



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland


National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People **2025-2030**



Department of
Children, Disability
and Equality



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Accessible guide to this document

At the beginning of this document, we have included:

Statement on Language

In this section, we describe what we mean by some of the key terms we use in the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

Forewords

In this section, we have forewords by the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality and the Minister of State for Disability. These forewords outline the importance of a whole-of-Government approach in delivering on the Strategy for the progressive realisation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Vision, values and principles

We set out our Vision for the Strategy. This strategy and the actions that flow from it are underpinned by the values of equality, participation and choice. The principles are adopted from what is laid down in Article 3 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Executive Summary

We provide an executive summary of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

Introduction

We describe in brief the context in which the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* was developed, against a disability landscape where we have seen many changes, challenges and advancements in Ireland over the last three decades.

What informed our thinking?

We describe in brief the approach we took based on a review of earlier disability and equality strategies. We describe the consultations that we held with disabled people.

Our commitments

We provide an overview of key commitments.

Our commitments for advancing human rights for disabled people 2025-2030

We outline what we are committed to doing over the period 2025-2030 to advance human rights for disabled people in Ireland. These commitments are set out under the following five Pillars:

Pillar 1: Inclusive Learning and Education

Pillar 2: Employment

Pillar 3: Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Pillar 4: Wellbeing and Health

Pillar 5: Transport and Mobility

We have provided some key facts and figures about what the current state of play is. Under each of the Pillars we have set out our ambition regarding what needs to be achieved. We have outlined key commitments and who is responsible for delivering on these commitments.

Our commitment to a whole-of-Government framework to advance human rights for disabled people 2025-2030

We outline the framework that will support delivery of this Strategy and its commitments.

This contains the following:

Framework for coordinated delivery across Government

We outline the framework that has been developed for the Strategy. This will ensure more cohesive and inclusive action on disability across Government Departments in delivering on the Strategy.

We outline how the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* aligns with the existing policy landscape and relevant strategies.

We also set out a legislative programme that will be reviewed and updated in light of Ireland's 2018 ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

In the *Spotlight on Specific Policy Areas* for 2025-2026 we focus on targeted actions relating to Irish Sign Language interpretation.

We explain how the *First Programme Plan of Actions 2025 -2026* will be developed as a mechanism for delivering on priority actions under the Pillars.

In order to build capacity across Government and with our disability stakeholders we have focused on the specific issues of Accessibility, Disability Data and Research, and Stakeholder Engagement. These key areas require urgent attention and action to support and enhance the implementation plans under each of the five Pillars.

We outline our plan to establish Strategic Focus Networks to facilitate strategic engagement on the following areas:

- Digital and Assistive Technology;
- Cost of Disability; and
- Intersectionality (the experience of multiple, overlapping forms of disadvantage or discrimination).

We outline cross-Government action that we will take across the following areas:

- Communications and Information;
- Workforce Planning; and
- Reviewing whole-of-Government spending on disability.

Finally, we outline how we will go about delivering and monitoring the Strategy. We will do this by engaging with various stakeholders and in particular disabled people. Together, we will review progress on the actions we are committed to delivering.

Appendices

In this section you will find five appendices.

Appendix 1 provides details of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's role as the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in Ireland.

Appendix 2 has more detail on the relevant legislation and policy documents relating to disability.

Appendix 3 is a summary of the Articles in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Appendix 4 provides an alphabetical listing of all the Government Departments, Statutory Agencies, Semi-State Companies and other bodies involved in delivering on the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

Appendix 5 outlines the key principles contained in *Designing our Public Services – Design Principles for Government in Ireland*. This is an aid for public servants that are eager to put people at the forefront of service provision.

Statement on Language

Language is very important to all of us. Using appropriate language can guide us in how we support the rights of disabled people. These are some of the key terms we use in the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*, with a brief description of what we mean by these terms. It is also important to acknowledge that language preferences can change and evolve.

Disability/Equality training

We use the term “Disability/Equality training” throughout the Strategy. This refers to the type of training that enriches our understanding of disabled people as individuals who have agency and as human beings who have rights. This training is intended to enhance knowledge about a rights-based approach to providing services and supports and to ensure that disabled people have a say and a choice about their services and supports.

Disabled person

We use “identity first” language throughout the Strategy. We describe someone as a “disabled person” rather than saying “a person with a disability”. This preference was clearly stated in engagement with Disabled Persons’ Organisations during development of the Strategy. The term “disabled people” is recognised by many within the disability rights movement in Ireland as aligning with the social model and human rights approach to disability. This acknowledges the fact that disabled people are disabled by various barriers that may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. We also recognise that others may prefer the term “people/persons with disabilities”. This term reflects an understanding that they are first and foremost human beings entitled to human rights. We also acknowledge that some people do not identify with either term. It is important, however, to ask a disabled person what their preference is as linguistic preferences may vary across the disabled community.

Disabled Persons’ Organisations

We use the term “Disabled Persons’ Organisations”, also called “DPOs”, in the Strategy to refer to civil society organisations of disabled people as distinct from other disability organisations and charities for disabled people. We acknowledge that some may prefer the term “Disabled Persons’ Representative Organisations” or “DPROs”.

Intersectionality

We use the term “intersectionality” to describe the range of intersecting identities a disabled person may have. These include identities such as:

- gender,
- sexual orientation,
- race,
- religion, and
- membership of the Traveller or Roma community.

These intersecting identities can influence disabled people’s experiences and the types of challenges and barriers they encounter. Taking an intersectional approach assists in identifying, understanding and tackling inequality in a manner that acknowledges the lived experience of disabled people with intersecting identities.

Universal Design

We use the term “Universal Design” to refer to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability. This includes:

- public places in the built environment such as buildings, streets or spaces that the public have access to;
- products and services provided in those places; and
- systems that are available including information and communications technology (ICT).

Universal Design is design without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Progressive Realisation

Ireland ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2018. The Convention articulates a range of rights to which disabled people are entitled. These are economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights. Under the Convention, States are obliged to ensure that civil and political rights (for example, the right to vote, or the right to freedom from inhumane treatment) are ensured with immediate effect. Economic, social and cultural rights (for example, the right to pursue meaningful employment, or to participate in the community) must be progressively realised. This means that States are obliged to take steps, using the maximum of their available resources, to achieve the full realisation of these rights over time.

Foreword

Taoiseach Micheál Martin



I am delighted to welcome the publication of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

This is a Programme for Government commitment, and

we are determined to deliver this Strategy as a whole-of-Government framework for the implementation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)*.

Ireland has been on a journey in recent decades when it comes to disability and this Government is unequivocal about affirming our position on the world stage that disabled people hold the same human rights as everyone else.

This is the first national strategy for disabled people that has been published since the ratification of the Convention, and it represents an opportunity for everyone to take stock of the progress we have made together. Through the development process for this Strategy, we have seen first-hand the commitment and energy that disabled people bring to advocating for their rights and to bringing about a more inclusive society that will benefit everyone in Ireland. I am grateful for the continued and tireless efforts of disabled people and for the key role that they, and their representative organisations, played in shaping this Strategy.

The commitments set out here represent an ambitious programme of work for Government over the next five years, cutting across the full range of issues that affect a disabled person in their daily life – education, employment, income supports, active participation in society through sport, arts culture and housing, as well as health and transport.

These commitments are backed by record levels of investment which the Government will provide, as part of the updated National Development plan, to improve disability services.

Delivery of this strategy will demand a genuine and significant whole-of-Government effort. To ensure this, there will be robust delivery structures, supporting departments and agencies across Government to work together, with disabled people and their representative organisations, to deliver and monitor its delivery.

We know that disabled people do not live their lives according to areas of departmental responsibility. Government has a duty to acknowledge the totality of the lived experience of disabled people and to provide joined-up, person-centred services that meet their needs. To support this, I have introduced a new unit in the Department of the Taoiseach that will lend the weight of my Office to the whole-of-Government agenda articulated in this strategy.

Working together, across Government and with disabled people, I look forward, and am determined, to deliver on the commitments in this Strategy and driving real and positive change over the next five years.

Micheál Martin
Taoiseach

Foreword

Tánaiste Simon Harris



The publication of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* is an important achievement in the first year of this Government. Developed in partnership with disabled people, this

Strategy represents a significant step forward for the realisation of disability rights in Ireland.

Since coming into office, Government has been upfront and consistent in its message on disability: we want to do more, and we want to do better for disabled people. That is why this Strategy has been prioritised for publication early in our term, so that we can lead and be assured of its delivery over the lifetime of the Government.

Disability is an issue that affects all of our lives. In Census 2022 more than one-in-five of us reported being disabled, all but guaranteeing that each of us will either experience disability ourselves within our lifetimes, or that someone close to us will. This is why the improvement of disability services is an absolute priority for Government. Already we have made the landmark decision to establish a new Education Therapy Service which will be rolled out nationally on a phased basis starting in 45 special schools.

We want to ensure disabled people are given equal treatment and that barriers are broken down so they can reach their full potential. Most disabled people can be supported through mainstream services – simply by Government doing the work to ensure that everyday services available to the general public are accessible. Access to the same services and supports as everyone else is the least that disabled people can expect and this Strategy is designed to deliver on that expectation. It also brings a necessary focus to the areas of specialised disability supports that we must enhance and improve – reducing waiting lists to ensure that children and families can access the right care at the right time, for example.

We must ensure that every department and agency is considering and listening to disabled people in the design and running of their services, making them truly accessible.

Disabled people, their families, and their representative organisations have advocated tirelessly for decades and have driven many landmark achievements. In 2024, I was proud as Taoiseach to launch the *Autism Innovation Strategy*, in acknowledgement of the bespoke needs of autistic people and to bring about a more autism-inclusive society.

I am passionate about improving disability services in this country, it's one of the reasons I became involved in politics. The publication of this Strategy is welcome but the real work starts now in ensuring that its actions and ambition are delivered. That is what I, along with my colleagues across Government, will be working to achieve.

Simon Harris

*Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Minister for Defence*

Foreword

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley



As Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, I am so pleased to publish the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*. This Strategy will set the course for disability policy across

Government over the next five years, driving real change for disabled people.

As Minister, I hear from people all over the country every day, describing the challenges they face in accessing services. I am conscious of the struggles of disabled people, and their families and loved ones in advocating on behalf of themselves and others for access to the right services at the right time, within their communities.

Time and again, disabled people have shared with me their strong view of “Nothing about us without us.” As a department, we have listened to, and I hope heard, disabled people and their representative organisations on the issues that matter most to them.

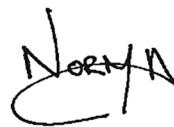
There were 34 focus groups, 5 town hall events, almost 500 responses to a national survey and more than 80 written submissions received by the Department. From these engagements, we learned that the key issues include access to a good education, access to good jobs, reliable and accessible public transport, and the necessary supports to live independently and healthily in local communities.

These fundamental entitlements are key to a good, fulfilling, meaningful life and I hope it is clear that these are the pillars on which this Strategy rests. I am grateful beyond measure to everyone who took the time to share their experience, and shape this Strategy. Disabled people with lived experience, their representative organisations and their families have been Government’s partners throughout the development of this document, and I look forward to continuing that spirit of partnership throughout its implementation.

We will build on the good work underway in cities, towns and villages all over Ireland, supporting Local Authorities to ensure that disabled people are at the heart of our communities, included and valued.

Perhaps most importantly, this Strategy will support Government’s enduring commitment to deliver better services and ensure that disabled children get the best start possible and that the necessary supports are there to ensure that they thrive into adulthood.

This Government has promised a step-change in the delivery of disability services in Ireland. This Strategy, and its built-in enforcement mechanisms, is the blueprint for how we will get there. Let the work commence.



Norma Foley
Minister for Children, Disability and Equality

Foreword

Minister of State for Disability, Hildegarde Naughton



I am delighted to publish the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*. As Minister of State for Disability, I have had the privilege of witnessing first-hand the passion and

commitment that disabled people bring to advocating for a more inclusive Ireland and for continually highlighting the need to provide for more services.

Disabled people and their representative organisations have given so generously of their time in the development of this document, and I would like to thank all of them for their extremely valuable input and determination to ensure that this Strategy sets the foundation to deliver the step-change in disability services which is so badly needed.

We know that this determination is in part born of frustration with a system that has failed many individuals and families who are waiting too long for services. Despite improvements and progress over recent years, including an uplift of €1.2 billion in funding for specialist disability services since 2020, there is much more to be done, and Government must work to earn the trust of disabled people through action. There are therapists delivering services through exemplary practice all over the country and, together with disabled people, it is Government's job to drive reform and deliver services that are person-led, sustainable, beneficial and cost-effective.

However, we know that investment in specialist services and therapies is only part of the step-change that is needed to deliver real change. For most disabled people, the services and supports required to live a good life can be found in the mainstream, delivered as part of the everyday functions of Government Departments and State Agencies.

From speaking to disabled people, their representative organisations, their families, advocates, and professionals working across disability services, it is clear that disabled people are often prevented from enjoying the same opportunities as other citizens. For disabled people, it is often challenging to access education, to secure meaningful employment and enjoy a career, to avail of transport, and to participate in one's local community.

This is a reality and a lived experience that we must acknowledge, but it is not acceptable. We must work together to deliver change. This Strategy has some big-ticket items like increasing capital investment, but also contains actions that will make a big difference to the everyday lives of disabled people. These include:

- Supporting transitions throughout the entire education system to help people move from early years to post-primary, and right through to further education and employment and the means to live independent lives.
- Delivering supports for employers, removing barriers to the employment of disabled people.
- Conducting walkability audits to ensure our towns and cities are accessible to all citizens.
- Removing barriers which prevent disabled people from enjoying public spaces such as parks and partaking in cultural events.

