

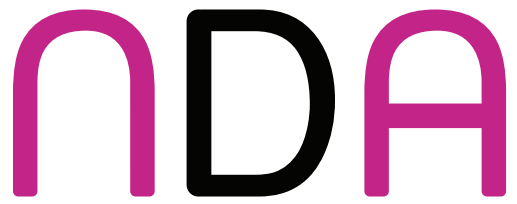
NDA

Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

Annual Report

2021





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National Disability Authority

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

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Chairperson's statement

I am pleased to present the annual report for the National Disability Authority (NDA) for 2021 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 final year of our three-year Strategic Plan 2019-2021.

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. During 2021, we continued to play our part in working towards this vision, through 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 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.

During 2021, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be felt across Irish society. Within the NDA we consolidated new ways of working, extending opportunities for remote engagement with all our stakeholders, including persons with disabilities. We were pleased to recognise the extent to which virtual meetings enhanced the capacity of disabled people to participate in and attend events, and particularly those events where we wished to consult and engage with individuals and their representative organisations in order to understand their perspectives and experiences, which then informed our work. At the same time, we remain conscious that there are many people who do not have access to technology and so feel further isolated by the experiences of the pandemic. We have continued to advise the importance of ensuring accessible technology can be made available across our society, and of building skills and capacity among all user groups, including disabled people, to engage with the virtual world.

Much of our work in relation to COVID-19 in 2021 focused on capturing the innovations and learning that can benefit people with disabilities as we seek to support work to 'build back better' following the pandemic. We have advised the importance of ensuring that the recovery from the pandemic should take full account of the needs of people with disabilities, and should incorporate those positive developments that have enabled this group to be more included in society. You will be able to read more about this in the pages that follow, and in particular our work to capture learning and innovations across a number of sectors, and work to develop guidance for residential long-term care settings that can maximise quality of life at the same time as enhancing infection control.

In keeping with it being the final year of the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, it was fitting that we were able to publish two very significant pieces of work during 2021 on the theme of employment for people with disabilities. As part of our research partnership with the ESRI,

we funded the delivery of a report on the employment and skills levels of persons with disabilities. While the findings were stark indeed, highlighting the distance still to be travelled in Ireland in comparison with our European and OECD counterparts, the report has great value in bringing this spotlight to such an important area of inclusion for disabled people.

Our partnership with the OECD facilitated the delivery of a further report in this space, where opportunities to address this disparity were explored. This report looked at how the state could support and advance employer engagement in order to enhance the labour market outcomes for people with disabilities, and we look forward to working closely with the relevant stakeholders to progress some of the recommendations emerging from this report in the coming years.

These partnerships were significant undertakings for an organisation the size of the NDA, but I hope readers will agree that this activity allows us to continue bringing attention to areas where further focus is required throughout society in order to recognise the skills and capabilities of disabled people, underpinned by the availability of this robust and extensive data.

As in the previous years of this Strategic Plan, a focus on UNCRPD was key for the NDA, including through our assessment of Ireland's journey towards progressive realisation of the Convention, facilitated through national strategies such as the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise our parent Department's completion and delivery of Ireland's first State Party Report in relation to the Convention to the UN Monitoring Committee.

The year also saw much work to establish a new monitoring function with the NDA, focusing on the EU Web Accessibility Directive, with the aim of ensuring that all public sector websites can be accessed and used by disabled people. We were pleased to complete and deliver our first monitoring report to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications by the statutory deadline, and look forward to further expanding this activity in 2022 and onwards.

We also delivered the first report on the operation of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 to Minister of State with responsibility for Disabilities during 2021. This report was a significant undertaking for the NDA, and served to bring increased focus and awareness to this important legislation. We look forward to seeing it published early in 2022, and to further supporting the Minister and her officials in work to increase awareness and compliance with the provisions of the legislation.

In addition to these continually expanding monitoring roles, the NDA also continued to promote awareness and uptake of Universal Design during 2021. In particular, we contributed to the development of standards that underpin the Universal Design agenda, offering practical and consistent guidance for all organisations seeking to deliver products, services, buildings and ICT that address the needs of all users. As well as the Universal Design guidance for

nursing home settings developed in the context of COVID-19, we have also devoted significant resources to establishing the costs of implementing a Universal Design approach to new housing builds, and look forward to publishing the findings of this work early in 2022.

During 2021, the NDA also worked to develop its own next Strategic Plan, covering the period 2022 to 2024. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who contributed to the development of this plan. This included my fellow Authority members, the NDA staff and a wide range of external stakeholders, including officials across government departments and public bodies, disabled people and their representative organisations, other disability organisations, and those professional bodies we collaborate with to progress the Universal Design agenda.

NDA Authority and Staff

2021 was another year in which the NDA staff demonstrated their commitment and enthusiasm to the work of the organisation, in spite of the continued challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and remote working. I thank each and every one of them for this commitment, and hope you will readily see the value of their contributions in the pages that follow.

I would also like to thank my fellow Authority members for their engagement and commitment throughout the year, and particularly in the process to develop the next Strategic Plan, which provides a road-map for the next three years of the NDA's important work.

As I move into the final months of my term as Chairperson of the Authority I am proud of the work we have delivered in support of our vision, and hope that this report – like those that precede it – will clearly show the value of the organisation in driving change and improvement for people with disabilities. I have been honoured to serve in this role, and wish my colleagues on the Authority, and all the staff in the NDA, the very best as they move into the next chapter of their work.

Yours



Helen Guinan
Chairperson

Overview and policy context

The NDA commenced the final 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.

2021 – Year at a Glance

Some key highlights of our activity during 2021 include:

Research

- Understanding the costs and benefits of community models of service in the disability sector – the **Moving In, Moving On Report**
- International research on engaging and supporting employers to employ disabled people – OECD report on **Disability, Work and Inclusion in Ireland: Engaging and supporting employers**
- Understanding skills and qualifications gaps experienced by disabled people in Ireland - ESRI report on **Identification of skills gaps among persons with disabilities and their employment prospects**
- Capturing innovations in service delivery achieved during COVID-19

Policy Advice

- Advice on what is required to develop a **national programme of Vocational Rehabilitation**
- Advice on the development of **Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services**
- Advice and background research on **assistive technology** in support of inter-departmental working group on AT
- Advice and submissions on **accessible public transport**
- Advice and recommendations arising from review of operation of **Part 5 of the Disability Act** submitted, and implementation commenced

Monitoring and evaluation

- Independent assessments of progress of the **National Disability Inclusion Strategy** and **Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities**
- Review of the operation of the **Irish Sign Language Act 2017**
- Ireland's first report on compliance with the **EU Web Accessibility Directive**
- Report on progress in employment of disabled people in the public sector for 2020 (**Part 5 Disability Act**)

Engagement and consultation

- First NDA listening event on the theme of Building Back Better after COVID-19
- Annual NDA conference on the theme of Article 12 – Equal Recognition before the Law
- Continued awareness raising at primary school level through the **Someone Like Me Art Competition**

Universal Design and Standards

- Input on the European Standard on face coverings for COVID-19 (**SWiFT 19:2020+AC1:2020**)
- Input on a New EU Standard in Transport Services – **Customer communications for passenger transport services – A Universal Design approach**
- Virtual delivery of enhanced **Power of Design modules** in schools to promote Universal Design

UNCRPD

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities continued to be central to the NDA's work during 2021. We welcome the continued oversight provided at government level through the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability matters, and are pleased to see the growing awareness across Government that the UNCRPD acts as a central platform for disability policy in the Irish context. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Bill, which is currently progressing through the Oireachtas, has subsumed the provisions previously contained in the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016 aimed at advancing the implementation of the Convention, such as a duty for the NDA in providing information and data to support its monitoring. During 2021 the NDA provided information to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to support its drafting of the initial State Report, submitted by DCEDIY to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in November. The NDA also further developed its series of UNCRPD Article briefing Papers, which collate available information, data and statistics to support individuals and organisations who seek to have a greater knowledge of progress in relation to the Convention.

Our annual conference in 2021 continued the trend of recent years and featured a UNCRPD Article as its theme. An exploration of Article 12 (Equal Recognition before the Law) was timely, given the commitment by Government to commence the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and operationalise the Decision Support Service in 2022.

Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015

In previous years the NDA delivered a substantive body of work in relation to development of draft Codes of Practice to support implementation of this legislation. While the draft Codes were submitted to the Director of the Decision Support Service in 2020, the NDA continues to engage on this important area, recognising the significant cultural transformation that will be required on full commencement of the Act. The Decision Support Service has been engaged in extensive awareness building activities to ensure as many relevant stakeholders as possible are aware of the implications of the Act. The NDA was pleased to be able to highlight the legislation and its import during the Annual Conference 2021 on the topic of Article 12 of UNCRPD, including discussions with individuals with lived experience who will benefit from the commencement of the Act. We note the importance of several departments and agencies working together to achieve successful and effective implementation, and look forward to continuing to support the relevant parties during 2022, as the Act is commenced.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy

We recognise that the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017 – 2022 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 2021 to deliver on the actions within the NDIS as a mechanism for delivery on obligations under the UNCRPD. We welcome the continued efforts of stakeholders to progress implementation of the NDIS despite the challenges caused by COVID-19.

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. 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 2021, the NDA published its independent assessment of progress in the implementation of actions for the year 2020, 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.

While the NDIS has been formally extended until the end of 2022, the NDA continues to advise the importance of commencing discussions and consultation around its successor in good time. In this vein, the NDA provided recommendations to the DCEDIY in 2021 on a proposed 10-year 'UNCRPD Implementation Strategy', which would build on the achievements and structures of the NDIS, while focusing fully on the goal of progressively realising the fundamental rights contained in the UNCRPD. NDA also advised that there be widespread consultation on this strategy including with Disabled Persons Organisations, and we look forward to seeing this work progress in 2022.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities

2021 was the final year of the current three year Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) for People with Disabilities action plan. We note the ongoing commitment of officials across departments and agencies in 2021 to deliver on the actions and welcome the continued efforts of stakeholders to progress implementation of the CES despite the challenges caused by COVID-19. NDA continues to serve on the CES Implementation Group and to advise DCEDIY in relation to the next three year action plan. In 2021, the NDA published its independent assessment of progress in the implementation of actions for the year 2020, 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.

Newly published evidence from NDA collaborations with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) contributed to the understanding of the challenges and obstacles that contribute to the employment gap for persons with disabilities. In addition, the Department of Social Protection published its 2022 to 2025 iteration of the 'Pathways to Work' employment strategy which clearly articulates a new drive to support persons with disabilities access employment through the national public employment service, Intreo.

In December 2021 the Indecon report on the 'Cost of Disability' provided new evidence regarding the understanding of the additional cost of having a disability in Ireland. NDA has inputted into the methodology and welcomed the report confirming the higher costs of living experienced by persons with disabilities. We look forward to continued focus on this matter across all relevant departments during 2022.

We also continued our work to monitor the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service. While many individual government departments and public bodies have exceeded the minimum statutory target of 3%, 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 the minimum target will increase to 6% 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 2021, NDA published the "Moving In, Moving On" study. This multi-annual study involved an evaluation of costs and benefits of new, community-based models of service in comparison to traditional institutionalised models of service provision. We also published research with staff and managers of service providers to gather information and experiences to inform future planning for the on-going process to transition to community models of service. We also inputted to a HSE Working Group to guide the implementation of



The NDA lit up its offices in purple as part of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd 2021

the National Framework for person-centred planning in disability services. We look forward to further progress in 2022, recognising that COVID-19 has had an impact on the rate of progress to date.

Standards & Monitoring

Two new monitoring roles were assigned to the CEUD in 2021. The first was to review the implementation of the ISL Act 2017. This was an extensive piece of work and involved engagement with key government departments and agencies as well as ISL users across the age ranges and across the country. A final report was presented to the Minister in Q3 2021. The second new monitoring role is the annual monitoring of the accessibility of public websites and mobile applications as set out in the European Web Accessibility Directive. This work involved monitoring websites and mobile applications at both a simplified and in depth levels. The final report was submitted to the Government by the agreed date in Q4 2021.

CEUD work also includes influencing standards at national and international level. During 2021, CEUD contributed to the development of a number of standards, some of which arose in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CEUD is participating as an expert member on a new European Standard that will produce a Technical Specification on the performance and use of Community Face Coverings for COVID-19 in 2022. The CEUD are contributing 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. CEUD also contributed to the European standard “Transport Services – Customer communications for passenger transport services – A Universal Design approach”; published in December 2021.

Universal Design

During 2021, the CEUD 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 2021 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.

CEUD commissioned research and development of high level Universal Design guidelines on the retrofit of existing long-term residential care settings for older people in Ireland. The work examines 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 wellbeing of residents and staff. The publication of the research and guidelines will take place in Q1 2022.

CEUD has provided policy advice and research papers to support the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) working group on assistive technology working group as required under Action 123 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS). The working group is focused on progressing action 53 of the NDIS, regarding access and affordability of assistive technology for entry, retention and return to work. This work is to be completed by Q4 2022.

A key area of work in 2021 was in the area of accessible, universally designed transport and CEUD made a number of submissions to consultations concerning transport. The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, the BusConnects Cork project, the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI). These submissions highlighted that further engagement with persons with disabilities was required not only at the start of these projects but throughout the whole design, development and final delivery of these projects.

COVID-19

As with many other organisations in the public sector, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to shape much of our work and our ways of working in 2021. A return to a hybrid working by NDA staff in October was short-lived with government guidance requiring a return to home working where possible in November. Staff have adapted well to remote working and the brief return to the office allowed new staff to meet colleagues in person for the first time.

The NDA made a submission on remote working to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and on flexible working to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth during 2021. NDA advised on the importance of differentiating between remote or flexible working for the whole workforce and reasonable accommodation that involved flexible or remote working for some people with disabilities.

The impact of the pandemic continued to be felt by persons with disabilities. Areas of concern during this period included access to services and education. We documented some of the innovations and adaptations that specialist disability services, schools, universities, employers, sports organisations and others have made in response to the pandemic that impact on the

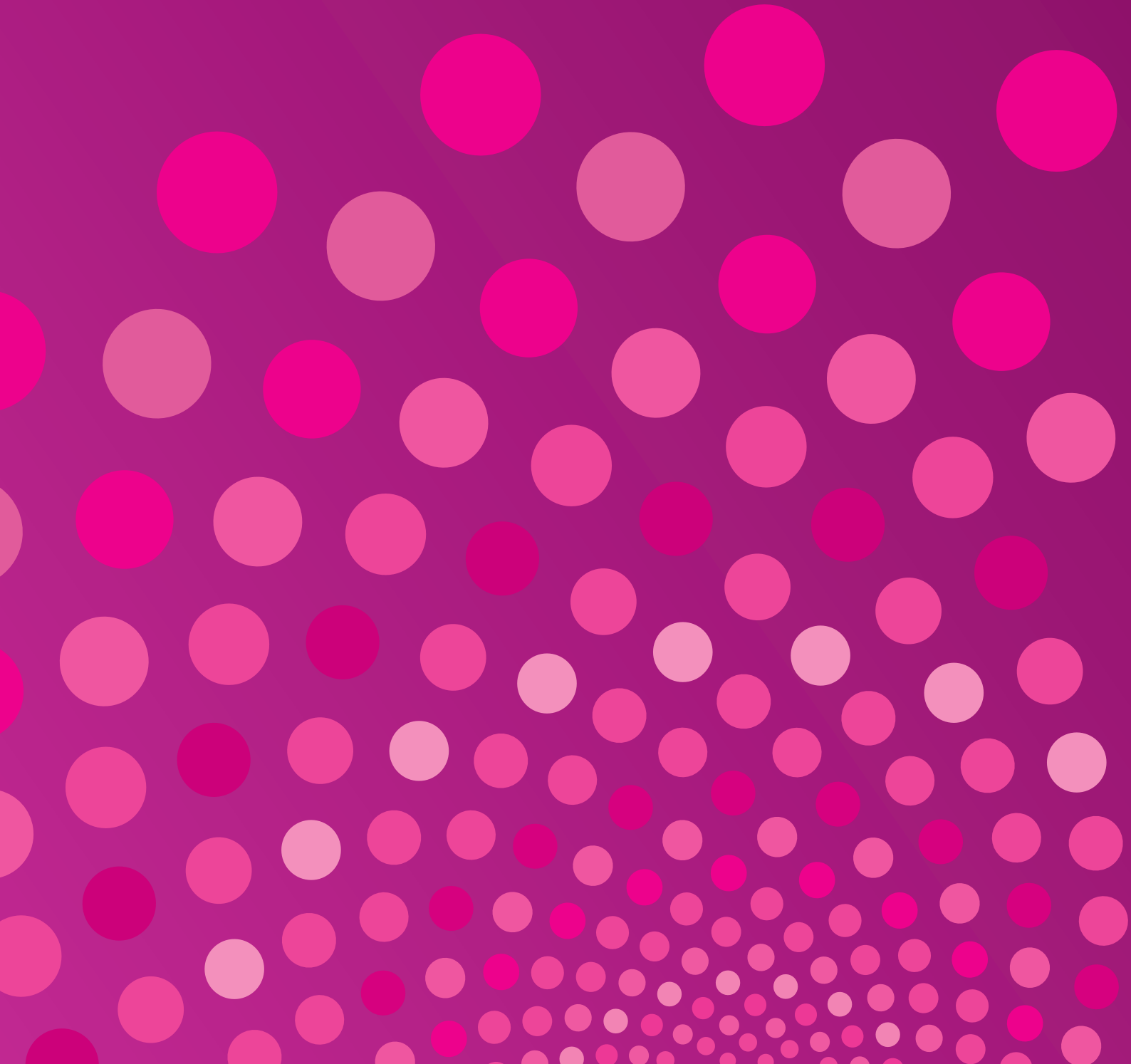
lives of persons with disabilities. The report highlights some of the challenges encountered, for example, the digital divide and isolation and loneliness experienced by some people with disabilities, but also highlights the strong community spirit present with people helping each other and the efforts made to ensure that people remained connected with friends and relatives and the wider community.

The NDA will continue to advise government and public bodies on the importance of ensuring persons with disabilities are included in recovery efforts, and are included in consultation and decision-making with regard to issues that affect them.

Summary

The NDA's work throughout 2021 covered a wide range of areas and themes, with outputs ranging from research reports to policy advice submissions to practical guidance to support implementation. We also work continually to enhance our engagement and communication processes with all our stakeholders, including disabled people through their representative organisations. More information on our outputs is available in the pages that follow.

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, Moving On 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. The report was published in December 2021. The NDA conducted and managed the study on behalf of the Health Service Executive (HSE) who commissioned and funded the study. In total 426 persons with a disability were interviewed in the study.

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, 91 adults who had intellectual disabilities and lived in congregated settings were interviewed before and after their transition to ordinary homes in the community. Quality of life outcomes improved after moving to the community. Participants and staff reported families visiting more often, residents having more opportunities to go out and about, to exercise more choice and control over their daily lives, and to improve their daily living skills.

Participants in the second phase comprised 280 adults from across 43 locations and 33 service providers with a variety of disabilities, who used a wide range of disability services. 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.

Findings indicated that quality of life was better for people who received person-centred services, and worse for people who lived in congregated settings, could not choose who they lived with, did not like who they lived with or were experiencing pain. It was clear 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.

