

Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities

2015-2024

**First Report of the Chair of the
Implementation Group – March 2017**

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Introduction

The Government launched its Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities in October 2015. It was designed as a ten-year strategy. Its vision is simple – that people with disabilities can get a job and enjoy a rewarding career. The aim is to ensure that people with disabilities who want to work in the open labour market are supported and enabled to do so.

The first couple of years were seen as a foundation phase, aimed at putting building blocks in place. Specifically, the government set out six strategic priorities, that are aimed at building skills, capacity, and independence; providing bridges and supports into work; making work pay; promoting job retention and re-entry to work; providing co-ordinate and seamless support; and engaging employers.

In support of those priorities, the government established a set of key performance indicators – almost 70 in all. Each of these KPIs was tied to a timeframe and a responsible lead agency or Department.

I was asked to chair an implementation group, to monitor and oversee implementation and to report to the Minister from time to time. The group (membership in Appendix) largely consists of representatives of the responsible Departments, together with a number of representatives of the disability sector. We met regularly throughout 2016, and received regular updates and reports on progress. I would like to express my gratitude to them.

I must also thank the officials in the Department of Justice who have provided me with exemplary support and have worked extremely diligently to coordinate the work of the Group. And I am grateful too to the NDA who have been an invaluable source of guidance and expert support.

It is perhaps important to state that it was never seen as likely that the early stages of implementation would produce significant growth in employment. Rather the intention has been to ensure that the barriers to employment are broken down systematically, and that necessary supports are put in place across the range of public services that affect the lives of people with disabilities.

It is hoped too that the strategy will over time see a significant culture shift, and that the skills and talents of people with disabilities will become more and more recognised and valued. We are still a long way from guaranteeing people with a disability the hopes, the aspirations and the respect to which they are entitled in world of work.

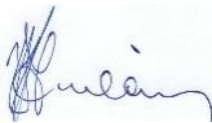
I have had an opportunity in the course of our first year to meet a number of groups and individuals whose experiences have added to whatever insight I can bring. In many cases these experiences have helped me to realise the intractable nature of the challenges some people face. Mental health is a particular challenge in this area, with taboos and barriers that must be addressed by more open dialogue across the community, and by greater awareness.

As an example of life at the most extreme end, it is particularly difficult for people who have served a sentence in the Central Mental Hospital, and been through a programme of rehabilitation back into the community, to build a future that includes employment.

Before commenting on some of the highlights of the year, and even though it is not a direct part of my remit, it is clear to me that as the Strategy develops, three things will be key.

- First, we need to engage more with people with a disability themselves, and we will seek to devise ways of doing that. We will also seek to develop a more thematic approach to our work. The work we have done in the first year already suggests a number of themes, and I hope these will be apparent from the following commentary.
- Second, Government needs to make a significant start in implementing its public-service wide commitment to a 6% quota for the employment of people with a disability. I would urge the Government to make and disseminate the necessary decisions to make decent incremental progress on that target this year. In doing so, it must be mindful that targets alone are not enough – there is a responsibility too to ensure that reasonable accommodations are always made to enable people with a disability to benefit from opportunity.

- Third, there is a need for a major campaign of public awareness, aimed at the world of work – and that includes employers, unions, and the wider workforce – that is aimed at breaking down barriers, and highlighting the real contribution people with a disability can make. While this Group is probably not the body to run such a campaign, it's clear from our work and interactions that there is a huge disparity in perception. We need to promote the concept of ability, and of socially valued role, as a fundamental part of knocking down barriers around disability.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fergus Finlay', is positioned above the printed name.

Fergus Finlay
Chair

Commentary

My report on the first year's work, against the targets set out, is contained in the tables below. (pages 16-41). I have used a traffic light system against each key performance indicator. **Green** is intended to represent good progress against the commitments made, **Orange** represents slower than intended progress, and **Red** represents inadequate progress (and in some cases none at all).

In preparing the tables I have sought to engage with each Department and/or agency, and I am grateful to everyone who has engaged with me. Because this is the first year – and because it is clear that many of the Government Departments and agencies take this work extremely seriously – I have by and large deferred to the “self-assessments” of those lead agencies who have engaged with me.

I don't wish to distract from the fact that over the next year, we need to turn a lot of orange green, and we need to pay serious attention to the red areas. There is also a need to develop a deeper sense of engagement with the wider disability movement, and in consultation with the group I hope to modify our work arrangements to address that, and to enable a fuller dialogue and appreciation of the barriers faced by people with a disability.

However, within the implementation of the Strategy in this early phase, there have been a number of highlights. (Highlights can include areas with a lot of green, but also areas where the other colours demand additional attention.)

1. Social Protection

The Department of Social Protection has a role in relation to 33 actions in the Plan, most of which were for delivery by end 2016. The Department has sought to deliver on its stated commitment to ensure better activation measures for people with disabilities, including its engagement with persons with disabilities and other stakeholders to examine how best the Department can achieve this through policy and practice.

In particular, it's worth welcoming the work advanced by the Department to build the capacity of its Intreo service to better support persons with disabilities who want to pursue further education, training or work opportunities. It has rolled out a programme of action in Intreo offices which will be a gateway to employment activation for person with disabilities, and Intreo has undertaken a programming of upskilling staff to support claimants with disabilities. From talking to people with intellectual disabilities, however, there is a challenge in making the benefits of this work visible to them.