Working with disabled people, these are just a few of the initiatives we will deliver through this Strategy in order to bring about real progress by 2030. I am grateful to all of the disabled people and advocates whose voices and experiences have shaped this document and look forward to continuing this partnership for the delivery of a better and more inclusive Ireland.

Hildegarde Naughton

Hildegarde Naughton
Minister of State for Disability

Vision, Values and Principles

Vision

To ensure full participation in Irish society on an equal basis with others, disabled people have a right to a life without barriers.

Values

This Strategy and the actions that flow from it are underpinned by the values of equality, participation, and choice.

EQUALITY

We are committed to equality for disabled people as rights holders. Disabled people are entitled to equitable treatment and to have opportunities like everyone else has in Irish society, without discrimination. Recognising that disabled people have agency, and equal status can only be achieved if their rights are upheld, and if they are widely represented at all levels of Irish life. Equality of opportunity means that disabled people can participate in education, employment, and all other walks of economic, social, political and cultural life on an equal basis.

PARTICIPATION

We are committed to maximising the participation of disabled people in all areas of Irish life. The State will engage with disabled people and have regard to their needs and interests. Individually and collectively, disabled people have the right to influence decisions that affect their lives. Effective participation is about having meaningful engagement with representative organisations of disabled people, including disabled children. It is about ensuring that disabled people genuinely participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes that affect their lives.

CHOICE

We are committed to disabled people having the right to self-determination and making their own decisions and choices about their lives. This enables disabled people to achieve their full potential. Disabled people should have access to quality supports and services which meet their needs at all stages of life.

Principles

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* establishes a framework for the promotion and protection of the rights of disabled people. Its fundamental principles are laid down in Article 3. These same principles underpin the approach taken in all the actions flowing from the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.



Executive Summary

This Strategy sets out a whole-of-Government approach to disability. Individual Government Departments and State Agencies are responsible for planning and delivering the commitments that come under their remit across five key Pillars.

Pillar 1 - Inclusive Learning and Education

Led by the Department of Education and Youth; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; in collaboration with the Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Health Service Executive; National Educational Psychological Service.

Commitment 1 – Inclusive Education

We will create a more inclusive education system for disabled children and young people that will respect the rights of everyone to choose and access the learning environments that meet their unique needs.

Commitment 2 – Transitions

We will improve retention rates and progression for disabled children and young people as they deal with transitions within education. We will support their participation and progress as they move from home through early learning and school to further education and enter the world of work or other adult paths.

Commitment 3 – Supporting Inclusion

We will help educators and staff to create learning spaces that are friendly and supportive of all disabled children and young people.

Pillar 2 - Employment

Led by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment; Department of Social Protection; in collaboration with the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation; Department of Children, Disability and Equality, publicjobs, Semi-State Bodies and parent Government Departments.

Commitment 4 – Civil and Public Sector

We will maximise opportunities and access for disabled people to get meaningful work in the civil and public sector.

Commitment 5 – Private Sector

We will actively promote the hiring and career advancement of disabled people across the private sector.

Commitment 6 – Supporting Disabled People to Work

We will provide the right supports at the right time for disabled people to access work or return to work.

Pillar 3 - Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Led by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; in collaboration with the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht; Department of Culture, Communications and Sport; Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Department of Health; Irish Prison Service; Local Authorities; Health Service Executive; The Housing Agency; National Disability Authority; Sport Ireland; Fáilte Ireland; RTÉ; Coimisiún na Meán; The Arts Council; Dublin City Council.

Commitment 7 – Individualised Supports

We will deliver the right individual supports at the right time so that disabled people using disability services can maximise their opportunities to live independently and choose to be actively part of their local communities.

Commitment 8 – Participation in Social and Cultural Life

We will increase the participation of disabled people in social and cultural life, including in arts, tourism and sport. We will improve accessibility across arts, cultural and sporting events.

Commitment 9 – Participation in Public and Political Life

We will enable disabled people to have meaningful engagement in political life and public fora and to actively engage in elections on an equitable basis as citizens.

Commitment 10 – Disability Services and Supports

We will improve access to supports and enable disabled people, particularly those with more complex disabilities, to live a full life in the community.

Commitment 11 – Housing

We will enhance the effective delivery of the *National Housing Strategy for Disabled People* (2022-2027).

Commitment 12 – Local Authorities

We will support the inclusion of disabled people in their local communities by continuing to improve our services and by creating accessible environments where disabled people can live independently and participate fully in all aspects of community life.

Commitment 13 – Criminal Justice System

We will ensure that disabled people have access to justice on an equal basis with others and that they do not unnecessarily enter the Criminal Justice system. We will improve the experience of disabled people in custody accessing services.

Pillar 4 - Health and Wellbeing

Led by the Department of Health; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; in collaboration with the Health Service Executive; Department of Education and Youth; National Council for Special Education.

Commitment 14 – Accessible Health Services

We will create a more accessible and inclusive mainstream health service for disabled people.

Commitment 15 – Safeguarding

We will ensure that disabled people are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and prevent abuse.

Commitment 16 – Health Promotion and Wellbeing

We will enhance disabled people's overall health and wellbeing.

Commitment 17 – Youth Mental Health

We will ensure that all disabled children and young people are supported to access the mental health services they need.

Commitment 18 – Supporting all Disabled Children and their Families

We will achieve a quality, accessible, equitable and timely service for all disabled children and their families based on their needs.

Commitment 19 – Oral Health

We will ensure that disabled children and adults can benefit from improved access to oral healthcare.

Commitment 20 – Screening Services

We will ensure that disabled people are made aware of the supports available to them in accessing the National Screening Service through improved targeted promotion.

Commitment 21 – Audiology Services

We will ensure that disabled children and adults who develop hearing loss can benefit from appropriate and timely interventions.

Pillar 5 - Transport and Mobility

Led by the Department of Transport; in collaboration with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Local Authorities; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Finance; Department of Social Protection; Department of Health; National Transport Authority; Transport Infrastructure Ireland; TFI Local Link; An Taisce; Health Service Executive; and transport operators.

Commitment 22 – Seamless and Accessible Journeys in Urban and Rural Areas

We will take a “whole-of-journey” approach applying Universal Design principles in the development of infrastructure and services to improve the accessibility of our transport system across the country.

Commitment 23 – Personal Mobility

We will support those who cannot use or access any public transport, or who may need private transport to get to and from public transport, by providing disabled people with enhanced personal mobility options.

To support us in delivering on these commitments, the Strategy will be supplemented by a Programme Plan of Action every two years, with the first for publication three months after this Strategy. These Programme Plans will set out how the key priority actions under each commitment will be delivered on, by whom, the timeframe for delivery, and relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They will also identify areas in need of specific policy focus. Growing the pipeline of Irish Sign Language Interpreters will be a key policy focus in the first Programme Plan.

We are also committed to delivering on a range of Capacity Strengthening initiatives that will transform how we approach disability policy in Ireland and support real step-change for the implementation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. These initiatives are as follows:

- **Accessibility** – to deliver more coordinated action on accessibility across government, with greater awareness of good practice and Universal Design (National Disability Authority).
- **Research and Data** – to deliver a more strategic approach to disability research and data across the public sector, we will establish a Disability Research and Data Advisory Group (National Disability Authority, relevant Government Departments and Agencies) and conduct a National Disability Survey (Central Statistics Office).

- **Stakeholder Engagement** – to deliver a framework across government for supporting meaningful and participatory stakeholder engagement with disabled people (Department of Children, Disability and Equality).

Strategic Focus Networks, led by the appropriate Government Department or Agency, will bring together key stakeholders to provide focused inputs across core and cross-cutting issues. One-day summit events will yield policy recommendations that will be taken forward in subsequent Programme Plans of Action. Under the First Programme Plan of Actions 2025-2026, the following areas will be the focus of Strategic Focus Networks:

- **Digital and Assistive Technology** – to enhance person-centred and integrated access to the technology that disabled people need (Strategic Focus Network Lead: Health Service Executive).
- **Cost of Disability** – all Government Departments to develop and implement whole-of-Government solutions, including in relation to the enhancement of services, that will address poverty, and the additional financial burden faced by disabled people (Strategic Focus Network Lead: Department of Social Protection).
- **Intersectionality** – to address the issue of how different minority identities intersect with disability (Strategic Focus Network Lead: Department of Children, Disability and Equality).

Finally, we will deliver on the following Cross-Government initiatives, taking joined-up action on the following key enablers for success:

- **Communications and Information** – to provide better accessible and more coherent communications across government, improved signposting and better access to information. The Department of the Taoiseach will work with all Government Departments and Agencies to improve communications and information and drive coherence and accessibility of communications and information across government for disabled people. This will include creating a clearly communicated and accessible path of supports and services for parents, children and young people.
- **Workforce Planning** – a strong skills pipeline is required to support current and future workforce needs. The Department of the Taoiseach will work with all appropriate Government Departments, the Health Service Executive and National Council for Special Education to:
 - Significantly increase training places and work placements for health and social care professionals, ensuring we are planning for projected future demand;
 - Enhance recruitment processes and attract international professionals to address workforce shortages; and
 - Improve retention of the existing workforce.

- **Whole-of-Government spending** – to develop a comprehensive baseline of Government expenditure on disability. Work across all Government Departments and Agencies to undertake a review of expenditure as part of a cross-departmental examination of efficiency and effectiveness of disability expenditure.

(All relevant departments, Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Sector Reform and Digitalisation; Department of the Taoiseach).

Robust delivery and monitoring structures have been co-designed with stakeholders to ensure oversight and accountability throughout the lifetime of the Strategy. Democratic oversight of delivery will be undertaken by the Cabinet Committee on Disability, supported by the relevant Senior Officials Group and the Disability Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters will function as part of the broader political and democratic oversight of progress. A Delivery and Monitoring Committee will be established with representation from Disabled Persons' Organisations and other disability stakeholders.

At all stages, the views and opinions of disabled persons, their organisations, and other relevant stakeholders will be central to delivery, and we are committed to building their capacity where needed to support them in providing this strong voice.

Introduction

This *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* is Ireland's plan to advance the realisation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. We are committed to the principles of the Convention - to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all disabled people and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that disabled people are supported and empowered to live full lives of their own choosing.

The disability landscape in Ireland has undergone many changes, challenges and advancements over the last three decades. *Strategy for Equality*, the 1996 report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, marked a key step forward in the mainstreaming of disability policy and the move from a medical to a social model of disability. Since then, the many strands of change over the years have seen Ireland experience intensive periods of disability law and policy reform and the establishment of statutory bodies to advance and protect the rights of disabled people including the National Disability Authority, the Health Information and Quality Authority, and the Decision Support Service.

The *National Disability Strategy 2004* and subsequent strategies provided clear direction and an unprecedented opportunity for policy development and the review and transformation of disability and mainstream public services. A range of policy documents, strategies, reviews and reports in the time since have sought to advance key disability issues. The adoption of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2006 and its ratification by Ireland in 2018, along with Ireland's accession to the *Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* on 30 November 2024, provide a further impetus to the progressive realisation of rights for disabled people.

In the *Programme for Government 2025*, Government committed to advancing the rights and improving the lives of disabled people. It prioritised the publication and funding of a new National Disability Strategy, setting out a vision to 2030. It adopted a whole-of-Government approach to advancing the implementation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of*

Persons with Disabilities. The *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* fulfils this commitment and provides a framework for a whole-of-Government policy on disability, emphasising the importance of mainstream-first service delivery.

However, we acknowledge that the progress made in advancing the rights of disabled people thus far has been hard won. It has relied on the strength and perseverance of many individual disabled people, their organisations, and those who care for them, advocating for their rights and access to services.

This Strategy aspires to be a further step-change in disability policy in Ireland. It does this in the context of a recognised increase in the prevalence of disability and the resulting need to ensure that mainstream services and supports are equipped to cater for the diversity of disabled people and their human experience. Recent research published by the ESRI indicates that there is a growing prevalence of disability among children in Ireland, with 36% of 13-year-olds born in 2008 having some degree of disability. Ireland's population is also ageing, and we know that disability occurs at higher rates in older cohorts.¹

This demographic shift means that a significant population of disabled people can and should be catered for via mainstream services, rather than specialist or segregated disability services, in keeping with the Convention's emphasis on mainstream service delivery and Ireland's aligned approach. We must consider how the delivery of mainstream supports can more appropriately and effectively accommodate greater varied needs within the population.

Success will require the wholesale integration of Universal Design principles, as well as thorough and consistent stakeholder engagement with disabled people across Government, in keeping with the stipulations of the Convention and in order to ensure the delivery of person-centred and disability-competent public services. The *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* is the primary whole-of-Government vehicle for the advancement of this work over the next five years.

1 Smyth, E., and Russell, H. (2024). Trends in disability prevalence among young people: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study, ESRI Research Series 192, Dublin: ESRI, <https://doi.org/10.26504/rs192>

What informed our thinking?

Review of previous equality strategies

The Centre for Effective Services² and the National Disability Authority have published reviews of Ireland's primary equality strategies. The strategies reviewed include:

- *The National Strategy for Women and Girls (2017-2020)*
- *The Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-2020)*
- *The National Traveller and Roma Strategy (2017-2021)*
- *The National Disability Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022)*³
- *The Comprehensive Employment Strategy (2015-2024)*⁴

What we learned from these reviews across all the strategies is that:

- focussing on a large number of actions for delivery over five years reduced our ability to respond to issues as they arose;
- tracking progress was difficult due to unclear delivery and monitoring structures; and
- the absence of a standardised mechanism for accountability or leadership at sectoral level made it difficult to problem-solve and deliver actions.

