

**NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
2013-2015**

## **Minister's Foreword**

People with disabilities can face particular challenges when it comes to participating in every day life activities. Many of the difficulties stem from the way society is organised. Disability comes in many forms be it physical, visual or hearing impairment, intellectual or mental health impairment. It also comes at many stages in people's lives including through accident, illness and as we age. Needs can change particularly as a person with a disability ages. It is important to consider to what extent our society supports or restricts individual independence, choice and control as well as access to income, social life, community living, mobility and much more. These are things others may take for granted.

There have been many important developments to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Irish society over the past number of years. However, through this Implementation Plan, the Government is committed to progressing an agenda to achieve significant progress in the next 3 years.

The National Disability Strategy provides a framework for driving this agenda forward and delivering real and meaningful improvements in the lives of people with disabilities in Ireland. We know there are many challenges in the current economic climate, but equally there are huge opportunities and momentum further to new policy directions approved by this Government. These will ensure people with disabilities will have more choice and control in their lives and in reaching their aspirations for the future.

I have been working with a team of senior officials covering most government departments and disability stakeholders to identify what actions can be implemented under the National Disability Strategy over the next 3 years. The key actions are set out in this Implementation Plan which has the full backing of the Taoiseach and Ministers through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy. Together we will be working to ensure a whole of Government approach, to maximise the benefits achieved through the Implementation Plan for people with disabilities.

The successful response and development of a society that values without distinction people with disabilities, depends on the willingness of every sector of Irish society to adapt. Irish society must adapt, from the national to the individual level, in their thinking, willingness and open minded approaches, to ensure people with disabilities are valued members of the community. This Plan calls to action all individuals, organisations, local and national Government to think positively about disability. It is a collaborative effort and an open invitation to the community and voluntary sectors to work creatively together with statutory agencies and government departments to improve the lives of people with disabilities over the next three years.

**Ms Kathleen Lynch T.D.**

Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People

## **Chapter I – Background and context**

### **1.1 Context**

The National Disability Strategy is a whole-of-Government approach to advancing the social inclusion of people with disabilities. In spite of the challenging economic and fiscal situation, it is important to continue to build on and consolidate the progress made to date. This Implementation Plan sets out the practical measures that will be taken to advance the National Disability Strategy over the period 2013 to 2015.

The implementation of the National Disability Strategy is taking place within an ever changing external environment that includes necessary fiscal adjustments, public sector reform, the Croke Park Agreement, reforms within the HSE and new policy directions following key reviews. Such reviews include for example, the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services, the Housing Strategy for people with disabilities and implementation of the report on closing disability institutions, *Time to move on from Congregated Settings*. In delivering actions in this plan regard will be had to other relevant strategies including the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion; the National Positive Aging Strategy; A Vision for Change Strategy; and Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing.

### **1.2 Mainstreaming**

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. What this means is that all mainstream public services are expected, by Government, to be designed and delivered in ways that include people with disabilities, so that people with disabilities are considered by the public sector to be an integral part of the community they serve.

The scope of this Implementation Plan therefore covers a wide range of government departments, and mainstream as well as focused disability services. It also recognises that the needs of individuals with disabilities change as they age.

### **1.3 Barriers to inclusion**

Social inclusion of people with disabilities depends on whether the wider social and physical environment offers supports or creates barriers. Inaccessibility as a barrier is wider than simply the physical environment, lack of access to information to those who have difficulties with sight or hearing can be as frustrating as the built environment. Systems can indirectly exclude people with disabilities if the architecture, policies, information or service delivery, are not geared to include people with a range of disabilities. Society should not require people with disabilities to redesign their lives. If, however,

the physical and policy environments are modified with people with a disability in mind, that can enhance freedom and participation and the enjoyment of fundamental rights. For example, accessible transport and accessible 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.

Diversity is part of the human condition, and systems or structures designed for 'typical' people can be a barrier to those who are equal but different. The concept of equality recognises diversity, that people **are** different. For people with disabilities, needs can vary depending on the nature of impairment, be it physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health, by the severity of the impairment or due to the complex and unpredictable nature of impairment.

#### **1.4 Development of the Implementation Plan**

In November 2011 the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People, Kathleen Lynch established the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG) to assist her in drafting the implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy and they will continue to work together to monitor and review progress over the three year period. The publication of this Implementation Plan fulfils a commitment in the Programme for Government.

The National Disability Strategy Implementation Group comprises key Government Departments, the County and City Managers Association, the National Disability Authority, and the newly configured Disability Stakeholders Group. The representation of government departments is wider than the original Departments designated under the Disability Act to prepare Sectoral Plans on disability, reflecting the importance of mainstream services to people with disabilities. The Group is chaired by the Minister and the Department of Justice and Equality provides the secretariat function to the NDSIG and chairs the Senior Officials Group on Disability.

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is an independent statutory body with responsibility for providing information and advice to the Minister to guide policy and practice relevant to the lives of people with disabilities and to assist the Minister in the co-ordination of national policy on disability.

The Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG) comprises representatives of the key disability umbrella bodies:

- Center for Independent Living
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Federation of Voluntary Bodies

- Inclusion Ireland
- Mental Health Reform
- National Service Users Executive
- Not for Profit Business Association

along with individuals with lived experience of disability, and an independent Chairperson.

Following development of this Plan by senior officials, in collaboration with the Disability Stakeholder Group through the NDSIG, this plan was submitted to Government on 23 July 2013 and is published following Government decision of that date.

### **1.5 The voice of people with disabilities**

At the request of the Minister, the National Disability Authority convened a forum, entitled **Your Voice Your Choice**, held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012, to facilitate people with disabilities to have their say about issues that matter most to them in living with a disability. This was to ensure that the perspective of people with disabilities would inform the development of the implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy. Together with online input from invitees who could not physically attend, about 250 people participated, and the report from the Forum has been published by the National Disability Authority, and was circulated to the government departments involved in preparing the Implementation Plan.

The voice of people with disabilities continues to be heard through those stakeholder groups represented on the NDSIG together with the voice of those on the NDSIG who were appointed by the Minister due to their lived experience with disability. These members are well placed to convey to the Minister the needs of those people with disabilities whom they represent. In addition, the consultative committees in government departments include representatives of the disability sector and bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to assist the implementation of actions in this Plan.

The NDA also held a round table discussion with the Irish Deaf Society, DeafHear and others to facilitate those who are deaf or hard of hearing to have their say on issues which matter to them. Their submissions following on from the round table discussion were submitted to the NDSIG for consideration.

The NDSIG will continue to engage at all levels with people with disabilities.

## **Chapter 2 – Key Goals and Objectives**

The National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan has as its aim the promotion of an inclusive Irish society where people with disabilities can reach their full potential and participate in the every day life of the community.

In identifying this aim the Implementation Plan recognises that:

- disability is an issue for all ages;
- the impact that demographic changes will have on specialist and mainstream services; and
- new policy directions, aimed at supporting people with disabilities to live in the community, will have an impact on public services delivery across government departments.

Four High Level Goals were agreed by the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group under the following themes:

- Equal citizens
- Independence and choice
- Participation
- Maximising potential

The Implementation Plan's High Level Goals are organised around important rights for citizens with disabilities, rather than being arranged around departmental responsibilities. This gives the Implementation Plan an important citizen focus and a framework for ensuring joined up working across departments.

These High Level Goals were further analysed and broken into fifteen Objectives for attaining those goals. The key government departments and state agencies have identified actions within their remit which are achievable over the period 2013-2015 towards achieving these Goals and Objectives. The actions will be delivered within stated timeframes and in line with agreed key performance indicators.

The four High Level Goals are outlined below, each with their respective objectives

### **High Level Goal 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**

<b>accommodate diversity.</b>
<b>1(a)</b> People with disabilities enjoy equality before the law
<b>1(b)</b> People with disabilities are treated with equality and respect
<b>1(c)</b> People with disabilities enjoy access to information
<b>1(d)</b> People with disabilities have equal access to public services

<b>High Level Goal 2: Independence and choice</b>
<b>People with disabilities are supported to live the life they choose</b>
<b>2(a)</b> People with disabilities have an adequate income
<b>2(b)</b> People with disabilities get the quality supports and services they need to be independent
<b>2(c)</b> People with disabilities have a say in decisions that affect them
<b>2(d)</b> People with disabilities exercise a choice in how they live their lives

<b>High Level Goal 3: Participation</b>
<b>People with disabilities live ordinary lives in ordinary places, participating in the life of the community.</b>
<b>3(a)</b> People with disabilities have access to jobs
<b>3(b)</b> People with disabilities can access the places they want to go
<b>3(c)</b> People with disabilities live and are part of the mainstream community
<b>3(d)</b> People with disabilities can enjoy friendships, relationships and a good social life
<b>3(e)</b> People with disabilities are safe and free from abuse

<b>High Level Goal 4: Maximise potential</b>
<b>People with disabilities are enabled to reach their full potential</b>
<b>4(a)</b> People with disabilities are enabled to maximise their physical and mental wellbeing and capacity for independence
<b>4(b)</b> People with disabilities get the education and training that enables them to reach their potential

The four High Level Goals are intimately connected. Taking goals and objectives together it is clear that inter-linkages are key to their effective

delivery. It is therefore essential that government departments work together so that cross-cutting issues can be dealt with efficiently.

To ensure the objectives set out for each department are met, the NDSIG will continue to support the implementation of the Plan and monitor progress over the next 3 years. Further detail on the NDSIG and the monitoring process is outlined in Chapter 4.

### **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Ireland has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and it is the intention of Government to ratify the Convention once relevant legislation to secure compliance with the Convention has been enacted.

Countries which have ratified the Convention are required to have a structured, planned approach towards progressively achieving the social, cultural and economic rights set out in the Convention. The NDS Implementation Plan is designed to provide that planned framework to advance those rights. The Implementation Plan has been drawn up with due consideration to the obligations contained in the various articles of the Convention.

The scope of the Convention is of course wider than this Implementation Plan, and implementation of the Convention will be monitored in line with the provisions set out in its Article 33.

### **Architecture of the Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan sets out key actions under each goal and objective which indicate the government department responsible and the timeframe for delivery. Where an action has a cross sectoral or cross departmental aspect, the lead department and other departments who have shared responsibilities are also identified. In addition, departments will include actions to be delivered via the agencies under their remit where appropriate. For example, many actions under Department of Health will be undertaken by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

The NDSIG will monitor the implementation of the plan using this high-level Implementation Plan and the more detailed action plans, which provide greater detail on the actions to be delivered by each government department, and specific agencies under their aegis. The more detailed action plans will enable monitoring of progress by each department under specific themes or by timelines as appropriate.

Monitoring the Implementation Plan is such as to allow flexibility to include additional actions that may come to the fore in relation to existing issues

already covered by the published Plan. For example there will be an action in the published Plan around the enactment of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) legislation. As time goes on and this legislation is enacted, additional actions will be identified around this issue and will be included in the more detailed monitoring document mentioned above.

However, it is not envisaged that brand new actions not already discussed and agreed during the drafting process will be added into the plan unless via the Implementation Plan structures. If it is agreed by the NDSIG during the monitoring process, that a new action needs to be considered, which due to new circumstances was not apparent during the drafting process, there will be a process to allow for this action to be brought forward.

## **Chapter 3 - Objectives, Actions and Performance Indicators**

This Chapter sets out the actions, performance indicators and associated timelines for the Implementation Plan under each of the Objectives.

In particular the Plan provides a framework for delivering key actions:

- delivering on committed actions through joined up working across government departments and agencies;
- ensuring mainstream services are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- enactment and implementation of legislation to support legal capacity for persons with disabilities on the same basis as others;
- recognition and support for the key role of personal advocacy services;
- reorientation of services towards supporting persons with disabilities to live independently in the community;
- provision of greater choice and control which are person centred to individuals with disabilities, particularly by enhancing access to mainstream services; and
- completion of actions which bring about alignment of domestic legislation and meet with obligations set out in the Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## High Level Goal I: 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.**

This High Level Goal together with its four objectives seeks to focus on achieving equality of citizenship. The National Disability Strategy is built on the foundation of the Equality legislation which bans discrimination in employment, and in the provision of goods and services, on grounds of disability, and which requires that people with disabilities be reasonably accommodated. The Disability Act 2005 is the cornerstone of the Strategy promoting positive action measures to achieve social inclusion, particularly through sectoral plans (i.e. disability action plans) published by government departments.

Key actions 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.

This High Level Goal also seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect, and do not experience negative attitudes or behaviours which would limit their fullest participation in society and in their chosen activities.

It is recognised that access to information is key to ensuring people with disabilities can avail of services, entitlements and make choices in their lives and actions are included in this regard. Commitments by all government departments to ensure people with disabilities can access their services and those of the public bodies under their aegis along with other citizens are also included under this Goal.

<b>Objective I(a) People with disabilities enjoy equality before the law</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Enact legislation which recognises and supports legal capacity of persons with disabilities.	People with disabilities can make decisions in areas that impact on their lives.	Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill Published.  Bill Enacted.	Department of Justice and Equality.	Q3 2013  Dictated by the Houses of the Oireachtas approval process.

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Establish new structures to support recognition of legal capacity of persons with disabilities.	People with disabilities can make decisions in areas that impact on their lives.	Office of Public Guardian established.	Department of Justice and Equality.	Subject to the enactment of the legislation.
To develop guidelines with service providers to ensure effective implementation of the provisions of mental capacity legislation in services for persons with disabilities.	Individuals in services are supported to exercise their legal capacity.	Guidelines produced and implemented to ensure individuals in services are supported to exercise their legal rights.	Department of Health and HSE.	Subject to the enactment of the legislation.
An Expert Group has been established to Review Mental Health Act 2001 and consider its recommendations for reforming and updating the law in relation to admission to, and detention in, approved centres for people with mental health problems.	Mental health law updated and compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	Report of Expert Group on the Review of the Mental Health Act 2001.	Department of Health.	Q2 2013
Review of Criminal Law (Insanity) Act.	Criminal law updated and compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	Review completed.	Department of Justice and Equality.	Ongoing.
The National Disability Authority will engage in discussions with key personnel in the justice system with a view to identifying practical steps that can be taken to improve the accessibility of the system and its procedures for people with disabilities.	Actions identified to improve accessibility to the justice system for people with disabilities.	Meetings with officials held.	Department of Justice and Equality and NDA.	Q2 – Q4 2013

<b>Objective I(b) People with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Ensure delivery of disability and mental health awareness training to staff, particularly frontline staff, including through NDA e-learning training module.	Customer services are better tailored to needs of customers with disabilities.	Planned programme for Training in place and delivered to key personnel.  Awareness enhanced and visible.	All government departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Over the life of the Plan.
Ensure customer care charters address the needs of persons with disabilities.	Customer services better tailored to the needs of customers with disabilities. Customer satisfaction level improved.	Customer charters reviewed and updated.	All government departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Over the life of the Plan.
Ensure appropriate public complaints procedure is in place for dealing with complaints under the Disability Act and right of appeal to the Ombudsman.	Effective complaints procedures to resolve issues of inaccessible public services and to inform service improvements.	Complaints process promoted as appropriate on public sector websites and relevant staff is in place to support those with disabilities who wish to make complaints.	All government departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Ongoing over the life of the Plan.
Ensure effective application of Disability Impact Assessment in developing proposals for policy and legislation.	Enhanced inclusion of disability focus in mainstream policy and	Disability Impact Assessment applied to substantive memoranda	All departments.	Ongoing for substantive Memoranda.

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	programmes.	submitted to Government through use of guidelines and arrangements in place to review ongoing.		
Ensure as far as possible that appropriate disability awareness training is provided by public transport operators to their staff and management.	Easier for people with disabilities to use public transport.	Organisations adopt a planned approach to training.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.
Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) is in the process of establishing a dedicated consumer management service which will include special services required by customers.	Customer Care Team is established.	Review of the way in which Regulators are offering services to clients with disabilities.	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER).	Ongoing.
Develop and support initiatives to promote positive attitudes to disability.	Level of positive attitudes enhanced.	Effective initiatives identified and promoted for wider implementation.	All departments and public bodies.	2015.

**Objective 1(c) People with disabilities enjoy access to information**

Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Ensure websites are accessible to people with disabilities.	People with disabilities enjoy equal access to public sector information via the web.	Websites reviewed and action taken to improve.	All departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Ongoing.

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Ensure procedures in place so that information published is available in alternative formats where appropriate or on request.	People with disabilities enjoy equal access to public sector written information.	Procedures in place and staff aware of same in line with National Disability Authority guidelines.	All departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Ongoing.
Any new signage and interpretive displays in National Parks and Wildlife Services visitor sites will contain appropriate enhancements for those with visual, auditory, intellectual and mobility impairments and information on same will be promoted through National Parks and Wildlife Services website.	Accessibility for all visitors.	Tender requirements for works will include specifications on accessibility. The National Parks and Wildlife Services will clearly display details of accessible sites with details of services provided locally at the sites on the NPWS.ie website.	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	Ongoing
Replace with larger print the explanatory signage for exhibits at heritage centres, museums and for paintings in art galleries, where possible.	Information is more easily accessible for those with sight impairments.	Number of sites with larger print signage.	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	Ongoing.
Deliver (and support the delivery of) a quality, comprehensive and up-to-date information service on social welfare supports for customers with disabilities including on-line and through SMS and ensure all forms and leaflets are accessible to people with different levels of literacy ability.	Enhanced access to information on social welfare services and entitlements for persons with disabilities.	Planned programme for information service improvement delivered and a 'Plain English' policy in place along with arrangements to review ongoing.	Department of Social Protection.	Ongoing.
Support the provision of Sign Language Interpretation	Increased levels of service for the deaf or	Increased provision of access to sign-	Department of Social	Ongoing.

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Services.  (The Department will also pilot a remote access interpretation service in an agreed Department of Social Protection office).	hard of hearing.	language interpreting services in Department of Social Protection offices.	Protection.	
British Irish Council webpage for Ireland live at <a href="http://www.dttas.ie/AccessibleTravel/Home/html">http://www.dttas.ie/AccessibleTravel/Home/html</a> to provide easier access to travel information for people with mobility difficulties.	People with Disabilities enjoy equal access to public sector information.	Site links checked periodically to ensure that they are functioning properly.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport initially. National Transport Authority (NTA) thereafter.	2013/2014
Transport for Ireland website designed and operating to accessibility standards providing one-stop-shop for travelling and commuting information.	People with Disabilities enjoy equal access to public sector information.	Transport for Ireland website checked periodically to ensure that it is functioning properly.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  National Transport Authority.	2013/2014
Tourism businesses (with the exception of the accommodation sector) updating their entries on Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Content System will be asked to specify whether or not they have access for those with impaired mobility to their business. These businesses will then be highlighted on a dedicated webpage, similar to Able awards page. Responsibility for correct information lies with tourism business directly.	People with disabilities enjoy access to information on tourism facilities that meet their needs.	All new tourism businesses published on the web will provide details on whether or not they have access for those with impaired mobility.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  Fáilte Ireland  Tourism businesses (with the exception of the accommodation sector)	Ongoing.
Fáilte Ireland will publish on their website all accommodation with an ABLE Tourism award.	People with disabilities enjoy access to information on accommodation that meets their needs.	New premises published on web as they achieve the award.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.  Fáilte Ireland	Ongoing.

<b>Objective I(d) People with disabilities have equal access to public services</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Ensure all corporate plans include focus on ensuring accessibility of services and programmes throughout the body concerned	Advisory and assistive services for People with Disabilities are in place in local authorities.	Annual corporate plans include specific focus on disability to cover all areas of policy and practice and evident in national and local policies, programmes and services	All government departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Ongoing.
Include Accessibility as an objective throughout all new Local Authority development plans, in line with National Disability Authority guidance.	New developments designed from outset to be accessible to people with disabilities.	Accessibility mainstreamed across Local Authority activities / functions.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.
Ensure all Public Procurement incorporates accessibility criteria as appropriate.	People with disabilities benefit from improved accessible services.	Accessibility is mainstreamed.	All government departments and public bodies under their aegis.  Office of Government Procurement	Ongoing.
Ensure that roll-out of new local authority initiatives delivered in most customer friendly approach, eg: FixMyStreet.	Optimum service delivery model ensuring accessibility for all customers.	Services developed to allow accessibility.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	Ongoing.
Improving accessibility and ensure effective maintenance of accessibility of public buildings and facilities.	People with disabilities have improved access to public buildings.	Action plan for audit and works required in place.  Implementation	All government departments and public bodies under	Ongoing.

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		of action plans in co-operation with relevant authorities e.g. Office of Public Works.	their aegis.	
Provide advice and assistance to the Office of Public Works in promoting improved access for people with disabilities at national monuments sites in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister, having regard to the conservation requirements of relevant sites.	Improved access to heritage sites.	New 'Places to Visit' section on website archaeology.ie which will provide pre-visit information including information in relation to accessibility at a number of national monuments in state ownership. A policy document on interpretation and presentation is currently being developed and will take account of access issues.  Office of Public Works work is underway to provide wheelchair access to part of the Hill of Tara.	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (& Office of Public Works).	Ongoing.
Ensure where possible that National Parks and Wildlife Services visitor sites (visitor centres, trails, national parks and nature reserves) are accessible to members of the public with visual, hearing, intellectual and mobility impairments.	Visitors will be able to navigate National Parks and Wildlife Services visitor sites with ease and maximum enjoyment.	Newly developed boardwalks where possible will be accessible for wheelchairs and motorised vehicles. Trail details will be	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	Ongoing over the lifetime of the Strategy.

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		clearly displayed on the NPWS.ie website and at the start of the route where appropriate for visitors with disabilities. Support services such as car parking, sanitary facilities, access routes and design structures will be specially adapted.		
Promote and monitor an increase in level of sub-titling of programmes on national and local TV channels in line with the targets as per Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.	People with disabilities enjoy better access to TV programmes.	Continue to move to target date of end 2015.	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.	End 2015.
Roll out Emergency Call Answering Service for persons with hearing impairments.	Enhanced access to supports in emergencies.	Call Answering pilot phase concluded - making arrangements for SMS for use of people with disabilities on a permanent basis.	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.	Ongoing.
Promote accessibility of Sub Post Offices.	Enhanced access to services by persons with disabilities.	Policy established requiring new owner/contract or of sub-post to ensure it is accessible.	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and An Post.	Ongoing.
Co-ordinate Sign Language Interpreting Service pilot project across government	Greater access to sign language	Remote interpretation access	Department of Justice and	Ongoing.

departments.	interpretation.	established through PC or laptop in relevant departments.	Equality.	
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## High Level Goal 2: Independence and choice

### People with disabilities are supported to live the life they choose

This High level Goal and its objectives seek to ensure the person with a disability can have choice and control in how they live their lives, including where and with whom they live. It is about everyday life in the community and supporting independent living.

Many of the actions arise from reviews of key service programmes undertaken in recent years including the Value for Money and Policy Review in relation to disability services funded through the health sector and the reviews of congregated settings and adult day services undertaken by the HSE.

<b>Objective 2(a) People with disabilities have an adequate income</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Continue to develop specific social welfare schemes to effectively support persons with disabilities, including into employment (being informed by published reports).	People with disabilities have an adequate income and are facilitated, to extent possible, to take up employment.	List/Schedule of demand-led schemes developed and implemented as appropriate, for e.g., Partial Capacity Benefit Scheme supports persons to work part-time and retain benefits.	Department of Social Protection.	Ongoing.
Ensure supports for rental accommodation are streamlined and easy to access by people with disabilities.	People with disabilities qualified for rental support can access with ease.	Supports located in the new Rental Accommodation Scheme enhancing co-ordinated approach to supporting individuals with	Department of Social Protection.	Ongoing.

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		disabilities in accessing housing.		
<b>Objective 2(b) People with disabilities get the quality supports and services they need to be independent</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Support the provision of advocacy services for persons with disabilities and mental health difficulties.	People with disabilities supported to access services and supports.	Community and Voluntary Sector Advocacy Programmes overseen by Citizens Information Board.	Department of Social Protection and Citizens Information Board.	Ongoing.
Ensure persons with disabilities receive supports and services needed to access housing.	People with disabilities living in places of their choosing as part of the community.	Monitoring of the implementation of Housing Strategy.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	Ongoing.
Oversee effective implementation by HSE and stakeholders of new strategies/Programmes on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• move from congregated settings to live in community;</li> <li>• new models of support to replace traditional adult day services;</li> <li>• supports for children with autism;</li> <li>• new models of respite support;</li> <li>• reconfiguration of services for children with disabilities aged 0 - 18 years;</li> <li>• clinical programmes in mental health.</li> </ul>	<p>People with disabilities supported to live lives of their choosing in the community.</p> <p>Progressive closure of residential institutions.</p>	<p>(a) Value For Money Implementation framework Plan published.</p> <p>(b) Oversight by the Department of Health of the HSE's National Consultative Forum's monitoring of the implementation of Disability Programmes.</p>	Department of Health and the HSE.	<p>Q2 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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See Objective 4(b), Department of Education and Skills				
<b>Objective 2(c) People with disabilities have an a say in the decisions that affect them</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Work to enhance access to voting by persons who are blind and have intellectual disabilities.	Persons with visual or intellectual impairments can access voting.	Arrangements for voting reviewed and improvements implemented.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	Ongoing.
Departmental consultative mechanism and Customer Fora designed to ensure effective input through representative members.	Perspective of persons with disabilities impacts on policy and services.	Mechanisms in place.	All departments.	Ongoing.
Ensure input of disability perspective on service user groups in place.	Perspective of persons with disabilities impacts on policy and services.	Structured arrangements in place to consult with stakeholders.	All departments.	Ongoing.
New standards for HSE supported (Day Services) to ensure people with disabilities have an opportunity to have a say.	Perspective of persons with disabilities impacts on policy and services.	Development, adoption and implementation of standards.	HSE and HIQA.	Ongoing.
Enact legislation which recognises and supports legal capacity of persons with disabilities.	People with disabilities can make decisions in areas that impact their lives.	Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill Published.  Bill Enacted.	Department of Justice and Equality.	Q3 2013  Dictated by the Houses of the Oireachtas approval process
Children with disabilities will continue to be included in participation/ consultation work carried out by Department of Children	Children with disabilities have an input to policy.	Appropriate percentage of children with disabilities included in	Department of Children and Youth Affairs.	Ongoing.

and Youth Affairs.		relevant consultation projects		
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**Objective 2(d) People with disabilities exercise choice in how they live their lives**

Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
<p>People with disabilities will be supported to be independent and to exercise individual choice in how they live their lives through implementation of new strategies by the HSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moving from residential centres to live in the community;</li> <li>• supports to access mainstream services and activities in the community through new models to replace traditional adult day services.</li> </ul>	<p>People with disabilities supported to live lives of their choosing in the community.</p> <p>Progressive closure of residential institutions.</p>	<p>(a) Value For Money Implementation Framework Plan in place.</p> <p>(b) Oversight by the Department of Health of the HSE's National Consultative Forum monitoring of the implementation of Disability Programmes.</p>	<p>Department of Health. HSE.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

**High Level Goal 3: Participation**

**People with disabilities live ordinary lives in ordinary places, participating in the life of the community.**

This goal and its objectives include actions to achieve the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community. It is important that people with disabilities can be active citizens in the mainstream life of the community engaging in everyday activities including where they want to live, working, shopping, socialising and visiting places.

Promotion of Universal Design can tackle barriers in the physical environment to inclusion of people with disabilities. This approach means that everyday environments are designed from the outset to ensure they can be used by everyone, regardless of age, size, ability or disability.

<b>Objective 3(a) People with disabilities have access to jobs</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Publication of a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities	Comprehensive employment strategy published	Strategy agreed by the NDSIG	NDA and Christy Lynch as drafters in collaboration with the Departments of Social Protection; Health; Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; and Education and Skills	Q1 2014
Ensure a co-ordinated approach to support persons with disabilities to progress into employment through a Comprehensive Employment Strategy.	<p>More persons with disabilities can access work</p> <p>Services at local level are co-ordinated and joined up access across agency boundaries to deliver more seamless supports to persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Strategic approach across Departments of Education and Skills; Social Protection; Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Health to ensure planning for work from the earliest stage.</p> <p>Strategy agreed.</p> <p>Increased numbers in work.</p>	Departments of Social Protection; Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Health; and Education and Skills	Ongoing.
Subject to the provision of appropriate links by relevant Departments and agencies, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will, through its website, highlight the supports that are available to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities in the	Greater awareness on the part of employers of the supports available to them to employ or retain a person with a disability.	Level of uptake of supports available to employers, as monitored by the relevant Department or agency administering the schemes in question.	Relevant Departments/agencies.	Ongoing.

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open labour market, or to retain in the workforce employees who acquire a disability.				
The Department through the Equality Tribunal, will ensure that employment rights and entitlements are safe-guarded and enforced for people with disabilities.	Dispute resolution and remedies mechanism available to disabled persons in relation to access to employment and/or employment rights.	Cases heard in a timely and efficient manner.	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.	Ongoing.
Works to ensure achievement of minimum of 3% of employees in the public sector are those with disabilities and effective support policies in place, including career progression policies.	People with disabilities employed in public sector.	3% target achieved.  Effective policies adopted and implemented.	All government departments and public bodies under their aegis.	Ongoing.

**Objective 3(b) People with disabilities can access places they want to go**

Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Ensure public areas and public buildings are accessible in line with relevant building standards as far as practicable.	Public services are more accessible.	More buildings and public areas are accessible.	All departments and public bodies under their aegis.	2015
Support roll out of accessible towns and villages programme, with local businesses and community groups to provide quality services to persons with disabilities.	Improved access of local environment for persons with disabilities.	Numbers of towns and local authorities engaged in programmes.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.
Work to deliver enhanced services through integrated	Enhanced availability of local and rural	Number of initiatives implemented	Department of Transport, Tourism and	Ongoing.

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rural transport initiatives.	transport services that people with disabilities can access.	and availability of services.	Sport National Transport Authority	
Continue to improve accessibility of bus stops, coach stops, bus and train stations.	Enhanced access to travel options for persons with disabilities.	Increase in numbers.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport National Transport Authority	Ongoing.
Continue to improve bus, coach and train vehicle accessibility.	People with disabilities can travel.	All new vehicles are accessible.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport National Transport Authority	Ongoing.
Develop policy guidelines to improve access for people with disabilities in relation to public roads and pedestrian facilities.	Upgrade works to streets and footpaths designed to accommodate all disabilities.	Policy guidelines completed.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.
Ensure where possible that National Parks and Wildlife Services visitor sites (visitor centres, trails, national parks and nature reserves) are accessible to members of the public with visual, hearing, intellectual and mobility impairments.	Visitors will be able to navigate National Parks and Wildlife Services visitor sites with ease and maximum enjoyment.	Newly developed boardwalks where possible will be accessible for wheelchairs and motorised vehicles. Trail details will be clearly displayed on the NPWS.ie website and at the start of the route where appropriate for visitors with disabilities. Support services such as car parking,	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	Ongoing over the lifetime of the Strategy.

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		sanitary facilities, access routes and design structures will be specially adapted.		
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**Objective 3(c) People with disabilities live in and are part of the mainstream community**

Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Ensure effective implementation of the Government's National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016.	People with disabilities live in mainstream community as equal citizens.	Actions to be delivered by relevant stakeholders set out in implementation framework and progressed within specific timelines.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	Ongoing.
Ensure new local authority housing strategies support independent living by integration local authority and HSE supports at per agreed protocols.	People with disabilities experience integrated supports from housing and disability services.	Strategies specify how people with disabilities will be supported to access housing in the community.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.
Develop protocol for strategic assessment of nature and extent of housing needs of persons with disabilities.	Better informed planning to meet housing needs.	Protocol developed and being implemented.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	End 2013
Develop accessibility assessment criteria for Rental Accommodation Scheme and local authority leasing schemes.	People with disabilities needs for accessible accommodation met.	Assessment criteria developed and being implemented.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	End 2013

**Objective 3(d) People with disabilities can enjoy friendships, relationships**

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<b>and a good social life</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Sustain sports partnership programme and resource appropriately in local authorities where funding allows.	Enhanced lifestyle and access to mainstream cultural and social opportunities.	Continue funding review and encourage best practice.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.
Community development projects funded by Local Authorities shall, as a minimum, take full cognisance of accessibility and inclusion issues and where possible have an access policy.	Mainstreaming accessibility across all activities.	Involvement in activities by people with disabilities.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.
Ensure that no sports organisation in receipt of sports capital funding discriminates against people with disabilities.	Access to all state funded sports facilities.	It is a requirement that all organisations applying for funding under the Sports Capital Programme provide documentary evidence that they do not discriminate against, among others, people with disabilities.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.
Fund disability specific sports groups.	More opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport.	Amount of funding allocated and paid.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.
Implement Arts and Disability Policy and Five Year Plan.	People with disabilities accessing arts.	Support for arts and disability sector and projects emerging.	Arts Council.	Policy was published end 2012. Policies to be implemented over the

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		Policy published		course of 5 years
Roll out Arts and Disability Networking partnership between Arts council, Arts and Disability Ireland (ADI) and selected local authorities.	Enhanced capacity in arts sector.	Increased level of local authority involvement.	Arts Council.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis over the course of 5 years.
Pilot accessible performances to audiences with disabilities.	People with disabilities can access arts events as audience.	Measured increase in accessible performances.	Arts Council.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis over the course of 5 years.
Prepare, deliver and promote assisted performances in arts ie. captioned and audio described in partnership with Arts and Disability Ireland (ADI).	People with disabilities can access arts events as audience.	Venues developing more inclusive marketing strategies to audiences with disabilities.  Venues and theatre companies are provided with assistance to provide access to people with disabilities to performances.	Arts Council.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis over the course of 5 years.
Ensure library and arts services support people to participate in mainstream activities in the community.	People with disabilities have enhanced opportunities to avail of supports in the community.	Participation of people with disabilities.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.

<b>Objective 3(e) People with disabilities are safe and free from abuse</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Review Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993	Law reviewed so that it is compatible with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	Review completed.	Department of Justice and Equality.	Ongoing.
Ensure implementation of Standards and Regulations for residential disability services and inspection of services as appropriate.	People with disabilities can benefit from quality; safe services and complaints are investigated and followed up.	Approval of Regulations.  Adoption and implementation of standards.	Department of Health.  HIQA.	Q4 2013.
Develop guidelines to ensure safe and quality supports for children with disabilities.	Children with disabilities are safeguarded against abuse and can access supports.	Children First Guidelines developed specific to children with disabilities.	HSE.	Q4 2013
Disability Awareness initiative by COSC.	People with disabilities have user friendly materials and programmes to stay safe.	Domestic and sexual violence organisations have disability friendly supports services in place.	Department of Justice and Equality.	Application process completed and grants paid by Q2 2013.
Children with disabilities will continue to have their needs assessed in the context of child welfare and protection, in line with Children First.	Children with disabilities are protected from abuse and supported appropriately.	Appropriate services available to children with disabilities who are in care or where there are welfare concerns.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs/HSE and all organisations dealing directly with children with disabilities.	Ongoing.

**High Level Goal Four: Maximise potential.**

**People with disabilities are enabled to reach their full potential**

This goal and its objectives seek to ensure people with disabilities can reach their full potential by availing of education and training.

<b>Objective 4(a) People with disabilities are enabled to maximise their physical and mental wellbeing and capacity for independence</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Encourage service providers to develop health promotion programmes for persons with disabilities.	<p>People with disabilities have better access to mainstream health screening programmes.</p> <p>People with disabilities are supported to manage their own health.</p>	HSE to encourage all service providers to develop health promotion programmes for people with disabilities.	Department of Health and HSE.	Ongoing.
Improve accessibility of mainstream health services via roll-out of guidelines for accessibility.	People with disabilities have better access to health services.	Guidelines for accessibility to be developed under the roll out of “Future Health”.	HSE.	Ongoing.
Strengthen community mental health teams in both adult and children’s areas to meet needs in line with A Vision for Change strategy.	<p>People with mental health difficulties benefit from enhanced access to services.</p> <p>Note: In 2012 and 2013, a total of €53 million additional funding was provided to strengthen Community Mental Health Teams in both Adult and Children’s mental</p>	Over 790 new mental health professionals will be employed to strengthen these services. The majority of the 370 posts approved for mental health in 2012 have either been filled, are under offer or awaiting clearance. The HSE has	HSE.	Ongoing.

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	health services.	prioritised the recruitment of the remainder of the posts.		
Continue to support sports partnership, Age Friendly and Social Inclusion programmes to assist people with disabilities to engage in activities, including through requirement of funding for programmes such as Sports Capital Grants.	People with disabilities benefit from improved physical wellbeing.	Increased participation by people with disabilities.	Local Authorities.	Ongoing.
Ensure that applicants under the Sports Capital programme and Swimming Pool programme are aware of the best ways to make facilities accessible to people with disabilities.	Increase in opportunities to participate in sport through the provision of accessible sports facilities.	Increase in the number of facilities accessible to people with disabilities and the provision of information to Sports Capital Programme applicants from the National Disability Authority.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.
Local Sports Partnerships will continue to assist in and support developments for the inclusion of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity.	People with disabilities will have opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity.	Development of opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.
Irish Sports Council will continue to support the CARA Centre in rolling out disability awareness training to mainstream sports clubs through the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network in conjunction with disability sports.	Mainstream clubs will be encouraged to become more open to taking in members with a disability.	Ongoing roll out of training.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.	Ongoing.

<b>Objective 4(b) People with disabilities get the education and training that enables them to reach their potential</b>				
Action	Outcome	Key Performance Indicators	Lead Department	Timeline
Ensure effective supports for children with special education needs.	Children with special education needs enabled to reach maximum potential in school.	Level of relevant supports in place and policies to ensure individuals enabled to reach potential in education.  Use and availability of assistive technology.	Department of Education and Skills.	Ongoing.
Effective Rehabilitative Training programme for those who need such support.	Improved functional ability and ability to progress to further training, education and employment.	Number of places available and systems to monitor appropriate placements and outcomes.	Department of Health.	Ongoing.
Establishment of SOLAS.  Development of a strategy to ensure quality further education and training.	Persons with disabilities benefit from relevant training and education that enable their progression to employment opportunities.	Structures and strategy for SOLAS designed to meet needs of persons with disabilities.	Department of Education and Skills.	Q3 2013.  2014
Ensure provision of vocational education for people with disabilities by the Education and Training Boards (replacing VECs).	Participation by persons with disabilities in education programmes.	Level of participation and Education and Training Boards (ETBs) policies.	Department of Education and Skills.	Ongoing.
Support students with disabilities to participate in higher education through Fund for Students with	Students supported to participate fully in academic	Numbers of students with disabilities participating in higher	Department of Education and Skills.	Ongoing.

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Disabilities.	programmes.	education.		
Implement the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education.	Students supported to participate fully in academic programmes.	Achieve targets set out in the Plan.	Department of Education and Skills.	Q4 2013.
Ensure persons with disabilities avail of education, employment and self employment through the Local and Community Development Programme.	Increased access to opportunities.	Numbers benefiting from the programme.	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	Ongoing.
Improve supports for children with disabilities in the preschool year.	Improved school readiness and learning for children with disabilities.	More than 50% of children in preschool year receiving appropriate supports.	Department of Health with the HSE, and Department of Children and Youth Affairs.	September 2016.

## Chapter 4 – Monitoring the Implementation Plan

### Monitoring mechanism for the Implementation Plan

Following the Publication of the Implementation Plan, the NDSIG will meet four times a year, or as directed by the Minister, to include at least one plenary and a number of thematic meetings, where for example, cross-departmental issues need to be discussed or topics of particular interest, where not all departments need to attend. The thematic meetings will include the relevant members of the NDSIG as appropriate.

The overall Implementation Plan will be reviewed through these thematic meetings, which will be chaired by the Minister. Prior to each meeting, the National Disability Authority will develop a briefing paper, based on the data available from departments, to help identify key themes and issues to inform discussion. A specific issue will be chosen e.g. Housing and all relevant Departments (Environment, Community and Local Government including representation from the Local Authorities, Social Protection and Health) will be invited to attend the meeting, together with the DSG. All actions in the Implementation Plan in relation to the chosen issue will be discussed, including progress made mapped against commitments in the plan, or if there is a lack of progress the reasons for same. Solutions to the latter will also be considered at these meetings.

Each department will have a consultative mechanism to facilitate a streamlined process of engagement at departmental level, between officials from that department and the disability sector including representatives of the DSG, on National Disability Strategy matters within that department's area of responsibility. The consultative mechanism will be the forum where the detail in implementation of actions, in accordance with measurable key performance indicators will be examined and any issues on actions can be addressed. Where major issues of a broader cross-sectoral or national importance are involved, such discussions will take place at a full NDSIG meeting.

The Minister will, through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy, keep the Taoiseach informed in relation to the work of the group, on a regular basis. The Plan will therefore have the involvement of the Taoiseach and other Cabinet Ministers with Social Policy functions, whenever such involvement becomes necessary to remove blockages, or to just keep everyone relevant informed. This will be particularly useful where there are cross-sectoral issues, as the Minister will be able to discuss the issues with her Cabinet colleagues, ensuring cross-sectoral co-operation on issues from the top down. In respect of the comprehensive employment strategy, once agreed by the NDSIG, its implementation will be overseen as part of the monitoring of the Implementation Plan process. In addition, the Cabinet Committee on

Pathways to Work will be kept informed of progress by the Minister, including any blockages encountered, to ensure that issues in regard to job activation measures are considered in a mainstream employment forum, chaired by the Taoiseach and with all relevant Ministers present.

The Department of Justice and Equality will continue to provide the secretariat function to the NDSIG and will also continue to chair the Senior Official's Group on Disability.

The voice of people with disabilities will continue to be heard throughout the monitoring and implementation process as set out in Chapter 1. Since the Implementation Plan is a live document their continued input will be sought and recorded on an on-going basis.

### **Outcome indicators**

The Plan will also be monitored in terms of outcomes for people with disabilities through a suite of indicators developed by the National Disability Authority and agreed by the NDSIG. The indicators will enable measurement of change in key areas addressed by the Strategy and have been determined by what reliable data is potentially available at regular intervals, for example through Central Statistics Office (CSO) data and complemented by periodic surveys carried out by the National Disability Authority.

The suite of outcome indicators sets out to capture outcomes for people with disabilities under the high level goals and broad objectives, insofar as that is feasible, rather than outcomes under each of the different actions to be taken in the Implementation Plan. For example, the outcome indicators will measure the employment rate of people with disabilities at the start and the end of the plan period, and measure how that has changed relative to employment rates for non-disabled people over the period.

### **For Further Information**

**Copies of this plan will be made available on the Department of Justice and Equality website see [www.Justice.ie](http://www.Justice.ie); the National Disability Authority website see [www.NDA.ie](http://www.NDA.ie)**

**Special formats on request**