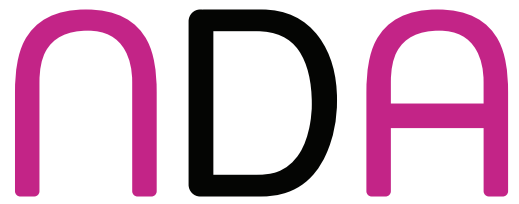


NDA

Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

Annual Report 2020





Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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Chairperson's statement

I am pleased to present the annual report for the National Disability Authority (NDA) for 2020 to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. This report presents an overview of the activities and outputs of the NDA during the second year of our three-year Strategic Plan 2019-2021.

As a statutory body, we continued during 2020 in our commitment to provide independent information and evidence-informed advice to the Government and officials in the public sector on policy and practice relevant to disability. Our vision is an Ireland in which persons with disabilities can realise their civil and political rights; have opportunities to participate in economic, social, and cultural life; have choice and control over how they live their lives; and reach their individual potential in a society and environment that embraces, accommodates and values the full range of human ability and diversity. We recognise that this requires a whole of government approach, involving departments and agencies across government working together, and we continued to work with many of them to this end throughout 2020. Our advice is informed and guided by research, data analysis, and review of good practice, as well as information and learning from the lived experience of persons with disabilities.

2020 was a year that brought sudden and significant change to the world in which we live. In the NDA, the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic meant we needed to quickly adapt the way in which we carry out and deliver our work. The pandemic also had a major impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, particularly in how public health restrictions were applied and felt.

The NDA worked throughout 2020 to highlight some of the issues arising, and to emphasise the importance of ensuring the needs of persons with disabilities were fully considered in the Government's response to the crisis. This advice included highlighting the impact of closure of social care services on the lives of persons with disabilities and their families; the challenges of providing in-person supports within the community in a way that ensured the safety both of individuals with disabilities and those providing assistance; and the significant effects of school closures on young people with disabilities. We advised the importance of ensuring that any activity to restore the economy after the crisis must include consideration of persons with disabilities, as many of those who were in employment worked in sectors particularly vulnerable to the restrictions and closures, and so experienced lay-offs and redundancies.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of ensuring our built environment is safe and accessible for all users, and we have advised public bodies on the importance of consulting with persons with disabilities before shared spaces are altered in response to public health restrictions. We also recognise the importance of ensuring information about services and supports is accessible for everyone, regardless of ability or disability, and welcome the ongoing efforts across the public sector to improve communications and dissemination of information in a range of formats.

The NDA has 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. We look forward to playing our part to capture and document some of the learning from these innovations, and to seeing the outcomes achieved as we move beyond the current crisis.

The year 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the NDA's establishment. On UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we launched a very special "Twenty years is Disability policy" publication which highlighted the extent to which there have been many positive advancements in relation to disability policy and practice over the last 20 years, but also those areas where more remains to be done. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) continued to be a key focus of the NDA's work, and we welcome the commitment on the part of government to developing and implementing a UNCRPD implementation plan, and work to advise and inform same will be a significant part of the NDA's activity for the coming years. We welcome the work progressed to develop Ireland's first State Party Report to the UN Monitoring Committee, and also the establishment of new structures to enhance engagement and consultative processes with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.

2020 brought a General Election and a subsequent reorganisation of a number of Government Departments in June 2020. The NDA welcomed the formation of a new Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), and Minister Roderic O'Gorman's appointment to lead this wide-ranging portfolio. We also welcomed the appointment of Junior Minister with special responsibility for Disability, Anne Rabbitte, as well as other junior ministries in other departments with specific responsibilities relevant to disability. We look forward to working with these ministers and their officials to help progress improvements across the lives of persons with disabilities, but also to seeing each and every government department recognise their own responsibilities to realise the goals of the UNCRPD. During 2020, we delivered a number of research reports and policy advice papers to support these efforts, and you will be able to read more about this work in the body of this report.

Early in 2020, the Government approved a mid-term review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, outlining several new and revised actions to reflect developments since the Strategy was first published. We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic led to unforeseen pressures across many government departments, including the redeployment of staff, and so some activity within the NDIS, and also the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, has been delayed. However, we look forward to renewed progress into 2021, as both these strategies are key mechanisms for realising the aims of the Convention.

We continued our work on Universal Design throughout the year, to promote the design and development of the environment so that it can be easily accessed, understood, and used by all, regardless of age, size, ability or disability. During 2020, we were pleased with the engagement by educational bodies in supporting the further development and embedding of Universal Design in educational courses for those engaged in designing products, services, ICT and the built environment. We also continued to work with industry, standards bodies

and professional bodies, evident from new standards and the standard of award programme participation, displaying awareness of Universal Design and its practical application.

During 2020, we took on new monitoring functions relevant to the EU Web Accessibility Directive and the Irish Sign Language Act (2017). When Ireland transposed the Web Accessibility Directive in September 2020, the NDA was named as the monitoring body for the state, and work is already well underway to establish the structures and methodologies to allow us deliver on this function. Ensuring that public bodies have websites and mobile applications that can be accessed and used by everyone has never been more critical, particularly as so many services and supports needed to be delivered remotely during 2020. We have also agreed to prepare a report on the implementation of the Irish Sign Language (ISL) Act during 2021, and welcome the government's commitment to reviewing the progress in achieving accessibility and inclusivity for those who use ISL as their language of choice when using public services.

The Authority and NDA Staff

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Authority members for their work throughout 2020, particularly as we all got used to meeting and deliberating online. I would also like to thank all the members of our Finance, Audit & Risk, and Director Performance Committees for their input and guidance throughout the year.

Mid-way through the year, our Director of 14 years, Ms Siobhan Barron, reached the end of her contract with the NDA. I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to her expert leadership of the organisation during these years, recognising that the NDA's strong reputation as a trusted advisor is owed in significant part to Siobhan's hard work and dedication in this role. I would like to wish her all the best in the next phase of her career.

We were pleased to appoint our current Director, Dr Aideen Hartney, in July of 2020. Aideen was previously the head of Policy, Research and Public Affairs within the NDA, and has transitioned smoothly into this new role. I look forward to continuing to work closely with her and her senior management team into the next phase of the NDA's development.

Finally, I would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank the NDA staff and management for their continued dedication to the work of the organisation, and their on-going commitment, flexibility and determination to deliver high-quality outputs, in what has been a particularly challenging year. The scope and standard of work delivered is a clear demonstration of the expertise within the organisation, and the importance of our role in informing the development of policy and practice that can make a real difference in the lives of persons with disabilities.



Helen Guinan
Chairperson
National Disability Authority



Overview and policy context

The NDA commenced the second year of its current three-year strategic plan with the following strategic objectives:

- To provide research-informed advice to government to guide the development and implementation of national policies, programmes and strategies relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities;
- To understand and advise on societal changes, challenges and opportunities that impact on the lives of persons with disabilities;
- To promote and monitor the implementation of Codes of Practice, standards, and guidelines in services, and to evaluate policy and practice;
- To continue to build awareness and adoption of Universal Design across society in Ireland; and
- To continue to be an effective and pro-active organisation, committed to delivering on our strategic priorities and communicating our work.

The NDA's work programme for 2020 under each of these strategic priorities supported the development and implementation of national strategies and programmes relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities across many government departments and agencies, and included the delivery of specific project commitments by the NDA itself, including actions to progress Universal Design.

UNCRPD

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities continued to be central to the NDA's work during 2020. We welcome the oversight provided at government level through the new Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability matters, and while we recognise that there is much more to do, the UNCRPD acts now as a central platform for disability policy in the Irish context. The Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016, includes provisions also supportive of advancing the implementation of the Convention, such as a duty for the NDA in providing information and data. However, while it had been hoped that this would proceed and be enacted in 2020, the formation of a new Government during the year has delayed the work. We look forward to the provisions of the Bill being enacted in 2021.

Our annual conference in 2020 made a seamless transition to the online world, and focused on Article 13 of the Convention – Access to Justice. We were delighted with the attendance at this event, and the contributions from a wider range of stakeholders to showcase learning and good practice in ensuring that persons with disabilities can experience equal treatment at every stage of the justice experience. We note the importance of several departments and agencies working together to achieve this aim, and were pleased to be able to highlight so many different perspectives as part of this event.

National Strategies and Policies

We recognise that the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017 – 2021 is intended to advance equality for persons with disabilities in Ireland and that the actions committed therein can assist progress in the implementation of the Convention. We note the ongoing commitment of officials across departments and agencies in 2020 to deliver on the actions within the NDIS as a mechanism for delivery on obligations under the UNCRPD.

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group (NDISSG), which comprises officials from many government departments and agencies, the Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG) and the NDA, is chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Disability Issues. The group continues to work to monitor and support the implementation of the Strategy. The NDA acts to independently assess progress on outputs under the strategy and to analyse data sources to assist in measuring impact.

In 2020, the NDA published its independent assessment of progress in the implementation of actions for the year 2019, informed by consideration of reports from departments, as well as information and evidence gathered by the NDA in the course of its membership of working groups and departmental consultative committees, and regular engagement with persons with disabilities both through these committees and in other areas of its work-programme. In addition, the NDA prepared an NDIS Indicator Report which provided a mid-term analysis of progress under the NDIS measured through a suite of indicators developed for this purpose. The NDA commenced data gathering at the end of 2019 and into 2020, and the report was presented to the NDIS Steering Group in May 2020. It offers a mid-term snapshot of what has been achieved to date under the Strategy, highlighting areas for further focus in the remaining lifetime of the NDIS.

The NDA continued in its role to provide advice and information to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (2015-2024) and the second three-year action plan under the Strategy which runs to the end of 2021. As with the NDIS, the NDA delivered its annual independent assessment of progress under the CES in the preceding year, and conducted a similar mid-term review of progress against a suite of agreed indicators.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Ireland continues to have one of the widest employment gaps in Europe for persons with disabilities, and the public health restrictions required to address the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated this inequality. However, the pandemic has also highlighted the opportunities presented by remote working, and it will be important for employers to maximise these opportunities as we move beyond the pandemic.

Recognising the importance of supporting employers to recruit and retain persons with disabilities, the NDA began a joint research programme with the OECD in 2020, specifically on employer engagement. The purpose of the collaboration is to inform and shape a strategic plan of action to enhance the employer's role in supporting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and it is expected that the final report of this project will be delivered in late 2021.

We also continued our work to monitor the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service, noting that despite an overall increase in the total number of employees in the public sector, the overall numbers of staff reporting a disability decreased in 2019. As a result, the percentage of employees reporting a disability decreased from 3.3% in 2018 to 3.1% in 2019. While many individual government departments and public bodies have exceeded the target, we have continued to encourage and advise others to develop plans of action to reach and exceed the target, by creating inclusive workplaces and working to attract and retain staff with disabilities. This will be especially important as a minimum target of 6% will be required by 2024.

Transforming Lives

Through research, advice and supporting the development of standards and frameworks, the NDA continued to support the initiatives designed to transform disability services to achieve an individualised and tailored approach to supports for persons with disabilities to live lives of their choosing. In 2020, we finalised the fieldwork on the “Moving In, Moving On” study, involving an evaluation of costs and benefits of new, community-based models of service in comparison to traditional institutionalised service provision. We also conducted research with service provider staff members to gather information and experiences to inform future planning for the on-going process to transition to community models of service. Both reports will be published during 2021. We also inputted to a HSE Working Group to guide the implementation of the National Framework for person-centred planning in disability services. We look forward to further progress in 2021, recognising that COVID-19 has had an impact on the rate of progress to date.

Personalised Budgets

Following the publication of the report of the Task Force on Personalised Budgets in 2018, the NDA continued to work during 2020 to advise the Department of Health and the HSE on the design and approach to the evaluation of demonstration projects. While work continued on the Demonstration Projects in 2020, progress was slower than anticipated, and was particularly impacted by COVID-19. The NDA participated as an independent advisory body on the Oversight Group for the demonstration projects along with officials. The NDA is leading on the evaluation element of the work, which in 2020 involved overseeing the procurement of an independent evaluation team and commencing to seek ethical approval for the evaluation. We look forward to renewed progress in 2021, and to capturing the learning from this significant initiative.

Universal Design

Our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design’s (CEUD) work includes influencing standards at national and international level. During 2020, CEUD contributed to the development of a number of standards, some of which arose in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were particularly pleased to see the new Irish Standard, I.S. SWiFT-19:2020 “Barrier Masks for Consumers – Requirements” approved during 2020. The CEUD contributed to the development of this standard and advised on the need to integrate Universal Design regarding the needs of a diverse range of users, including persons with disabilities. The NDA also joined CEN-CENELEC TC 248 WG38 on a standards project to develop a European Technical Specification (TS) regarding the requirements for Community Face Coverings which is expected to be published in 2021.

Other standards work during 2020 included contributing to the European standard “Transport Services – Customer communications for passenger transport services – A Universal Design approach”; participating in the NSAI Working Group on a draft standard in support of European accessibility requirements for public procurement in the built environment- prCEN/TR 17210:2020 Accessibility and usability of the built environment – Technical performance criteria and specifications; contributing to the development of international standards on Innovation Management as part of NSAI Technical Committee TC 45; and representing the NDA as a member of a European committee on Accessibility for mainstream products and services for Independent Living technologies.

CEUD ran another very successful Universal Design Grand Challenge online in November 2020 which saw the highest number of entries received since the Grand Challenge was first run, and an impressive breadth of designs across three categories which include the built environment, products, and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

CEUD also continued its partnership project with Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) and Dublin City Council (DCC) whereby a Universal Design module was delivered in primary schools as part of the Power of Design Programme. Work during 2020 involved revisions to the rollout of the programme, with a successful pilot trial of virtual delivery completed during the year, in response to COVID-19.

We also sought to commission research and to develop high level Universal Design guidelines on the retrofit of existing long-term residential care settings for older people in Ireland. The work will examine how the built environment in these settings can be adapted and retrofitted from a Universal Design approach to enhance quality of life for residents and improve pandemic preparedness and resilience while still protecting the psychosocial health and well-being of residents and staff. We look forward to the publication of these guidelines during 2021.

COVID-19

As with many other organisations in the public sector, the COVID-19 pandemic shaped much of our work in 2020, as the impact of the crisis was particularly felt by persons with disabilities, and is likely to last for some time to come, even as our society and economy move into a recovery phase. Areas of concern during this period included access to services and education for persons with disabilities. The NDA made a number of submissions during 2020 to Ministers and Joint Oireachtas Committees on these issues, including those related to non-COVID healthcare, education and the wider vaccination programme, noting in particular, that the COVID-19 experience has underlined the importance of long-term health and social care planning and the need to accelerate progress across a range of areas. We have also advised other public bodies of the importance of ensuring persons with disabilities are included in consultation and decision-making with regard to interventions in the physical environment and how to make this safe and accessible for all.

We have seen evidence of positive outcomes in some areas, including innovations in the delivery of services and supports. The NDA will continue to advise on the importance of ensuring persons with disabilities are included in any recovery, and in particular to emphasise the necessity of robust data and information in relation to disability as a route to highlighting areas for focus and attention.

2020 Deliverables:

In light of these policy developments at national level, the NDA work-plan for 2020 included the following key achievements, as well as many others, with further detail set out in the following pages:

- Delivery of a report on progress in implementing the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) to end of 2019 and delivery of a report on progress against an agreed suite of indicators for monitoring high level outcomes related to NDIS;
- Delivery of an independent assessment of progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) to end of 2019 and delivery of a report on progress against agreed suite of indicators for monitoring high level outcomes related to CES;
- Completion of grant funded online disability awareness training modules for employers;
- Delivery of a successful Annual Conference on the subject of Access to Justice, a critical Article of UNCRPD, hosted online in its entirety;
- Delivery of reports through the Research Promotion Grant Scheme 2019 on disability and homelessness;
- Continuation of a programme of partnership with OECD to explore effective approaches to employer engagement to guide implementation at government level in Ireland;
- Continuation of a partnership programme with the ESRI to analyse data and information relevant to employment of persons with disabilities, and approaches to provision of personal assistance, with a literature review published in 2020;
- Delivery of advice to the Minister on the provision of after-school care for children with disabilities;
- Ongoing advice to the Department of Health and HSE regarding the design and development of demonstration projects to test approaches to the rollout of personalised budgets for persons with disabilities;
- Delivery of advice and input on Universal Design in the development of the National Standards Authority of Ireland's SWiFT standard (SWiFT 19:2020+AC1:2020) on face coverings in light of Covid-19;
- Delivery of advice and input on a New EU Standard in Transport Services – Customer communications for passenger transport services – A Universal Design approach;
- Development and dissemination of guidance for accessible online meetings, in light of remote working due to COVID-19;
- Development of adapted Power of Design modules for delivery in primary schools in light of COVID-19;
- Scoping and trialling of a national pilot monitoring system for public transport and indicators development (Part 3 Disability Act);
- Development of a statutory annual report on employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector in 2019;
- Delivery of an organisation-wide Communications Strategy & associated protocols;
- Development and implementation of a public sector duty plan for the organisation;
- Delivery of work place wellness programme, delivered remotely during 2020.

Strategic Priority 1



Strategic Priority 1:

“To provide research-informed advice to government to guide the development and implementation of national policies, programmes and strategies relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities”

Conduct research to inform and guide the development of policy and practice and to support the implementation of key national strategies and policies

Transforming Lives – Moving In Study

The “Moving In Moving On” study is a major programme of evaluation of the costs and quality of life of new, community-based models of service in comparison to traditional institutionalised service provision.

In early 2020 interviews were completed with 426 persons with a disability interviewed. Interviewees included adults with a wide variety of disabilities accessing a range of different support services. The interviews included an assessment of participants’ support needs and, an evaluation of costs and outcomes.

This project included a before-and-after evaluation of participants living in congregated settings to identify the benefits of decongregation. The profile of these participants was that they typically had high support needs. Findings from the 91 participants that had a before-and-after interview found that none of the agreed nine outcomes were being met when participants were living in congregated settings but following the move to the community two outcomes were being met, six were being partially met and it was not possible to measure one outcome.

The second part of the study interviewed 280 people from across 43 locations and 33 service providers. A range of support services were covered. Overall, the heterogeneity of this group of participants and the range of living circumstances encountered precluded a similar tracking of outcomes between old and new models of service. It was clear however, that positive outcomes are more likely to be achieved where supports are delivered in a tailored and person-centred way, which is not generally compatible with institutional or congregated living.

The Phase 2 findings also show other factors that can impede an individual’s capacity to achieve positive outcomes, including experiencing pain, not being able to choose the people they live with, or not liking the people they live with.

It was initially intended for this study to directly compare the costs to the State of providing supports to individuals with disabilities in congregated settings to the costs of delivering supports in newer models of service – i.e. in homes dispersed throughout the community. However, the lack of a standardised approach to costing supports across disability service providers, and the absence of standardised approach to resource allocation by the funder – the HSE – meant that this linear ‘before and after’ comparison was challenging to achieve.

It is intended therefore that in early 2021, some additional work will be done on the cost component of the study before the study is finalised and published.

The NDA is also a member of a sub-group of the HSE’s Time to Move On implementation group, which monitors progress in the transition from congregated settings to community settings. The NDA provided input and advice on the communications protocols necessary to enhance the experiences of people with disabilities, their families and service providers throughout the process.

Transforming Lives – Staffing Project

The NDA analysed the data collected from interviews with 37 participants in 2019 on the experiences of staff and managers who transitioned from an ‘old’ model to a ‘new’ model of HSE funded residential disability during 2020. The purpose of this research was to gather information to inform future planning for the on-going process to transition to community models of service. A number of key themes have emerged from the analysis including organisational culture and values, person-centredness, building buy-in to transitions, skill mix and new roles and responsibilities, and wider system and policy issues.

The NDA looks forward to publishing the report on this research in early 2021. Feedback from the HSE was sought and the NDA have agreed to work with the HSE on a series of effective practice documents to share and disseminate the findings of the report to disability residential service managers.

A poster and an oral presentation on some of the preliminary findings of the study were made at the Trinity Health and Education International Research Conference in March 2020.

Transforming lives - Respite Study

A study on users’ perspectives of respite care conducted by Ace Communication in 2019 was followed up in 2020 by a peer-reviewed publication. ACE Communication were supported to develop a manuscript which was peer-reviewed and subsequently published by the British Journal of Learning Disability. The study ‘Person-centred respite supports: The perspectives of adults with intellectual disabilities in Ireland’ was published in October 2020 and is open access and therefore freely available to all.

Personalised Budgets

The report of the Task Force on Personalised Budgets, published in July 2018, recommended that the Department of Health and the HSE establish demonstration projects to test the delivery of personalised budgets, with a view to identifying the best approach to the wider roll-out of personalised budget in an Irish context.

In 2019, the HSE sought expressions of interest from individuals to participate in the demonstration projects. The demonstration projects were to be run in two phases over a two-year period, with 90 adults taking part in each phase. The Department of Health requested the NDA to manage the evaluation of the Demonstration Projects.

In early 2020, the HSE began to recruit participants but had to pause recruitment once COVID-19 restrictions came into place. While work has continued on the Demonstration

Projects in 2020, recruitment of participants has been slow for a number of reasons, and was particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NDA completed a tender evaluation process to recruit an independent evaluation team and at the end of 2020 commenced the process to seek ethical approval for the evaluation. The evaluation will consider several elements, including the process of administering personalised budgets as it is rolled out, the outcomes for individuals and the system, and considerations regarding financial sustainability.

Equality Budgeting

The NDA continues to input to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Equality Budgeting Expert Advisory Group with the aim of advancing the concept of equality budgeting in an Irish context. There were fewer meetings of this group during 2020 due to COVID 19 but a number of strands of activity were progressed, including development of an Equality Data Hub led the CSO and consideration of a number of challenges in the collection and use of robust equality data. The NDA was pleased to provide information and input to the process to develop the data hub, and will continue to work with the Expert Advisory Group throughout 2021 to highlight relevant data sources and policy developments relevant to disability budgeting.

Research Promotion Scheme (RPS)

In December 2020, the NDA hosted a webinar launching the outputs of two research projects funded through the 2019 Research Promotion Scheme, which was themed 'Persons with disabilities experiencing homelessness'. The webinar was opened by Peter Burke, TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning.

