

Policy

National Disability Strategy

The Government launched the National Disability Strategy on 21 September, 2004 to underpin the participation of people with disabilities in Irish society. The strategy builds on existing policy and legislation, including the policy of mainstreaming public services for people with disabilities. It has been endorsed in the social partnership agreement [Towards 2016](#).

The key elements of the strategy are:

the [Disability Act 2005](#)

the [Citizens Information Act 2007](#), which equips the Citizens Information Board (formerly Comhairle) to provide a personal advocacy service for people with disabilities

the [Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004](#)

sectoral plans prepared by six Government departments

a multi-annual investment programme worth €900 million targeted at high-priority disability support services which ran until 2009

The [Towards 2016](#) Strategic Document (PDF, 30.3KB) pulls together the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the National Disability Strategy.

Sectoral Plans

Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 requires six Government departments to prepare plans (known as sectoral plans) that set out how they will deliver specific services for people with disabilities. Those departments are:

[Health and Children](#)

[Social and Family Affairs](#)

[Transport](#)

[Communications, Marine and Natural Resources](#)

[Environment, Heritage and Local Government](#)

[Enterprise, Trade and Employment](#)

People with disabilities, their families, carers, advocates and service providers were consulted on the plans before they were finalised for submission to the Oireachtas. Each plan includes arrangements for complaints, monitoring and review procedures. The Oireachtas approved the six sectoral plans in October 2006, and the plans were published in December 2006. The sectoral plans were reviewed in December 2009 (see links below).

[Department of Health and Children](#)

[Department of Social and Family Affairs](#)

[Department of Transport](#)

[Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government](#)

[Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment](#)

[Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources](#)

3% Target for Employment of People with Disabilities

Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 provides for a statutory target, currently set at 3%, for the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities in the public sector. Public bodies are required to submit reports on their compliance with the target to their monitoring committees by 31 March each year. The monitoring committees are, in turn, required to submit their reports to the NDA and ministers by 30 June annually.

Following the first year of reporting under the Act, the process was reviewed by the NDA in consultation with the Department of Justice and Equality and other Government departments, and revised reporting formats were agreed and used to gather 2007 data onwards

The NDA submitted the first statutory report on the compliance by the public service with the target, based on 2006 data, to the Minister of State of this Department in 2007.

Reports based on [2006](#); [2007](#); [2008](#); [2009](#) and [2010](#) data are all available at the links provided.

2011

Implementing the Strategy: National Disability Strategy Implementation Group. (NDSIG)

The current Programme for Government commits to publishing “*following wide consultation, a realistic implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy (NDS), including sectoral plans with achievable time scales and targets within available resources and ensuring whole of government involvement and monitoring of the Strategy, in partnership with the disability sector*”.

In line with this commitment on 30 November 2011, the Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality, Kathleen Lynch established and will personally chair the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG). The Group is a collaborative partnership comprising members from: the Senior Officials Group on Disability (chaired by the Department of Justice and Equality); the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG); the National Disability Authority (NDA); and the County and City Managers Association. This group replaces the former National Disability Strategy Stakeholder Monitoring Group (NDSSMG).

Purpose of the NDSIG

- To provide a forum under the leadership of the Minister within which Government officials and disability stakeholders can work together, to guide the development of a National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan and to collaborate on its implementation including advising on resolution of implementation difficulties.

- To bring the lived experience of people with disabilities to bear on strategic and cross-sectoral implementation issues.
- To promote positive change in attitudes towards disability.
- To support the Minister in reporting on the Implementation Plan as required to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy.

Membership of the Group is made up of representatives of the Departments of Health; Social Protection; Transport, Tourism and Sport; Environment, Community and Local Government; Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Education and Skills; Children and Youth Affairs and Public Expenditure and Reform.

NDA

County & City Managers Association

Disability Federation of Ireland; Inclusion Ireland; Mental Health Reform; National Federation of Voluntary Bodies; National Service Users Executive and Not for Profit Business Association.

It also includes a number of service users who are serving as individuals in a personal capacity.

Terms of Reference of NDSIG:

re-energise the National Disability Strategy, maximising what can be realistically achieved within available resources, towards enhancing the quality of life of people with disabilities; guide the development of an Implementation Plan for the NDS in accordance with the commitments in the Programme for Government, setting actions and targets that can be realistically achieved as a three year programme of work; Collaborate and monitor the implementation of the plan.

Modus Operandi:

- The Terms of Engagement document sets out the consultation method to be used between Government Departments and the DSG. It is only cross-sectoral and strategic concerns which arise at these consultations that should be brought forward for discussion at the NDSIG.
- The DSG will deliver advice to the NDSIG by way of co-ordinated written and oral input presented by its Chairperson, who may select other members to speak at the NDSIG on any given issue.
- Following the publication of the Implementation Plan, the NDSIG will meet at least 4 times per year, or as directed by the Minister, to include both plenary and thematic sessions. For thematic sessions, only those Government Departments with responsibility for or interest in the topic concerned will attend, together with the DSG, the NDA and other relevant stakeholders as deemed appropriate.
- The Minister will keep the Taoiseach informed in relation to the work of the group by way of the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy.

Information Days January 10 and 31, 2012

At the inaugural meeting of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group in November 2011, Minister of State Kathleen Lynch, T.D; requested that in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government the Group produce a new Implementation Plan for the National Disability Strategy, Information sessions were held to familiarise new group members with Departments' range of responsibilities and ongoing work in relation to disability and issues involved in the development of the Plan. The relevant Government Departments along with the County and City Managers Association gave presentations to raise awareness of what has been achieved to date and what challenges face us in devising and implementing a new plan over the next three years. The National Disability Authority hosted the Information Days and also made a presentation on monitoring the National Disability Strategy. Below are links to presentations.

[Department of Justice & Equality](#)

[Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht](#)

[Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources](#)

[Department of Children and Youth Affairs](#)

[Department of Health](#)

[Department of Education and Skills](#)

[Department of Social Protection](#)

[Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport](#)

[Cavan County Council](#)

[Click here to view minutes of all meetings relating to this process](#)