

Ten Years On: Did the National Children's Strategy Deliver on its Promises?

February 2011



The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 90 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to secure the rights and needs of children in Ireland, by campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It aims to improve the lives of all children under 18, through securing the necessary changes in Ireland's laws, policies and services.

Our Membership

The Alliance was formally established in March 1995. Our membership, from which Board Members are elected at the Alliance's AGM, consists of a diverse range of groups, including child welfare agencies and service providers; child protection groups; academics; youth organisations; family support groups; human rights organisations; disability organisations; parent representative organisations; community groups and others interested in children's rights. The Alliance's policies, projects and activities are developed through ongoing collaboration and consultation with our member organisations.

Our Aims

- Bringing about a shared vision that will realise and protect children's rights in Ireland.
- Securing legislative and policy changes to give meaningful effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Securing the effective implementation of Government policies relating to children.

Our Experience

- The Alliance is recognised for its participation in the international monitoring and reporting process of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the publication of two shadow reports critically evaluating progress made by the Irish State to implement the Convention's provisions into domestic law, policies and services.
- In 2006, the Alliance was the sole Irish NGO commentator reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- The Alliance is a designated Social Partner within the Community and Voluntary Pillar.
- The Alliance has played an important role in influencing the development of several key initiatives for children, including the publication of a National Children's Strategy; the establishment of the Office for the Ombudsman for Children; and the inclusion of children's rights in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Children's Rights Alliance is a registered charity – CHY No. 11541



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Introduction

The National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives, a 10 year strategy that has driven children's policy in Ireland since 2000, comes to an end in December 2010. This review, undertaken by the Children's Rights Alliance in collaboration with our members,¹ looks back at the ten years of the Strategy and assesses whether it has delivered on its objectives.

The review is intended to be reflective: it does not provide recommendations for the next National Children's Strategy, expected later in 2011, but rather provides the space to assess and reflect on the ten years just past. The review is the first phase of the Alliance's work on the *National Children's Strategy*, the second phase will provide member organisations with an opportunity to comment on what they would like to see included in a second strategy. The Alliance will play an active role in the National Children's Advisory Council with the aim of influencing the development of recommendations for the second strategy. We believe that the second national children's strategy should build on the achievements of the *National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives*, but also learn from its shortcomings and take active steps to address them. This review is an important opportunity to collectively reflect on the achievements and failures of the past ten years. Since 2000, much progress has been made and children have become more visible in Irish policy, however much remains to be done to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. It is hoped that this review will help provide the foundation for the development of the second strategy.

Overview of the National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives

Our Children – Their Lives was an innovative step in Irish policy making, being Ireland's first ever national children's strategy and one of the first globally. Its specific focus on children as a life cycle group and its commitment to children as participants in the policy making process marked it out as an important milestone in changing attitudes towards children in Ireland.

The Strategy was published in November 2000, following wide consultation with children, parents, and those working with and for children – from both statutory and voluntary organisations. The consultation was the first of its kind in Ireland, and the quality of the consultation is evident in that the Strategy's three national goals and 24 associated objectives still hold firm; and its vision still connects with our aspirations for children today:

An Ireland where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own, where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential.

The consultation with children, undertaken as part of the Strategy's development, brought items onto the national policy agenda that had not previously been a priority, including play, recreation and children's concern for their environment.

General comment

Our Children – Their Lives was based on three national goals:





1. Children will have a voice
2. Children's lives will be better understood
3. Children will receive quality supports and services.

¹ The Children's Rights Alliance has over 90 member organisations. This review was only possible with their unique expertise and on-the-ground experience of children's lives. See p.43 for a full listing.

Under these three goals were 24 associated objectives and 136 actions. Over the ten years, progress on the first two goals has been impressive: the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) established specific divisions and work programmes in the areas of children’s participation and research, with Dáil na nÓg and Comhairlí na nÓg now offering a space for children’s voices to be heard in decisions that affect them, while *Growing Up in Ireland: the National Longitudinal Study of Children* is providing a clearer picture of childhood in Ireland. Progress on the third goal, however, has been limited: quality services and supports for vulnerable children are not yet available, including adequate social work services for children in care, treatment and counselling for children that have experienced abuse, consistent aftercare and homelessness services.

Alliance Review

The Alliance review assesses whether or not measures outlined in *Our Children – Their Lives* have been achieved. It does not comment on whether the measures chosen were the right ones or whether further progress could have been made. It is a face-value assessment of delivery on specific commitments and should be read as such. Based on this assessment, the outcome is broadly positive. Of 136 listed actions:

	60 have been achieved
	53 have made some progress
	13 have not been achieved
	10 cannot be assessed as we cannot measure progress

However, these figures do not tell the whole story; naturally, the reality is far more nuanced. Four key points stand out:

- *A Strategy of two halves*: The ten years covered by *Our Children – Their Lives* can be broken into two distinct halves – an initial active period marked by development of key infrastructure, and a latter period of reduced activity and investment, which, in some cases, risked undermining earlier achievements. This is illustrated in box 1 below. The loss of momentum in the second part of the Strategy’s ten year period corresponds with a more general tightening of Government expenditure, and, in recent years, cutbacks affecting services and supports for children.
- *Weighting of achievements*: The figures above fail to show the hierarchy of achievements and their impact on children’s lives as each action is given the same weight. For example, the introduction of a one year free pre-school for all children (requiring significant planning and ongoing implementation) is counted the same as reviewing the effectiveness of legislation on youth employment (which has no commitment to action the reports’ findings).
- *Output vs. outcome*: The figures do not demonstrate the difference between achieving an output (for example publishing a National Strategy to improve health status of Travellers) and an outcome (for example, making positive change for the health of Traveller children).
- *Nature of actions*: Many of the actions are not framed appropriately for a ten year nature of the Strategy. Given their scale or once-off nature, they would have been more suited to a departmental work plan rather than a ten year strategy.

Scope of the Review

It would be an onerous task to map out every activity that has taken place over the ten year period of the Strategy. This review has only taken on to provide key highlights. It is inevitable in such an exercise that we have neglected to include issues of importance. If you would like to raise an issue that has been omitted, please contact info@childrensrights.ie

A Strategy of Two Halves

2000-2006: Development of infrastructure relating to children

- Establishment and strengthening of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (see note below)
- Establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children (2004)
- Creation of a National Children's Advisory Council (2000)
- Establishment of Dáil na nÓg (2001) and Comhairle na nÓg (2002) and the OMCYA's Children and Young People's Forum (2004)
- Establishment of the Irish Youth Justice Service (2005)
- Publication of *Towards 2016 Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2016*, which reflected many of the commitments in the National Children's Strategy (2006)
- Publication of *Ready, Steady, Play! The National Play Policy* (2004)
- Establishment of city and county child care committees (2001)
- Establishment of National Educational Welfare Board (2002) and National Educational Psychological Services (1999) under Department of Education.

2007-2010: Slow-down in progress and reduced investment

- Closure or merging of agencies tasked with delivering policies for children including the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in 2008. Reduction in budgets in 2009 for bodies that represent vulnerable children including the Equality Authority (-49%) and the Irish Human Rights Commission (-24%).
- Delayed delivery of Workforce Development Plan for early years professionals (3 years overdue)
- Failure to deliver on target for Child and Adolescent Community Mental Health Teams (just 55 of 99 promised teams delivered by end 2010), serious delay in delivery of promised National Nutrition Policy (5 years overdue)
- Failure to provide adequate child protection services, despite evidence of need (ongoing issue).

Development of the OMCYA

The OMCYA went through a series of phases to get where it is today. The National Children’s Office (NCO) was established in 2001 to lead and oversee the implementation of the National Children’s Strategy. The Office of the Minister for Children (OMCYA) was established in December 2005 and incorporated the NCO into an expanded structure. The post of Minister for Children was promoted to a ‘super’ junior Minister, who is entitled to attend Cabinet meetings but who does not have a vote. In May 2008, the OMC was renamed the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) to reflect the office’s expanded role, in that ‘youth affairs’ was transferred over from the Department of Education and Skills. The Minister is responsible for overseeing implementation of the *National Children’s Strategy* and coordinating Government policy on children and young people in order to maintain the policy coherence achieved through the publication of the strategy. The Minister has specific statutory delegated functions in each of the three departments operating within the umbrella of the OMCYA — Department of Health and Children, Department of Education and Skills, and Department of Justice and Law Reform.

Structure of the OMCYA

The OMCYA comprises:

- Minister’s Office Staff
- Minister’s Advisor
- Child Welfare and Protection Policy Unit (CWPPU)
- Childcare Directorate
- Legislation Unit
- Child and Youth Services Development Unit

In addition, the Early Years Education Policy Unit of the Department of Education and Skills is co-located within the OMCYA. The Irish Youth Justice Service comes under the umbrella of the OMYCA (it is located at a separate site). The OMCYA works closely with the Department of Health and Children’s Research Unit and Citizen Participation Unit.

Factors that contributed to the achievement of NCS objectives

Many objectives were achieved, and it is worth examining the conditions that facilitated success:

- *Shift in attitudes towards children:* The consultation and publication of the Strategy and the participation work undertaken by the OMCYA spurred a shift in attitudes towards children and the recognition of children's rights and need for investment in quality services and supports for children.
- *Momentum:* In the Strategy's first six years a strong momentum developed in relation to making positive change for children. General buy-in to the life cycle approach facilitated the development of policy strategically focused on children.
- *Investment:* Particularly in the first six years of the Strategy, significant resources were ploughed into developing the infrastructure required to deliver on its aims.
- *OMCYA staff and culture:* The establishment of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) and its predecessors, and its high quality, committed staff and an action-focused culture were critical in driving the Strategy's delivery and working across Government Departments to ensure coordinated policy and action for children.
- *Policy gap:* the previous lack of policy focusing exclusively on children created an opportunity for new policy development, leading to the publication of various strategies and programmes linked to specific NCS commitments, such as the *National Childcare Investment Programme* and *Ready Steady Play: the National Play Policy*.