In addition, the Department has completed a Survey of over 12,000 Disability Allowance claimants. The survey shows in good relief some of the issues faced by people with a disability. 67% of respondents said that it has been five or more years since they last took part in education or training. 31% of those who replied said they had never worked. 56% had previously worked, 13% said they are currently working (either part or full time). This survey provides information for DSP, and for all of us, as we work to develop supports to assist people with disabilities obtain work.

The Department has also established an expert group, chaired by Frances Ruane, to examine how to make work pay for persons with disabilities. I understand that the Group expects to complete its report on target by end of year and to report to the Minister in early 2017. It has identified significant disincentives to some people with disabilities taking up work and for some people with disabilities returning to work. It intends to make recommendations to address these issues same and also to recognise cases where employment may be intermittent for some persons with disabilities. The Group's work will also inform the development of a ready reckoner to provide information to a person with a disability on the impact of a job on their overall income.

The Department has completed an evaluation of the Disability Activation pilot project programme. We look forward to hearing about the policy development that will be informed by that learning. It is to be hoped that where the learning demonstrates that real progress was being made, those pilot projects will be reintroduced on a more mainstream and properly funded basis.

2. Health

The Department of Health and the HSE have a key role to play in advancing the goals of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy. Many people with disabilities accessing services and supports through organisations funded under the Health Vote have goals of working, and some are accessing training and employment opportunities. The Department also has a key role in working with other Departments in relation to actions in the Strategy.

The HSE has established a Working Group to “identify current Rehabilitative Training good practice in supporting the implementation of New Directions”. (New Directions is intended to represent a new approach to day services for people with a disability that envisages all the supports available in communities will be mobilised so that people with disabilities have the widest choice and options about how to live their lives.) New Directions clarifies the HSE’s role in regard to work and employment and specifies that within the policy, one of the supports available to people that require a HSE funded day service is “Support for Accessing Vocational Training and Work Opportunities”.

Preliminary findings from the Working Group have indicated that the most crucial time for young people is the transition from childhood to adulthood and from school to mainstream/specialist services. In 2017 the HSE will develop a Rehabilitative Training Programme that will have a significant focus on the transition issues that arise for people.

The establishment of the Working Group is important and welcome. The timeframe for implementing this work has slipped, however. It will be critical that this focus on progression to training and employment is maintained as the primary focus of the review.

The Strategy includes a commitment to progress planning to appropriate transition people with disabilities who are currently involved in sheltered employment. While it was the intention that a detailed action plan for completing the remaining work in this area would be finalised in 2106, with transitions from sheltered employment due to have commenced before year end, the Department has given a strong indication that they will prioritise it in early 2017. I’m assuming that the plan provides for effective engagement with individuals and families in relation to transition.

In mid-2016 the HSE established a cross divisional group which consists of members from the primary care unit and social care unit. This group is currently formulating an action plan to implement HSE actions under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy which is a positive step.

However, it is worth restating that the progress made in the context of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, while real, frequently does not mirror the experience of people with a disability in their daily lives. One of our members, with long experience of advocating for people with an intellectual disability, sent me the following summary of the experience as he sees it:

- “Children with intellectual disability attend various centres until they reach 18 years and then the majority are moved to various centres which are section 38 and 39 or one of the big Institutions ...
- There is no assessment of the young adult other than that they are on the NIDD (national intellectual disability database)
- The NIDD is rarely used as I have attended regional meetings where the HSE representative has informed the various providers that there will be so many young adults coming from schools and how many can they take
- We need a proper COA for young adults with an intellectual disability so that their skills can be honed. Many of them reaching 18 have no reading skills and jobs or training are scarce in their vocabulary
- Young adults will attend projects which are state funded but last for a short time. These projects are not part of life-long learning, and aren’t designed to lead anywhere.”

I am convinced that if new Directions is to become meaningful in the context of our work, it needs to be prioritised as a key them for us.

3. Education

It is during school years that children are developing aspirations and plans for their future careers, and building skills and knowledge that will be critical to their success.

Unfortunately, research has shown that lower levels of educational attainment have persistently hampered employment opportunities for some people with disabilities. In the survey conducted by DSP and referred to earlier, only a minority of Disability Allowance recipients reported educational attainment beyond junior secondary education or special school.

The Department of Education and Skills and educational bodies including NCSE, SOLAS, Education and Training Boards (ETBs) among others have key roles to play in delivering on various actions to enable achievement of key strategic priorities.

The Department committed to developing a revised model for additional teaching supports for pupils with special education needs. A pilot of the new allocation model took place in the 2015/16 school year, in which 47 schools (28 primary schools and 19 posts primary schools) participated. The project was designed to ensure that as full a range of schools as possible were represented with appropriate representation by sector, disadvantage classification, gender mix and size.

The report of the review of this pilot has been finalised and published on the Department's website. In summary, the review has found that the new model has been positively received by schools and parents. Schools indicated that they welcomed the increased flexibility and autonomy provided by the model to allocate resources based on need. Schools welcome the move away from the unnecessary labelling of children in order to secure resources. Schools also welcomed that they no longer need to wait for diagnosis and that this facilitates intervention at an earlier stage based on the schools' identification of need.