The first study was conducted by the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability in conjunction with the Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services. The title of this study was 'The experience and risk of homelessness for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism and their families in Dublin. A mixed methods study'.

This study explored the experiences of a small number of persons with Intellectual Disability (ID) and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in the Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services in one area of Dublin. Participants highlighted socioeconomic factors such as an over-reliance on social welfare and poor literacy as factors contributing to the experience of homelessness. A lack of understanding of the needs of persons with an ID and/or ASD often resulted in people with these disabilities living in substandard accommodation. The study found an over-reliance on the private rental market among study participants. The study concluded that emergency accommodation is particularly challenging for families who have a child with an ID and/or ASD and illustrates that homeless services such as hostels are unsuitable for this population group.

The second study was conducted by the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health in Dublin City University in collaboration with the Dublin Simon Community. This study was entitled 'Adult Autism in Homelessness: Prevalence, Experiences and Support Needs in an Irish Context- A Mixed Methods Study'.

This study was a first attempt in Ireland to establish the prevalence of autism among people using homeless services. The study estimated the prevalence of autistic traits among a Dublin-based homeless population of 106 adults as 2.8% increasing to 9.4% when possible autistic traits are also considered. A small number of persons with autism who were experiencing or had experienced homelessness spoke about their adverse childhood experiences and also expressed their distress at not being diagnosed or supported to understand their ASD. They spoke about challenges in accessing appropriate homeless services that recognised their individual support needs. The study also found that adults with autism are at high risk of poor outcomes, such as social isolation, discrimination and victimisation and that they have difficulties attaining and maintaining employment, housing and independent living. Skills gaps and a need for training were identified as challenges among key worker staff.

HSE Working Group to guide implementation of the National Framework for Person-centred planning in Disability Services

The HSE carried out a demonstration project in 2019 of the implementation of the national framework for person-centred planning, with five disability service providers. The report on the demonstration project contains a range of recommendations for a national roll-out of the framework, including learning and development for the person who owns the plan, families and staff. The HSE set up a working group to address the recommendations from the demonstration project report. The NDA is represented on this group.

Work has progressed to address the recommendations from the demonstration project, and the NDA looks forward to further progress in 2021, recognising that COVID-19 has had an impact on the rate of progress to date.

Establishment of Working Group on Transport Supports for Persons with Disabilities – Action 104 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS)

The NDA participated in the first meeting of this cross-departmental group held in March 2020. As detailed in Action 104 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS), the objective of this group is to lead a review of transport supports encompassing all Government-funded transport and mobility schemes for people with disabilities. This is being done in order to enhance the options for transport to work or employment supports for people with disabilities and will develop proposals for development of a coordinated plan for such provision. This plan will have regard to making the most efficient use of available transport resources. The NDA provided feedback on the terms of reference for the group. Follow on meetings were impacted by COVID-19 in 2020, but the NDA understands that they are expected to resume in 2021.

Statements of Strategy

Under section 5 of the Public Service Management Act 1997, Departments are required to prepare a Statement of Strategy within six months of the formation of a new Government. The NDA made submissions regarding areas for consideration in these Statements to nine Departments (See Appendix 3) and in addition responded to a request for submissions from the Irish Probation Service.

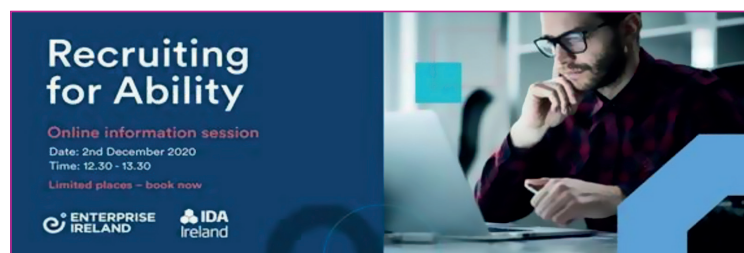
The NDA highlighted the opportunity that the Statements of Strategy gave to disability-proof the range of actions across Departments, particularly those that had a new configuration. In addition to highlighting specific disability issues relevant to each department the NDA also highlighted the need to reconfirm and embed mainstreaming of disability across Department which is required to deliver commitments due under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Conduct research, supply evidence-based information and advice to support the further development and implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy

Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (CES) 2015-2024

During 2020, NDA continued to provide support and advice on the implementation of the national Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) 2015 to 2024 and the second three-year action plan under the Strategy which runs to the end of 2021. Actions are committed for delivery by a range of government departments and agencies under six Strategic Priorities. The NDA sits on the Implementation Group and has advised the group in relation to thematic approaches to meetings.

NDA also supported departments and agencies to reach their CES commitments. For example, the NDA assisted IDA and Enterprise Ireland to host a webinar on 'Recruiting for Ability' which informed over 130 client organisations on the business case of recruiting staff with neuro-diverse conditions.



The NDA and the Deputy Secretary General of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) launched the 3rd annual Progressive Pathways event in Tralee Co Kerry in January 2020. This event was a collaborative exercise between the DEASP regional Intreo office and the local EmployAbility service, to proactively promote options for further education and training available on leaving school to young people with disabilities. Over 300 people attended the panel discussion, with representation from mainstream and special education students, parents and teachers. The NDA also provided advice to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on developments in public sector employment of persons with disabilities, extracting learning from the International Labour Organisation.

Draft advice paper on Vocational Rehabilitation Pathway

The NDA has developed a draft advice paper on the development of a vocational rehabilitation pathway for people with acquired disabilities and long term health conditions. The paper recommends ways of improving the pathways back to sustainable employment for people who leave the workplace as a result of the onset of a disability or long-term illness through a national policy and system for vocational rehabilitation. The paper will be finalised once consultation with persons with disabilities is completed. Successive Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports, and a 2015 NDA-commissioned international research study have highlighted that Ireland has, at present, a poorly developed vocational rehabilitation system.

NDA/OECD Research Programme

Under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, one of the main strategic priorities focuses on the engagement of employers, which is key to enhancing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The NDA has previously advised the need for further exploration on effective means of engaging employers and supporting them in this regard. In 2020, the NDA began a joint research programme with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) specifically on employer engagement. The purpose of this collaboration is to inform and shape a strategic plan of action to enhance the employer's role in supporting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, drawing from international learning, and also considering the State's role in engaging with employers.

It is expected that the final report of this project will be delivered in late 2021. During 2020, desk research, surveys and interviews with key stakeholders in other jurisdictions and in Ireland were conducted. Due to COVID-19, it was not possible for the OECD team to do a study visit to Ireland. However, with the support of the NDA, the team conducted a number of one-on-one and group virtual interviews with key Irish stakeholders in government departments and employer representative bodies. The OECD also undertook an analysis of Irish policy and data relating to employment of persons with disabilities, comparing the Irish position with that in other OECD jurisdictions. In 2021, this work will be further developed through a survey of employers and a series of workshops.

Open Doors Initiative

During 2020, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) agreed to fund the Open Doors Initiative to develop an Employer Disability Information service – Employers for Change – aimed at employers who wish to employ or accommodate a person with a disability. Providing information to employers is key to enhancing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. This action is a successor to the pilot Employer Disability Information initiative that was funded by the NDA and which ended in January 2019. The NDA welcomes this new service and has accepted an invitation to join the Strategy group of the new information service.

Evaluate progress and challenges in implementing national strategies, measurement against indicators and data and produce independent assessment reports, with particular regard to evaluating outcomes for individuals

National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) assessment of progress

In 2020, NDA published its independent assessment of progress in the implementation of actions under NDIS 2017-2021 for the year 2019. The assessment was informed by departmental reporting against actions committed, as well as information and evidence gathered by the NDA in the course of its membership of working groups, committees and Departmental Consultative Committees, as well as engagement with disability stakeholders. The assessment was also informed by findings from the NDIS indicators report which is discussed in more detail below.

The NDA reported that there had been progress on many actions under all eight NDIS themes in 2019, but in a number of these that the pace of progress was slower than originally planned. To address this the NDA has advised that certain areas should be selected for more detailed scrutiny at Departmental Consultative Committee meetings and/or at NDIS Steering Group meetings. NDA also advises the importance of departments giving consideration to how to develop a structured approach to implementation of, and reporting on, actions that are the responsibility of 'all departments and public bodies' within their own departments and the bodies under their aegis.

Some of the areas where work has been completed or progressed in line with stated actions in the NDIS over the course of 2019 included:

- Delivery of Person-Centred Planning demonstration projects in five disability services;
- Report published by the NDA and the OPW on a Review of the Effectiveness of the Operation of Section 25 of the Disability Act by public bodies;
- Continued progress in implementing the AIM Programme to support children with disabilities to access and benefit from early learning and care services;
- Piloting of a new School Inclusion Model in 75 schools, which is a research-informed package of education and health supports which aim to build schools' capacity to include children with additional needs;
- Neuro-rehabilitation implementation framework published by the HSE;
- An operational definition of Hate Crime was adopted by An Garda Síochána and work was commenced by the Department of Justice on Hate Speech legislation;
- The HSE's Safeguarding Draft Policy 2019 was completed;
- Hundreds of organisations and clubs adopted the Sport Inclusion Disability Charter.

There were a number of areas where progress was slow or seemed to have stalled in 2019. Some of these areas which the NDA recommended would require greater focus in 2020 included:

- Progress required towards operationalising the Decision Support Service;
- Progress required to develop the Deprivation of Liberty legislation;
- Progress required to advance legislation to reform the Mental Health Act, 2001;
- While a number of pieces of work were progressed by the HSE in 2019 in relation to decongregation the pace at which people are moving out institutions remains slow;
- Progress on the establishment and roll out of the Personalised Budgets Demonstration Project was slow in 2019;
- Progress required in supporting transitions for children and young people with disabilities.

The NDA welcomed the mid-term review approved by Cabinet in early 2020, and the commitment to strengthening the strategy for the remainder of its term and with due regard to the UNCRPD. The NDA advised that it will be important for the remainder of the Strategy's lifetime that its actions are more clearly linked to relevant Articles of the UNCRPD.

NDIS Indicators Report

This report provided a mid-term analysis of progress under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) measured through a suite of indicators developed for this purpose. The NDA commenced data gathering at the end of 2019 and into 2020, and the report was presented to the NDIS Steering Group in May 2020. It presents information on 61 indicators across eight themes. The indicators are categorised as being either structural (13%), process (67%) or outcome (20%) indicators. Most indicators use publically available data sources such as from the Central Statistics Office.

The analysis has shown areas of progress in realising the aims of the NDIS strategy and areas in need of improvement. The ratification of the UNCRPD was an important milestone in the life time of this Strategy and the commitment to develop a fuller national action plan with localised action plans in each department and body is important. The Irish Sign Language Act (2017) will impact the lives of the deaf community although the report expressed concern at the lack of awareness in the public sector around their obligations to comply with this legislation. There are some key pieces of legislation that are outstanding and advancing them in the remaining years of the strategy is crucial. These include Deprivation of Liberty legislation, fully commencing the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015, which would then allow full operation of the Decision Support Service, and reform of Mental Health Legislation.

The indicators in this report have again highlighted the gap between people with and without a disability in terms of lower levels of employment, education and self-reported health, and higher standardized mortality rates, rates of poverty and experiences of discrimination for persons with disabilities. While there are improvements in some areas, for example, a reduction in the consistent poverty rate over time, this reduction has been found for both people with and without disabilities and therefore the gap between the two groups persists. Many children under 18 years of age were found to be admitted to adult psychiatric units. The timely completion of Assessment of Needs for children and their access to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services was very poor. However, the Access and Inclusion Model for pre-school children has been a success story with an evaluation showing positive impacts for children.

The indicators highlighted the slow pace of decongregation, a HSE policy since 2011. They also highlighted discrepancies between HSE policies for residential disability services (for persons with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities) and residential services for people with mental health difficulties for which more research is required. Lack of regulation of 24-hour community psychiatric residences is also of concern.

While there are still issues in relation to accessing transport there have been a number of improvements such as shorter notice periods for using rail services, improvements in accessibility of stations and bus stops and the introduction of Customer Services Officers. The NDA is working on a set of indicators specifically to monitor the transport sector, as per Part 3 of the Disability Act.

A key challenge for this indicator report is that for most indicators there are no targets in the current strategy against which to measure any incremental changes. There were also some indicators for which there were little or no data available. However, it offers a useful point-in-time analysis of progress to date, against which further progress over the remaining lifetime of the Strategy can be measured when the exercise is repeated at the end of the NDIS.

Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities Assessment

In early 2020, NDA published its independent assessment of progress in the implementation of the CES for 2019. The assessment includes an identification of some highlights and achievements in the implementation of the Strategy, along with those areas where progress was slower than anticipated, and where actions needed to carry over into 2020. Areas of progress included:

- Publication of ‘First 5, the Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families’ (2019-2028) and an implementation plan by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs which includes supports for transitions of children from early years settings to primary school;
- Improvements in transport including an increase in wheelchair accessible taxis, and increase in accessible buses and bus stations;
- Completion of the NDA’s review of WRC adjudications and good practice in relation to reasonable accommodations in late 2019 and launch of the reasonable accommodation passport scheme;

The NDA assessment found that there was limited progress in 2019 on actions related to:

- Support for transitions for post-primary age children with disabilities including the lack of provision of career guidance support for students in special and mainstream education;
- Development of an implementation plan on Make Work Pay recommendations around “early engagement” with persons with disabilities through the Intreo service;
- Action 5.1, the goal of which is to achieve a ‘seamless and coordinated provision of supports’ for people with disabilities who wish to work, including those with high support needs.

This report noted that much of the focus of 2019 was on agreement of the action plan itself. The NDA recognises that the work to finalise and agree the second three-year action plan was extensive, and some momentum with regard to implementation of some specific actions may have been impacted.

The NDA acknowledged that the strategy requires departments and agencies to work in different and coordinated ways to address the committed actions. A significant question for all departments and agencies during 2020 was to consider approaches to the proactive communication of changes or policy interventions as they are implemented. This will ensure that both persons with disabilities and public sector staff are fully aware of developments that will have a direct impact on them.

Indicators for Monitoring Progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy

The NDA conducted a mid-term analysis of progress under the CES against a suite of indicators it had developed for this purpose. The report presents information on 31 indicators across the six strategic priorities. The report provided up-to-date information across many areas regarding the education levels, skills, and employment of persons with disabilities, the supports provided to facilitate them in transitioning to employment and supports provided to employers to enable them to recruit and retain employees with disabilities. The data presented also highlighted areas where the gaps in employment outcomes between persons with and without disabilities have widened, where progress has perhaps stalled, and where there is room for improvement in the uptake of supports by employers. The report provides a picture of progress at the mid-point of the CES, against which further progress in the remaining lifetime of the Strategy can be reassessed at the end of its span.

Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters

On 11th November 2020, the NDA was pleased to be invited to attend a session of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters, a committee convened following the formation of the 33rd Dáil. The NDA welcomed the opportunity to provide input to the Committee's work at such an early stage, and particularly focused on the NDA assessment of progress under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2019 including:

1. Gaps in legislation, policy or programmes to address the intention of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
2. Input on legislative gaps and international best practice.

In its opening statement, the NDA highlighted the progress achieved to date under the NDIS, but also those areas where progress had been slower than hoped, particularly with regard to legislative amendments needed to ensure realisation of the goals of UNCRPD. Some of the challenges and barriers to implementation identified included:

- Absence of dedicated funding to transition to new models of service provision;
- Challenges in supporting structured cross-departmental working, as many barriers can only be addressed through a 'whole-of-system' approach;
- Challenges in gathering and accessing harmonised data on disability.

The NDA also advised on the importance of considering a whole-of-government approach to implementation of UNCRPD, including what a successor to the NDIS might look like, as well as emphasising the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities.

The NDA looks forward to continued engagement with this Committee during 2021, and remains available to provide advice and information as per our statutory remit as required.

Advise on the implementation of standards in services for persons with disabilities and development of guidance to share good practice

Engagement with the Office of Public Works (OPW) on implementation of IS EN 17161

The NDA's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) collaborated with the OPW on a trial demonstration of implementing IS EN 17161 on accessibility in their fit-out of their new offices at 1GQ, Dublin 2. 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' is a European process Standard about using a Universal Design (Design for All) approach at all levels in organisations to continuously improve and manage the accessibility and usability of the products and services they provide. Organisations can really benefit from "Extending their range of users" by providing mainstream products and services that are easy to "access, understand and use". The project will also take into consideration changes in office arrangements to address the risks of interactions due to the pandemic.

Meeting with Fáilte Ireland on Universal Design for Accessible Tourism

CEUD met with Fáilte Ireland regarding their planning to develop and roll out an Accessible Tourism Toolkit. They asked to draw on our expertise and guidance as they develop training & business support responses for the Irish tourism industry. Also discussed was their 'educational awareness programmes' that operate via their Local Authority Development Programme as related to Tourism. CEUD provided advice on the guidance documents available on the CEUD website to support the Fáilte Ireland programme in developing more inclusive information resources such as online training materials for the tourism sector

Membership of HIQA Advisory Group to inform the development of the Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services

The NDA is a member of the new HIQA Advisory Group to inform the development of the Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services, which met for the first time in Q3 2020.

The purpose of the standards is to promote clarity, consistency and continuity within and between services, to ensure that no matter what service a child is using that there is a consistent response to their needs, and that if they need support from more than one service that these services work in an integrated way.

The development of overarching national standards also provides an opportunity to create a framework for the development of more specific standards or guidance that describe in more detail how services can care for and support children in a particular context, if required.

Separately, HIQA is in the process of developing a set of principles to underpin all future National Standards for health and social care services, replacing the eight-theme framework it has used since 2012. The new overarching standards will be structured according to this set of principles.

This work is ongoing, and it is intended that the standards will be submitted to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for their approval in January 2022.

Membership of HIQA Advisory Group to inform the development of the Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services

The NDA is also a member of an Advisory Group established by HIQA to assist the development of Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services. These standards are being developed to cover all support and protection services from the point of referral until discharge of the child or client from the services. A meeting took place in November 2020, to be followed by a 6-week public consultation from January 2021, with the next Advisory Group meeting to be held in Q2 2021. The NDA is pleased to be able to input through the group, as appropriate.

Develop guidance to support implementation of policy and legislation relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities

Independent Advice paper on the Use of Intermediaries in the Irish Justice System

Following the hosting of a roundtable in April 2019, during which officials from the Northern Ireland Department of Justice outlined their approach to establishing a Registered Intermediaries Scheme, it was agreed that the NDA would draft an independent advice paper on the use of intermediaries in the Irish justice system, for consideration by the Minister for Justice.

The EU Victims of Crime Directive recognises the right of victims of crime to understand and to be understood in the context of criminal proceedings, and the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017 contains provision for special measures, including intermediaries, to achieve recognition of this right for victims of crime in Ireland. However, there has been no progress to date to implement this provision, nor the original provision for special measures contained in the Criminal Evidence Act 1992 (Section 14).

In this paper, the NDA advised that a panel of intermediaries- professionals with communication skills- be established in order to support individuals with communications difficulties at all stages of the criminal justice system. This would include all individuals, whether they are victims, witnesses or accused persons. A person may experience communication difficulties as a result of disability, age or other factors, which may mean that they encounter barriers to accessing justice.

The NDA advised a regulated approach to providing accommodation to persons with communication difficulties when giving evidence, that is in line with both Ireland’s international obligations and examples of good practice in other jurisdictions, is needed.

This includes an obligation under Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including through the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodations.

The NDA advised that this accommodation should come in the form of a Registered Intermediaries Scheme. This Scheme should be available to witnesses, victims and accused persons who may be in need of support, due to their communication difficulties, to give better evidence, at all stages of the criminal justice system, including in Garda stations and in court settings.

The establishment of a pilot scheme in the first instance would reflect good practice in other jurisdictions that have similar schemes in place.

The advice paper highlights minor legislative amendments that are necessary to allow a national scheme to effectively operate and to come into line with appropriate language and Ireland's obligations.

Advice Paper on a Thematic Approach to NDISSG meetings

In 2018, National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group meetings were structured around themes aimed at sharing information on relevant developments within Departments and agencies, to support consideration of progress in delivering committed actions in specific areas. This thematic approach continued in 2019, although a number of the later NDISSG meetings focussed on the topical issues of the NDIS mid-term review and the implementation of the UNCRPD, rather than on themes regarding progress in specific areas. The NDA reiterated this advice for meetings in 2020, however, both the impact of COVID-19 and the reshuffle of departmental responsibilities following General Election 2020 shifted the focus of NDISSG meetings.

The drafting of Ireland's first State Report under UNCRPD, the establishment and development of the Disability Participation and Consultation Network and the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of persons with disabilities were prioritised in NDISSG meetings in 2020. At the same time, Minister Rabbitte took up her position as Chair of the NDISSG.

It is important to achieve a balance between monitoring the Strategy as a whole and allowing for focus on actions under key themes, to guide the agenda for each of the four NDISSG meetings. The NDA has advised the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (the coordinating department for the NDIS) that there would be benefit in a thematic approach to meetings in 2021.

Implementing the recommendations of the operational review of the effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act

In early 2020, the NDA met with the Chair of the Office of Public Works (OPW), the State Architect at the OPW and an Assistant Principal Architect at OPW. The group discussed next steps by OPW and NDA to implement the recommendations set out in the Operational Review of the Effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act, which was jointly carried out by the NDA and OPW in 2019. The key points discussed included the need for awareness

raising, accredited access auditor training, developing a Code of Practice on Accessible Public Buildings, embedding Universal Design into OPW quality management systems and embedding the recommendations in the next Government Policy on Architecture. Following the meeting, the NDA wrote to all secretaries general reminding them of the deadline of the 1st of January 2022 for all public buildings to be accessible. OPW stated a commitment to increase the OPW universal access budget to €1 million for 2020.

Submission to the Interim Mobility Intervention Programme for Dublin City

The NDA made a submission to Dublin City Council and the National Transport Authority (NTA) regarding the development and the implementation of the Interim Mobility Intervention Programme for Dublin City. This Programme was developed to address urgent needs which have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in Ireland. This includes, for example, providing space for safe movement by people as well as for business activities, and accommodating changed transport patterns. It aims to provide additional space for movement and enhanced pedestrian areas, providing safer cycling facilities and additional space at bus stops to facilitate social distancing. It would entail greater parking provision at the periphery of the city's core area and some bus route changes.

The NDA advised of the need to ensure consultation with a diverse range of users in advance of implementation of measures, including persons with disabilities, and applying a Universal Design approach to the programme, while noting the urgency of the situation. We also referred to the various guidance documents that the NDA had produced to ensure accessibility and Universal Design, including in relation to the facilities being provided such as public toilets and seating.

We highlighted the importance of ensuring that this programme and subsequent updates would include actions that Dublin City Council and the NTA would be taking to ensure that digital, written, spoken and signed communications regarding every element of this programme, would be universally designed in line with NDA's previous advice and guidance. The Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service- A Universal Design Approach, will be of assistance in this regard.

As it will be important to monitor and review the implementation of each phase of this programme, this will need to be done in consultation with persons with disabilities and other users. This will ensure alignment with the provisions regarding engagement and participation of persons with disabilities as set out in the UNCRPD. The NDA advised that it is happy to meet with Dublin City Council and the NTA to guide further on these matters.

Continue to promote positive public attitudes to disability across all areas of life, including in an employment context

Employer Disability Awareness Training

The National Disability Authority provided grant funding in 2019 to four partner organisations to create an accessible online training programme on employer engagement to support all employers to become "disability confident". To mark UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities, on 3 December 2020, the four organisations- Rehab Group, WALK, AsIAM and

Not So Different- launched the training programme to support employers to develop inclusive recruitment, retention and promotion practices for persons with disabilities. The programme fulfils an action under the Second Action Plan of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024. It aims to take a rights-based approach to employment in accordance with Ireland’s obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The training programme can be delivered in person or online.

Someone Like Me Primary School Art Competition

“Someone Like Me” is an annual primary schools’ art competition funded by the NDA as a way of developing children’s awareness and understanding of disabilities. The competition engages children, teachers and others in their awareness and understanding of disabilities. The competition is open to all primary school pupils from junior infants to sixth class, and entries can be received from individual pupils or a class/school group. Entries can come in all shapes and sizes from a poster or collage to a papier-mâché or mixed-media sculpture.

Due to the restrictions in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in line with public health guidance, the competition was launched a month later than normal, in October, by Anne Rabbitte, TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability. By the closing date, approximately 1,300 entries had been received. A virtual prize-giving ceremony took place in January 2021.

Awareness Building Seminars

The NDA continues to provide general advice and information to departments and public bodies as part of its work to increase awareness regarding disability. During 2020, the Director delivered seminars to the Department of Social Protection and the Department of the Taoiseach to mark UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3. The seminars focused on building capacity among departmental officials to be disability aware, including in their role as employers and line managers, as well as considering their remit to deliver accessible public services.

NDA Book

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the National Disability Authority in 2000, a publication commemorating the occasion was launched on 3 December 2020, marking UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities. ‘National Disability Authority 2000-2020: Twenty Years of Disability Policy Development in Ireland’ covers the work and achievements of the National Disability Authority since its inception and covers the major developments in disability policy over the twenty years since its establishment.

The book is available to download from www.nda.ie.

Transposition of the Web Accessibility Directive and naming of NDA as the national monitoring body

The Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) was signed into statute on 23 September 2020 through statutory instrument S.I. No. 358 of 2020. Clause 8 of the S.I. names NDA as the monitoring body. The Directive requires that websites created after 23 September 2018 would be accessible by 23 September 2019. Existing websites had until 23 September 2020 to achieve compliance. All mobile applications will have to be accessible by 23 June 2021. NDA continued

to receive an increase in the number of queries related to web accessibility throughout 2020 from a wide range of public bodies, and advises that as yet, awareness of the provisions of the Directive across the public sector are low, with much work to be done to achieve compliance. The full monitoring and reporting function will be established within the NDA during 2021.

Further develop data collection, and its analysis, seeking to build a wider range of data and statistics to inform planning and development relevant to disability, and to measure progress in key areas

Enhancing disability statistics

2020 has seen increased engagement between the NDA and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and included consultation on disability-related datasets available in Ireland as part of the CSO's national audit on equality data to feed into their Equality Data Hub. This was followed with engagement on the CSO's pathfinder project that aims to link CSO and administrative data sources with the potential to have novel datasets for analysis that could answer questions related to disability. During 2019 and into early 2020 the NDA advised the CSO on disability related questions and outputs for the 2021 (now 2022) national census. The NDA will continue these discussion into 2021. Discussions have also taken place in relation to making other datasets more useful in terms of disability statistics.

The NDA continues to work to encourage bodies to improve data collection regarding disability. For example, the NDA participated in an RCSI stakeholder consultation to inform the design of a Survey of Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy among the General Population in Ireland. The NDA urged the research team to capture disability status in order to be able to disaggregate results accordingly to identify specific experiences and needs of those with disabilities. The NDA also engaged with HIQA to ensure a disability question was included in their 2020 survey of patient experiences of maternity services, and commenced analysis of the findings of this survey in late 2020, with a report due in 2021.

ESRI Partnership Project

The NDA and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) have undertaken a partnership research programme on matters relevant to disability. The objective of the programme is to create, improve and enhance knowledge on specific areas relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities, with a focus on supports for independent living in the community and employment, both of which are areas relevant to Ireland's realisation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The first peer-reviewed report of the partnership was published in September 2020. Entitled "Specialist support for persons with disabilities living in the community: Review of the international literature", this report presented an exploratory examination of the international literature on the provision of specialist support for persons with disabilities living in the community, in the context of Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Further work on this part of the study commenced toward the end of 2020 with a number of interviews conducted with disability managers regarding the provision of personal assistant supports.

Another element of the partnership included a study looking at the academic and socio-emotional outcomes of students with Special Educational Need using data from the Growing Up In Ireland (GUI) national longitudinal study of children. This is a follow-up to a previous study commissioned by the NDA on this issue using earlier GUI data. A presentation on this work was given at the most recent GUI conference in October and the paper has been submitted to an academic journal of high standing for review.

Work is also progressing on the employment strand of the project, where work includes a desk study using multiple datasets to characterise skills endowments and gaps among persons with disabilities in Ireland.

Disability & Housing Factsheet

In December 2020 the NDA published the latest in its series of factsheets presenting data and statistics on key disability policy issues. The latest factsheet examined the question of where persons with disabilities live. Access to appropriate and secure housing has been recognised as a key factor in assisting persons with disabilities to lead independent and fulfilling lives in the community. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) expresses a right for persons with disabilities to choose their place of residence and with whom they live on an equal basis with others. Some of the key findings set out in the factsheet include the fact that a significantly higher proportion of persons with disabilities continue to live in congregated settings as compared to the general population, but that this share has declined in recent years in part because more persons with disabilities are transitioning to living in community-based housing. This factsheet is the first in a series of NDA research papers on the issue of housing. Future research will consider issues such as the societal benefits of adopting Universal Design (UD) principles and the development of a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) to evaluate the adoption of UD principles in the public housing sector.

Where do persons with disabilities live?



92.9% of persons with disabilities live in private households



7.1% of persons with disabilities live in communal establishments



0.3% of persons with disabilities are homeless

Source: CSO Census data

Where do persons with disabilities live?



92.9%
in Private
Households in
2016



7.1%
in Communal
Establishments in
2016



0.3%
Homeless in
2016

97.3%
for General
Population

2.63%
for General
Population

0.14%
for General
Population

Source: CSO Census data

Persons with Disabilities Living in Communal Establishments



44,431 persons with disabilities live
in communal establishments



35% of residents in communal
establishments have a disability



87% of residents in nursing
homes have a disability

Source: CSO Census data

Persons with Disabilities Living in Private Accommodation



92.9% of persons with disabilities live in private households



68.8% of persons with disabilities live in an owner occupied property



13.4% of persons with disabilities are renting a property from a Local Authority

Homelessness and Disability



1,871 persons with a disability are homeless



27.1% of homeless persons have some form of disability



11.9% of homeless persons have a psychological or emotional condition

Source: CSO Census data

Accessible online meetings – supplementary guidance to the Customer Communications Toolkit

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design published additional guidance on the accessibility of online meetings during 2020. The guidance covers all elements of arranging and holding online meetings, including the planning stage, running a meeting and meeting follow-up. It is based on guidance already contained in the Customer Communications Toolkit, but was particularly relevant and beneficial due to the sudden shift to remote working across the public sector in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. NDA circulated this guidance to other agencies and Government Departments to guide their approaches, and it can be viewed at:

<http://universaldesign.ie/Products-Services/Customer-Communications-Toolkit-for-the-Public-Service-A-Universal-Design-Approach/>

Strategic Priority 2



Strategic Priority 2:

“To understand and advise on societal changes, challenges and opportunities that impact on the lives of persons with disabilities”.

Understand the perspectives of key stakeholders regarding these challenging areas, including: persons with disabilities, families and carers, representative organisations and government officials working on policy and practice

Emergency Planning

At the request of the Office of Emergency Planning, the NDA drafted material, focusing on advice for persons with disabilities, for a Summer Ready booklet, noting that persons with disabilities may sometimes at risk in particular aspects of summer than others. This booklet is a follow on from their Winter Ready booklet that has been available for a number of years. The NDA previously provided material for the Winter Ready booklet.

Understand the perspectives of key stakeholders regarding these challenging areas, including: persons with disabilities, families and carers, representative organisations and government officials working on policy and practice

Annual Conference 2020

The NDA’s Annual Conference 2020 took place on 21 October, and continued the trend that began in 2019 of featuring the UNCRPD as the main theme. In 2020, the NDA focused Article 13 of the Convention.

Article 13 of seeks to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. It is a very clear example of an article with a defined goal; facilitating access to justice for persons with disabilities. However, that goal will only be achieved if several key departments and agencies work together, effectively and coherently. In particular, the realisation of Article 13 requires the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Prison Service and the Probation Service to have a common understanding of the requirements of Article 13. They must also collaborate effectively to ensure that the protections of the UNCRPD are afforded to individuals with disabilities at every stage of the Irish criminal justice system. Its realisation will also need the cooperation of different government departments, for example the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Department of Health.

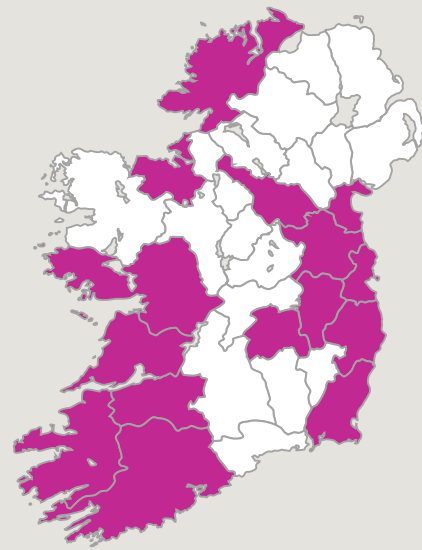
In 2020, the NDA chose to host its Annual Conference on a virtual platform given the public health measures in place in light of COVID-19. It worked with an external conference provider to build this platform, as well as online registration and feedback processes. The team worked to make the platform and other processes as accessible as possible, and used captioning and ISL interpretation throughout the day.

The Conference featured almost 40 contributors, between keynote speakers, moderators and

Attendee Map

268 Attendees from 16 counties

Based on registration information we can see that there were 268 attendee's from 16 different counties in the Republic of Ireland



pre-recorded presentations. Two hundred and seventy people registered, an increase of 80% on the previous year, and there was a steady number of 90-120 online at all times.

The Conference also marked the NDA's first introduction to the use of social media. The organising team live-tweeted the Conference throughout the day, and saw much engagement. The engagement continued in the days after the Conference, with people praising the both the medium and content of the event. The entire Conference is available to watch on the NDA's YouTube Channel and all presentations and relevant documentation can be accessed on the NDA website.

The links are:

YouTube channel link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NatDisabilityAuth/videos>

Presentations and documents:

<http://nda.ie/Policy-and-research/Conference-reports/NDA-Annual-Conferences/NDA-Conference-2020-Presentations.html>

Gather and analyse information, data and statistics relevant to these areas in order to provide an evidence base for future policy advice and input

Law Reform Commission Issues Paper on a Regulatory Framework for Adult Safeguarding

During 2020, the NDA made a submission in relation to the Law Reform Commission's Issues Paper on a Regulatory Framework for Adult Safeguarding. The Issues Paper notes that there is widespread agreement on the need for a clear statutory framework on adult safeguarding, which would address risks of physical, psychological and financial abuse. The Commission's approach in the Issues Paper is, therefore, to examine what form that regulatory framework might take, building on existing arrangements and parallel policy and legislative developments.

The Issues Paper was heavily guided by the Adult Safeguarding Bill 2017, which proposed a particular regulatory framework for adult safeguarding that would be both rights-based and which also proposed additional preventative and protective measures for adults who may be at risk of exploitation or abuse. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and the Minister for Health agreed that the issues in the 2017 Bill required further research, and the Commission agreed that the project was suitable for inclusion in its Fifth Programme of Law Reform, which was approved by Government in March 2019.

The NDA submitted a comprehensive paper as part of this process, including the advice with regard to:

- Due regard to existing and pending legislation and policies, such as the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, protection of liberty safeguards, HSE policies and HIQA and Mental Health Commission standards, as well as the UNCRPD
- Consistency in language and message with existing legislation and policy
- The body to be responsible for making enquiries and conducting investigations around safeguarding concerns
- The options around creating a new independent agency or granting additional powers to an existing agency
- Powers of entry and inspection
- Reporting obligations
- Independent advocacy
- Multi-agency collaboration.

New Transport for Ireland Buses and Regional Commuter Vehicles

The National Transport Authority (NTA) are purchasing a new fleet of buses to upgrade the existing bus and coach fleet in Ireland and to ensure that there will be a national reduction in carbon emissions. The NDA was requested to make a submission on the design for these vehicles. Building on previous advice we had given the NTA and Bus Éireann, the NDA's submission incorporated the core elements of providing integrated universally designed public transport services.

Strategic Priority 3



Strategic Priority 3

“To promote and monitor the implementation of Codes of Practice, standards and guidelines in services, and to evaluate policy and practice”

Develop analyses and data reports to inform assessment of compliance by Ireland with the UNCRPD

Participation and Consultation Network

During 2020, the Department of Justice and Equality drafted an application form and corresponding guidelines for a new role entitled ‘Organising Member’, to establish and facilitate a network of disabled persons’ organisations, advocacy organisations and individuals with disabilities and/or lived experience. This is in line with obligations to consult and engage with persons with disabilities under the UNCRPD.

The Department asked that the NDA to review the Expression of Interest guidelines and advise on any relevant amendments. The NDA emphasised the importance of clarity within the documentation, as well as the use of different accessible formats, such as Easy to Read, plain English and large print. The NDA also advised that the selection committee would include at least one person with a disability.

The NDA also developed a working paper on Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) which was shared with the Department of Justice and Equality to inform them of best practices internationally in supporting DPOs and to assist in their considerations for the Terms of Reference of the group.

Ireland’s initial State Report under the UNCRPD

The Department of Justice and Equality began the drafting process of Ireland’s initial State Report in Summer 2020, to be submitted to the Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2021. This work was continued and finalised by DCEDIY, which now acts as the focal point under the UNCRPD, following the transfer of functions during 2020. The NDA provided advice to the Department during the drafting process, including the provision of up-to-date statistics and updates regarding its assessment of the implementation of various policies and programmes. The NDA has developed a number of internal papers on various UNCRPD articles and conducted a mapping exercise to map existing legislation, policies, strategies and processes to the UNCRPD articles to develop a picture of the current landscape, and this work was useful in informing our advice to the Department. The NDA are also providing evidence-informed advice to the Department around mechanisms to consult on the report before submission, recognising the critical importance of meaningful engagement with persons with disabilities as part of this process, including through their representative bodies.

Draft Working Paper on Engagement with Disabled Persons’ Organisations

Following research carried out on good practice in other jurisdictions in relation to engagement with Disabled Persons’ Organisations (DPOs), the NDA has developed working

paper on same, using the learning contained in the research to make recommendations regarding the engagement and participation of persons with disabilities to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

The paper explores how other jurisdictions approach the explicit obligation in Articles 4(3) and 33(3) of the UNCRPD to effectively engage persons with disabilities in the development of legislation, policies and in the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. The paper considers commentary by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its General Comment No. 7, which elaborated on its understanding of who should participate and what that participation should look like.

The paper also examines how lived experience, expertise and opinions of persons with disabilities are currently collected and used in Ireland. The paper highlights the gaps between these current methods and the standards set by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The NDA advises that a solid, sustainable infrastructure is developed in order to facilitate meaningful engagement with persons with disabilities, and highlights the following elements that are necessary for such infrastructure:

- A clear mandate;
- A consistent and continuous funding model;
- Membership that represents various disabilities, as well as others factors such as gender, location and age;
- Capacity-building;
- Buy-in from all relevant Government Departments; and
- Innovative methods of engagement.

Evaluate and advise on monitoring mechanisms

Rehabilitative Training and School Leavers Profiling

In previous years the NDA has supported the HSE in various aspects of the profiling process for Rehabilitative Training and School Leavers (RTSLs) applying for adult day service placements. The NDA has worked with HSE staff over several years to guide on a standardised process, making it transparent and fair across the country and across disability groups. This includes written guidance, training videos, group training and individual tuition of local area profilers, as well as quality assurance reviews of the profiling returns.

The NDA continues to provide independent validation and quality assurance of the RTSL process. During 2020, the NDA worked alongside the HSE, conducting reviews of the local processes and providing relevant and timely feedback to the HSE at the local and national levels. The NDA also provided advice on, and supported a transition to, online profiling processes arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Develop and monitor implementation of Codes of Practice as appropriate

Part 3 Monitoring Public Transport against Code of Practice

The NDA has devised a set of indicators alongside a new monitoring methodology to support it in its function to monitor compliance with the statutory Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information. A pre-pilot exercise was undertaken to validate the methodology where we monitored public transport operators against a sub-set of indicators.

A pilot trialling the full set of indicators and monitoring methodology commenced in late 2020 where we engaged with one transport provider. This resulted in an updated set of indicators. The indicators and monitoring methodology are developed to be applicable to all public bodies in the public sector. Formal monitoring will begin in 2021 against the full set of indicators, focussing firstly on public bodies that deliver public transport services. This type of monitoring, known as vertical monitoring, where we evaluate a public bodies conformance against the full set of indicators, will reveal the conformance level of that individual public body with the Code.

Methods for end user involvement are being explored and considered which include the potential of using a mobile phone application created under EU funding called “Rate the Service”. The NDA will pilot this app in 2021.

We also progressed our horizontal monitoring activity, where we evaluated the conformance level of all public bodies against one indicator to give us a widespread picture of how the entire public sector is performing in a specific area. We commenced two horizontal monitoring activities evaluating the information provided on public body websites regarding their access officer and their complaints process. We intend to provide a full report on our horizontal monitoring findings in 2021. This particular monitoring activity will also address recommendations arising from “An Operational Review of the Effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act”.

Transport consultation submissions

The NDA has made a number of submissions in 2020 on various public transport strategies, including Luas, Irish Rail, NTA Bus Connects and the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. Within these submissions, in addition to specific advice and recommendations, we have stressed obligations under the Disability Act 2005, highlighted duties to implement the requirements of the Code of Practice and emphasized the principles of Universal Design to involve persons with disabilities early in the development of plans and throughout the entire process. The submissions also recognised the challenges of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to provide safe and accessible transport services for everyone, including persons with disabilities.

Code of Practice on Accessible Public Buildings

In 2020, the NDA received a formal request from the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to develop a Code of Practice on Accessible Public Buildings, as provided for in Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005. This Code will provide guidance on accessible

public areas of public sector buildings, as set out in Action 105 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021. The NDA has commenced work, and it is scheduled for completion in early 2022.

Update on the Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies

A draft revision of the (2006) 'Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies' was submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality for approval for publication in early 2019. At the beginning of June 2020, the NDA submitted an amended draft to the Minister, further to the Minister's request that the NDA explore the possibility of adding in text to encourage public bodies to consider the installation of Changing Places in public buildings where possible and on including more information on a complaints process beyond what had already been included on the matter. The revised Code will be progressed as a statutory instrument once approved by the Minister.

Engage with government departments to support the monitoring of key EU initiatives

European Disability Strategy

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was recently evaluated by the European Commission. The NDA prepared a note on the evaluation for the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and also contributed to the Commission's own review of the impact of the Strategy on national policies and implementation.

The Commission has begun work on the successor to this Strategy, and the NDA drafted a submission to an online consultation run by the Commission on what should be included in the next 10-year Strategy.

The NDA inputs emphasised the importance of effective engagement with persons with disabilities, cross-institutional and cross-country collaboration, and the collection and dissemination of data to inform policy decisions.

Meeting of NSAI TC023 SC05 'Universal Design Standards Consultative Committee – Products and Service – Range of Users'

An annual meeting of the chair, and secretariat of the National Standards Authority (NSAI) Technical Committee (TC) 23 ('Universal Design Standards Consultative Committee') Sub-Committee (SC) 05 'Products and Service – Range of Users' took place in February 2020. The key purpose of this committee is to ensure that the widest range of users including persons with disabilities are considered in all standards development for products and services. CEUD holds the positions of Chair and Secretariat support on this committee. At the meeting the committee reviewed which standards of relevance are currently under development at a national, European and international level. The Committee also identified which of those standards Ireland should monitor and provide input on at European and International levels as well as reviewing the work and management of individual working groups within the sub-committee.

Monitor and report on the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service in accordance with Part 5 of the Disability Act

Government Departments and public bodies have legal obligations in relation to the employment of persons with disabilities and ensuring a minimum target of 3% of the workforce is achieved, as per Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005. The NDA has a statutory function to submit an annual report on performance to the Minister in this regard. It also has functions to follow up on non-compliance and to specify measures for individual bodies.

Report on Compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 for 2019 – Departmental Returns

The NDA was pleased to note that 80% of Government Departments succeeded in submitting their Part 5 returns on or before the statutory deadline of 30 June, despite the pandemic.

The NDA submitted the **Report on Compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 for 2019** to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the Minister of State with responsibility for Disability by the statutory deadline of Monday 30 November 2020.

In summary, the report outlined that overall, the public sector continued to exceed the current minimum target of 3% for the ninth successive year. At the end of 2019, the total number of employees in the relevant public sector bodies was 238,174, an increase of 6,390 (+2.8%) from 2018. However, the overall number and percentage of employees reporting a disability decreased from 7,585 (3.3%) in 2018 to 7,319 (3.1%), a decrease of 265 (-3.5%) from the 2018 figures. The NDA advises that given this decrease, it will be important for all public bodies to ensure continued efforts to recruit and retain persons with disabilities, particularly as the target is scheduled to increase to 6% by 2024, as per a commitment in the Programme for Government.

Part 5: Final determinations of non-compliance 2016 and 2017

Under section 49 of the Disability Act (2005), the NDA may make a request to a public body that would enable the NDA to assess whether compliance has been achieved, and if there were valid reasons that prevented a public body from meeting the minimum 3% target for 2 consecutive years.

The NDA sent S.49 requests to four public bodies that had not achieved the minimum 3% target for 2016 and 2017, as follows:

- Waterford IT
- Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB)
- Health Research Board (HRB)
- Health Service Executive (HSE)

The NDA considered the responses these public bodies provided, reviewed the evidence, and decided based on information provided that while Waterford IT did not warrant a determination of non-compliance for 2016 and 2017, the remaining three bodies (PIAB, HRB and the HSE) did.

Draft determinations were sent to each of these public bodies, acknowledging the measures the public bodies had in place for this two year period to create an inclusive environment, while also providing them with the reasons why they were receiving the draft determination. The draft determinations also gave these public bodies an opportunity to provide additional information that could help the Authority to decide whether this public body warranted a final determination of non-compliance for this two year period.

In their responses to the draft determinations of non-compliance, the PIAB, the HRB and the HSE provided little evidence that they had proactive measures in place, during this two year period, to support employees to share their disability status or to increase the recruitment of persons with disabilities. The Authority decided therefore that these public bodies warranted a final determination of non-compliance for 2016 and 2017.

Part 5: Draft determinations for 2017 and 2018

The NDA sent S.49 requests to four public bodies that had not achieved the minimum 3% target for 2016 and 2017, in accordance with section 49 of the Disability Act 2005, as follows:

- Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- National Gallery of Ireland
- Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB)

The NDA considered the responses these public bodies provided. These four public bodies provided little evidence, during this two year period, that they put proactive measures in place to support employees to share their disability status and to increase the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

The Authority has decided that these four public bodies should receive draft determinations of non-compliance for 2017 and 2018. The responses from these public bodies to these draft determinations will be reviewed in 2021 and will inform the Authority's decision as to whether these public bodies warrant a final determination of non-compliance for 2017 and 2018.

The NDA continues to work with the public bodies to help them to develop, implement and report on Action Plans that will include a planned approach with detailed specific actions to incrementally increase their recruitment of persons with disabilities. The NDA recognises that it can take time for public bodies to embed changes in their recruitment processes and to see the impact of these changes. However, the NDA looks forward to an improvement in the public sector's overall performance in the near future.

Engagement with the HSE

A designated team has been appointed in the HSE to focus on improving this public body's compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005. The NDA has had a number of meetings with this team since June 2020 and advised on the development and implementation of an incremental approach that will, over time, help the HSE to meet its obligations under Part 5.

The HSE had informed the NDA that addressing its issues with data collection was a priority. As part of this strategic and sustained engagement, the NDA hosted a closed online workshop for relevant HSE personnel (involved in the Part 5 process, recruitment and employment) on 7 September 2020. The objective of this workshop was to provide the HSE with learning from models of good practice regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, including collecting and reporting on data. The key theme of this workshop, in line with NDA guidance, was that effective data collection processes develop from an inclusive work environment that promotes and supports the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities.

The NDA will be following up with the HSE regarding the draft Action Plan and the Communications Strategy it is working on.

It is hoped that the HSE, with the continued support of the NDA, will improve its performance under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005.

Seminar with Disability Liaison Officer Networks

In February 2020, the Disability Liaison Officer's Network asked the NDA to conduct a seminar on public bodies' obligations under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 and measures public bodies could implement to create an inclusive work environment. On 11 March 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, the NDA hosted a well-attended seminar.

This workshop provided the Network with valuable learning that could assist public bodies in their respective Departments to improve their performance under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005.

Review the process to enhance quality of data and reporting under Part 5 of the Disability Act and guide on implementation of findings

NDA advice paper on the Review of Part 5

In 2019, the NDA commissioned a review of best practice on processes for monitoring and measuring the employment of diverse talent in the workplace. A number of key findings emerged from this review including areas that needed further research and clarification regarding the Part 5 process. The NDA committed to carrying out further research on these areas and producing one comprehensive paper informed by these outputs, on how the Part 5 process can be improved and how these recommendations can be implemented in the future in keeping with NDA's statutory role in this regard.

In 2020, the NDA produced a briefing paper on the Review of Part 5 which was a synthesis of this additional research; the commissioned work, and NDA's reflections on the learning

from this body of work. This paper includes evidence-informed research and best practice on a number of key points including: systems used by National Health Services (NHS) in the UK to collect comparative data on employees with and without disabilities; applying learning from key findings from NDA's research on Reasonable Accommodations (2019); and systems and processes used to validate data. This paper also sets out some key conclusions and recommendations, for example, revising the Part 5 process could potentially incorporate legislative amendments, process improvements, but also greater awareness raising for public bodies. The NDA will consider these recommendations regarding how the Part 5 process can be improved and the implementation of these recommendations during 2021-2022, in keeping with NDA's statutory role in this regard.

Assess and monitor the implementation and impact of national strategies and policies

Public Consultation on the revised bus network proposals

The NDA has continued to advise the NTA on engaging with an extended range of users, especially persons with different disabilities, regarding further rounds of consultation held in relation to the BusConnects proposal. The NDA notes that the NTA held a specific consultation event with persons with disabilities in December 2019 on the revised proposal. The NDA made a submission at that time to the NTA highlighting the importance of implementing previous advice regarding the inclusion of the core elements of providing integrated universally designed public transport services in the revised bus networks proposals for Bus Connects. These core elements are also detailed in some of the key recommendations in the submission NDA made to the Oireachtas committee in 2018 on **Accessibility of Public Transport Services for Persons with Disabilities**.

In July 2019, the NTA employed a Transport Accessibility Manager for the first time. The NDA has been working closely with this Manager throughout 2020, to progress several projects. The NDA is pleased to note that the new contracts issued in Q4 2019 to public transport operators requires them for the first time to comply with the core elements of the Code of Practice on the Provision of Accessible Services and Information. The core elements included in the new contracts are: Provision of Accessible Services; Accessible Procurement; Provision of Accessible Information; Provision of Accessible Complaints Processes including having an Inquiry Officer to respond to and resolve complaints. The NDA has been working with the NTA to consider how these provisions can be monitored on an ongoing basis and feed into a continual improvement process.

Strategic Priority 4



Strategic Priority 4:

“To continue to build awareness and adoption of Universal Design across society in Ireland”.

Advise and assist in the development of national and international standards, guidelines and toolkits on Universal Design and promote their implementation by national stakeholders

Design Guidance and Part M Review to provide for Changing Places Toilets

In 2020, the National Disability Authority’s Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) commenced work to update its design guidance on Changing Places Toilets. Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all persons with disabilities, in particular, people with complex and multiple disabilities, who need assistance and additional equipment to use toilet facilities. Changing Places Toilets offer larger facilities that address the needs of people for whom current accessible sanitary accommodation is inadequate. Currently there is no requirement in Irish building regulations for Changing Places Toilets to be provided.

In December 2020, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage established a Working Group on the provision of a Changing Places Facility, to review Part M technical requirements of a ‘Changing Places Facility’ suitable for inclusion in a revised Technical Guidance Document M (Access and Use). The CEUD is participating in this Working Group. A CEUD staff member is chairing a subgroup focusing on specific technical elements of a changing places toilet.

NSAI Working Group on New European Standard on Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment

CEUD was an active participant in the NSAI Working Group to providing feedback on a draft standard being developed under Mandate M/420 in support of European accessibility requirements for public procurement in the built environment- prCEN/TR 17210:2020 Accessibility and usability of the built environment – Technical performance criteria and specifications. The feedback aimed to ensure that the standards specified in the document represent good practice and Universal Design, rather than a minimum standards approach. The standard is due for completion in early 2021.

Research and Design Guidelines for building adaptation and retrofit in residential care settings from a Universal Design Approach

In 2020, CEUD commissioned Trinity Haus and Tallaght University Hospital to conduct research and develop high level Universal Design guidelines on the retrofit of existing long-term residential care settings for older people in Ireland. This work is very relevant in that nursing homes have been one of the most impacted sectors due to COVID-19. The work will examine how the built environment in these settings can be adapted and retrofitted from a Universal Design approach to:

- Enhance quality of life for residents and improve the visitor experience for family members, carers and friends;
- Improve pandemic preparedness and resilience while still protecting the psychosocial health and well-being of residents and staff.

The work commenced in Q4 2020 and the completion date is set for Q2 2021.

Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets in Ireland

In 2020, the CEUD continued to advise the National Transport Authority on the development of a Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets in Ireland. This work involved revisions to a draft of the audit tool following a pilot that was carried out in 2019, in Kilrush, County Clare. The pilot involved participants with a diverse range of ages and abilities and was organised by CEUD working in partnership with Age Friendly Ireland. The original audit tool was informed by extensive consultation in six pilots across Ireland with a wide range of users including persons of all ages, sizes, abilities and disabilities such as persons with vision impairments, mobility issues etc. The Universal Design audit tool was published by the National Transport Authority in 2020.

Preliminary Review of Universal Design Homes and Associated costs

During 2020, CEUD continued to engage with the Quantity Surveyors (QS) Division in Dublin City Council (DCC) and with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) to develop an analysis of the costs of Universal Design Homes in comparison to traditional build dwellings. CEUD and SCSI met with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the later part of 2020 to discuss the draft cost assessment paper. The Department made a number of observations on the paper which CEUD and SCSI are evaluating. A revised paper is to be completed in the first half of 2021. A workshop will be hosted thereafter with key local stakeholders who have championed UD and are keen to incorporate this new data as part of their work.

Workshop on integrating UD standards – SláinteCare project with ALONE

During 2020, CEUD ran a workshop for ALONE on their SláinteCare funded project “BConnect; Linking healthcare, social care and community care to deliver better outcomes for older people”. The purpose of the project is to provide technology, services and training to support timely discharge from hospital, reduce avoidable hospital admissions, support people to remain well in their own homes and communities and enable better quality of care for older people from statutory services and community organisations. The workshop focused on the integration and use of relevant standards and resources to bring a Universal Design approach in the project and thereby extend the range of users that can use the technology being piloted. The Centre continues to engage with ALONE on this project to provide advice on the use of these standards and resources in other health care related technology projects for Sláintecare, the HSE and the Department of Health.

Further promote the development of courses and take-up of curriculum content incorporating Universal Design and delivering this through a Universal Design Learning approach building capacity in relevant initial professional training, education and in continuing professional development (CPD)

Developing an e-learning module for use as Universal Design CPD for architectural professionals in Ireland

Following a competitive tender process, NDA commissioned Aurion Learning to develop an e-learning module for use as Universal Design CPD for architectural professionals in Ireland. The module will be based on a case study of the Central Bank of Ireland, which won the RIAI Universal Design Award in 2017. This work is in line with Action112 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, which states that the National Disability Authority 'will introduce Continuous Professional Development on Universal Design for architects, to encourage application of National Disability Authority guidance such as Building for Everyone and Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland'. It is expected that this e-learning module will be the first of a suite developed, based on buildings that have received the RIAI Universal Design Award, an annual award, supported by the CEUD since 2013. This work has been delayed due to COVID-19 in 2020 but will resume at the earliest opportunity once public health guidance permits.

School Design for All from a Universal Design Approach

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) asked CEUD to provide a high level briefing paper that addresses mainstreaming all children in Irish schools and the application of a Universal Design approach to the design, build and retrofit of new and existing primary and secondary schools, specifically looking at the built environment. Work continues with the NCSE and is expected to include a full international literature review and the development of national guidance for all primary and secondary schools.

Universal Design Grand Challenge 2020

CEUD, in conjunction with White Light Consulting, commenced marketing and promotion of the Centre's educational resources for higher education and the Universal Design Grand Challenge 2020. Over 1300 lecturers received two emails in December containing a one hour introductory lecture on Universal Design and a link to the Universal Design Module for higher education developed by the Centre in 2014. The modules have subsequently been downloaded by 60 lecturers and CEUD had been invited to provide 6 guest lectures in Q1 2020 in Schools of Architecture in TU Dublin and Cork (UCC/CIT) and in schools of engineering in DCU, TU Dublin and TCD. A communications plan and social media campaign to target students was developed and rolled out in January to March 2020.

Due to the significant disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis to the higher education sector, the Centre took a number of contingency measures and deferred the Universal Design Grand Challenge (UDGC) 2020 awards event from May to November 2020.

This year saw a huge increase in support for the UDGC, due in part to the Centre's outreach work and approach to communicating with both lecturers and students through a variety of

UNIVERSAL DESIGN GRAND CHALLENGE 2020

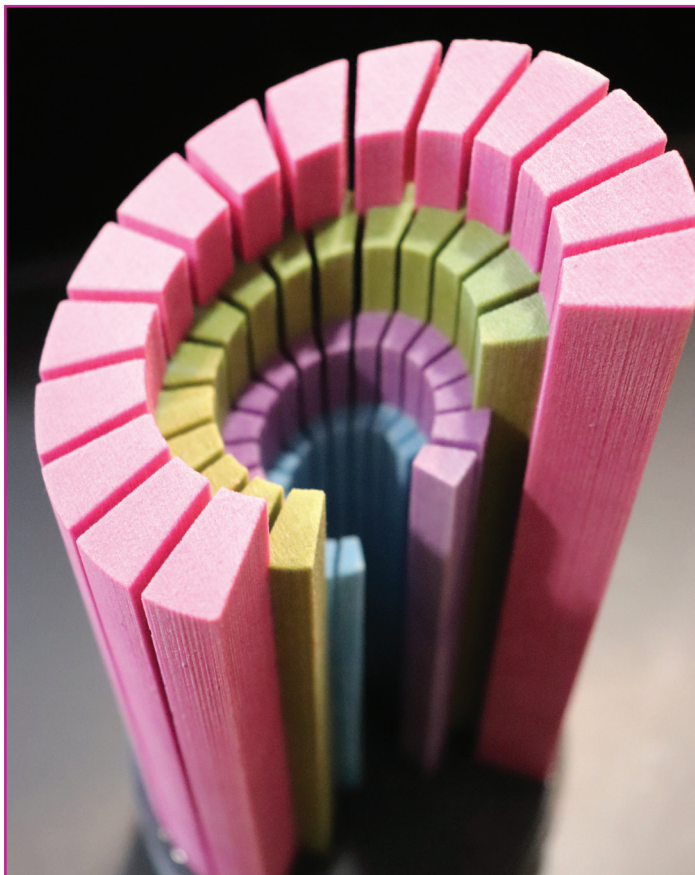
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Built Environment - Winner

Congratulations Lydia Rose Morgan

Cork Institute of Technology

ENTERPRISE IRELAND
where innovation means business

Technology and ICT - Winner

Congratulations Vicki Anderson

Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)

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People's Choice - Winner

Congratulations Team Korta

Trinity College Dublin

ENTERPRISE IRELAND
where innovation means business



Thanks for attending

channels. CEUD provided eight guest lectures and site visits to students and lecturers at TU Dublin, UCC, CIT, DCU and TCD.

This year's entries were up by nearly 70% from last year, with a total of 118 entries received.

Following adjudication by the panel of international judges for the award, this year's shortlist for the Universal Design Grand Challenge 2020 were announced on 22nd June. The nine shortlisted entries came from TU Dublin, TCD, IADT, CIT, NCAD and NUI Maynooth. The shortlisted entrants received pitch coaching and other supports in advance of presenting their designs online to the panels of national judges in advance of the awards event, held on 11th November.

The keynote speaker at the UDGC 2020 awards events was Patricia Scanlon. An Irish entrepreneur, she founded SoapBox Labs in 2013, a company that applies artificial intelligence to develop voice and speech recognition applications that are specifically tuned to children's voices. Dr Scanlon was recognized by Forbes in December 2018 as one of the World's Top 50 Women in Tech. Enterprise Ireland provided the Universal Design Commercialisation Award again this year, which provides up to €15,000 worth of consultancy to explore the market/commercial opportunity for the winning entry.

Our winners were:

- **Built Environment:** Lydia Morgan, Wandersford Quay Intergenerational Community Hub, Cork Institute of Technology
- **Products & Services:** Jack Canavan, Flo (formerly Puck) NCAD.

- Technology & ICT: Vicki Anderson, SuperValu Assistance App, IADT
- **Enterprise Ireland Universal Design Commercialisation Award:** Jack Canavan, Flo (formerly Puck) NCAD.
- **People's Choice Awards:** Korta – Tracking App for Diabetic and Hypertensive Patient, Trinity College Dublin

Universal Design and Junior Achievement Ireland

During 2020, the NDA continued a partnership project with Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) and Dublin City Council (DCC) whereby a Universal Design module is being delivered in primary schools as part of the Power of Design Programme initiated by JAI and DCC in previous years.

The Power of Design module uses a 'learning by doing' methodology to demonstrate to primary level students the positive impact of design on social, cultural and economic life. The programme was initiated in 2015 as part of Dublin City Council's Pivot Dublin submission and more than 3,000 students have participated in Dublin City Council catchment areas.

The project not only introduces Universal Design to students and their schools but also raises awareness among a range of participating industry volunteers. The direct interaction with students in schools, by working through teachers and principals, is an effective approach for promoting Universal Design.

Phase 1 was completed in 2019 and further to a review of its success, it was agreed to advance to Phase 2 where the UD module would be integrated and rolled out to more schools. It is hoped that a longer term sustainable model can be established thereafter.

CEUD worked closely with Junior Achievement Ireland to plan the roll out of Phase 2 of the module on Power of Design (POD) to 50 workshops in 5th and 6th Class during 2020. Prior to COVID-19, most of the schools had been registered and volunteers trained along with the materials updated and ready to be distributed. COVID-19 caused a revision of how the rollout of the POD module was conducted. A successful pilot of virtual delivery of modified module content was completed in Q3 2020. CEUD is engaging to refine the accessible formatting for the virtual module and is in communications with JAI on arrangements for extending the contracted time period to allow for completing the rollout of the module in early 2021. A full evaluation of the project will be conducted to inform considerations for how the program might be implemented beyond 2021.

European Standard on Communications in Transport

CEUD is contributing to the development of a European standard entitled 'Transport Services – Customer communications for passenger transport services – A Universal Design approach'. This standard will be based on the previous standard that the CEUD was involved in with NSAI at a national level covering the utility sectors such as electricity, gas and water. The focus is on verbal/signed, written and digital communications through a Universal Design approach. CEUD facilitated meetings for Irish transport stakeholders to promote and facilitate contributions from stakeholders on the draft European standard during a public consultation.

Continue to promote awareness and understanding of Universal Design in the built environment, products, services, and information and communication technologies through promoting and participating in awards, workshops and conferences

Implementing the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings

This project aims to promote understanding and adoption of the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings, developed by the NDA CEUD in 2019 in conjunction with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and which are the first of their kind in the world.

The project will be funded by the **Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF)**. The Department of Children & Youth Affairs submitted a successful application for a three year project under the DAF.

This collaboration with a Government Department presents a unique opportunity for CEUD to influence the adoption of Universal Design in the critically important sector of Early Learning and Care. This is the biggest opportunity of this kind that CEUD has been presented with to date; to disseminate and embed UD guidelines nationally. The work was scoped out in 2020 and the deliverables for 2021 have been agreed as follows:

1. A website – that assists awareness building
2. e-learning courses and platform – that assist capacity building
3. A communications strategy and campaign to disseminate and promote the use of the above deliverables.

Outreach and guest lectures with Higher Education Institutions

To further engage with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and promote the CEUD's work in this sector and the Universal Design Grand Challenge, the Centre responded to a number of invitations to provide guest lecturers and visit with departments and schools.

The Cork Centre for Architectural Education invited the centre for a day visit to provide lectures to 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students and to meet with the head of school and all staff. The Centre presented to over 100 students, researchers and staff from industrial design, product design and architectural technology courses in IT Carlow. A presentation given to final year computer science students in Trinity College Dublin looked at incorporating Universal Design in their final, challenge based module. TU Dublin School of Architecture invited the Centre to meet with and present to all 4th year Interior Architecture students. The Peter McVerry Trust runs an internal diploma on social care for its staff and the Centre presented on its work on housing, customer communications and service provision.

CEUD visited Griffith College to review and grade Interior Architecture student's final year presentations. This follows on from previous presentations to these students on Universal Design and the Built Environment. A Griffith College student was the winner of the UDCG 2019 Built Environment section.

Universal Design Homes, Sarsfield House, Ballyfermot

CEUD was invited by Dublin City Council’s Planning Department to provide advice on Universal Design Homes in Sarsfield House, Ballyfermot. CEUD attended a meeting to discuss multi-generational UD homes at this site. The 3.8 acre field beside Sarsfield Road in Lower Ballyfermot is currently being leased by The Sons of Divine Providence (TSDP) on a long-term lease arrangement from Dublin City Council. A Working Group was set up in 2019 to discuss the design of the multi-generational housing for older people from a UD approach and to provide stakeholder feedback to the Dublin City Council Architects team. This work continued in 2020 with advice being provided by CEUD staff.

Launch of the updated Customer Communications Toolkit

The updated Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service – A Universal Design Approach was launched by Patrick O’Donovan TD, Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) with Special Responsibility for Public Procurement, Open Government, and eGovernment. The launch was held on 11 December 2019 as part of the DPER Annual Quality Customer Service Conference, which took place at Farmleigh House. CEUD collaborated with the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) on a project to update and re-launch the Toolkit to reflect recent changes in related legislation and terminology.

The revised Toolkit was finished in 2020 to ensure it was fully accessible and is listed in the Actions under Our Public Service 2020, and it continues to align with the work of the National Adult Literacy Agency.

The original 2017 NDA-DPER Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service – A Universal Design Approach has been very successful, with uptake and impact across a wide range of public bodies. As part of a shared print run with DPER, the NDA-CEUD has 500 copies of the updated Toolkit for use in workshops and seminars and the revised Toolkit is also hosted on the DPER and UD websites for wider dissemination.

USA Masters in Occupational Therapy visit NDA

15 students from University of Tennessee at Wesleyan visited the NDA in February 2020. The visit was part of a Masters in Occupational Therapy course activity to tour disability related organisations in England and Ireland. The visiting group was presented with an overview of the functions and publications of the NDA and CEUD.

RIAI Annual Architecture Awards – Building for All - Universal Design category

Since 2013, the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) at the National Disability Authority (NDA), has supported the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Universal Design category as part of their annual architecture awards. The aim of the award is to promote excellence in Universal Design among the architectural profession in Ireland. As part of its support for the award, CEUD invites a national or international architect to chair the jury for the award. In 2020, the jury chair was to be Mr Jim Harrison, an internationally recognised expert on architecture from a Universal Design approach.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions (both local and national), the RIAI paused all site visits to the shortlisted projects for all Architecture Awards. RIAI decided to defer the Universal Design category for 2020 and agreed that the short-listed candidates would be part of the 2021 RIAI awards program. The NDA CEUD looks forward to continued collaboration with the RIAI in 2021.

Irish standard NSAI SWiFT-19 Barrier Masks

The new Irish Standard, I.S. SWiFT-19: 2020 “Barrier Masks for Consumers- Requirements” was approved for publication by the National Standards Authority Ireland (NSAI). The development of the new standard was in response to, and in collaboration with, a request from the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC). NDA’s Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) contributed on the committee to integrate Universal Design regarding the needs of a diverse range of users, including persons with disabilities.

In parallel to this work, a European specification has been developed in [CEN](#) (the European Committee for Standardization). This new European publication (CEN Workshop Agreement) S.R. CWA 17553:2020 (Community face coverings- Guide to minimum requirements, methods of testing and use) was published in 2020.

The NDA joined CEN-CENELEC TC 248 WG38 on a standards project to develop a European Technical Specification (TS) about requirements for Community Face Coverings. The TS is expected to be published in 2021.

European Standard on Accessibility Independent Living Technologies

A representative from the NDA is a member of a European standards committee about Accessibility for mainstream products and services for Independent Living Technologies. The focus of the standard is looking at the convergence of mainstream technologies and assistive technology and the requirements that need to be developed to ensure that they are accessible for persons with disabilities. It is expected that this new standard will be completed in late 2022.

International Standards on Innovation Management

A representative from the NDA is a member of National Standards Authority Ireland (NSAI) Technical Committee TC 45. TC 45 mirrors the development of series of International Standards Organisation (ISO) 56000 on Innovation Management. Some Irish members of the committee are also active with integrating innovation into enterprise and public service using an innovation scorecard assessment and related training initiatives.

The NDA is contributing content in the standards about accessibility following the Universal Design approach. Cross collaboration between innovation and accessibility is being initiated based on aligning with the new 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’.

Presentation to the Strategic Advisory Group on Accessibility (SAGA)

CEUD presented to the Strategic Advisory Group on Accessibility (SAGA) about progress on implementing the European Universal Design process standard EN 17161:2019 Accessibility following a Design for All in products, goods and service – Extending the range of users. As a member of SAGA the semi-annual meeting in Brussels at the European Standards Office was attended virtually. SAGA has membership from European National Standards Bodies as well as representative groups for disability, consumers, older persons and the EU Commission. The presentation highlighted on-going implementation trials of 17161 and planning for a European workshop in 2021 for member states to showcase how they are using the standard.

Housing Agency – Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) CPD on Innovative Housing for All

A member of CEUD presented on Universal Design Homes as part of a series of 3 Webinars looking at ‘Innovative Housing for All’ organised by the Housing Agency, in partnership with the RIAI. The presentation was titled ‘Universal Design Homes from UD to UD++’. The key messages included that Universal Design is good design and that the requirements to design and build Universal Designed homes needs to be prioritised as it future proofs homes to be accessible for people across the life cycle. The webinar and the series itself was well attended and received positive feedback.

Steering Committee for the development of a remote ISL service

CEUD was invited to partake in a Steering Group to oversee and advise on the development of several projects shared by both the Citizen Information Board (CIB) and the Sign Language Interpretation Service (SLIS). This includes the continued development and expansion of the IRIS (Irish Remote Interpreting Service). CIB was successful in obtaining funds under the Department of Public Expenditure and Innovation Fund to develop an App, platform and register of ISL interpreters to further enhance accessibility to ISL services for the Deaf community and to support public services to providing accessible services which will form part of the work of the Steering Group’s work.

The Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) Awards

The CEUD continued its long-running partnership with the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) to promote Universal Design among the design community. The CEUD judges entries in the Universal Design category of the IDI Awards and the IDI Graduate Design Awards each year. In 2020, the IDI Awards and IDI Graduate Design Awards took place in November. The winner of the Universal Design category of the IDI Awards was Nokia Bell Labs for its design of an interactive stall at the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition. The winner of the Universal Design category of the IDI Graduate Design Awards was Aoife Taaffe of Cork Institute of Technology for ‘Social Steps’, an app to help improve digital literacy and reduce social isolation of older adults.

The CEUD was also invited to join a panel of judges of a new IDI Awards category titled “Design for Good”, which was established to accommodate the growth of design for good. This award goes to a design project that has made the world a better place by addressing a need. The joint winners of the Design for Good category were Big Life Fix and Creatives against Covid-19.

Continue to build a network of Universal Design Champions across the various domains of industry, government, education and the public to extend the knowledge base of good practice in Universal Design

Presentation on Customer Communications Toolkit at DPER's QCS Conference

CEUD presented at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) meeting of the Quality Customer Service Network (QCSN) on 1 April. The QCSN includes members from across the civil and public service, and is facilitated by the Reform and Delivery Office at DPER. CEUD made a presentation on the updated Customer Communications Toolkit, the new standard IS EN 17161 'Design for all', and procurement under the European web accessibility directive.

Continue to promote the adoption of Universal Design in practice in the areas of products, services, and Information Communication Technologies

New education programme called The BIG IDEA

CEUD extended its long term partnership with the Institute of Designers Ireland (IDI) to collaborate on co-development of the BIG IDEA education programme for Transition Year (TY) students that will adopt and use parts of CEUD's 2nd Level Universal Design curriculum. The creative design ethos, social themes and proposed learning outcomes for the BIG IDEA educational programme are very compatible with Universal Design.

The BIG IDEA programme comprises workshops for schools as part of TY classes, community and industry participation and a showcase/competition component. The Big Idea programme structure and operation for 2nd Level is similar to the successful CEUD education initiatives with Junior Achievement for Primary Level and the Universal Design Grand Challenge for 3rd Level. The successful integration of the Universal Design curriculum into the BIG IDEA is enhanced in that a key advisor to the BIG IDEA team is the same educator that worked on the development of the Universal Design curriculum for 2nd Level. As a follow-on to the Universal Design for 2nd Level curriculum project work it is recognised that the timing of this IDI BIG IDEA project can strongly compliment the introduction of Universal Design curriculum in the schools and among teachers. Further, the initiative services to raise awareness of Universal Design (UD) among the vast network of IDI professional affiliated with The Big Idea programme.

Meeting of the Service Design Network

CEUD joined a meeting of the [Irish Chapter \(branch\) of the Service Design Network \(SDN\)](#) in Q3 2020. The SDN is a global non-profit institution of service designers. The Irish Chapter of the SDN comprises service designers that work with clients in the public and private sectors, and its objective is to promote the value of service design in Ireland. At the meeting, CEUD spoke about its objectives, its work, and the European standard EN 17161:2019 'Design for All – Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services – Extending the range of users' and how it may be used in the design of services.

Development of Universal Design for Learning Guidelines for FET

The NDA participated in a SOLAS National Advisory Committee on Universal Design for Learning for Further Education and Training (NAC-UDL) and on its Sub-Committee. The SOLAS Active Inclusion Unit, in collaboration with ETBI, commissioned AHEAD to conduct research on inclusive learning environments using a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. The overall output of the work is to publish Guidelines on UDL for FET. CEUD advised the establishment of the Sub-Committee to enhance participation and transparency in the Guidelines development. A working group made up of internal as well as a number of external UD education champions was hosted by the CEUD to prepare an extensive comments on the number of drafts of the Guidelines. CEUD prepared a Policy Paper on Universal Design for Education that was integrated into the UDL Guidelines. Find at:

<http://universaldesign.ie/awards/education/universal%20design%20in%20education%20and%20training%20%E2%80%93%20policy%20landscape%20in%20ireland.pdf> SOLAS

proposes that the guidelines be launched in early 2021.

ICT Accessibility and Public Procurement

CEUD presented at a roundtable on “ICT Accessibility & Public Procurement” organised by G3ICT and the European Disability Forum on 16th July for EU member states. Since January 2016, Ireland has had obligations under the EU Directive on Public Procurement that includes specific requirements to reference accessibility for persons with disabilities in tenders. However accessibility criteria still are not always included broadly or consistently in public ICT procurements. CEUD presented on its experience of developing and promulgating ICT accessibility resources and standards with public sector bodies.

CPD training on Universal Design for IT Professionals

CEUD in conjunction with the Irish Computer Society developed and delivered the first of a series of courses on Universal Design for IT Professionals. The training on “Accessible Digital Content” such as Word, PDF and PowerPoint has been delivered to 200 participants in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the course was redesigned to be delivered exclusively online, which resulted in some cost savings but also the need to keep the virtual class sizes small. This course continues to be offered to staff from the private and public sector. A second course, an “Introduction to Web Accessibility” is being developed and will commenced delivery in 2021. Further details are available here:

<https://www.ics.ie/events/accessible-digital-content-1990>

Presentation at Quality Customer Service Network

CEUD presented to the Quality Customer Service Network, a public service network facilitated by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, at its online seminar on 16 September. The title of the presentation was ‘A Universal Design Approach to Accessibility in Customer Services’, and it covered Universal Design of services, customer communications and ICT design. The purpose was to inform the network of the revised and updated toolkit including sign language as a key addition. This network is mainly made up of front line staff across the public sector who are the key implementers of the previous version of the toolkit.

AI Here for Good Strategy

NDA provided input on the draft government (Artificial Intelligence) AI strategy, “AI Here for Good”, being developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. A key recommendation provided is the need for any datasets used to underpin AI applications, such as machine learning and natural language processing, to be fully reflective of the broad range of diverse abilities and disabilities in Irish society. All interfaces to AI applications, particularly in public services should be universally designed.

Strategic Priority 5



Strategic Priority 5:

“To continue to be an effective and pro-active organisation, committed to delivering on our strategic priorities and communicating our work”.

In 2020, the NDA continued in our commitment to effectively deliver on our strategic priorities and in compliance with all of our statutory, regulatory and governance obligations. Throughout the year, we continued to engage with our stakeholders in different ways, including through our staff, submissions, consultations, websites, social media accounts and our newsletter.

Governance and Financial Reporting

The National Disability Authority is committed to attaining the highest standard of corporate governance within the organisation. Continuing to develop a culture which supports and drives high standards was central to the work programme undertaken by the Authority and Executive in 2020.

The overall governance and control framework within the National Disability Authority is guided by compliance with the NDA Act 1999 and the provisions of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). During 2020, given the requirement for staff to work remotely in accordance with public health guidance, particular emphasis was placed on reviewing and monitoring the control environment operating in the NDA, focussing specifically on financial and data management measures in place.

An Oversight and Performance Framework Agreement was established between the National Disability Authority and the Department of Justice and Equality for the 2020 period. This Agreement defined and clarified the roles and responsibilities of both the NDA and the Department of Justice and Equality and detailed the high-level goals and objectives, as well as the key programme of activity that the NDA committed to for 2020. The Agreement also outlined the NDA’s commitment to ongoing compliance with relevant requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

In October 2020, the Government transferred a number of relevant functions and agencies from the Department of Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), including the National Disability Authority, as outlined in the Disability, Equality, Human Rights, Integration and Reception (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2020 (S.I. No 436/2020). In light of this transfer, DCEDIY undertook to provide Financial Shared Services and Internal Audit services to the NDA.

Financial reports (through management accounts and updates) showing details of expenditure against the agreed budget were reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Authority throughout the year on a bi-monthly basis. The management accounts were also shared with the Audit & Risk Committee throughout the year.

In accordance with the National Disability Authority Act 1999, the NDA prepared and submitted draft financial accounts for 2019 to the Comptroller and Auditor General. The NDA

submitted the approved financial accounts and Annual Report for 2019 to the Minister on 23 September 2020. The Financial Statements of the NDA for the year ended 31 December 2020 have been prepared under FRS102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).

Internal Audit

The NDA continued to avail of the independent services of the Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Justice and Equality to perform its internal audit function during 2020, to monitor risk, and to review the effectiveness of the NDA's arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control. One internal audit was carried out in 2020 which involved a review of internal controls operating during the 2019 period with no material concerns identified and no high risks identified. A report on the review of financial procedures operating in the NDA was finalised in April 2020 with recommendations implemented during 2020.

Authority 2020

The Authority of the NDA comprises a Chairperson and 12 ordinary members. The Authority met 9 times during 2020, with one 2-day meeting. In accordance with public health guidelines, all meetings were held remotely from March 2020. A schedule of 2020 attendance, fees and expenses is set out in the Governance Statement. Representatives of the NDA attended a number of seminars provided by the IPA's Governance Forum throughout 2020. The Authority conducted a self-evaluation of its performance in 2020 in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016), taking into account the recently published Gender & Diversity Annex to the Code. Recommendations from the previous evaluation process (2019) were progressed throughout the year.

Risk Management

The effective management of organisational risk requires robust control processes to support the Authority and the Executive in achieving the NDA's objectives and in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Risk and control functions are established in the role of Audit & Risk Committee appointed by the Authority, who review performance, risk matters including policy and practice.

The NDA's Risk Management Advisory Group comprises the senior management group and two independent members. The group provides a forum to support the Senior Management Group in relation to their considerations for the day to day implementation of the agreed NDA risk management framework. The NDA has an established Risk Register which is reviewed in light of Covid-19 and approved at regular intervals by the Audit & Risk Committee and Authority, as appropriate. The Authority has a designated Chief Risk Officer and has developed and approved the organisation's Risk Appetite Statement.

The risk environment and any issues for the NDA are considered by the Senior Management Group at regular intervals and risk is a standing item on the agenda for each Authority meeting. A number of enhancement recommendations from a previously commissioned Risk Review were implemented and approved by the Authority throughout 2020. Risk considerations are also built into the NDA's project management system.

In line with the requirement under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies to publish top risks, and reflecting on key priorities of the organisation, the following were identified as the potential risks that could negatively impact on the NDA during 2020:

1. Challenges in delivering on new functions within defined timeframes such as the Web Accessibility Directive and increasing monitoring role in the absence of additional resources and technical expertise.
2. Challenges to ensuring sufficient capacity to provide consistent, high quality, and time-relevant outputs to deliver on the statutory functions of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in response to increased demand in this area.
3. Challenges to the effective delivery of the NDA's work programme in 2020 in light of the wider COVID-19 environment and the potential impacts posed.

During 2020, the NDA put in place plans and actions to mitigate these risks.

Code of Conduct, Ethics in Public Office, Additional Disclosures of Interests by Authority Members and Protected Disclosures

For the year ended 31 December 2020, the NDA can confirm that a Code of Conduct for the Authority and staff members was in place and adhered to. Furthermore, all Authority members and relevant staff members complied with their statutory responsibilities under the Ethics in Public Office legislation.

As a public body, the NDA is required under section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, to publish an annual report in relation to the number of protected disclosures made to it in the preceding year, and the action taken in response to any such protected disclosures.

No protected disclosures were made to the NDA in the period 1 January to 31 December 2020.

The NDA also updated its Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy during 2020, which was approved by the Authority and circulated to staff thereafter.

Data Protection/Freedom of Information

During 2020, the NDA continued a programme of work to ensure its compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and its related risks mitigated. This included updating and developing key policies and procedures in light of the Regulation. The NDA liaised with the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) on the Regulation as relevant to the NDA as matters arose during 2020. The NDA's Data Protection Officer is also a member of the DPC's DPO Network.

The NDA received three FOI requests in 2020. Two of the request(s) were part-granted with some redactions and answered within the statutory timeframe. The other request was received in December 2020 for answer in January 2021.

Public Sector Duty

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014) requires that the NDA conduct an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the NDA; set out the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues; and report on developments and achievements regarding the Public Sector Duty in its annual report. Recommendations made through a consultation process with staff in 2019 was progressed during 2020 including preliminary work to commence updating the NDA’s ‘Ask Me Guidelines’ from a human rights and equality perspective.

Staffing in the NDA

In accordance with section 27 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999, the NDA is the employer of its staff. The Executive, led by the Director, implements the strategy, annual work plan and policies of the National Disability Authority on a day-to-day basis.

As at 31 December 2020, the National Disability Authority had 34 staff. The NDA’s payroll, pension and travel and subsistence processing is provided by the Payroll Shared Service Centre of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Executive consists of three sections:

- Policy, Public Affairs and Research;
- Centre for Excellence in Universal Design;
- Corporate Services.

The Heads of these three sections, reporting to the Director, comprise the senior management group.

Senior Management at 31 December 2020

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Director | Dr Aideen Hartney |
| Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Research | Dr Rosalyn Tamming |
| Chief Officer, Centre for Excellence in Universal Design | Dr Ger Craddock |
| Head of Corporate Services | Suzanne Lambe |

Training and Development

The NDA continued to roll out a training and development plan for staff informed by the Performance Development Management System (PMDS) and individual needs, which included attendance at seminars, training sessions and access to coaching supports for example. The following is an example of some of the training and development opportunities in 2020:

- Corporate Governance for State And Public Sector Bodies
- COVID-19- First Aid responder & lead worker representative training
- Digital Content Training

- GDPR & The Health Research Regulations;
- DSE Assessments
- Freedom of Information Briefing Session
- Protected Disclosure Training
- Procurement Training
- Public Spending Code
- Web Accessibility Zoom Webinar- creating and checking accessible eDocuments
- Webinar UNI Leeds engagement
- Think Visual- Visual Thinking & Note-taking

Staff also attended conferences on relevant work themes including for example:

- Accessible Digital Content Online Training
- Annual Health Summit
- CIPD Student Conference
- Governance Forum- Culture & Good Governance
- Public Services 2020 Conference- Innovation: Focusing on outcomes
- SEAI Annual Public Sector Energy Conference 2020
- UCD Public Policy conference

Workplace Wellness

The NDA continued to make the Employee Assistance Programme available to staff during 2020. This free, confidential, professional service provides a range of support and advice to staff on personal or work-related concerns, which may affect a person's well-being and their performance in the workplace.

An online DSE/Ergonomic Assessment was undertaken by all staff, following the move to home working in light of COVID-19, with recommendations arising implemented.

The NDA provided Employee Wellbeing eLearning, facilitated by VHI, to all staff during 2020 in the following areas:

- Bright Ideas for Enhances Wellbeing
- Building Resilience
- Financial Fitness
- Nutrition
- Positive Mental Health

Health and Safety

The NDA is committed to ensuring the well-being of its employees by maintaining a safe place of work and ensuring compliance with all requirements pursuant to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (as amended). The NDA's Health and Safety Committee continued to support monitoring and guidance on Health and Safety matters during 2020 including revising the NDA's Safety Statement.

In response to COVID-19 and Government guidance in this regard, all staff of the NDA have been working remotely since the end of March 2020. The NDA established a COVID-19 Management Response Team and appointed a lead worker representative, tasked with assisting in the implementation of measures identified by the Government and relevant agencies to ensure a safe return to work for all employees through an agreed COVID-19 Response Plan. A commissioned Health & Safety review, focusing specifically on COVID-19 control measures, was conducted with the recommendations implemented during 2020 and into 2021.

Disability Act 2005

Under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005, public sector bodies are required to report on their level of employment of persons with disabilities. The Percentage of NDA employees with a disability, under the definition in the Disability Act 2005, was 20% for 2020.

These figures are based on a Staff Census carried out in 2021. The data is updated annually as appropriate to account for new staff or for existing staff who have a Change in Status.

The NDA has taken all reasonable measures to promote and support the employment by it of persons with disabilities. For example; providing an accessible work environment, including Work Station Assessments, with further remote work station and ergonomic assessments conducted in 2020.

Communications Strategy

Throughout the year the National Disability Authority worked with an external contractor to develop a new Communications Strategy. A number of stakeholders including persons with disabilities, departmental officials and members of the NDA Board, were consulted on their experience of communications with the National Disability Authority. Our contractors subsequently drafted a number of documents that were developed into a high level Communications Strategy, and an associated Implementation Plan. All the activities recommended, or committed to, in the Strategy will have a guide/protocol in place for all staff so that they can easily follow the process required. Implementation will be supported by an annual Communications Action Plan and an internal Communications Advisory Group.

To further support the Communications Strategy the National Disability Authority created a Twitter account (@NDAIreland) to share its policy advice and research, publicise consultations and vacancies and highlight relevant documents from the archive on its website. The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design also has a new Twitter account (@CEUD_NDA) which replaces the account used to promote and run the annual Universal Design Grand Challenge.

Library and Information Resource

The NDA Library continued to provide a service for staff by conducting literature searches for staff to support the development of NDA's evidence-based advice and for use in literature reviews and articles.

Other services to staff provided by the Library contractor included:

- Engagement with staff to guide improved response to meet needs;
- Collaboration with staff to enhance projects;
- Responses to queries from staff and general public.

The library holds extensive collections on disability and related topics, universal design topics, as well as books, eBooks, eJournals, newsletters, and other materials. Public access to the library was paused in 2020 due to COVID-19.

Websites development

The NDA is required to act in line with Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 (Web Accessibility Directive) on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. All public bodies are required to ensure their websites and apps are accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Directive was transposed into Irish law via Regulations on 23 September 2020, by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. As the statutory advisory body to government on matters relevant to disability and Universal Design, and the designated national monitoring body for the Directive, it is important that the National Disability Authority's websites meet the best current, international standards of accessibility.

Following approval from the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, in October 2020, the National Disability Authority contracted for the redevelopment of its two websites (nda.ie and universaldesign.ie) in accordance with the provisions of the Web Accessibility Directive, and the aims of the organisation's new Communications Strategy. . The new websites are due to be operational by the summer of 2021.

Accommodation and Facilities

The NDA's Corporate Services Department is responsible for maintaining a safe and efficient premises and for facilitating arrangements for internal and stakeholder use of the NDA's facilities for meetings and other scheduled events.

Over the course of 2020, the NDA commissioned works to ensure the effective maintenance and use of its accommodation. This included upgrading emergency exits and enhancing accessibility of doorways internally. An extra accessible car-parking space was also successfully designated immediately to the front of the building. The NDA began a building works program which will include electrical, accessibility and refurbishment works over the next 3 years and appointed a specialist Project Manager to advise for the duration of the project.

Since 1 July 2015 the NDA has had a lease agreement in place with tenants for a number of offices, from which the income is accrued as Appropriations in Aid to the Department of Justice and Equality. Income was transferred to the Department as appropriate in 2020.

Energy

The NDA Energy & Green Team registers and maintains records for the National Disability Authority with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

The National Disability Authority has a total floor area of 2,633 m² which comprises a two-storey over garden level Victorian Building (x2), a link building completed in 2006 and an adjoining three-storey plus attic building completed in the early 1980s. The main energy users are:

- Electrical Energy: Lighting, ICT & Offices, Air Conditioning and General Services;
- Thermal Energy (Natural Gas): Space Heating (LTHW radiator circuits and under floor heating) and Hot Water (HWS).

For the purposes of making a statutory return for 2020, 94% of electrical energy use in the buildings was attributable to the National Disability Authority. In relation to thermal energy, 82% of the natural gas used was attributable to the NDA.

Since 1 July 2015, the first floor in the Back Building has been leased and occupied by a private company. This company has a separate electricity meter, although it does not have a separate gas meter.

In 2020, the National Disability Authority consumed 247,692 kWh of energy, consisting of:

- 69,692kWh of electricity;
- 178,000kWh of fossil fuels;
- 0 kWh of renewable fuels.

The NDA can report a:

- 50.2% cost savings since baseline;
- 56.6% lower consumption since baseline.

Actions undertaken in 2020

In 2020, the NDA undertook planning and implementation of a range of initiatives to improve our energy performance, including:

- Continued Energy Awareness- SEAI Annual Public Sector Energy Conference 2020

Although savings were achieved due to staff working remotely during COVID-19, projects were not possible during this time.

Actions planned for 2021

In 2021, the NDA intends to improve further our energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Monitoring & Reporting- New User Workshop
- Review and/or upgrade insulation
- Internal Lighting: LED upgrade
- Rewiring

Access Officer

The NDA's Access Officer, appointed in line with the Disability Act 2005 continued to be available to guide on any assistance required for persons with disabilities who accessed the NDA's facilities, events and website in 2020. The Officer's contact details are on the home page of the NDA's website.

Oireachtas members' enquiries

In accordance with DPER Circular 24/2016, the National Disability Authority provided a dedicated enquiries email address OireachtasReps@nda.ie for members of the Oireachtas seeking information on matters pertaining to the work of the NDA.

**Financial Statements
for Year ended 31
December 2020**





Ard Reachtaire Cuntas agus Ciste
Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas National Disability Authority

Opinion on the financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the National Disability Authority for the year ended 31 December 2020 as required under the provisions of section 17 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999. The financial statements comprise

- the statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves
- the statement of comprehensive income
- the statement of financial position
- the statement of cash flows and
- the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the National Disability Authority at 31 December 2020 and of its income and expenditure for 2020 in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 — *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland*.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Authority and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Report on information other than the financial statements, and on other matters

The Authority has presented certain other information together with the financial statements. This comprises the annual report, the governance statement and Authority members' report and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.

Colette Drinan
For and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General

23 July 2021

Appendix to the report

Responsibilities of Authority members

As detailed in the governance statement and Authority members' report, the Authority members are responsible for

- the preparation of financial statements in the form prescribed under section 17 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999
- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS102
- ensuring the regularity of transactions
- assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under section 17 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999 to audit the financial statements of the Authority and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.

I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists

- related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date

of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.

- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Information other than the financial statements

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

Reporting on other matters

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. I report if I identify material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I report if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

I also report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.

Financial Statements for Year ended 31 December 2019

GENERAL INFORMATION

Address: 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Director: Aideen Hartney (appointed 13th July 2020)

Siobhan Barron (resigned 24th July 2020)

Solicitors: Messrs. Beauchamps, Grand Canal Dock, Dublin 2

Bankers: Bank of Ireland, 104 Ranelagh, Dublin 6

Bank of Ireland, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Auditors: Comptroller and Auditor General, 3a Mayor Street Upper, Dublin 1

Governance Statement and Authority Members' Report

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Governance

The National Disability Authority (NDA) was established under the National Disability Authority Act 1999. The NDA has duties to deliver on functions set out in section 8 of the Act and can produce codes of practice in accordance with section 10 of the Act. The NDA has additional functions awarded under the Disability Act 2005 and was named as the monitoring body under the European Union (Accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies) Regulations (S.I. No 358 of 2020) – also known as the Web Accessibility Directive (WAD). Late in 2020, the NDA was assigned the role to prepare a report under Section 10 of the Irish Sign Language Act (2017), and has been advised that this will become another of the

NDA's standing functions in future years. Further functions will be assigned to the NDA when the draft Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2016, is reviewed and revised for enactment by the current Dáil and Seanad.

In October 2020, the Government, in accordance with the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 1939, transferred a number of relevant functions and agencies from the Department of Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, including the National Disability Authority, as outlined in the Disability, Equality, Human Rights, Integration and Reception (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2020 (S.I. No 436/2020).

The NDA is independent in the exercise of its functions, in accordance with section 7 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999. The NDA's independent Board (the Authority) is accountable to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and is responsible for ensuring good governance. It performs this task by setting strategic objectives and targets and taking strategic decisions on all key business issues.

The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of the National Disability Authority are the responsibility of the Director and the senior management group. The group must follow the broad strategic direction set by the Authority and must ensure that all Authority members have a clear understanding of the key activities and decisions related to the entity, and of any significant risks likely to arise. The Director, newly appointed in July 2020 following the completion of the previous Director's term, acts as a direct liaison between the Authority and management of the National Disability Authority.

Responsibilities of the members of the Authority

The work and responsibilities of the Authority are set out in the National Disability Authority Act 1999 and the Disability Act 2005. The Authority has a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved for it for decision to ensure that the direction and control of the NDA is maintained. This schedule includes the following:

- significant acquisitions, disposals and retirement of assets of the NDA;
- major investments (in excess of €50,000) and capital projects, contracts and investments;
- delegated authority levels and risk management policies (standing item);
- Authority committee structures and terms of reference;
- assurances of compliance with statutory and administrative requirements in relation to the approval of the appointment, number, grading and conditions of all staff (which will also include remuneration and superannuation);
- approval of annual budgets and corporate plans;
- approval of annual reports and financial statements;
- appointment, remuneration and assessment of the performance of the Director

Section 17 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999 requires the Authority to keep, in such form as approved by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, all proper books of account of all income and expenditure of the Authority. In addition, section 16 of the Act states that moneys may be provided by the Oireachtas, a grant of such amount as the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance, sanctions towards the expenses of the Authority in the performance of its functions.

In preparing these financial statements, the Authority is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that it will continue in operation, and;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Authority is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, its financial position and enables it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 17 of the NDA Act. The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on the NDA's website is the responsibility of the Authority.

The Authority is responsible for approving the NDA annual work plan and budget. An evaluation of the performance of the annual plan and budget was completed on an ongoing basis by the Authority throughout 2020. This includes a review of the monthly management accounts, reports from the Finance Committee and a review of the annual financial statements. The Authority also approves annual work plans and reviews implementation progress during the year. The budget and performance as set out in the monthly management accounts are also reviewed by the senior management group and separately by the Finance Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee also receives the monthly management accounts for information purposes.

The Authority is responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Authority considers that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of the National Disability Authority at 31 December 2020.

Board Structure

The Authority (i.e. the Board of the NDA) consists of a Chairperson and 12 ordinary members, all of whom are appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Of the 12 members, one is elected through a ballot of the staff and is appointed by the Minister. Another is an officer of the Minister and a third member of the Authority is appointed by the Minister as a nominee of the Department of Health.

The members of the Authority are appointed for a term of four years and meet on a bimonthly basis. Since March 2020, in accordance with public health advice regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, all Authority meetings were held remotely. Under the provisions of the Act, the Authority members may be appointed for a second term. The table below details the appointment period for the current members of the Authority:

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: | Reappointment Date: |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Helen Guinan | Chairperson | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Ruthann LaMalfa | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Teresa McDonnell | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Deaglán O'Briain | Member | December 2014* | December 2018 |
| Aisling Glynn | Member | June 2017* | August 2018 |
| Jack Kavanagh | Member | August 2018 | |
| Cathal Morgan | Member | August 2018 | |
| Kathryn O'Donoghue | Member | August 2018 | |
| Martha Griffin | Member | August 2018 | |
| Deirdre O'Connor | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Damian Gordon | Member | August 2018 | |
| Brian Callanan | Member | August 2018 | |
| Grainne Collins** | Member | August 2018 | |

*Authority members currently serving a second term.

**Authority member (staff nominee) resigned in October 2020. A staff election process for this position was held to appoint a new member to the Authority in light of this resignation. Niamh Fawl was formally appointed in January 2021.

The Authority conducted a self-evaluation of its performance in 2020 in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016), taking into account the recently published Gender & Diversity Annex to the Code. Recommendations from the previous evaluation process (2019) were progressed throughout the year.

The Authority had four committees in 2020, as follows:

1. Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit & Risk Committee comprises three Authority members and four independent members, one of whom is the Chairperson of the Committee and another of whom is the Chairperson of the Risk Management Advisory Group. The Audit and Risk Committee forms part of the NDA’s control environment, with responsibility for providing independent advice to the Director and the Authority and supporting them in their responsibilities for matters of internal control, risk and governance. In particular, the Audit & Risk Committee makes recommendations to the Authority and the Director on matters relating to:

- a) The financial accounting and annual reporting processes;
- b) The effectiveness of internal controls and risk management environment;
- c) The operations and development of the Internal Audit function;
- d) The effectiveness of and the relationship with external Audit; and
- e) Value for money and other corporate governance issues.

The Audit & Risk Committee reports formally to the Authority after each meeting, and presents a comprehensive report by the ARC Chairperson in writing annually. The table below details the appointment period for the current members of the Audit & Risk Committee:

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: | Reappointment Date: |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| John Fitzgerald | Chairperson | March 2017 | |
| Teresa McDonnell | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Tony Fitzpatrick | Member | June 2017 | |
| Cathal Morgan | Member | August 2018 | |
| Kathryn O’Donoghue | Member | August 2018 | |
| Tim Maverley | Member | August 2018 | |
| John Maher | Member | August 2018 | |

*Audit & Risk Committee members currently serving a second term.

There were 4 meetings of the Audit & Risk Committee in 2020 with the Committee’s Charter reviewed in May 2020. The most notable amendment was the renaming of the Audit Committee to the Audit & Risk Committee, following a recommendation made during a commissioned Risk Review conducted in late 2019. The Audit & Risk Committee conducted a self-evaluation of its performance in 2020 in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and also monitored the business continuity arrangements proposed and implemented by the Executive in light of COVID-19.

2. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee comprises four Authority members and two independent members. The duties of the Committee are as follows:

- a) to examine the annual expenditure profile and make recommendations to the Authority in relation to it;
- b) when the annual operating budget is approved, to review its implementation during the course of the year;
- c) to examine management accounts of the Authority on a regular on-going basis;
- d) to bring the annual statutory accounts to the Authority for approval following recommendations from the Audit & Risk Committee;
- e) to consider proposals from the Audit & Risk Committee where appropriate; and
- f) to review the format of the Authority's accounts.

The table below details the appointment period for the current members of the Finance Committee:

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: | Reappointment Date: |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Kathryn O'Donoghue | Chairperson | August 2018 | |
| Ruthann LaMalfa | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Pat Fitzsimons | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Harry McGeary | Member | August 2018 | |
| Damian Gordon | Member | August 2018 | |
| Brian Callanan | Member | August 2018 | |
| John Maher | Member | August 2018 | |

*Finance Committee members currently serving a second term.

The Finance Committee is required to hold at least four meetings each year, one of which must coincide with the recommendation for approval of the annual statutory accounts by the Authority. There were six meetings of the Finance Committee in 2020. The Committee assessed its performance in compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, taking account of the Gender and Diversity Annex, published in September 2020. Recommendations from the previous evaluation process (2019) were progressed throughout the year.

3. Director Performance Committee

The Director Performance Committee (a sub-committee of the Authority) was established to agree the Director's responsibilities and actions in line with the NDA work programme as set out in the Strategic Plan and the Annual Work plan. In addition, the Committee acts on behalf of the Authority, to review the Director's performance in relation to the agreed responsibilities and actions. The Committee reports to the Authority and informs the Director of the Authority's views and recommendations. The Committee met twice in 2020.

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: | Reappointment Date: |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Helen Guinan | Chairperson | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Deirdre O'Connor | Authority Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Jack Kavanagh | Authority Member | August 2018 | |

*Director Performance Committee member currently serving a second term.

The Authority commenced succession planning for the role of the Director of the NDA in September 2019 and the process was completed in July 2020 with the appointment of a new Director, Dr Aideen Hartney. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Kathryn O'Donoghue, was co-opted onto the Director Performance Committee in the latter half of 2019 to assist the Committee specifically with its preparations in relation to the recruitment process, which was conducted in accordance with DPER guidance on appointments of CEO's of non-commercial state bodies and the schedule of matters reserved for decision by the Authority and their responsibility for overseeing recruitment of the Director.

4. Risk Management Advisory Group

Separate to the Committees appointed by the Authority, an established Risk Management Advisory Group provides a forum to support the Senior Management Group in relation to considerations for the day to day implementation of the agreed NDA risk management framework. The NDA's Risk Management Advisory Group comprises the senior management group and two independent members nominated from the Audit & Risk and Finance Committees respectively. The NDA's Director and Chief Risk Officer, both of whom are members of the SMG, report on risk matters to the ARC and Authority respectively.

The duties of the Group are to:

- a) Advise on defining and reviewing the policy for the management of risks across the NDA;
- b) Advise on the implementation of the risk management policy;
- c) Support and advise on the promotion of awareness of risk management and advise on best practice to ensure that there is a comprehensive process to identify, assess, manage, monitor and report on risks within the NDA;
- d) Advise on the monitoring and the management of risk throughout the NDA;
- e) Advise on the formal review of the NDA's risk on a bi-annual basis;
- f) Advise on the report of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Authority.

The table below details the appointment period for the current members of the Risk Management Advisory Group:

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: | Reappointment Date: |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Tim Maverley | Chairperson | August 2018 | |
| Pat Fitzsimons* | Member | July 2014* | December 2018 |
| Senior Management Group | | | |

*Risk Management Advisory Group member currently serving a second term.

The Risk Management Advisory Group met twice during 2020. The Group reviews and updates the Risk Register on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Governance of State Bodies (2016). The Group reviewed its Terms of Reference in August 2020 and was renamed the Risk Management Advisory Group from the Risk Committee, on the recommendation of a commissioned Risk Review conducted in late 2019.

Schedule of Attendance, Fees and Expenses

A schedule of attendance at the Authority and Committee meetings for 2020 is set out below including the fees and expenses received by each member. Additional meetings were held during 2020 to formally appoint a new Director and to consider a monitoring function under the ISL Act 2017. Five Authority members do not receive fees as a result of the “One Person One Salary” (OPOS) principle.

| Authority Member | Appointment Date | Committee Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings attended |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Helen Guinan (Chair) | Reappointed August 2018 | 8,978 | 1,385 | 9/9 |
| Aisling Glynn | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 8/9 |
| Ruthann LaMalfa | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 7/9 |
| Teresa McDonnell | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | 45 | 9/9 |
| Deaglán Ó Briain | Reappointed December 2018 | - | - | 8/9 |
| Deirdre O’Connor | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 9/9 |
| Jack Kavanagh | Appointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 8/9 |
| Cathal Morgan | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 8/9 |
| Kathryn O’Donoghue | Appointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 9/9 |
| Martha Griffin | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 1/9 |
| Damian Gordon | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/9 |
| Brian Callanan | Appointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 9/9 |
| Grainne Collins | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/6 |

Grainne Collins (staff nominee) resigned from the Authority in October and her attendance is reflected in line with her term.

| Audit Committee | Appointment Date | Authority Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings attended |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| John Fitzgerald (Chairperson) | Appointed August 2018 | 2,565 | - | 4/4 |
| Teresa McDonnell | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |
| Tony Fitzpatrick | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 3/4 |
| Cathal Morgan | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 2/4 |
| Kathryn O'Donoghue | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |
| Tim Maverley | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |
| John Maher | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 3/4 |

| Finance Committee | Appointment Date | Committee Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings Attended |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Kathryn O'Donoghue (Chairperson) | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/6 |
| Pat Fitzsimons | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/6 |
| Ruthann LaMalfa | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/6 |
| Harry McGeary | Appointed August 2018 | - | 201 | 6/6 |
| Damian Gordon | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 3/6 |
| Brian Callanan | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/6 |

| Director Performance Review Committee | Appointment Date | Committee Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings Attended |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Helen Guinan (Chairperson) | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |
| Deirdre O'Connor | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |
| Jack Kavanagh | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |

| Risk Management Committee | Appointment Date | Committee Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings Attended |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Tim Maverly | Appointed December 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |
| Pat Fitzsimons | Reappointed December 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |
| Senior Management Group | | | | 2/2 |
| | | 53,438 | 1,631 | |

Authority Member Appointments

The current four year term expires in 2022 and therefore, there were no appointments made to the Authority in 2020. The staff nominee to the Authority resigned in September 2020, however the appointment of a new member was not formalised until January 2021, following a staff election process.

Disclosures Required by Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that the National Disability Authority has complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (“the Code”), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016. The following disclosures are required by the Code:

(a) Employee short term benefits breakdown

A table showing the breakdown of employee short term benefits is included in Note 6(a) – Remuneration and Other Pay Costs, to the financial statements.

(b) Consultancy Costs

Consultancy costs include the cost of external advice to the management and exclude outsourced “business-as-usual” functions.

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Legal advice | 42,526 | 27,429 |
| Strategic and governance projects | 41,007 | 40,283 |
| Total Consultancy Costs charged to the statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves. | 83,533 | 67,712 |

(c) Legal costs and settlements

No expenditure was incurred in the reporting period, in relation to legal costs, settlements and conciliation and arbitration proceedings in relation to contracts with third parties (2019- €0).

(d) Travel and Subsistence Costs

Travel and subsistence are categorised as follows:

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Domestic | | |
| – Direct Authority expenses (the Board) | 1,876 | 5,769 |
| – Indirect Authority expenses | 191 | 6,402 |
| – Employees | 2,510 | 13,877 |
| International | | |
| – Authority (the Board) | - | - |
| – Employees | 831 | 9,027 |
| Total Travel and Subsistence Costs | 5,408 | 35,075 |

(e) Hospitality Costs

No expenditure was incurred on client hospitality in the reporting period (2019- €0).

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Authority hospitality | - | - |
| Staff wellbeing workshop | - | - |
| Total Hospitality Costs | - | - |

Statement of Compliance

The Authority has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and has put procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Code. The National Disability Authority was in full compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies for 2020.



Helen Guinan
Chairperson
Date: 23 July 2021



Kathryn O' Donoghue
Authority Member
Date: 23 July 2021



Dr Aideen Hartney
Director
Date: 23 July 2021

Statement on Internal Control 2020 – by the Authority of the NDA

Scope of Responsibility

On behalf of the Authority of the NDA, I confirm that the Authority has overall responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated, and for reviewing its effectiveness. This responsibility takes account of the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

Through the Director and Senior Management Group structure, the Executive are responsible to the Authority for the implementation and maintenance of internal controls over all functions.

Purpose and context of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a tolerable level rather than to eliminate it. The system can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected in a timely way. During 2020, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in rapid changes to the working and control environment operating within the NDA with remote and virtual working in place since April 2020. In addition, in October 2020, the Government transferred a number of relevant functions and agencies from the Department of Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), including the National Disability Authority, as outlined in the Disability, Equality, Human Rights, Integration and Reception (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2020 (S.I. No 436/2020).

The system of internal control, which accords with guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, has been in place in the NDA for the year ended 31 December 2020 and up to the date of approval of the financial statements.

Capacity to Manage Risk

Risk management is integral to how the NDA works, and is implemented and monitored through structures described as follows.

The NDA Audit & Risk Committee, appointed by the Authority, comprises three Authority members and four independent members including an independent Chairperson who has the requisite financial and audit expertise. The role of the Audit & Risk Committee, as part of the ongoing systematic review of the business and corporate governance procedures of the Authority, is to oversee and advise the Authority and the Director on matters concerning the effectiveness of internal controls and the risk management environment.

During 2020, the Committee monitored the business continuity arrangements proposed and implemented by the Executive in response to Covid-19 at regular intervals. This included consideration of the NDA's Risk Register, which was regularly reviewed by the Executive in light of Covid-19, as well as review of the control arrangements in place in response to remote working arrangements. Risk is a standing item on the agenda of the Audit & Risk Committee and the Committee's views on risk matters are reported to the Authority in regular formal

written reports. The Committee also has responsibility for formally recommending the Risk Register to the Authority for approval at set times during the year. The Committee met four times in 2020 and the Committee's written annual report was presented by the Chairperson to the Authority on 26th November 2020.

The NDA's Senior Management Group, made up of a Director and three Heads of Unit, regularly consider risk and the Risk Register at its bi-weekly team meetings. An NDA Risk Management Advisory Group, which met twice in 2020, is also in place, comprised of the Senior Management Group and two independent nominated members from the Audit & Risk and Finance Committees respectively. The Group provides a forum to support the Senior Management Group in relation to their considerations for the day to day implementation of the agreed NDA risk management framework. The NDA's Director and Chief Risk Officer, both of whom are members of the SMG, report on risk matters to the ARC and Authority respectively.

The NDA commissioned a Risk Review in late 2019, as provided for in Section 7.2 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. Throughout 2020, the NDA sought to implement a number of recommendations made to enhance the NDA's Risk Management Framework including revisions to the NDA Risk Policy, Guidelines and Register, all of which were subsequently approved by the Authority. These documents set out the NDA's capacity to deal with risk, the risk management processes in place and details the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to risk. Risk management training is planned for the Chief Risk Officer, Senior Management Group members and wider staff in 2021.

The Authority has a Finance Committee to review and monitor expenditure and budget planning. The committee comprises members from the Authority and independent members, and it met 6 times during 2020. The Committee's work included a mid-year expenditure review and forecast of expenditure to year end, which reflected the impacts of Covid-19 on the delivery of some projects in the NDA's agreed Work Plan.

Until October 2020, the Authority availed of audit services from the Internal Audit Unit under the Department of Justice, which conducted a programme of work agreed directly with the Audit & Risk Committee approved by the NDA Authority. In light of the transfer of functions occurring so late in 2020, the Department of Justice and agreed to provide the internal audit services to the NDA for the 2020 audit, and it is envisaged that these services will be provided by DCEDIY for 2021 and onwards.

The NDA is also a member of the IPA governance forum and availed of training through same on areas including risk management throughout 2020.

Risk and Control Framework

Risk

The NDA has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address them and, to the greatest extent possible, to mitigate those risks. The Authority has an approved Risk Appetite Statement,

which details the level of risk the NDA is willing to accept in order to meet its strategic objectives. This statement acts to guide management in setting goals and making decisions so that the NDA is more likely to achieve its goals and sustain its operations.

A Risk Register is in place, which was further enhanced in 2020 on the recommendation of the commissioned review. The Register identifies the key risks facing the NDA which have been evaluated and graded according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Senior Management Group who have responsibility for its implementation.

The outcomes of regular risk assessments are used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. In May 2020, this included the review and revision of the NDA's Work Plan by the Executive in light of Covid-19 and its impacts on projects and their delivery. A revised Plan was presented and approved by the Authority in June 2020. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff for delivery within stated timeframes. In addition, the NDA operates a project management system whereby the risks relevant to individual projects are identified at the earliest stage of a proposal alongside the actions to address these. The NDA's project management policy, designed to specify the essential elements in the management of projects including the assessment of project risks, was most recently updated in 2019, with further enhancements to be made in 2021.

Budget Controls

The NDA budget is profiled at the start of year and distributed between all relevant items as approved by the Authority, including payroll, central services and commissioned works. Responsibility for departmental budgets is held by each Unit head. The detailed profile of expenditure and performance is reviewed regularly through the monthly management accounts, meetings of the Senior Management Group, and at meetings of the Finance and Audit & Risk Committees, and through reports to the Authority where finance and expenditure appear as a standing item on the agenda.

The monthly management accounts are reconciled with reports of expenditure received from the Department of Justice/Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and reports of the Payroll Shared Services Centre under the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Consistent quality reports from shared service centres are important in informing fully effective controls monitoring.

ICT Systems and Assets

The NDA avails of the shared ICT support service from the Department of Justice and the shared print management service through the Irish Prison Service. A Service Level Agreement was established for a further 3 year period in November 2019 with the Department in relation to the ICT service and arrangements are in place to back up NDA systems. The NDA and ICT support service met once in 2020, with the next meeting scheduled for Q1 2021.

The NDA takes assurance from the Head of ICT in the Department of Justice's letter and statement of assurances stating that adequate IT controls are in place and are operating effectively. A statement of assurances is appended to the letter, covering information management including: security & privacy; ICT disaster recovery; SLA arrangements; security of ICT infrastructure; ICT asset management; Data Protection; Mobile Asset Security; Communication networks; Governance of ICTs and Project Management practices.

The NDA adheres to the Department's ICT usage policy and this is communicated to all staff. Systems are backed up off site and overseen by the Department. During 2020, the NDA's designated Data Protection Officer provided guidance to staff on data protection measures while working remotely, as advised by the Data Protection Commission. A commissioned review of the ICT service is planned for 2021.

ICT assets are supplied to the NDA through the Shared ICT support service and those assets are recorded on the Asset Register of the Department of Justice. In 2020, the Authority approved the acquisition of additional hardware to support remote working arrangements as a result of Covid-19 public health measures. This additional hardware purchased in January 2021 is the property of the NDA and will be recorded on the NDA Asset Register. IT Assets are treated in the financial statements in line with the appropriate depreciation rates.

Shared Financial Services

The Department of Justice (Jan-October 2020)/Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (Nov-December 2020) have each provided written assurance to the NDA in relation to controls of the Financial Shared Service. The NDA receives monthly reports of expenditure from the Department(s) and these are reconciled monthly against NDA data on expenditure and budget profiles. The NDA takes assurance from the system of control within the Departments as reported by the respective Department officials.

The NDA also avails of shared services from the Payroll Shared Services Centre (PSSC) under the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's National Shared Service Office (NSSO). A Memorandum of Understanding for the provision of this service was established in April 2020 directly between NSSO and the National Disability Authority. The NDA also takes assurances from the control measures outlined as part of an Audit Assurance event hosted by NSSO on 19th February 2021.

The NDA receives fortnightly payroll reports from PSSC. The controls operated by the NDA in relation to payroll will be covered in the Internal audit of Internal Controls which is due to be conducted in quarter one of 2021.

Fraud and Irregularities

There are no matters of fraud or irregularities to report for 2020.

The NDA has a Fraud Prevention Policy in place which was updated and approved by the Authority in November 2020. Thereafter the policy, the objective of which is to promote a culture which deters fraudulent activity in the organisation, was circulated to all staff for adoption. Further training will be provided to staff during 2021.

The NDA has a Protected Disclosure Policy and procedures for notification of protected disclosures and any alleged fraudulent incidents or irregularities. This policy was last updated and approved by the Authority in November 2019, and establishes the structures and processes for receiving and dealing with disclosures, and provides for reports to be made annually on any disclosures.

The parties which are to be notified of such incidents are:

The Audit & Risk Committee

The Authority members

The Head of the Internal Audit Service

The Secretary General of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

The Minister (as appropriate)

The Comptroller and Auditor General

An Garda Síochána (where appropriate)

There were no Protected Disclosures reported in 2020. The NDA maintains a register for Protected Disclosures and all alleged fraudulent incidents. The NDA has procedures in place to ensure their investigation. In accordance with section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, the NDA published its Protected Disclosures Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2019 on 2nd July 2020.

Tax Compliance

Most of NDA payments are processed through shared financial services including:

- Payment of invoices through the Financial Shared Services under the Department of Justice based in Killarney, Co. Kerry (Jan-Oct) and Financial Shared Services under the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth based in Co. Galway (Nov-Dec);
- Payment of salaries, pensions, pension lump sums and travel and subsistence through the Payroll Shared Services Centre under the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Expenditure in relation to tax is made under the VAT and Employer tax numbers of the Department of Justice. The NDA complies with requirements to apply Professional Services Withholding Tax (PSWT).

Accountability

The Authority prepares a Strategic Plan every 3 years under the National Disability Authority Act, and this Plan is submitted to the Minister for approval. The current plan for 2019 to 2021, was approved by the Minister for Justice during 2018. The Authority has continued to ensure the implementation of the strategy for 2019 – 2021, which sets out the high level organisational strategic goals against which NDA reported on progress to the Department. The Authority began the process of developing the next Strategic Plan (2022-2024) in Q4 2020 and it will be finalised for approval by the Minister in June 2021.

The annual work plans are aligned to the strategic priorities with the Strategic Plan, and senior management report at regular intervals to the Authority on progress in their implementation. The Work Plan was reviewed and revised by the Executive in May 2020 in light of Covid-19 and its impacts on projects and their delivery. Some project delivery dates and planned expenditure allocations were revised as a result. In addition, some new projects were added to the work plan in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on persons with disabilities. The 2021 Work Plan was approved in November 2020 by the Authority.

The system of internal control, which by its nature is dynamic, is continually developed, maintained and monitored in response to the emerging requirements of the organisation. Key elements, processes and procedures include:

- Clear separation of roles of the Chairperson and the Director as set out in the NDA governance manual;
- Procedures for key business processes have been documented, financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability. Processes were updated in April 2020 to facilitate financial business processes while working remotely, and advised to staff;
- There is a regular management reporting process and a framework of administrative procedures which includes segregation of duties, a system of delegation and accountability and a system for the authorisation of expenditure (updated in light of Covid-19);
- Financial Procedures were updated following an internal audit report in 2020. All of the recommendations were implemented prior to the end of 2020 and they were further updated to align with the new parent Department's financial procedures;
- The organisation has policies and procedures designed to strengthen compliance with all pay and travel requirements as per the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circulars;
- The organisation has a performance delivery agreement in place with the Department of Justice for the period 2020, and held a governance meeting with the Department in relation to its delivery;
- The following committees of the Authority i.e. the Audit & Risk, Finance, and Director Performance Review Committees all have terms of reference in place. The Audit & Risk and Finance Committees terms of reference were subject to review by the Authority during 2020. The Authority and its Committees each reviewed their performance during 2020 for the previous 12 month period. These reviews were cognisant of the Gender & Diversity Annex published in September 2020;
- Following a review of the Audit Committee Charter stemming from a recommendation made during the commissioned Risk Review conducted in late 2019, the Committee was renamed to the Audit & Risk Committee;
- The Director Performance Committee met during 2020 to agree the Director's responsibilities and actions in line with the NDA work programme as set out in the Strategic Plan and the Annual Workplan. The Committee reports to the Authority and informs the Director of the Authority's views and recommendations;

- The Authority commenced succession planning for the role of the Director of the NDA in September 2019 and this process was completed in July 2020 with the appointment of a new Director, Dr Aideen Hartney. This process was conducted in accordance with DPER guidance on appointments of CEO's of non-commercial state bodies and the schedule of matters reserved for decision by the Authority and their responsibility for overseeing recruitment of the Director;
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems. The NDA has a Service Level Agreement in place with regard to the shared ICT support service it avails of under the Department of Justice;
- There are systems in place to safeguard and account for assets;
- The Executive of the NDA works continuously to improve control systems and to report to the Audit & Risk and Finance Committees. For the period 2020, this included the development of management assurances related to controls operating in the NDA, as well as a review by the group of the impact of Covid-19 on the NDA's control environment, as presented to the ARC in March 2021;
- The Annual Report is produced incorporating the financial statements and is published by the NDA once it has been laid before the Oireachtas.

The NDA's Corporate Governance manual is aligned with the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies (2016). The manual sets out the role of members of the Authority and of the Executive and procedures for delegated authority, decisions, interests of members and other matters.

The NDA has a Data Protection Officer, a Freedom of Information Officer and a Risk Officer.

Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes, and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action in the relevant areas, with provisions to inform management, the Authority and its committees, where relevant, in a timely way.

I confirm that the following ongoing monitoring systems are in place:

- Key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies, whereby the Risk Management Advisory Group meets twice per year and the Audit & Risk Committee meets at least quarterly;
- The Director reports to the Authority every two months on organisation, governance, business plans and project matters, bringing any items to the Authority that require approval;
- The Authority receives regular formal reports from the Finance Committee, Audit & Risk Committee and Chief Risk Officer as standing items on the Authority Agenda throughout the year;

- Risk management is a standing item on the Authority agenda;
- The Director monitors expenditure performance and ensures there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual performance on budget and project implementation. This includes review of monthly management accounts and administration of a project management system, which supports performance measurement against work plan commitments and budgets/forecasts;
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned. The Finance & Procurement Officer reports to the Head of Corporate Services and produces monthly accounts for review by senior management, the Finance Committee and the Authority. The Finance Committee considers the financial analysis produced by the senior management group and reports to the Authority on performance. The Finance Committee meets 4 – 6 times per year to review expenditure performance and budget management;
- Effectiveness of controls are subject to independent audits which are directed by audit programme determined by the Audit & Risk Committee. For 2020 this has included a review of internal controls operating in the NDA. The reports of audits are considered by the Audit & Risk Committee and presented to the Authority;
- The Authority has considered the reports of audits conducted in 2020 including the review of internal controls and review of preparation of accounts and is satisfied that there are effective controls in place.

Procurement

I confirm that the NDA has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines and that during 2020 the NDA complied with those procedures.

The NDA has a documented procurement policy in place and systems for evaluating and awarding contracts, and reporting on procurement outcomes to the Authority. The NDA continued to enhance existing procurement procedures and practice throughout the year and will undergo a review of procurement procedures as part of the Internal Audit Plan in 2021.

Risk Management

I confirm that the NDA has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The NDA's monitoring and review of the

effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors, the Audit & Risk Committee which oversees their work and the senior management group within the NDA with responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

Annual Review

The annual independent review of internal controls was undertaken in early 2021. It is considered that Internal Audit provides an objective evaluation and opinion on the effectiveness of the NDA's framework of governance, risk management and control. The overall conclusion from this audit is that effective internal controls are in place. The report of this audit was considered and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee on 23rd March 2021 and was presented to the Authority for consideration and noting at its meeting on 25th March 2021.

The Audit & Risk Committee considered the implementation of recommendations from previous audit findings (both internal and external) and provided assurances on these in their annual report to the Authority in November 2020 in relation to same.

This statement on internal control has been adopted by the Authority further to discussion and consideration of all assurances provided.

Internal Control Issues

There were no weaknesses in internal control identified in relation to 2020.



Helen Guinan
Chairperson

Date: 23 July 2021

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND RETAINED REVENUE RESERVES
For the year ended 31 December 2020

| | Note | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|--|------|------------------|------------------|
| Income | | | |
| Oireachtas Grants | 2 | 4,029,788 | 4,275,899 |
| Net Deferred Pension Funding | 3(d) | 307,400 | 455,100 |
| Other Income | 4 | 190,579 | 200,809 |
| Transfer from/(to) the Capital Account | 7 | 56,965 | 55,305 |
| Total Income | | 4,584,732 | 4,987,113 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Projects and Commissioned Works Payable | 5 | 519,331 | 577,516 |
| Administration and Operations Costs | 6 | 3,124,645 | 3,264,407 |
| Retirement Benefit Costs | 3(a) | 991,300 | 975,100 |
| Reduction in the value of fixed assets | 8 | 76,020 | 75,686 |
| Total Expenditure | | 4,711,296 | 4,892,709 |
| (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year | 9 | (126,564) | 94,404 |
| Balance Brought Forward at 1 January 2020 | | 354,093 | 259,689 |
| Balance Carried Forward at 31 December 2020 | | 227,529 | 354,093 |

The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 16 form part of these financial statements.
 On behalf of the Authority of National Disability Authority:



Helen Guinan
 Chairperson

Date: 23 July 2021



Kathryn O' Donoghue
 Authority Member

Date: 23 July 2021



Dr Aideen Hartney
 Director

Date: 23 July 2021

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
For the year ended 31 December 2020

| | Note | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|------|----------------|---------------|
| Surplus/(Deficit) | | 227,529 | 94,404 |
| Actuarial gain/(loss) on retirement benefit obligations | 3(b) | (1,934,400) | (2,152,700) |
| Adjustment to deferred pension funding | | 1,934,400 | 2,152,700 |
| Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss) for the year | | 227,529 | 94,404 |

The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 16 form part of these financial statements.
 On behalf of the Authority of National Disability Authority:



Helen Guinan
 Chairperson
 Date: 23 July 2021



Kathryn O' Donoghue
 Authority Member
 Date: 23 July 2021



Dr Aideen Hartney
 Director
 Date: 23 July 2021

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 31 December 2020

| | Note | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|------|------------------|------------------|
| Fixed Assets | | | |
| Property, plant & equipment | 8 | 2,864,814 | 2,921,779 |
| Total Fixed Assets | | 2,864,814 | 2,921,779 |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Receivables | 10 | 480,703 | 500,073 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | | 122,757 | 45,224 |
| Current Liabilities (amounts falling due within one year) | | 603,460 | 545,297 |
| Payables | 11 | (365,931) | (181,204) |
| Net Current Assets | | 237,529 | 364,093 |
| Long term Liabilities (amounts falling due after one year) | | | |
| Rental deposit held | 12 | (10,000) | (10,000) |
| Retirement Benefits | | | |
| Deferred retirement benefit funding asset | 3(b) | (28,984,200) | (26,742,400) |
| Retirement benefit obligations | 3(b) | 28,984,200 | 26,742,400 |
| Total Net Assets | | 3,092,343 | 3,275,872 |
| Representing | | | |
| Capital account | 7 | 2,864,814 | 2,921,779 |
| Retained revenue reserves | | 227,529 | 354,093 |
| | | 3,092,343 | 3,275,872 |

The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

On behalf of the Authority of National Disability Authority:



Helen Guinan
 Chairperson
 Date: 23 July 2021



Kathryn O' Donoghue
 Authority Member
 Date: 23 July 2021



Dr Aideen Hartney
 Director
 Date: 23 July 2021

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the year ended 31 December 2020

| | Note | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities | | | |
| (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year | | (126,564) | 94,404 |
| Movement to Capital Account | | (56,965) | (55,305) |
| Depreciation of Fixed Assets | 8 | 76,020 | 75,686 |
| (Increase)/Decrease in Receivables | | 19,370 | (112,012) |
| (Decrease)/Increase in Payables | | 184,727 | 8,892 |
| Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities | | 96,588 | 11,665 |
| Cash Flows from Investing Activities | | | |
| Payments to acquire Property, Plant and Equipment | 8 | (19,055) | (20,381) |
| Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities | | (19,055) | (20,381) |
| Cash Flows from Financing Activities | | | |
| Bank Interest received | | - | - |
| Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities | | | |
| Net (Decrease)/Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents | | 77,533 | (8,716) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January 2020 | | 45,224 | 53,940 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December 2020 | | 122,757 | 45,224 |

National Disability Authority
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 December 2019

1. Accounting Policies

The basis of accounting and significant accounting policies adopted by the National Disability Authority (NDA/Authority) are set out below. They have all been applied consistently throughout the year and for the preceding year. The financial statements are presented in Euro (€).

a) General Information

The National Disability Authority was set up under section 6 of the National Disability Act 1999, with its premises at 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 on 12 June 2000 on the dissolution of the former organisation, the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB).

The principal function of the National Disability Authority (NDA) is to advise the Minister for Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth regarding issues of policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities.

National Disability Authority's particular functions as set out in section 8 of the National Disability Act 1999 include:

- To act as a central, national body which will assist the Minister in the coordination and development of policy in relation to persons with disabilities.
- 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 persons 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 codes of practice in programmes and services provided to persons 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 persons with disabilities and to facilitate and support the development and implementation of appropriate standards for programmes and services for persons 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 persons with disabilities.

- To recognise the achievement of good standards and quality in the provision of programmes and services to persons with disabilities, including through the provision of a disability equality awards system.
- To prepare strategic plans.

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

- To prepare codes of practice relating to the accessibility of public buildings, services, information resources and heritage sites at the request of the Minister (Part 3).
- To monitor compliance and ensure implementation 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).
- To establish and operate a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in relation to the built environment, products, services and information technology which will promote the principles of universal design so that each of these may be accessed, understood and used to the greatest practicable extent by people with disabilities:
 - In the most independent and natural manner, and
 - In the widest possible range of situations without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialised solution (Part 6).

b) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements of the National Disability Authority for the year ended 31st December 2020 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland.

c) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared using the accruals method of accounting, except as indicated below and in accordance with FRS 102 under the historical cost convention. Financial Reporting Standards recommended by recognised accountancy bodies are adopted as they become operative. The financial statements are in the form approved by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the National Disability Authority's financial statements.

d) Revenue

Oireachtas Grants

The NDA receives a grant annually from the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth as provided in the National Disability Authority Act 1999. Oireachtas Grants are recognised on a cash receipts basis.

Other Income

Other Income comprises rent, HSE funding and social welfare benefits and is recognised on an accruals basis.

e) Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, adjusted for any provision for impairment. Depreciation is provided on all property, plant and equipment at rates estimated to write off the cost less the estimated residual value of each asset on either a straight-line or reducing balance basis over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

- (i) Freehold Premises 2.5% per annum (Reducing balance)
- (ii) Fixtures and Fittings, Equipment 10% per annum (Straight line)
- (iii) Computer hardware and software 20% per annum (Straight line)

Residual value represents the estimated amount which would currently be obtained from disposal of an asset, after deducting estimated costs of disposal, if the asset were already of an age and in the condition expected at the end of its useful life.

If there is objective evidence of impairment of the value of an asset, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves in the year.

f) Capital Account

The Capital Account represents the unamortised value of income used for capital purposes (i.e. acquisitions).

g) Receivables

Receivables are recognised at fair value, less a provision for doubtful debts. The provision for doubtful debts is a specific provision and is established when there is objective evidence that the NDA will not be able to collect all amounts owed to it. All movements in the provision for doubtful debts are recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves.

h) Employee Benefits

Short-term Benefits

Short-term benefits such as holiday pay are recognised as an expense in the year. Benefits that are accrued at year-end are included in the Payables figure in the Statement of Financial Position.

Retirement Benefits

The NDA operates a defined benefit superannuation scheme for staff, funded annually on a pay as you go basis from monies provided by the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth and also from staff contributions, which are retained by the Department and credited to a suspense account on the Department's Vote ledger. Lump sum entitlements to retiring staff are paid from the suspense account whereas monthly pension payments to retired staff are paid out of current income.

Up until the end of 2020, 18 staff came within the Single Public Services Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”), which is a defined benefit scheme for pensionable public servants appointed on or after 1 January 2013. Single Scheme members’ contributions are paid over to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Pension costs reflect pension benefits earned by employees and former National Rehabilitation Board employees, including single scheme contributions, where appropriate, and are shown net of staff pension contributions, which are retained by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and paid over to DPER (for single scheme members). An amount corresponding to the pension charge is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable and offset by grants received in the year to discharge pension payments.

Actuarial gains or losses arising on scheme liabilities are reflected in the Statement of Comprehensive Income, and a corresponding adjustment is recognised in the amount recoverable from the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth.

The financial statements reflect, at fair value, the assets and liabilities arising from the NDA’s pension obligations and any related funding, and recognises the costs of providing pension benefits in the accounting periods in which they are earned by employees. Retirement benefit scheme liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method.

i) Critical Accounting Judgements and Estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the reporting date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. However, the nature of estimation means that actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. The following judgements have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Depreciation and Residual Values

The Executive has reviewed the asset lives and associated residual values of all fixed asset classes, and in particular, the useful economic life and residual values of fixtures and fittings and has concluded that asset lives and residual values are appropriate. Upon the dissolution of the National Rehabilitation Board, artwork with a residual value of €1 was transferred to the NDA.

Retirement Benefit Obligation

The assumptions underlying the actuarial valuations for which the amounts recognised in the financial statements are determined (including discount rates, rates of increase in future compensation levels, mortality rates and healthcare cost trend rates) are updated annually based on current economic conditions, and for any relevant changes to the terms and conditions of the pension and post-retirement plans.

The assumptions can be affected by:

- (i) the discount rate, changes in the rate of return on high-quality corporate bonds
- (ii) future compensation levels, future labour market conditions
- (iii) health care cost trend rates, the rate of medical cost inflation in the relevant regions

2. Oireachtas Grants

The Oireachtas Grants voted to the National Disability Authority from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, (2019: Department of Justice) as shown in the financial statements consists of:

| | Note | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grants for current expenditure | Vote 40 Subhead D03 | 4,029,788 | - |
| Grants for expenditure | Vote 24 Subhead D3 | - | 4,275,899 |
| | | 4,029,788 | 4,275,899 |

3. Retirement Benefit Costs

(a) Analysis of total retirement benefit costs charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Current service costs | 769,000 | 597,300 |
| Interest on retirement benefit scheme liabilities | 320,800 | 482,400 |
| Employee Contributions | (98,500) | (104,600) |
| | 991,300 | 975,100 |

(b) Movement in net retirement benefit obligations during the financial year

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Net retirement benefit obligation at 1 January | 26,742,400 | 24,134,600 |
| Current service costs | 670,500 | 597,300 |
| Interest costs | 320,800 | 482,400 |
| Actuarial (gain)/loss | 1,934,400 | 2,152,700 |
| Pensions paid in the year | (683,900) | (624,600) |
| Net retirement benefit obligation at 31 December | 28,984,200 | 26,742,400 |

(c) Deferred funding for retirement benefits

The NDA recognises these amounts as an asset corresponding to the unfunded deferred liability for retirement benefits on the basis of the set of assumptions described above and a number of past events.

These events include the statutory basis for the establishment of the retirement benefit schemes, and the policy and practice currently in place in relation to funding public service pensions including contributions by employees and the annual estimates process. The NDA has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to meet such sums in accordance with current practice.

Also, for single scheme members, section 44 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 provides for funding of pension payments, as they fall due by way of payments out of the Central Fund or from funds provided by the Oireachtas, for that purpose.

The net deferred funding for retirement benefits recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves was as follows:

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Funding recoverable in respect of current year retirement benefit costs | 991,300 | 1,079,700 |
| State grant applied to pay retirement benefits | (683,900) | (624,600) |
| | 307,400 | 455,100 |

The deferred funding asset for retirement benefits at 31st December 2020 amounts to €28.9m (2019 : €26.7m).

(d) General description of the schemes

The retirement benefit scheme is a defined benefit final salary pension arrangement with benefits and contributions defined by reference to current “model” public sector scheme regulations. The scheme provides a pension (being 1/80 per year of service), a gratuity or lump sum (being 3/80 per year of service) and spouses and children’s pensions. Normal retirement age is a member’s 65th birthday, and pre-2004 members have an entitlement to retire without actuarial reduction from age 60. Pensions in payment (and deferment) normally increase in line with general public sector salary inflation.

The NDA also participates in the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (single scheme). This scheme is the defined benefit pension scheme for pensionable public servants appointed on or after 1 January 2013 in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. The scheme provides for a pension and retirement lump sum based on career-average pensionable remuneration, and spouse’s and children’s pensions. The minimum pension age is 66 years (rising in line with State pension age changes). It includes an actuarially-reduced early retirement facility from age 55. Pensions in payment increase in line with the consumer price index.

The valuation used for FRS 102 disclosures has been based on a full actuarial valuation performed in February 2021 by a qualified independent actuary, taking account of the requirements of the FRS in order to assess the scheme liabilities at 31 December 2020.

The principal actuarial assumptions were as follows:

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|-------|------|
| Rate of increase in salaries | 3.3% | 3.4% |
| Pension Increases – Superannuation scheme | 2.3% | 2.4% |
| Discount rate | 0.65% | 1.2% |
| Inflation rate | 1.3% | 1.4% |
| State pension increases | 1.3% | 1.4% |
| Pension increases- SPSPS | 1.3% | 1.4% |

Mortality

58% of ILT15 for males with improvements (see below). 62% of ILT15 for females with improvements (see below).

Annual compound improvements in annuity rates of 0.36% p.a. (Males with no spouse’s pension), 0.30% p.a. (Males with spouse’s pension), 0.30 p.a. (Females with no spouse’s pension) and .25% p.a. (Females with spouse’s pension) for each year between 2014 and the year in which normal retirement date falls.

The table below shows the assumed life expectancy for members attaining normal retirement age in 2021 and 2041.

| Year of attaining age 65 | 2021 | 2041 |
|--------------------------|------|------|
| Life expectancy male | 21.4 | 23.0 |
| Life expectancy female | 24.0 | 25.5 |

4. Other Income

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Social Welfare | 18,360 | 14,791 |
| Rental Income | 52,016 | 56,703 |
| HSE Funding | 120,203 | 103,523 |
| NEN Funding | - | 25,792 |
| | 190,579 | 200,809 |

Rental income of €56,703 includes rent of €38,000 and €18,703 for the associated service charge received from tenants who rent a floor at 25 Clyde Road from the NDA.

The NDA receives funding from the HSE for 2 staff (1.8 whole time equivalents) working on 2 specific HSE research projects. One of these projects completed in 2020 and at year end there was 1 staff member (0.8 whole time equivalent) working on the remaining funded HSE project.

5. Projects and Commissioned Works

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Research | 220,394 | 175,763 |
| Information Resources | 46,916 | 11,301 |
| Universal Design Promotion | 63,849 | 51,415 |
| Standards and Guidelines | 77,128 | 156,670 |
| Conference and Seminars | 29,440 | 22,555 |
| Translation | - | 2,963 |
| Disability awareness program | 81,604 | 156,849 |
| | 519,331 | 577,516 |

Translation costs totalling €7,123 have been allocated against the relevant projects as they were incurred.

6. Administration and Operations Costs

| | | 2020 | 2019 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------------------|------------------|
| | | € | € |
| Remuneration and other pay costs | 6(a) | 2,429,335 | 2,420,176 |
| Building overheads and improvements | | 127,655 | 227,098 |
| Rates | | 54,431 | 53,009 |
| Cleaning and domestic services | | 17,852 | 46,131 |
| Authority Fees and expenses | 6(b) | 57,244 | 69,196 |
| Postage and telecoms | | 15,531 | 23,432 |
| Office costs | | 33,406 | 45,983 |
| Library | | 32,812 | 34,647 |
| IT costs | | 134,668 | 134,770 |
| Professional fees | | 73,115 | 65,776 |
| Audit fees | | 17,600 | 17,600 |
| Staff training | | 37,250 | 56,222 |
| Recruitment fees | | 61,582 | 30,084 |
| Consultancy | | 32,164 | 40,283 |
| Hospitality | | - | - |
| | | 3,124,645 | 3,264,407 |

(a) Remuneration and Other Pay Costs

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| | € | € |
| Staff salaries (including holiday pay accrual) | 2,346,934 | 2,260,611 |
| Agency Staff pay | 76,621 | 136,661 |
| Staff travel and subsistence costs | 5,780 | 22,904 |
| | 2,429,335 | 2,420,176 |

Staff salaries are stated net of €39,563 recouped from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) for 1 staff member on secondment (2019- €50,616).

Employee Short Term Benefits Breakdown

| Range of total employee short term benefits | | Number of Employees | |
|--|-----------|----------------------------|-------------|
| From | To | 2020 | 2019 |
| Less than | €59,999 | 25 | 21 |
| €60,000 | - €69,999 | 4 | 3 |
| €70,000 | - €79,999 | 3 | 3 |
| €80,000 | - €89,999 | 4 | 6 |
| €90,000 | - €99,999 | 0 | 1 |
| Greater than | €100,000 | 2 | 2 |
| Total number employed | | 38 | 36 |

The short-term benefits in relation to services rendered during the reporting period include salaries but exclude employer's PRSI. No other benefits such as holiday pay have been included.

There were no payments made to any staff members in relation to overtime or termination benefits (2019: €0).

Director's Remuneration

During the course of 2020 there was a change in Director following the expiry of the contract term. The table below outlines the salary paid in 2020 and the comparative for 2019 (Civil Service Principal Officer (Higher) pay scale). No other payment was made in the year to the Director in the nature of pay. The outgoing Director was a member of the Department of Justice superannuation scheme and her entitlements did not extend beyond the standard entitlement available under such a scheme.

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Aideen Hartney (appointed 13th July 2020) | 51,140 | - |
| Siobhan Barron (resigned 24th July 2020) | 70,506 | 104,617 |
| | 121,646 | 104,617 |

The incoming Directors pay is based on the Civil Service Principal Officer (Higher) pay scale, where the increase year on year related to the pay restoration from 1 January 2018 under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Act 2015 and the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017. No other payment was made in the year to the Director in the nature of pay. The Director is a member of the Single Pension Scheme and her entitlements do not extend beyond the standard entitlements available under such a scheme.

Additional Superannuation Contribution

€71,477 (2019: €81,043) was deducted from staff by way of the additional superannuation contribution and retained by the Department of Justice and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC) replaced the Pension Related Deduction (PRD) with effect from 1 January 2019 and is a permanent contribution based on pensionable remuneration only.

6(b) Authority Costs

Authority Members Fees and Expenses

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| | € | € |
| Opening balance | 2,921,779 | 2,977,084 |
| Income applied to purchase of fixed assets | 19,055 | 20,381 |
| Amortised in year in line with asset depreciation | (76,020) | (75,686) |
| Transfers (to)/from Statement of Income and Expenditure and Revenue Reserves | (56,965) | (55,305) |
| Closing balance | 2,864,814 | 2,921,779 |

Included in the Authority fees is €1,984 for employer's PRSI (2019: €1,966). Authority fees shown in Note 6 do not include any accruals for 2020 expenses (2019:

€245). Mr Donie O'Leary also received travel expenses to the value of €54 (2019: €349) in respect of his membership of the Disability Stakeholder Group and its sub-committee. The latter expenses are disbursed by the NDA and captured under the Projects and Commissioned Works heading (Note 5).

7. Capital Account

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Opening balance | 2,921,779 | 2,977,084 |
| Income applied to purchase of fixed assets | 19,055 | 20,381 |
| Amortised in year in line with asset depreciation | (76,020) | (75,686) |
| Transfers (to)/from Statement of Income and Expenditure and Revenue Reserves | (56,965) | (55,305) |
| Closing balance | 2,864,814 | 2,921,779 |

8. Property, Plant and Equipment

| | Computer hardware and software € | Fixtures and Fittings, Equipment € | Freehold Premises € | Total € |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| Cost at 1 January 2020 | 26,556 | 116,556 | 4,474,208 | 4,617,320 |
| Additions | - | 19,055 | - | 19,055 |
| Disposals | - | - | - | - |
| At 31 December 2020 | 26,556 | 135,611 | 4,474,208 | 4,636,375 |
| Depreciation at 1 January 2020 | 26,556 | 108,062 | 1,560,923 | 1,695,541 |
| Depreciation on Disposals | - | - | - | - |
| Charge for the year | - | 2,891 | 73,129 | 76,020 |
| At 31 December 2020 | 26,556 | 110,953 | 1,634,052 | 1,771,561 |
| Net Book Value | | | | |
| At 1 January 2020 | - | 8,494 | 2,913,285 | 2,921,779 |
| Net movement for the year | - | 16,164 | (73,129) | (56,966) |
| At 31 December 2020 | - | 24,658 | 2,840,156 | 2,864,814 |

The Authority operates its business from premises at 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, which it owns. The Authority does not own or lease any other property.

9. Deficit/surplus for the Year

As noted in the accounting policies, the Oireachtas grant is recognised on a cash receipts basis and represents the gross payments made by the Department on behalf of the NDA, offset in some instances by receipts remitted to the Department. Other income and expenditure in the financial statements is recognised on an accruals basis. As a result, the surplus/deficit on the statement of comprehensive income, does not represent a normal operating surplus/deficit. This is largely attributable to the variance between cash-based funding and expenditure accounted for on an accruals basis.

10. Receivables

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth * | 366,987 | 415,832 |
| Prepayments | 19,008 | 48,474 |
| Other Debtors | 94,708 | 35,767 |
| | 480,703 | 500,073 |

* The costs of pension lump sums are met from a specific / suspense account maintained for that purpose by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and from 1st November the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth following the transfer of function. The Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth retains the superannuation contributions from all staff and credit these to that account on a fortnightly basis. Lump sum payments over the course of the year are charged to that account. The balance here represents the amount held in the account at 31st December 2020.

11. Payables - amounts falling due within one year

| | 2020 € | 2019 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth | 116,614 | 57,173 |
| Holiday pay accrual | 117,820 | 66,356 |
| Audit fee | 17,600 | 17,600 |
| Other accruals | 113,897 | 40,075 |
| | 365,931 | 181,204 |

12. Payables – amounts falling due after one year

Creditors falling due after more than one year consists of €10,000 (2019: €10,000) held as a rental deposit in respect of the lease agreement regarding part of the property held at 25 Clyde Road.

13. Key Management

Key management personnel comprise the Director and 3 Senior Managers. Total remuneration, excluding employer's PRSI, paid to key management personnel amounted to €410,486 (2019: €384,846). Authority members' fees amounted to

€53,438 (2019: €53,438). Please refer to Note 6 for a breakdown of the remuneration and benefits paid to all staff, including the Director. Payments to Authority members are disclosed in the Governance Statement.

14. Related Party Disclosures

The National Disability Authority adopts procedures in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform covering the personal interests of Authority members. In the normal course of business, NDA may approve grants or enter into other contractual arrangements with entities in which NDA Authority members are employed or are otherwise interested. In cases of potential conflict of interest, Authority members do not receive Board documentation, participate in, or attend discussions regarding these transactions. A register is maintained and available on request of all such instances.

There were no transactions in the year in relation to the Authority's activities in which Authority members had any beneficial interest.

15. Events after the Reporting Date

The NDA has a reasonable expectation, at the time of approving the financial statements, that they have adequate resources to continue its operations. For this reason, the NDA continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted how the NDA operates, with all staff moved offsite and resources diverted to managing implications of the pandemic during 2020. NDA's income is derived from grant funding, which continues to be received throughout the pandemic and therefore we are financially less impacted than those industries that have closed or have limited output.

16. Approval of the financial statements

The financial statements were approved by the Authority of the National Disability Authority on 15th July, 2021.

Appendix 1: Authority and other committees in 2020

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Helen Guinan | Chairperson | July 2014* |
| Ruthann La Malfa | Member | July 2014* |
| Teresa McDonnell | Member | July 2014* |
| Deaglan O'Briain | Member | July 2014* |
| Aisling Glynn | Member | June 2017 |
| Jack Kavanagh | Member | August 2018 |
| Cathal Morgan | Member | August 2018 |
| Kathryn O'Donoghue | Member | August 2018 |
| Martha Griffin | Member | August 2018 |
| Deirdre O'Connor | Member | July 2014* |
| Damian Gordon | Member | August 2018 |
| Brian Callanan | Member | August 2018 |
| Grainne Collins | Member | August 2018** |

*Authority members are currently serving a second term.

**Authority member (staff nominee) resigned in October 2020 and following staff election process a new appointment was formally made in January 2021.

Audit & Risk Committee

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| John Fitzgerald | Chairperson | March 2017* |
| Teresa McDonnell | Member | July 2014* |
| Tony Fitzpatrick | Member | June 2017* |
| Cathal Morgan | Member | August 2018 |
| Kathryn O'Donoghue | Member | August 2018 |
| Tim Maverley | Member | August 2018 |
| John Maher | Member | August 2018 |

*Audit & Risk Committee members currently serving a second term.

Finance Committee

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Kathryn O'Donoghue | Chairperson | August 2018 |
| Ruthann LaMalfa | Member | July 2014* |
| Pat Fitzsimons | Member | July 2014* |
| Harry McGeary | Member | August 2018 |
| Damian Gordon | Member | August 2018 |
| Brian Callanan | Member | August 2018 |

*Finance Committee members currently serving a second term.

Risk Management Advisory Group

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: |
|-------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Tim Maverley | Member | August 2018 |
| Pat Fitzsimons* | Member | July 2014* |
| Senior Management Group | | |

*Risk Committee member currently serving a second term.

Director Performance Committee

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Helen Guinan | Chairperson | July 2014* |
| Deirdre O'Connor | Authority Member | July 2014* |
| Jack Kavanagh | Authority Member | August 2018 |

*Director Performance Committee member currently serving a second term.

Appendix 2: Representation on external bodies in 2020

- National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group
- HSE Consent to Research Policy Steering Group
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and associated agencies
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability Implementation Monitoring Group
- Working Group on Disability Voting
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability Housing Subgroup in the Housing Agency
- Stakeholder Forum in Irish Water

Department of Health and associated agencies

- Member of HSE New Directions National Implementation Group
- Member of the Personalised Budgets Implementation Oversight Group
- Member of Transforming Lives Working Group 2
- Member of the HSE's National Consultative Forum
- Member of HSE Progressing Disability Services Training Group
- Member of HSE Progressing Disability Services Outcomes for Children and Families Framework Group
- Member of HSE Consent to Research Policy Steering Group
- Member of Health Research Board (HRB) National Ability Supports System (NASS) Committee

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and associated agencies

- Member of AIM Project Team
- Member of AIM Cross-Sectoral Implementation Group
- Member of TÚSLA – Early Years Inspectorate Forum

Department of Education and associated agencies

- Member of National Council for Special Education Consultative Forum
- Member of NCSE Research Sub-committee

Employment and Further Education and Training related groups

- Member of Dublin Regional economic committee
- Member of Dublin Regional Sills Forum
- Member of Solas specialist training review group
- Member of SOLAS National Technical Advisory Committee to the Adult Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy 10 year Strategy

Other

- Member of the IDS TILDA (Intellectual Disability Supplement of the Longitudinal Study on Ageing) Steering Committee;
- Member of An Garda Síochána – Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee
- Partnership Process Steering Group re ESF/ERDF funding, convened by DPER
- HIQA Advisory Group developing Overarching Standards for the Care and Support for children using Health and Social Care Services
- HIQA National Standards Advisory Group developing national standards for children’s social services
- HSE Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation Subgroup
- National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) Universal Design Standards Consultative Committee (NSAI TC023) and its subcommittee and working groups
- The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committees (TCs): CEN TC452 (and its workings groups (WGs)), CEN TC320, CEN TC228 WG14, CEN TC 293 WG12,
- Council of Institute of Designers in Ireland
- HSE Disability Services National Quality Improvement Governance Review Committee
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Working Group on the provision of a Changing Places Facility
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Consultative Committee on the Review of Part B Fire Safety

Departmental Consultative Committees

There are 9 Departmental Consultative Committees (DCCs), tasked with monitoring the implementation of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, in particular the NDIS actions allocated to that particular Department. They comprise department /agency officials, NDA representatives, DSG members, and often representatives of disability organisations, and they meet 4 times a year (usually). They are as follows:

- Department of Justice and Equality
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing
- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Children
- Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment

Appendix 3: Publications in 2020

- National Disability Authority 2000-2020: Twenty Years of Disability Policy Development in Ireland
- Communications Strategy
- Annual Report 2019
- NDA assessment of progress under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2019
- Mid-term Review of Progress: The National Disability Inclusion Strategy and Indicators
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2019: NDA Year-end review, July 2020 Indicators for Monitoring Progress under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2024

Appendix 4: Policy advice papers in 2020

Policy advice papers issued in 2020 included:

Statements of Strategy letters

- Submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Health's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Education's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Justice's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Social Protection's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Department of Transport's Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Irish Probation Service Statement of Strategy

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

- Submission to Limerick City and County Council's Development Plan 2022-2028 – Pre-Draft Consultation
- Submission to South Dublin County Council's Development Plan Pre-Draft Plan Public Consultation
- Submission to Cork County Council's Development Plan Pre-Draft Plan Public Consultation
- Advice to the Office of Emergency Planning for their Summer Ready Advice with an emphasis on Persons with Disabilities

Department of Education & Skills

- Submission to Indecon on first-time mature student participation in higher education
- Submission to Indecon on a Needs Analysis' for the development of a Partnership Agreement covering the Common Provisions Regulation Funds and Operational Programmes for the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund for the 2021-2027 period.

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

- Independent Advice Paper on Engagement with Disabled Persons' Organisations
- Independent Advice Paper on a Thematic Approach to NDISSG meetings

Department of Justice & Equality

- Independent Advice Paper on the Use of Intermediaries in the Irish Criminal Justice System
- Submission to the Law Reform Commission Issues Paper on a Regulatory Framework for Adult Safeguarding
- Submission to the draft Youth Justice Strategy
- Submission to the draft Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy

Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation

- Submission on the 'Remote Working Guidance Consultation', conducted by the Enterprise Strategy, Competitiveness and Evaluations Division, of the Department Business Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI).

Other

- Submission on the EU Disability Strategy



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National Disability Authority is the independent state body providing evidence informed advice on disability policy and practice to the Minister, and promoting Universal Design in Ireland.