Obstacles that hindered the delivery of NCS objectives

It is worth examining the conditions that hindered the delivery of some objectives; these observations can provide valuable learning for the next strategy:

- *Complexities of cross-departmental working:* The Strategy brought to the fore the complexities of cross-departmental working. Not all Departments or agencies responsible for actions within the Strategy were accountable to the OMCYA, making it difficult for the OMCYA to drive action outside of its own direct remit.
- *No implementation plan:* The lack of a clear implementation plan driving delivery and outlining practical issues such as budget, timeframe and accountability was a weakness.
- *Implementation barriers:* Policy development and establishing structures and infrastructure are easier to budget for, and complete, than for example, the roll out of a new service on a national level. And multiple barriers to implementation may appear overwhelming.
- *Inconsistency in 'on-the-ground' service delivery:* Circumstances countrywide are not uniform. Where delivery on commitments is devolved to the local level, inconsistencies occurred; for example delivery of quality of services for teenage parents varies widely across the country.
- *Weak governance:* The National Children's Advisory Council (NCAC) required stronger terms of reference to play a meaningful role.
- *Not rights-based:* Despite Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, the Strategy was not rights-based and thus key actions requiring significant investment did not materialise and there was no mechanism to enforce them.
- *Difficult to track progress:* In many cases the actions outlined were not measurable as they were framed in language that was too open and broad. Therefore, it was difficult, or impossible, to track their progress. In addition, many actions lacked an accountability mechanism.
- *Inappropriate level:* Many actions did not consider the ten year nature of the Strategy. Some were minor tasks better suited to a departmental work plan rather than a ten year strategy, while others became outdated before the Strategy's conclusion (that is they were no longer relevant given changed circumstances).

Guide to the Alliance grid

The Strategy contains three goals, 24 objectives and 136 actions. The grid below reproduces in full the three national goals and 24 associated objectives at the beginning of each relevant section. The grid then summarises the 136 actions and colour-codes them to denote the Alliance's grading of progress made since 2000.

We chose to grade the measures, as these are the elements of the Strategy that are most concrete and measurable. The second column provides a factual account of whether progress was made in reaching the 'measure'. The third column provides an opportunity to comment on the quality of the progress to date.

Legend for Grid



Action achieved



Some progress made on achieving action



Action not achieved






Cannot measure progress or context has changed and it is no longer valid or relevant




GOAL ONE




Goal: Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

Objectives:

- To put in place new mechanisms in the public sector which achieve participation by children in matters that affect them
- To promote and support the development of a similar approach to the private and voluntary sectors
- To ensure children are made aware of their rights and responsibilities
- To support children and organisations to make the most of the new opportunities to be provided
- To target additional resources and supports to enable marginalised children to participate equally
- To support research into and evaluation of new mechanisms to give children a voice.

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
1	Establish a Dáil na nÓg (with clear objectives & arrangements to support its operation).		<p>Dáil na nÓg, the national parliament for young people aged 12-18, was set up in 2001 and has met annually over nine years to date with approx. 200 delegates. Dáil na nÓg is funded and overseen by the OMCYA and organised by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI).</p> <p>Each year a delegates from each of the 34 local Comhairle na nÓg is elected to form a Dáil na nÓg Council. It meets monthly to follow up on the recommendations from Dáil na nÓg. It is supported and facilitated by the OMCYA to engage with appropriate Ministers and policy-makers.</p>	<p>Action achieved. Implementation ongoing.</p> <p>Has made a positive difference to children's lives. Successive evaluations find Dáil na nÓg has gone from strength to strength and debates more challenging and contentious issues each year.</p>
2	Establish an Office of the Ombudsman for Children.		<p>The Ombudsman for Children Act 2002 set out the functions of an Ombudsman for Children. Emily Logan was appointed as Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children in 2004; and was reappointed for a second term in 2009.</p>	<p>Action achieved.</p> <p>Has made a positive difference to children's lives. Ongoing resources are required to ensure that the Office can fulfil its statutory remit.</p>
3	Represent children's views on existing National and Local Fora in relation to relevant services, e.g. education and health.		<p><i>Young Voices: Guidelines on how to involve children and young people in your work</i> – developed by OMCYA, the Children's Rights Alliance and NYCI – were published in 2005.</p> <p>Comhairle na nÓg were set up in the 34 City and County Development Boards to give young people a voice in the development of local services and policies. An evaluation in 2005 found they were not effectively engaging with children & required improvement. As a response, an Implementation Group was set up in 2006. The group's recommendation led to the set up of a Development Fund, which has received positive evaluations regarding its impact on the Comhairlí.</p> <p>The OMCYA have supported consultations/dialogues with children and young people on many issues ranging from alcohol, mental health to experience of care.</p>	<p>Action achieved. Implementation ongoing.</p> <p>Has made a positive difference to children's lives. Several evaluations of participation programmes undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dáil na nÓg – successive evaluations find it has gone from strength to strength • Inclusion Programme – highlighted benefits accrued and identified challenges in providing relevant participation opportunities for seldom heard children. To address these challenges, the OMCYA is commissioning a literature review on best practice in this field. <p>It is disappointing that the main focus has been on children over the age of 12 years, to the</p>

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
			<p>Other structures established or consolidated include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMCYA Children and Young People’s Participation Support Team and Partnership Committee • OMCYA Children and Young People’s Forum established in 2004 to advise and undertake projects for OMCYA and Minister • Inclusion Programme to support the involvement of seldom-heard children in CYPF and Comhairle na nÓg • Student Councils & Student Council Support Service • National Children’s Advisory Council (children represented in its first two terms) <p>The OMCYA has commissioned an audit of children’s participation and a literature review on international good practice in participation to inform the development of the next National Children’s Strategy.</p> <p>The OMCYA has also commissioned research into young people’s perspectives on the impact of participation in OMCYA initiatives, such as Comhairlí na nÓg.</p>	<p>exclusion of those under 12.</p> <p>Ongoing support is needed to ensure that the mechanisms truly reflect diversity in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity and disability.</p>
4	Establish Family Group Conferencing.		The Children Act 2001 provides for three types of Family Group Conferencing. The placement of Family Welfare Conference on a statutory footing came into effect in 2004.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children’s lives.
5	Undertake a review of the Guardian Ad Litem Service to examine: - Role of GAL service in family law proceedings & general issue of representation for children in legal proceedings; Need for more detailed guidelines on GAL; and Adequacy of present service.		A review was undertaken by Capita consulting and published in 2004. CAAB produced Guidelines in 2009 on the role, criteria for appointment, qualifications and training of GAL for children under the Child Care Act 1991. (CAAB no longer operational, having been subsumed into OMCYA).	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved it has had little positive impact on children’s lives as no follow up to the review was required.
6	Two measures to facilitate the ratification of European Convention on the Exercise of Children’s rights: - Extend to District Court power to order social reports in guardianship, custody and access proceedings - Provision of a GAL service in such proceedings to represent the interests of children.		Ireland signed the Convention in 1996, but has yet to ratify it. The powers of the District Court have yet to be extended, nor the GAL service expanded to relation to social reports.	Action not achieved. No positive impact on children’s lives.

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
7	Develop and put in place a formal representation and complaints procedure for children in care.		<p>The Ombudsman for Children can investigate complaints from children in care (if the nature of complaint falls within her remit). Children in St Patrick's Institution are excluded from the Ombudsman's remit; they can, however, make a complaint to the Garda Ombudsman Commission.</p> <p>The Irish Association for Young People in Care (IAYPIC), established in 1999, provides a voice for children in care and will support a child to make a complaint.</p> <p>The OMCYA set up a National Consultation Forum for Young People in Care in 2009 (an RRIP commitment). The Forum was to be completed by Sept 2010 and permanent forums established. A report was expected by early 2011 and is still awaited (as of Feb 2011).</p> <p>The Social Services Inspectorate inspects care settings and interviews children during these inspections. However, until the relevant provisions of the Health Act 2007 are commenced, not all children's care settings can be inspected (including those for children with disabilities, and supported lodgings).</p>	<p>Action achieved. Implementation ongoing.</p> <p>Made a positive difference to children's lives but work must be ongoing to ensure each child is made aware of how to make a complaint and are supported to do so.</p>
8	Produce a discussion paper on medical consent in relation to children.		<p>The Law Reform Commission published a consultation document <i>Children and the Law: Medical Treatment</i> in December 2009. No legal reform has occurred to date.</p>	<p>Action achieved.</p> <p>Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. Implementation of the Law Reform Commission's recommendations would result in positive outcomes for children. Publication of the paper alone cannot.</p>
9	Children's Constitutional Rights: All-party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution asked to prioritise its consideration of the issue of the constitutional underpinning of individual children's rights.		<p>In 2006, the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution examined a broad range of issues relating to the family, including children's constitutional rights and recommended an amendment to Article 41.</p> <p>In 2007, the Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children was established. It produced three reports and completed its work in February 2010. Recommended a referendum to strengthen children's rights in the Constitution. Published proposed wording with all-party consensus. No date set by Government for referendum as yet.</p>	<p>Action achieved.</p> <p>Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. Implementation of the recommendations made by the Joint Committee, specifically the holding of a referendum to strengthen children's rights in the Constitution, would result in positive outcomes for children. Consideration of the issue by the Joint Committee alone cannot.</p>

GOAL TWO




Goal: Children’s lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of services.