On 18th January 2017 the Minister for Education and Skills announced that the new allocation model will be introduced from September 2017, for the 2017/18 school year. The Minister also announced that an additional 900 posts have been provided to support the introduction of the new model. This additional provision will ensure that some 1000 schools

will receive additional support in the coming year while no school will experience a reduction in their resource teaching allocations as a result of the introduction of the new model. This is an important development.

The Department of Education and Skills, together with the National Council for Special Education, are tasked with a number of actions focused on supporting effective transition from school to further or higher education and ensuring that students with disabilities can be supported to plan for their futures and to achieve their aspirations. This requires information on the options and supports, as well as ensuring all actors including schools and families work together to ensure those aspirations can be realised.

Welcome guidelines have been published by the National Council for Special Education (and accompanying guides for parents) on a range of issues under this heading, with a view to providing effective tools for the transition planning process. The NDA has advised that it would be important to capture data on how the guidelines are being used.

This would involve the Department working with the NCSE, Solas, Education and Training Boards and the DSP to consider recommendations emerging from the NCSE Research Report on Moving to Further and Higher Education, and developing a transition process with agreed incremental targets for effective transition from school to further and higher education for students with special education needs.

Schools have been required to use the NCCA Education Passport materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information at the end of sixth class since the 2014/15 academic year (DES circular 0045/2014), and were reminded again of their need in 2016. This is an important and welcome development.

In the area of higher education, a review of the Fund for Students with Disabilities has been commissioned by the Higher Education Authority. While the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2014-2016) established an overall target of new entrants to higher education of people of disability from 6% to 8%, there also needs to be a focus on students with intellectual disabilities. A review of targets, including targets for people with disabilities in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education is due to take place in 2017. It will be important that the targets are actively monitored.

4. Transport

A recent report published by the National Platform of Self Advocates makes the point very strongly that for many people with a disability, and especially in their case an intellectual disability, access to transport is one of the main barriers to work, and indeed to living. And many of them have ongoing issues with our current transport models of provision.

It is a pity in that context that the Department of transport and the National Transport Authority have not sought to engage as actively with the Strategy as other lead agencies. We will without a doubt have to make that engagement a key theme of our work next year.

In fairness however it does appear that there has been progress on some actions, including the improved functionality and the availability of the Leap card so that it simplifies the payment for travel for those with a disability. These improvements will be significantly augmented when the Department of Social Protection rolls out the new Public Services Card which will have Leap chip for those that are eligible for Free Travel.

In addition, the NDA has engaged a contractor to develop a monitoring approach for monitoring the accessibility of public transport in Ireland. The contractor is building a monitoring toolkit which will be pilot-tested before the end of 2016. This involves mystery shopping, customer feedback and self-assessment by the service providers. The monitoring process is expected to identify key issues that impact access to transport for people with disabilities and older people, from the point of view of both the end customer and the service provider.

5. Working Together

Priority 5.1 of the Strategy requires a number of bodies to work together specifically to “develop an effective co-ordinated policy approach (and draw up an implementation plan based on that approach), to assist individuals with disabilities, including those who require a high level of support, to obtain and retain employment having due regard to the implementation of New Directions”

Implementation of that objective is somewhat behind target. However, the evidence is that a whole-hearted approach is emerging to the tasks involved. A cross-departmental group consisting of the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Social Protection and the National Disability Authority (NDA) was established to work together, in meetings facilitated by the NDA, and a body of work has emerged from the process.

The recommendations emerging from the Group so far acknowledge the key role of a gateway to a support service and effective connections to supports, with the Intreo service being such a key gateway. The other elements of the proposed seamless pathway can be built around this central point. While some of these actions are being developed and advanced elsewhere under the CES implementation process, they will ultimately form part of the co-ordinated policy as a whole.

In other cases, the Action 5.1 Group (as it has come to be known) has identified actions that need to be commenced and will require the cooperation of Government departments. The proposed policy approaches plots a coordinated approach across three phases of a seamless pathway including a coordinated pre-activation phase, a gateway to supports and effective referrals and access to supports.

6. Employer Support Initiative

The NDA was asked to facilitate an initiative to engage employers in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy. The Initiative entailed a call for proposals by employer bodies. It commenced at end of 2015 with a consortium of employer representative groups coming together to run a support service for employers, sharing knowledge and best practice with regard to employing people with disabilities. The consortium partners are IBEC, ISME and Chambers Ireland. The start-up phase included the development of a Helpline, a dedicated website and a series of networking events to foster knowledge-sharing and exchange among employers with the ultimate aim of increasing rates of employment for people with disabilities.

Initial work from this service has highlighted difficulties for employers in accessing supports such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme and in supporting staff members with reasonable accommodations. A first-year review with the consortium and the Initiative's advisory committee is scheduled to take place by end of November 2016 with regard to the KPIs to apply to years 2 & 3 of the service and plans for scaling and sustaining the initiative.

It has been my impression that this is a successful initiative in its own terms, with significant number of employers engaging. However, it's also my impression that a large number of employers have arrived at the Helpline and other resources, not so much because they want to hire a person or persons with a disability, but rather because one of their existing employees has acquired a disability. This suggests that there is a deeper issue, that a helpline alone cannot address.