Learning from these findings and from consultation with disabled people, the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* will be a dynamic framework to target outcomes-focused commitments and actions that will be ambitious, transformative and achievable.

National consultation with disabled people

Since 2023, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality has been engaging with a range of stakeholders. These include disabled people, Disabled Persons' Organisations and other disability stakeholders. Our consultation sought to identify the key issues and priority areas that should be addressed in this Strategy. This engagement directly informed the commitments and related actions you will find in this document.

This engagement was also vital in guiding the questions that we asked in the extensive national consultation process which took place between November 2023 and March 2024. This process was conducted by the National Disability Authority on behalf of the Department. From the outset, this national consultation was underpinned by the principle of participation. Our aim was to engage meaningfully with disabled people through a genuine, accessible, and transparent process. Several hundred people gave their views across different strands of the consultation. The National Disability Authority and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality also proactively sought and gave due priority and consideration to the opinions of Disabled Persons' Organisations throughout the process.

Disabled people and other disability stakeholders such as families, parents, carers, and disability organisations were targeted and actively encouraged to participate. Marginalised and seldom heard-from groups, such as disabled children and people with significant support needs, were specifically included. Focused consultation reflected the intersectionality of disability with other identities,⁵ and, therefore, included women, migrants, Travellers, and members of the LGBTIQ+ community. A range of consultation activities was organised to allow different stakeholders choice in how they could engage. Consultation events were held at various times of the day, and during weekdays and at the weekend.

² Kavanagh, Lauren and Sweeney, Lorna (2023) *Realising the Promise of Equality Policy: An evaluation of the processes implementation of three national equality strategies*, The Centre for Effective Services, Dublin

³ *NDA Independent Assessment of Implementation of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy*, National Disability Authority, 2023, Dublin

⁴ *Final Review of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2024*, National Disability Authority, 2025, Dublin

⁵ Disabled individuals may belong to multiple different racial, ethnic, gender, or socio-economic backgrounds. These intersecting identities can influence their experiences and the types of challenges and barriers they encounter.

Consultation in Numbers

34

Focus Groups

involving 211 participants



18

Interviews

with disabled individuals,



5

Public Consultation Events

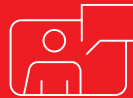
in Dublin, Cork, Galway,
and online, including 166
attendees,



85

Submissions

In written and video format,
from Disabled Persons
Organisations, disability
organisations, individuals,
and other interest groups,



484

Responses to a National Survey

Completed by disabled people,
carers, family members and
supporters of disabled people



We collected data from our consultation activities. This included number-based data (quantitative) such as how many disabled people were in employment. We also collected data about how disabled people felt about the services and supports available to them (qualitative).

This helped us to identify the challenges, barriers, actions, and solutions raised by consultation participants.

The final report on this consultation is available on the National Disability Authority website.

Our commitments to advance human rights for disabled people 2025-2030

We will progressively realise the rights of disabled people under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* by delivering on the following commitments under five Pillars. Each Pillar has a brief statement of facts, an ambition statement and a range of key commitments with priority actions identified for delivery during 2025-2026. Over the lifetime of this Strategy other commitments and priority actions will be identified for delivery in Programme Plans of Action on a two-yearly basis.

The actions set out here collectively outline a vision for a suite of disability services and supports, provided across Government on a mainstream-first basis, delivering optimal value for money and supported by high quality governance. Strong value for money will mean that these supports and services reach as many disabled people as possible and deliver better outcomes.

Embedding high-quality governance across the system will involve reviewing and enhancing existing governance structures, including within the Health Service Executive, and will foster increased representation of disabled people within the leadership and governance structures of service providers.

The articles of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* have informed the level of ambition, key commitments and priority actions to be delivered on under each Pillar.

In the following pages we look at each of these Pillars in more detail. For each Pillar, we look at what we know, our ambition, our commitments to 2030, and our priority actions for 2025 and 2026.

Pillar 1

Inclusive Learning and Education

Led by the Department of Education and Youth; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; in collaboration with the Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Health Service Executive; National Educational Psychological Service.

What we know

A person's journey through education directly impacts their ability to enjoy the full potential of their life, as well as employment prospects. We know that over the years there have been increased supports provided in mainstream early learning and education settings for disabled children. These include the Access and Inclusion Model in pre-schools; additional special education teachers and Special Needs Assistants in mainstream schools; and initiatives like PATH 4⁶ in further and higher education settings.

We also know that parents have sought the provision of special classes and special schools. There has been significant growth in the last 10 years in the number of special classes in primary schools and in post-primary schools, particularly in the provision of special classes for autistic children.

Many studies have shown that children and young people with Special Educational Needs have poorer academic, socio-emotional, and post-school outcomes compared to their peers without special educational needs. We know from *Census 2022* that there remains an attainment gap between disabled people and their non-disabled peers.⁷

Our Ambition for Inclusive Learning and Education

Our ambition is for disabled children and young people to have full access to inclusive learning and education in which they are empowered to reach their potential, fulfil their ambitions and live full lives of their own choosing.

The importance of an inclusive education system at all levels, as well as lifelong learning, is underpinned by Article 24 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Article 24 places an emphasis on education systems that support the full development of human potential and self-worth; the fostering of personality, talents and creativity alongside mental and physical abilities; and ultimately supporting the participation of disabled people in society.

Our ambition is for a learning and education system in which disabled children, young people, and learners of all ages are supported to flourish socially and academically.

It is critical that disabled students are supported as they transition between each education level and setting, ensuring that the pathways are easily navigated and clearly communicated and that any identified barriers are addressed.

Our aim is to create an educational environment that ensures that disabled people can work toward realising their career aspirations, on an equal basis with others. Crucial to this is that disabled learners are regarded with as much expectation as their peers in realising their career and life ambitions and are supported to excel in the workforce and contribute to society and their community.

⁶ <https://hea.ie/policy/access-policy/path-4-phase-2/>

⁷ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp4/census2022profile4-disabilityhealthandcarers/disabilityandeverydayliving/>

Our Commitments

By 2030, disabled learners will have better access to inclusive education at all levels and will be supported in transitioning through the education system, resulting in higher rates of educational attainment.

Commitment 1

Inclusive Education

We will create a more inclusive education system for disabled children and young people. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) published policy advice on inclusive education in early 2024. This policy advice is underpinned by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and recommends the progressive realization of an inclusive model of education in Ireland. To address this, we will put together a roadmap for inclusion. This will show how Ireland will deliver on a more inclusive system across all education levels. This will respect the rights of everyone to choose and access the learning environments that meet their unique needs.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

Early Learning and Childcare settings

- 1.1** Ensure that capital investment in early learning and childcare facilitates the participation of all children in early learning and care and promotes settings that are inclusive and accessible to all children, families and educators, informed by Universal Design Guidelines.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 1.2** Identify existing models of good practice between educators in Early Learning and Childcare settings and the Health Service Executive in supporting a disabled child's needs. This would inform the delivery of an enhanced integrated provision of supports.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Health Service Executive)
- 1.3** Enhance provision of professional support and advisory services around the needs of disabled children in early learning and childcare, which responds to the findings of the review of the Access and Inclusion Model.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- 1.4** Support the development of more inclusive and transparent admissions policies in early learning and childcare.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 1.5** Extend the Access and Inclusion Model to provide targeted supports to disabled children beyond Early Childhood Care and Education provision to all early learning and childcare settings and continue to enhance the model to improve supports for all forms of disability.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Primary and Second Level Mainstream Education

- 1.6** Develop a Roadmap for Inclusive Education, with the aid of the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument programme to take account of the National Council for Special Education's policy advice on inclusive education and Ireland's commitments under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 1.7** Invest in the School Building and Refurbishment Programme, in line with the progressive realisation of a more inclusive education system, to ensure that more schools – including mainstream schools and special schools - provide a high-quality environment to support the needs of disabled children.
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 1.8** Ensure that disabled students have access to the appropriate level of supports including the provision of therapeutic, and behaviour supports for schools through the National Therapy Service and as outlined in the programme for Government, initially in special schools, and the wider rollout of psychological supports through the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS).
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 1.9** Scope the requirements for the provision of Irish Sign Language Bilingual education and the examination of a newly developed Irish Sign Language subject to maximise learning potential for students whose preferred language is Irish Sign Language.
(Department of Education and Youth)

Higher and Further Education

- 1.10** Identify which educational supports best meet the needs of disabled students in third level. This will facilitate building a system of relevant supports for disabled students that will support them to reach their potential at third level.
(Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 1.11** Continue to develop flexible options and pathways to education which support and recognise the diverse needs of learners.
(Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 1.12** Expand the roll out of courses for people with intellectual disabilities, informed by an evaluation of current provision in 11 Higher Education Institutions.
(Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)

Commitment 2

Transitions

We will work within Government and with others to improve retention rates and progression for disabled children and young people as they deal with transitions within education. We will support their participation and progress as they move from home through early learning and school to further education and enter the world of work or other adult paths.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 2.1** Develop a national policy on transitions for all children from home into and through early learning and childcare and onto primary school and post-primary school and into further and higher education, supported by a national model of transitions.
(Department of Education and Youth; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 2.2** Apply learning and best practice from the evaluation of existing pilot transitions programmes, or those in development, to support effective transitions for disabled students into post-school options with particular regard to the views of schools, parents and learners participating in the programmes.
(Department of Education and Youth and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 2.3** Develop tailored guidance at all levels and in both mainstream and special schools, with a focus on encouraging aspirations and combatting diminished expectations.
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 2.4** Conduct a pilot project in further and higher education with the aim of developing a policy framework that will support disabled students in transitioning at key educational points.
(Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 2.5** Identify opportunities to include work experience/work placements for disabled people, either as a part of/or following completion of third level training/courses.
(Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 2.6** Use Universal Design approaches to foster inclusion across all programmes. Information on third-level courses will be readily available and provided in a clear and accessible form. In specific circumstances, courses for people with intellectual disabilities have been developed to facilitate access to higher education.
(Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 2.7** Support earlier transition planning for school-leavers and their families, who may be considering Day Services as an option, so that enhanced guidance and information can be provided to young people and their families on all post-school options, such as apprenticeships, employment, and further and higher education.
(Health Service Executive; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Department of Education and Youth)

Commitment 3

Supporting Inclusion

We will help educators and staff to create learning spaces that are friendly and supportive of all disabled children and young people. We will have integrated development plans for all staff on inclusive learning practice. We will enhance workforce capacity and competency in supporting individuals' needs, promoting ambition, attainment and achievement among disabled students.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 3.1** Support practice-education opportunities within school settings across professions including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Psychology, facilitating the expansion of higher education places in these disciplines.
(Department of Education and Youth; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)
- 3.2** Publish the first Special Needs Assistants Workforce Development Plan including actions to facilitate a more inclusive education system through an enhanced Special Needs Assistance service.
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 3.3** Develop an integrated professional development plan on inclusive learning and education for teacher education. This will range from initial teacher education to ongoing teacher professional learning and leadership programmes.
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 3.4** Redevelop the approach for evaluating provision for children and young people with special or additional needs to ensure a more agile and responsive model of inspection.
(Department of Education Inspectorate)
- 3.5** Progress the development of an implementation plan on foot of the publication of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 review report to address recommendations relating to legislation and policy.
(Department of Education and Youth)

- 3.6** Expand training opportunities for schools to support trauma-informed practice and other relational approaches to supporting wellbeing and mental health.
(Department of Education and Youth; National Educational Psychological Service)
- 3.7** Progress improvements to the School Transport Scheme for children with special educational needs, arising from the review of the School Transport Scheme.
(Department of Education and Youth)
- 3.8** Expand the Towards Inclusion pilot programme to all special schools to maximise opportunities for disabled children and young people attending special schools to engage with their peers in mainstream schools.
(Department of Education and Youth)

Pillar One

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The commitments made under this pillar stem from our obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and support the progressive realisation of these rights.

In particular:

Article 24 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* provides for the right of disabled people to education without discrimination and based on equal opportunity. Disabled people have the right to an inclusive education system at all levels, in the communities in which they live, and for lifelong learning.

Other relevant articles to Pillar One include:

- **Article 4.3** Engagement with disabled people
- **Article 7** Children
- **Article 9** Accessibility
- **Article 15** Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
- **Article 21** Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
- **Article 28** Adequate standard of living and social protection

Pillar 2

Employment

Led by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment; Department of Social Protection; in collaboration with the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; publicjobs; and Semi-State Bodies.

What we know

In Ireland, disabled people reported a consistent poverty rate of 19%, compared to 5% for the population generally.⁸ The experience of poverty and deprivation for disabled people is strongly linked to the difficulties they face in securing and holding down employment.

We know that about a third of Disability Allowance recipients are teenagers, with another third being over fifty (but under pension age). Current data also shows that about 50% of people in receipt of Disability Allowance are neurodiverse and/or have mental health challenges.⁹

We also know that disabled people are less likely to be employed than people without disabilities of their own age. Based on Census 2022 the employment participation rate of disabled people of working age in Ireland is 49%, compared to 71% for the wider working population.¹⁰

We know there is a comprehensive range of income supports, in-work measures, employment programmes and employer incentives available to help increase the number of disabled people at work.

However, some employers have misconceptions about employing disabled people that can be a barrier to their employment, while disincentives to work for disabled people include challenges of getting benefits restored should a job not work out.

Our Ambition for Employment

Our ambition is to substantially reduce the employment gap between disabled people and others who are in employment. Our aim is to enhance the opportunities for disabled people who can earn a living, to do so. Our aim is to introduce a range of measures that will address the needs of those who have been disabled since childhood and of those who have become disabled during adult life, including in older years.