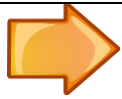
Objectives:

- To build a more coherent understanding of children’s development and needs among those working with children
- To develop an evidence-based approach to decision-making at all levels down to service delivery
- To improve the commissioning, production and dissemination of research and information
- To improve evaluation and monitoring of children’s services

Comment on progress to date (analysis)/ Comment on quality of progress (analysis)

Progress made to date (factual information)/ Description of Progress made to date

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
10	Establish a National Longitudinal Study of children.		National Longitudinal Study <i>Growing up in Ireland</i> is being undertaken. First round data collection for 9-year-old cohort completed in May 2008 and for infant cohort in April 2009. Findings regarding 9-year-olds published in December 2009.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives over the coming years.
11	Fund a programme of research into Children’s lives.		OMCYA Children’s Funded Research Programme established in 2004. It has funded or part-funded 30 research projects to date (not including Growing Up in Ireland). OMCYA Research Scholarship Programme has operated since 2001 and supported 35 researchers through post-graduate funded research relating to children and to the National Children’s Strategy. This group has been set up. The Alliance has been provided with the group’s terms of reference and membership but this is not available on the website. OMCYA Research Development Advisory Group established provides advice to the OMCYA on matters relating to research, reviews research reports and assists in initiating and developing research partnerships.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives over the coming years.
12	Better information systems: - develop an integrated set of core data relating to children’s lives and ensure that data gathered by individual departments is compatible - undertake a review to establish what information is needed on a cross-departmental basis - how to identify and pool info from		Core data – A National Data and Research Strategy on Children’s Lives is being prepared by the Dept. of Health. Policy information has been reviewed and an extensive inventory of data sources on children’s lives collected and analysed. A draft action plan links to the outcomes in the <i>Agenda for Children’s Services</i> and the <i>National Children’s Strategy</i> . Implementation of a pilot children’s research programme is underway.	Some progress made on achieving action. Implementation ongoing. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives over the coming years.

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
	existing dept. databases.		Review – The draft action plan is being agreed with key agencies/stakeholders. Using existing data –Content and structure of over 100 datasets relevant to children’s lives have been reviewed and a detailed analysis of these is being prepared.	
13	Develop a set of child wellbeing indicators.		<i>Development of a national set of child wellbeing indicators</i> report was published in 2005. Informed <i>State of the Nation’s Children</i> report (see 14).	Action achieved. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives over the coming years.
14	Produce a bi-annual <i>State of the Nation’s Children</i> Report.		A <i>State of the Nation’s Children</i> report was first published in 2006, then again in 2008 and 2010.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives over the coming years.
15	Core fund a National Children’s Research Dissemination Unit to gather and disseminate research on children in Ireland.		Childrensdatabase.ie set up to provide access to research and information on children for policy makers, Government departments, academics etc. The OMCYA is preparing a National Data and Research Strategy on Children’s Lives, and conducted a consultation process in 2009.	Action achieved. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives over the coming years.
16	Introduce Child Impact Statements: all Departments will be required to identify the impact of their policies on children.		Report on the Development and implementation of Child Impact Statements in Ireland published in 2006. A decision was taken to not introduce Child Impact Statements given concerns about their effectiveness and the efficient use of resources.	Context changed. Review undertaken but decision taken not to proceed as the review concluded that the such statements were not proven to be effective.
17	Develop Quality Standards for children’s service provision, including specific standards for children’s services that are provided as part of a universal service.		The Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) introduced national standards for children’s residential centres and special care units in 2001, and for foster care in 2003. Adherence is monitored by inspection through the SSI or the HSE. Work is underway to develop a common standard set for all children in care (those in residential, foster and special care, centres for children with disabilities, and children detention schools). Preparation has begun to develop standards and begin inspections of child protection and welfare services. Other sets of national standards also exist in: Youth Work (2009); <i>Síolta</i> for early childhood education (2006) and <i>Agenda for Children’s Services</i> (2007).	Much progress made on achieving action. But standards are not yet applied universally, e.g. HIQA does not inspect centres for children with disabilities. Relevant provisions of the Health Act 2007 need to be commenced to enable all child care settings to be inspected. <i>Agenda for Children’s Services</i> is a practical tool for practitioners but there is no obligation to adhere to its principles and actions. An evaluation to establish its usefulness and whether it is being used as intended would be useful.

GOAL THREE

Goal: Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development





Goal Three is lengthier than Goals One and Two. It includes 14 objectives and 118 specific measures. The National Children’s Strategy breaks it into a further three sections, under these headings:





1. All children have a basic range of needs
2. Some children have additional needs
3. All children need the support of family or community

The grids below correspond to each of the 14 objectives, the objectives are listed ‘A to N’ (as in the Strategy) and structured under the three headings.


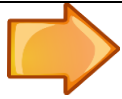


1: All children have a basic range of needs





Objective A: Children’s early education and developmental needs will be met through quality childcare services and family-friendly employment measures

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
18	Continued investment in supply of childcare places to meet identified needs.		By end 2010 it is estimated that the <i>National Childcare Investment Programme</i> (NCIP) led to the creation of approximately 25,000 new childcare places, half of those committed to under the NCIP Plan.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Issues around quality and affordable childcare remain.
19	ECCE programmes will be developed based on White Paper to meet the needs of all children (incl. children in the home).		The White Paper ‘Ready to Learn’ published in 1999 by the Department of Education and Skills. Subsequent policies and programmes are in line with the White Paper’s recommendations, including the establishment of the Early Years Education Policy Unit at the OMCYA and of county childcare committees. Introduction in January 2010 of a free pre-school year for all children in the year before they attend primary school. In September 2010, 94% of eligible children participated. Participating services are required to implement <i>Síolta: the national quality framework for early education</i> .	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Made a positive difference to children’s lives. To ensure quality services for young children full implementation and adequate resourcing are required for <i>Síolta</i> and the <i>Workforce Development Plan</i> . Aspiration for ECCE should not be limited to one year free pre-school.
20	Draft framework for qualification in the childcare sector will be submitted and related staff training supported.		The <i>Workforce Development Plan</i> was published in December 2010, outlining a strategy to up-skill the early years workforce. The Plan does not have an allocated funding stream and does not include a timeline for raising minimum staff qualification levels.	Some progress made on achieving action, but some children’s needs still unmet. Workforce Development Plan provided, but without additional funding to support related staff training its impact will be minimal.
21	Provide funding for research of children’s early years’ needs.		Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) set up in 2002 and undertook considerable research into early years. The CECDE was subsumed into the OMCYA in November 2008.	Some progress made on achieving action. Has potential to make a positive difference to children’s lives but the role of CECDE since it was subsumed into the OMCYA is unclear.





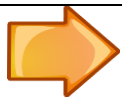
	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
22	County and City Childcare Committees (CCCs) will be established to develop a coordinated strategy for childcare in each county and city area.		33 CCCs set up in 2001. Strategic plans adopted for 2002-2006 and 2007-2010. From Jan 2011 all CCCs will work under a National Strategic Plan to deliver the 3 major early childhood programmes of the OMCYA: Free Pre-school Year in Early Childhood Education and Care Scheme; Community Childcare Subvention Scheme; and National Childcare Investment Programme.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Work undertaken by the 33 CCCs has made a positive difference to children's lives.
23	Additional maternity leave will be provided.		Maternity leave was extended in March 2007 to 26 weeks paid leave and optional 16 weeks unpaid leave – one of the most generous in the EU.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children's lives and to a positive work life balance for families.
24	Parental Leave Act 1998 will be reviewed.		A report on the review of the Parental Leave Act 1998 was published in 2002. The Act was amended in 2006 to allow parents to take leave in respect of a child up to 8 years (it was previously 5 years), and up to 16 years for a child with a disability. Parental leave is available for each child and amounts to 14 weeks per child. Parental leave is unpaid.	Action achieved. Amendment of Parental Leave Act made a positive difference to children's lives by improving the choice and flexibility in how the leave is taken, including in a broken format over a longer period of time and it increased the upper age limit of an eligible child.
25	Further measures to promote family friendly work put in place.		DSFA Report <i>Balancing Work and Family Life</i> published in 2008. A National Framework Committee for Work Life Balance Policies exists and continues to make recommendations in this area.	Some progress made on achieving action. Terms used to frame this action are difficult to measure. It is unclear whether the recommendations of the DSFA report were implemented.





Objective B: Children will benefit from a range of educational opportunities and experiences which reflect the diversity of need

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Progress made to date (factual information)	Comment on progress to date (analysis)
26	A National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) will be provided to all schools.		<p>Access to NEPS is now available to all schools.</p> <p>In 2008/09 NEPS psychologists were assigned to 74% of primary schools and 92% of post-primary schools. Schools that do not have an assigned NEPS psychologist can commission private psychological assessments but this function is limited and they do not have access to follow up supports. In 2010, the number of NEPS psychologists was capped at 178: in December 2010, the number stood at 164.</p>	<p>Action achieved.</p> <p>Although much progress of the 10 year period, the NEPS service is still struggling to meet demand from the school.</p>
27	Implement a series of measures to improve literacy and numeracy including a public awareness campaign, improvement in school remedial service, better home/school cooperation, development of support materials and ongoing monitoring.		<p>The Department of Education's DEIS programme incorporates the measures identified. Findings of DEIS evaluation were expected at end 2010 but not yet available. Unclear whether findings will be published. Over lifetime of NCS literacy achievement among 15 year old children fell: Ireland's PISA ranking dropped from 5th in the OECD (2000) to 17th (2009) out of 39 countries.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>Results suggest that inputs (resources into schools and specific disadvantage initiatives) are not leading to the achievement of desired outcomes. DEIS evaluation findings must inform all future policy and programmes in this area.</p>
28	Continued expenditure on in-career teacher development. Enactment of Teaching Council Bill.		<p>Spending on teacher training increased over NCS period, but was cut from €33.8 million in 2008 to €28.8 million in 2009. Remained at this level in 2010.</p> <p>Teaching Council Act 2001 was enacted.</p>	<p>Action achieved.</p> <p>Although progress was made on the stated action, without a focus on children's outcomes (as a result of teacher training) it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives.</p> <p>For example, in addition to investment, teaching practice and training must evolve to reflect changing needs in the classroom. To support this, traditional approaches should be reviewed and creative approaches to improving the quality of teaching should be considered, including those focused on collaborative/peer based learning.</p>
29	Establish a Education Welfare Board and appoint Education Welfare Officers.		<p>The National Educational Welfare Board was established in 2002, under the Education Welfare Act 2000 and Education Welfare Officers were appointed.</p> <p>May 2009: three services were integrated into the NEWB - Home School Community Liaison, School Completion Programme, and Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers – making the NEWB responsible for an additional 750 staff. The Visiting Teachers Service for Travellers was abolished in Budget 2011.</p>	<p>Action achieved. Implementation ongoing, currently in transition period.</p> <p>The expanded NEWB has potential to make a positive difference to children's lives over the coming years by streamlining services to deliver a more joined up response to children and their families.</p>