SP1 – Build Skills, Capacity and Independence					
	Actions	Responsible Body	KPIs	Time Frame	Progress Assessment
1.1	Provide key messages from point of diagnosis of disability to emphasise the person's positive potential.	HSE – Multi-Disciplinary Teams and others.	Preparation of 'knowledge packs' (build on Informing Families to include all disabilities) to provide positive messages regarding potential.	Guidance group established by HSE Q1 2015. Guidance Prepared Q3 2015.	
			Key message providers all receive knowledge packs/guidance. Rollout of knowledge packs and incorporation of guidance into ongoing practice	Dissemination Strategy agreed & commenced Q4 2015. 25% providers 2016 50% providers 2017 25% providers 2018	
1.2(a)	Raise awareness & expectations. Raise awareness of training and employment options among school-goers, via parents, schools, occupational guidance officers and guidance counsellors. Raise the expectations that education and employment are real options post school.	DES, Solas, HEA, ETBs NDA, DSP, DOH, HSE, libraries, schools, NCGE NCSE.	See SP 1.6		

1.2(b)	<p>Raise awareness and expectations.</p> <p>HSE to liaise with special and mainstream schools to provide information in regard to the supports service provided for young people with disabilities.</p>	HSE and partners	<p>Enhanced awareness in schools.</p> <p>Liaison structure developed.</p> <p>Select 2 CHO areas and pilot liaison structure.</p> <p>Review and amend.</p> <p>Roll out 7 other CHOs.</p>	<p>Continuous.</p> <p>2015</p> <p>2016</p> <p>2017</p> <p>2018</p>	
1.3	Development of revised allocation model for additional teaching supports for pupils with special educational needs.	DES	Gather data to support implementation of proposed new model and undertake consultations with stakeholders.	2015	
1.4(a)	<p>Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in School</p> <p>Link SNA support to individualised planning for each pupil. Focus is on developing students' independence skills.</p> <p>2014 circular outlines SNA role to promote child's independence.</p>	DES, NCSE	Circular issued 2014	<p>DES Circular 0030/2014</p> <p>Revised allocations made in Sept 2015.</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting of implementation are ongoing.</p>	
1.4(b)	<p>Special Needs Assistants in School</p> <p>Periodic review of pupils' needs for Special Needs Assistants in schools</p>	DES, NCSE	See above	See above	
1.5(a)	Transition Planning	DES, Solas, ETBs NCSE, DSP	Work commenced to develop a	Q1 2015.	

	<p>Consider recommendations of NCSE Research Report on Moving to Further and Higher Education.</p> <p>Work together to ensure the effective transition from school to further and higher education for students with special education needs.</p>	<p>DES, Solas, ETBs NCSE, DSP</p> <p>DES, Solas, ETBs NCSE, DSP</p>	<p>multi-level transition process.</p> <p>Report delivered.</p> <p>Incremental Targets agreed.</p>	<p>Q4 2015.</p> <p>Q4 2015.</p>	
1.5(b)	<p>Transition Planning</p> <p>To ensure effective links with the National Oversight Group and the New Directions Implementation Group to address school leaver issues.</p>	DES, NCSE, Solas, HSE, DOH.	Links operating effectively.	Q4 2015.	
1.5(c)	<p>Transition Planning</p> <p>To promote the use of the Education Passport to provide information to parents and post primary schools (post-enrolment) on students' achievements.</p>	DES, NCCA, Schools.	Schools using the Education Passport.	Q4 2015.	
1.6	Publish mapping of further education and training supports for people with disabilities.	NCSE	Report Published	Done	
1.7	Work together to consider how Guidance	DES, NCSE, Schools	Action plan agreed.	Q1 2015.	

	<p>Counsellors can effectively support students with disabilities in guiding them on further education, training and career options, for example:</p> <p>Guidance and training provided for Guidance Counsellors Counsellors provided with the skills to develop individual FET options.</p>		<p>All guidance counsellors in post primary and Further Education and Training settings, as part of their initial training and on-going CPD to consider how they can effectively support students with disabilities and thereafter to implement such support.</p>		
1.8(a)	<p>Further Education and Training Sector Further to publication of a 5 year strategy for further education and training, to develop a specific action plan with targets for people with disabilities.</p>	Solas, DES, DSP.	<p>Establish national and local targets for people with disabilities.</p>	Q4 2015.	
1.8(b)	<p>Further Education and Training Sector Ensure new structures (ETBs) enhance the provision of services previously delivered by VECs.</p>	Solas, DES.	<p>Establish national and local targets for people with disabilities.</p>	Q4 2015.	
1.8(c)	<p>Further Education and Training Sector Solas to link their action plan with Intreo activation process.</p>	Solas, Intreo	<p>Links to Intreo agreed.</p>	Q4 2015.	

1.8(d)	Further Education and Training Sector Memorandum of Understanding between Solas and DSP to include targets and outcomes for people with disabilities	Solas, DSP, DES.	MOU signed.	Q4 2015.	
1.9(a)	Joined Up Working for Effective Pathways	NCSE	Guidelines produced	Done	
1.9(b)	<p>Joined Up Working for Effective Pathways</p> <p>Transitions in school and from school and post school options involving key stakeholders.</p> <p>As part of the transition planning process opportunities should be created for learners with disabilities to experience training, work experience and employment sampling during their school years. These measures will assist students on a pathway to a career.</p>	DES, teachers, DSP, HSE.	Structured systematic transition planning process developed.	Q4 2015.	
1.9(c)	<p>Joined Up Working for Effective Pathways</p> <p>Ensure that where available, access to Transition Year is open equally to all</p>	DES, teachers, HSE.	Structured systematic transition planning process developed.	Q2 2015.	

	students including students with disabilities.				
1.10	<p>Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) in consultation with the NDA and other key stakeholders will develop a programme of work to include people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within the SFI Discover programme.</p> <p>In particular, in the Discover Primary Science and Maths and Smart Futures initiatives, in terms of their potential for supporting teachers and schools to engage young people with ASD with Science Technology, Education and Maths education and career paths.</p>	SFI	Develop and deliver a pilot of Discover Primary Science and Maths inclusion, developed in consultation with NDA.	Q4 2015.	
			Commence broader roll out of Discover Primary Maths and Science inclusion.	Q4 2015.	
			Review of work.	Q3 2018.	
			Develop Smart Futures careers profiles with role models with ASD, in consultation with NDA.	Q4 2015.	
			Promote careers profiles through Smart Futures portals.	Q3 2015.	
			Review of work.	Q3 2018.	
1.11	Examine the effectiveness of the current Rehabilitative Training programme in supporting people, including those with mental health difficulties, to transition to training and employment	DOH, HSE	<p>Within current Rehabilitative Training programmes identify those that are successful for people with disabilities, including those with mental health difficulties, to progress to Vocational Training and Employment</p>	<p>Plan developed 2015</p> <p>Streamline application process for new entrants 2015</p> <p>Monitor demo programmes 2015/17</p> <p>Use learning and agree restructure 2018</p>	

1.12	<p>Receiving Income Support. Enhance process to engage with people with disabilities using results of analysis of existing database of people with disabilities receiving income supports from DSP (to be carried out in 2015), to include outcomes of the DACT Projects and the review of EmployAbility service.</p>	DSP	<p>Review and develop engagement methods.</p> <p>Pilot engagement</p> <p>Review & implement</p>	<p>Q4 2015</p> <p>Q1 2016</p> <p>Q3 2016</p>	
1.13	<p>Learning from relevant Disability Activation Projects, which addressed the needs of younger people with disabilities and the transition from education into work, will inform policy development.</p>	DSP	<p>Project's End</p> <p>Evaluation Completed.</p> <p>Implementation of learning For Activation, Benefits Employers Education systems</p> <p>3 year review of measures.</p>	<p>Q2 2015.</p> <p>Q4 2015.</p> <p>Phased as necessary commencing Q1 2016</p> <p>Q1 2019.</p>	
1.14	<p>Higher Education Sector</p> <p>The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2014-2016) will include new targets to increase participation by under-represented groups, including students with physical, sensory and multiple disabilities.</p>	DES, HEA.	<p>Set targets for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Review target.</p>	<p>Q1 2015.</p> <p>Q1 2018.</p>	

1.15	<p>Transition from Higher Education to Employment.</p> <p>Examine existing programmes that provide students/ graduates with disabilities in higher education with the chance to develop work- related skills and experience, to assess the feasibility of developing similar provision across all HEIs.</p> <p>Examine the possibility of developing an individualised ePortfolio system, with the aim of supporting successful transition from college to employment. This should incorporate access to a variety of individually-tailored disability and careers specific resources and supports as required</p>	Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) HEA, NCSE in consultation with AHEAD	<p>Track the development and establishment of disability and career specific resources and supports.</p> <p>ePortfolio developed and used.</p> <p>Track the destinations of students with declared disabilities as they graduate from college.</p> <p>Undertake qualitative interviews with students on graduation to track and monitor their transition from college to employment</p>	Under discussion	
1.16	Develop proposals for redefining the Disability Access Route to Education scheme for approval of the participating Institutions for January 2015.	Higher Education Institutes	<p>Roll out of new DARE scheme.</p> <p>Applicants enter colleges through new DARE scheme</p>	<p>Q4 2015 (September 2015).</p> <p>Q4 2016 (September 2016).</p>	

SP2 – Provide bridges and supports into work					
	Actions	Responsible Body	KPIs	Time Frame	Progress Assessment
2.1	Planning to be progressed to appropriately transition people currently involved in sheltered employment.	Co-operative Engagement between DOH, HSE and other departments.	Identify people currently engaged in sheltered employment within HSE services.	Q3 2015	Green on the basis that it is in the HSE's 2017 work plan Otherwise a definite Orange
			Agree plan for transitioning of people involved to appropriate support.	Q1 2016.	
			Commence transition to more appropriate training	25% 2016 50% 2017 25% 2018	
2.2	Employment Supports. Implement recommendations from the review of Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)	DSP	Change operating rules for WSS.	Q1 2015.	
2.3	Work sampling DSP to promote work sampling for a defined period of time through programmes including the EmployAbility Service.	DSP	Guidance on Work sampling as a feature of DSP programmes	Q4 2015.	
2.4	DSP to work proactively with employers to provide work placements.	DSP	Produce guidance on business case for placements	Q3 2015.	
			Disseminated by DSP	Q4 2015.	
2.5	DSP to explore the idea of expanding internships as a	DSP	Outline path into work	Q3 2015.	