Evidence across the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries indicates that the persistent disability employment gap is aligned with a persistent disability gap in education and skills. The education and skills gaps start early in life, as disabled children and young people often face multiple disadvantages that result in difficulties in thriving at school and in transitioning to job opportunities. Our ambition is that appropriate supports are put in place to enable disabled young people to maximise their opportunities to realise their potential within education, and to transition into work.

Article 27 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* recognises the right of disabled people to work and earn a living, on an equal basis with others; to freedom from discrimination; and to accessible work environments.

⁸ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2024/poverty/>

⁹ Data from the Department of Social Protection

¹⁰ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp4/census2022profile4-disabilityhealthandcarers/disabilityandeverydayliving/>

Employment rates of disabled people, particularly those with more significant levels of difficulty, are well below those of non-disabled people. Our ambition is to narrow this gap through proactive measures by education/training bodies, by the public employment service (Intreo), and by both public and private sector employers, to build skills, to assist disabled people to obtain and maintain a job, and to return to work after the onset of a disability or an episode of ill-health, and to provide ongoing support to individuals who need it.

Article 28 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* recognises the right of disabled people to an adequate standard of living, and to social protection. It commits States to work towards continuous improvement in living standards, and to assist disabled people who are in poverty with the costs of disability.

Disabled people have a high risk of poverty, particularly where they are unable to work, and on average experience poorer health than others, so that better welfare incomes and timely access to benefits if a job does not work out, play an important role in raising living standards.

Our Commitments

By 2030, disabled people will have increased employment opportunities and better access to meaningful employment.

Commitment 4

Civil and Public Sector

We will lead by example and maximise opportunities and access for disabled people to get meaningful work in the civil and public sector. We will enhance disability inclusion policies and practices, provide support for career progression and offer clear pathways to permanent employment, for those who do a good job on work placement programmes.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 4.1 Review and enhance disability inclusion policies and practices including approaches to reasonable accommodation in line with relevant Codes of Practice in the Civil Service.
(Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation)
- 4.2 Expand the number and range of work placement opportunities with mentoring support and explore clear pathways to permanent employment in the Civil Service.
(Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation)
- 4.3 Promote inclusion with the development of innovative recruitment, assessment and assignment practices.
(publicjobs and Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation)
- 4.4 Strengthen awareness, training and capacity to support employees with disabilities across staff, management and in the deployment of Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) in the Civil Service.
(Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation)
- 4.5 Ensure compliance across the civil and public sector with the 6% minimum statutory employment target for disabled people.¹¹
(All Government Departments and public bodies)

Commitment 5

Private Sector

We will actively promote the hiring and career advancement of disabled people across the private sector. We will have targeted employer initiatives to increase their disability competence. We will improve awareness of the range of supports available to them for the employment of disabled people.

¹¹ The *Disability Act 2005* sets out a minimum statutory target for the employment of disabled people across the public sector of 3%. Under the *Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022*, the minimum statutory target increased to 4.5% in 2024 and to 6% in January 2025. Compliance is monitored annually by the National Disability Authority.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 5.1 Launch and maintain on an ongoing basis a significant media campaign to change attitudes to employing disabled people, increase awareness and take-up of supports (e.g., Work and Access Scheme) and provide practical information on how to hire, retain and promote a disabled employee.
(Department of Social Protection, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment)
- 5.2 Expand and build on successful programmes like WorkAbility, Employability and the new Work and Access Programme to support disabled people into employment.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 5.3 Extend the Wage Subsidy Scheme to employers who retain workers, on their workforce, who acquire a disability that would qualify them for entitlement to an Invalidity Pension or Disability Allowance payment.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 5.4 Review the minimum hours requirement under the Wage Subsidy Scheme for disabled people and examine an increase to the payment rate.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 5.5 Establish a ministerial-led forum which will include engagement with relevant disability stakeholders, including Disabled Persons' Organisations, in order to raise awareness of supports and discuss issues related to the employment of disabled people.
(Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment)
- 5.6 Promote inclusion and accessibility in entrepreneurship through the Local Enterprise Offices, including adapting content and method of delivery in consultation with Disabled Persons' Organisations, and standardised training to meet the needs of clients with a disability.
(Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment)
- 5.7 Identify models of good human rights practice in the employment and advancement of disabled people to act as role models for other business enterprises.
(Semi-state bodies and parent Government departments)

- 5.8 Undertake research with employers in identifying enablers and obstacles to employing disabled people.
(Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment)

- 5.9 Promote resources and supports available to small and medium enterprises to encourage the hiring, retention and promotion of disabled people.
(Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment)

Commitment 6

Supporting Disabled People to Work

We will provide the right supports at the right time for disabled people to access work or return to work. We will provide enhanced wrap-around supports for those who need it, to ensure equity of opportunity for all disabled people to meaningfully engage in work.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 6.1 Review disability equality training provided to Intreo (the Public Employment Service) staff to ensure they can support disabled people to access training, employment and ongoing supports.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 6.2 Reform the Disability Allowance Payment and remove anomalies in the means test.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 6.3 Expand supports for disabled people seeking employment by doubling the number of Dedicated Disability Employment Advisors operating in Intreo offices to 62 and continuing to roll out the Employer Charter with a target of signing up 300 employers by end 2025 who will engage proactively in offering employment supports to groups at risk of unemployment, including disabled people.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 6.4 Examine ways, in consultation with disabled people, to make it easier to regain Disability Allowance if employment ceases. We will expand the "no questions asked" route of return to disability payments to 3 years.
(Department of Social Protection)
- 6.5 Review the retention of secondary benefits where disabled people take up employment and move off a Department of Social Protection payment.
(Department of Social Protection and other relevant Departments)

- 6.6** Undertake an analysis of the process and data where people have deferred a Day Services place to identify trends and contributory factors. Promote the Disability Day Services Deferrals policy to allow greater flexibility to access education, employment and other mainstream opportunities.

(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- 6.7** Implement recommendations arising out of the Rehabilitative Training Review, ensuring the programme supports the development of skills required to explore further education and employment opportunities.

(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Pillar 2

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The commitments made under this pillar stem from our obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and support the progressive realisation of these rights in particular:

Article 27 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* provides for the right of disabled people to work on an equal basis with others. This includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to disabled people.

Other relevant articles to Pillar Two include:

- **Article 4.3** Engagement with disabled people
- **Article 9** Accessibility
- **Article 24** Education
- **Article 26** Habilitation and rehabilitation
- **Article 28** Adequate standard of living and social protection

Pillar 3

Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Led by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; in collaboration with the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht; Department of Culture, Communications and Sport; Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Department of Health; Irish Prison Service; Local Authorities; Health Service Executive; The Housing Agency; National Disability Authority; Sport Ireland; Fáilte Ireland; RTÉ; Coimisiún na Meán; The Arts Council; Dublin City Council.

What we know

We know from Census 2022 that a significant proportion of disabled people experience difficulties in participating in daily activities in the community. Almost 350,000 disabled people had difficulties with leisure or using transport and 258,000 had difficulty leaving home.¹²

Disabled people are only half as likely to attend an arts event as non-disabled people.¹³

According to the *Irish Sports Monitor*, 32% of disabled people compared to 54% of non-disabled people play sport regularly.¹⁴

We know that access to an appropriate level of a Personal Assistance service is a vital resource for many disabled people. A Personal Assistance service facilitates a disabled person to have control of their own lives and to actively participate in society.

We also know the role of housing and aligning support services, as required, is fundamental to facilitating disabled people to live independently and be included in their communities. Of disabled adults who do not live in a residential setting, three-fifths live with a primary carer, the majority of whom are parents, with 41% being over the age of 60.¹⁵ In 2023, 2,279 people were living in congregated disability settings. Over 1,200 disabled young people (under the age of 65) lived in nursing homes in 2024.¹⁶

Our Ambition for Independent Living and Active Participation in Society

Our ambition is that disabled people can actively participate in society on an equal basis to others. This can happen when the right of disabled people to live independently is fully realised and they have choice and control over their own lives.

¹² <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp4/census2022profile4-disabilityhealthandcarers/disabilityandeverydayliving/>

¹³ The Arts Council Arts Insights 2024, the National Arts Engagement Survey, Dec 2024, awaiting publication

¹⁴ ISM 2024 | Sport Ireland

¹⁵ National Ability Supports System Bulletin 2023

¹⁶ <https://ombudsman.ie/en/news/d8cbc-ombudsman-lack-of-funding-is-no-reason-to-keep-young-disabled-people-in-nursing-homes/>

This includes a right to self-determination and the freedom to make decisions about how things are done.

Article 19 of the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* requires that a disabled person has choice, access to supports in their place of residence, and an ability to avail of community facilities on an equal footing with others.

Our aim is to provide a clear pathway for disabled people to access the supports they require to live independently; to ensure that support is provided in line with the person's will and preference; and to address the societal barriers that impact on their daily lives.

We want an Ireland where disabled people are empowered to participate fully in their communities. Going beyond the supports required to live with independence, choice and autonomy, the actions under this Pillar will speak to the rights of disabled people to enjoy their communities on an equal basis with others, where access to arts, culture, sport and society will be inclusive of all.

Our Commitments

By 2030, disabled people will have more of the supports they need to live with independence, choice and autonomy and participate in and enjoy their communities on an equal basis with others.

Commitment 7

Individualised supports

We will deliver the right individual supports at the right time so that disabled people using disability services can maximise their opportunities to live independently and choose to be an active part of their local communities.

Priority Actions 2025-2026:

- 7.1** Deliver 1 million additional Personal Assistance hours by 2030 to support greater access to Personal Assistance services and help maximise the independence of disabled people in Ireland.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- 7.2** Develop a National Policy on Personal Assistance that ensures a focus on the ethos of self-directed care and promotes a coordinated approach to Personal Assistance service provision across the sectors. We will also appoint HSE staff dedicated to Personal Assistance at national level to drive the development of the new policy and ensure its effective implementation.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Health Service Executive; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)

- 7.3** Complete the independent review of the Personalised Budgets pilot. This will inform the development of an effective model for Personalised Budgets.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- 7.4** Ensure that essential personal support services are deliverable for disabled people who need them by progressively aligning the Personal Assistance and Home Support pay rates with the rates paid in other sectors, to help address staffing challenges.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- 7.5** Increase availability of respite places and broaden the spectrum of respite provision in supporting disabled people and their families.
(Health Service Executive; Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Commitment 8

Participation in Social and Cultural Life

We will increase the participation of disabled people in social and cultural life, including in arts, tourism and sport. We will improve accessibility across arts, cultural and sporting events.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 8.1 Implement Sport Ireland's *Disability Inclusion in Sport Statement and Commitment to Action*. Having appointed a Disability in Sport Lead, Sport Ireland will provide directed investment through Local Sports Partnerships and National Governing Bodies.
(Sport Ireland)
- 8.2 Ensure all audio-visual projects funded by Sound and Vision make provision for/provide access services (for example subtitles, Irish Sign Language or audio description) to aid audiences' understanding and enjoyment of those programmes.
(Coimisiún na Meán)
- 8.3 Monitor and enforce compliance by broadcasters and video-on-demand providers with their obligations in relation to the provision of access services - subtitling, Irish Sign Language and audio description – with an increased focus on the quality of those services.
(Coimisiún na Meán, 2025-2030)
- 8.4 Engage with Coimisiún na Meán on the provision of Irish Sign Language for news content including via the use of innovative digital solutions to deliver more ISL content for audiences that need it.
(RTÉ; Coimisiún na Meán)
- 8.5 Embed Universal Design and accessibility principles across capital investment schemes including the Sports Capital Programme and all of Fáilte Ireland's Capital Investment Programmes.
(Department of Culture, Communications and Sport; Fáilte Ireland)
- 8.6 Have regard to Universal Design and accessibility principles for capital schemes across wider rural development investment programmes.
(Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht)

- 8.7 Drive greater awareness, build capacity, and support the tourism sector to enhance greater provision of accessible and inclusive tourism products, services and destinations, through the appointment of a dedicated Inclusive Tourism team.
(Fáilte Ireland)
- 8.8 Address barriers faced by disabled people when engaging in the Night-Time Economy arising from the findings of the Night-Time Economy Accessibility Survey.
(Department of Culture, Communications and Sport)
- 8.9 Provide for an increased and richer participation of disabled audiences and creators in arts and cultural events nationwide. We will work strategically with arts and cultural facilities to enhance accessibility.
(The Arts Council)
- 8.10 Enable equal participation in the arts by disabled artists and arts workers by enhancing existing supports through a new disability access policy and improving disability-friendly working conditions.
(The Arts Council)

Commitment 9

Participation in Public and Political Life

We will enable disabled people to have meaningful engagement in political life and public fora and to actively engage in elections on an equitable basis as citizens.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 9.1 Deliver inclusivity and capacity building supports and activities for disabled people through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).
(Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht)
- 9.2 Develop the new national electoral registration system - Voter.ie. All electors will be listed on the same system making it easier to register or amend details. Dublin City Council (the Designated Registration Authority) will engage with Disabled Persons Organisations and other relevant bodies regarding the accessibility of the public portal.
(Dublin City Council)

- 9.3** Provide clear, simple and accessible material at electoral events. This includes prioritising the legibility of printed material supplied at elections and referendums, and the accessibility of website information at electoral events.
(Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage)
- 9.4** To assist Public Participation Networks (PPNs) to ensure that they are as representative as possible, we will undertake research into diversity and representation among PPN memberships, explore barriers to involvement in PPNs, including for Disabled Persons' Organisations, and share the findings with all PPNs and relevant stakeholders with a view to informing inclusive participation.
(Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht)

Commitment 10

Disability Services Supports

We will improve access to supports and enable disabled people, particularly those with more complex disabilities, to live a full life in the community. We will progressively address gaps in services through the Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026. We will improve access to these supports, acknowledging that they function as part of an overall continuum of service provision and in the context of ongoing work to bolster the provision of mainstream services for disabled people. This will be supported by better data, systems and enhanced leadership and oversight capability.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 10.1** Update the Disability Capacity Review and provide up to date estimates of unmet need for specialist services and set out the funding and other resources required to address the gap between need and service provision.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 10.2** Support the delivery of service expansion targets as set out in the *Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026* and its successor to address the unmet need for services and supports as identified in the Capacity Review.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality).