	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Progress made to date (factual information)	Comment on progress to date (analysis)
30	Assessment of measures to tackle educational disadvantage. Necessary remedial action taken including new measures.		<i>DEIS: Delivering Equality of Education in Schools</i> was introduced in 2005. DEIS is the programme through which educational disadvantage is addressed. It provides a standardised system for identifying and regularly reviewing levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP). DEIS programme ended in 2010, and has been extended to cover 2011 but no clarity about next phase.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Progress made but some children's needs are still unmet. DEIS phase one completed in 2010, second phase required. Problems in relation to literacy and numeracy achievement and school completion among students from disadvantaged areas remain.
31	Develop a national policy on out-of-school and after-school care services.		The <i>Developing School-Age Childcare</i> report (2005), published by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, set out guidelines for the delivery of quality after-school services. National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) committed to 5,000 after-school childcare places. The <i>renewed Programme for Government</i> (2009) includes a commitment to regulate after-school services.	Action not achieved. No positive impact on children's lives. The OMCYA will begin work on the regulation of after-school services in 2011.
32	Implementation of personal development programmes in schools.		SPHE programme is a mandatory part of the primary school and post-primary (junior cycle) curriculum and supports the personal development, health and well-being of children. The SPHE curriculum for senior cycle is still in draft.	Some progress made on achieving action. SPHE is still not mandatory at senior cycle and research undertaken by Dáil na nÓg published in 2010 and by TCD in 2007 shows that the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) element of SPHE is not consistently provided.
33	Review of effectiveness of the enforcement of the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996.		A review was undertaken by the Labour Inspectorate and published in 2005.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. The impact of the review is unknown.

Objective C: Children will be supported to enjoy the optimum physical, mental and emotional wellbeing


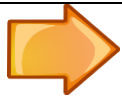
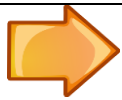

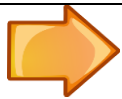
	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
34	Implementation of Best Health for Children programme (0-12 years) (BHfC was a review of child health services for children 0-12 completed in 1998. Following its publication, a project – also called BHfC – was established to oversee implementation of the report’s recommendations).		<i>Best Health for Children Programme Review</i> (‘revisited’) published 2005 by HSE. BHfC followed up by two additional (and linked) reports on adolescent health and family supports. BHfC appears to have lost momentum by 2005.	Action not achieved. Impact on children’s lives is unknown. BHfC is not the current operating document relating to children’s health. National strategies guide health policy, including <i>Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You</i> (2001), <i>Primary Care Strategy: A New Direction</i> (2001).
35	Provide an appropriate health programme developed for 12-18 year-old adolescents.		There is no over-arching health programme addressing adolescent health needs (five aspects of adolescent health are listed in the NCS, and dealt with individually). <i>Get Connected: developing an adolescent friendly health service</i> was published in 2001. This is a review, not an agreed policy. It makes recommendations for future actions. <i>Best Health for Children Revisited</i> (2005) sets out the standards for a child health programme as it should be delivered.	Action not achieved. The recommendations of the 2001 review on developing an adolescent friendly health service were not acted upon.
36	Continue progress towards national target of 95% uptake in Primary Childhood Immunisation Programme.		The most recent data available is from 2007, it shows 87% uptake in the Primary Childhood Immunisation Programme for children aged 12 months and 92% for children aged 24 months (up from 73% in 2001 for first dose of the MMR)	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children’s lives. As the terms used to frame this action (‘continue progress towards’) is vague, the action is achieved even though target (95% immunisation) has not yet been met.
37	Continue efforts to increase number of mothers who breastfeed, including a comprehensive review of the National Breastfeeding Policy (1994).		The National Committee on Breastfeeding, established in 2002, reviewed the 1994 National Breastfeeding Policy. This led to the development of <i>Breastfeeding in Ireland – A Five Year Strategic Action Plan</i> (2005) which sets out time-framed targets and actions and is intended to be a template for implementation. Between 2004 and 2008 the percentage of infants who were breastfed increased consistently. In 2008, 50.9% of infants were breastfed (either exclusive or combined) on discharge from hospital (SONC 2010), this is an increase from 41.3% in 2001 and 47.5% in 2005.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Terms used to frame this action (‘continue efforts’) are difficult to measure. New strategy introduced in 2005. <i>State of Nation’s Children</i> 2010 shows improvement in rate of breastfeeding between 2005 and 2008.
38	Children’s waiting lists to be specially targeted (especially ENT, cardiac and orthodontic).		National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) was established in 2002. It became the vehicle for this measure. Patients who have been on a surgical waiting list for more than three months can apply. 2010 waiting list for ENT (ears, nose and throat) at Temple St. Hospital in Dublin at 12 months. 2009 ward closures at Crumlin led to waiting lists for cardiac surgery.	Some progress made on achieving action. Some children’s needs still unmet. Terms used to frame this action (‘targeted’) are difficult to measure. Outlining how much waiting lists should be reduced and by when would have been useful.

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
39	Develop cross sectoral programmes to address sexual health, teenage pregnancy and healthy eating/exercise as part of the national health promotion strategy.		<p>Still awaiting the National Sexual Health Strategy (announced in 2007). Adolescents were not included in the national survey of sexual health undertaken in 2006. Teen parents support programme in operation. HSE/Crisis Pregnancy Agency launched campaign website b4udecide.ie in 2009. It is aimed at teenagers, parents, youth workers and teachers.</p> <p>Healthy eating and exercise should be dealt with in the promised (6 years overdue) National Nutrition Policy.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>The delay in publishing National Sexual Health Strategy and the National Nutrition Policy means there is no over-arching framework for these activities.</p>
40	Specialist drugs treatment for under 18s expanded.		<p>Drugs treatment for under 18s has improved in pockets across the country. A working group was established and <i>Report of the Working Group on Treatment of Under-18 year olds Presenting to Treatment Services with Serious Drug Problems</i> was published in 2005. A 4 tier approach was recommended and money was allocated to HSE South-East to develop services for this cohort. The <i>National Drugs Strategy</i> (2001-2008) included an action (49) regarding the development of a protocol for under-18s presenting at drugs services.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>Impact on children's lives is unknown as impact on funding on services is unclear.</p>
41	Publish a National Strategy to improve health status of Travellers (by end 2000).		<p>A <i>National Traveller Health Strategy</i> (2002-2005) was published in 2002. It was not renewed but a series of actions have been taken, including setting up a Traveller health advisory committee (to oversee implementation) and Traveller health units in each HSE region. The first all-island study of Traveller Health 'Our Geels' was published in 2010.</p>	<p>Action achieved.</p> <p>Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. The full implementation of the National Traveller Health Strategy would lead to positive outcomes for children.</p>
42	Introduce new arrangements for planning and managing children's services at national and health board levels.		<p>Children's Services Committees (CSCs) are to be set up under the 34 city and/or county development boards. All major organisations and agencies working locally on behalf of children are to be represented on the CSCs. Four CSCs currently in place, goal is for 20 plus CSCs by end 2012.</p> <p>The HSE appointed an Assistant National Director for Children and Family Services in 2009, and a National Director for Children and Family Services in 2010.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>Roll out nationwide is needed.</p>





Objective D: Children will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood








	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
43	Develop national play and recreation policies.		<i>Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy</i> published in 2004 (2004-2008). <i>Teenspace: The National Recreation Policy for Young People</i> published in 2007 (no timeframe).	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Implementation of play and recreation policies to date made a positive difference to children's lives: but some actions outstanding.
44	Local sport and recreation policies developed by Irish Sports Council through establishment of Local Sports Partnerships.		Local Sports Partnerships now established in all counties: full national coverage achieved.	Action achieved. Work of Local Sports Partnerships made a positive difference to children's lives.
45	Financial support to community and voluntary groups, local authorities and agencies towards the provision of sport and recreational facilities under the NDP and Young People's Services and Facilities Fund (YPFSF).		Since 1998, YPFSF contributed to the development of approximately 228 youth and community facilities in 18 target areas, employing 420 people. These areas now have modern facilities for young people and a range of services to attract at risk young people. In 2009 the Fund was expanded to four additional towns (Arklow, Athlone, Dundalk and Wexford). Grants are available under the Local Sports Partnerships for selected initiatives.	Action achieved. Financial supports provided through the YPFSF contributed to making a positive difference to children's lives.
46	Publish a National Youth Work Development Plan (2002-2006).		National Youth Work Development Plan (2003-2007) published in 2007.	Action achieved. Implementation of the National Youth Work Development Plan made a positive difference to children's lives.
47	Incorporate local play and recreation needs into County and City Development Boards Strategies for Economic, Social and Cultural development.		Each CBDs has an individual Strategy.	Some progress made on achieving action. Impact on children's lives is unknown: need to review CBD strategies to assess.
48	Each local authority to designate an officer responsible for play and recreation activity.		In 2009, 65% of local authorities had appointed a play officer.	Some progress made on achieving action. The status of this role differs between local authorities.
49	Provide more opportunities for participation in arts and cultural activity (beginning with Arts Plan 1999-2001).		The Arts Council has a dedicated team that focuses on young people.	Action achieved. Terms used to frame this action ('provide more opportunities') are difficult to measure. Figures, timelines and desired outcomes are required.

Objective E: Children will have opportunities to explore information and communication technologies in ways which are safe and developmentally supportive

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
50	Commission research into the impact of a wide range of technologies on children.		Research commissioned by OMCYA into play and technology for children aged 4 to 12 years, published in 2007. Further research done by the EU on this theme.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up (e.g. implementation of actions recommended in the research) it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives.
51	Continued investment in schools information technology programmes. Ensure every classroom is connected to the Internet, teachers are trained in ICT and improve ratio of computers to pupils.		The National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) is the agency with responsibility for this measure. Significant investment has happened in this area but it has been sporadic. Every classroom is not yet connected to the internet (broadband access in rural areas still an issue). In 2008, the DES published 2 reports on ICT in schools: <i>Investing Effectively in information and communications technology in schools 2008-2013</i> by the Minister's Strategy Group and <i>ICT in Schools</i> by the DES inspectorate.	Some progress made on achieving action. Action here must happen quickly to keep up with technological developments.
52	Ensure all children leaving formal education have appropriate training in ICT.		The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) produced a discussion paper on ICT in schools (2004), and a framework for ICT in curriculum and assessment (2007). They outline activities that schools could engage with across curriculum, but initiatives are not mandatory and application is uneven across the country. Digital divide still a big issue for children. The National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) has undertaken significant work in relation to internet safety.	Some progress made on achieving action. Some children's needs still unmet. Measuring outcomes here is difficult without an exam (or alternative indicator) on completion of formal education.
53	Special attention to children in progressing the 1999 Action Plan: <i>Implementing the Information Society in Ireland: an action plan.</i>		The 1999 Action Plan was superseded by the <i>New Connections Action Plan</i> published in 2002. The key issues affecting children are the policy objectives for ICT in schools (sections 6.3.1-6.3.5). The DES has operational responsibility.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up (eg implementation of the Action Plan's recommendations) it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. In addition, the context changed during the NCS period and so now further action is required.
54	Develop a code of ethics from private and public sector in ICT (in partnership) in relation to children's issues.		The Office for Internet Safety was established in 2008 it has lead responsibility for internet safety in Ireland, with a particular focus on children and child pornography. The Office will build on and oversee the current self-regulatory framework which is in place under the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI) .	Some progress made. But a code of ethics has yet to be delivered.







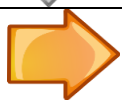
Objective F: Children will be safeguarded to enjoy their childhood free from all forms of abuse and exploitation


	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
55	Develop measures for prevention and early identification of neglect, abuse and exploitation of children through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of family support services - Full implementation of Children First by Health Boards and all organisations providing services to children. 		<p>Family Support – Family support services expanded through Family Support Agency (established in 2003), and the family resource centres (which have increased from 10 in 1994 to 107 in 2010).</p> <p>Children First – A revised edition of the 1999 <i>Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children</i> was published online in 2010, and will become operational once supporting infrastructure is in place. The Guidelines are still voluntary and research has shown that their implementation is ad hoc countrywide. The 2009 Ryan Report <i>Implementation Plan</i> (RRIP) commits to place <i>Children First</i> on a statutory footing.</p> <p>In 2010, three activities were announced: development of an implementation framework to support the Guidelines implementation; establishment of a national HSE group to drive implementation and compliance with the Guidelines; and a policy to underpin legislative reform.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>Children’s needs are still unmet.</p> <p>Now, family support services are subject to budget cuts and the impact of these services risks being diminished.</p> <p>The absence of a statutory basis for the <i>Children First</i> guidelines continues to hinder its consistent and effective implementation. Action in this areas is urgently required. There is also concerns about the 2010 revised guidelines, including a weakening of the focus on prevention, early intervention and family support of the previous versions,</p>
56	Expand Irish Social Services Inspectorate so it can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor quality of all aspects of childcare services - provide guidance on standards and good practice. 		<p>The remit of the Social Services Inspectorate was expanded under the Health Act 2007; and it became part of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). However, certain provisions of the Health Act 2007 have yet to be commenced and thus the SSI cannot inspect all care settings, including centres for children with disabilities.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>Some children’s needs are still unmet. The outstanding provisions of the Health Act must be commenced and the SSI adequately resourced to ensure it can fulfil its statutory duties.</p>
57	Develop treatment and counselling services for children that have experienced abuse.		<p>Services have improved incrementally.</p> <p>Key actions in the RRIP relate to the provision of counselling services for those who have experienced abuse in childhood; bringing renewed focus to this issue</p>	<p>Some progress made.</p> <p>However, services for children who have experienced abuse remain under-developed; waiting lists are long for social work assessment and treatment (e.g. counselling) and for mental health services.</p> <p>Action is needed urgently to progress this.</p>
58	Develop a comprehensive child care information system to improve efficiency (local) and allow evaluation (regional and national).		<p>The report on the National Child Care Information System Project was published October 2009 – this is linked to the Business Process Standardisation which is currently being developed.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>No positive impact on children’s lives. Ten years on, the information system, Business Process Standardisation, is still in the development phase.</p>

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
59	Enact the Children Bill and the Sex Offenders Bill.		The Sex Offenders Act was enacted in 2001. The Children Act was enacted in 2001 and was commenced on a phased basis over a number of years.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
60	Publish a revised <i>Code of Ethics for Good Practice in Children's Sport</i> .		A revised Code was published in 2000 and is now active.	Action achieved.
61	Ensure Garda clearance for any person seeking employment with children.		The Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) was set up in 2006. It vets all persons, paid or voluntary, who are working directly with children. The National Vetting Bureau Bill is awaited; it will put the Garda Vetting Unit on a statutory footing and allow for the collection and exchange of soft information to enable the operation of a comprehensive vetting system, in line with the 2008 recommendation of the Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children.	Action achieved. The establishment of the GCVU made a positive difference to children's lives and is a key component of our child protection system. It must, however, be adequately resourced to fulfil its vetting role. A lack of resources has led to significant delays and a knock on effect on the ground.
62	Courthouse design to include video link facilities and waiting/consultation rooms. Specific needs of children to be considered in a review of the court accommodation programme.		Children's needs are considered when building new courts or refurbishing existing ones. However, there is no general programme around this. Several video-conferencing rooms have been established in some courts.	Some progress made on achieving action. Children's needs still unmet; further work in this area is required. Many existing courts require child-friendly facilities urgently.
63	General information booklet on the courts system to be distributed and made available on line.		Booklet: <i>Explaining the Courts</i> published in 2003 and a revised edition in 2010 and is available on the Court Service website.	Action achieved.
64	Keep best methods of dealing with children in court proceedings under review.		Too vague to comment.	Cannot measure progress. Terms used to frame this action ('keep under review') are difficult to measure.
65	Implement the Stockholm Agenda for Action Against Sexual Exploitation of Children.		No progress made to implement the measures of the Stockholm Agenda.	Action not achieved. No action taken: this action appears to have been abandoned.





GROUP 2: Some children have additional needs



Objective G: Children will be provided with the financial supports necessary to eliminate child poverty

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
66	Set targets for the elimination of child poverty under the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.		Target set in Revised National Anti Poverty Strategy (2002); and again in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (2007) which aims to reduce consistent poverty by between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim of eliminating it by 2016. Although child poverty was reduced during the decade, the figures is currently above the target set: in 2009, 8.7% children were in consistent poverty.	Action achieved. Children's needs still unmet. Although the stated action was achieved (targets were set), without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. Steps taken toward reaching the targets them were not sufficient. There is no coherent strategy to address child poverty.
67	Increase Child Benefit over the next three years (up to 2003) moving towards £100 per child for third and subsequent children.		The Child Benefit payment was increased over a number of years.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
68	Expand initiatives to support money management in families through MABS.		MABS has been expanded significantly since 2000. MABS activity is ongoing.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Children's needs still unmet. Economic crisis means more families need MABS support. Terms used to frame this action ('expand') are difficult to measure.
69	Introduce legislation to establish MABS on a statutory basis.		Social Welfare Act 2008 extended the functions of the Citizens' Information Board to give it responsibility for MABS as of July 2009. The Citizens' Information Board is statutory but all companies operating under it (including MABS) are independent and governed by company law.	Context has changed. Each MABS service is now an independent company.
70	Report from the Working Group on adequacy of adult and child social welfare payments due in 2001.		The <i>Final Report of the Social Welfare Benchmarking and Indexation Group</i> was published in 2001.	Action achieved. Little or no positive impact on children's lives. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up (e.g. the implementation of the report's recommendations) it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives.
71	Increased assistance through active measures for long-term unemployed and socially-excluded.		Various measures undertaken.	Cannot measure progress over 10 years. Changing economic climate means policy here shifted rapidly.
72	Pursue range of proposals in <i>Review of One Parent Family Payment</i> to secure payments for lone parent families.		Much discussion and change in context over recent years. Under the Social Welfare Bill 2010 One Parent Family	Some progress made on achieving action. Little or no positive impact on children's lives.







	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
			Payment will no longer be paid to lone parents once child is over 13. To be introduced on a phased basis.	Recent decision restricting OPFP is seen as backwards step by groups representing lone parents.
73	Target measures to assist return to education and employment of lone parents and long-term unemployed.		Current NESC project addressing this, due to complete in 2010, awaiting report.	Some progress made on achieving action. Difficult to measure progress in relation to children and changing economic climate means policy here shifting rapidly.



