NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2021

**National Disability Authority logo**

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# Legal Mandate

The National Disability Authority’s mandate is set out in the National Disability Authority Act 1999, with additional functions assigned under the Disability Act 2005, both of which are detailed in the appendix.

**The overarching mandate of the National Disability Authority is, in summary, to provide advice and information to the Minister for Justice and Equality on matters concerning policy and practice in relation to persons with disabilities and to assist the Minister in the co-ordination of disability policy.** In doing so, the National Disability Authority has functions in relation to research; assisting the development of standards; producing codes of practice; monitoring implementation of standards and codes of practice, and recognising the achievement of good standards and quality. The National Disability Authority has responsibility for monitoring the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector.

The statutory Centre for Excellence in Universal Design is an integral part of the National Disability Authority. It has a remit to promote the design of the built environment, products, services, and information and communications technology, so that they can be accessed, understood, and used independently to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. The main functions of the Centre include contributing to the development and promulgation of standards; promoting Universal Design in education courses and curriculum for the relevant professions and occupations; and raising awareness of Universal Design. The Universal Design role extends beyond disability to consider design issues for everyone and entails engagement with standards bodies, industry, professional bodies and educational institutions.

The NDA has also been assigned a new function to provide information and advice to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). This includes the development and provision of statistical information if required, in order to assist IHREC in carrying out its function in relation to monitoring the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In performance of its functions, the NDA focuses on disability as defined in the Act to mean “a substantial restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in economic, social or cultural life on account of an enduring physical, sensory, learning, mental health or emotional impairment”, and including persons with autism.

# Foreword

I am delighted on behalf of the National Disability Authority (NDA) to present this Strategic Plan 2019 to 2021 to the Minister.

The plan sets out how the NDA will deliver on its responsibilities to provide information and evidence informed advice to the Minister and officials in order to guide policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities, and to promote Universal Design in practice over the next 3 years. It is informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, national policy priorities and developments, suggestions by those who shared their views with the NDA, and areas that we consider will require particular attention over that period.

We recognise that the plan coincides with the first reporting period for Ireland in relation to implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which was ratified in April 2018. This significant development will, I believe, bring a renewed energy and impetus to implementing the many important national strategies and new policy directions under way in Ireland to transform how persons with disabilities here are empowered and supported to live lives of their choosing. This strategy shows that the NDA is ready to play its part in ensuring that Ireland actively progresses the rights of persons with disabilities as equal citizens.

The NDA looks forward to continuing to play its part in monitoring how the strategies and policies are delivering and impacting change to support Ireland in meeting its obligations under the Convention. The NDA has evolved since it was established in 2000, building a wealth of research, advice and practical guidance and engaging more in the evaluation of policy implementation and monitoring of impact.

Our own monitoring role is growing as we take on the new statutory function to provide information and reports to IHREC in relation to the UNCRPD. We will also report on the outcome of monitoring how the public sector is meeting its responsibilities in the employment of persons with disabilities and in enhancing the accessibility of services, facilities and information. We expect increased focus on the accessibility of websites and services in light of the EC Web Accessibility Directive 2017, and the EU Web Accessibility Act respectively.

We believe our responsibilities for monitoring will have greater significance as the various disability strategies are progressed, and that the learning from our evaluations will guide further developments. Equally, we expect that the growing requirements for evidence, cost benefit analyses, impact assessments and advice on practical policy solutions in a wide range of areas will be a core part of our annual work programmes. Increased opportunities to access rich data will be a key element of improving our ability to further this work.

Ireland’s economy is expected to continue to grow over the coming years. This will enhance the opportunity to address the disappointingly low levels of employment participation by persons with disabilities. There is much evidence on the value of work, not just in terms of any economic independence, but also for social participation, self-esteem and personal growth. Over the life of this strategic plan, we look forward to seeing the second three-year action plan under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy move beyond the foundation stage to impacting job opportunities. We recognise that this is not just the role of the State sector, but also that the second action plan must focus on how other stakeholders, including employers, can support this goal.

Our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design is an integral part of the NDA. There is no doubt that Universal Design in practice benefits everyone – regardless of age, size, ability or disability - as defined in the Disability Act 2005. As such, it enables us all to interact as independently as possible with the built environment, products, services and ICT. While relevant to everyone, it is especially important to persons with disabilities and older persons. We know Ireland is unique in having a statutory centre and we look forward to the continued impact it is having in how public services are being redesigned and focused. It is already visible in the successes of many award programmes and design challenges, and in the emerging curricula for higher education courses and the continued professional development of relevant professionals. We look forward to building on this work in the coming three years.

I believe that the work the NDA will progress over the coming three years will build on and add to our work to date, and will be of value in guiding how Ireland can ensure that persons with disabilities participate equally in society and achieve their potential and personal goals. The NDA will be working to enhance how we communicate our work and reports. We will work to show how the independent research, assessment and guidance of the NDA is designed to inform and influence how policy and practice is shaped and delivered to respect the rights of persons with disabilities and to realise those rights.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who generously and diligently contributed their views and inputs to supporting the development of this strategic plan.



Helen Guinan

**Chairperson**

# Mission – why we are here

The National Disability Authority is an independent statutory body with a duty to provide evidence-informed advice and information to Government and officials in the public sector on disability matters; to assist in the co-ordination of disability policy; and to promote awareness and adoption of Universal Design to benefit the wider population.

# Vision - what we wish for

A society in 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.

# Values – the principles that guide us

The following values inform the work of the National Disability Authority:

* Independence: We add value through objective, research-informed advice and guidance
* Equality: We uphold the fundamental principles of equality, non-discrimination and human rights in our work, policies and practices and in the delivery of our functions and as an employer
* Excellence: We are committed to excellence in delivery of our functions in order to make a real difference to people’s lives
* Engagement: We work to enhance active engagement with persons with disabilities and communications with all relevant stakeholders
* Effectiveness: We add value based on an ethos of public service, teamwork, flexibility, innovation and efficiency in delivering on our mandate
* Transparency: We demonstrate integrity, openness and commitment in how we work to achieve the organisation’s strategic priorities
* Respect: We are always professional, respectful and ethical in our relationships and communications with each other and with all internal and external stakeholders.

# What we do

The National Disability Authority:

* Undertakes research and policy analysis
* Provides policy advice to Government officials and public bodies
* Evaluates and monitors implementation and impact of national strategies
* Develops technical and practical guidance, toolkits and educational materials, available on-line and free of charge
* Participates in working groups to advise on strategies, policy and their implementation, to guide standards-development and good practice
* Develops Codes of Practice and monitors their implementation
* Monitors the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector
* Hosts seminars, conferences, roundtables, consultation exercises, events and design workshops
* Promotes excellence in disability research
* Promotes Universal Design and guides how it can be implemented in practice.

We engage in strategic collaborations to support the delivery of our statutory remit and to enable the most effective deployment of resources.

The National Disability Authority is independent in the exercise of its functions. Our policy analysis, advice, standards and guidelines are grounded in the evidence base we have brought together, by

* Undertaking original research
* Consulting and engaging on the lived experience of persons with disabilities
* Collating the national and international research evidence
* Analysing the data
* Documenting national and international good practice
* Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of policy and practice

# Background and context

There have been many changes and positive developments in relation to disability since the NDA was established. While these are welcome, it is recognised that there are still many issues yet to be addressed. Many of these have been identified in strategies and policies relevant to persons with disabilities but are yet to be fully implemented. Further progress is also required in ensuring Universal Design is seen as the mainstream approach to designing a more inclusive environment for all.

We welcome Ireland’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the overarching vision it provides to ensure persons with disabilities can participate and contribute in society on an equal basis with all other citizens. It is recognised that there has been progressive realisation of this vision through a range of national strategies and policy commitments. These provide a foundation to further the implementation of the Convention’s goals, including new policy directions to empower individuals to have choice and control over how and where they live their lives.

The NDA has played its role in advising on many of these developments, and continues to monitor and evaluate their impact. The NDA’s role has evolved over the years in how it delivers on functions. We have developed a substantial range of research to guide policy direction, and have since continued to advise on the practical means and methods of implementing new policy approaches. Our research role has extended to evaluation of the impact of policy on quality of life but also of the effectiveness of policies, identifying indicators to enable consistent measurement of outcomes. In so doing it covers the needs and considerations across the spectrum of disability.

Universal Design guidelines/toolkits developed in the areas of the built environment, services and ICT have also gained recognition both in the public and private sectors.

We can expect the full implementation of assisted decision-making legislation and the related codes of practice, recognising that this will require changes to how services and systems work, as well as changes in culture to ensure the principle of presumption of capacity is always respected.

Building on work to date there will be continued roll out and scaling up of the major transformation programme in relation to disability services. This will include the implementation of new models of funding and delivery of personalised and effective supports for persons with disabilities to live lives of their choosing in the community. In particular, this will require greater attention to how mainstream services and bodies operate within the community.

Employment, and the continued implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (CES) 2015-2024, will continue to be a key area of focus for the NDA. We expect that there will be many opportunities to be maximised as employment levels increase. The second 3-year action plan under the CES will coincide with the NDA’s strategic plan and we look forward to advising on its implementation.

Ireland will experience increasing obligations to improve access to public services and to report on performance as per European Union directives over the coming years including the EU Website Accessibility Directive and the continued implementation of the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

We can expect increasing recognition of Universal Design as the practice adopted in projects and services to date is expanded into other areas. We would hope to see the work to date to guide curricula for the relevant professions have continued impact on educational courses and related accreditation. We also look forward to increased recognition and adoption of UD standards and guidelines, by both public and private sectors, aided by various awareness programmes and awards. Building on those successes, we will work to support the wider adoption of Universal Design in practice.

Good quality data and its analysis is increasingly important to guiding policy, investment decisions and to assist in the assessment of policy and of programme effectiveness. The NDA will continue to build its capacity in this area.

The NDA considers that many of the national Strategies and tools that have been developed to date have reached the end of their “foundation” and exploratory stages, and that they will progress to the next stage of implementation over the coming 3 years. In addition, new policies and frameworks will be at the early stages of implementation when independent reviews will be important to establish any adjustments necessary.

We are conscious that Ireland is entering a period of uncertainty as the implications of Brexit may be felt, for example. At the same time, the significant programmes of change underway under the Strategies we have mentioned here should yield positive changes in the lives of persons with disabilities and in society generally. The National Disability Authority is committed to playing its part to helping drive that positive change through our work and advice to Government and officials and to assisting a continued focus on solutions where challenges may arise.

# Strategic Priorities Overview

**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**

**Strategic Priority 2**

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

**Strategic Priority 3**

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

**Strategic Priority 4**

**To continue to build awareness and adoption of Universal Design across society in Ireland**

**Strategic Priority 5**

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

# Strategic Priorities – our key areas of focus

## 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

There are a range of national strategies and policies to be implemented over the coming years which provide a framework for advancing the provisions of the UNCRPD. The NDA will continue to provide advice and practical guidance to support the implementation and further development of these strategies and policies. We will also continue to evaluate the implementation processes of the policies and services involved, as well as the outcomes achieved.

We recognise the commitment to driving the necessary change programmes and the challenges that may be faced. Through our independent role, we will bring forward the research, learning, and advice that can assist with addressing those challenges.

### Actions

* 1. Conduct research to inform and guide the development of policy and practice and to support the implementation of key national strategies and policies, including:
* National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
* The Transforming Lives programme, including:
* Time to Move On from Congregated Settings
* Progressing Children’s Disability Services
* New Directions policy on alternatives to traditional day-care services
* Personalised Budgets
* Access and Inclusion Model (Early Childhood Services)
* Housing Strategy
* Vision for Change
  1. Conduct research, supply evidence-based information and advice to support the further development and implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy by the relevant departments, agencies and by employers and other stakeholders
  2. 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
  3. Advise on the implementation of standards in services for persons with disabilities and development of guidance to share good practice
  4. 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
  5. Develop guidance to support implementation of policy and legislation relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities, for example, the Irish Sign Language Act
  6. Continue to promote positive public attitudes to disability across all areas of life, including in an employment context
  7. 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
  8. Disseminate and communicate the learning from research

### Key Performance Indicators

1. Research undertaken and reports published each year with learning promoted
2. Evidence-based policy advice delivered and follow-up actions identified through advice papers, submissions, engagement with officials and participation in advisory and monitoring committees.
3. Guidance and Codes of Practice developed to inform and guide implementation of policies and strategies
4. Enhanced disability awareness through our activities and funding programme
5. Effective engagement with relevant departments, agencies and stakeholders on policy and practice
6. Facilitated co-ordination of cross-departmental working
7. Communication and dissemination of NDA work through appropriate and relevant channels
8. The impact of developments in provision of services and supports are monitored, assessed and analysed
9. Timely and accurate analysis of data and statistics relevant to disability
10. Communication of publications of fact sheets and reports relevant to disability

## Strategic Priority 2 - To understand and advise on societal changes, challenges and opportunities that impact on the lives of persons with disabilities

It is important to consider on-going changes and developments in society in Ireland, and the implications these may have for the lives of persons with disabilities, future policy, resources, and for future planning taken from a Universal Design approach. With this in mind we consider that there are a number of areas that may require more focused research and analysis over the lifetime of this strategic plan to better inform policy and practice and the achievement of an inclusive society for all persons with a disability of all ages.

### Actions

* 1. Identify and conduct research to build information and evidence on the implications of societal changes and developments, with the flexibility to prioritise issues such as ageing, engagement with persons with disabilities – particularly children and young people - family supports and caring activities, consideration of complex needs, and the role of technology and data in planning and providing for future need while maximising independence
  2. 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
  3. Gather and analyse information, data and statistics relevant to these areas in order to provide an evidence base for future policy advice and input
  4. Share the learning from this research

### Key Performance Indicators

1. Research evidence and information on identified areas for attention, and shared learning on effective solutions to addressing these
2. Increased identification and awareness of any issues and areas for attention to advise key decision and policy makers
3. Evidence-based policy advice delivered to relevant departments and agencies in these challenge areas
4. Enhancing the wider policy advice work, research and its relevance to addressing societal developments and challenges

## Strategic Priority 3 - To promote and monitor the implementation of Codes of Practice, standards and guidelines in services, and to evaluate policy and practice

The NDA has functions to develop codes of practice and to monitor their implementation. These include a Code of Practice on accessible public information and services and a Code of Practice on accessible heritage sites. It also has functions to monitor the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector and achievement of employment targets by the sector. In monitoring improvements in the accessibility of mainstream services, it will be important that performance on compliance with EU Directives on web accessibility can be measured and reported. Universal Design is a key enabler to advancing the mainstreaming of disability in policies and services, where supported in standards, guidelines and practical toolkits. We will continue to promote this in our work.

The NDA will focus in particular on monitoring the implementation of national strategies and programmes relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. While there can be challenges to ensuring robust and reliable data to measure progress and make determinations, the NDA will continue to work to guide data development and access to useful data sources and systems. This will support effective monitoring.

The NDA will also develop information to provide to IHREC relevant to guiding assessments of Ireland’s progress in implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

### Actions

* 1. Develop analyses and data reports to inform assessment of compliance by Ireland with the UNCRPD
  2. Evaluate and advise on monitoring mechanisms
  3. Develop and monitor implementation of Codes of Practice as appropriate
  4. Engage with government departments to support the monitoring of key EU initiatives such as the new Web Accessibility Directive
  5. Monitor and report on the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service in accordance with Part 5 of the Disability Act
  6. Review the process to enhance quality of data and reporting under Part 5 of the Disability Act and guide on implementation of findings
  7. Assess and monitor the implementation and impact of national strategies and policies, including the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, and policies associated with the Transforming Lives programme
  8. Research on new approaches to gathering and mining data that will provide robust evidence on progress in implementing national strategies, programmes and their outcomes on the quality of life for persons with disabilities, as well as measuring the uptake of Universal Design
  9. Incorporating Universal Design and learning from relevant developments in standards, guidelines and toolkits

**Key Performance Indicators**

1. Statistical reports, information and reports of analyses relevant to support consideration of progress in implementing the UNCRPD
2. Advice on monitoring mechanisms
3. Development of Codes of Practice on request from Minister
4. Report on the implementation of statutory Codes of Practice under the Disability Act 2005
5. Annual statutory report on employment of persons with disabilities in the public service (Part 5, Disability Act 2005)
6. Evaluation reports and impact assessments on existing guidelines and Codes of Practice

## Strategic Priority 4 – To continue to build awareness and adoption of the concept of Universal Design, maximising independence and participation for all

The work of the NDA’s Centre for Excellence in Universal Design relates to the design of the built environment, products and services, and information and communications technologies so that they can be accessed, understood and easily used by people of any size, age, ability or disability, in the widest possible range of situations, without the need for adaptations.

A range of resources have been developed by the Centre to support the adoption of Universal Design in practice. There has been a steady increase in the take up of Universal Design in areas such as housing and customer service design in the public and private sectors since the last strategic plan was developed. The Centre will continue to build on this work and to build the network of Universal Design champions and exemplars to support further adoption of Universal Design, which benefits everyone in Irish society.

### Actions

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

* 1. 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)
  2. Continue to promote awareness and understanding of Universal Design in the built environment, products, services, and information and communication technologies though promoting and participating in awards, workshops and conferences
  3. 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”
  4. Continue to build a network of Universal Design Champions across the various domains of industry, government, education and the public to extend the knowledge base of good practice in Universal Design
  5. Target particular sectors in promoting Universal Design practice in partnership with the relevant stakeholders such as the utility, banking and transport sectors
  6. Continue to promote the adoption of Universal Design in practice in the areas of products, services, and Information Communication Technologies
  7. Explore the development of a test design lab in collaboration with key stakeholders to support the trialling of Universal Design in practice and evaluation of same

### Key performance indicators

1. Research-informed advice to guide national policies and the achievement of excellence in Universal Design
2. New products and services further developed on foot of Design Challenges
3. Universal Design standards and guidelines adopted in practice by relevant professionals
4. Integration of the 2nd level Universal Design course materials as a Junior Certificate short course progressed
5. Adoption of Universal Design focus in education curricula for relevant professions by third level and further education bodies
6. Engagement with accreditation bodies to incorporate Universal Design in core qualifications as relevant
7. Progress in the development of education campuses, building on work in relation to Universal Design homes and “Smart Ageing” initiatives
8. Increased awareness of the value of Universal Design across built environment, products, services and ICT achieved through the Universal Design Grand Challenge for students
9. Promotion of Universal Design through other award programmes where we partner with bodies such as the RIAI, IDI, IIA, and through the eGoverment awards programme
10. Continued demonstration of the viability, cost effectiveness, exemplars and business cases to achieve understanding of Universal Design in practice
11. Enhanced engagement with wider community on Universal Design e.g. through social media and other platforms
12. Established links with relevant stakeholders, including industry, to research, test and develop the commercial potential of Universal Design

## 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 the NDA, we recognise that our people are our most important resource, bringing a wealth of expertise and skills to effectively deliver on our statutory remit. We will continue to drive and support a high performance organisation and support staff through training and development, while working to ensure that workforce planning takes account of available expertise and future knowledge requirements.

The NDA will continue to maintain its position as an accountable, responsive and well governed organisation continuously improving its policies and systems. We will also work to improve engagement with stakeholders and to share the learning from our work and advice to stakeholders. We will also continue to enhance our processes of engagement with all stakeholders, both to inform our advice and guidance, and to promote our work in keeping with our statutory remit and on-going developments.

### Actions

* 1. Effectively implement the Human Resources Strategy and complementary policies, to support staff in delivering on the strategic plan and the annual work programmes of the National Disability Authority
  2. Ensure effective use of resources in the delivery of strategic priorities and annual work programmes, taking account of existing expertise and future knowledge requirements
  3. Nurture and support a positive work culture and environment
  4. Review staff training and development in light of staff personal development and future organisational needs
  5. Develop a robust external communications plan to reflect the range of our engagement activities, including effective engagement with stakeholders; promotion of learning from our research; delivery of practical advice and guidance. In doing so we will use a range of communications tools and technologies, including further development of our website and other media channels
  6. Ensure effective internal communications through enhanced information management and sharing processes, to encompass file management systems and protocols and provision of a library service
  7. Maintain efficient and effective management of facilities, buildings and organisational systems, including Information Communication Technologies
  8. Maintain high standards of governance, including actions to improve systems, controls, documented procedures, updated customer charter, data protection procedures, and other actions to ensure compliance with legislation and good practice
  9. Continue to improve internal controls
  10. Ensure effective compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements
  11. Deliver an Annual Report in keeping with our statutory duties
  12. Maintain robust financial procedures to provide effective and transparent stewardship of public resources

### Key Performance Indicators

1. Human Resources Strategy developed and implemented
2. Effective implementation of the Performance Management and Development System
3. Comprehensive annual training and development plan designed and delivered
4. Communications plan developed and implemented
5. Accessible and user-friendly website with regularly updated information and publications
6. Development of effective dissemination strategy for National Disability Authority outputs
7. Effective engagement with all relevant stakeholders
8. Timely delivery of Annual Report
9. Statutory financial reporting requirements met and continuously improved
10. Information management protocols reviewed and revised as appropriate
11. Full compliance with relevant legislation, including GDPR and the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies
12. Newsletter distributed quarterly to all relevant stakeholders

# Resources

The NDA will operate through structures which are reflective of its functions and responsibilities through departments and units including:

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

The staffing complement is determined by the skills, expertise and competencies required to deliver research evidence of a qualitative and quantitative nature, including data development and analysis. We also ensure a focus on policy analysis and advice in order to inform and impact policy changes. Organisational capacity is informed by the need for technical expertise on the design of the built environment, product and service design, and design of Information Communication Technologies to inform curricula, training and capacity building in Universal Design. Job roles and related descriptions are designed with all this in mind.

In addition to enabling us to deliver on its statutory functions, NDA resources are planned and deployed to deliver our annual work programmes. These programmes are cognisant of national policy priorities relevant to disability and Universal Design matters, and how our work can support their effective implementation. Our resources are also deployed to meet governance requirements, financial reporting and to support the operation of an effective organisation, together with its facilities and systems.

The NDA notes the additional functions and responsibilities assigned to the NDA in light of the ratification of the UNCRPD. This will be fully rolled out over the course of this strategic plan. As a result, there will be increasing demands for research support. Alongside increasing monitoring activity and our work to enhance communications, this will require that we can maintain existing expertise and where necessary, secure additional resources to enhance our capacity in these areas.

The NDA is committed to effectively deploying its resources to deliver on its wide ranging work programme to guide public policy and practice. We do so by working collaboratively and innovating to maximise resources and availing of external expertise where appropriate. This includes resource planning for ongoing and specific programmes of work, and effective deployment of the annual grant and any other income it receives.

# Measuring Impact

Through research, evidence-based information, advice and guidance to Government, the NDA aims to achieve tangible improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities. Through the remit of our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design to promote Universal Design of the environment, we aim to achieve an enhanced awareness and understanding of the concept of Universal Design. This includes the adoption of guidance and standards and the embedding of UD in the relevant curricula.

We will monitor the success of this strategic plan in a number of ways. We will:

1. regularly review the achievement of Key Performance Indicators outlined under each strategic priority
2. avail of key opportunities to influence national policy which may arise over the course of the plan, being flexible and responsive in doing so
3. regularly review the outputs and impact from actions in the annual work plans produced under the strategy and feedback to the Minister on progress
4. report on progress at quarterly meetings between the Executive and the Disability Policy Department at the Department of Justice and Equality and in accordance with the agreed Performance Framework Agreement
5. regularly engage with stakeholders including persons with disabilities and representative groups
6. regularly engage with Universal Design stakeholders

# Appendix

## Functions of the National Disability Authority under section 8 of the National Disability Authority Act 1999

The principal function of the National Disability Authority is to advise the Minister for Justice and Equality regarding issues of policy and practice relating to disability and 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.

Additional functions:

* To undertake, commission or collaborate in research projects and activities on issues relating to disability and to assist in the development of statistical information appropriate for the planning, delivery and monitoring of programmes and services for persons 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 Code(s) 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 to submit to the Minister in line with our statutory remit

### Additional Functions of the Authority under the Disability Act 2005 include:

* To prepare Code(s) of Practice relating to the accessibility of public buildings, services, information and heritage sites (section 30)
* To monitor compliance with statutory targets for recruitment and employment of persons 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 of the Disability Act 2005)
* To establish a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the built environment and information technology which will promote the principles of Universal Design that may be accessed, understood and used to the greatest practicable extent by people regardless of age, size, ability or disability in the most independent and natural manner; in the widest possible range of situations; without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialised solution (Part 6 of the Disability Act 2005)

## Statutory Powers

In order to fulfil its statutory functions, the National Disability Authority has certain statutory powers.

The National Disability Authority has right of access to information (including data) of relevance to its functions which is held by public bodies (section 13, National Disability Authority Act 1999) and may seek information on any matter which concerns the provision of programmes or services for persons with disabilities that is provided by statutory duty and that is publicly funded in whole or in part (section 14, National Disability Authority Act 1999).

The National Disability Authority can make annual reports and other reports to the Minister with respect to its functions (section 15, National Disability Authority Act 1999). It can develop codes of practice where so requested to do so by the Minister and such codes must be approved by the Minister, e.g. Code of Practice on Accessible Services and Information provided by Public Bodies. The NDA has functions to monitor the implementation of those codes in programmes and services for persons with disabilities. Further to monitoring implementation of such codes of practice and standards, where it considers appropriate in the circumstances to do so, the Authority can make recommendations to the Minister for the review, reduction or withdrawal of funding by the State for those services and programmes.