including floor stickers on buses and coaches to highlight that the free priority seats are for those people who need them. Luas has had Customer Assurance Officers in Pink High Visibility vests on the platforms and trams to assist all passengers. If Luas is contacted they can arrange assistance for people, keeping in line with public health guidance. While these measures are to be welcomed there is the need to conduct a disability impact assessment on the BusConnects programme including the Core Bus Corridor proposal.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Noting that restrictions on capacity of public transport are likely to continue for some time yet, this is an opportune time for NTA to develop robust consultation measures with persons with disabilities. Figure 1 below depicts the range of needs relevant to disability that public transport must be able to cater for and illustrates why NTA needs to continue meaningful consultation with diverse groups of persons with disabilities, including through their representative bodies, to ensure that their public transport services are available and accessible and met the needs of these customers.

**Figure 1: Means of public transport to work by disability type 2011and 2016[[57]](#footnote-57)**

Achieving this level of consultation with a diverse range of users, who require integrated universally designed public and private transport services in urban and rural areas which are easy to access, understand and use by everyone, regardless of age, size ability or disability is challenging. The NDA recommends that the Department and the NTA refer to the [European standard I.S. EN 17161:2019 ‘Design for All - Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services - Extending the range of users’](http://universaldesign.ie/News-events/News/Launch-of-a-new-standard-on-design-for-accessibility.html). This standard was developed to continuously improve and manage the accessibility and usability of the products and services.[[58]](#footnote-58) Consultation with persons with disabilities through their representative organisations will also be important with respect to realisation of the goals of UNCRPD.

**Conclusion**

This report acknowledges the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of persons with disabilities and on those who provide support services in the context of employment. Through this paper the NDA has indicated some areas of progress in relation to the goals of the CES during 2020, and has also highlighted key areas that require further action in order to achieve the aims of the Strategy. The NDA advises that priority areas for consideration during 2021 include the following:

* Recognising that as 2021 is the final year of the second three year action plan, it is necessary that a third action plan is finalised and published by year end
* Through Intreo, developing a return to work approach for people with disabilities who have lost their jobs through as a consequences of the pandemic
* Addressing the slow progress on actions relating to transition planning across the strategy
* Addressing the lack of progress on the provision of Career Guidance for learners with disabilities in special and mainstream school settings
* Addressing implementation of the agreed policy under CES action 5.1
* Extracting learning from the Ability Projects and sharing that information across the system, therefore ensuring that the learning from these projects is mainstreamed
* Publishing the details of the DSP early engagement implementation plan and process
* Implementing the recommendations emanating from the review of the reasonable accommodation fund
* Conducting a full review of the Make Work Pay actions
* Putting in place actionable measures to achieve the increased target of 6% of persons employed in the public service by the agreed date of 2024

As in any other year there is an urgent need to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the correct information about their entitlements to supports whether welfare, education, health or employment. Online and virtual supports must be supported with other accessible options. A unified communications strategy is necessary across the system; one that supports a swift return to work for those who have lost their job in 2020 or who wish to access employment for the first time.

Finally it is important that persons with disabilities can have their voice heard in relation to any developments being planned or implemented on issues relevant to their lives and in the measures across government to ‘build back better’, post COVID-19. In this regard, the NDA advises the importance of meaningful engagement with persons with disabilities, including through their representative bodies, as activity is progressed.

1. [NDA Factsheet 4: Retaining people with a disability in the workforce](http://nda.ie/Resources/Factsheets/NDA-Factsheet-4-Retaining-people-with-a-disability-in-the-workforce/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://nda.ie/publications/employment/employment-publications/indicators-for-monitoring-progress-under-the-comprehensive-employment-strategy-for-persons-with-disabilities-2015-2024.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/lr/liveregisterdecember2020/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. CSO (2020) Employment and live effects of COVID-19 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elec19/employmentandlifeeffectsofcovid-19/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NDA’s submission to the Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 Response on the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities and the disability sector (June 2020) <http://nda.ie/publications/health/covid-19/nda-submissions-to-the-oireachtas-special-committee-on-covid-19-response.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ibid page 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (2019) Remote work in Ireland. Future Jobs 2019 <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Remote-Work-in-Ireland.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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10. The Regional Enterprise Strategy 2020

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11. WHO Substantial investment needed to avert mental health crisis

    https://www.who.int/news/item/14-05-2020-substantial-investment-needed-to-avert-mental-health-crisis [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ### Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 - 2025

    file:///H:/Downloads/46557\_bf7011904ede4562b925f98b15c4f1b5.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Indicators for Monitoring Progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2024

    http://nda.ie/publications/employment/employment-publications/ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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15. Gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Figures reported at the Departmental Consultative Forum (DCF) meeting Nov 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Earnings disregard means that some earnings from work are not taken into account in the assessment of your means and do not affect your payment. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Figures reported at a DSP update to CESIG Dec 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The Fidelity review ensures that the IPS model operated in each CHO is authentic to the 8 principles of IPS. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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26. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/how-parliament-is-run/houses-of-the-oireachtas-service/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/owl-programme/> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Guide to Promoting Inclusive Employment: Supporting People with an Intellectual Disability <https://www.publicjobs.ie/documents/OWLProgrammeGuidetoSupportingInclusiveEmployment.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Quality Matters have conducted a mid-term evaluation, publication due in 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
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    <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20174016/pdf/20174016.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Page 16 Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities 2015 to 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. HSE update CESIG Dec 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. UK Departments of Education and Health (2015) Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
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36. SOLAS (2020) Further Education and Training (FET) Progression to Higher Education (HE) Transitions Reform Working Paper <http://www.transition.ie/files/2020/des-transitions-sub-group-working-paper-june-2020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
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38. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
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42. <http://nda.ie/Policy-and-research/Policy-Advice/Policy-Advice-Papers/Technical-paper-on-Employment-Targets.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Rosenthal D et al., (2005) Case Management Issues within Employer-Based Disability Management’, in Chan F et al., (Eds.), Case Management for Rehabilitation Health Professionals (2nd Ed.), Vol. l, pp. 330-365. Lake Osage – MO, US: Aspen Professional Services. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. On average, it is taking 5 weeks to award new DA claims. This is a significant improvement since 2019 when it was taking 13 weeks. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. COVID-19 (PUP) is a social welfare payment for employees and self-employed people who have lost all their employment due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. The CSO has not yet disseminated EWSS data but will work with the Revenue Commissioners to make this available to users as soon as possible [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. High Road’ Back to Work:  Developing a Public Employment Eco System for a Post-Covid Recovery

    <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341940981_The_High_Road_Back_to_Work_Developing_a_Public_Employment_Eco_System_for_a_Post-Covid_Recovery> [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Making Remote Work. National Remote Working Strategy, 2021 <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Making-Remote-Work.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. The States PES is managed by DSP and is delivered through its nationwide network of Intreo centres and through contractors delivering Employability, Local Employment (LES) and Jobpath services on its behalf. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Reboot & Reimagine: Ibec campaign for national recovery and a sustainable economy

    <https://www.ibec.ie/influencing-for-business/ibec-campaigns/reboot-and-reimagine> [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Programme for government 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The Part 5 report for 2019 was submitted to the Minster by the statutory deadline of 30 November 2020. This report will be published later in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. UKs National Health Service Workforce Disability Equality Standard

    <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/wdes/#:~:text=The%20Workforce%20Disability%20Equality%20Standard,and%20publish%20an%20action%20plan>. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. These reports will be published during 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. .A disability impact assessment is an obligatory requirement of all substantive proposals requiring Government approval as stipulated in [The Cabinet Handbook](https://assets.gov.ie/6813/2a580791a7b24decb97a550539a0faff.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Indicators for Monitoring Progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2024, NDA 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The standard is available through the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). [www.standards.ie](http://www.standards.ie/) Email [info@standards.ie](mailto:info@standards.ie).  [↑](#footnote-ref-58)