Objective H: Children will have access to accommodation appropriate to their needs

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
74	Ensure families with children are prioritised for accommodation under new streams of housing that become available (Local authorities and voluntary housing Programmes).		Each local authority has its own scheme for allocating housing, however all housing must be allocated on the basis of the established need of the household. On this basis families with children will often qualify as needier than families without children or individuals.	Some progress made on achieving action. Impact on children's lives is unknown as tracking this at national level is difficult. Though this is perceived to be happening in practice, policy does not state that families with children will be prioritised.
75	Publish National Strategy for Youth Homelessness (end 2000).		The <i>Youth Homelessness Strategy</i> was published in 2001. It did spur activity but has since lost momentum. The Strategy does not include an end date.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved (the Strategy was published), without follow up (implementation) it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. A new Strategy to address youth homelessness is now needed, with clear actions, timelines and accountability mechanisms.
76	Introduce formal programmes to prepare young people for leaving care and to deliver after care support (to ensure no child leaving care is discharged into homelessness).		Over the ten year period, some progress was made to improve aftercare services and supports to care leavers, including the establishment in north Dublin of HSE project and the funding of aftercare workers posts. However, programmes and funding remains ad hoc. The RRIP makes 6 commitments in relation to aftercare support. The HSE is developing a National Policy on Aftercare Services. In June 2010, following lobbying by NGOs, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs directed the HSE to formulate and put in place appropriate administrative policies, procedures and guidance for implementing its duty to provide aftercare to those in need.	Some progress made on achieving action. But children's needs are still unmet. The provision of aftercare to children in need ranges depending on which part of the country you live in. Until children have a statutory right to aftercare support, such services will be vulnerable to budget cutbacks and to exclusion by limited eligibility criteria. This would require an amendment to Section 45 of the 1991 Child Care Act. It is vital that the National Policy on Aftercare adopts a broad definition of eligibility, and appropriate consultation is carried out.
77	The Housing Forum to review impact on children of housing developments.		Addressed in discussion at the Housing Forum, but no concrete outcome.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved, it did not clearly result in positive action for children.





	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
78	Provide an adequate emergency response to young homeless people (including day service, education and training, drug treatment).		Certain services for homeless children and young people are in existence. However, the supports available and response to homeless children is still patchy and ad hoc across the country.	Some progress made on achieving action. Children's needs still unmet: selected programmes introduced but service is still not adequate.
79	Develop preventative and restorative programmes (family and community-based) and alternative supports to reduce the incidence of homelessness.		Series of programmes have been set up which may, among other things, reduce youth homelessness (Springboard, Youth Advocacy, Teen Parent Support, Youth Advocacy Programme)	Some progress made on achieving action. Children's needs still unmet: selected programmes introduced but service is still not adequate.





Objective I: Children with behavioural problems coming before the courts or in trouble with the law will be supported in the least restrictive environment while having their needs addressed

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
80	Expand family support and other community-based, early intervention services under a new programme of investment.		See also 106. The OMCY is managing the Prevention and Early Intervention 5 year Programme, which is co-funded by the Government and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The focus to date has been on a small number of projects in severely disadvantaged communities, including Tallaght West, the Northside Partnership and in Ballymun.	Some progress made. Significant funding has been invested in the three projects and evaluation is underway to determine what worked and why it worked.
81	Introduce more structured programmes for the identification, assessment and management of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (to ensure a comprehensive response based on individual case plans).		NEWB and NEPS active on this (see 26 & 29). The Children Acts Advisory Board was established but has since been subsumed into the OMCYA.	Some progress made on achieving action. It is understood (anecdotally) that the NEWB and NEPS have made a positive difference to those children's lives that have engaged with them; however neither have yet been subject to evaluation.
82	Develop more effective response to children in crisis (including staged use of residential care, family group conferencing etc). Ongoing monitoring of Children Bill (once enacted).		Progress made in the quality and range of service provision for children in crisis, but system (especially for homeless children) still inadequate. Irish Youth Justice Service established 2005. Family Group conferencing is operational. The Children Bill was enacted in 2001 and is now fully commenced. There is no ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Act's provisions.	Some progress made on achieving action. Terms used to frame this action ('develop more effective...') are difficult to measure.
83	Put in place the additional care and support services required to implement the Children Bill (incl. teaching posts, nurses, child psych etc).		Much investment has taken place, including in the Garda Youth Diversion projects. However, in the absence of research it is difficult to quantify the supports needed and if they are being provided.	Cannot measure progress as action is too broad. Children's needs still unmet: gaps in service remain. Terms used to frame this action ('put in place additional...') are difficult to measure.
84	Provide resources to support projects for children at risk of offending, including phased expansion of Garda Youth Diversion projects and re-integration of young offenders into the community.		There has been much development of services in the area of youth justice. The first Garda Youth Diversion project was set up in 2000, there are now 100 countrywide.	Some progress made on achieving action. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
85	Target additional funding at expanding the range of community-based alternatives to residential care, including fostering.		Fostering, and in particular relative fostering, are considered to be the first care option for a child who enters care. The Foster Care payment was substantially increased in 2000 and then incrementally over a number of years.	Some progress made. Children's needs still unmet. The care system still faces huge challenges. Key to addressing

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
	Ensure availability of full range of services needed to provide a through-care service.		There was limited progress on investing in a country wide system of intensive family support and community based services as an alternative to a child coming into care.	these is delivery on the Ryan Report <i>Implementation Plan</i> .
86	Support and develop staff to ensure they have necessary knowledge and expertise, and skilled supervision and support available to them.		In 2009 the Ryan Report <i>Implementation Plan</i> commits to improvements in the training of social workers and others working with children and families.	Cannot measure progress as action is too broad. Terms used to frame this action ('support and develop staff...') are difficult to measure. Clear target, measure and timeline is required.
87	Provide appropriate accommodation, including child-centred systems, in new facilities in Dublin and Cork for children who are detained.		Standards and Criteria for Children Detention Schools were adopted by the Irish Youth Justice Service in 2008 and the schools are inspected against these standards by the SSI. Children under 16 years can be detained in Trinity House, Oberstown Boys and Oberstown schools. In 2008, the Government pledged to open a National Children Detention Facility in the Lusk Campus to accommodate 16 and 17 year old boys from all part of the country. A key priority is to move the boys currently detained in St Patrick's Institution. No visible progress has been made on this commitment.	Action not achieved. No visible progress has been made on a new unit to accommodate the young offenders who are currently in St Patrick's Institution, which operates a penal regime very different from the care model in the other schools.





Objective J: Children with a disability will be entitled to the services they need to achieve their full potential





	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
88	Publish Disabilities Bill in 2001 (provides for participation of children with disabilities in society).		<i>National Disability Strategy</i> 2004 comprises National Disability Bill 2004, Comhairle (amendment) Bill 2004, six sectoral plans, and a commitment to multi-annual investment programme for disability support services. The Disability Act was enacted in 2005.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
89	Promote access to services of Government Departments and agencies in conjunction with the NDA.		The Disability Act 2005 makes access for people with disabilities to services a legal requirement on Government departments and agencies	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
90	Review and identify key statistical needs in relation to children with disabilities, for the purpose of informing policy, planning and service delivery.		National databases exist for children with physical or sensory disability (2002) and children with intellectual disabilities (1995). Participation on databases is voluntary. Data is being gathered by the NCSE relating to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. Statistics must be used to inform future policy and service delivery for children with disabilities.
91	Develop more effective early intervention and respite services for children with disabilities. Increase the number of residential and associated day places (to enable all children have access to a residential place based on need).		Early intervention – Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 gives people with disabilities an entitlement to an independent assessment of health and education needs and a service statement identifying the services to be delivered. This mechanism has only been commenced for the under fives, and its roll-out for children aged 5-17 years has been delayed indefinitely. There were 72 assessments in 2007. Work has commenced on preparing standards for early intervention services. Between 2005 and 2008, 389 multi-disciplinary posts were commenced, the majority of which were focused on early intervention services. Residential places – the philosophy has changed in relation to residential places for children: they are now seen as a last resort. Now, the issue in relation to residential centres for children with disabilities is inspection and standards: these centres are not subject to the same SSI standards as other children's residential centres. To change this, the Health Act 2007 must be commenced, which will allow for the independent inspection and registration of all children's care settings.	Some progress made on achieving action. Made a positive difference to children's lives Terms used to frame this action ('develop more effective' and 'increase the number') are difficult to measure and are not suitable for a ten year strategy. Clearer measures and targets are required to assess whether actions are being achieved. Context has changed, this action is no longer appropriate.

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
92	Develop supports to enable children with a disability to access a quality education.		The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 has not yet been fully commenced. When commenced EPSEN will give all children the right to an individual education plan and the delivery of services associated with that plan. Some elements of the Act have been commenced and action delivered – NCSE has published guidelines on individual education plans and the SESS has commenced training for teachers on the process.	Some progress made on achieving action. Children’s needs still unmet. Achieving this action requires the full commencement of the EPSEN Act.
93	Develop a primary pupil data base to allow for more effective identification and response to children with special needs.		A primary pupil database has not yet been established. Some preliminary work was done in 2004 but no evidence of progress since.	Action not achieved. No positive impact on children’s lives.
94	Develop quality training and placement to facilitate young people with disabilities to access employment. Provide suitable transport and aids/appliances where their absence is a barrier to participation in education or training.		Quality training – changed philosophy, understanding that employment for people with disabilities should be community based rather than outsourced and ‘sheltered’. <i>New Horizons</i> policy document expected in 2010. It outlines new employment supports for people with disabilities, and moves responsibility from the HSE to a partnership between the HSE, FAS and the DETE. It is a positive development. Aids/appliances – there are coordination issues in relation to the transfer of resources for children with disabilities at transition points in education (pre-school to school, primary to second-level, second-level to university). The present system is not child-centred and requires re-assessments at transition points, which can leave children waiting a number of months for necessary supports.	Some progress made on achieving action. Children’s needs still unmet: accessing aids and appliances to support children’s learning remains bureaucratic and complex.
95	Examine the feasibility of introducing a cost-of-disability payment.		Work undertaken by NDA, at request of working group looking at cost of disability, recommended introduction of a cost of disability payment. Recommendation not taken on board.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved (examination of the payment’s feasibility) without follow up (eg the introduction of a cost of disability payment) this measure cannot have a positive impact on children’s lives.

**Objective K: Children will be educated and supported to value social and cultural diversity
so that all children including Travellers and other marginalised groups achieve their full potential**








Overall in relation to this objective it is important to note that the structures supporting and promoting Interculturalism have been dismantled in recent years: The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism closed in December 2008 due to Government cut-backs. In the same year, the Equality Authority budget was cut by 49% in 2009 and the Irish Human Rights Commission budget was cut by 24%.



	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
96	Develop school and community based initiatives to promote a more participative and intercultural society that values social and cultural diversity.		Ireland's first <i>Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015</i> was published in September 2010. It provides a framework for intercultural education based on ten key components and five high level goals. The Department of Education hosts 'Accessing Intercultural Materials' a central web-based repository of information on relevant resources for teachers, parents and students. DICE project (development and intercultural education) delivers development and intercultural education training to primary school teachers, it is funded by Irish Aid. The focus is more on development than intercultural education.	Action achieved. Has potential to make a positive difference to children's lives over the coming years. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. Implementation of the Intercultural Education Strategy must be monitored to ensure it is achieving its stated outcomes.
97	Schools to incorporate intercultural strategies in their school plans.		NCCA guidelines for schools on integrating intercultural education in primary schools published in 2005. DES has not funded inter-cultural piloting.	Some progress made on achieving action. Although progress has been made on the stated action (the production of guidelines) without follow up (integrating intercultural strategies into school plans) it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives can result in positive outcomes for children. It is unclear whether all schools have acted on the instruction to integrate intercultural strategies into school plans.
98	Launch an anti-racism public awareness campaign (key part aimed at children and youth).		The timeframe for the <i>National Action Plan Against Racism 2005-2008</i> is now complete and a report submitted to Govt by its Strategic Monitoring Group, but no new plan and no body to take further action forward. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) was closed in December 2008 due to Govt. cutbacks.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved, without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. An anti-racism campaign alone cannot end racism in Ireland, a longer term approach is required.
99	Conduct research into the needs of refugee children living in Ireland.		The Ombudsman for Children, an independent statutory agency, undertook a project to listen to the voice of separated children. Other research that has been undertaken has not been state funded. This includes work by NGOs, the ESRI, UCC and philanthropic organisations etc.	Limited progress made. Further research and evaluation is needed to ensure refugee children are adequately supported and protected.






	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
100	Target additional resources at non-English speaking children to enable them to participate fully in school.		Significant increase in language support teachers since 2000 but Government cutbacks (starting in 2011) will lead to a reduction of 500 posts over 4 years.	Action achieved. Recent steps in the wrong direction mean that progress made risks being reversed due to economic crisis.
101	Public services will respect specific needs of children from cultural, ethnic and linguistic minorities. Staff training will be provided.		Training not happening in education or early childhood sector to the extent that it might. Diversity and intercultural education and training not seen as priority.	Cannot measure progress as action is too broad.
102	Implement <i>Report of the Task Force of the Travelling Community</i> especially re health, education, accommodation and combating discrimination and racism targeted at Traveller children.		This taskforce report is from 1995. Progress made in terms of inputs (Traveller Health Strategy and Survey, Traveller Education Strategy). Evidence suggests that recommendations from various Strategies are cherry-picked according to ease of implementation. Traveller Education Strategy was published in 2006 but stalled and has only just begun to have Traveller representative input again in 2009. Health/accommodation Strategies are working better. There is no national level programme around tackling discrimination and racism against Traveller children. Any work taking place is at individual school level.	Action not achieved. Context has changed so difficult to measure : action is out of date and policy has moved on. This issue needs urgent attention.
103	Treat unaccompanied children seeking refugee status in accordance with international best practice, including provision of a designated social worker and a GAL.		<p>During the ten years of the Strategy, separated children were not treated in accordance with best practice. The majority were placed in private hostels in Dublin with no care staff and little supports. Over 500 children disappeared during this period; the majority remain unaccounted for. Children in general were not provided with a GAL or an allocated social worker.</p> <p>In 2009, the HSE begun operating an 'equity of care' policy: treating separated children on a par with other children in the care system. Now, foster placements are sourced from around the country and social work responsibility is transferred to the local community care team. During 2010, the last of the 7 private hostels were closed.</p>	<p>Progress happened in ninth year of the Strategy.</p> <p>This action was not progressed for first 9 years of NCS; RRIP spurred some action in final year (2010). New policy now in operation; is welcomed but brings with it new challenges.</p> <p>Timely evaluation of equity of care policy needed to ensure it is delivering the intended outcomes for separated children.</p> <p>The Immigration, Residency and Protection Bill 2010 provides an opportunity to set out a clear legal framework for the care and protection of separated children.</p>



Group Three: All Children need the Support of Family and Community






Objective L: Children will have the opportunity to experience the qualities of family life

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
<i>1. Supporting Families locally</i>				
104	Quality parenting courses available to all parents.		Variety of parenting courses available (Barnardos provides a database funded by the Family Support Agency)	Some progress made on achieving action. Difficult to measure impact of this action on children: no target/indicator provided.
105	Pilot teenage parenting initiatives expanded to all health boards.		Teen Parents Support Programme in operation. Not yet available in all HSE areas.	Some progress made on achieving action. Impact on children's lives is unknown. No evaluation of Programme available.
106	Family and community resource centres expanded.		Now over 100 Family Resource Centres in Ireland, which aim to help combat disadvantage by supporting the functioning of the family unit.	Some progress made on achieving action. Services provided by Family Resource Centres made a positive difference to children's lives Term used to frame this action ('expand') is difficult to measure.
107	Successful aspects of Family Services Pilot Project extended.		Not clear what these pilot projects were. 2005 OMCYA midterm progress report says that it was fully implemented.	Do not have information to measure progress.
108	Community Mothers programmes extended to all health board community care areas.		Pockets of very good practice but not consistent nationally. Role of local champion can be important. Dublin North East and Mid-Leinster HSE annual reports available online.	Some progress made on achieving action. Impact on children's lives is unknown.
109	Increase number of family support workers		Number of family support workers likely to have increased since 2000 so some progress can be claimed but there is no indication of baseline figure or where additional workers were to be placed (e.g. in HSE, funding non-statutory organisations etc) or number required/budgeted for.	Do not have information to measure progress. Terms used to frame this action ('increase') are difficult to measure. Lack of target or timeline is problematic.
110	Develop early assessment and intervention for families with children with a disability.		Disability Act 2005 entitles children under 5 years to an assessment of need (but not to identified services). Intended that commencement for children aged 5-18 years be done in tandem with implementation of the EPSEN Act. This is stalled.	Some progress made on achieving action. Made a positive difference to some children's lives, but is still limited to children under 5 years.

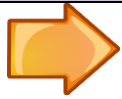






	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
111	Improved and proactive service for lone parents (including localised payments).		This has happened. Is still in progress in some areas but has been broadly achieved.	Action achieved. Impact on children's lives is unknown.
112	Enhance access to services locally through REACH (which will assist in greater integration of public services).		Reachservices.ie – web site linked to this initiative is no longer operational.	Action not achieved. Appears to be abandoned. No positive impact on children's lives.

Action: NCS 2000-2010		Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
<i>2. Measures taken to provide a family type experience for children in care</i>				
113	Publish a Bill to implement the Hague Convention on the protection of children and co-operation in respect of inter-country adoption.		The Adoption Act 2010 was passed into law in November 2010, which provided for the ratification and membership of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption. The Act established the Adoption Authority.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children's lives. The resourcing of the Adoption Authority must be sustained to ensure the administration of the new adoption legislation.
114	Expand and support foster care based on the major review undertaken by the National Foster Carer Working Group.		The review was published in 2001. Progress has been made on a number of its recommendations, including the National Standards for Foster Care and an accompanying children's version were launched in April 2003. Recent SSI inspections in a number of foster care services have highlight many issues of concern and weak implementation of national standards.	Some progress made on achieving action. Reforms todate have made a positive difference to children's lives but more needs to be done, a priority issue is the roll out of inspections by the SSI.
115	Review domestic adoption law (in light of recommendations of the Constitution Review Group and All-Party Committee on the Constitution).		Domestic adoption law was reviewed in 2004 but the recommendations of the review were not acted upon. The Constitution Review Group recommended that a child should have a right to his or her own identity which includes a knowledge and history of his or her own birth parents and be entitled to this information not only for genetic and health reasons but also for psychological reasons. This has not been progressed. Following the passage of the Adoption Act 2010, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs committed to examine the introduction of legislation on information and tracing.	Action achieved. Although the stated action was achieved (undertaking a review), without follow up it cannot have a positive impact on children's lives. Implementation of the recommendations (and introducing relevant legislation) made by the Constitution Review Group would result in positive outcomes for children.
116	Upgrade children's residential homes and improve the physical environment.		The SSI inspection process has lead to improvements in residential care over the past 10 years. However, their reports continue to highlight centres where problems persist, for example recent report relating to the Ballydowd Special Care Centre.	Some progress made on achieving action. Made a positive difference to some children's lives. Terms used to frame this action ('upgrade') are difficult to measure. There is no associated target or timeline.
117	Identify best practice and failure to reach standards in children's homes through inspections by the Irish Social Services Inspectorate.		The Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) introduced in 2001 national standards for children's residential centres and for special care units. It also reported in 2008 on the use of residential care for children under 12 years. Centres are inspected by SSI against these standards; and this process has lead to improvements across the services.	Some progress made on achieving action. Made a positive difference to some children's lives. HIQA requires adequate resources so it can deliver on its remit.






	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
118	Increase capacity of residential care services to care for vulnerable children in partnership with families.		<p>Ryan Report <i>Implementation Plan</i> commits that the HSE will actively review the impact of placement distance from family and community on a child's ongoing relationship with family, if the placement goes ahead, the HSE will put in place a plan to facilitate ongoing contact. Ensuring that each child has an allocated social worker and care plan is key to ensuring this can happen.</p> <p>Local HSE health offices also have a role to play in the provision of family support services to vulnerable families in whose children have been taken into care.</p>	<p>Some progress made on achieving action.</p> <p>Terms used to frame this action ('increase capacity') are difficult to measure.</p>
119	Enable children to learn their birth identity through 'right to birth information' in legislation.		National Adoption Contact Register allows those over 18 years who have been adopted and birth parents to seek each other voluntarily but there is no right of a child to access birth information.	<p>Action not achieved.</p> <p>No positive impact on children's lives.</p>

Action: NCS 2000-2010		Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
3. Families in conflict				
120	Invest in scheme of grants to voluntary organisations providing marriage, child and bereavement counselling.		Scheme of grants administered by Family Support Agency.	Some progress made on achieving action. Terms used to frame this action are difficult to measure. No target/indicator.
121	Promote awareness about the effects of violence in the home on children Research the effects of violence on children Develop protocols for service providers (Undertaken by National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women working with eight regional committees).		Various awareness raising initiatives at local and national level over the course of the NCS. <i>Listen to me</i> research (2006) undertaken by TCD. <i>Children First</i> Guidelines provide protocols for service providers, but their implementation remains voluntary. <i>Framework for the Assessment of Vulnerable Children and their Families: Assessment Tool and Practice Guidance</i> was published in 2006 by the Children's Research Centre, TCD and Sheffield University. It was a collaborative effort between the two universities and the HSE, however it is just a model: there is no obligation for it to be applied. COSC, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence was established in 2007 to ensure the delivery of co-ordinated response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. COSC's strategy includes a number of actions and activities relating to violence against children.	Some progress made on achieving action. Terms used to frame this action ('promote awareness/'research the effects') are difficult to measure.
122	Establish Family Mediation service on a statutory basis.		Family mediation service now makes up part of the Family Support Agency structure.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
123	Adequately resource court proceedings and the implementation of orders with additional Probation and Welfare staff, recruited for civil (family law) matters.		No additional probation and welfare staff have been recruited, however retired probation officers engaged to do family law reports. Some Guardian Ad Litem also undertake this work on behalf of the P&W service.	Some progress made on achieving action. There is still not of required level of service or standard.
124	Initiate additional research on family-related issues under the Families Research Programme.		Family Support Agency now has responsibility for this funding programme. It is active.	Action achieved. Has potential to make a positive difference to children's lives over the coming years.

Objective M: Children will benefit from and contribute to vibrant local communities

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
125	Encourage active involvement of children in community and voluntary activity through the National Youth Work Development Plan & White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity.		<i>Young Voices: Guidelines on how to involve children and young people in your work</i> – developed by OMCYA, the Children’s Rights Alliance and NYCI – were published in 2005. Active citizenship office closed in Budget 2010. The Children’s Rights Alliance represents children’s issues as a member of the Community and Voluntary Pillar of Social Partnership. The level of child participation across the C&V sector is difficult to estimate giving organisational differences.	Some progress made on achieving action. Terms used to frame this action (‘Encourage active involvement’) are difficult to measure.
126	Identify a means to ensure that the best interests of children are considered in delivery of community and voluntary activity services that impact on them.		No measure identified.	No action achieved.
127	Health Boards and Family Support Centres to provide support and training in relation to children’s services (and support development of local self-help groups re mental health, bereavement etc).		During the 10 year period, the number of Community Development Projects grew to 180. However, they have experienced significant cut backs in recently. Children Services Committees are being rolled out (see 42). They will take this on.	Cannot measure progress as action is too broad. It was noted by OMCYA in their 2005 review that ‘the wide-ranging nature of this action did not facilitate meaningful collection of data’.
128	Expand pilots to develop capacity of local Traveller communities to support primary healthcare and health promotion of Traveller children.		Traveller Health Units established in every HSE area.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children’s lives.
129	Implement the White Paper <i>Supporting Voluntary Activity</i> (specific: to put in place a more cohesive and coherent policy and administrative framework to support voluntary activity).		Provision of funding (ongoing) to support national organisations in the CV sector (e.g. Alliance), but funding has been cut in recent budgets. Charities Act 2009 now in operation.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing.
130	Expand initiatives that integrate and support C & V services (Springboard, Integrated Services Process and Family and Community Resource Centres) on basis of agreed common criteria.			Do not have information to measure progress.
131	Provide support for development of local services for children through the Social Economy Programme.		Social Economy Programme introduced in 1999 but no longer in operation.	Action not achieved. Action abandoned. No positive impact on children’s lives.

Objective N: Children will benefit from a built and natural environment which supports their physical and emotional wellbeing

	Action: NCS 2000-2010	Progress	Description of progress	Comment on progress
132	Enhance the design of open space provision and improve safe access to it for children.		No concrete action taken.	Action not achieved. No positive impact on children's lives.
133	Give consideration to children's safety while walking or cycling when planning traffic management policies.		Children's safety is considered when planning traffic management in relation to schools. Other initiatives are ad hoc. Local authorities are empowered to set 'special' speed limits to designated areas. Key policy documents include: <i>National Cycle Policy Framework (2009)</i> and <i>SmarterTravel, A Sustainable Transport Future (2009-2020)</i> .	Limited progress made. Terms used to frame this action ('give consideration to') are difficult to measure.
134	Provide funding for the development of pilot public transport initiatives in rural areas (with aim of encouraging locally-based initiatives to provide bus services in rural areas).		Rural transport initiative set up in 2002 and made permanent from 2007. Concern about continued funding in changed economic environment.	Action achieved. Implementation ongoing. Impact on children's lives is unknown.
135	Provide access to environmental education in the formal education system.		Over 85% of schools participate in the Green School Programme, an award scheme that promotes long-term, whole-school action for the environment. Social, Environmental and Scientific education at primary level (history, geography, science). CSPE, geography and science at senior cycle.	Action achieved. Made a positive difference to children's lives.
136	Provide environmental information to children (to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour).		Various initiatives undertaken, including the Green Schools Programme.	Some progress made on achieving action. Terms used to frame this action ('provide information') are difficult to measure.

LEGEND OF ACRONYMS

C & V	Community and Voluntary	NCSE	National Council for Special Education
CCCs	County and City Childcare Committees	NCTE	National Centre for Technology in Education
CECDE	Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education	NDA	National Disability Authority
COSC	National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender- based Violence	NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
CSCs	Children’s Services Committees	NESC	National Economic and Social Council
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools	NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
DICE project	Development and Intercultural Education	NTPF	National Treatment Purchase Fund
DSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs	NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education	OCO	Ombudsman for Children’s Office
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
GAL	Guardian Ad Litem	OMCYA	Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
GCVU	Garda Central Vetting Unit	OPFP	One-Parent Family Payment
HIQA	Health Information and Quality Authority	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
IAYPIC	Irish Association for Young People in Care	RRIP	Ryan Report Implementation Plan
IYJS	Irish Youth Justice Service	RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service	SEN	Special Educational Needs
NCAC	National Children’s Advisory Council	SESS	Special Education Support Service
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
NCCRI	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism	SSI	Social Services Inspectorate
NCIP	National Childcare Investment Programme	SSP	School Support Programme
NCO	National Children’s Office	UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
NCS	National Children’s Strategy	YAP	Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland
		YPFSF	Young People’s Facilities and Services Fund

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ALLIANCE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS 2011

Alcohol Action Ireland
 Amnesty International
 Ana Liffey Children's Project
 The Ark, a Cultural Centre for Children
 Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development
 Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
 ATD Fourth World Ireland Ltd
 Barnardos
 Barretstown Camp
 Belong To Youth Services
 Border Counties Childcare Network
 The CARI Foundation
 Catholic Guides of Ireland
 Catholic Youth Care
 Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
 Childminding Ireland
 Children in Hospital Ireland
 City of Dublin YMCA
 COPE Galway
 Crosscare Aftercare Unit
 Crosscare Drug & Alcohol Awareness Programme
 Centre for Social and Educational Research, DIT
 Down Syndrome Ireland
 Doras Luimni
 Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
 Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project
 Educate Together
 Education Department UCD
 Enable Ireland
 Focus Ireland
 Forbairt Naíonraí Teo
 Foróige
 Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN)
 Headstrong – The National Centre for Youth Mental Health

Home Start National Office Ireland
 Irish Association of Young People in Care (IAYPIC)
 Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU)
 Inclusion Ireland
 Inspire Ireland
 The Integration Centre
 International Adoption Association
 IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation
 Irish Autism Action
 Irish Association of Social Care Workers
 Irish Association of Social Workers
 Irish Association of Suicidology
 Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUIG
 Irish Congress of Trade Unions
 Irish Council for Civil Liberties
 Irish Foster Care Association
 Irish Girl Guides
 Irish National Teachers Organisation
 Irish Penal Reform Trust
 Irish Refugee Council
 Irish Traveller Movement
 Irish Youth Foundation
 Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)
 Jack & Jill Children's Foundation
 Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice
 Junglebox Childcare Centre F.D.Y.S
 Kids' Own Publishing Partnership
 Kilbarrack Youth Project
 Lifestart National Office
 Mary Immaculate College
 Matt Talbot Community Trust
 Miss Carr's Children's Services
 Mothers' Union of Ireland

Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project
 National Association for Parent Support
 National Children's Nurseries Association
 National Parents Council Post-Primary
 National Parents Council Primary
 National Youth Council of Ireland
 National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA)
 OPEN
 One Family
 One in Four
 Parentline
 Pavee Point
 Peter McVerry Trust
 PLANET
 Psychological Society of Ireland
 Saoirse Housing Association
 SAOL Beag Children's Centre
 Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
 SPARK Project - Support Project for Asylum seeker Refugee Kids
 Spunout.ie
 Start Strong
 St. Nicholas Montessori College
 St. Nicholas Montessori Society
 Step by Step Child & Family Project
 Sugradh
 Crosscare Teen Counselling
 Treoir
 UNICEF Ireland
 Youth Advocate Programme Ireland
 Youth Initiative in Partnership
 Youth Work Ireland

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