A cost analysis assessed the financial implications of transitioning to the community based on pay and non-pay costs but excluding any capital costs. The analysis indicated a cost uplift of 60% for providing services in community rather than congregated settings. The level of support required by residents is a key driver of costs with higher support needs incurring higher costs- mainly due to the need for additional frontline staff.

To capture the full cost of transitioning the approximately 1,800 individuals who still live in congregated settings, and who predominantly have higher support needs, to the community,

the study modelled the cost implications for three scenarios, 2030, 2027 and 2025, finding that the faster the rate of deinstitutionalisation, the higher the cost. Once mortality and inflation had been accounted for the annual cost uplift for disability residential care services that is attributable to the transfer of additional individuals to the community reaches €140.1million (m) per annum (p.a.) by 2030 in Scenario 1. However, a comparable level of expenditure of €139.2m p.a. is reached in 2027 under scenario 2 before rising to €147.7m p.a. by 2030. Under scenario 3 expenditure of €138.8m p.a. is reached in 2025 before reaching €153.2m p.a. by 2030.

NDA will use the findings of this study in its policy advice. We also plan to disseminate the findings more widely through developing a number of papers for academic journals and conferences.

NDA continues its membership 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 provides input and advice on issues relevant to the group including guidance and advice on housing and supporting implementation of the group's action plan.

Transforming Lives – Staffing project

During 2021, the NDA published 'Staff and change management: Good practice in the transition to community residential disability services'. This report gathered the experiences of staff and managers who transitioned from an 'old' model to a 'new' models of HSE funded residential disability services. This study identifies and documents effective practice in change management processes relating to the transition of staff from working in congregated settings to working in the community. The purpose was to share learning with staff and managers currently or about to transition to the community, with a role to support individuals with disabilities, to achieve a successful transition for all. A number of key themes emerged from the analysis including shift in model of service and work practice, leadership and management, communicating about transition and building staff support for transitions.

NDA continues 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 as part of the Transforming Lives programme.

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.

The HSE sought expressions of interest from individuals to participate in the Demonstration Projects in 2019 and commenced bringing people on to the Demonstration Project in early 2020. The Demonstration Project was to be run for a two year period but due to delays in implementation primarily related to COVID-19, the HSE received approval from the Minister

to extend the Demonstration Projects by a year (to the end of June 2022). It is likely that the project will be further extended.

The Department of Health requested the NDA to manage the evaluation of the Demonstration Projects. In 2020 we conducted a tender competition to select an evaluation team. In 2021 our work on the evaluation of the Demonstration Project involved getting ethical approval for the evaluation (from the many service providers supporting people involved in the Demonstration Project) and supporting the HSE in their work around consent procedures and documenting and getting approval for data collection and processing arrangements. We will continue to work on this project in 2022 and remain committed to capturing the learnings from this important initiative.

Implementing the demonstration projects was again impacted by COVID-19 in 2021 as it had been in 2020. Progress was also impacted by the HSE Cyber Attack in 2021.

The NDA continued to participate in the Demonstration Project Oversight Group in its capacity as independent advisor and to update the Department on out preparatory work on the evaluation.

Ageing with a disability

The Trinity Centre for Ageing & Intellectual Disability (TCAID) have been commissioned to examine care of older adults with intellectual disability (ID) and complex age-related conditions in Ireland. The project seeks to examine available care options such as specialist aged care facilities for older adults with ID and the suitability of generic nursing homes for older adults with ID, including identifying examples of good practice, service delivery costs and the outcomes for the individuals in question. The objective of the research is to review the existing evidence base regarding the care of older adults with complex age-related conditions and generate additional evidence regarding current models of care, expected future needs, and quality of life outcomes in different care settings.

Progress in the project was significantly hindered throughout 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on care facilities and nursing homes in particular made it difficult to progress the project, making it necessary to defer research work until a point at which a majority of residents at care facilities were inoculated and the working conditions of staff had normalised to some degree.

The project Steering Group was reconvened in mid-2021 to assess the state of play in terms of progressing the research. Following this the project was relaunched owing to improved circumstances at facilities. TCAID have been continuing their engagements with specialist ID service providers in an effort to arrange focus groups and interviews. Sampling for focus groups started in early December 2021 and TCAID are working towards conducting additional focus groups in early 2022. TCAID are also rolling out a survey of specialist and general ID facilities.

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. One of the outputs of the group this year, led by the CSO, was an in-depth audit of TUSLA data examining which equality grounds (for example, disability, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity and membership of the Traveller community) are covered in the datasets held by Tusla. The results are being added to the overall civil and public service equality data audit compiled by the CSO last year. This will inform work on an equality data strategy, led jointly by CSO and DCEDIY, and which the NDA is supporting. The Equality Budgeting Group continues to work towards the development of an Equality Budget Statement and NDA did some background work examining the Equality Budget Statements from other jurisdictions.

Research Promotion Scheme 2021/22

NDA runs a research promotion grant scheme every two years. The theme of the Research Promotion Scheme 2021/22 is Assistive Products (APs) and Consumer Products (CPs) that support choice and control for Persons with Disabilities.

Six applications were received for the RPS. Two applicants were shortlisted and interviewed and both were awarded a grant as follows:

- Award 1: School of Psychology, National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG). This research will survey the use of APs and CPs for reading instruction with children with intellectual Disability (ID) and Developmental Disability (DD) in Irish schools.
- Award 2: School of Occupation Sciences and Occupational Therapy, University College Cork. This research will explore the potential of a range of consumer products (CP's) such as Digital Voice Assistants and smart home-based technology to support the participation of people with disabilities to live independently and be included in their communities.

Final research reports are expected in Q3 2022.

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

In Q2 2021 NDA published its annual independent assessment of implementation of committed actions under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (CES) 2015 – 2024.

The paper provided a context setting section for 2020 which described the unique circumstances that the COVID-19 pandemic presented. As 2020 progressed it became more apparent that CES activity was slower than previous years. The COVID-19 experience led to a sudden and dramatic shift in patterns of living, working and service delivery across the

population. Large numbers of public sector staff were redeployed to areas of work that required immediate staffing. By the end of December 2020, 335,599 of those whose income from employment has been affected due to COVID-19 were being facilitated through the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) which is administered by the Department of Social Protection.

While the response to COVID-19 led to some delays in the implementation of CES actions, by Q4 2020, some service and supports for persons with disabilities had rebounded and the NDA assessment paper described the collective progress during 2020. The paper provided a contextual assessment of progress under four key themes: transitions: support to work and/or return to work: public transport: and engaging employers.

With regard to economic and social recovery plans, the assessment paper noted the interplay and opportunities presented by areas of the recovery plan and strategic priority areas of the CES. In brief these included; remote working: regional enterprise strategy, national skills strategy and the roadmap for social inclusion.

2021 marked the final year of the current three year action plan. NDA has been advising DCEDIY on an approach to developing a new action plan, on potential content and on the need to consult widely particularly with disabled persons organisations.

Consultation and Advice paper on Vocational Rehabilitation Pathway

Vocational rehabilitation is the process that enables individuals to overcome the barriers they face when accessing, remaining or returning to work following injury, illness or impairment. The NDA published a policy advice paper which is based on a review of evidence and identified gaps that exist in the Irish system. The paper provided advice on the development of a pathway to retaining employment or returning to work for those who have acquired a disability or long-term health condition during their working life.

The policy advice paper was further informed by a consultation with persons with acquired disabilities or conditions and a separate consultation report has also been published. The consultation involved an online survey of 115 people followed by six case study interviews. The findings from this consultation reinforced the argument that there needs to be a coherent national programme of vocational rehabilitation in place in Ireland.

NDA is working to ensure that the next CES action plan includes concrete actions to advance the development of vocational rehabilitation provision.

NDA/OECD Research Programme

The NDA collaborated with the OECD to examine employer engagement and support for employers which the NDA had identified as critically important for the improvement of the labour market situation for persons with disabilities in Ireland. While the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities has specific actions underway in pillar six that relates to employer engagement, the NDA tasked the OECD to examine effective international strategies for employer engagement. Of importance were strategies to overcome

disability-related misperceptions and discrimination and to raise awareness about available support programmes and subsidies.

Over the lifetime of the project, the OECD team conducted a numbers of work strands, which included:

- Interviews with stakeholders including department officials, employer organisations and education providers
- An inter-departmental workshop with senior officials which served to highlight some of the issues and obstacles regarding incentives for employers and gaps in knowledge of supports available
- Examination of learning from other jurisdictions on employer engagement, which included an international expert workshop with experts from the Austrian Public employment services
- An employer survey
- A consultation exercise with persons with disabilities to discuss emerging recommendations
- Dissemination of report through launch and media campaign

The NDA is working to ensure that the recommendations from the OECD report are incorporated within various department work-plans and the new CES action plan.

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 2021, the NDA published its independent assessment of progress in the implementation of actions under NDIS 2017-2022 for the year 2020. 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, and through engagement with disability stakeholders.

The NDA reported that there had been progress on many actions under all eight NDIS themes in 2020, but in a number of these 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. The NDA also advised 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 2020 included:

- Finalising and adopting the Revised Strategy following its mid-term review
- Input to the UNCRPD State Report across Departments
- Establishment of the Disability Participation and Consultation Network
- Increased awareness of CRPD and obligation to engage with persons with disabilities across Departments
- Transposition of the EU Web Accessibility Directive
- Budget allocation for the Decision Support Service
- Development of specific disability awareness training for employers

There were a number of areas where progress was slow or seemed to have stalled in 2020. Some of these areas, which the NDA recommended would require greater focus in 2021, included:

- Review of the Mental Health Act
- Progress of Protection of Liberty safeguards
- Personalised Budgets
- Regulations for residential disability services
- Work of new Groups established to examine issues around Assistive Technology and Transport as it relates to Employment
- New and existing actions that were impacted by COVID-19
- Shared Actions owned by all Departments, with no single 'responsible' Department
- Development of a successor to NDIS and/or UNCRPD Implementation Plan

The NDA advised that the NDIS Steering Group follow a thematic approach in respect of the focus of the quarterly meetings, and shared suggested topics with the Group. Themes included Mental Health; Employment; Person-centred disability services and inclusive communities; and most urgently, a thematic discussion on the successor to the current Strategy, due to end in 2022.

Oireachtas committee on Justice

The NDA was invited to attend a meeting of the Joint Committee on Justice, on Tuesday, 28 September, alongside other witnesses including the Courts Service, Victim Support at Court, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Bar of Ireland. In its opening statement, the NDA spoke about relevant UNCRPD Articles, including Article 4(3) on engaging directly with persons with disabilities, and relevant NDIS actions around enhancing access to justice for persons with disabilities. The NDA listed both procedural and accessibility accommodations that should be put in place to facilitate the active participation of persons with disabilities in the justice system, including intermediaries, the ISL Act and accessible buildings, information and ICT. We also stressed the importance of continued training and awareness-raising for Courts Service staff and the judiciary, and the need for proper collection and dissemination of data.

Members of the Joint Committee asked questions and made comments around applying a Universal Design approach to the modernisation programme being carried out by the Courts Service, and about supports available to victims of crime, including intermediaries. The NDA took the opportunity to emphasise that providing for accessibility in court houses was an obligation under the Disability Act and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, and that provision should be made for same, including through relevant budgeting processes. We also advised that a Universal Design approach to these premises would negate the need for costly renovations at a later stage.

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

National Standards for Children’s Social Services

The NDA continued its membership of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Advisory Group for the development of Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services, which commenced mid-2019. The NDA submitted feedback during the development of the draft standards, as well as on the new principles-based framework for HIQA standards that was to be used for the first time in these standards. In its submission during the public consultation on the draft standards, the NDA welcomed the focus on achieving outcomes for the user rather than on process and the development of having standards written from the perspective of the person accessing the service. NDA also contributed comments on specific standards in relation to equitable access to services and the requirement for robust organisational policies and practices for complying with legislation on personal information, and on the accessibility of the standards document.

The Board of HIQA approved and strongly endorsed the Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services at its December 2021 meeting, and the standards have been submitted for Ministerial approval. HIQA will now look at implementation tools to support services to put the standards into practice.

Draft Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services

The draft Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services, are being developed by HIQA and the Mental Health Commission, and the NDA continued its membership of HIQA’s Advisory Group for the development of the standards during 2021. The NDA submitted feedback during the development of these standards, including during the public consultation. The Advisory Group met for the last time in February 2022, and it is expected that the final draft standards will be submitted for Ministerial approval in the weeks following this.

National Standards for Home Support Services

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has commenced the development of national standards for home support services to complement the primary legislation and minimum requirements (regulations) being developed by the government to support people to live in their own homes. It is envisaged that the standards for Home Support Services will cover a wider range of services than those proposed will be covered by the regulations/

licensing¹. HIQA is convening an Advisory Group to inform the development of these standards; NDA is represented on this group, which met for the first time in November 2021.

Conduct research and develop advice to guide on building capacity in the wider community, including consideration of mechanisms to achieve community integration and social inclusion

Advice Paper to DCEDIY on an approach to a UNCRPD Strategy

In June 2020, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) invited comments on its concept note outlining their proposed approach to development of a long-term UNCRPD Implementation Plan, and the timeline for same. This was in line with commitments following the mid-term review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy.

The NDA advised that a 10-year **UNCRPD Implementation Strategy** be developed to provide a roadmap for the realisation of the Convention. This Strategy would set out high-level commitments to ensure that the Convention is fully implemented across all areas of life. From this, shorter-term, multi-annual (e.g. 3 years) **disability action plans** at the level of each government department or agency would flow. This action plan would contain specific, time-bound and measurable commitments for that Department, and would be similar to the Sectoral Plans developed for Departments under the Disability Act, but would be developed across government rather than the selected areas identified within that legislation. These action plans would in turn be translated into **annual work-plans** within departments and public bodies.

The NDA advised that a UNCRPD Implementation Strategy would be developed around high-level themes. In other jurisdictions, six or eight high-level themes are chosen, each of which incorporate, and progressively realise, several UNCRPD Articles. For example, a theme of 'Choice and Control' could include Articles 12, 19, 20, and 23, amongst others, and could then be interpreted in different ways depending on the department or public body in question.

In respect of monitoring, the NDA suggested that a series of over-arching, high level indicators of progress would be developed for the UNCRPD Implementation Strategy, to ensure that a monitoring framework for the Strategy can be sustained beyond the lifetime of the current equality strategies, and can guide the monitoring methodologies developed for any future

¹ The Department of Health intends that the minimum requirements set out in secondary legislation (regulations) will apply in the first stage of roll-out to professional home-support activities that encompass the provision of assistance with personal care; the activities of daily living (ADL). It is currently not proposed to include the broader range of services that are provided in a person's home to support people with care-needs to live independently, for example, services provided by nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists or other healthcare professionals in these regulations.

It is currently envisaged that the initial regulations will refer to 'Home-support' as the provision of physical and personal care to a person aged 18 or older in their home who by reason of illness, infirmity or disability is unable to provide it for themselves without assistance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) physical assistance with movement, bodily functions and personal hygiene, such as eating and drinking, toileting, washing, dressing, and oral, skin, hair and nail care
- b) prompting and supervision in relation to the taking of medication and the activities listed in (a) where a person is unable to perform them competently without such prompting and supervision.

such strategies. The NDA also suggested that, while the current structure of the NDIS Steering Group offers a model that could be adapted for a longer-term UNCRPD Implementation Strategy, it would be important to consider how Disabled Persons' Organisations may form part of any monitoring or oversight group. The NDA also advised that Senior Officials Group and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters should both play a role in the oversight of the Strategy.

The NDA advised that DCEDIY factor in sufficient time for consultation on a UNCRPD implementation plan to be conducted in a meaningful way, and to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in the Strategy development process. The NDA also noted that IHREC's input will be important, as the Independent Monitoring Mechanism under the UNCRPD.

Assistive Technology

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) working group on assistive technology was reconvened in June 2021 following a break that resulted from COVID-19 restrictions. The working group is focused on progressing action 53 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS), regarding access and affordability of assistive technology for entry, retention and return to work. The NDA has been an active participant in this group and provides policy advice and research papers to support the working group as required under Action 123 of the NDIS.

NDA also sits on the HSE's Digital and Assistive Technology group and advises on their work and supported them in reviewing applications for an AT grant scheme. The theme of NDA's Research Promotion Grant Scheme for 2021/22 is on AT.

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

Revision of Ask Me Guidelines

The NDA began work on revising the "Ask Me Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities" which was first published in 2022. Since the publication of these guidelines, a number of legislative and policy changes have taken place, including the ratification of the UNCRPD, which outlines specific obligations with regard to the participation of persons with disabilities in policy development and monitoring processes. The updated guidance will advise government departments, local authorities and public bodies in relation to engaging people with disabilities in policy development and consultation processes in line with UNCRPD.

As a first step, the NDA carried out a review of the literature regarding the participation of persons with disabilities in policy development and monitoring processes. Disabled Person's Organisations (DPOs) and other stakeholders were invited to suggest literature for inclusion in the review. Interviews then took place with five national DPOs in which the emerging themes from the literature review were shared for feedback and discussion. Focus groups with young people with disabilities were also facilitated, together with a national DPO, to gather their views. The NDA then launched a public call for submissions which invited inputs from all interested stakeholders.

The inputs gathered from this consultation process were collated into a consultation report with draft recommendations from stakeholders. The NDA then held focus groups with public officials from Departments, public bodies and local authorities. The purpose of these focus groups was to share the draft consultation recommendations in order to identify the potential opportunities or challenges with regard to the practical implementation of these recommendations. The final guidelines will be published in 2022 and will be disseminated widely throughout the public service and beyond.

Rollout of National Framework of Person-Centred Planning

The National Framework for Person-Centred Planning, the development of which was managed (and partly funded) by NDA, is being rolled out in adult disability day services in 2021, further to a pilot phase in the second half of 2019. NDA is a member of the New Directions Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation Sub-Group. There were recommendations from the pilot phase report to provide detailed guidance to service providers in relation to various aspects of the person-centred planning process. Four guidance documents were developed, and a series of webinars to explain the framework for service providers took place in May – September; the documents and webinar recordings were then made available online. It was planned that all adult disability day services would complete a self-evaluation against the framework by early 2022, and develop plans to address alignment to the framework in following that.

Review of the Operation of the ISL Act, 2017

The NDA prepared the first report on the operation of the Irish Sign Language (ISL) Act 2017. This legislation was enacted on the 24th December 2017 with a requirements for the Minister to require a report to be prepared on the operation of the Act no later than three years after enactment. This report was produced by the NDA at the Minister's request.

The ISL Act commenced on 23rd December 2020, meaning that all the provisions of the Act must be functioning by this date. The NDA consulted with ISL users and other interested parties through surveys and focus group meetings to understand public perspectives and experience around implementation of the Act. Public bodies with responsibilities under the Act were also asked to provide information about their implementation activities through a survey and through virtual meetings with departments who had specific responsibilities under the Act. An advisory group made up of key stakeholders was also formed.