- 10.3** Publish a Health Service Executive multi-annual capital strategy for specialist disability services which will provide the infrastructure required to expand supports and services in line with the needs set out in the Capacity Review and the capital funding available under the National Development Plan.
(Health Service Executive)
- 10.4** Develop a new vision and reform strategy for specialist disability supports and services for 2030 to ensure that services are progressively more person-led, sustainable and cost-effective.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 10.5** Support delivery of sustainable, efficient, and effective services for disabled people into the future by ensuring high quality financial governance, data and oversight arrangements and by addressing cost drivers in the delivery of services.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Health Service Executive)

Commitment 11

Housing

We will enhance the effective delivery of the *National Housing Strategy for Disabled People (2022-2027)* by strengthening the mechanisms at regional level for coordination between the HSE and Local Authorities to support local level coordination.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 11.1** Establish the Regional Interagency Group structure to improve coordination between the HSE and Local Authorities at the local level. This will help to bring together the key HSE and Local Authority staff responsible for making decisions. It will help Local Authorities and the HSE to deliver coordinated service responses in each area.
(The Housing Agency; Health Service Executive; Local Authorities, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Health)

- 11.2** Complete the mid-term review, with input from stakeholders, in relation to the development of actions.

(The Housing Agency; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Health)

- 11.3** Advance the delivery of appropriate housing for the purposes of specialist disability residential services, providing additional residential places aligned with the *HSE National Service Plan* and informed by HSE service needs. This will include advancing de-congregation in line with Article 19 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

(Local Authorities; The Housing Agency; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Health Service Executive; Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- 11.4** Finish a Cost Benefit Analysis of lifetime adaptable Universal Design homes, including UD Home and UD Home+ dwellings. This will
- provide a robust economic appraisal of Universal Design Homes;
 - identify the main technical issues in estimating costs and benefits of implementing Universal Design in housing; and
 - the implications of integrating Universal Design Homes as a percentage of dwellings in all new housing developments.

(National Disability Authority; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage)

- 11.5** In accordance with the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 - Implementation Plan, consider the published analysis conducted by the National Disability Authority (NDA) and evaluate further actions to support the advancement of Universal Design principles in new housing.

(Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage)

Commitment 12

Local Authorities

We will support the inclusion of disabled people in their local communities by continuing to improve our services and in creating accessible environments where disabled people can live independently and participate fully in all aspects of community life.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 12.1** Ensure that there is a dedicated full-time post for an Access and Inclusion Officer in each Local Authority, in line with obligations under the *Disability Act 2005*. This role is pivotal for improved engagement with disabled people in the coordination, standardisation and delivery of the Local Authority's legal obligations regarding services and supports provided to disabled people and to bring coherency and alignment with obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.
(Local Authorities)
- 12.2** Co-ordinate Local Authority commitments under the Strategy across Local Authorities to provide greater coherence in delivery of Local Authority actions.
(Local Authorities)
- 12.3** Conduct an audit across all Local Authorities regarding current status on disability-related matters, such as who is representing disabled people on Public Partnership Networks; access officers; information on accessibility of public realm; Universal Design housing.
(Local Authorities)
- 12.4** Local Authorities will develop and implement a plan for conducting walkability audits of towns and cities with a population greater than 5,000. This will provide relevant information for the development of accessible route maps in cities and towns as well as a plan for progressively addressing inaccessible road crossings, footpaths and the location of street furniture in local towns and cities.
(Local Authorities)
- 12.5** Establish a mechanism for the sharing of best practice across Local Authorities with regards to their obligations in the implementation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.
(Local Authorities)

Commitment 13

Criminal Justice System

We will ensure that disabled people have access to justice on an equal basis with others and that they do not unnecessarily enter the Criminal Justice system. We will improve the experience of disabled people in custody accessing services.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 13.1** Provide better coordinated support for disabled people interacting with the Irish Prison Service by developing clear pathways for access to primary, community, mental health and disability services, between the Health Service Executive and criminal justice agencies.
(*Irish Prison Service; Health Service Executive*)
- 13.2** Consider how the Registered Intermediaries Scheme, following the pilot programme, could be promoted to increase awareness about its availability to support those with communication difficulties to engage with the system and have effective access to justice.
(*Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration*).

Pillar 3

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The commitments made under this pillar stem from our obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and support the progressive realisation of these rights in particular:

Article 19 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* provides for the right of disabled people to live in the community, be included and participate in the community, the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live, with support and responsive community services.

Other relevant articles to Pillar Three include:

- **Article 4.3** Engagement with disabled people
- **Article 9** Accessibility
- **Article 12** Equal recognition before the law
- **Article 14** Liberty and security of the person
- **Article 18** Liberty of movement and nationality
- **Article 21** Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
- **Article 23** Respect for home and the family
- **Article 28** Adequate standard of living and social protection
- **Article 30** Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

Pillar 4

Wellbeing and Health

Led by the Department of Health; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; in collaboration with the Health Service Executive; Department of Education and Youth; National Council for Special Education.

What we know

We know that disabled people are less likely to rate their health as good, and more likely to rate their health as bad, than people without a disability. In *Census 2022*, among people who experienced at least one long lasting condition to any extent, 23% reported very good health. In contrast, 53% of the total population reported very good health.¹⁷

We know that people in the most disadvantaged areas are four and a half times more likely to report not having good health.¹⁸ The disability rate of children and young people in disadvantaged areas is equivalent to that of older people in affluent ones.

We know that disabled people, like everyone else, can experience a range of health challenges. The prevalence of mental health diagnoses is 44% among those over 40 years-of-age with an intellectual disability.¹⁹ Other challenges include oral health, with 1 in 5 of those over 40 years-of-age with an intellectual disability having no teeth at all.²⁰

Our Ambition for Wellbeing and Health

Our ambition is that all disabled people will have equal access to mainstream health and well-being services and can get any additional supports, services and treatments they need arising from their disability.

Article 25 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Health) recognises that disabled people have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability. All appropriate measures should be taken to ensure access for disabled people to health services that are gender-sensitive, including health-related rehabilitation.

Our ambition is for disabled people to be empowered and informed and to have a say about measures and supports that would enhance their mental, physical and social health and wellbeing.

Our aim is to expand and enhance supports for disabled people to live full lives of their own choosing and actively participate in their community. It is important to have a particular focus on access to integrated and inclusive wellness and health services, early intervention and on improving quality of life and better health outcomes for people using these services. Improving access to mainstream wellness and health services and having targeted initiatives on health promotion and wellbeing programmes for disabled people should ensure that individuals supported by health services and specialist disability services can improve and maintain good health and wellbeing.

¹⁷ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp4/census2022profile4-disabilityhealthandcarers/healthandsmoking/>

¹⁸ *Disability-and-Deprivation_Investigating-the-Relationship-between-Health-Inequalities-and-Geographic-Disadvantage-using-the-Pobal-HP-Deprivation-Index.pdf*

¹⁹ <https://www.tcd.ie/tcaid/assets/pdf/idstildawave5report.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.tcd.ie/tcaid/assets/pdf/idstildawave5report.pdf>

Our Commitments

By 2030, disabled people will have equitable access to mainstream wellness and health services and will be supported to achieve optimal wellness and health.

Commitment 14

Accessible Health Services

We will create a more accessible and inclusive mainstream health service for disabled people. We will develop appropriate disability equality training for health workers. We will ensure the concepts of Universal Design and inclusivity are central to future policies and in how associated services and supports are delivered.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 14.1** Develop a comprehensive disability competency training framework for all staff across the health and social care sector aligned with the *National Clinical Programme for People with a Disability* and co-designed with Disabled Persons' Organisations. We will target pre and post-registration education and training across the healthcare sector for personnel working with children, young people, adults and older people with disability.
(Health Service Executive)
- 14.2** Ensure that disability is incorporated into the *Inclusion Health Framework*. We will address intersecting challenges for disabled people who are homeless, Travellers, Roma, ex-offenders, and people who use drugs and alcohol.
(Department of Health)
- 14.3** Ensure that disabled people and disability service providers are included and actively represented in the engagement structures and processes being established as part of Health Regions implementation and the promotion of population-based planning. These structures include Regional Patient and Service User Forums and Voluntary Organisation Forums.
(Health Service Executive; Department of Health)

Commitment 15

Safeguarding

We will ensure that disabled people are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and prevent abuse.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 15.1** Complete an expert-driven, non-statutory safeguarding exercise to identify learnings from the Farrelly Commission's findings to inform present day safeguarding policies and practices.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 15.2** Develop a new policy on adult safeguarding in the health and social care sector, covering the full spectrum of health care and social care provided by public, private and voluntary services.
(Department of Health)

Commitment 16

Health Promotion and Wellbeing

We will enhance disabled people's overall health and wellbeing. We will provide preventative health and holistic wellbeing initiatives that are accessible to disabled people.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 16.1** Ensure the funding for new and existing community development programmes on well-being enhances community connectedness for disabled people.
(Department of Health)
- 16.2** Design and deliver Physical and Mental Health initiatives that are inclusive and accessible to disabled people of all ages, including the provision of counselling supports for disabled people undergoing treatment in health services. Ensure that accessible health programmes, such as Healthy Ireland campaigns, have disabled people specifically incorporated into their design.
(Department of Health)

Commitment 17

Youth Mental Health

We will ensure that all disabled children and young people are supported to access the mental health services they need. We will develop and deliver a ‘Single Point of Access’ approach to services across Primary Care, Disability and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 17.1** Ensure equitable and timely access for young disabled people to Child and Youth Mental Health Services.
(Health Service Executive; Department of Health)
- 17.2** Introduce a “Single Point of Access” policy across mental health services, ensuring that onward referral pathways are clear and clearly signposted.
(Department of Health)
- 17.3** Ensure that services are appropriate to support intersectional issues such as disabled Travellers and LGBTIQ+ young disabled people.
(Department of Health; Health Service Executive; Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Commitment 18

Supporting all Disabled Children and their Families

We will achieve a quality, accessible, equitable and timely service for all disabled children and their families based on their needs. We will address capacity challenges across all children’s therapy services in Children’s Disability Network Teams, primary care, mental health services for children and young people and in schools. We will reduce waiting lists for both therapy services and Assessments of Need.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 18.1** Ensure better integration through the rollout across the health regions of a single HSE point of access to direct children and families to the appropriate service (primary care, child and adolescent mental health services, Children’s Disability Network Team), informed by a review of the implementation of the *National Access Policy for Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delay* (NAP) and its associated Joint Working Protocol (JWP).
(Department of Health; Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- 18.2** Deliver actions to ensure more timely access to primary care therapy services for people with mild to moderate disabilities by progressing the three Workstreams under the joint Programmatic Approach to Address Primary Care Waiting List Management.
(Department of Health; Health Service Executive)
- 18.3** Deliver on the Programme for Government (2025) commitment to build capacity in primary care therapy services to support those with lower levels of complexity in line with the HSE’s the *National Access Policy for Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delay* (NAP).
(Department of Health)
- 18.4** Continued delivery of actions under the *Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026* and the *Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023-2026* to increase capacity in Children’s Disability Network Teams, to provide improved early intervention and therapy services for children with complex needs and their families, and to reduce waiting lists for both therapy services and Assessments of Need services.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality).
- 18.5** Utilise the Cross Sectoral Group on disability issues for children and young people to provide leadership and support decision-making for key Government Departments and Agencies with a role in the delivery of services for all disabled children and young people in Ireland.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Education and Youth; Department of Health; Health Service Executive; National Council for Special Education)

Commitment 19

Oral Health

We will ensure that disabled children and adults can benefit from improved access to oral healthcare. We will reform and modernise our oral healthcare services in line with the vision set out in the *National Oral Health Policy: Smile Agus Sláinte*. We will reduce oral health inequalities through mainstreaming of oral healthcare for all and through development of clinically appropriate referral care pathways for those who are unable to access care in a general dental practice setting.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 19.1** Publish the *National Oral Health Policy Implementation Plan 2025-2027*.
(Department of Health)
- 19.2** Address poorer levels of oral health, particularly among those with intellectual disabilities, by improving access to mainstream oral healthcare. Packages of prevention-focused oral healthcare will be developed for both children and adults, to be accessed in a general dental practice.
(Health Service Executive)
- 19.3** Commence reorientation of the Health Service Executive Oral Healthcare Service to lead on oral health promotion programmes and to provide dental services to those who are unable to access care in a general dental practice setting.
(Health Service Executive)
- 19.4** Progress an initiative that will focus on assessing oral healthcare needs for those in residential settings and develop training materials for associated healthcare workers to enable improved support to be provided for oral health care as part of personal care for these residents.
(Health Service Executive)

Commitment 20

Screening Services

We will ensure that disabled people are made aware of the supports available to them in accessing the National Screening Service through improved targeted promotion.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 20.1** Provide disability equality training for all National Screening Service staff and tailored training for access officers who play a key role in liaising with and supporting disabled people to access the service. Access officers liaise with disabled people, carers, and family members to facilitate accommodations to appointments e.g., longer appointments, wheelchair access and other requirements.
(Department of Health)

Commitment 21

Audiology Services

We will ensure that disabled children and adults who develop hearing loss can benefit from appropriate and timely interventions.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 21.1** Submit the *National Hearing Care Plan* with recommendations for a holistic model of care to the Minister.
(Department of Health)
- 21.2** Progress the appropriate linkage between public and private provision of care, including hearing tests and hearing aid provision, to maximise positive outcomes for patients. This will boost capacity and ensure waiting list times for early assessment are reduced.
(Department of Health; Health Service Executive)
- 21.3** Undertake awareness campaigns that address attitudes towards, and stigma related to, ear diseases and hearing loss in children and adults with disabilities.
(Department of Health; Health Service Executive)
- 21.4** Use expanded capacity to reduce the waiting list numbers, specifically targeting those waiting longer than one year.
(Health Service Executive)

Pillar 4

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The commitments made under this pillar stem from our obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and support the progressive realisation of these rights in particular:

Article 25 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* provides for the right of disabled people to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability.

Article 26 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* provides for the right of disabled people to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life through comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services and programmes, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and social services.

Other relevant articles to Pillar Four include:

- **Article 4.3** Engagement with disabled people
- **Article 6** Women and girls
- **Article 9** Accessibility
- **Article 16** Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse
- **Article 17** Protecting the integrity of the person
- **Article 19** Living independently and being included in the community
- **Article 21** Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
- **Article 23** Respect for home and the family
- **Article 30** Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

Pillar 5

Transport and Mobility

Led by the Department of Transport; in collaboration with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Local Authorities; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Finance; Department of Social Protection; Department of Health; National Transport Authority; Transport Infrastructure Ireland; TFI Local Link; An Taisce; Health Service Executive; and transport operators.

What we know

We know that for disabled people personal mobility and being able to make seamless journeys in accessible environments and on public transport are critical to their daily lives and active participation in society. In *Census 2022*, difficulty participating in activities related to leisure or using transport was the most common difficulty recorded among disabled people.²¹

We know that a significant proportion of disabled people have difficulty with mobility, and that 53% of disabled people who report a disability to a great extent also report difficulties accessing public transport.²² We know that disabled people spend a higher proportion of their income on transportation costs than households with a similar income. Within transportation costs, public transport represents the highest share of State help.²³

We know that reliable, seamless public transport options in both rural and urban areas, as well as personal mobility supports, are critical in ensuring that disabled people are empowered to access education, employment, health services and recreational activities on the same basis as everyone else.

We also know that a whole-journey approach based on Universal Design principles is central to achieving an accessible transport infrastructure. This must include all elements of a person's journey from start to finish using public transport and the associated built environment: from journey planning, to getting to stops and stations, ticketing and fares, getting on public transport, accessing onboard information, getting off public transport, leaving the station and getting to final destinations.

Our Ambition for Transport and Mobility

Our ambition is that disabled people will be enabled to participate, on an equitable basis like others, in all aspects of society by providing an accessible, affordable, sustainable transportation system and physical environment. Transportation is key to the economic and social inclusion of disabled people. The importance of integrated, universally designed transportation services and networks that include the built environment and information and communication technologies is underpinned by Article 9 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

21 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp4/census2022profile4-disabilityhealthandcarers/typeofdisability/>

22 NDA Survey on Wellbeing and Social Inclusion 2023

23 Indecon, Cost of Disability Report in Ireland, 2021

Article 9 states that in order for disabled people to live independently and fully participate in all aspects of life, they need accessible transportation, infrastructure, the built environment, information and communication technologies and other accessible public facilities and services.

Achieving this will require the continued roll out of an integrated, accessible public transport system and enhanced collaboration between all Government Departments and Agencies to ensure that the different stages of a passenger's journey, and the built environment at any points of interchange, are fully accessible. This is to enable disabled people to make seamless journeys to their destination in keeping with the aims of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. A Universal Design approach is central to this process and should be an integral part of the design, procurement and delivery of available, affordable, and accessible transportation and mobility services and infrastructure.

Our ambition is to enhance the personal mobility and participation of disabled people in their local communities. This includes ensuring community-based solutions that will reduce social isolation for disabled people. Our aim is to ensure that all transportation infrastructure, services, and facilities are accessible to enable disabled people to be supported in their journey from start to finish.

However, even if all the issues regarding public transport accessibility were addressed, some disabled people also need access to personal mobility services. This requires the provision of personal mobility options for those disabled people who cannot avail of or use accessible public transport, who require assistance in end-to-end journeys or who need to avail of dedicated disability transportation services. This focus on 'access of choice' and personal mobility will ensure that disabled people have equal 'access to opportunities' including educational, employment, leisure and recreational opportunities.

Crucially, it is our ambition to ensure that these vital advancements take their place in the context of a Just Transition and the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), and particularly SDG Target 11.2.²⁴ The needs of disabled persons in shared spaces are a fundamental consideration in the development of Active Travel Networks and the movement towards more integrated and sustainable transportation infrastructure, services and facilities in Ireland.

Our ambition in this Strategy will be reflected by the Department of Transport in its development of a new *Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2026 to 2030* which will specify detailed actions to support the realisation of that Policy's related goals to –

- Take a whole-of-journey approach to mobility, promoting inclusive access for all.
- Design infrastructure according to Universal Design Principles and the Hierarchy of Road Users model.

Our Commitments

Our aim is that by 2030, existing barriers will be reduced or eliminated to enable disabled people to get where they want to go. To achieve this outcome, we will ensure consultation with disabled people on the development of policy regarding transport and where it interacts with the associated built environment.

Commitment 22

Seamless and Accessible Journeys in Urban and Rural Areas

We will take a 'whole-of-journey' approach applying Universal Design principles in the development of infrastructure and services to improve the accessibility of our transport system across the country. We will provide increased funding for the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme, in line with the National Development Plan. We will expand the availability of accessible public transport options in urban and rural areas. We will aim to make the external physical and built environment accessible over time so that disabled people can get to the public transport they need.

²⁴ Affordable and sustainable transport systems: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 22.1** Undertake a review of all minimum standards, guidelines and regulations that apply to the public transport network where it interacts with associated built environment with regards to accessibility, including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. We will then publish a strategic review report with recommendations.
(Department of Transport; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; the National Transport Authority; and Local Authorities)
- 22.2** Undertake measures as to be detailed in the revised *Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan* to reduce over time the advance notice required to be given to undertake public transport bus and rail journeys.
(National Transport Authority and transport operators)
- 22.3** Invest in and overhaul audio visual communications and information systems on all public transport services to provide a better customer service.
(National Transport Authority and transport operators)
- 22.4** Consult and engage with disabled people in the design and implementation of transport infrastructure where it interacts with the associated built environment, ensuring application of a Universal Design and “whole-of-journey” approach in line with the objectives of the *Sustainable Mobility Policy*.
(Department of Transport; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; the National Transport Authority; Transport Infrastructure Ireland; local authorities and transport operators)
- 22.5** Expand the Safe Routes to School initiative, in consultation with disabled people, making travel safer for young disabled people.
(National Transport Authority; An Taisce; Department of Transport; Local Authorities)
- 22.6** Progressively scale up and expand TFI Local Link networks, including the existing integrated transport pilot in Leitrim.
(National Transport Authority; Department of Transport; Health Service Executive; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Health; TFI Local Link)

- 22.7** Establish a pathway to support commercial bus operators to transition to a 100% wheelchair accessible and low/zero emission fleet.
(National Transport Authority; Department of Transport)
- 22.8** Require taxi companies who bid for HSE procurement contracts to have a minimum of 20% of their fleet wheelchair accessible.
(Health Service Executive; National Transport Authority)
- 22.9** Extend the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Taxi Grant Scheme.
(National Transport Authority)
- 22.10** Develop a pilot programme to provide disabled people with integrated non-conventional public transport solutions in rural and regional areas.
(Department of Transport; National Transport Authority)
- 22.11** Expand the Independent Travel Support Scheme (previously called the Travel Assist Scheme) to a number of rural and regional locations.
(National Transport Authority and public transport operators)
- 22.12** Examine extending the Free Travel Pass to children in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance.
(Department of Social Protection)

Commitment 23

Personal Mobility

We will support those who cannot use or access any public transport or who may need private transport to get to and from public transport, by providing disabled people with enhanced personal mobility options.

Priority Actions 2025-2026 include:

- 23.1** In the context of a new scheme being developed by the Department of Transport, the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme will be reviewed.
(Department of Finance)
- 23.2** We will develop a new vehicle adaptation scheme.
(Department of Transport, with relevant supporting departments/agencies)

- 23.3** Support the upgrade of vehicles for specialist disability service providers to ensure that vehicles are adequately maintained.

(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Pillar 5

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The commitments made under this pillar stem from our obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and support the progressive realisation of these rights in particular:

Article 9 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* provides for what disabled people need to live independently and fully participate in all aspects of life. It requires accessible buildings, roads, transport, schools, hospitals, workplaces, businesses, services, public spaces, information, communication systems and technology.

Article 20 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* ensures personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for disabled people, in the manner and at the time of their choice and at affordable cost.

Other relevant articles to Pillar Five include:

- **Article 4.3** Engagement with disabled people
- **Article 19** Living independently and being included in the community
- **Article 21** Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Our commitment to a whole-of-Government framework for advancing human rights for disabled people 2025-2030

The *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* is the framework to bring about a transformative step-change in how all parts of Government approach their work when it comes to disability. It focuses on improving outcomes for disabled people. It reinforces the responsibility of all Government Departments and State Agencies to perform their functions in ways that are aligned to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, working collectively toward the advancement and realisation of those rights.

Driving change through existing disability policy and other strategies

This Strategy was developed to align with existing national and international frameworks for policy and rights progression.

This alignment will strengthen collaboration, ensure consistency with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, and enhance accountability across the board.

National Policy Alignment

Where an established policy or strategy addresses a key policy area affecting the lives of disabled people, its reporting structures will be meaningfully aligned to the overarching framework of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

Relevant strategies will include, but are not limited to:

- *Action Plan for Disability Services 2024-2026*
- *Autism Innovation Strategy*
- *First 5 - A Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and Their Families 2019-2025*
- *National Development Plan 2026-2030*
- *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028*
- *National Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future*

- *National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 and its successor strategy*
- *National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028*
- *National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027*
- *National Rare Disease Strategy 2025*
- *National Strategy and Policy for the Provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland*
- *Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023-2026 - Disability Services for Children and Young People*
- *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 and its successor strategy*
- *Sport Ireland Disability Inclusion in Sport: Statement of Commitment and Action 2024*
- *Sports Action Plan 2024-2027*
- *Tourism Policy Framework for the period 2025-2030*
- *Young Ireland National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028*, which includes a Disability Spotlight that focuses attention on the areas of most significant difficulty in disability services for children and young people, bringing visibility to the issues and fostering a cross-Government approach to make positive progress.

The framework for the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* will align with *Better Public Services*,²⁵ Government's strategy to deliver inclusive, high-quality services.

It will also align with the Sustainable Development Goals²⁶ and *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a global blueprint for reducing inequality, improving health and education and spurring economic growth.

Autism Innovation Strategy²⁷

The *Autism Innovation Strategy* was published in 2024. It provides a framework for cross-Government action on autism over 18 months and focuses on areas where there are bespoke needs for autistic people. The objective of the Strategy is to identify and deliver solutions to address the challenges faced by autistic people across Ireland.

It contains 83 actions across the following pillars:

- Autism-affirming society

²⁵ See <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-ndp-delivery-and-reform/publications/better-public-services-public-service-transformation-2030-strategy/>

²⁶ See <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications/policy-information/sustainable-development-goals/>

²⁷ See <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-equality-disability-integration-and-youth/publications/autism-innovation-strategy/>

- Equality of access to public services
- Accessible, inclusive communities
- Building capacity

It is vital that the needs of autistic people are accounted for within the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* as Ireland's overarching framework for action on disability. The *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* will incorporate and support delivery of the Autism Innovation Strategy. Progress updates on the *Autism Innovation Strategy* will be provided to the National Committee established for the delivery and monitoring of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

The *Autism Innovation Strategy* will be delivered in parallel to the First Programme Plan of Actions 2025-2026, under the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*. Subsequent Programme Plans of Action (for 2027-2028 and 2029-2030, respectively) will incorporate successor action plans as necessary to advance bespoke actions in relation to autism.

This will ensure delivery of what we are committed to doing under the *Autism Innovation Strategy* to support autistic people in a more holistic and coordinated manner and to provide a foundation for improved mainstream understanding and accommodation of the needs of autistic people across the public sector and across society in the future. It will also ensure, going forward, that autistic people are included in an integrated way in progressing the rights of all disabled people in the progressive realisation of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Legislative Programme

We recognise the need to review and update existing disability legislation and to consider where a need for new legislation may exist, particularly following Ireland's ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. This will ensure that relevant legislation properly accounts for the human rights of disabled people, with a focus on the following:

- **Disability Act 2005** – Review of the Act in light of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and of practical experience of its operation. This review will examine and update the statutory underpinning for coordinated action across Government on disability issues in order to strengthen delivery mechanisms for whole-of-Government action, such as review

of sectoral plans in the *Disability Act 2005* and in light of the Programme for Government commitment to legislate to place an autism strategy on a statutory footing.

(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

- **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004** – Addressing recommendations related to legislation and policy on foot of the publication of the EPSEN review report.²⁸
(Department of Education and Youth)
- **Equality Acts (Equal Status Act 2000 and the Employment Equality Act 1998)**. A General Scheme and Heads of Bill arising from a review of Ireland's equality legislation was approved by Government in November 2024.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- **Mental Health Act 2001** - A Bill to update and modernise mental health legislation in light of the 165 recommendations of an Expert Group Review, and in the context of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015.²⁹
(Department of Health)
- The **Irish Sign Language Act 2017** and related matters, such as the requirements for the regulation of Irish Sign Language Interpreters and structures to ensure appropriate implementation of the Act.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- The **Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022** - The Acts provide for a review of their operation and effectiveness not later than 5 years following commencement, which occurred in April 2023.
(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)
- The **National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities** - The publication of HIQA's current evidence review, to inform the update of the National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities, is planned for Q4 2025. This will help to inform any decision regarding the updating of these standards and their alignment with national policy and legislation.
(HIQA, Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

28 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Report_on_the_Review_of_The_Education_for_Persons_with_Special_Educational_Needs.pdf

29 See <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/report-of-the-expert-group-review-of-the-mental-health-act-2001.pdf>

Spotlight on Specific Policy Areas

The following policy area has been identified as requiring specific and targeted action over the initial 2025-2026 period. Subsequent Programme Plans of Action (for 2027-2028 and 2029-2030, respectively) may identify other issues requiring a priority focus.

Irish Sign Language – Strengthening the Pipeline of Interpreters

Under the *Irish Sign Language Act 2017*, the State recognises the right of Irish Sign Language users to use Irish Sign Language as their native language and the corresponding duty on all public bodies to provide Irish Sign Language users with free interpretation when availing of, or seeking to access, statutory entitlements and services.

Among other things, the Act provides for access to Irish Sign Language interpretation in legal proceedings, ensuring sufficient educational placements offering Irish Sign Language training for teachers of children who are Deaf, the determination of the minimum qualifications of teachers of Deaf children, and supports for access to social, educational and cultural events and services.

Considering these obligations, we will:

- Recruit an Education and Accreditation Officer in RISLI (Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters). This Officer will provide guidance on the “Pathway to Accreditation”, setting out the basic standard competency threshold for applicants to be placed on the RISLI register of accredited interpreters. This work will also establish the criteria for competency to facilitate any educational institutions who wish to commence Irish Sign Language interpreting courses with a view to increasing Irish Sign Language interpreter supply.
- Establish a Working Group on Irish Sign Language to consider the recommendations of the reporting by the National Disability Authority on the operation of the *Irish Sign Language Act 2017*³⁰ and any subsequent reports, with a focus on increasing the supply of Irish Sign Language interpreters.

Working Group priority issues for 2025-2026 will include:

- Identify barriers to recruitment and education of interpreting students and their entry into the workforce as Irish Sign Language interpreters.
- Make recommendations to address these barriers with a view to progressively increasing the number of Irish Sign Language interpreters actively providing interpretation services to Deaf people and giving due consideration to the implementation of high priority recommendations from the NDA reports, with all relevant stakeholders.
- Work with the Further and Higher Education Sector
 - to scope the provision and range of pathways and courses (part-time, full-time, remote or hybrid courses) available, with a view to identifying opportunities to increase the numbers graduating with qualifications leading to careers as Irish Sign Language interpreters, and
 - to scope the development of a quality continuous professional development programme for Irish Sign Language interpreters.
- Advise on awareness raising of Irish Sign Language interpretation and the Teaching of Irish Sign Language as a viable and meaningful career through Whole School Guidance and promotional campaigns.
- Identify the requirements and appropriate structure for the regulation of Irish Sign Language teaching and delivery of curricula in schools.
- Explore opportunities to provide for enhanced access for Deaf people to public services on a rights basis, including accident and emergency services, 112 emergency calls, and access to wider health and legal services, and in line with obligations in the *Irish Sign Language Act 2017*.

Membership of the working group will be made up of key stakeholders and include:

Citizens Information Board; Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters; Department of Children, Disability and Equality; Department of Education and Youth; Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Department of Social Protection; Irish Deaf Society (Disabled Persons' Organisations); National Disability Authority; Quality and Qualifications Ireland; Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters; Sign Language Interpreting Service; Trinity College Dublin Centre for Deaf Studies.

30 See <https://nda.ie/publications/report-on-the-operation-of-the-irish-sign-language-act-2017-december-2021>

Capacity Strengthening Commitments

Disabled people have identified several issues as being key to improving capacity for effective disability policy across the system and supporting mainstream service delivery.³¹ The following commitments will target these issues.

Commitments to strengthen our capacity for accessibility

There will be more coordinated action on accessibility across Government, with greater awareness of good practice in Universal Design, and the built environment, and good practice in how we provide information to the public, including through information and communications technologies, and in the design and delivery of services.

There will be key deliverables, including regular monitoring of the accessibility of civil and public services in line with current statutory accessibility obligations, as provided for under the *Disability Act 2005*, the *EU Web Accessibility Directive 2016/2102*, and the implementation of the *Irish Sign Language Act 2017*.

There is a fundamental requirement for goods and services – including facilities and information – provided by a public body, or on their behalf, to be accessible. This core requirement for accessibility is long established by the *Disability Act 2005* and reinforced by other legislation such as the *European Accessibility Act (EAA)*.³² Accessibility should be specified as a key requirement for the procurement of goods and services, except in duly justified cases.

(National Disability Authority)

The *European Accessibility Act (EAA)* is a European Directive that sets mandatory minimum accessibility requirements for a range of products and services. It came into force in Ireland on 28 June 2025 and applies to any company that wishes to trade in the EU. Work is ongoing to ensure widespread awareness of, and compliance with, the obligations of the EAA.

(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Commitments to strengthen our capacity for disability research and data

There will be a more strategic and coordinated approach to disability research and data across the public sector. This is necessary to maximise efficiencies, prevent overlap and ensure evidence informed policymaking.

The Central Statistics Office will conduct a National Disability Survey (Central Statistics Office).

In addition, a Disability Research and Data Advisory Group will be established. The focus of this group is captured in the table below.

- 1 Determine, cost and develop where feasible the enablers required for a more coherent and coordinated approach to disability research, which may include:
 - a. development of approaches to facilitate synthesis and dissemination of disability research
 - b. creation of a database of planned disability research
 - c. creation of a list of priority disability research topics
 - d. ensuring a strategic approach to disability research at national level.
- 2 Work in line with the National Data Equality Strategy to identify and address gaps in disability data and assist in the creation of a broader suite of standardised disability data (e.g., survey questions, assessment questions etc).
- 3 Propose areas for new and novel data collection, linking of databases and approaches to analysis.
- 4 Ensure coherence with other developments and structures in the data eco-system, such as better utilisation of existing data through the national data infrastructure (Individual Health Identifiers, data standards and classification), open data and utilisation of administrative data.

31 This work will be undertaken in alignment with *Designing our Public Services – Design Principles for Government in Ireland*, which sets out principles for the design of person-centred public services for a holistic and systematic understanding of service users' needs and experiences. Key principles include evidence, designing for trust and inclusivity (further detail in Appendix 5).

32 The accessibility requirements in the *EU Accessibility Act (Annex I)* are a useful reference for the accessibility criteria that products and services need to fulfil, and the "Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies" provides further guidance.

These activities will strengthen the quality and utilisation of existing and new data to provide a coherent basis for informing disability policy, service delivery and for future resource allocation requirements. This work will be aligned to the focus on evidence-informed policy under *Better Public Services*.

(National Disability Authority, other departments and agencies)

Commitments to strengthen our capacity for stakeholder engagement

We will establish and embed a robust framework across Government for supporting meaningful and participatory stakeholder engagement with disabled people. We will advance capacity and awareness across Government of the State's obligations to consult with disability stakeholders, and Disabled Persons' Organisations in particular, in line with Article 4.3 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Our aim is to develop a structured process for stakeholder engagement. There will be a dual focus on building the capacity of both civil and public servants and disability stakeholders.

The collaborative approach will be developed and delivered in partnership with Disabled Persons' Organisations and other disability stakeholders across civil society and will include mechanisms for funding to support capacity strengthening. Areas for skills, knowledge and competency development include:

- Human rights approaches to policy and practice;
- Co-design and delivery of policy and services; and
- Strategic and respectful engagement.

Stakeholder engagement will also encompass representation and visibility of disabled people, for example ensuring that clear and transparent processes are in place for elections to the boards of service provider organisations and to encourage targets for disabled people within board membership and organisational leadership.

(Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Strategic Focus Networks

Over the timeframe of the First Programme Plan of Action 2025-2026, there will be a range of Strategic Focus Network Summits to bring additional strategic focus to developments in the following areas:



Under the Second and Third Programme Plans of Action, other issues may be the focus of Strategic Focus Networks. In line with the principle of mainstreaming, each of the Strategic Focus Network Summits will be led by the appropriate Government Department/Agency and chaired by the relevant Minister. Each Summit will be a one-day event for strategic engagement with key stakeholders, including Senior Officials across Government, Disabled Persons' Organisations, employers, civil society representatives and stakeholders with subject expertise.

The aim of the Summits will be to provide a space for:

- Shared learning on initiatives that have been advanced and innovative good practice;
- Strategic thinking around potential options for making further progress; and
- Identifying key actions that would bring about a significant step-change in the lives of disabled people and that can be progressed during the timeframe of the Strategy.

Submissions will be sought from stakeholders in advance and considered by lead Government Departments and Agencies to inform the agenda for each Summit. The content for discussion at each of the Summits will also be informed by actions in the Programme for Government, any relevant reports or recommendations and work ongoing to address issues.

Following each Summit a briefing paper will be produced by the lead Government Department/Agency outlining the key learnings and any discrete tangible outcomes, (for example, in the form of a scheme, action plan, review, or legislative change) which will support a paradigm shift in how Government approaches policy coordination and service provision in this area. This will be published and considered by the National Delivery and Monitoring Committee with a view to identifying actions for inclusion in the Second Programme Plan of Actions 2027-2028 or sooner if required.

The focus of each Summit will be as follows:



Digital and Assistive Technology

We will review the current provision of digital and assistive technology to disabled people and enhance person-centred and integrated access across Government so that disabled people can get the digital and assistive technology they need.

(Strategic Focus Network Lead: Health Service Executive)

Cost of disability

Addressing the cost of disability is a whole-of-Government issue. As well as income supports, the delivery of and access to services are also key. The Indecon report on the cost of disability found that the extra costs of disability are due to a number of factors, including higher costs of healthcare, transport, education and other services, that arise because of a greater need for services and additional barriers experienced by disabled people in accessing these services.

All Government Departments will develop and implement whole-of-Government solutions that will address the cost of disability experienced by disabled people. These solutions will acknowledge the disproportionate financial burden experienced by disabled people and their households in daily living.

We will use information from the latest research to help us develop these solutions. This research includes:

- the Indecon Report on the *Cost of Disability in Ireland*, and
- the ESRI report on *Adjusting Estimates of Poverty for the Cost of Disability (2025)*.

Solutions will include the Annual Cost of Disability Payment outlined in the Programme for Government as well as the enhancement of services and other measures under the five Pillars that will reduce the cost of disability.

(Strategic Focus Network Lead: Department of Social Protection)

Intersectionality

We will develop a coherent approach to the issue of intersectionality in addressing how different minority identities intersect with disability. We will examine how additional difficulties can arise for disabled people who may experience multiple forms of disadvantage or discrimination where being disabled intersects with other aspects of their lives such as being from a minority ethnic community, their social class, or their gender. We will explore solutions unique to these experiences.

(Strategic Focus Network Lead: Department of Children, Disability and Equality)

Cross-Government Initiatives

Acknowledging the need for a whole-of-Government approach to improving outcomes for disabled people, we will deliver on a range of cross-Government initiatives that will develop innovative approaches and solutions to issues that require a joined-up response across the system. This will focus on the following areas:

Communications and Information – to provide better accessible and more coherent communications across Government, improved signposting and better access to information.

The Department of the Taoiseach will work with all Government departments and agencies to improve communications and information and drive coherence and accessibility of communications and information across Government for disabled people. This will include creating a clearly communicated accessible path of supports and services for parents, children and young people.

Workforce Planning – a strong skills pipeline is required to support current and future workforce needs. The Department of the Taoiseach will work with all appropriate Government Departments, the Health Service Executive and the National Council for Special Education to:

- Significantly increase training places and work placements for health and social care professionals, ensuring we are planning for projected future demand;
- Enhance recruitment processes and attract international professionals to address workforce shortages; and
- Improve retention of the existing workforce.

Whole-of-Government spending – to develop a comprehensive baseline of Government expenditure on disability. Work across all Government departments and agencies to undertake a review of expenditure as part of a cross-departmental examination of efficiency and effectiveness of disability expenditure.

(All relevant departments, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Sector Reform and Digitalisation, Department of the Taoiseach).

Delivery and Monitoring Structures

The following delivery and monitoring structures have been co-designed with stakeholders to ensure appropriate oversight and accountability throughout the period of delivery of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

Democratic oversight of delivery will be undertaken by the Cabinet Committee on Disability. The structures below will be accountable to the Cabinet Committee on Disability, where this body has a mandate for overseeing Programme for Government commitments in relation to disability.

The Disability Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach will work with the Department of Children, Disability and Equality and the Pillar Leads on broader implementation of the Strategy to support whole-of-Government delivery and accountability, and to troubleshoot, through Cabinet Committee and supporting structures.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters will function as part of the broader political and democratic oversight of progress.

These structures will support and complement broader infrastructure comprising the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission as the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in Ireland (detail on the role of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism in **Appendix 1**).



Delivery and Monitoring Committee

The Delivery and Monitoring Committee has two primary functions:

1. **To oversee** the development and delivery of Strategy commitments and actions, operating as a national mechanism for problem-solving and collaboration and reporting to the democratic system and to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission on achievements and challenges.
2. **To direct** the delivery of the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*, including the development of Programme Plans of Action at appropriate intervals, and managing the national response to policy issues as they arise.

The Delivery and Monitoring Committee will meet twice a year, to be chaired by the Taoiseach.

Through the relevant Senior Officials Group, the Department of the Taoiseach will coordinate updates from the Delivery and Monitoring Committee to the Cabinet Committee on Disability.

To facilitate the work of the Delivery and Monitoring Committee we will establish a Data and Evidence Working Group led by the National Disability Authority, to advance the development of indicators for a rights-based approach to monitoring the Strategy.

The Data and Evidence Working Group will have the following functions:

- Develop a human rights-based monitoring framework for the strategy that includes the identification of appropriate structural, process, and outcome indicators of progress under the strategy.
- Identify relevant data to support monitoring of indicators and, where no data exist, propose ways of filling data gaps.
- Compile bi-annual data on progress and key milestones provided by each of the Pillars on their commitments and actions.
- Produce summary reports and presentations for the Annual Forum and the Implementation and Monitoring Committee and support them in tracking progress.

- Provide feedback to the Pillars on their bi-annual returns and provide advice and support regarding pillar-specific data collection, research, and monitoring of progress.
- Liaise with the new Disability Research and Data Advisory Group as necessary to ensure coherence and to seek advice.
- Provide a mid-term and end-of-strategy broader evaluation of progress of the Strategy in progressively realising the obligations in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

This work will be aligned to the focus on evidence-informed policy under Better Public Services, as well as to the forthcoming *Public Service Data Strategy*.

Pillar Groupings

Pillar groupings under the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030* comprise the lead departments, agencies and other stakeholders for that pillar and have three primary functions:

1. **To identify** detailed actions for delivering the commitments set out in the Strategy, determining departmental responsibility for same.
2. **To manage** the delivery of actions under the Strategy, establishing collaborative and cooperative working relationships between necessary departments, agencies and wider disability stakeholders including Disabled Persons' Organisations.

3. **To lead** on the development of Pillar Implementation Plans and Biannual Reports for submission to the Implementation and Monitoring Committee. The Biannual Reports will be published.

Disabled Persons' Organisation Group

In line with Article 4(3) of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, it is crucial that Disabled Persons' Organisations are represented in the monitoring and delivery structures for the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*. Subject to Ministerial appointment, the DPO Group will be formed, and its chairperson will be a member of the Delivery and Monitoring Committee.

Annual Disability Forum

An Annual Disability Forum will be organised as an opportunity to highlight progress made across the Strategy and provide a space for the disability sector to reflect, provide feedback and have their views heard. This will provide a space particularly for those groups and individuals not directly or regularly engaged in the above structures to meaningfully engage in a constructive dialogue on the *National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030*.

The Annual Disability Forum will provide a space for general feedback from the disability sector and updates from Pillar groupings on progress on priority actions. A portion of the day will be dedicated to Pillar-specific workshops and showcases organised and chaired by the Pillar co-leads.

Appendix 1

Role of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission as the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

The role of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in the independent monitoring of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in Ireland is provided for under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022 which came into legal force in April 2023.

The establishment of an Independent Monitoring Mechanism is in line with Article 33 of the Convention, which states that

“States Parties shall, in accordance with their legal and administrative systems, maintain, strengthen, designate or establish within the State Party, a framework, including one or more independent mechanisms, as appropriate, to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the present Convention. When designating or establishing such a mechanism, States Parties shall take into account the principles relating to the status and functioning of national institutions for protection and promotion of human rights.”

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is also Ireland’s National Equality Body, with a specific role provided for by the European Union’s Equality Standards Directives, due to be transposed into Irish Law by June 2026. These include a legal basis for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to request disaggregated and intersectional disability data from public bodies, private entities, and voluntary and community organisations. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission has legal powers to monitor and provide information, guidance and education to public bodies to understand and meet their statutory obligations under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Appendix 2

Legislation, Policy, Reviews and Reports

Legislation

Some of the legislation enacted to date include:

- Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015
- Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022
- *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*: Department of Children and Youth, 2017
- Citizens Information Act 2007
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Disability Act 2005
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004
- Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015
- Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2015
- European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020
- Health Act 2007 (establishing HIQA)
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014
- Irish Sign Language Act 2017
- Mental Health Act 2001
- Mental Health Act 2008
- Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2015
- Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2018
- National Disability Authority Act 1999

Policy, Reviews and Reports

Some of the key policy documents, reviews and reports published are:

- *Better Public Services* – A transformation strategy to deliver for the public and build trust: Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, 2023
- *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*: Department of Children and Youth, 2017
- *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015 – 2024*: Department of Justice and Equality, 2015
- *Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017 – 2023*
- *Designing our Public Services* – Design principles for Government in Ireland: Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, 2022
- *Disability Capacity Review to 2032*: Department of Health, 2021
- *Effective Participation in Decision Making*: HSE, 2018
- *Empowering and Safeguarding Vulnerable People at Risk of Abuse*: HSE, 2014
- *First 5 - A Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and Their Families 2019-2025*
- *Guidelines on Person-centred Planning*: The National Disability Authority, 2005
- *Home Sharing in Intellectual Disability Services in Ireland* - Report of the National Expert Group: HSE, 2016
- *Housing for All – A new Housing Plan for Ireland*: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021

- *HSE Quality Improvement Division/ Social Care Division – Quality Improvement Programme:* HSE, 2016
- *Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities:* HSE, 2016
- *National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2016 – 2020:* Department of Justice and Equality, 2017
- *National Financial Regulations:* HSE, 2014
- *National Framework for Person Centred Planning:* HSE, 2019
- *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2022-2027:* Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; the Department of Health; and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2022
- *National Programme to Enable Cultures of Person-centredness in the HSE:* HSE, 2017
- *National Review of Autism Services:* HSE, 2012
- *National Sports Policy 2018-2027:* Department of Transport, Sport and Tourism, 2018
- *National Standards for Foster Care:* Department of Health, 2003
- *National Standards for Residential Services for Adults and Children with disabilities:* HIQA, 2013
- *New Directions Personal Support Services for Adults with Disabilities:* HSE, 2012
- *Our Shared Future: Programme for Government, 2025*
- *Outcomes for Disability Services:* National Disability Authority, 2017
- *Progressing Disability Services 0-18:* HSE, 2011
- *Progressing Towards Outcomes-Focused Family-Centred Practice – An Operational Framework:* HSE, 2020
- *Rebuilding Ireland 2016:* Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, 2016
- *Report on the Future Needs of Disability Services:* HSE, 2018
- *Report on the National Reference Group on Multi-disciplinary Disability Service for children aged 5-18:* HSE, 2009
- *Review of Policy Implementation 2012-2017- Time to Move on from Congregated Settings: A Strategy for Inclusion:* HSE, 2017
- *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy and Procedures:* HSE, 2014
- *Sectoral Plans:* Government Publications, 2005
- *Sharing the Vision- A Mental Health Strategy for Everyone:* Department of Health, 2020
- *Sláintecare Report:* Department of Health, 2017
- *Social Housing Strategy 2020:* Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2014
- *Sport Ireland Disability Inclusion in Sport: Statement of Commitment and Action 2024*
- *Supporting People with Disabilities to Access Appropriate Housing in the Community – Guidance Document:* HSE, 2020
- *Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – A Strategy for Inclusion:* HSE, 2011
- *Transforming Lives – Programme for the Implementation of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services:* HSE, 2014
- *Universal Design Guidelines Dementia Friendly Dwellings for People with Dementia, their Families and Carers:* National Disability Authority, 2015
- *Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services in Ireland:* Department of Health, 2012
- *Vision for Change:* Department of Health, 2006

Appendix 3

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The adoption of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2006 and its ratification by Ireland in 2018, along with Ireland's accession to the *Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* on 30 November 2024, provides a further impetus to the progressive realisation of rights for disabled people.

The Convention states that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Disabled people are capable of:

- Claiming those rights;
- Making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent; and
- Being active members of society.

The emerging principles of self-determination and personalisation and active citizenship are enshrined in the Convention. These are critical to the delivery of mainstream and bespoke services for disabled people and moving towards more flexible models of support focused on greater independence for the individual and enabling them to achieve their full potential in living ordinary lives in ordinary places.

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination – The right to enjoy equal protection and benefit of the law.

Article 6: Disabled Women – The right of disabled women to full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 7: Disabled Children – Disabled children enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.

Article 8: Awareness-raising – A commitment by the State to raising awareness, to encourage respect for the rights and dignity of the person, to combat stereotypes and to promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of disabled people.

Article 9: Accessibility – so that disabled people can live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. It requires accessible – buildings – roads – transport – schools – hospitals – workplaces – businesses – services – public spaces – information – communication systems – technology.

Article 10: Right to life – “Every human being has the inherent right to life, and we shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by disabled people on an equal basis with others.”

Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies – In times of risk, conflict, emergency or natural disaster, all necessary measures are taken to ensure the protection and safety of disabled people.

Article 12: Equal recognition before the law – A right to recognition as persons before the law, to enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others, to own property and to control their financial affairs, with safeguards to prevent abuse.

Article 13: Access to justice – A right to effective access to justice for disabled people on an equal basis with others with appropriate accommodations in all legal proceedings and training for those working in the field of administration of justice.

Article 14: Liberty and security of the person – The right to liberty and security on an equal basis with others – “The existence of a disability shall not justify a deprivation of liberty.”

Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment – No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This is a right for disabled people on an equal basis with others.

Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse – Disabled people, both within and outside the home, shall be protected from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse. Protection includes providing information and education on how to avoid, recognise and report instances of exploitation, violence and abuse. All services to persons with disabilities are effectively monitored by independent authorities.

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person – A right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others.

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality – The right to liberty of movement, to freedom to choose their residence and to a nationality, on an equal basis with others.

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community – The right to live in the community, be included and participate in the community, the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live, with support and responsive community services.

Article 20: Personal mobility – Ensuring personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for disabled people, in the manner and at the time of their choice and at affordable cost.

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information – The right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to look for, receive and pass on information and ideas.

Article 22: Respect for privacy – The right to the protection of the law against arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or communication or to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

Article 23: Respect for home and the family – On an equal basis with others, the right to marry and found a family, decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and access to reproductive and family planning education and to retain their fertility. Respect for home and family also includes the right to services and support to prevent concealment, abandonment, neglect, and segregation of disabled children. A child shall not be separated from parents based on a disability of either the child or one or both of the parents.

Article 24: Education – The right of disabled people to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity and the right to an inclusive education system at all levels, in the communities in which they live, and lifelong learning.

Article 25: Health –recognises that disabled people have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability. We shall:

- Provide the same range, quality, and standard of free or affordable health care and programmes as provided to other persons.
- Provide those health services needed by disabled people specifically because of their disabilities, including early identification and intervention and services designed to minimise and prevent further disabilities, all as close as possible to people's own communities.
- Provide care of the same quality to disabled people as to others, including on the basis of free and informed consent.
- Prohibit discrimination against disabled people in the provision of health insurance, and life insurance and prevent discriminatory denial of health care or health services or food and fluids based on disability.

Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation – The right to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life through comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services and programmes, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and social services.

Article 27: Work and employment – Recognition of the right of disabled people to work on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. We shall:

- Have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services, vocational and continuing training.
- Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace.
- Ensure that disabled people are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labour.

Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection – The right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

The right to social protection without discrimination based on disability. Equal access to clean water services, appropriate and affordable services, devices and other assistance for disability-related needs, social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes, public housing programmes and retirement benefits and programmes.

For disabled people and their families living in situations of poverty we must ensure access to assistance from the State with disability-related expenses, adequate training, counselling, financial assistance, and respite care.

Article 29: Participation in political and public life – A guarantee of political rights and the opportunity to enjoy on an equal basis with others. This includes the right and opportunity for disabled people to vote and be elected and the right to participate in non-governmental organisations and associations and political parties.

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport – The right of disabled people to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life including access to cultural materials (TV, theatre etc.), participation to the fullest extent possible in mainstream sporting activities at all levels and an opportunity to organise, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities.

Appendix 4

Government Departments, Agencies and Bodies involved in the Strategy

The Government Departments, Statutory Agencies, semi-State companies and other bodies involved in delivering on the National Human Rights Strategy for *Disabled People 2025-2030* are as follows:

- Department of Children, Disability and Equality
- Department of Education and Youth
- Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration
- Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation
- Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of the Taoiseach
- Department of Culture, Communications and Sport
- Department of Transport
- Citizens Information Board
- Coimisiún na Meán
- City and County Managers Association
- Dublin City Council
- Fáilte Ireland
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Housing Agency
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors
- Irish Prison Service
- Local Authorities
- Local Government Management Agency
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- National Disability Authority (NDA)
- National Educational Psychological Service
- National Transport Authority (NTA)
- publicjobs
- Public Transport Operating Companies
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland
- Register of Irish Language Interpreters
- RTÉ
- Sport Ireland
- An Taisce
- The Arts Council
- TFI Local Link
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Appendix 5

Design Principles for Public Services

Designing our Public Services – Design Principles for Government in Ireland is an aid for public servants that are eager to put people at the forefront of service provision. It puts forward a set of principles that incorporate tools and techniques to deliver human-centric solutions to complex social issues, and support the design of more accessible, effective and simpler public services.

The ten principles are as follows:

1. We will **put people first**
2. We will **design to be inclusive**
3. We will **design services together**
4. We will **design for trust**
5. We will **design so knowledge can be reused and shared**
6. We will **challenge assumptions and design with evidence**
7. We will **design from the top down and the bottom up**
8. We will **design to deliver value – in all its forms**
9. We will **build, test, learn and iterate**
10. We will **work to make things simpler**





Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland