



# What is this report about?



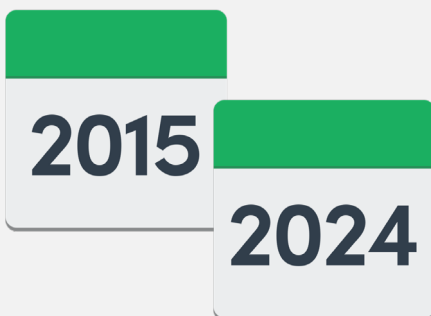
This is the final report on the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, also known as the CES.



The CES was a plan to support people with disabilities to get into work.



This report looks at what Ireland did to bring better employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



It looks at work over the last 10 years.



The CES was put together to tackle the difference between the number of people with and without disabilities in work in Ireland.

This is called the Disability Employment Gap.



Ireland has one of the largest gaps across the European Union.



The CES took a whole of government approach. This means that government departments, organisations, and others work together.

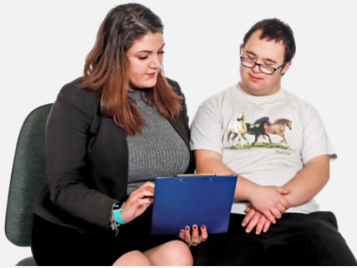


The CES set out to make sure that every person with a disability who was able to and wanted to work was supported to do so.

# 6

The CES had 6 main priorities.

Priorities are the most important things to do.



- **Build Skills, Capacity, and Independence**

Have education and training so people can get the skills they need for work.

Encourage independence from a young child to an adult.



- **Provide Bridges and Supports into Work**

Give individual supports so people with disabilities can get jobs in the open labour market.



- **Make Work Pay**

Make sure that work pays and people know this.

Make sure that people with disabilities can get their disability payments back if they get work but have to leave it.



- **Promote job retention and re-entry to work**  
Support people who become disabled to get and keep work or get back to work.



- **Provide co-ordinated and seamless support**  
Make sure that public services are well organised and work together to support people with disabilities to work.



- **Engage employers**  
Support and encourage employers to employ people with disabilities.  
Support employers to keep people in their jobs and help them back to work if they get a disability.



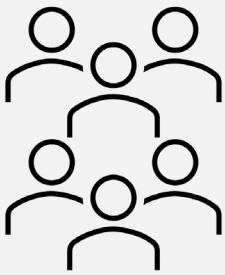
The CES wanted to raise the number of people with disabilities in work from 33% in 2011 to 38% by 2024.

# The CES Implementation Group



An Implementation Group was set up to check progress with the 6 priorities.

This is known as the CESIG.



The members of the group were from government departments, organisations, groups in society, unions, and employer organisations.



This group had an independent chair – Fergus Finlay.

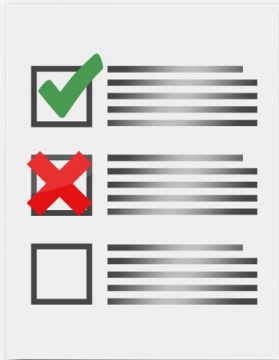
At first, the group was managed by the Department of Justice and Equality.

Later, it was managed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

# Doing a final check on progress with the CES

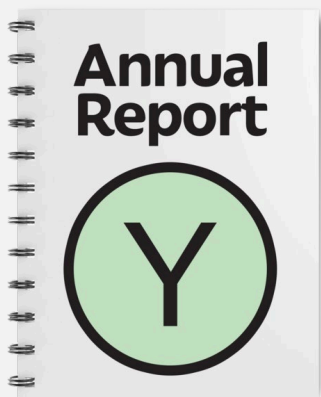


The National Disability Authority (NDA) checked on progress with the CES in different ways.



The NDA studied a set of measures to check on progress with the CES.

We got reports and information from government departments and organisations.



The NDA looked at the assessment reports that we put together on the CES each year.



We talked to the Implementation Group, government departments and organisations about the CES and its achievements.



We looked at information from consultations with people with disabilities.

These were carried out by the NDA and DCEDIY.

We looked at what people said about work.



We shared a draft of the report with the CESIG, government departments and organisations, DPOs, and others.

# Progress and Achievements



Over the lifetime of the CES, there were a number of good changes.



## Education and Skill Development

- There is more access to and inclusion in education for young people with disabilities.



- There are better supports for pre-school children with disabilities from the Access and Inclusion Model, known as AIM.



- There are more students with a disability in further and higher education.  
Some more students with a disability are taking up apprenticeships.



- There was money under the Programme for Access to Higher Education. This gave more access to higher education for students with an intellectual disability and/or autism.



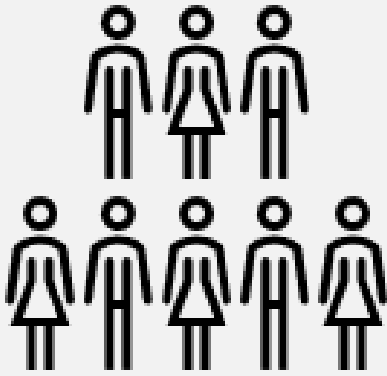
- A pilot project allowed school leavers with a disability to put off a day service place to try education or employment.



- This successful project will continue. School leavers can put off a day service place for up to 5 years.



- More part-time education programmes can get money from the Fund for Students with Disabilities. This should bring good changes over time.



- **Employment Supports**

The number of people using employment supports stayed low or went down during the CES.

For example, the Wage Subsidy Scheme and Reasonable Accommodation Fund.



- There have been reviews to try to find out why people are not using these supports.



- Actions are being taken to make these schemes more accessible, flexible, and useful.



- For example, the new Work and Access scheme gives different types of supports and has a workplace needs assessment.



- The actions from the Make Work Pay report were part of the CES action plans.



- There has been progress to make sure people with disabilities can work and not lose money.



- For example, people that start work and leave the benefits system can keep free travel for 5 years.

People can return to disability payments if a job does not work out in the first 12 months.



- People with disabilities can earn more money before their Disability Allowance and some other allowances are cut.



- People do not have to do rehabilitative work so more people can think about a job.



- Many employers are open to connecting with disability service providers and education colleges to hire people with disabilities.



- The AHEAD Willing Able and Mentoring programme, or WAM, is supporting more graduates.



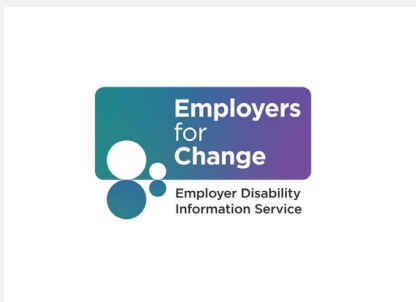
- The Oireachtas Work and Learning programme, OWL, is a different way of hiring for the Houses of the Oireachtas and the civil service.



- Ibec and ICTU worked together on the reasonable accommodation passport. This helps employers to understand how reasonable accommodations work for people.



- An employer information service called the Employer Disability Information service ran from 2016 to 2020.



- The Employers for Change service was set up. It gives information and support to employers on hiring, employing, managing, and keeping staff with disabilities.



- It was very important that everyone worked together on the actions in the CES.

# Gaps and Challenges



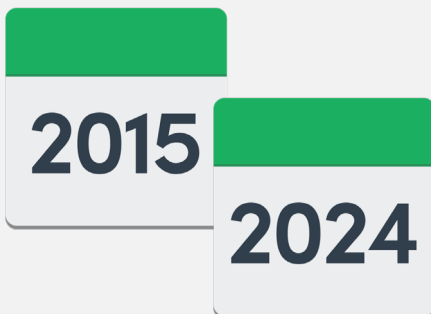
Census 2022 showed that people with disabilities are more likely to be early school leavers. They are less likely to have higher education qualifications.



There is still a big difference in Ireland between the number of people with disabilities and people without disabilities in work.



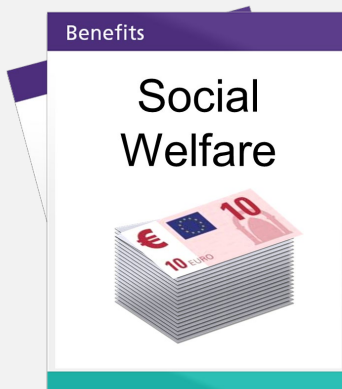
Ireland had the largest Disability Employment Gap of all 27 EU Member States in 2022.



There has been no change in the Disability Employment Gap during the lifetime of the CES.



Changes from the Make Work Pay report have not resulted in more people moving from Disability Allowance to work.



The number of people getting disability social welfare payments went up during the CES.

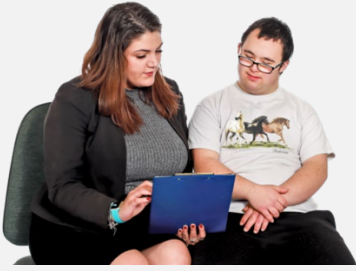


Some of the barriers that stop people working were not removed, for example, money for Personal Assistants.



People with disabilities may earn less than people without disabilities.

The cost of disability means that some people are not better off at work.



There are still gaps in career guidance for learners with disabilities at school.



The policy on supported employment should be put into action.



There has been little progress in keeping people with disabilities in jobs and supporting people to return to work if they become disabled.



The longer someone with a disability is out of work, the less likely they are to get back to work.

There should be a clear return to work path and support for employers to help people keep jobs.



People said that communication was weak during the CES.

Departments and organisations did not always work together.



The action plan for 2022 to 2024 was never agreed. It was not clear who was responsible for supporting people to get into work.



It was hard to put together measures and targets to check if the CES was working.



The change in how disability data was collected in Census 2022 was also a challenge.

It made it harder to compare data at the beginning and end of the CES.

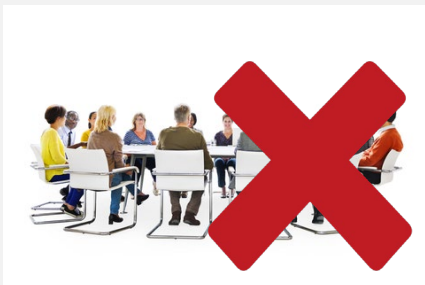
# Planning for the future



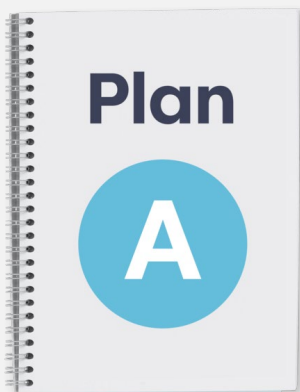
The CES did some important work in creating inclusive employment for people with disabilities in Ireland.



There are still challenges and a Disability Employment Gap.



People with disabilities say that support services do not work together and are not flexible.



A ten year plan may have been too long.  
Shorter plans may be better in the future.



There are different national plans.

It is hard to make sure that all of these plans get the attention and resources they need.



The new National Disability Strategy must build on work from the CES to support people with disabilities to work.



By doing this, Ireland can progress towards a more inclusive workforce and society.



We need a supported employment system that meets the needs of people with higher support needs and people who get a disability during their working lives.



To close the Disability Employment Gap, we must all work together to check progress and put plans into action.



This needs support, resources, and work from government departments and organisations.



We must think about what is available in mainstream services and individual services.



We should set targets to cut the Disability Employment Gap and increase the number of people with disabilities in work.



This Easy to Read information is from the National Disability Authority.



Ace Communication helped to put together this report.  
Experts by Experience helped with this information.

