

NDA Strategic Plan 2022 to 2024

**This is a Plain English version of the
Strategic Plan**



**Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority**

Chairperson's Foreword

On behalf of the National Disability Authority (NDA), I'm delighted to present this Strategic Plan 2022-2024 to the Minister of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

The plan says how we will give advice to the Minister and government departments on disability policy. It says how we will encourage Universal Design.

To develop the plan, we spoke to persons with disabilities, the organisations that support them, government departments, and the public sector. We spoke to people involved in the design and delivery of buildings, information, technology, products, and services.

I would like to thank all those who gave their time and shared their ideas.

This Strategic Plan sets out our goals for the next three years. We know that Irish society faced many challenges and difficulties in 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a very hard time for persons with disabilities.

We know, however, that there are opportunities for change, for new ways of working, and for new ideas. We want a society where all persons with disabilities can take part.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has been key in the development of this Strategic Plan. We will support the Government to put the Convention into action. We will check on progress and say which areas need more attention.

We will keep working to raise awareness of Universal Design. We want to make sure that places and services can be used by everyone, regardless of age, size, ability or disability. We want services to be accessible whether they are delivered in person or remotely.

I believe we are at an exciting time, with new opportunities for persons with disabilities to be fully included in Irish society. At the NDA, we will play our part to make this happen.

Helen Guinan, Chairperson of the NDA

Mission

To give independent advice to the Government on things that are important to persons with disabilities.

To check if new laws, policies, and plans are working and bringing good changes for persons with disabilities.

To encourage more people to understand and use Universal Design.

Vision

An Irish society in which persons with disabilities are fully included, and where their rights are recognised and realised.

Values

- **Independence:** We give independent advice and guidance. This comes from research.
- **Equality:** Equality and human rights are part of all the work we do.
- **Excellence:** We promise to do excellent work that makes a difference to the lives of persons with disabilities.
- **Engagement:** We work in partnership with persons with disabilities and the people that support them. We listen to the views of persons with disabilities and the people that support them.
- **Effectiveness:** This means working and using resources in the best way we can. We work as a team and share ideas.
- **Respect:** We are professional. We show respect to each other and to everyone we work with.

Background

The NDA was 20 years old in 2020. To mark this milestone, we published a review of 20 years of disability policy in Ireland. The review looked at the work of the NDA. It highlighted many good changes in disability policy and in the way we work. The review said that more work needs to be done in certain areas.

As we move into the next phase of the NDA's development, there are significant challenges and opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has been very hard for persons with disabilities. It will take some time for us to recover from COVID-19. The NDA will make sure that persons with disabilities are part of this recovery. To support this, we need better data and information on persons with disabilities and their needs.

The NDA's work crosses all government departments, and all areas of life. There are some important areas under this Strategic Plan:

UNCRPD

We welcome work across government to put the UNCRPD into action. While we know there is much more to do, the UNCRPD is now at the centre of Ireland's disability policy. We are pleased that the new Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability matters will check on the UNCRPD.

The NDA will support government departments and agencies to put the UNCRPD into action. We will show which areas of the UNCRPD need more attention. We look forward to giving information and data to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. We welcome the Government's action plan for the UNCRPD.

National and European Union (EU) Strategies and Policies

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on national disability plans, such as the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy.

There were a lot of challenges for public bodies in 2020 and 2021. However, it is important that we keep working to put these plans in place and to make new plans for the future. Our research and advice can help with this.

In particular, we will think about the opportunities for better employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. Working from home and new accessible technology could support our work in this area.

We would like to see the focus back on the Transforming Lives agenda, and in particular on activities that will help us move to more person-centred supports.

The NDA will think about other strategies and policies from the EU. For example, we will need to consider the new EU Disability Strategy 2021-2030 and the EU Accessibility Act.

Universal Design

We have been very pleased to see more awareness and use of Universal Design over the last three years.

More people recognise the NDA guidance in this area, developed through our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.

We want more public services to be accessible; both in-person and through technology. This means they can be used by everyone. Universal Design can help us to deal with issues in our environments and spaces, services and supports, and in our communities.

Monitoring

During 2020 and 2021, the NDA was given new monitoring tasks. These new responsibilities will be part of our work as we move into the next Strategic Plan.

We will check if Ireland is following the EU Web Accessibility Directive. This will encourage public bodies to make sure everyone can use their websites and mobile apps.

We will advise public bodies to follow the Irish Sign Language law of 2017.

The NDA will keep giving advice to public bodies so their services can be used by everybody, regardless of what type of disability they may have. We will check on progress with the Codes of Practice.

Building inclusive societies

We know that persons with disabilities are more likely than non-disabled people to be poor, to be isolated, or to be treated unfairly. We need to make sure that as we recover from COVID-19, persons with disabilities are not left behind.

During this Strategic Plan, we will look at how new technologies and supports can help persons with disabilities to take full part in their communities. We will give advice so persons with disabilities can move from institutional living to community living. We will look at person-centred supports and ways to pay for individual supports.

The role of technology

Technology can support persons with disabilities to be part of society.

During COVID-19, technology helped people to work from home, to connect with friends and family, and to use services and supports.

However, not everyone can use technology. The NDA is aware that some people may not have the right equipment or training and education. Some people cannot afford to buy technology.

As part of this plan, we will support government departments to work together so persons with disabilities have better access to technology.

Equality Data

The NDA will collect and use equality data to check progress and highlight areas that need more focus. We welcome the work across government to collect better data around disability. We will make sure there are more improvements in this area in the future.

We welcome work on equality and well-being budgeting.

We look forward to a period of recovery as we start on this next Strategic Plan. We will give the Government advice on how persons with disabilities can be part of the recovery, and on how the UNCRPD can be put into action in our society.

NDA's Work to Date

During the 2019-21 Strategic Plan, the NDA was proud to continue work to put the UNCRPD into action.

We worked on different national strategies, policies, and programmes. We look forward to building on this work in the next Strategic Plan.

From 2019 to 2021:

- We talked with persons with disabilities about the UNCRPD.
- We put together 11 new Codes of Practice to support a new law on making decisions.
- We held a conference each year to look at putting the UNCRPD into action.
- We encouraged Universal Design in early years centres and in housing.
- We wrote about Disabled Person's Organisations, work, and childcare.
- We did research on disability and being homeless, respite services, staff in disability services, and moving to live in the community.
- We checked how the National Disability Inclusion Strategy is working.

Strategic Priorities 2022 2024

Strategic Priority 1

To give good advice to the Government on things that are important to the lives of persons with disabilities.

This advice will guide national programmes and plans, for example, the UNCRPD.

Strategic Priority 2

To check if policies, plans, and laws are working and bringing good changes for persons with disabilities.

Strategic Priority 3

To encourage people to learn about and use Universal Design across Ireland.

Strategic Priority 4

To make sure that persons with disabilities and the people supporting them get the chance to share their views and ideas.

Strategic Priority 5

To be a well-run organisation that delivers our plan.

Public Sector Duty

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty says that public bodies must treat people fairly and equally. They must protect the human rights of staff and of the people using their services.

The Duty could change how public bodies carry out their work. It could change how they engage with members of the public and their own staff.

The NDA is a public body. To follow the Duty, we must list any human rights and equality issues that are important to our work. We must put this list in our Strategic Plan and say how we will deal with any issues.

Promoting equality and human rights for persons with disabilities is a very important part of our work at the NDA. We do this through research and by giving advice. In 2019, we held workshops to look at human rights and equality issues. We raised awareness of the Public Sector Duty. We put together an action plan that we are working on.

Human rights and equality matters are a key part of our Strategic Plan. They are part of our mission, vision and values.

A number of actions will happen during this Plan. For example, we will put together guidance on including persons with disabilities in research and in developing policies. We will make sure the human resources systems at the NDA are in line with the Public Sector Duty.

The NDA will continue to make sure that persons with disabilities are part of its staff team. We follow the rules for the civil and public service on hiring and employing staff. The NDA will look at how we can have more diversity among our staff. This means employing people from different backgrounds, including persons with disabilities.

Our Authority (Board) is due to change during this Strategic Plan. We want to keep persons with disabilities, their representatives and family members on the Authority. We want to show the diversity of Irish society in the board's membership, in so far as possible.

Many parts of the Public Sector Duty fit with our responsibilities under the UNCRPD. We will keep checking on how we are doing with the Public Sector Duty. We will report on our progress.

Finding out if things are working

The NDA will give independent research and guidance to the Government in order to bring meaningful improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities.

We also want a better awareness and understanding of Universal Design.

We will talk to each other, to the Government, to persons with disabilities, to service providers, and to other key people about this plan.

The NDA will check how it is doing with the priorities in this plan. We will:

- Put the goals in the Strategic Plan into detailed work-plans for each year. We will say clearly what we hope to achieve in each project area and when we hope to achieve it
- Work with government departments to make sure we are getting the best opportunities to give advice and guidance
- Do all the work that we must do by law in a timely manner
- Regularly review our annual work plans and report on progress
- Review and report on our work to the Minister and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Regularly talk with all our stakeholders, including persons with disabilities and the groups that support them.

Resources

The NDA will deliver the priorities in this plan through our structures:

- The Policy, Research and Public Affairs Department
- The Standards and Monitoring Unit
- The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design
- The Corporate Services Department.

Across each of these units, staff have the right education and skills to carry out our work. This includes giving advice and guidance to government departments and others on different topics. This advice and guidance can lead to positive changes for persons with disabilities.

The NDA will take on more monitoring duties for the Web Accessibility Directive and the Irish Sign Language Act. It will be important that we have the resources we need to do this job well.

We may need to do more research to support putting the UNCRPD into action.

We will manage our resources and run the organisation well so we can do this work.

We will use outside expertise when we need to.

We will look for extra resources if we need them.



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

This Report was put together by the National Disability Authority.



ACE Communication helped with this Report.

NDA

25 Clyde Road

Dublin 4

01-6080400

www.nda.ie