The report considered each of the 10 sections of the ISL Act and found that overall the Act is not yet operating as intended. It highlighted the need for significant improvements in awareness, understanding, and clarity about the Act for all stakeholders, in addition to the need for improvements in implementation and compliance by relevant public bodies. The report offered 17 recommendations, and five items relevant to the Act for further consideration. The recommendations of the report related to:

- Increasing the supply of ISL interpreters
- Raising awareness of the Act, and providing clarity on its scope and key terms
- Establishing standard procedures for access to services through ISL, including complaints mechanisms

- Supporting public bodies' compliance and monitoring
- Establishing children's right to ISL learning
- Improving family access to ISL learning in the ISL Tuition scheme
- Improving ISL access at recognised schools, as well as minimum qualifications and higher education placements for teachers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Improving broadcasters understanding and implementation of relevant clauses of the Act

The draft final report was completed in July 2021 and provided to the Minister. Some further clarifications were received from departments towards the end of 2021 and these were considered and updates made as appropriate. The report includes versions in ISL, Plain English and Easy-to-Read formats. The report will be presented to both Houses of the Oireachtas by the Minister of State with Responsibility for Disability in early 2022, as required by the legislation. The next report on the operation of the ISL Act will be undertaken in five years' time as required by legislation.

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

Someone Like Me Primary School Art Competition

"Someone Like Me" is an annual primary schools' art competition funded by the National Disability Authority as a way of developing children's awareness and understanding of disabilities. The competition engages children, teachers, parents 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.



The prize-giving ceremony for 2020-21 took place in January 2021 when the national overall winner was announced as Cathal Walsh from 6th Class in Summercove National School, Co. Cork. Cathal's entry was a portrait of his twin brother Harry. Cathal and Harry featured in a report on the RTÉ Nine O'Clock News and in the three national newspapers. This was the largest amount of coverage the competition had ever received. There was also a lot of coverage of the county winners in the local media.

This year's competition was able to return to near-normal, while still following the COVID-19 guidelines in place at the time. The competition was launched in September, by Anne Rabbitte, TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability. By the closing date, over 1,800 entries had been received. A virtual prize-giving ceremony took place in February 2022.

During 2020 the National Disability Authority also commissioned an evaluation of how the competition has performed over the period 2016-20 in terms of its effectiveness in raising

awareness and its value for money. This evaluation report will be available in Q1 2022. It will be considered by the National Disability Authority and will help inform considerations with regard to expenditure on disability awareness.

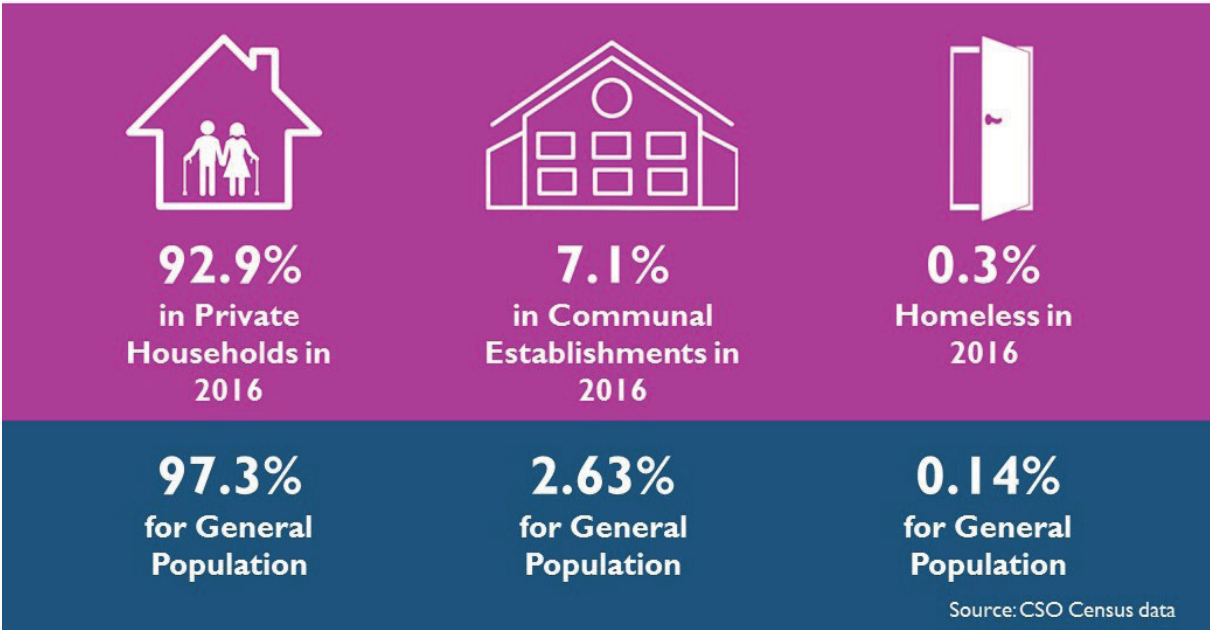
Further develop data collection, and its analysis, seeking to build a wider range of data and statistics to inform planning and development relevant to disability, and to measure progress in key areas

Enhancing disability statistics

Throughout 2021 the NDA has continued its collaborative work with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and other bodies on the development, collection and analysis of data relevant to disability. This has included working with a variety of stakeholders to enhance disability data collection and standards and ongoing collaborative research work to develop new insights using data on disability.

In December 2021 the CSO published 'Income, Employment and Welfare Analysis of People with a Disability 2019'.² This research project entailed linking a variety of different government administrative datasets to the Census of Population 2016 in order to provide new insights into a wide range of issues including employment, education, housing and other outcomes in the lives of persons with a disability. The NDA worked in collaboration with the CSO to inform the report.

Where do persons with disabilities live?



² <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/fp-iewad/incomeemploymentandwelfareanalysisofpeoplewithadisability2019/>

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

The NDA continues to work to encourage public bodies to improve disability data collection and management standards, including the consistent utilisation of disability markers in administrative and survey data in line with National Statistical Board (NSB) guidance.

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). Following the publication of the first report of the partnership in September 2020, research has continued throughout 2021 with several papers having been published or submitted to academic journals.

Academic and socio-emotional outcomes of students with special educational needs

The ESRI undertook an analysis of data from Ireland's Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) national longitudinal study of children. Entitled 'A capability approach to understanding academic and socio-emotional outcomes of students with special educational needs in Ireland', the paper investigates how individual characteristics as well as home and school environmental factors at age 9 relate to academic and socio-emotional outcomes of students with special educational needs (SEN) at age 17. Results suggest that young people with SEN register

³ See: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054985.2021.1973982?journalCode=core20>

both lower average scores and make less academic progress between the age of nine and their national lower secondary examination, with the exception of young people with a physical SEN. By using rigorous nationally representative longitudinal data, the paper offers a more holistic understanding of the development of young people with SEN, while providing important evidence that a more inclusive approach for supporting students with additional needs, their parents, and their schools is needed. The paper was published in the 'Oxford Review of Education' in September 2021.³

Identification of skills gaps among persons with disabilities and their employment prospects

Over the course of 2021 the ESRI developed a comprehensive report focussed on identification of educational and skills gaps among persons with disabilities and their employment prospects. The analysis utilised a mix of econometric and descriptive statistics methods, and included some novel applications of econometric methods in the analysis of labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities. A number of nationally representative data sources were utilised to examine the skills and educational endowments of persons with disabilities compared to those without. Specifically, data from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC), the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), the Census of Population, and the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) were examined.

The report was launched in September 2021 alongside another NDA-commissioned report produced by the OECD focussed on engaging and supporting employers to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities in Ireland. The joint launch of these reports garnered significant levels of attention in the national media.

Community Living and Personal Assistance Services

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. Building upon this literature review, further research on community living and personal assistance (PA) services continued throughout 2021. This work was overseen by an advisory group which was established to oversee research focussed specifically on PA service clients. This group includes persons with lived experience of disability.

Following a round of interviews with disability service managers in the Health Service Executive (HSE), a survey focussed on the process to assess and allocate PA supports was distributed to managers across all nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs). Following this the ESRI produced a Landscape Paper examining the key findings of the interviews and surveys which was submitted to the Disability and Society academic journal. An additional survey focussed on the experience of PA service clients was developed and distributed in Q2 2021, with input from both the NDA and the study advisory group. In Q4 2021 the ESRI presented the key findings of the initial phase of work to the NDA, Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) and several other key government bodies with responsibilities in the area of PA services. Towards the end of 2021 the ESRI submitted a draft paper on PA

services covering the full range of surveys and interviews undertaken for the project. This paper has been submitted to Disability and Society which is an academic journal of high standing for review.

NDA is using the work from these studies to inform its policy advice in this area.

Experiences of women with disabilities of maternity services

The purpose of this research report was to fulfil the NDA's commitment under the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 to "Undertake further research to guide maternity services and supports for women with disabilities during and post pregnancy" (Action 2.20). While the Department of Justice and Equality were originally responsible for this Strategy, it moved to sit in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

This report was based on secondary data analysis of the 2020 National Maternity Experience Survey (NMES). NMES provided mothers with an opportunity to report on their experiences of care from the antenatal to the postnatal period in Ireland's maternity services. This survey was led by HIQA and is part of the National Care Experience Programme, an initiative by HIQA, the HSE and the Department of Health. This programme captures feedback on people's health and social care experiences in order to improve the quality of these services in Ireland. There has been a suite of reports published from NMES on women's maternity experiences at national and local level, as well as quality improvement plans based on the survey's findings for all 19 maternity hospitals/units and nine CHO areas. None of these reports to date refer specifically to women with disabilities.

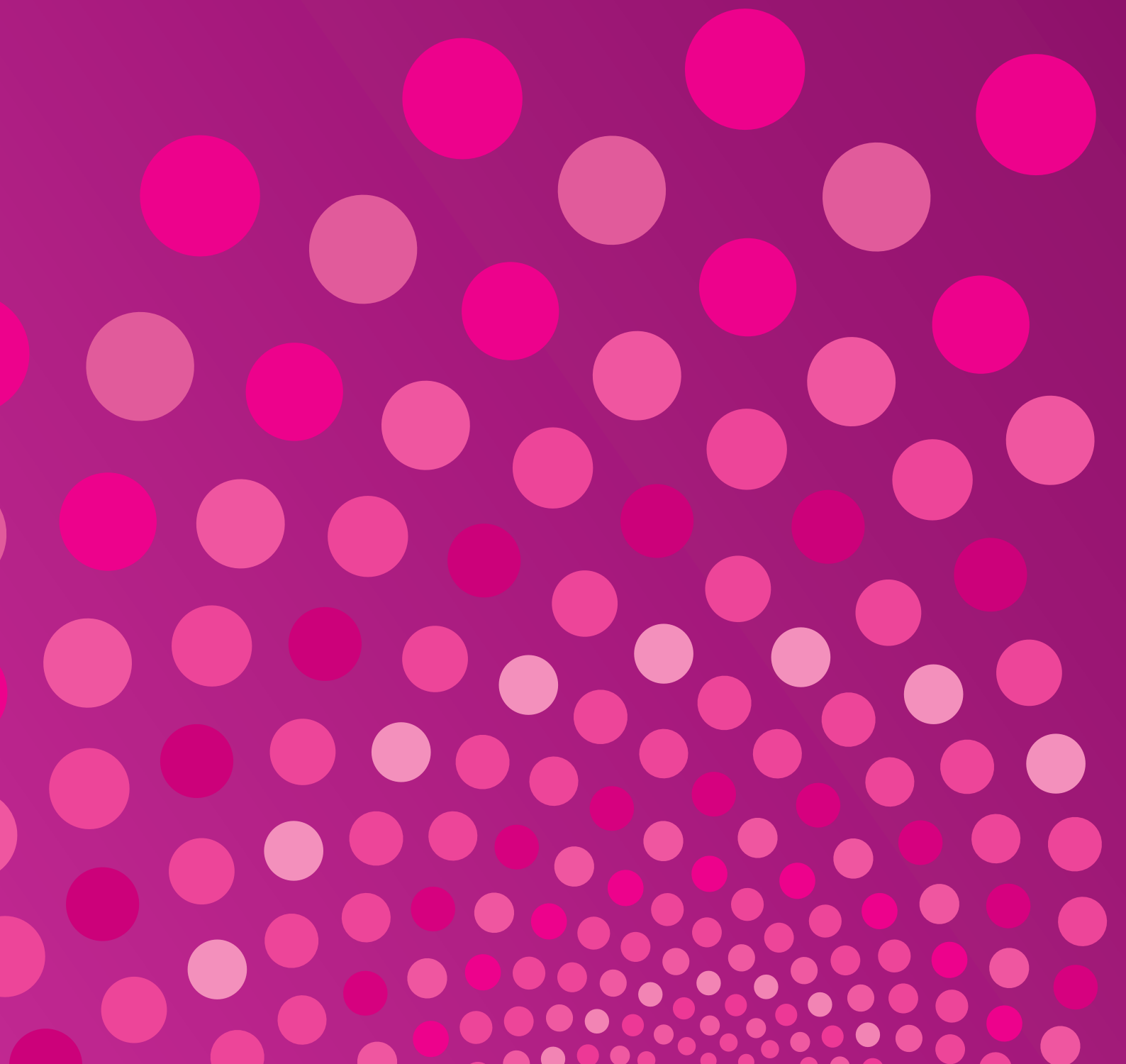
This report uses NMES data to focus on the maternity care experiences of women with disabilities and is intended to complement the NMES publications. It describes the maternity care experiences of 217 women with disabilities in Ireland who responded to NMES, and compares their experiences to the 2,987 respondents without disabilities. It outlines the various initiatives that the HSE and other relevant stakeholders have indicated should resolve some of the key issues emerging from NMES that impact on all women. It then makes a series of recommendations to ensure that these initiatives adequately address the needs of women with disabilities. Implementation of these recommendations will help to ensure that maternity services can meet the specific needs of women with disabilities. Otherwise, the concern is that initiatives which aren't accessible to all women may serve to create, perpetuate or exacerbate existing differences in the care experiences of those with and without disabilities.

The final report and recommendations were disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders. It is intended to repeat the analysis following the next NMES survey in 2023.

Data Governance Board

In 2021, the Director of the NDA was invited by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to join the Data Governance Board as established under the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019. The Board is convened to oversee and advise the Minister on good practice in relation to data sharing for the public good, and in keeping with data protection legislation. The Director was invited on the basis of competency in equality and inclusion data, and has advised the Board on the importance of accessibility in the Board's work, including public consultation activities.

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”.

Identify and conduct research to build information and evidence on the implications of societal changes and developments

COVID-19 innovations project

In 2021 the NDA conducted research to identify innovations and adaptations that stemmed from COVID-19. The research sought to identify innovations and new practices that would be beneficial to persons with disabilities if they stayed in place post COVID-19. The report draws on a literature review, submissions received from various stakeholders and the view of participants in a “Build Back Better post COVID-19” consultation event convened by the NDA.

The report documents how the pandemic provided the spur for extensive adaptations and innovations and resulted in some changes that were already planned or in train being fast-tracked. It was also the catalyst for collaborative cross community and inter-agency initiatives that resulted in new approaches to promoting social inclusion and more efficient sharing of resources.

The submissions received suggest that there is an appetite amongst disability service providers and service users for some changes to be embedded and further developed. A blended approach that incorporates a mix of in-person and remote services is now a viable option for areas such as specialist disability services, therapy services, and some educational provision.

Key areas where rapid change occurred during the pandemic include telehealth, remote working and widespread adoption of digital technologies. Many of the innovations that feature in the report were facilitated by the increased use of technology.

Technology is especially important for children and young people with additional needs as it can promote autonomy, overcome communication difficulties, foster inclusion and enable the learner to learn in a manner and at a pace that best suits them. The closure of schools prompted by the pandemic resulted in a rapid embrace of digital technology and the upgrading of teachers’ ICT skills. This is likely to enable more students with additional needs to reach their full potential over time. Advancing the integration of digital technologies in teaching and learning may be especially beneficial to those with additional needs.

The report points to the prominent role that technology played in the lives of persons with disabilities during the pandemic and concludes that the use and importance of technology is likely to extend and expand in the post-pandemic era.

The report suggests that consideration should be given to conducting further research to establish if the positive changes made during the pandemic have been embedded and to

assess their impact and advises that further research should draw on the perspectives of key stakeholders, including: persons with disabilities, families and carers, representative organisations and relevant government officials.

NDA's submission to the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

In June 2021, the NDA made a submission to the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI). The purpose of the NIFTI is to ensure that a planned approach is taken to investing in Ireland's transport system so that it meets the demands of Ireland's growing population which will reach almost 5.7 million people by 2040.

The NDA noted that the Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority (NTA) are committed to increasing the accessibility of public and private transport services. However, the NDA expressed its concern that NIFTI did not contain an explicit strategic objective to providing integrated universally designed public and private transport services in urban and rural areas. There was no mention or consideration given regarding the impact of the NIFTI on a diverse range of users including persons with disabilities and their ability to access transport services. The NDA submission highlighted the importance of a Universal Design approach to the design and implementation of the various elements of a national transport system, but also in consultation and engagement with the full range of users of such a system. We also emphasised the importance of conducting a disability impact assessment for any project entailing significant expenditure.

Engagement with the National Transport Authority

The NDA made three submissions in December to three consultations being run by the NTA concerning three transport projects; The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, the BusConnects Cork project, and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy.

The NDA's submissions acknowledged the benefits of all transport projects, however, the NDA expressed its concern that it was not apparent if an inclusive approach was taken that included the views of persons with disabilities in all three projects. Currently only one out of these three (the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy) expresses a commitment to incorporating universal design in the project.

The Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy had also conducted an Equality Impact Assessment, which incorporated disability in its scope.

The NDA submissions emphasised the importance of consultation activities being design to maximise participation, including from people who may experience challenges with online modes of engagement. This consultation is critical in order to inform the design and delivery of transport projects that result in greater numbers of older people and disabled people being able to access the public transport networks.

The NDA has engaged further with the NTA to discuss these points in further detail, and we look forward to continued collaborative working in 2022.

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 2021

The NDA Annual Conference 2021 was held on Thursday, 14 October. The Conference focused on the theme of realising Article 12 of the UNCRPD (equal recognition before the law) through the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015. Article 12 of the UNCRPD obliges States Parties to recognise that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with other persons and to take all appropriate measures to provide persons with disabilities with the support they need to make decisions. Article 12 also seeks to ensure safeguards exist to promote the will and preferences of the person, and to protect against undue influence and conflicts of interest. Finally, it commits States Parties to take measures to ensure the equal right of persons with disabilities to own or inherit property and to control their own financial affairs.

The Conference featured Ministerial addresses by Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Mr Roderic O’Gorman TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Ms Anne Rabbitte TD. We heard from keynote speakers Rosemary Kayess (Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), Alberto Vasquez (Disability Rights lawyer and advocate) and Áine Flynn (Director of the Decision Support Service). Our first panel discussion, chaired by Patricia Rickard Clarke (Safeguarding Ireland), featured stakeholders whose work will be impacted by the introduction of the legislation, including the HSE, the National Advocacy Service, the Courts Service, solicitors and financial professionals. Our second panel featured experts from three different jurisdictions who are ahead of Ireland in terms of supported decision-making legislation and/or practice, namely England & Wales, Sweden and the USA. Our final panel featured people whose lives will be directly impacted by the legislation, including representatives of the Irish Dementia Working Group, the National Platform of Self-Advocates, the HSE Mental Health Recovery and Engagement Office and Family Carers Ireland. Many thanks to Board member, Aisling Glynn, for chairing this panel. The Conference concluded with a closing address by the President of the High Court, Ms Justice Mary Irvine.

The recording of the Conference and all presentations are now available to view on the NDA website <https://www.nda.ie/policy-and-research/conference-reports/nda-annual-conferences/nda-annual-conference-2021-opportunities-and-aspirations-for-the-assisted-decision-making-capacity-act-2015-progressive-realisation-of-uncrpd-article-12-equal-recognition-before-the-law-.html>

Creating our Future event “The Big Think – What do people with disabilities in Ireland think researchers should explore in future?”

The NDA held an online brainstorm session on Tuesday November 23rd 2021 on ideas for future research in Ireland. This was part of the government’s ‘Creating Our Future’ project. ‘Creating Our Future’ was a chance for everyone in Ireland to tell the government their research ideas to help make our country better for everyone. Participants contributed 101



Anne Rabbitte TD
Minister for Disability

Anne Rabbitte opening NDA Conference October 2021



Roderic O’Gorman speaking at the NDA Conference October 2021

ideas for research, largely to do with the lives of people with disabilities. These ideas were collated into a report and submitted to the Creating our Future team and have also been published on the NDA's website. The key themes that emerged are listed below:

- Human rights and disability
- Consultation with persons with disabilities
- Inclusive research and research dissemination
- Implementation and utility of research/policy/guidance
- Attitudes towards and awareness of disability
- Service provision and accessibility
- Accessibility and participation
- Education and employment
- Community
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Transport
- Online platforms and technology
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Universal design
- Housing and homelessness
- Cost of disability

These ideas will also be useful to the NDA in terms of identifying areas for new research.

Annual listening event

On 14th May 2021, the National Disability Authority (NDA) hosted a virtual event to hear directly from persons with disabilities and their representative organisations on the theme of 'Building Back Better Post COVID-19'. The aim of the event was to hear perspectives on the impact of the pandemic on education, employment and daily living and to hear of innovations or developments that could be adopted in the post-pandemic world to achieve better outcomes for persons with disabilities. The first part of the event featured keynote speakers who have lived experience of disability: It focused on harnessing the learning about positive ways to build back better. The learning from the event will inform NDA advice and information to the Minister, department officials and the wider public sector. It emerged during the discussions that many participants had experienced positive developments in their lives during COVID-19. They expressed the hope that any gains achieved during the pandemic would be built on for the longer term. They hoped that learnings from more negative experiences during the pandemic would lead to mechanisms being put in place to prevent such actions being repeated in future crises. A summary report published to the web lays out the views of persons with disabilities as voiced in the consultation and groups the themes addressed under a number of categories: representation and voice, universal design (UD), technology and education and employment. Sixty-seven participants attended.

Engagement with HCD Jordan

During 2021 NDA continued to support the Jordanian Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) through a relationship that has been underway for the past three years. The relationship was originally developed with the support of the Irish Embassy in Jordan with the aim of supporting the HCD to advance disability rights in that jurisdiction. Two main activities took place in 2021.

In March the NDA organised a meeting between the HCD and the HSE. His Royal Highness Prince Mire, President of the HCD chaired the meeting. Professor Mac MacLachlan, National Clinical Lead for Disability Services, attended from the HSE. This meeting focused on an overview of the reasons for a focus on autism in Jordan and an update on developments and plans relating to Autism in Ireland.

In November the NDA organised a joint meeting of the National Council of Special Education (NCSE) in Ireland with the HCD staff and their committee. This was to inform the HCD thinking regarding the creation of a national body similar to the NCSE. The meeting was chaired by the director of the HCD Dr Muhammad and attended by the Director of the NCSE Ms. Teresa Griffin. The HCD prepared a list of questions and these were answered by the NCSE with follow up discussion.

The NDA will continue to facilitate discussions with the HCD as relevant and appropriate as they seek to develop their policies.

Youth Justice Advisory Group

The Department of Justice published its Youth Justice Strategy in 2021, and established an Advisory Group as one element of the monitoring and oversight structures. A high level Governance and Strategy Group has oversight for the implementation of the Strategy and its work is informed by the Youth Justice Oversight Group, which includes representatives from key agencies and Government Departments, and by the Youth Justice Advisory Group.

The Youth Justice Advisory Group is chaired by Minister Browne (Minister of State with responsibility for Law Reform) and it serves as a key forum for engagement with a wide range community and expert stakeholders on the implementation of the Youth Justice Strategy. The NDA Director was invited by Minister Browne to join this group, which met twice during 2021. The meetings provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of good practice in gathering and using equality data, including data relevant to the experiences of young people with disabilities interacting with the justice system. The importance of disability awareness, particularly with regard to hidden disabilities, among justice professionals was also highlighted. The work of the group will continue throughout the lifetime of the Strategy.

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

NDA delivers policy advice on a variety of issues, often through submissions in response to consultations run by government departments and public bodies. Some of the ones included in 2021 are outlined below and a full list can be found in appendix 4.

Equality Legislation review submission

In December 2021, the NDA submitted a comprehensive paper to the public consultation on the Review of Equality Legislation in Ireland. The review of the Equal Status Acts, the Employment Equality Act and several other relevant pieces of legislation aimed to examine the functioning of the Acts and their effectiveness in combatting discrimination and promoting equality, as well as reviewing definitions and grounds.

The Government will draw on the findings of the public consultation both to inform the areas of consideration in the legislation and to inform recommendations arising from the review. These may take the form of recommendations for legislative changes, recommendations for policy development or recommendations for changes to the practical operation of the redress mechanisms.

In its submission, the NDA advised on several areas to consider:

- We advised that the definition of ‘disability’ under the Acts remain as broad and far-reaching as possible, so as not to exclude anyone from making a complaint of discrimination on that ground. We advised that some of the outdated, medicalised language be amended. However, we suggested that the current definition remains appropriate, in that it does not introduce a hierarchy of disability, it provides for past, present and future disabilities, it does not require several elements to be ‘proved’, and therefore remains a better option than its counterparts in legislation in other jurisdictions, or definitions provided by other pieces of legislation in Ireland or by the UNCRPD;
- We highlighted the need to review current exemptions under the legislation, for example exemptions via ‘legislated discrimination’ under Section 14, or broad exemptions granted to An Garda Síochána;
- We outlined several areas that require clarity and guidance in respect of the provision of reasonable accommodations;
- We made suggestions around inclusions in the legislation recognising the extent to which persons with disabilities are at increased risk of socio-economic discrimination;
- We proposed the inclusion of definitions for new and emerging terms, such as multiple and intersecting discrimination, and suggested wording for same;
- We advised enhancing the potential of the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty;
- We made several suggestions around procedural amendments to enhance the operations of the WRC under the legislation;
- We emphasised the importance of robust and accurate data collection

Disability Capacity Review submission

The Department of Health published its Review of Disability Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032 in July 2021. This report sets out a range of estimates of the scale of disability social care needed, and the additional capacity required, from a base year of 2018 up to 2032. These estimates are based on projections of future change in the size and age structure of the population, and on the extent of unmet need documented in the Health Research Board’s disability databases. Based on this work, the Government is committed, by

end 2021, to the development and publication of an Action Plan for Health-funded Disability Services, to cover the first years of this period, from 2022-2025. The NDA was invited to make a submission.

The main recommendations in the NDA submission were as follows:

- Evaluate the progressing disability services programme with a view to developing a pathway to reducing waiting lists for early intervention to a sustainable level;
- Set a target date and develop a plan for all sheltered work to cease;
- Develop a plan to prevent new inappropriate admissions to nursing homes of people less than 65 years of age;
- Accelerate decongregation with due regard to the availability of housing and avoid new admissions to congregated settings;
- Consider the housing needs of people living in residences with five to nine people in parallel with decongregation;
- Develop a national framework of assessment of need, including selecting and implementing a resource allocation tool for disability services;
- Fund and support services to develop the requisite expertise, resources and interest to ensure good measurement, interpretation and use of outcome data to guide policy and practice;
- Review the role of regulation for each area of the Disability Capacity Review

Electoral Reform Bill submission

In April 2021 the NDA made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Electoral Reform Bill 2020. The Bill seeks to create an Electoral Commission to oversee all aspects of elections/referendums.

Our submission advised on measures to encourage candidates with disabilities to seek election and advised that changes to postal voting would make it easier for more persons with disabilities to vote.

We also outlined other current issues that the Committee needed to consider including the Irish Sign Language Act, the Web Accessibility Directive, Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act, the National Disability Inclusion Strategy and having a Universal Design approach to all the Electoral Commission's communications.

In August 2021 the Oireachtas Committee published its report containing the following recommendations:

- that the Department engage with the National Disability Authority to explore how the proposed legislation might be improved so as to better serve the needs of people with disabilities
- that the Electoral Commission be mandated to develop guidelines to ensure that all electoral and political information produced by parties is accessible for persons with disabilities

- that the proposed bill provide for the promotion, inclusion, facilitation, and participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral and political process as an explicit function of the Electoral Commission
- that the proposed bill provide for the promotion of voter registration and electoral participation, particularly for under-represented groups, as an explicit function of the Electoral Commission

We welcome these recommendations and look forward to working with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to bring about a truly inclusive electoral process for persons with disabilities.

Housing for All Submission

In May 2021 the National Disability Authority made a submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in response to its consultation on a new Housing for All policy document.

We emphasised that the main priority should be that the planning, design and building of all homes following a Universal Design approach needed to have greater prominence than given in the Programme for Government. We set out the benefits of following a Universal Design approach to planning, design and building homes. We also highlighted the existence of targets already set out in the Department’s joint policy paper on older people with the Department of Health.

We advised the importance of a clear and consistent pathway to housing for all persons with disabilities to replace the two-tier system currently in place involving the HSE and the local authorities, respectively. We also highlighted the difficulties faced by potential tenants with disabilities when trying to find accommodation and advised the benefits of building disability awareness among landlords, as well as development of a register of accessible properties. We also reiterated previous advice to the Department, with regard to the dimensions set out in their apartment planning guidelines, which are currently too small to facilitate a Universal Design approach.

In addition to the above, we repeated our recommendation that Part M is reviewed and amended to properly incorporate Universal Design. We asked the Department to introduce statutory measures to include Universal Design in the planning design and building of homes. We also drew attention to the need for a review of the Department’s existing funding schemes used to fund social housing as they were not suitable for fast-track decision making.

National Housing Strategy for Disabled People Submission

The National Disability Authority participated at all stages of the consultation on the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People (NHSDP) and provided feedback on all drafts. We also sat on the National Advisory Group for the strategy, chaired by the Housing Agency.

The NDA welcomes increased reference to Universal Design than in its within the Strategy, but advises that this could be further emphasised in implementation. In our input to the Strategy,

we advised that there is an overlap between the design requirements to meet the needs of older people and persons with disabilities, and that this could be reflected in the content and implementation plans for the Strategy.

The NDA also advised that a mid-term review of the Strategy would allow a refresh of the actions in consideration of new developments in the disability or housing landscape, and we look forward to supporting such a review as relevant and appropriate.

The NHSDP is a high-level document with lots of the actions left to be fleshed out in the Implementation Plan that is to be agreed in Q2 2022. The Implementation Plan will have a series of annual targets. The Housing Agency is continuing the Advisory Group that worked on drafting the NHSDP and the NDA looks forward to providing further input to support the development of the implementation plan. The NDA will have some new information to contribute in 2022, based on the work that has been done with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland on the cost assessment of Universal Design homes and standard homes and the work being done on the Universal Design Cost Benefit Analysis.

Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based violence Submission

The Department of Justice launched a public consultation to inform the development of a new national strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence in June 2021. The third national strategy will place an emphasis on prevention and reduction, and is to be agreed by Government before the end of 2021.

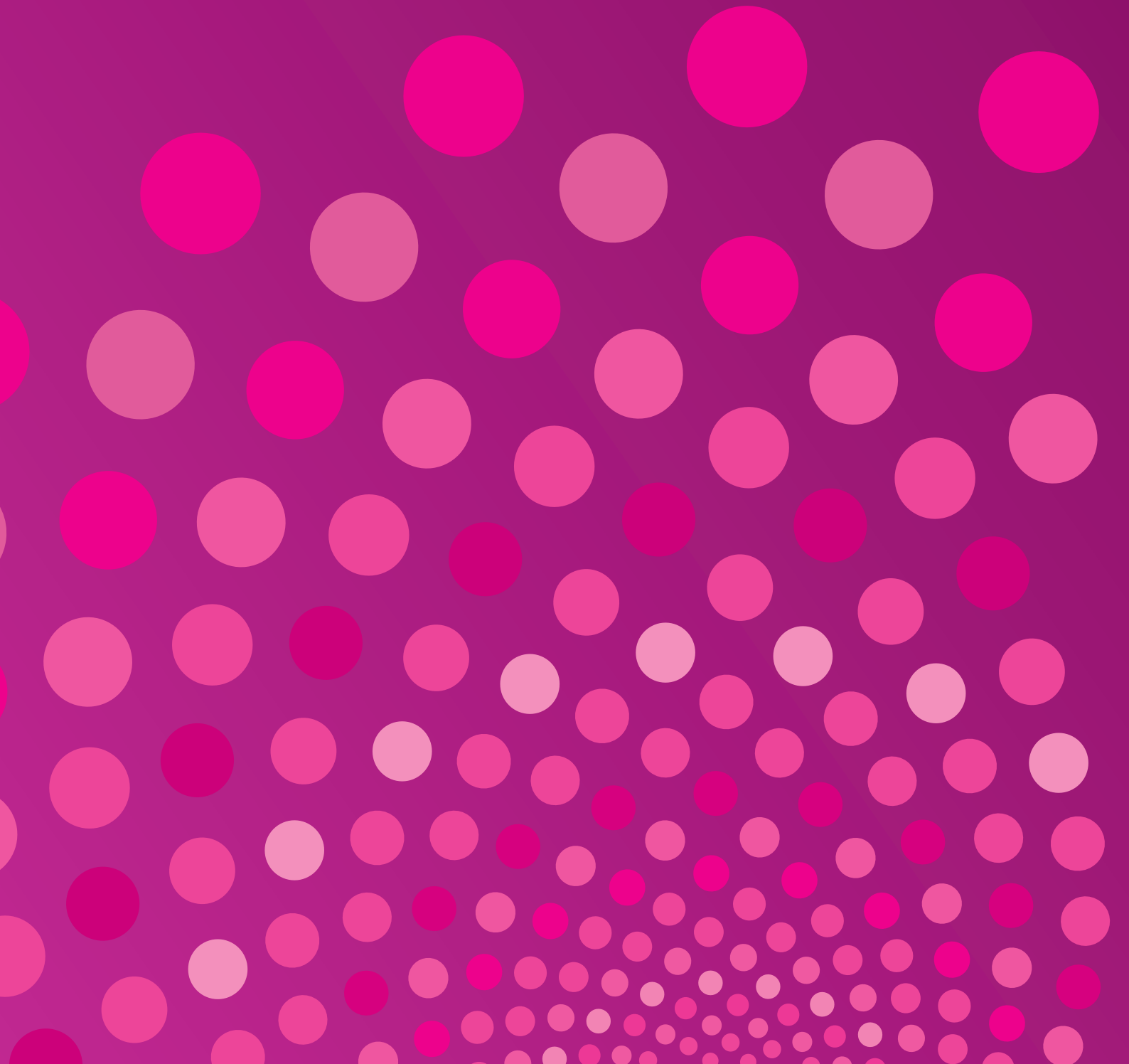
In its submission, the NDA highlighted the importance of UNCRPD Articles 6 and 16 in relation to the new Strategy. We advised that the drafting of the Strategy is progressed in the context of the UNCRPD, in order to consider the relevant obligations of the various stakeholders/ audiences, and to emphasise the importance of these obligations in the final Strategy. Similarly, the drafting of the Strategy should also be progressed in the context of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which was ratified by Ireland in 2019 and which has due regard to the UNCRPD.

The NDA included several statistics which illustrate the high prevalence of persons with disabilities presenting at Rape Crisis Centres, and which show that persons with disabilities are 2.9 times more likely to have experienced domestic violence or abuse by an intimate partner than other adults. Previous studies have shown that several barriers to disclosure and reporting exist, including the fear of being blamed, the fear of not being believed and the fear of the legal process. In one study (funded by the NDA), approximately one quarter of respondents with disabilities mentioned fear of losing support as a factor in not disclosing abuse.

Advice on COVID-19 Mobility Infrastructure

CEUD is a member of the Dublin City Council (DCC) Walking and Cycling subcommittee. As part of the DCC Walking and cycling subcommittee meeting in October, an update was provided regarding COVID mobility infrastructure and future plans for this infrastructure. The subcommittee was informed that the infrastructure put in place in response to COVID-19 (such as wider pedestrian and cycle lanes, and build outs and seating to facilitate outdoor dining) was to remain as is until Christmas 2021, with a decision regarding permanency to be taken in the New Year. Although this update was only for Dublin it is likely similar decisions are to be taken across the country. In November 2021 CEUD therefore wrote to local authorities in advance of any decisions being taking regarding permanency of any infrastructure put in place in response to COVID-19 to provide information to local authorities concerning the barriers which this temporary infrastructure presents to persons with disabilities and how these impact on their obligations under the Disability Act and the UNCRPD. In correspondence to local authorities CEUD also provided information and suggestions as to how to address these barriers using Universal Design and the Design for All Standard in planning more permanent developments.

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

Information provided to support development of First State Report on 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 independent 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 is 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.

Working Paper and research paper on Engagement with Disabled Persons’ Organisations

NDA published a review of international literature in November 2021 related to Disabled Persons’ Organisations (DPOs) and their participation in implementing and monitoring the UNCRPD. The review included examining General Comment number 7 and other documentation from the UNCRPD Committee. The report explores the nature of DPOs and their participation in CRPD implementation and monitoring, highlights challenges experienced in achieving the participation of DPOs in the legislative and policy processes required to implement the CRPD, examines factors that can foster participation of DPOs and persons with disabilities, and gives examples of how DPO participation can bring added value and meaningful change in terms of attaining rights and full societal participation for persons with disabilities.

Evaluate and advise on monitoring mechanisms Rehabilitative Training and School Leavers Profiling

The NDA has supported the HSE in their Rehabilitative Training/School Leaver Profiling process since 2015 with more concentrated support in the last three years. The process is used to quantify the support needs of individuals seeking an Adult Day Service Placement within

HSE-funded disability services. The NDA provided independent quality assurance of the process, as well as advice and training for profiling staff. The NDA report on the annual process delivered in May of 2021 marked the end of the NDA's direct involvement, as the HSE now plans to administer the process within their own resources. The NDA has offered recommendations on how to continuously improve the process and also supported a transition to online delivery of the profiling process during COVID-19.

ALONE Sláintecare project

CEUD was a member of a Steering Group overseeing a trial project that ALONE was carrying out and which was funded by the government under the Sláintecare Integration Fund.

The project was titled 'ALONE BConnect; linking healthcare, social care and community care together using technology and services'. The two key objectives of the project were:

1. to provide technology and services to support older people to better manage their health and remain living at home for longer, and
2. to improve the community's capacity to meet the growing needs of older people through alignment, collaboration, common service models and training.

CEUD also worked with ALONE on applying a Universal Design approach to address user needs in the provision and procurement of technology in this project. There were two outputs from this partnership:

- a document on using 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' as a framework for applying a Universal Design approach to the provision of products and services; and is available on our www.universaldesign.ie website
- a guidance document on using the harmonised European standard EN 301 549 'Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services' for the procurement of technology.