	recruitment route for the private sectors. (DPER to explore alternative recruitment routes see action 6.7)		through internships.		
2.6	<p>Activation.</p> <p>Use Intreo as a gateway to employment activation for people with disabilities.</p> <p>On a phased basis from February 2015 a person with a disability will be offered an interview with an employment officer.</p> <p>The employment officer in conjunction with the individual will draw up an appropriate action plan.</p> <p>The person will also be recorded on the Department's records as being an INTREO customer</p> <p>Learning from first Phase together with training of staff and general operational issues will be taken into account in determining the extension of the service to other locations.</p>	DSP	<p>Front line Intreo Staff trained.</p> <p>People with disabilities case-managed along with live register cohort.</p>	<p>Q2 2015.</p> <p>Q3 2015.</p>	
2.7	Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the EmployAbility service;	DSP	Review completed.	Q3 2015.	

	explore whether the service can be more responsive to the needs of people with continuing or with episodic support needs; and consider the merits of the 'place and train' model.				
2.8	Employment Supports. Assess outcomes from DACT projects and develop strategy for implementing key learning.	DSP	Evaluation Completed	Q4 2015.	
2.9	HSE funded services use Person Centred Planning to discuss training and employment services with service users.	HSE	Best Practice Demo sites identified. Awareness, training package developed for providers, commence dissemination.	2015 2015 25% 2016 75%	Green because HSE has committed to have a framework in place by end Q2 17
2.10	Support and promote self-employment as a viable option for people with disabilities, including equal access to mainstream supports and schemes. Disability proof Local Enterprise Offices' (LEOs) services. The LEOs should: Implement and promote their policies of providing inclusive, comprehensive services for people with disabilities, as per s.26 of the Disability Act 2005, in	DJEI	Training provided to LEO staff on accessible/inclusive services and supports. Data on take up of Self-employment for people with disabilities published.	Constant from 2015 - a period of time will be required for changeover to LEO structure following dissolution of CEBs. Q4 2016.	

	conjunction with their respective Local Authority. Provide staff with training to ensure they are skilled to provide inclusive services.				
2.11	Develop the concept of car-sharing beyond the car sharing website and voluntary car schemes that currently exist and tailor that provision for those with a disability.	National Transport Authority.	Voluntary car scheme available in each local authority area.	Q4 2015.	
2.12	Develop the passenger assistance concept further for assisting people with a disability to plan their public transport journeys.	National Transport Authority.	Assess the current provision and demand for the service.	Q2 2015.	
2.13	Examine the introduction of conditions on licensed commercial operators of public transport services to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles.	National Transport Authority.	Regulatory assessment completed and amendments to licensing requirements made.	Q1 2015.	
2.14	Simplify the fares structure across the public transport modes to make them easier to understand.	National Transport Authority.	Make incremental changes to fare structures.	Continuous	
2.15	Develop the functionality and the availability of the Leap card so that it simplifies the payment for travel for those with a disability.	National Transport Authority.	Liaise with disability groups to see what changes need to be made.	Q1 2015.	

2.16	Facilitate the increase in the numbers of wheelchair and accessible taxis across the state by allowing smaller vehicles and incentivising purchase or adaption of those vehicles.	National Transport Authority.	Increase the percentage of wheelchair taxis in the state.	Regulatory change made and grant scheme in place.	
2.17	Provide a subsidy to fund the provision of public transport services throughout the state.	National Transport Authority.	Adequate subsidy to be provided.	Continuous.	
2.18	Invest in bus fleet to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the provision of public transport services.	National Transport Authority.	Increase percentage of wheelchair accessible bus fleet on subsidised services.	Dublin Bus already 100% accessible. Bus Éireann is 100% accessible in regional cities. Continuous improvement on other fleets.	
2.19	Invest in supporting infrastructure to increase their level of accessibility i.e. bus stops, bus and rail stations, bus ramps.	National Transport Authority.	Increase percentage of wheelchair accessible bus stops, stations etc. on subsidised services.	Continuous	
2.20	Develop the information tools that are currently available to ensure that they include the information that a person with a disability needs to know in order to take a public transport journey e.g. the National Journey Planner on www.transportforireland.ie is being	National Transport Authority.	Complete project	Q1 2015 and continuous improvement.	

	developed to have an option to plan a journey with no steps.				
2.21	Implement on-board announcements of next stops on all public transport to assist those with a visual impairment.	National Transport Authority.	Develop proposal for regional city services.	Q4 2015.	

SP3 – Make Work Pay					
	Actions	Responsible Body	KPIs	Time Frame	Progress Assessment
3.1	Implement ready reckoners that provide people with disabilities with information of what they could earn over a period of time if they take a job.	DSP, CIB, NDA, DOH.	Ready reckoner developed.	Q3 2016.	
3.2	Employment activation. Continue to support people with disabilities to access further training and employment opportunities through the relevant programmes that include the EmployAbility Service, the Wage Subsidy Scheme, the Reasonable Accommodation Fund, JobBridge and the Back-to- Education Allowance.	DSP	Support. Review inclusion of people with disabilities in Intreo process (in context of Action 1.12).	Constant Action Q2 2016.	
3.3	Income/employment support interaction. Review range of income supports for people with disabilities to ensure consistency, enhanced links between income support and employment, appropriate access to supports and effective controls.	DSP.	Review of Partial Capacity Benefit	Q2 2015	
			Overall review of illness schemes.	Q4 2015	
			Legislative changes made as required.	Q1 2016	

3.4	Continue to ensure that resumption of welfare payment is as streamlined as possible for people who may be in and out of work due to the episodic nature of their disability.	DSP		Continuous	
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SP4 – Promote job retention and re-entry to work					
	Actions	Responsible Body	KPIs	Time Frame	Progress Assessment
4.1	Promote and support strategies for intervention in the early stages of absence from work due to acquired disability. These strategies will be based on evaluation of the relevant DACT project. They will also include people with mental health difficulties.	HSE and DSP.	Working group established to develop guidelines on interventions.	Q4 2015.	
			Guidelines issued to all stakeholders.	Q4 2016.	
4.2(a)	Recovery Model of rehabilitation for those with mental health difficulties Promote and support the role of work in the Recovery Model of rehabilitation for those with mental health difficulties. Use the Individual Placement Support Model as part of rehabilitation process that includes coordinated support for employers and employees at local level by job coaches and community health teams.	HSE and DSP.	Work commenced to develop pilot.	Q1 2016. Suggested target of 90 coaches for 90 community health teams, subject to outcome from pilot	
4.2(b)	Recovery Model of rehabilitation for those with mental health difficulties. Pilot model.	HSE and DSP.	Pilot completed and evaluated.	Q4 2017.	

4.2(c)	Recovery Model of rehabilitation for those with mental health difficulties. To consider outcome of pilot.	HSE and DSP.	Guidelines for job coaches and community health teams.	Q4 2018.	
4.3	NDA to work with the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) to disseminate guidance for employers and employees on job retention and re-entry into work.	NDA, IOSH.	Joint Programme agreed	Q1 2016.	
4.4	Training programme. ICTU to develop training programme for disability champions, trade union reps and shop stewards to assist employers to support employees with an acquired disability to return to work.	ICTU.	Training programme developed tested & disseminated to target audience.	Dependent on budget. If budget allocated, then pilot programme rolled out by Q2 2015. Final programme rolled out Q4 2015.	
4.5	National Vocational Rehabilitation Service. Produce a research report/document on good practice in organising national vocational rehabilitation services across a number of jurisdictions.	NDA.	Research completed.	Completion of NDA research by Q4 2015	
			NDA advice paper.	Q2 2016.	

SP5 – Provide co-ordinated and seamless support					
	Actions	Responsible Body	KPIs	Time Frame	Progress Assessment
5.1	To work together to develop an effective co-ordinated policy approach (and draw up an implementation plan based on that approach), to assist individuals with disabilities, including those who require a high level of support, to obtain and retain employment having due regard to the implementation of New Directions.	DOH, HSE, NDA and DSP	Approach agreed.	Q4 2015.	
			Implementation plan finalised.	Q4 2016.	
			Commence roll out of implementation plan.	Q4/Q1 2016/17.	
5.2	Interdepartmental protocols for cross-referrals at national and local level and within organisations.	DSP, Intreo, DES, Solas, NDA, HSE.	Agreed Implementation.	Q2 2016.	
5.3	Develop the Real Time Information system both on-street and on web and smart phone applications to be more accessible and to include real time information that is of value for a passenger with a disability e.g. wheelchair symbol on real time information identifies services that are wheelchair accessible.	National Transport Authority.	Liaise with disability groups to see what improvements can be made.	Q1 2015.	
5.4	Develop the model of door-to-door community transport provision that is currently being provided in isolated rural areas.	National Transport Authority.	Increase the number of services and coverage.	Continuous.	

5.5	Ensure that employment rights and entitlements are safe-guarded and enforced for people with disabilities.	DJEI, Equality Tribunal.	Cases heard in a timely manner	Continuous.	

SP6 – Engage Employers					
	Actions	Responsible Body	KPIs	Time Frame	Progress Assessment
6.1	Promotion of employer awareness. Raise awareness among employers of the benefits of employing (and retaining in employment), people with disabilities. Enlist their participation in actions to promote the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities in open labour market employment.	DSP.	Range of services to employers highlighted at DSP road shows.	Underway – constant action.	
6.2	Work with employers to develop more inclusive recruitment and workplace practices.	DSP, others, NDA.	NDA Conduct research on Public Sector Employment. (See 6.13)	Q3 2016.	
			Disseminate learning.	Q4 2016.	
6.3	Encourage employers to provide work experience for people with disabilities.	DSP, DES.	Prepare Information pack for employers on providing work experience.	Q4 2015.	
6.4	Disseminate information on the supports that are available to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities or to retain employees who acquire a disability, including the EmployAbility Service, workplace supports and the wage subsidy scheme.	DSP.	Range of services to employers highlighted at DSP road shows.	Continuous.	

6.5	Subject to the provision of appropriate links by relevant Departments and Agencies, DJEI will, through its website, highlight the supports that are available to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities in the open labour market, or to retain in the workforce employees who acquire a disability. This will operate through appropriate links made available by the relevant Departments and agencies to the DJEI's website.	DJEI, DOH, DSP.	Information prepared for DJEI website. Information placed on website.	Q1 2015. Q1 2015.	
6.6	Work Placements. Explore the idea of expanding internships as a recruitment route for both public and private sectors, in discussion with a range of stakeholders. The roles of the Public Appointments Service, Pobal, Local Employment Services and job facilitators need to be discussed in this context. NDA will discuss this further with the relevant departments and agencies.	NDA, DSP, other relevant departments and agencies.	NDA discussion with relevant Departments.	Q4 2015.	
			Plan Developed	Q4 2016.	

6.7	Subject to the provision of appropriate links by relevant Departments and Agencies, DJEI will, through its website, highlight the supports that are available to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities in the open labour market, or to retain in the workforce employees who acquire a disability. This will operate through appropriate links made available by the relevant Departments and agencies to the DJEI's website.	DPER, PAS	DPER to commence review of the CPSA Code of Practice and PAS recruitment models to ensure that both fully support the employment of people with disabilities in the public service.	Q3 2015.	
			PAS to examine the introduction of an alternative recruitment model for people with disabilities.	Q4 2015.	
			DPER to review the application of the new sick leave regulations in terms of their impact on people with disabilities and/or long standing conditions.	Q3 2015.	
6.8	IBEC, Chambers Ireland and ICTU will work in partnership with each other and the NDA to: Engage and support employers to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Service, workplace supports and the wage subsidy scheme.	IBEC, ICTU, Chambers Ireland, NDA.	Action plan developed.	Q4 2015.	
6.9(a)	Increase employers' awareness of DSP employers' supports and other relevant guidance by disseminating information to the	IBEC, ICTU, Chambers Ireland, NDA.	IBEC disseminates employer supports' information via IBEC website and via alerts in the IBEC newsletters on	Continuous	

	business community about these supports.		an continuous basis as appropriate.		
6.9(b)	Increase employers' awareness of DSP employers' supports and other relevant guidance by disseminating information to the business community about these supports.	IBEC, ICTU, Chambers Ireland, NDA.	Disseminate information on DSP's employer supports to employers and trade unions.	Continuous	
6.9(c)	Increase employers' awareness of DSP employers' supports and other relevant guidance by disseminating information to the business community about these supports.	IBEC, ICTU, Chambers Ireland, NDA.	Chambers Ireland disseminates employers supports' information through their communications channels.	Continuous	
6.10	ICTU will work on engaging and supporting trade unions to promote and support the employment of people with disabilities.	ICTU		Continuous	
6.11(a)	Employer Peer Support Network IBEC will work with ICTU, Chambers Ireland and the NDA to input into the development of a national employer peer support network.	ICTU, IBEC, Chambers Ireland, NDA.	A national employer peer support network established.	Q4 2015.	
6.11(b)	Employer Peer Support Network ICTU and Chambers Ireland will work with IBEC and the NDA to develop a national				

	employer peer support network.				
6.12(a)	Produce new guidance for employers Work with IBEC, Chambers Ireland and other stakeholders e.g. employers, to produce new relevant guidance to assist employers to employ people with disabilities. This guidance will build on key points in the previous Workway guide and on the experience of ICTU's DACT project.	ICTU, IBEC, Chambers Ireland, NDA.	Guide produced and disseminated to employers and relevant agencies.	Q4 2016.	
6.12(b)	Produce new guidance for Line Managers Produce guidance to assist employers/ line managers to support employees with autism	NDA and Partners	Guide produced and disseminated to employers and relevant agencies.	Q4 2016.	
6.13	Training Programme. ICTU to train former disability champions and trade union reps in how to: Support employers to employ people with disabilities Support people with disabilities to retain employment Deal effectively with any workplace/ employment issues	ICTU.	Training programmed developed, tested and disseminated.	If finances available, programme rolled out Q4 2015.	
6.14	Investigate establishment of an employer helpline.	NDA, DJE, DSP.	Establish Advisory Committee Helpline	Q1 2016	

			Established.	Q4 2016	
6.15	Conduct research to document good practice in the employment of people with disabilities in the public sector and to highlight how barriers are being addressed.	NDA.	Liaise with disability groups to see what improvements can be made.	Q3 2016.	
6.16	Evaluate employer-related Disability Activation Projects, co-funded by the ESF.	DSP	Projects evaluated.	Q4 2015.	
6.17	Review access to and marketing of Enterprise Ireland and Local Employment Office programmes to entrepreneurs with disabilities	Enterprise Ireland.	Review completed.	Q1 2016	
	Enterprise Ireland will review how to ensure employers are aware of needs and potential of employees with disabilities.	Enterprise Ireland.	Review completed	Q1 2016	
	Engagement between Enterprise Ireland and the NDA's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design to examine routes to commercialising universal design product ideas from NDA's annual Design Challenge.	Enterprise Ireland, NDA	Commercial path for universal designed products are produced with guidance from the NDA	Commenced Q2 2015	

Appendix

Membership of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy Implementation Group

Fergus Finlay, Chair

Deaglán Ó Briain, Department of Justice and Equality

Jennifer O'Farrell, Secretariat, Department of Justice and Equality

Claire Collins, Department of Health

Gráinne Morrissey, Department of Education and Skills

Niamh Moloney, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Anne Melly, Health Service Executive

Ger Gilroy, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

Nicholas Meehan, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Marcella Luz, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Christy Grogan, Department of Social Protection

Adam Harris, AsIAM & Member of the Disability Stakeholders' Group

Siobhán Barron, National Disability Authority

Des Henry, WALK & Member of the Disability Stakeholders' Group

Joe Mason, WALK

John Twomey, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Shari McDaid, Mental Health Reform & Member of the Disability Stakeholders' Group

Daragh Phelan, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Marion Wilkinson, National Disability Authority

David Joyce, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Claire Mahon, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Pat Clarke, Down Syndrome Ireland

Patricia Mooney, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs