

# **Key themes for the New National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2016 – 2019**

## **Your opportunity to make your views known**

### **1. Introduction**

The current National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan (NDSIP), which runs from 2013 to 2015, is a whole-of-Government approach to advancing the social inclusion of people with disabilities. The Department of Justice and Equality, together with the National Disability Authority and the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group chaired by the Minister of State for New Communities, Culture, Equality and Drugs Strategy at the Department of Justice and Equality intends to undertake a comprehensive consultation process during 2015 with a view to putting in place a revised National Disability Inclusion Strategy. The consultation process will allow interested parties to make recommendations in key areas such as service provision, accommodation, health, employment, and education.

It is intended that a revised National Strategy, covering the next implementation phase which will run from 2016 to 2019, will be in place in early 2016.

### **2. Background**

The high level goals in the current NDSIP are:

1. Equal Citizens – People with disabilities are free from discrimination. They are treated as equal citizens by their fellow citizens. They are included as equals by public services which welcome and accommodate diversity.
2. Independence and Choice – people with disabilities are supported to live the life they choose.
3. Participation – people with disabilities live ordinary lives in ordinary places, participating in the life of the community.
4. Maximise potential – people with disabilities are enabled to reach their full potential.

The high level goals are further broken down into specific objectives as follows:

### **HLG 1 – Equal Citizens**

- Objectives** – 1(a) People with disabilities enjoy equality before the law.  
1(b) People with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect  
1(c) People with disabilities enjoy access to information  
1(d) People with disabilities have equal access to public services

### **HLG 2 – Independence and choice**

- Objectives** - 2(a) People with disabilities have an adequate income  
2(b) People with disabilities get the quality supports and services they need to be independent  
2(c) People with disabilities have a say in the decisions that affect them  
2(d) People with disabilities exercise choice in how they live their lives

### **HLG 3 – Participation**

- Objectives** – 3(a) People with disabilities have access to jobs  
3(b) People with disabilities can access places they want to go  
3(c) People with disabilities live in and are part of the mainstream community  
3(d) People with disabilities can enjoy friendships, relationships and a good social life  
3(e) People with disabilities are safe and free from abuse

### **HLG 4 – Maximise potential**

- Objectives** - 4(a) People with disabilities are enabled to maximise their physical and mental wellbeing and capacity for independence  
4(b) People with disabilities get the education and training that enables them to reach their potential

## **3. Consultation with you**

The Department is seeking the views of stakeholders – disability organisations and service providers, individuals with a lived experience of disability, Government departments and agencies – as to how the National Disability Strategy should be progressed over the years 2016 to 2019. It is envisaged that a new implementation plan will be in place by the end of 2015.

As well as seminars and meetings with organisations at national level, the consultation process will include a series of regional public meetings to allow maximum participation by anyone interested in contributing to the development of a new National Disability Inclusion Strategy.

The consultations will take the form of a 3-stage process as follows:

1. An initial round of consultations, which this paper is intended to facilitate, to identify the priority themes to be addressed in a new National Disability Inclusion Strategy.
2. A second phase to identify and agree specific objectives under each of the themes identified in Phase 1. Again, this phase will be grounded on a paper which sets out the identified themes. The Paper will be published in July 2015.
3. Phase 3 will focus on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of each of the objectives that emerged from Phase 2. Following this phase, a draft proposal for a revised Strategy will be prepared in October 2015 by the NDSIG for consideration by Government.

To aid the discussion under Phase 1, we have set out a number of themes that we would see as being key to progressing Disability policy:

### **Employment**

For those who can and want to, paid employment is central to self-esteem, independence and participation in society.

A Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities is in the final stages of drafting. The strategy sets out a ten-year approach towards the goal of ensuring that people with disabilities who are able to and want to work are supported and empowered to do so. It incorporates an Action Plan for the first three years with commitments which will be the building blocks for implementation of the full strategy. Revised Action Plans will be developed at three-year intervals over the lifetime of the strategy.

### **Housing**

The National Housing Plan for People with a Disability runs until the end of 2016. The key issues suggested for discussion are Congregated Settings and the National Housing Strategy.

## **Health**

The provision of health services is paramount to the well being of people with disabilities. The Health Service Executive (HSE) provides a range of services for people with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities or autism. These services include basic health services as well as assessment, rehabilitation, community care and residential care.

Some services are provided directly by the HSE. Many of the community, residential and rehabilitative training services are provided by voluntary organisations with grant aid from the HSE.

## **Social Protection**

The social welfare system and services supported by the HSE are central to promoting the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities. A key question that has been raised in the context of the CES is how workable solutions can be identified to difficulties related to the complex interactions between the benefits systems including the medical card, the additional costs associated with a disability to being in work, and actual net income gains in employment. Addressing the extra economic costs of disability may help to alleviate elements of social exclusion for people with disabilities.

## **Education**

Following the Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, the principle of mainstreaming has been established policy since 2000, and was put on a legal footing in the Disability Act, 2005. Notwithstanding this, it is essential that effective and necessary supports are available to people with disabilities to enable them to participate in education.

## **Status / Social Attitudes / Self Esteem**

Social inclusion of people with disabilities depends on whether the wider and physical environment offers supports or creates barriers. Accessibility, both in terms of transport, buildings and streets are key factors in enabling people with disabilities to participate in work, cultural and social settings. Negative attitudes or behaviours towards people with disabilities can also limit their participation in mainstream society.

## **Personal Autonomy & Safety / Human Rights**

It is essential people with disabilities have choice and control in how they live their lives, including where and with whom they live. Key actions contained in the present implementation plan to publish and enact legislation providing for persons with disabilities to enjoy legal capacity on the same basis as other citizens and to provide the basis for supported decision making, will give effect to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It will also ensure safeguards against abuse in this regard.

### **Aging Society**

The report on population and labour force projections from 2016-2046 predicts that the number of people aged 65 and over will rise from 532,000 in 2011 to almost 1.4 million by 2046. Given our aging population, we can expect to see a rise in age disability.

## **4. Your views**

We want your views on whether these are the priority themes that should underpin the next Disability Strategy Implementation Plan. We would like your opinions and comments under three questions as follows:

1. Are these the themes that should underpin the next implementation plan?
2. Are there other themes that should be included?
3. Within the list of themes, which are the priorities?

## **5. What happens next?**

Once the first phase of this consultation process has been completed and a list of key themes have been agreed for the next implementation plan, we will come back to all stakeholders to get your views on a draft list of objectives under each of the agreed themes.

Finally, we will come back again in the autumn of 2015 with a set of suggested actions under each specific objective. The agreed themes, objectives and specific actions will form the next National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan.

## **6. Submissions**

If you are making a submission, please include your name and contact details (Phone number, postal address and, if available, an email address) and please state whether the views expressed are personal or are being made on behalf of an organisation. If the views of an organisation are being submitted it should be made clear which organisation is being represented and you should indicate your position in the organisation.

Submissions may be e-mailed to: [disabilityinbox@justice.ie](mailto:disabilityinbox@justice.ie) or may be posted to

Disability Policy Unit  
Department of Justice and Equality  
Bishop's Square  
Redmond's Hill  
Dublin 2

Please note that submissions received are subject to the Freedom of Information Acts and may be published on the Department's website.

**The closing date for receipt of submissions for this phase is Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

**Disability Policy Unit  
Department of Justice and Equality**

**May 2015**