The ALONE Sláintecare project was delayed significantly as a result of the pandemic, but was completed in December 2021.

CEUD plans to promote the guidance document on the use of EN 301 549 with public bodies such as the HSE, so that the standard is referenced in the procurement of technology. It has also been working with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) to promote referencing of the harmonised standard in OGP guidance material that is relevant to the procurement of technology.

Develop and monitor implementation of Codes of Practice as appropriate

Part 3 Monitoring Public Transport against Code of Practice

The revised version of the Code of Practice was submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, incorporating amendments in relation to accessible services and information for persons with autism, as well as reference to Changing Places

Toilets. During 2021, the NDA continued to develop its monitoring approach in relation to the Code of Practice, with an initial focus on public transport. A pre-pilot monitoring exercise trialed a subset of novel indicators that were presented to Dublin Bus and extensive feedback has resulted in refining the indicators and the monitoring methodology. We await Ministerial approval for the revised Code of Practice in order to report the findings from the pre-pilot to the individual transport bodies and proceed to wider roll-out.

Also as part of the Monitoring pilot project, the NDA has procured the services of Compass Informatics to trial the Rate My Service app. This app developed under EU Interreg BE-GOOD funding, allows transport users to rate bus stops and/or the route journey (their experience on the vehicle) employing a set of performance measures as predefined criteria to establish a rating through one centralised channel. The objective is to conduct a trial of the Rate my Service app to assess its usability and to determine if it is an effective method for the collection and analysis of user experience as part of our monitoring methodology and work will continue in this regard in 2022.

Part 3 Monitoring all public bodies against the Code of Practice

During 2021, the NDA carried out desk-based monitoring of 292 public body websites with responsibilities under Part 3 of the Disability Act with regards to their statutory duty to promote information respecting two sections of the Act:

- Section 26(2) Access Officer
- Section 38 and 39 Complaints and Inquiry Officer.

Preliminary data suggests that:

44.5% public bodies promoted the appointment of an Access Officer which included contact details.

19.9% of public bodies appear to have a process in place concerning complaints under the Disability Act 2005 available on their website and provide contact details.

Further engagement with Departments on their obligations under the Disability Act and other legislation is planned for 2022 in order to support activities aimed at improving inclusion and accessibility.

Code of Practice on accessible public areas of public sector buildings

The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth formally wrote to the NDA in Q4 2020 to request the NDA to develop a Code of Practice for Accessible Public Buildings in accordance with Section 25 of the Disability Act and as committed to in Action 105 of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy. An Advisory committee has been set up and a draft of the Code of Practice has been developed and reviewed by the committee in 2021. The next stage is conduct focused consultation, followed by a national consultation so that the final Code of Practice has taken on board a diverse range of views to inform the final document. The Code of Practice is to be completed by Q4 2022.

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

EU Web Accessibility Directive Monitoring

NDA completed [Ireland's first monitoring report](#) under the EU Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) at the end of 2021. The report describes the monitoring methodology developed by NDA to conduct compliance reviews and monitoring data on all public sector websites and mobile apps monitored in 2021 and was submitted to the European Commission by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications on 22nd December 2021.

NDA provided all monitoring data to public bodies so they may improve the accessibility of their websites and mobile apps.

The report demonstrated levels of awareness of, and compliance with, the standards under the Directive are low, and that many public bodies do not have yet sufficient processes in place to ensure an adequate level of accessibility. The NDA will continue to deliver its monitoring and reporting activities in 2022 and annually thereafter, as prescribed by the Directive.

WAD Supports and guidance provided by NDA

NDA published guidance for public bodies on their obligations under on the [Irish Regulations](#) transposing the Directive, including the requirement to publish and maintain an [Accessibility Statement](#).

Web Accessibility Techniques

NDA published sixty guidance documents on [Web Accessibility Techniques](#) organised into sections for “Developers”, “Designers” and “Content Providers”.

Web accessibility information seminars and training webinars

NDA in partnership with the Irish Computer Society delivered six information seminars and training webinars on the WAD and web and mobile app accessibility. The target audience for the seminars and trainings were public bodies and private companies who provide web design and development services to the public sector. The information seminars covered themes such as an “Introduction to the Web Accessibility Directive/2020 Regulations”, while the training webinars focused on more technical topics such as “How to conduct an accessibility review of your website”. The information seminars and trainings were made available online and were attended by over 700 hundred participants.

New European Standard: EN 17210:2021 Accessibility and usability of the built environment - Functional requirements

A new European Standard with functional requirements for the accessibility and usability of the built environment was published in 2021, along with two complementary technical reports. The NDA participated in a NSAI mirror committee that provided feedback on drafts of the standard and technical reports when they were under development. According to the CEN website, EN17210:2021 ‘describes basic, minimum functional requirements and recommendations for an accessible and usable built environment, following ‘Design for

All ‘Universal Design’ principles which will facilitate equitable and safe use for a wide range of users, including persons with disabilities.’

Standardisation Request for the European Accessibility Act (EAA)

In June 2021 the European Commission (EC) issued a draft standardisation request to the European Standardisation Organisations (ESO) as regards the accessibility requirements of products and services in support of Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council, European Accessibility Act (EAA). In brief, the proposed draft standardisation request calls for three standards to be revised for their adoption as harmonised standards, including:

- EN 301 549 ‘Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services’;
- EN 17161:2019 ‘Design for All- Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services- Extending the range of users’;
- EN 17210:2021 ‘Accessibility and usability of the built environment- Functional requirements’.

The NDA had contributed to the development of the above standards.

Further, it calls for new standards to be developed for their adoption as harmonised standards, including:

- Harmonised standard(s) setting up requirements on the accessibility of non-digital information related to products
- Harmonised standard for the accessibility of support services related to products and services (help desks, call centres, technical support, relay services and training services)
- Harmonized standard for the accessibility and interoperability of emergency communications and for the answering of emergency communications by the PSAPs (public safety answering point) (including to the single European Emergency number 112)

The harmonised standards, together with revisions to two standardisation deliverables, may become required for compliance with the EAA, such as in the example of how EN 301549 is required for compliance with the Website Accessibility Directive. Generally, a harmonised standard becomes a de facto regulation that will need to be transposed by all EU states.

The NDA as a member of the CEN/BTWG 213 Strategic Advisory Group on Accessibility (SAGA) contributed to observations prepared in 2021 for the European Commission (EC) on the upcoming standardisation request covering the products and services regulated by the European Accessibility Act (EAA). The NDA staff as the Chair of CEN-CENELEC JTC 12 Design for All that developed EN 17161 has joined the CEN-CENELEC Standardization Request Ad-Hoc Group (SRAHG ‘ACC’). The SRAHG ‘ACC’ prepared comments to inform a CEN-CENELEC submission to the EC with recommended edits to the Standardisation Request. Upon publication of the Standardisation Request, the NDA will collaborate with the NSAI to organise Irish participation in standardisation work. DCEDIY is being kept up-to-date on this standardisation activity in the context of implementing the EAA.

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

Report on Compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 for 2020

As per the statutory monitoring function set out in the Disability Act, in November 2021 the NDA prepared and delivered a report on compliance with Part 5 of the Act for the year 2020. At the end of 2020, the total number of employees in the relevant public sector bodies was 245,190, an increase of 7,016 (+3.0%) from 2019. The NDA is pleased to note that in 2020, the number of employees reporting a disability increased by 318 (+4.4%) from 7,319 in 2019 to 7,637 in 2020. In 2018 and 2019 the number of employees reporting a disability decreased as detailed in the table below

| Year | Total employees | Recorded no. of employees with disabilities | % of total employees with disabilities |
|------|-----------------|---|--|
| 2017 | 225,809 | 7,796 | 3.5% |
| 2018 | 231,784 | 7,584 | 3.3% |
| 2019 | 238,174 | 7,319 | 3.1% |
| 2020 | 245,190 | 7,637 | 3.1% |

However, in light of the overall increase of employee numbers in the public sector the overall percentage of employees reporting a disability in the public sector remains at 3.1%, the same percentage as 2019.

Overall the public sector exceeded the minimum target of 3% for the tenth successive year.

In 2020, 182 (84.7%) public bodies achieved or exceeded the minimum 3% target compared to 186 (86.1%) bodies in 2019. In 2020, 33 (15.4%) public bodies did not reach the minimum 3% target compared to 30 (13.9%) public bodies in 2019.

The NDA notes that the HSE, the largest body in the public sector reported a slight increase in the number and percentage of employees reporting a disability in 2020. In 2019, the HSE reported that out of 88,215 employees, 464 (0.5%) reported a disability. In 2020, out of 92,612 employees, 514 (0.6%) reported a disability. This a slight increase of 50 (+0.1%) employees.

The NDA continues to work to guide and advise public bodies on increasing the employment of persons with disabilities, noting that the Government has committed to an increased target for the public sector of 6% by 2024, under the **Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2024** and in **the Programme for Government 2020**. Legislation to put this increase on a statutory basis is likely to be enacted in 2022.

The NDA hosted numerous online seminars for public bodies from February – June 2021 to help them provide detailed and accurate Part 5 returns and to support them to progress towards ensuring that a minimum of 6% of their employees are persons with disabilities.

In 2020, 61(28.4%) of public bodies reported that over 6% of their employees reported a disability. This a slight increase from 2019, when 48 (22.2%) public bodies reported that over 6% of their employees reported a disability. The NDA notes that unless the whole of the public sector focuses on improving its performance under Part 5, it will be unlikely for the sector to reach the minimum statutory employment target of 6% by 2024. It is therefore important that the public sector focuses on creating Equitable Diverse and Inclusive (EDI) work environments that will help them to increase the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities.

No Draft determinations of non-compliance for 2018 and 2019

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. In 2021, the NDA sent S.49 requests to two public bodies who did not make the minimum 3% target in 2018 and 2019:

- Coillte
- Health and Safety Authority (HSA)

The NDA reviewed the responses from these public bodies applying the consistent and equitable approach the NDA has always used to determine whether public bodies are compliant or non-compliant with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005. Following the Authority meeting in September 2021, it was decided, based on the detailed responses these public bodies provided that they had measures in place to create EDI work environments that promoted and supported the increased recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities and where employees felt supported and comfortable in sharing their disability status. Correspondence has issued to these public bodies informing them of the Authority's decision and providing them with guidance and advice to help them to continuously improve their performance under Part 5 and to progress towards meeting the minimum 6% by 2024. The Executive has also requested that these public bodies provide a draft EDI Action Plan for us to review by Q1 2022 and with a progress report by the end of Q2 2022 demonstrating the progress they are making regarding improving their performance under Part 5.

S.49 requests for 2019 and 2020

The NDA issued S.49 requests to the following three public bodies that did not make the minimum 3% target for 2019 and 2020:

- Coillte
- Dublin Dental Hospital
- Fáilte Ireland

Under Section 49 of the Disability Act (2005) public bodies have three months to respond to these requests. The NDA should be receiving responses from these public bodies by March 2022.

The NDA will also be sending a S.49 request to the HSE for 2018 and 2019 in Q1 2022 and will review the response received in order to determine next steps.

Public bodies that did not make the minimum 3% in 2020

The NDA contacted 11 public bodies that reached the minimum 3% target in 2019 but who had failed to reach it in 2020. The NDA has met with most of these public bodies and provided them with relevant advice and guidance to help them improve their performance under Part 5.

The HSE

Since June 2020, the NDA has initiated and engaged in a strategic process of engagement with a designated team that has been appointed in the HSE to focus on improving this public body's compliance with Part 5, in light of the fact that the HSE is the largest public sector employer in the State.

The NDA continues to meet with this team on a regular basis to help the HSE to apply the learning from this sustained process of engagement. The NDA notes that some progress has been made to date. 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.

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

Implementing Recommendations from the Review of Part 5

In 2021, the NDA began the process of implementing a number of recommendations from this Review, including, supporting the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) in work to merge two similar Codes of Practice – the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service and the Code of Practice for Appointment of Persons with Disabilities to Positions in the Civil Service and Certain Public Bodies. The NDA also advised updates to reflect current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies and strategies, including guidance on confined competitions, alternative recruitment routes and accessible job specifications.

The NDA also advised the CPSA on the Draft Guidance they had produced to accompany the Code of Practice, which was published in 2021 on the CPSA's website at <https://www.cpsa.ie/codes-of-practice/what-are-the-codes/CPSA-Code-of-Practice-2021.pdf>

In April 2021, the NDA provided the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth with a copy of the NDA's **Review of Part 5**, which included emphasis on the need for the increased targets to be put on a statutory footing. The NDA welcomes the work to place the increased target of 6% on a statutory footing through the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act Amendment Bill, scheduled for commencement in mid 2022.

The NDA continued to work with the Action 16 Group Our Public Service (OPS) 2020 to promote the creation of EDI work environments throughout the public sector. In 2021 this Group launched the EDI Resource Pack. The NDA also provided this Group with feedback on their pilot Human Rights-Based Approach to Equitable, and Inclusive Data

Incorporating Universal Design and learning from relevant developments in standards, guidelines and toolkits

EU-BAUHAUS

The European Commission launched the [New European Bauhaus initiative](#), announced by President **von der Leyen** in her 2020 State of the Union [address](#). The New European Bauhaus is an environmental, economic and cultural project, aiming to combine design, sustainability, accessibility, affordability and investment in order to help deliver the European Green Deal. The core values of the New European Bauhaus are thus **sustainability, aesthetics and inclusiveness**. EU-BAUHAUS is a multi-year initiative.

CEUD collaborated with the Institute of Designers Ireland (IDI), in promoting Universal Design for a coordinated approach related to design in Ireland for the EU-BAUHAUS initiative. CEUD contributed to a workshop in 2021 promoting Universal Design guidance resources that aligned with the EU-BAUHAUS core values.

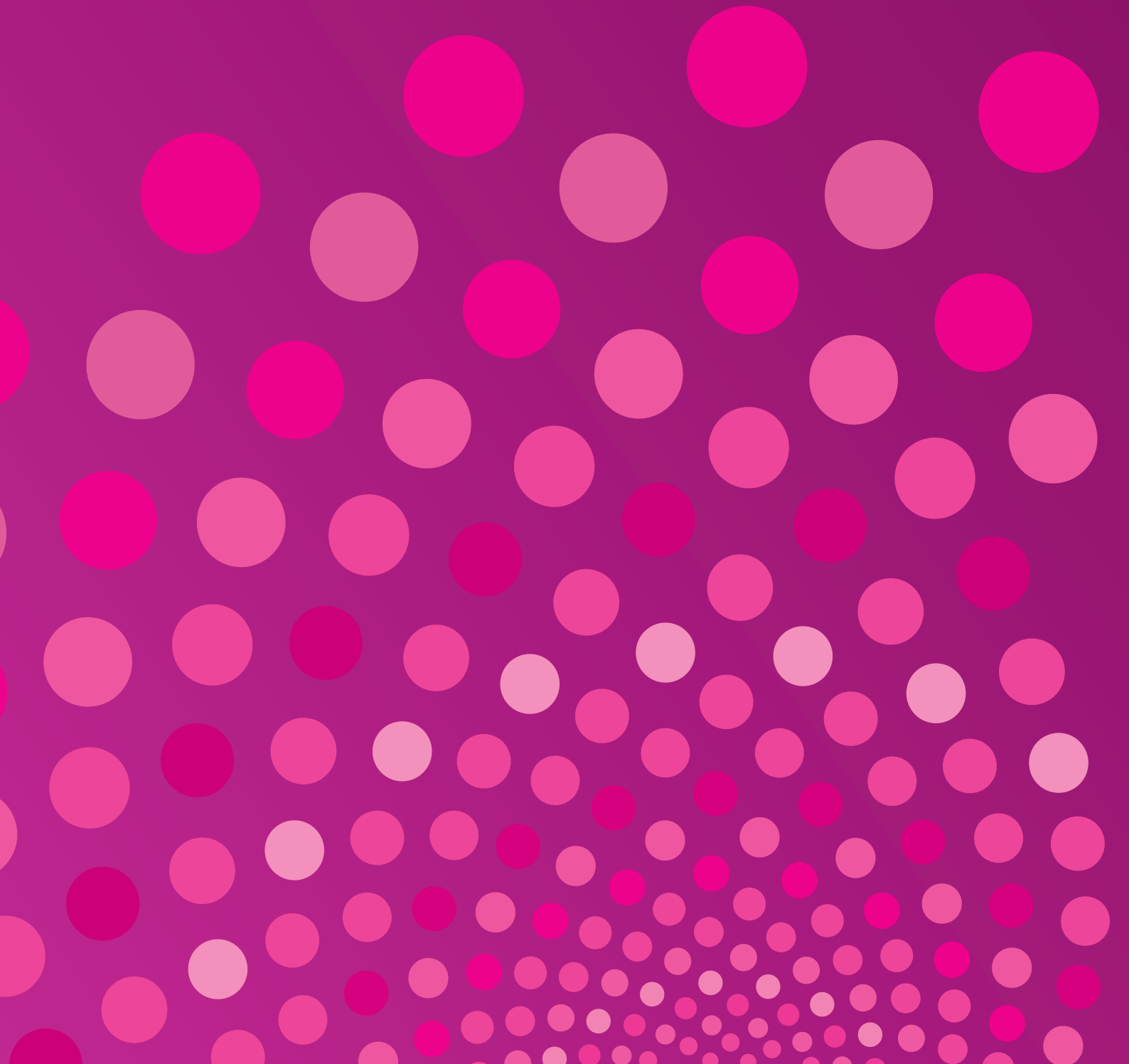
DCC Strand Road Cycle-Lane Consultation

The NDA made a submission to DCC Strand Road Cycle-lane Consultation in February 2021. Our submission highlighted the importance of consultation with people with disabilities and in conducting a disability impact assessment for this project to identify issues and solutions. DCC requested a meeting with us to discuss our submission. We had a constructive meeting with the planning team and both parties have committed to continuing our discussions on accessible roads into the future.

Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU)

The NDA submitted a response to a public consultation by the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU) on the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook 2021. This handbook sets out the regulatory requirements for the utility sector in Ireland. Our advice referenced the legislation requiring electricity and gas suppliers to apply the Principles of Universal Design to their communications with customers; referencing the standard IS 374:2019 that was developed to assist suppliers in meeting those legal requirements; and terminology.

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

Research and Universal Design Guidelines for improving quality of life and enhancing COVID-19 infection control in existing residential care settings for older people.

At the end of 2020, the NDA signed a contract with TrinityHaus, in collaboration with Tallaght University Hospital to conduct research and develop design guidance on improving quality of life and pandemic resilience in existing long-term residential care settings for older people. The project examined how the built environment in these settings can be adapted and retrofitted from a Universal Design approach to:

- enhance the quality of life for residents; and
- improve pandemic preparedness and resilience while still protecting the psychosocial health and well-being of residents and staff.

The research and guidance was completed in late 2021 and will be launched in Q1 2022.

Review of Part M of the building regulations to provide for Changing Places Toilets

At the end of 2020, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage invited the NDA to nominate a representative to a Working Group being established to examine how Part M of the building regulations can provide for Changing Places Toilets in certain large new buildings and existing buildings undergoing works. As part of its contribution to the Working Group, the NDA chaired the ‘Technical Requirements Subgroup’ and provided analysis of existing census and other data to estimate the number of potential users of Changing Places Toilets in Ireland.

The NDA had already carried out work to develop guidance on Changing Places Toilets. The development on this guidance was paused pending the review of Part M, as it will need to reflect the new minimum regulations for Changing Places Toilets, as well as good practice Universal Design. Publication is now planned for Q2 2022.

Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets completed

In early 2021, the National Transport Authority (NTA) published a new [Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets](#) in Ireland. This audit tool can be used to capture the existing conditions of a specified walking route in relation to its walkability. The audit is intended to be carried out by a wide range of people of various ages and abilities including

disability and older people's organisations, advocacy organisations, school travel planners, members of the public and Local Authority officers. CEUD provided advice to the NTA on the development of the audit tool, along with Age Friendly Ireland, and Green Schools. This included engagement with people with a range of accessibility requirements, including older people, parents with buggies, people with physical disabilities and people with visual impairments, as well as a pilot of a draft version of the tool in Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines for FET completed

The NDA advised and participated on 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 was to publish Guidelines on UDL for FET.

A final draft of the Guidelines was approved on 16th December 2020 by the NAC-UDL for submission to the SOLAS board. The guidelines publication titled, "UDL for FET Practitioners - Guidance for Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Irish Further Education and Training" has a unique structure based primarily on case studies about Irish FET practitioners. Along with the guidelines publication a Summary version was prepared. Also, a web-based information hub was developed to host relevant resources. The launch of the publications took place in Q1 2021.

CEUDSM expert on standards project for face coverings

CEUD is participating as an expert member on new European Standards project that has started to produce a Technical Specification on the performance and use of face coverings for COVID-19. The CEN/TC 248 WG38 operated the project throughout 2021 with full day monthly virtual meetings. The Technical Specification is based in part on our previous contribution to the NSAI SWIFT-19 Barrier Masks standard work in 2020, along with other related national standards work and the CWA 17553 on Community Face Coverings. CEUDSM as part of a NSAI UDSCC Working Group contributed expertise on accessibility requirements that need to be taken into account for sizing, donning and doffing, packaging, information/instructions for use, and transparent windows in face coverings to allow view of the wearers' facial expressions. The Technical Specification standards publication is expected to be launched in early 2022.

New European Standard: EN 17478:2021 'Transport Services - Customer communications for passenger transport services - A Universal Design approach'

The NDA continued its participation in the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee that developed a new European standard to promote the Universal Design of communications in the passenger transport sector. The standard, which was published in December 2021, specifies requirements and recommendations for the planning, design, development and provision of user communications related to passenger transport so that these communications can be accessed, understood and used by the widest range of users, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI)

CEUD has a partnership with the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) to promote Universal Design among the design community, and is a member of IDI. The IDI appointed its first CEO, Charlotte Barker, in mid-2020. At its AGM in late 2020, the IDI President and CEO presented IDI's new vision, purpose and related priority activities; it includes the promotion of Universal Design among designers as standard and an inherent part to good design. In 2021 IDI presented to the CEUD on an update on its activities to promote Universal Design.

The Power of Design – Phase 2

Building on a successful 2018- 2019 Phase One demonstration trial, Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI), The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) and Dublin City Council (DCC) worked together on a Phase Two in 2020 and 2021 to deliver 50 Power of Design (POD) programme workshops nationally. The Power of Design (POD) is a turn-key workshop delivered by volunteer mentors that introduces 12 year old students in primary classrooms to Universal Design as well as introducing Universal Design to the facilitating teachers and the professional volunteer mentors involved. Evaluations from the POD Phase 2 showed excellent results for achieving the project objectives, for the intended learning outcomes and a strong interest across all stakeholders, (students, teachers and volunteers) for the POD programme. Planning is underway for future scaling of the POD programme to increase national uptake.



Senior Standards & Monitoring Officer Donal Rice speaking at EU High Level Conference on Disability Rights April 2021

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)

Universal Design in the TU Dublin Human Factors CPD course

CEUD conducted a 3 hour guest lecture for the TU Dublin module as part of the course TFSM9020 Ergonomics and Human Factors. Around 20 health and safety professionals in the CPD module attended the lecture on Universal Design. The lecture was titled “Accessibility and evaluation of accessibility and design for humans with different needs”. It was based on the CEUD 3rd Level curriculum along with interactive activities that focused on people with the more diverse capabilities and characteristics, along with introduction to design guidance, tools and standards related to addressing accessibility. The students were required to represent use of the information from the lecture in their course project work.

Implementing the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings (UDG4ELCS)

A project for implementing the 2019 Universal Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings (UDG4ELCS) was started in 2021. The project is a result of an ongoing collaborative relationship between the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) at the National Disability Authority (NDA) for the implementation of the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings. The aims of the project are to produce outputs to raise awareness of, and build capacity in the design, planning, development and delivery of Early Learning and Care settings. The two year project will work to raise awareness of the UDG4ELCS by disseminating and promoting the Guidelines and related information resources to professionals across a range of sectors. The main project outputs include the development and provision of a dedicated website, online self-paced eLearning modules, a national design competition and a conference to showcase best practice. DCEDIY will fund the project with CEUD being the primary project manager and work will continue into 2022.

Lecture on Universal Design in Higher Education

CEUD collaborated with TU Dublin on co-hosting a Lecture on Universal Design in Education in early June. The speaker was Prof Sheryl Burgstahler from the University Of Washington in the USA. The key focus of the talk was to highlight the various dimensions to Universal Design, ranging from the macro-level of government policy and regulation, to the micro level of organisation governance and strategy, down to the micro-level of the built environment, technology, services and instruction (Universal Design for Learning).

Over 130 attendees registered from various universities such as TU Dublin, UCD, Trinity, as well as from the HEA, Enterprise Ireland and several of CEUD’s Universal Design Champions.

The next stage is to work with a small group of TU Dublin’s staff to produce a UD policy paper that not only would be applied within TU Dublin but can be replicated across other further and higher education institutions.

Further Development of Universal Design in the IDI BIG IDEA

CEUD has an ongoing partnership since 2012 with the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) to promote Universal Design among the design community. The IDI is affiliated with The BIG IDEA education programme that introduces a creative design ethos based on social themes for Transition Year (TY) students. The purpose of The BIG IDEA is to empower students through inquiry-based learning, developing critical thinking through socially conscious, human centred projects that will connect them with their peers, industry, their community and their world.

The Big Idea was been trialled in early 2021 with 500 students and concluded with a showcase event. Year two was proposed to involve 2000 students, although because of the popularity of the programme, applications from schools on the waiting list for participation was capped at 10,000 students. Based on evaluation and feedback results, further work was conducted to integrate more Universal Design curriculum into The BIG IDEA during 2021.

The outputs of the project were to increase the percentage of UD in The BIG IDEA programme scheduled to run in spring 2022 across all counties in Ireland expecting 2000 students and 400 mentors to participate. The objectives for the 2021 BIG IDEA Further Development Project included:

- Objective 1: Programmatic Review
 - Programmatic review of learning materials from The BIG IDEA and CEUD UD JC short course curriculum materials
- Objective 2: Programmatic Modification
 - Programme modification to develop and incorporate UD, UDL materials and the continuous improvement of accessibility
- Objective 3: Case Study Resource
 - Design and development of BIG IDEA UD Case Studies Learning Resource

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

RIAI Building for All / Universal Design Awards 2020 and 2021

The NDA sponsors this award within the RIAI's annual programme. The RIAI Building for All / Universal Design Award is the only category in the RIAI Architecture Awards that includes a site visit to short-listed buildings as part of the assessment process. The RIAI Building for All / Universal Design Award was not awarded in 2020, as COVID-19 restrictions meant that site visits could not take place. Site visits for both the 2020 and 2021 awards were carried out in 2021.

The Building for All / Universal Design Awards for both 2020 and 2021 were announced at the RIAI annual conference in November 2021. The winner of the 2020 award was Rochestown House Phase III, a housing development by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Architects' Department. The winner of the 2021 award was The National Rehabilitation Hospital by O'Connell Mahon Architects.



*The National Rehabilitation Hospital
by O'Connell Mahon Architects*

IDI Awards 2021

CEUD has a partnership with the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) to promote Universal Design among the design community. CEUD awards a 'Universal Design Award' to a designer and a student designer in the IDI Awards and the IDI Graduate Design Awards, respectively, each year. This year, the IDI Awards and IDI Graduate Design Awards took place, online, on 9 November and 11 November, respectively. The CEUD reviewed design entries in the Universal Design category for each of these awards and nominated the winning entries, which were announced at the online awards events. The winning entry in the Universal Design category of the IDI Awards was 'Merlyn Revo', by Dolmen Design and Innovation. This is a multifunctional bathroom storage system and shower rail that addresses the need of users with diverse characteristics and demonstrates the application of many of the 7 Principles of Universal Design. The winning entry in the Universal Design category of the IDI Graduate Design Awards was 'Lighten- Caring for Carers' by Shane McCabe. 'Lighten' is an Internet of Things system to support people with late stage dementia and those that care or provide support to them, and its development demonstrated the application of a Universal Design approach.

Universal Design webinar

CEUD has a partnership with the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) to promote Universal Design among the design community. The IDI facilitates its CPD training through its association with Design Skillnet. On 29 November, 2021 Design Skillnet hosted a one hour webinar organised by the CEUD with IDI. The title of the webinar was “A Universal Design for All Approach – Methods for a Culture of Co-Design”. Over 250 people registered to attend from the design sector, the public sector and academia. The webinar included:

- Chief Officer of CEUD on an overview of Universal Design and its connection to the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Director of the NDA introduction to a speech by ALONE being a recognised Early Adopter of the EN 17161 standard;
- CEO of the National Standards Authority introduction to a speech by Dolmen Design being a recognised Early Adopter of the EN 17161 standard; and,
- A keynote lecture by Professor Liz Sanders of Ohio State University on Methods for a Culture of Co-Design.

Professor Sanders set of 29 Co-Design Methods Cards was shared with attendees. The webinar was recognised by the IDI as a first in a series of collaborative information sessions to underpin their strategy toward Universal Design as standard. Design Skillnet noted that the webinar was exemplary for how their future trainings should include real-time captioning and ISL. A video from the webinar was prepared and is available to view on our www.universaldesign.ie website. Planning is underway with each of the parties involved for follow on events in 2022. CEUD implementation activity for EN 17161 is ongoing with organisations in Ireland, and plans are for the Irish Early Adopter organisations to be showcased at a European Commission affiliated event in the coming year.

Presentation in Brussels at the 25th Anniversary Conference of EASPD

CEUD were asked to present at a European conference on “The Future is Now: Technology to empower people and disability Services” by the European Association of Service Providers for Disabled (EASPD) in Brussels on the 13-15th of October. The title of the presentation was

“Applying a Universal Design

Approach to create more person centred technologies”. The presentation was well received which coincided with a new policy publication launched at the conference on “Person Centred Technology for Social Care sector”. A number of the recommendations in the publication for both service providers and policy makers highlight that a Universal Design approach is the way to ensure that new technologies are accessible for persons with disabilities. This publication will be important reference on current work that the NDA are involved in regarding Assistive Technology with both HSE as well as DECDIY.



Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on Disability Matters

The NDA was invited to make a written submission to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters in advance of its meeting on October 14 on the theme 'From Accessibility to Universal Design'. The NDA submission outlined key issues in the built environment, with a focus on the need to amend Part M for Dwellings to move from a visitable standard to provide Universal Design Homes. It also highlighted the work of the CEUD in Education, ICT (including the Web Accessibility Directive) and Products and Services.

Investigate how Universal Design can be best incorporated into the urban, town and community developments, building on previous work relevant to the "Smart Ageing Strategy"

Universal Design Cost Benefit Analysis

The CEUD at the NDA is conducting a Cost benefit Analysis (CBA) of UD homes. A CBA is an economic appraisal methodology used to assess whether or not the social and economic benefits associated with a project are greater than its social or economic costs. The provision of a robust evidentiary basis to appraise the UD housing model will encourage the inclusion of UD housing considerations, standards and options in future housing delivery in Ireland. The research findings will also play a significant role in guiding progress towards meeting the targets set out for delivery of UD housing in the "Housing Options for our Ageing Population" policy document.

A Technical Advisory Group was established to oversee the project in 2021 and held two meetings over the course of the year. A stakeholder consultation process for the project is continuing, with consultees to date including individuals with lived experience of disability, DPO representatives, carers, technical experts in the housing and disability policy fields and members of the project Technical Advisory Group. A literature review and data collection work to support the project are ongoing. A draft survey has also been prepared to evaluate UD homes, and engagements are ongoing to identify recipients for the survey involving collaboration with DPOs, Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and Local Authorities (LAs).

Universal Design Housing Cost Assessment

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) "Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland" reflect the fact that all people experience changes in their abilities as they progress through the different stages of life. The Universal Design (UD) approach benefits a wide range of user groups regardless of age, size, ability or disability including families with young children, people with a temporary or permanent injury, people with a disability and older people living independently. The NDA has worked in collaboration with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI), with technical expertise provided through Hardy Partnership Quantity Surveyors to develop this draft Cost Review of Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland. Engagement with the Department of Housing throughout the project also highlighted a number of areas where further information would be helpful to support the case for UD Homes. The work so far highlights that providing adequate internal floor area in a dwelling in conjunction with carefully designed Universal Design features is critical to achieving Universal Design in new housing. The current internal floor area limits for

apartments and houses have been repeatedly raised as a key barrier to providing Universal Design Homes by Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies in our consultations with them. The Irish Wheelchair Association has also highlighted this issue in relation to wheelchair liveable dwellings. This work to be completed by Q2 2022 and will complement and inform the CBA described above.

Submission on Draft Design Manual for Quality Housing

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a draft of a 'Design Manual for Quality Housing' for consultation in 2021. The purpose of the manual is 'to provide advice and guidance, at the level of the diagrammatic layout, to local Authorities, selected Approved Housing Bodies and stakeholders and their design teams on quality economic design for housing, ranging from site layouts to individual dwelling design'.

The NDA made a detailed submission on the draft document. The key points of our advice were:

- In line with Action 4.4 of the Housing Options for Our Ageing Population policy statement, the language in the document needs to be strengthened to ensure that Universal Design is actively promoted, rather than presented as an option for consideration.
- In line with Action 4.6 of the Housing Options for Our Ageing Population policy statement, the document should reflect guidance on Universal Design in **houses**, as well as apartments.
- Given the lack of accessibility of upper level duplex units, further consideration should be given to the proportion of duplex units in our new housing stock.
- Neighbourhood layouts should be carefully considered through a universal design lens, including footpath and parking provision.
- A disability impact assessment should be carried out of the guidelines, which would include meaningful consultation, with persons with disabilities, including with Disabled Persons' Organisations.

The NDA CEUD submission included a review of the apartment layouts which were labelled as Universal Design apartments against a list of key Universal Design Homes guidelines that have been identified to have an impact on the spatial/ plan layout of a home. It highlighted for each apartment type where further work would be required to implement relevant Universal Design Homes guidelines.

Target particular sectors in promoting Universal Design practice in partnership with the relevant stakeholders such as the utility, banking and transport sectors

Meeting with Dublin City Council and the National Transport Authority on seating at bus stops

CEUD was invited by the Lord Mayor of Dublin to attend a meeting on 28 October with Councillors, Dublin City Council officials, Age Friendly Ireland and the National Transport Authority, to discuss the provision of seating at bus stops in Dublin. The CEUD made a presentation at the meeting to provide an overview of Universal Design considerations, including the guidance on accessible bus stops provided in the new European Standard EN 17120: Accessibility and usability of the built environment – Functional requirements. At the meeting, the NTA noted that they are developing new designs for bus-stops and confirmed that they would liaise with the CEUD on the design to ensure that universal design considerations are taken into account. The Lord Mayor requested that a follow up meeting to be arranged in 6 months' time for an update on progress.

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 2021, the NDA continued in our commitment to deliver on our strategic priorities and in compliance with our statutory, regulatory and governance obligations. Throughout the year, we engaged with our stakeholders through a number of mediums including consultations, submissions, social media platforms and our newsletter.

Governance and Financial Reporting

The National Disability Authority is committed to attaining the highest standard of corporate governance within the organisation. 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 2021, given the requirement for staff to work remotely in accordance with public health guidance, particular emphasis continued on monitoring the control environment operating in the NDA, focussing on financial and data management.

An Oversight and Performance Framework Agreement was established between the National Disability Authority and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth. The 2021 Performance Delivery Agreement detailed the high-level goals and objectives, as well as the key programme of activity that the NDA committed to for 2021.

Following the transfer to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, (DCEDIY) undertook to provide Financial Shared Services and Internal Audit Services to the NDA until October 2021 at which time these services moved to an in-house and direct drawdown model. Internally produced financial reports 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 (through management accounts and budget updates). The management accounts were also shared with the Audit & Risk Committee throughout the year.

In accordance with the National Disability Authority Act 1999 and the Code of Governance for State Bodies 2016, the NDA prepared and submitted draft financial accounts for 2021 to our parent department and the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Financial Statements of the NDA for the year ended 31 December 2021 have been prepared under FRS102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC). The NDA will submit the approved financial accounts for 2021 to the Minister.

Internal Audit

The NDA availed of the independent services of the Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Justice and Equality on an exceptional basis to perform its review of internal control for 2020 with no material concerns and 5 recommendations identified. In September 2021 the NDA

secured independent Internal Audit Services through on OGP Framework to enable the review the effectiveness of the NDA's arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control for a maximum of 4 years.

Authority 2021

The Authority of the NDA consists of a Chairperson and 12 ordinary members. One Authority member was appointed in January 2021 and a member resigned in July 2021. The Authority met 8 times during 2021. In accordance with public health guidelines, all meetings were held remotely during 2021. A schedule of 2021 attendance, fees and expenses is set out in the Governance Statement. The Authority commissioned an independent evaluation of its performance in 2021 in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) which included reference to Gender & Diversity Annex within the Code. A small number of recommendations were issued which are being addressed as appropriate in 2022.

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. 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 has a Risk Management Advisory Group, which comprises of the senior management group and two independent members nominated from the Audit & Risk and Finance Committees respectively. The group provides a forum to support the Senior Management Group in relation to their considerations in relation to the NDA risk management framework.

The risk environment for the NDA is monitored and considered by the Senior Management Group at regular intervals and is a standing item on the agenda for each Authority meeting. The NDA has an established Risk Register which is reviewed 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.

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 the NDA during 2021:

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 in relation to the provision of research and advice and also 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 2021 in light of the wider COVID-19 environment and the potential impacts posed.

During 2021, the NDA put in place plans and actions to mitigate these risks.

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

For the year ended 31 December 2021, 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 2021.

Data Protection/Freedom of Information

During 2021, 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 as appropriate. An Advisory Audit on GDPR policies and procedures is being conducted in 2022.

The NDA received nine Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in 2021. Three requests were granted, one was part-granted with some redactions and one was refused. All were dealt with within the statutory timeframe. A number of requests were answered outside FOI or were withdrawn.

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 workshops. These were held mainly online during 2021 due to COVID-19. A Leadership Programme was delivered to all Higher Executive and Assistant Principal Officers during the year with a similar programme being developed for the remaining grades in the NDA for delivery in 2022. The following is an example of some of the training and development opportunities in 2021:

- Emerging insights into Vocational Rehabilitation
- Deepening stakeholder involvement in policymaking
- Core skills for Executive Officers
- Withholding Tax Workshop
- Certificate in Corporate Governance

Staff also participated in conferences on relevant work themes including for example:

- Ireland's Housing Conference
- Employment Law

- Human Resources
- Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference
- Emerging insight into vocational rehabilitation
- Deepening stakeholder involvement
- Social Media Strategy
- Person centred tech to empower people and disability services

Workplace Wellness

The NDA continued to make the Employee Assistance Programme available to staff during 2021. 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.

Online DSE/Ergonomic Assessments were provided to relevant staff, following the move to home working, with recommendations arising implemented.

The NDA provided Employee Wellbeing eLearning, facilitated by Public Affairs Ireland, to all staff during 2021 in the following areas:

- Positive Mental Health
- Psychology of Living & Working Well
- Strategies for Wellbeing & Resilience

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 the 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 2021 and continued with the implementation of COVID-19 control measures throughout the year.

As in 2020 in response to the on-going situation with COVID-19 the NDA availed of the services of a Health and Safety Consultant to further review the Safety Statement and provide expert advice. The established COVID-19 Management Response Team and appointed a lead worker representative met in 2021 to assist with 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.

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 20.51% for 2021.

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 2021.

Library and Information Resource

The NDA Library continued to provide an online 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.

Accommodation and Facilities

The NDA's Corporate Services Department is responsible for maintaining a safe and efficient premises. During 2021 the NDA appointed Accent Solutions to provide an integrated facility management service. Over the course of the year a programme of preventative maintenance continued and also commissioned works to ensure the effective maintenance and use of its accommodation which included:

- Fire Protection Survey
- Installation of magnets on fire doors
- Installation of CO2 monitors and Perspex screens

The NDA began a building works program which consists of electrical, accessibility and refurbishment works to be carried out over a number of years, and appointed a specialist Project Manager to advise for the duration of the project. Electrical works began in November 2021 and are due to complete in April 2022.

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 Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Income was transferred to the Department as appropriate in 2021.

Energy

The NDA Corporate Services Department 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
- Thermal Energy (Natural Gas): Space Heating (LTHW radiator circuits and under floor heating) and Hot Water (HWS).

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 2021, the National Disability Authority consumed 217,069 kWh of energy, consisting of:

- 105,370 kWh of electricity;
- 111,699 kWh of fossil fuels;
- 0 kWh of renewable fuels.

The NDA can report a:

- 70.8% lower consumption since baseline.

Actions undertaken in 2021

In 2021, 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 2021
- Commissioned Energy Audit Review

Actions planned for 2022

In 2022, the NDA intends to further improve our energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Monitoring & Reporting- New User Workshop
- Rewiring
- Implement recommendations from Energy Audit Review

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 2021. 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.

Staff Resources

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 2021, the National Disability Authority had 39 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 NDA facilitates communication on key issues between management and a recognised trade union that represents NDA staff interests.

The Executive consists of three sections:

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

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

Senior Management at 31 December 2021

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

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. The NDA has developed a work-plan on the Public Sector Duty and during 2021 progress was made with regard to updating the NDA's 'Ask Me Guidelines' and reviewing our procurement procedures including adding accessibility to the selection criteria. The plan is due to be reviewed and progressed further in 2022.

Communications Strategy

2021 is the first full calendar year that the National Disability Authority's Communications Strategy has been in operation. The implementation of the Strategy has been supported by

an internal Communications Advisory Group that has met regularly throughout the year. The Group is made up of staff from all parts of the NDA.

The Strategy has also been supported by a number of documents that are being consistently updated as we learn more about how to operate in an environment where online communication is paramount at the moment but with the promised easing of restrictions will evolve into a combination of in-person and online events and communications.

An implementation plan has been designed to support the implementation of the Communications Strategy. It is an operational document that will be reviewed and updated regularly. It is cross-referenced with the Communications Strategy and any changes to the implementation plan are in line with the objectives in the communications strategy.

An annual communications plan is informed by the annual work-planning process and takes account of the strategic priorities for the year. It prioritises certain activities and audiences as relevant to same for significant communications investment.

We have also had a growing presence on social media, via our @NDAIreland and @CEUD_NDA Twitter accounts. We have steadily grown our followers throughout the year. @NDAIreland increased from 292 followers at the end of 2020 to 1,240 followers at the end of 2021, an increase of 325%. Increased engagement was most evident in the run-up to, and immediately following NDA events, such as the launches of the Lockdown Innovations report, the ESRI and OECD reports, the Moving In, Moving On Report, the Strategic Plan and the the Annual Conference.

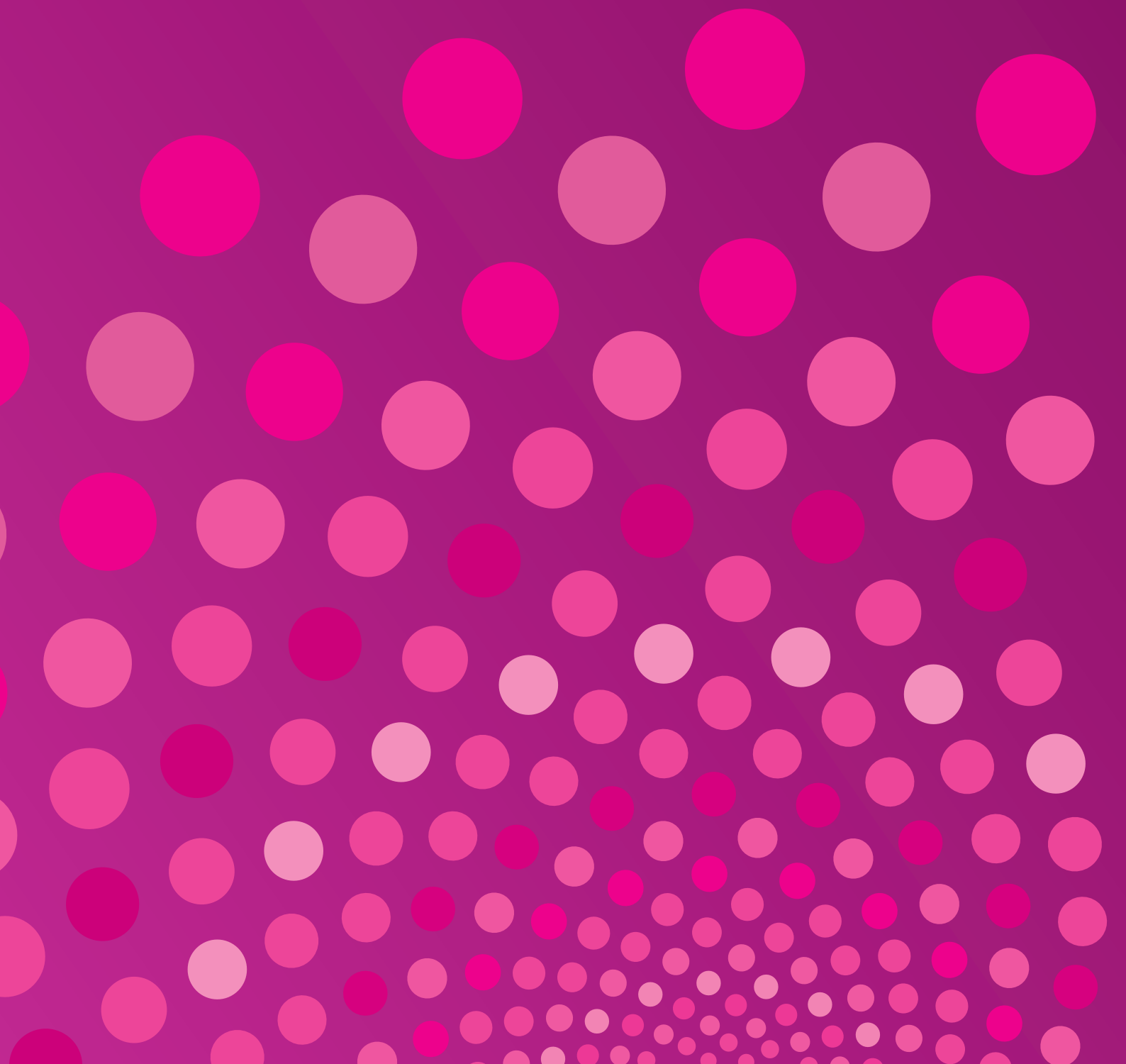
As an example of activity, in September 2021, the @NDAIreland profile posted 61 tweets, was mentioned by other users in 140 tweets, received 7,794 visits to its page and had 40,300 tweet impressions (which represents the number of times a tweet has appeared on anyone's timeline). The growth in the @CEUD_NDA account was more modest with a 33% increase from 322 followers at the end of 2020 to 429 followers at the end of 2021. Both accounts have been very useful in publicising our research, publications, policy advice, events and vacancies.

With regard to the website, analytics performed during 2021 showed that we had 219,768 website users with 88% new users and 12% returning users. Returning users are more likely to browse more pages and stay on the website for longer, on an average of 2min38 versus 1min02 seconds for new users. It should be noted that changes made in our websites' cookies to comply with new legislation limits the number of users registered by Google Analytics and may not reflect the full use of the website.

Websites re-development

Throughout 2021 the National Disability Authority worked with its contractor to develop two new websites for nda.ie and universaldesign.ie. The contractor was made aware of the high standard of online accessibility expected of our websites, and specifically that they will need to confirm to the standards of the web accessibility directive. NDA also emphasised the different audiences that our two websites have. Work is continuing and it is expected that the websites will be launched by mid-2022.

Financial Statements for Year ended 31 December 2021





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 2021 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 2021 and of its income and expenditure for 2021 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.

John Crean

For and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General
6 October 2022

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 annual 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.

I 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.

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.

Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 December 2021

GENERAL INFORMATION

Address: 25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Director: Aideen Hartney

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 2021

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 may be assigned to the NDA when the Assisted Decision Making (Amendment) Bill 2022 is enacted by the current Dail and Seanad.

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 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 work plan and budget was completed on an ongoing basis by the Authority throughout 2021. 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 2021.

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 | |
| Niamh Fawl | Member | January 2021 | |

* Authority members currently serving a second term.

** Authority member resigned in July 2021. This vacancy will be filled in 2022 as part of a broader Authority new appointment and re-appointment process.

*** Kathryn O' Donoghue was appointed as Chairperson replacing Helen Guinan as at the 30th September 2022.

As per the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies 2016, in 2021 the NDA engaged Mazars to conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of the Authority, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee. The resulting recommendations were presented to the Authority and the sub-committees in late 2021, and implementation of same is well advanced. The Authority had four committees in 2021, 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 Audit & Risk Committee 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* | August 2021 |
| Teresa McDonnell | Member | July 2014* | August 2018 |
| Tony Fitzpatrick | Member | June 2017* | August 2021 |
| 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 2021 The Committee continued to monitor 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 | |

* Finance Committee members currently serving a second term.

**Finance Committee member resigned in July 2021. This vacancy will be filled in 2022 as part of a broader Authority new appointment and reappointment process.

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 2021.

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 2021.

| 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 members currently serving a second term.

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:

- Advise on defining and reviewing the policy for the management of risks across the NDA;
- Advise on the implementation of the risk management policy;
- 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;
- Advise on the monitoring and the management of risk throughout the NDA;
- Advise on the formal review of the NDA's risk on a bi-annual basis;
- 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 2021. 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).

Schedule of Attendance, Fees and Expenses

A schedule of attendance at the Authority and Committee meetings for 2021 is set out below including the fees and expenses received by each member. Five Authority members do not receive fees as a result of the “One Person One Salary” (OPOS) principle.

| Authority Member | Appointment Date | Authority Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings attended |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Helen Guinan (Chair) | Reappointed August 2018 | 8,978 | 33 | 8/8 |
| Aisling Glynn | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 7/8 |
| Ruthann LaMalfa | Reappointed August 2018 | 2,993 | - | 4/4 |
| Teresa McDonnell | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 8/8 |
| Deaglán Ó Briain | Reappointed December 2018 | - | - | 7/8 |
| Deirdre O’Connor | Reappointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 6/8 |
| Jack Kavanagh | Appointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 5/8 |
| Cathal Morgan | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 8/8 |
| Kathryn O’Donoghue | Appointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 7/8 |
| Martha Griffin | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/8 |
| Damian Gordon | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/8 |
| Brian Callanan | Appointed August 2018 | 5,985 | - | 4/8 |
| Niamh Fawl | Appointed January 2021 | - | - | 8/8 |

Ruthann LaMalfa resigned from the Authority in July 2021 and her attendance and fees are reflected in line with her term.

| Audit Committee | Appointment Date | Committee Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings attended |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| John Fitzgerald (Chair) | Appointed August 2018 | 2,565 | - | 3/4 |
| Teresa McDonnell | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 3/4 |
| Tony Fitzpatrick | Appointed June 2017 | - | - | 3/4 |
| Cathal Morgan | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |
| Kathryn O’Donoghue | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |
| Tim Maverley | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |
| John Maher | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/4 |

| Finance Committee | Appointment Date | Committee Fees | Incurred Expenses | Meetings Attended |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Kathryn O'Donoghue (Chair) | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/6 |
| Pat Fitzsimons | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 6/6 |
| Ruthann LaMalfa* | Reappointed August 2018 | - | - | 3/3 |
| Harry McGeary | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 5/6 |
| Damian Gordon | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 4/6 |
| Brian Callanan | Appointed August 2018 | - | - | 5/6 |

*Ruthann LaMalfa resigned from the Authority, and accordingly the Finance Committee, in July 2021 and her attendance is reflected in line with her term.

| 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 Maverley | Appointed December 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |
| Pat Fitzsimons | Reappointed December 2018 | - | - | 2/2 |
| Senior Management Group | | | | 2/2 |
| | | 50,446 | 33 | |

Authority Member Appointments

The former staff nominee to the Authority resigned in September 2020, and the appointment of a new member was formalised in 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.

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Legal advice | 20,164 | 42,526 |
| Strategic and governance projects | 75,384 | 41,007 |
| Total Consultancy Costs charged to the statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves. | 95,548 | 83,533 |

(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 (2020- €0).

(d) Travel and Subsistence Costs

Travel and subsistence are categorised as follows:

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Domestic | | |
| - Direct Authority expenses (the Board) | 33 | 1,876 |
| - Indirect Authority expenses | - | 191 |
| - Employees | 146 | 2,510 |
| International | | |
| - Authority (the Board) | - | - |
| - Employees | 589 | 831 |
| Total Travel and Subsistence Costs | 768 | 5,408 |

(e) Hospitality Costs

No expenditure was incurred on client hospitality in the reporting period (2020- €0).

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 2021.



Kathryn O' Donoghue
Chairperson
Date: 5 October 2022



Dr Aideen Hartney
Director
Date: 5 October 2022

Statement on Internal Control 2021 – 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 2021, the changes to the NDA's working and control environments, begun in April 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, continued, with remote and virtual working in place for all employees for the majority of the year.

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 2021 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 2021, 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 2021 and the Committee's written annual report was presented by the Chairperson to the Authority on 18th November 2021.

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 weekly team meetings. An NDA Risk Management Advisory Group, which met twice in 2021, 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 2021, the NDA continued to implement a number of recommendations made to enhance the NDA's Risk Management. Risk training took place for Senior Management Group members in the summer of 2021 and then in December 2021 for the wider staff.

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 2021. 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 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 and approved by the Authority. Following the transfer of functions in late 2020 the expectation was that DCEDIY's Internal Audit Unit would conduct the NDA's internal audit. However, ultimately the necessary services were sought via an OGP framework. Following a successful tendering process, Crowleys DFK were appointed in Q4 2021 on an initial one-year contract, with the option to extend the contract for up to a further 12 months, with a maximum number of 3 such extensions.

The NDA is also a member of the IPA governance forum and availed of training through same in a number of governance areas throughout 2021.

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 2021 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. 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 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 Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and reports of the Payroll Shared Services Centre under the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Further to the transfer of function from the Department of Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth financial matters transferred on 1st November 2020. From that date, the Department processed all supplier payments on behalf of the NDA.

A business case to transition the NDA from an outsourced system of payment processing to an internally managed system of expenditure control was presented at both the Finance Committee and Authority Meetings in July 2021. The proposed draw down system would allow stricter management over cash flow and would enable detailed financial reporting through the purchase of an accounting software package, Sage Line 50. The business case was approved by both Committees, and subsequently the Authority, as well as the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth who agreed to the transfer to the draw down system which was completed on 1st November 2021.

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 2021, with the next meeting scheduled for 8th April 2022.

The NDA takes assurance from the Head of ICT in the Department of Justice's letter and statement of assurances stating that adequate ICT 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. A commissioned review of the ICT service is planned for 2022.

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 is recorded on the NDA Asset Register. ICT Assets are treated in the financial statements in line with the appropriate depreciation rates.

Shared Financial Services

The NDA receives monthly reports of expenditure from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and these are reconciled monthly against NDA data on expenditure and budget profiles. The NDA takes assurance from the system of control within the Department 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 the NSSO's annual Audit Assurance event.

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 2022.

Fraud and Irregularities

There are no matters of fraud or irregularities to report for 2021.

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.

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 policy will be updated in 2022 in line with the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Bill 2021.

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 2021. 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 2020 by 30th June 2021.

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 Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. As of 1st November 2021 the NDA moved to a Direct Drawdown model, ensuring full control over its non-pay budget and an expanded approver listing for invoices.
- 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 for the period January to October 2021 was made under the VAT and Employer tax numbers of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. From the 1st November 2021 expenditure in relation to tax is made under the tax number of the National Disability Authority. 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 relevant Minister for approval. The current plan for 2019 to 2021, was approved by the Minister for Justice during 2018, when the NDA was within the Minister's remit. 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 the plan was finalised for approval by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in June 2021, owing to the transfer of responsibility for the NDA from the Department of Justice to this newly created Department.

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 draft 2022 Work Plan was presented to the Authority in November 2021 and was approved at their January 2022 meeting.

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.
- 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 the transfer to a direct draw down model of financial control.
- Procurement Procedures were reviewed and a procurement manual was introduced during 2021.
- 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 Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for the period 2021, and held two governance meetings with the Department in relation to its delivery;
- The Director Performance Committee met during 2021 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. The Committee reports to the Authority and informs the Director of the Authority's views and recommendations;
- As per the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies 2016, in 2021 the NDA engaged Mazars to conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of the Authority, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee. The resulting recommendations were presented to the Authority and the sub-committees in late 2021.
- 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 2021, this included the development of an updated Business Continuity Plan, refinements to the NDA's remote-working policies, an updated Financial Procedures Manual and the introduction of a separate Procurement Manual.
- 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 Chief 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. The reports of audits are considered by the Audit & Risk Committee and presented to the Authority.

Procurement

I confirm that the NDA has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines and that during 2021 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. In 2021 the NDA extracted the Procurement Policy and Procedures from the Financial Procedures Manual to form a separate Procurement Manual which is in line with public procurement guidelines.

Risk

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 applying during 2021 was undertaken in early 2022. 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 report was presented to the Authority for consideration and noting at its May 2022 meeting.

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 2021 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 2021.



Kathryn O' Donoghue
Chairperson
Date: 05/10/2022

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND RETAINED REVENUE RESERVES
For the year ended 31 December 2021

| | Note | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|------|------------------|------------------|
| Income | | | |
| Oireachtas Grants | 2 | 4,696,122 | 4,029,788 |
| Net Deferred Pension Funding | 3(c) | 375,200 | 307,400 |
| Other Income | 4 | 69,841 | 190,579 |
| Total Income | | 5,141,163 | 4,527,767 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Projects and Commissioned Works Payable | 5 | 704,003 | 519,331 |
| Administration and Operations Costs | 6 | 3,142,106 | 3,124,645 |
| Retirement Benefit Costs | 3(a) | 936,400 | 991,300 |
| Reduction in the value of fixed assets | 8 | 84,630 | 76,020 |
| Total Expenditure | | 4,867,139 | 4,711,296 |
| Surplus/ (Deficit) before appropriations | | 274,024 | (183,529) |
| Transfer (to)/ from Capital Account | 7 | (109,764) | 56,965 |
| Surplus/ (deficit) after appropriations | 9 | 164,260 | (126,564) |
| Balance at the beginning of the year | | 227,529 | 354,093 |
| Balance at the end of the year | | 391,789 | 227,529 |

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

Note the change in presentation when making to 2020 'Statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves',

On behalf of the Authority of National Disability Authority:



Kathryn O' Donoghue
 Chairperson
 Date: 5 October 2022



Dr Aideen Hartney
 Director
 Date: 5 October 2022

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 31 December 2021

| | Note | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|------|----------------|----------------|
| Surplus/(Deficit) | | 391,789 | 227,529 |
| Actuarial gain/(loss) on retirement benefit obligations | 3(b) | (1,226,100) | (1,934,400) |
| Adjustment to deferred pension funding | | 1,226,100 | 1,934,400 |
| Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss) for the year | | 391,789 | 227,529 |

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:



Kathryn O' Donoghue
 Chairperson
 Date: 5 October 2022



Dr Aideen Hartney
 Director
 Date: 5 October 2022

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 31 December 2021

| | Note | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|------|------------------|------------------|
| Fixed Assets | | | |
| Property, plant & equipment | 8 | 2,974,578 | 2,864,814 |
| Total Fixed Assets | | 2,974,578 | 2,864,814 |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Receivables | 10 | 568,044 | 480,703 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | | 25,653 | 122,757 |
| | | 593,697 | 603,460 |
| Current Liabilities (amounts falling due within one year) | | | |
| Payables | 11 | (191,908) | (365,931) |
| Net Current Assets | | 401,789 | 237,529 |
| 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) | (30,585,500) | (28,984,200) |
| Retirement benefit obligations | 3(b) | 30,585,500 | 28,984,200 |
| | | | |
| Total Net Assets | | 3,366,367 | 3,092,343 |
| Representing | | | |
| Capital account | 7 | 2,974,578 | 2,864,814 |
| Retained revenue reserves | | 391,789 | 227,529 |
| | | 3,366,367 | 3,092,343 |

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:



Kathryn O' Donoghue
 Chairperson
 Date: 5 October 2022



Dr Aideen Hartney
 Director
 Date: 5 October 2022

National Disability Authority
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 December 2021

| | Note | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|------|------------------|-----------------|
| Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities | | | |
| (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year | | 164,260 | (126,564) |
| Movement to Capital Account | | 109,764 | (56,965) |
| Depreciation of Fixed Assets | 8 | 84,630 | 76,020 |
| (Increase)/Decrease in Receivables | | (87,341) | 19,370 |
| (Decrease)/Increase in Payables | | (174,023) | 184,727 |
| Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities | | 97,290 | 96,588 |
| Cash Flows from Investing Activities | | | |
| Payments to acquire Property, Plant and Equipment | 8 | (194,394) | (19,055) |
| Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities | | (194,394) | (19,055) |
| Cash Flows from Financing Activities | | | |
| Bank Interest received | | - | - |
| Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities | | | |
| Net (Decrease)/Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents | | (97,104) | 77,533 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January 2020 | | 122,757 | 45,224 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December 2021 | | 25,653 | 122,757 |

National Disability Authority NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2021

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.

The 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
- To assist 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).
- The NDA was assigned further functions in 2020 under S.I. 358/2020, the transposition of the EU Web Accessibility Directive. The NDA is named as the monitoring body for the purposes of the Directive and associated Regulations in Ireland. The monitoring body shall periodically monitor the compliance of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies with the accessibility requirements set out in Regulation 4, and shall submit a report to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, on the outcome of the monitoring carried out.
- In 2021 the NDA took on an additional role in relation to Section 10 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 at the request of the Minister. The NDA prepared a report on the operation of the Act, as per section 10 of same, and it is envisaged that the preparation of this report at intervals specified in the Act will become a regular function of the Authority..

b) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements of the National Disability Authority for the year ended 31st December 2021 *have been prepared in compliance with the applicable legislation, and with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council in the UK*

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 HSE funding and social welfare benefits which are recognised on an accruals basis and grant funding received from the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth, for the purposes of meeting the reporting requirements in relation to Section 10 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.

Following guidance provide to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration of Youth from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the NDA were advised that Rental Income shall no longer be classified as other income and must be transferred to the Department of Finance as an Extra Exchequer Receipt.

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 2021, 17 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 (DPER) 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.

| | Note | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grants for current expenditure | Vote 40 Subhead D03 | 4,696,122 | 4,029,788 |
| | | 4,696,122 | 4,029,788 |

3. Retirement Benefit Costs

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

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Current service costs | 854,300 | 769,000 |
| Interest on retirement benefit scheme liabilities | 189,000 | 320,800 |
| Employee Contributions | (106,900) | (98,500) |
| | 936,400 | 991,300 |

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

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Net retirement benefit obligation at 1 January | 28,984,200 | 26,742,400 |
| Current service costs | 747,400 | 670,500 |
| Interest costs | 189,000 | 320,800 |
| Actuarial (gain)/loss | 1,226,100 | 1,934,400 |
| Pensions paid in the year | (561,200) | (683,900) |
| Net retirement benefit obligation at 31 December | 30,585,500 | 28,984,200 |

(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:

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Funding recoverable in respect of current year retirement benefit costs | 936,400 | 991,300 |
| State grant applied to pay retirement benefits | (561,200) | (683,900) |
| | <u>375,200</u> | <u>307,400</u> |

The deferred funding asset for retirement benefits at 31st December 2021 amounts to €30.5m (2020: €28.9m).

(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 change in line with general public sector salary movements.

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 May 2022 by a qualified independent actuary, taking account of the requirements of the FRS in order to assess the scheme liabilities at 31 December 2021.

The principal actuarial assumptions were as follows:

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Rate of increase in salaries | 4.0% | 3.3% |
| Pension Increases – Superannuation scheme | 3.0% | 2.3% |
| Discount rate | 1.15% | 0.65% |
| Inflation rate | 2.0% | 1.3% |
| State pension increases | 2.0% | 1.3% |
| Pension increases- SPSPS | 2.0% | 1.3% |

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% (Males with no spouse’s pension), 0.30% (Males with spouse’s pension), 0.30% (Females with no spouse’s pension) and .25% (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 2022 and 2042.

| Year of attaining age 65 | 2021 | 2041 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Life expectancy male | 21.5 yrs | 23.1 yrs |
| Life expectancy female | 24.1 yrs | 25.5 yrs |

4. Other Income

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Social Welfare | 4,633 | 18,360 |
| Other Grant Funding* | 50,000 | - |
| Rental Income | - | 52,016 |
| HSE Funding | 15,208 | 120,203 |
| | 69,841 | 190,579 |

* Irish Sign Language (ISL) Grant funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth.

5. Projects and Commissioned Works

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Research | 224,786 | 220,394 |
| Information Resources | 75,262 | 46,916 |
| Universal Design Promotion | 33,122 | 63,849 |
| Standards and Guidelines | 154,696 | 77,128 |
| Conference and Seminars | 8,677 | 29,440 |
| Disability awareness program | 101,372 | 81,604 |
| Web Accessibility Directive | 99,664 | - |
| Interpreting and Translation Costs* | 6,424 | - |
| | 704,002 | 519,331 |

* These costs include, Interpreting and Translation Costs to the value of €4,964 and Easy Read and Plain English Costs of €1,460

6. Administration and Operations Costs

| | | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|-------------------------------------|------|------------------|------------------|
| Remuneration and other pay costs | 6(a) | 2,473,828 | 2,429,335 |
| Building overheads and improvements | | 120,947 | 127,655 |
| Rates | | 13,385 | 54,431 |
| Cleaning and domestic services | | 42,641 | 17,852 |
| Authority Fees and expenses | 6(b) | 52,463 | 57,244 |
| Postage and telecoms | | 15,651 | 15,531 |
| Office costs | | 13,037 | 33,406 |
| Library | | 38,891 | 32,812 |
| IT costs | | 142,925 | 134,668 |
| Professional fees | | 55,154 | 73,115 |
| Audit fees | | 21,100 | 17,600 |
| Staff training | | 55,513 | 37,250 |
| Recruitment fees | | 16,909 | 61,582 |
| Consultancy | | 64,202 | 32,164 |
| Interpreting and Translation Costs | | 15,461 | - |
| Hospitality | | - | - |
| | | 3,142,106 | 3,124,645 |

(a) Remuneration and Other Pay Costs

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Staff salaries (including holiday pay accrual) | 2,428,891 | 2,346,934 |
| Agency Staff pay | 44,202 | 76,621 |
| Staff travel and subsistence costs | 735 | 5,780 |
| | 2,473,828 | 2,429,335 |

Staff salaries are stated net of €98,467 recouped from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth and the HSE for 2 staff members on secondment (2020-€39,563).

The total number of staff employed (WTE) at year end was 39 (2020: 38).

Employee Short Term Benefits Breakdown

| Range of total employee short term benefits | | Number of Employees | |
|---|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| From | To | 2021 | 2020 |
| Less than | €59,999 | 24 | 25 |
| €60,000 | - €69,999 | 1 | 4 |
| €70,000 | - €79,999 | 6 | 3 |
| €80,000 | - €89,999 | 6 | 4 |
| €90,000 | - €99,999 | 0 | 0 |
| Greater than | €100,000 | 2 | 2 |
| Total number employed | | 39 | 38 |

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 (2020: €0).

Director's Remuneration

The table below outlines the salary paid in 2021 and the comparative for 2020 (Civil Service Principal Officer (Higher) pay scale). No other payment was made in the year to the Director in the nature of pay. During the course of 2020 there was a change in Director following the expiry of the contract term.

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | € | € |
| Aideen Hartney (appointed 13th July 2020) | 111,367 | 51,140 |
| Siobhan Barron (resigned 24th July 2020) | | 70,506 |
| | 111,367 | 121,646 |

The current Director's pay is based on the Civil Service Principal Officer (Higher) pay scale. 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

€70,195 (2020: €71,477) was deducted from staff by way of the additional superannuation contribution and retained by the Department of Justice (2020) 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

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | € | € |
| Authority fees | 52,430 | 55,422 |
| Direct Authority travel expenses | 33 | 1,631 |
| Indirect Authority travel expenses | - | - |
| Conference costs | - | 191 |
| | <hr/> 52,463 | <hr/> 57,244 |

Included in the Authority fees is €1,994 for employer's PRSI (2020: €1,984).

7. Capital Account

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Opening balance | 2,864,814 | 2,921,779 |
| Income applied to purchase of fixed assets | 194,394 | 19,055 |
| Amortised in year in line with asset depreciation | (84,630) | (76,020) |
| Transfers (to)/from Statement of Income and Expenditure and Revenue Reserves | 109,764 | (56,965) |
| Closing balance | 2,974,578 | 2,864,814 |

8. Property, Plant and Equipment

| | Computer hardware and software € | Fixtures and Fittings, Equipment € | Freehold Premises € | Total € |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| Cost at 1 January 2021 | 26,556 | 135,611 | 4,474,208 | 4,636,375 |
| Additions | 35,695 | 1,549 | 157,150 | 194,394 |
| Disposals | - | - | - | - |
| At 31 December 2021 | 62,251 | 137,160 | 4,631,358 | 4,830,769 |
| Depreciation at 1 January 2021 | 26,556 | 110,953 | 1,634,052 | 1,771,561 |
| Charge for the year | 7,139 | 2,558 | 74,933 | 84,630 |
| At 31 December 2021 | 33,695 | 113,511 | 1,708,985 | 1,856,191 |
| Net Book Value | | | | |
| At 1 January 2021 | - | 24,658 | 2,840,156 | 2,864,814 |
| Net movement for the year | 28,556 | (1,009) | 82,217 | 109,764 |
| At 31 December 2021 | 28,556 | 23,649 | 2,922,373 | 2,974,578 |

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

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth * | 437,181 | 366,987 |
| Prepayments | 88,958 | 19,008 |
| Other Debtors | 41,905 | 94,708 |
| | 568,044 | 480,703 |

* 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 from 1st November 2020 following the transfer of function from the Department of Justice. 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 2021.

11. Payables - amounts falling due within one year

| | 2021 € | 2020 € |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and other Creditors | 4,031 | 116,614 |
| Holiday pay accrual | 139,679 | 117,820 |
| Audit fee | 19,350 | 17,600 |
| Other accruals | 28,848 | 113,897 |
| | 191,908 | 365,931 |

12. Payables – amounts falling due after one year

Creditors falling due after more than one year consists of €10,000 (2020: €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 (Senior Management Group) comprise the Director and 3 Senior Managers. Total remuneration, excluding employer's PRSI, paid to key management personnel (Senior Management Group) amounted to €395,024 (2020: €410,486).

Authority members' fees amounted to €52,430 (2020: €55,422). 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 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 impacted how the NDA operates, with all staff moved offsite and resources diverted to managing implications of the pandemic during 2021 except for a six week period when a blended working model was trialled before public health guidance regarding a return to remote working where possible was issued in November 2021. The 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 24th March 2022.

Appendix 1: Authority and other committees in 2021

| Name: | Role: | Appointment Date: |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Helen Guinan*** | Chairperson | July 2014* |
| Ruthann LaMalfa** | Member | July 2014* |
| Teresa McDonnell | Member | July 2014* |
| Deaglán O'Briain | Member | December 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 |
| Niamh Fawl | Member | January 2021 |

* Authority members currently serving a second term.

** Authority member resigned in July 2021. This vacancy will be filled in 2022 as part of a broader Authority new appointment and re-appointment process.

*** Kathryn O' Donoghue was appointed as Chairperson replacing Helen Guinan as at the 30th September 2022.

Audit and 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 McGearry | Member | August 2018 |
| Damian Gordon | Member | August 2018 |
| Brian Callanan | Member | August 2018 |

* Finance Committee members currently serving a second term.

**Finance Committee member resigned in July 2021. This vacancy will be filled in 2022 as part of a broader Authority new appointment and reappointment process.

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 members currently serving a second term.

Risk Management Advisory Group

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

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

Appendix 2: Representation on external bodies in 2021

Departmental Consultative Committees

There are 10 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 usually meet four times a year. They are as follows:

- Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth
- Department of Justice
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Further Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of Education
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of Transport
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

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

- National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group
- Member of Comprehensive Employment Strategy Implementation Group
- Member of Employer's for Change Strategy Group
- 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

Department of Further and Higher Educational Research, Innovation and Science and associated agencies

- 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

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 HSE Progressing Disability Services Training Group
- Member of HSE Progressing Disability Services Outcomes for Children and Families Framework Group
- Member of HSE New Directions National Implementation Group
- Member of HSE Consent to Research Policy Steering Group
- Member of Health Research Board (HRB) National Ability Supports System (NASS) Committee
- Member of HSE's Digital and Assistive Technology Committee
- Member of HIQA Advisory Group developing Overarching Standards for the Care and Support for children using Health and Social Care Services
- Member of HIQA National Standards Advisory Group developing national standards for children's social services
- Member of HSE Person-Centred Planning Framework Implementation Subgroup
- Member of HSE Disability Services National Quality Improvement Governance Review Committee on the Review of Part B Fire Safety
- Specialist Group Panel Member of the National Implementation and Monitoring Committee Steering Committee of Sharing the Vision

Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage and associated agencies

- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability Implementation Monitoring Group
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability Sub-Group
- National Housing Strategy for Disabled Persons Advisory Group
- Working Group on Disability Voting
- Irish Water Stakeholder Forum
- Working Group on the provision of a Changing Places Facility

Other

- Member of Dublin Regional Sills Forum
- 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
- 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 working groups (WGs)), CEN TC320, CEN TC228 WG14, CEN TC 293 WG12,
- Council of Institute of Designers in Ireland

Appendix 3: Publications in 2021

- Strategic Plan 2022-2024
- Annual Report 2020
- UNCRPD Article 25, Right to Health
- UNCRPD Article 6, Women with Disabilities
- Moving In, Moving On: An evaluation of the outcomes and costs of congregated and community models of service in the disability sector
- NDA policy advice on vocational rehabilitation provision in Ireland
- Experiences of support for return to work among people with acquired disabilities or conditions
- Disability, Work and Inclusion in Ireland: Engaging and supporting employers⁴
- Identification of skills gaps among persons with disabilities and their employment prospects⁵
- Report on Compliance Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 for 2019
- Experiences of Women with Disabilities in their Journey through Maternity Services in Ireland
- NDA Independent Assessment of Implementation of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2020
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy: NDA Year-end Assessment 2020
- Staff and Change Management: Good Practice in the Transition to Community Residential Disability Services
- Lockdowns Unlock Innovation: Review of innovations and adaptations affecting persons with disabilities arising from COVID-19 restrictions
- Summary of the Consultation 'building back better post COVID-19
- Creating our Future 2021: Ideas from the National Disability Authority's "Big Think" Brainstorming Event
- Article for Legal Aid Board 'Legal Ease' publication
- Walkability Audit Kilrush, Co. Clare
- Estimated number of potential users of Changing Places Toilets in Ireland

⁴ Commissioned by NDA and published by OECD

⁵ Jointly published with the Economic and Social Research Institute

Appendix 4: Policy advice papers in 2021

Policy advice papers and submissions to relevant government and public body consultations included:

- Policy advice paper on vocational rehabilitation provision in Ireland
- Policy advice paper on UNCRPD implementation
- Policy advice paper on Supporting the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Mainstream School Age Childcare
- Submission on Digital Schools Strategy
- Submission to inform development of Disability Action Plan 2022-25 – an output of the Review of Disability Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032
- Submission to the Review of Equality Legislation
- Submission to RTE Public Service Statement
- Submission to the Joint Committee on Justice on Courts and Courthouses
- Submission on the Dying with Dignity Bill
- Submission on the first State Party Report under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Submission on Flexible Work
- Submission on Remote Working
- Submission on the Electoral Reform Bill
- Submission on the Irish Human Rights and Equality Authority Strategy Statement
- Submission on the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- Submission on “Housing for All” Policy Statement and Action Plan
- Submission on the National Housing Strategy for Disabled Persons
- Submission on the Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners
- Submission on the Future of Family Justice
- Submission on National Resilience and Recovery Fund
- Submission on the Operation of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015
- Submission on the Review of Prison Rules 2007
- Submission on the Office of the Ombudsman Strategy Statement 2022 – 2024
- Submission on the Second National Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development Goals
- Submission on the legislation to amend the Mental Health Act, 2001

- Submission on the draft United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child State Report
- Submission on the Higher Education Authority national Access Plan 2022-2026
- Submission to the Policing Authority on Policing Priorities
- Submission on draft general scheme to amend the Mental Health Acts 2001-2018
- Submission to An Garda Síochána Statement of Strategy
- Submission to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority on barriers to entry to careers



nda

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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.