



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY



The Migrant Integration Strategy

A Blueprint for the Future

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Foreword by Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality

Ireland's population has become increasingly diverse over the past two decades. It is timely for us to focus on integration and to consider what is needed to enable Irish society to enjoy the benefits of diversity. We will all need to play our part. Effective integration requires ongoing engagement by migrants, public services, businesses and communities.

The Migrant Integration Strategy sets out the Government's commitment to the promotion of migrant integration as a key part of Ireland's renewal and as an underpinning principle of Irish society. The Strategy provides a framework for a range of actions to support migrants to participate fully in Irish life. The actions proposed are designed to support the integration process. They are also intended to identify and address any remaining barriers to integration. The Strategy offers a flexible structure which allows for additional actions and initiatives to be added where new issues emerge over its lifetime.

The Strategy is the first step towards realising the long-term vision of Ireland as a society in which migrants and those of migrant origin play active roles in communities, workplaces and politics. It sees the guiding principles for Ireland of the future as those of solidarity and opportunity for all, underpinned by

respect for diversity.

Irish society has responded positively to the changes that have occurred as a result of greater migration. Nonetheless, societal change can bring challenges. If we are to achieve the long-term vision of Ireland as a society which harnesses the benefits of integration, we will need to address such challenges proactively. One of the priorities for the Migrant Integration Strategy will be to identify such challenges and to begin the process of addressing them.

Ireland has the opportunity to get integration right, to build on what has been done so far and to plan for the future. The Migrant Integration Strategy will provide the means for us to begin this process.

Frances Fitzgerald T.D.

Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality



Foreword by David Stanton T.D., Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Integration and Immigration

Our recent celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising have reminded us of the ambition in the Proclamation that Ireland should cherish all the children of the nation equally. Ireland has become a diverse country, its children drawn from all across the world. The nation's children now include citizens born outside Ireland and those of migrant origin.

We have to ensure that existing systems are responsive to their needs. We have to ensure that migrants can access information and services and that barriers to their integration are identified and removed. The Migrant Integration Strategy sets a blueprint for action on integration over the period to the end of 2020. It includes actions to make public services more responsive to the needs of migrants. It also includes positive action initiatives to address areas where migrants find it difficult to avail of opportunities on an equal basis with other members of Irish society.

Communities play a crucial role in making those living within them feel at home. We have to mobilise communities to promote integration. We have to engage sporting organisations, faith-based groups, cultural organisations, community groups more actively in the integration process.

I am particularly pleased to announce the establishment of the Communities Integration Fund as part of the Migrant Integration Strategy. That Programme will provide funding and support for communities across Ireland to play a greater role in promoting integration. The initiative is intended to harness the goodwill and expertise in communities across Ireland to include migrants in the fabric of our communities. Communities will be the better for it.

David Stanton T.D.

*Minister of State at the Department of Justice and
Equality with special responsibility for Equality,
Immigration and Integration*

Migrant Integration Strategy: Summary of Key Actions

The Migrant Integration Strategy foresees actions applicable to all Government Departments and those intended to address particular issues.

Actions applicable to all Government Departments

The actions applicable to all Government Departments include the provision of:

- information to migrants in language-appropriate formats;
- ongoing intercultural awareness training for all front-line staff,
- signage in public offices indicating where interpretation is available;
- clear information on how to make a complaint about racist behaviour by staff or another customer.

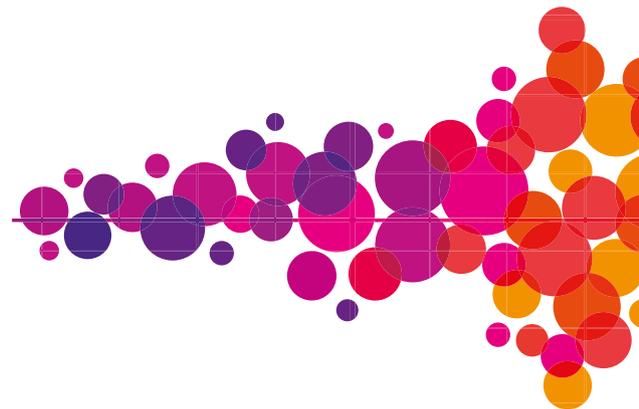
The Strategy also foresees that integration issues will continue to be mainstreamed into strategic statements and annual reports and into the general work of Departments.

Specific Actions

Specific actions are set out which are intended to address particular issues. The organisation responsible for implementing such actions has also been identified. They include:

- the inclusion of a target of 1% for the employment of EEA migrants and people from minority ethnic communities in the civil service (in most cases civil service employment is not open to non-EEA nationals). This issue is important in terms of beginning the process of making the civil service representative of the broader population.
- Schools outside the established education system will be encouraged to network with the aim of providing information on child protection and health and safety regulations to them and of developing relationships with them.
- the establishment by local authorities of networks aimed at reaching out to hard-to-reach migrant groups so to help them to engage with Government Departments and to provide information on their needs.

- the development of the second National Intercultural Health Strategy.
- the establishment of a Communities Integration Fund intended to support organisations in local communities (sports organisations, faith organisations etc.) to undertake actions to promote the integration of migrants into their communities.
- the monitoring of current school enrolment policies over time to assess their impact on the enrolment of migrant students.
- the inclusion of a language component in education and training programmes for unemployed migrants with poor English proficiency.
- initiatives to ensure that migrant needs in relation to skills acquisition and labour market activation are addressed.
- initiatives to encourage the business sector to play a role in promoting integration.
- the establishment of a working group to examine data gaps in relation to migrant needs and experience.



Introduction

Ireland has become an increasingly diverse country over the past two decades. Census 2011 indicates that 12% of the population is of migrant origin. The migrant population is itself highly diverse in terms of nationality, ethnicity and religious belief, or absence thereof. The migrant population includes people of different ages, genders and sexual orientation. There are considerable differences between migrants in terms of their situation in Ireland, including whether or not they have the right to work here, and the manner in which they have come to Ireland. The population's profile includes the Irish-born children and grandchildren of migrants. The family situation of the migrant population is also diverse. Some migrants have come with their families to Ireland. Others have formed families since their arrival. Yet others are single. Some migrants have made their home in Ireland. Others plan to remain in Ireland on a short-term basis. Correspondingly, migrants have differing needs and opportunities depending on their circumstances.

It is expected that inward migration will continue over the next decades and that Ireland will remain culturally diverse into the future. Second and third generation migrants can be expected to play an increasingly greater role in Irish society in the decades ahead.

The integration process is moving beyond the initial phase of focussing on the needs of those newly arrived in Ireland. It is moving into the second phase where many migrants have lived in Ireland for some time but may continue to have needs particular to their migrant status. For the host population, in this phase, cultural diversity is no longer a novelty but rather a permanent reality. Some within the population may look more negatively at cultural diversity during this phase, particularly if they perceive resources and opportunities to be scarce or more limited than heretofore.

Progress so far

The actions taken by successive governments over the past two decades, as well as by the business sector, civil society organisations and local communities, have achieved positive outcomes for migrants in key areas. More than 100,000 persons from over 170 countries have become Irish citizens since citizenship ceremonies were introduced in 2011.

Social inclusion measures have ensured that migrants do not experience significantly higher risks of poverty because of their migrant status. In 2012, the differentials in the at risk of poverty rates for citizens

and third country nationals were narrowest in Ireland of all EU Member States. Similarly, the differentials in the consistent poverty rates are also narrow. In 2014, for example, the consistent poverty rate for Irish nationals was 8% and 8.8% for non-Irish nationals.

Integration plans have been devised for key sectors. The National Intercultural Health Strategy (2007-2012) provided a framework for action by the health service to respond to increasing cultural diversity. Similarly, the Intercultural Education Strategy (2010-2015) has focused on enabling students to experience an education respectful of diversity while assisting education providers to ensure that integration becomes the norm within an intercultural learning environment. The draft Culture 2025 Framework Policy/ Éire Ildánach highlights, amongst its key values, the importance of cultural diversity, informed by the many traditions now in Ireland and the inherent right of everyone to participate in the cultural life of the nation. Further, it provides for a focus on social integration in the context of Ireland's shift to a multicultural society with diverse cultural influences. The Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) highlights the range of actions being taken by Ireland to advance the rights of migrant women internationally.

Equally, many businesses recognise the importance of managing workplace diversity successfully. 44 companies in Ireland encompassing 103,000 employees have signed up to the Diversity Charter to demonstrate their commitment to diversity. 50 companies will have signed up to the Charter by January 2017. Many more companies have developed expertise in managing workplace diversity well.

Continuing challenges and risks

However, certain issues still create barriers to integration. These include language acquisition, particularly for those recently arrived in Ireland. Similarly, unemployment rates are considerably higher for specific migrant groups, particularly Africans. Migrants often cluster in towns or in areas of the main cities where accommodation is cheaper or more easily available. They may have reduced interaction with the host population as a consequence. There continue to be data gaps on key issues which make it difficult to assess the experiences of migrants in key areas. It is difficult, for instance, to assess the degree to which migrants experience racist incidents.

Irish society faces considerable risks if integration is not supported by the Government, by communities and by individuals. The risks include the following:

- Loss to Irish society of the contribution which migrants can make in all spheres of life;
- Reduced opportunities for migrants and their families;
- Segregation and ghettoization of specific migrant groups, with the potential for social exclusion and economic disadvantage;
- Fragmentation of shared societal norms;
- Racism and discrimination against migrants and their families;
- Promotion of anti-integration agendas among persons of Irish heritage and among migrants.

In addition, public services may come under pressure if faced with increased and unanticipated demands or if demands diverge from those with which they are familiar. This may lead to corresponding pressures on communities if they are unable to access the services that they need.

Radicalisation has been a particular issue for other European societies where ideologies that seek to undermine the state have prompted some young people, particularly second-generation Muslim immigrants, to undertake terrorist actions. The risk of radicalisation leading to terrorist activity is a risk for all societies. The challenge will be to reach out to young people at risk of radicalisation to encourage them to participate constructively in Irish society.

Brexit is anticipated to have implications for migration patterns to Ireland. Migrants living in the UK may seek to move to Ireland. Those who would formerly have chosen to seek residence or asylum in the UK may decide instead to seek to live in Ireland. This may alter the number and profile of migrants in Ireland.

Aim of the Migrant Integration Strategy

The Migrant Integration Strategy has been developed as the Government's response to the challenge of promoting integration in a context of increased diversity. Its vision is to enable migrants or persons of migrant origin to participate on an equal basis with those of Irish heritage. Its primary objective is to ensure that barriers to full participation in Irish society by migrants or their Irish-born children are identified and addressed.

The aim of the Strategy is to work towards the creation of a society that is equipped to support integration both collectively and individually. It is a four-year strategy which is intended as a crucial step towards a long-term vision in which integration is a strongly embedded principle in Irish life. The long-term vision is that Ireland thirty years from now will be a society in which migrants and those of migrant origin play an active role in communities, workplaces and politics. It sees the guiding principles for Ireland of the future as those of solidarity and shared identity as members of Irish society.

Achieving the long-term vision will involve change for Irish society. It will require a change of perspective from one in which cultural diversity is viewed as optional or temporary to one in which such diversity is recognised as integral to Irish identity. It will require those of Irish heritage to expand their notion of Irishness to include migrants and those of migrant origin. Equally, migrants who make their homes in Ireland on a long-term basis will be expected to engage actively and to assume shared civic responsibilities for promoting the well-being of our society.

The Migrant Integration Strategy is intended to work towards the long-term vision in which integration is embedded in communities, workplaces and broader society.

What is planned

The Strategy's aim is to communicate the key message that successful integration is the responsibility of Irish society as a whole and will require action by Government, public bodies, service providers, businesses, NGOs but also by local communities. It seeks to encourage local communities to take action to promote integration.

The Strategy proposes to use networks as a means by which migrant and non-migrant groups and organisations can get to know one another and by which migrants can raise areas of concern.

Ireland has developed an approach to integration that involves both mainstream services and targeted initiatives. This Strategy focuses on ensuring that mainstream services are responsive to the needs of the diversity of migrants. It recognises that mainstream services may need to adapt over time to ensure that migrant needs are met on the same basis as those of non-migrants. Research will be undertaken to see how services can be planned and / or adapted to respond more effectively to integration challenges.

The Strategy also proposes a number of targeted initiatives:

- to increase migrant participation in specific areas (such as in entrepreneurship or public sector employment);
- to address particular migrant needs (such as in education and health); and
- to address challenges (such as on data gaps).

The Strategy provides a framework for action on integration by Government and diverse sectors and organisations. It is intended to harness the benefits of integration and to address potential risks that may arise if integration is not undertaken effectively.

The Strategy is directed at Government Departments, public bodies, the business sector, community, voluntary, faith-based, cultural and sporting organisations as well as at families and individuals. It will run from January 2017 until December 2020. Its implementation will be monitored by a Strategy committee under the auspices of the Department of Justice and Equality.

The Strategy recognises that this is a period of change and that the integration challenges which will need to be addressed are likely to evolve in the years to December 2020. It has been designed to evolve in response to new challenges and emerging issues that may arise over its lifetime. A set of actions are set out for implementation. The process also allows for additional actions to be added or for existing actions to be adapted to respond to changing circumstances.

Vision

The vision of this Strategy is that migrants are facilitated to play a full role in Irish society, that integration is a core principle of Irish life and that Irish society and institutions work together to promote integration.

The vision has the following key elements:

- The basic values of Irish society are respected by all.
- Migrants are enabled and expected to participate in economic life – in employment and self-employment.
- Migrants interact with the host community and participate with them in cultural, sporting and other activities while preserving also their own traditions as they wish.
- Migrants have language skills sufficient to enable them to participate in economic life and in the wider society.
- Migrants have a knowledge of Ireland, its history and culture.
- Migrants, and particularly their children, benefit fully from the education system.
- Migrants are enabled to celebrate their national, ethnic, cultural and religious identities, subject to the law.
- Migrants participate in politics and public life as provided for by law.
- Integration policies and measures are mainstreamed in the work of all Government Departments and agencies, local authorities and other public bodies and organisations.
- Positive action measures are undertaken where appropriate to address the specific needs of migrant groups.
- Migrants and migrant representative groups, contribute to policy and service development.
- Migrants get support to access and navigate public services.

Definition of Integration

Integration is defined in current Irish policy as the 'ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity'¹.

The Migrant Integration Strategy encompasses migrants and those of migrant background and envisages integration to encompass participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the State.

Integration recognises the right of migrants to give expression to their own culture in a manner that does not conflict with the basic values of Irish society as reflected in Ireland's Constitution and in law.

As a two-way process, integration involves change for Irish society and institutions so that the benefits of greater diversity can be fully realised.

¹ *Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999) Integration: a Two Way Process. Dublin. This is in conformity with the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration.*



Policy and Legislative Context

The Migrant Integration Strategy builds on existing policy on integration and is situated within the context of the legislative safeguards that are in place to protect the rights of migrants. Ireland's integration policy is intercultural in nature, seeking to promote the engagement of migrants, to address their specific needs and to ensure respect for their distinct identities. The policy approach has been to combine access to mainstream services for migrants with targeted positive action programmes to address specific needs.

Policy Context

Towards 2016, the social partnership strategy for the period to the end of 2015, set the framework for policy on integration from 2006. It committed the Government to the development of a framework to address the broader issue of integration policy and to the establishment of appropriate co-ordinating mechanisms to implement such a strategy. Migration Nation was accordingly published in 2008 as the Ministerial statement on migration. The Office of the Minister for Integration (later the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration) was also established to coordinate action on integration.

Existing Integration Initiatives

Migration Nation – A Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management. (2008)

This document, which was published in 2008 by the Office of the Minister for Integration represented the first Ministerial statement on the issue of integration and was intended to be the starting point for the development of an overall integration strategy.

The Statement sets out the key principles which would inform and underpin State policy on integration as follows:

1. A partnership approach between Government and non-Governmental organisations.
2. A strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives.
3. A clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos, i.e. mainstream public services are expected, by Government, to be designed and delivered in ways that include immigrants, as an integral part of the community they serve.

4. A commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities.
5. A focus on the role of local authorities, sporting bodies, faith-based groups and political parties in building integrated communities and the plans to target funding in these areas.

The principle of mainstreaming has been established policy since 2008.

Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration

The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, a division of the Department of Justice and Equality, has a mandate to develop, lead and co-ordinate migrant integration policy across Government Departments, agencies and services. Its functions include the promotion of the integration of legal migrants into Irish society, the management of the resettlement of refugees admitted as part of the United Nations Resettlement Programme and the administration of funding from national and EU sources to promote integration.

Sectoral Strategies

As a result of recommendations contained in an earlier document – the National Action Plan against Racism (2005 -2008) – national strategies were developed in many areas. These strategies encompassing issues in specific areas of service delivery continue to be implemented on a national basis. They cover areas such as:

- An Action Strategy to Support Integrated Workplaces;
- An Garda Síochána's Diversity Strategy and

Implementation Plan 2009 to 2012 (following an extensive consultation process, work on a new strategy is advanced);

- Cultural Diversity and the Arts;
- An Intercultural Education Strategy 2010 to 2015;
- National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 to 2012 (a second strategy will be developed in 2016 that will take account of the changing landscape in intercultural health).

In addition, almost all local authorities have drawn up and implemented strategies taking into account local conditions and circumstances. Many of these were supported by funding from the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

History of Integration Policy Development

The emergence of Ireland as a country of net immigration in the period since the late 1990s led to an increased focus on integration policy, including actions to combat racism and xenophobia and to promote interculturalism.

Key policy papers for this purpose included:

- **Integration - A Two Way Process (1999)**

A document entitled “Integration: A Two Way Process” was published in 1999 and was a report to the then Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This report was compiled by an Inter-Departmental Working Group. The primary focus of the Report was the integration of refugees in Ireland

in the period from 1994 onwards.

- **Planning for Diversity - The National Action Plan Against Racism (2005 - 2008)**

The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005 – 2008 was the first major framework document on the issue of racism and was developed arising from a commitment made by Government at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance in Durban in 2001 and reaffirmed in Sustaining Progress, the Social Partnership Agreement 2003 – 2005.

The Plan provided strategic direction to combating racism and to promoting a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland. It supported the development of a number of national and local strategies which continue to be implemented.

- **The National Economic and Social Council's study of Migration Policy (2006)**

In September 2006, the National Economic and Social Council published a report entitled *Migration Policy*. The Report influenced *Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management* (referred to above) and continues to inform policy on migrant integration in Ireland.

- **European Common Basic Principles on Integration**

In October 1999, at the European Council meeting in Tampere (Finland), the leaders of the European Union called for a common immigration policy which would include more dynamic policies to ensure the integration of third-country nationals residing

in the European Union. The Justice and Home Affairs Council of 19 November, 2004 agreed eleven principles which are being adopted in one form or another by all the Member States.

Current Irish integration policy has regard to the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration.

Legislative Context

Policy action to promote integration has been underpinned since 1998 by a series of legislative provisions aimed at combating discrimination, including in relation to race.

Equality legislation

Equality legislation is in place which prohibits discrimination on nine specified grounds: gender, civil status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and membership of the Traveller community. The race ground encompasses nationality and ethnicity. The legislation is designed to promote equality, prohibit discrimination – direct, indirect and by association – and victimisation, and allow positive measures to ensure full equality across the nine grounds. The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2011 outlaw discrimination at work including recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment.

The Equal Status Acts 2000–2012 outlaw discrimination outside the workplace, in particular in the provision of goods and services, disposal of property and certain aspects of education.

Equality legislation also provides for remedies for those who have suffered discrimination. The Workplace Relations Commission investigates

or mediates claims of unlawful discrimination under equality legislation. Our equality legislation is constantly kept under review and amended as necessary.

IHREC and positive duty

The equality legislation provides for a national equality body to promote compliance with the legislation. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) was established as an independent statutory body on 1st November 2014 following the merger of the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is tasked with providing information and advice to persons who feel that they have been discriminated against on any of the nine grounds, whether in the areas of employment equality or equal status.

The Commission supports public bodies to place equality and human rights considerations at the heart of decision making. A significant innovation in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 is the introduction of a positive duty on public bodies to have due regard to human rights and equality in their work and to conduct their business in a manner that is consistent with individual human rights. The Commission assists public bodies in complying with the positive duty, including by producing guidelines and codes of practice. This means the systematic integration of an equality and human right perspective into everyday work, including changes to organisational cultures so that such a perspective is an integral part of the organisation. One of IHREC's specific functions is to encourage good practice in intercultural relations, and to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the State.



How the Strategy was developed

The Cabinet Committee on Social Policy, at its meeting on 24 February 2014, endorsed the proposal of the then Minister for Justice and Equality to reconstitute a Cross-Departmental Group on Integration with a view to preparing an updated migrant integration strategy.

On 28 March 2014, the then Minister for Justice and Equality announced that there would be a review of Ireland's approach to the integration of migrants to ensure that the policy remained fully in keeping with the commitment in the Programme for Government to promote policies which contribute to integration.

The mandate of the reconstituted Cross-Departmental Group on Integration was to:

- review the activities being undertaken by Government Departments and agencies directed to promoting the integration of non-Irish nationals;
- prepare a draft overarching Migrant Integration Strategy taking account of the policies and actions already being implemented;
- undertake consultation with key stakeholders.

The Cross-Departmental Group was chaired at

a senior level by the Department of Justice and Equality and included representation from a wide range of Government Departments and Bodies which have a significant role in integration. A list of the Departments/Bodies represented is provided in Appendix 1.

Work of the Group

The Cross-Departmental Group met on 24 March 2014 in order to agree a work plan that would include the methodology for public engagement and input into the work of the Group.

The Group agreed that a series of thematic meetings would be held with each meeting addressing a specific topic. The topics discussed were:

- Promoting Intercultural Awareness and Combating Racism and Xenophobia;
- Education;
- Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion;
- Employment and Pathways to Work;
- Active Citizenship.

Public participation in the review process

An important part of the work of the Cross-Departmental Group was to engage in a meaningful way with the large number of non-governmental groups working with migrants and with members of the public. In order to do this, a two-fold approach was undertaken by the Group. The first step was to place a call in the media inviting submissions from interested parties who wished to contribute to the work of the Group. The closing date for contributions was 9 May 2014 and more than 80 submissions were received from a wide range of individuals, organisations and groups providing services to migrants.

The second phase of the consultation process was a series of face-to-face meetings with some of those who had contributed material.

Five consultation sessions were held, with each session lasting one day and involving a series of sub-meetings with members of the public. A total of 27 separate groups, one individual and a group of seven individuals met with the Cross-Departmental Group during these sessions. This segment of the consultative process facilitated the highlighting of, and in-depth discussions on, issues of particular concern. They also afforded contributors present at these sessions the opportunity to inform the Cross-Departmental Group of their personal experiences or those of the groups that they represent. These meetings were held on 23 June 2014, 7 July 2014, 28 July 2014, 8 September 2014 and 1 December 2014. A list of the Groups and individuals who provided material for consideration by the Cross-Departmental Group is outlined in Appendix 2.

Suggestions in the written contributions were collated and circulated to the relevant Departments and associated agencies for consideration.

The consultation process has informed the development of the Migrant Integration Strategy.

Finalisation of Strategy

The draft Strategy has been revised during the course of 2016 to take account of issues raised by organisations during the consultation process and to allow for additional actions to be added.

Who is covered by the Strategy?

The Strategy is intended to cover EEA and non-EEA nationals, including economic migrants, refugees and those with legal status to remain in Ireland. They will have differing needs depending on their situation.

The diversity of migrant needs has implications for the integration-related issues potentially facing Government Departments and for the services provided by Departments, agencies and other service providers.

EU/EEA Nationals

This group, who possess the right to travel and work within the EU/EEA, can face integration issues such as the need for well-developed English language skills in order to participate fully in the life of the State. They may also face issues of segregation and isolation.

Nationals of countries outside the EU/ EEA

Nationals of countries outside the EU / EEA may arrive in the State through a number of mechanisms - through the employment permit route or as refugees or as applicants for refugee status.

Those who arrive through the employment permit route will have secured a job before they arrive here. In terms of the process of integration, the stability offered by employment, and the possibility that it offers

to engage with others in the community, can enhance the integration process. This group may also bring high skills and qualifications.

The types of supports that will be in demand will be determined by the requirements of the individuals concerned but it is possible to identify generic or common forms of assistance that may be essential. In addition, the status of different groupings within this category needs to be considered.

One group are migrants who have lived here for some time. These persons may have more advanced language skills and may therefore be in a better position to avail of opportunities presented by, for example, employment or education. However, some, such as certain older migrants, in particular, may feel inhibited from interacting with the local community because of language difficulties or differing social customs.

Persons recognised as refugees and persons given permission to remain on other grounds also need support to facilitate their successful integration.

A transition Task Force was established last year which put in place important supports to facilitate people granted protection status or leave to remain to integrate into the community. These included the production of a comprehensive information guide to living independently and the availability of information sessions nationwide for those granted status.

Second Generation Migrants

It will be important for future social cohesion, stability and inclusion that this group grow up to become part of the essential fabric of Irish society and feel fully integrated in every way possible. This will require equality of opportunity with other Irish people generally and a sensitivity on the part of Government Departments, agencies and other public bodies to the needs of this group.

Statistics on the Non-Irish population

As will be seen in the table, census data indicates that the number of non-Irish persons increased by 87.2% between 2002 and 2006 and by 29.7% between 2006 and 2011. The proportion of the population which is non-Irish rose from 5.6% in 2002 to 10% in 2006 and 12% in 2011. The results for the past three censuses in tabular format are as follows:

	Total Population	Total Non-Irish National Population	Percentage change of non-Irish nationals
2002	3,917,203	224,261 (5.6% of total)	
2006	4,239,848	419,733 (10% of total) Male 223,717; Female 196,016	87.2% increase
2011	4,588,252 ²	544,357 (12% of total) Male 271,864; Female 272,493	29.7% increase

In the period from 2006 to 2011, the number of Polish nationals grew by 97.7 per cent to 122,585 making them the largest non-Irish group in the State. The next largest group were UK nationals decreasing by 0.3 per cent over the same period. The UK national group numbered 112,259 persons.

2 For the first time, Census 2011 distinguished being present and being usually resident on census night. Of the total population recorded, 62,971 were usually resident outside Ireland, so total Population usually resident and present in the State on Census night was 4,525,281.

What the Strategy proposes to do

Promoting integration will require action not alone by all Government Departments but also by public bodies, business networks, local communities and NGOs. The needs of migrants and effective responses to those needs are likely to evolve over the period of the Strategy. The following approach is proposed:

- Implementation of a series of actions that have been identified on the basis of the consultation process and Government policy;
- Development of a coordinating mechanism with the remit to oversee implementation of the actions already identified and to assess whether further action is required.

Implementation Structure

It is proposed that a Strategy committee will be established under Mr David Stanton T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality with responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, to oversee implementation of the Strategy. It will include representatives of Government Departments, key public bodies, local authorities and of NGOs.

The committee will review implementation of all actions. It will agree indicators for monitoring progress.

The committee will also have the task of assessing whether or not further action is required on specific issues. In addition, it will make recommendations on actions needed to be added to the Strategy or changed to respond to changing needs.

Actions to be undertaken

1. General Actions			
	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
1	Integration issues will be mainstreamed in the work of all appropriate Government Departments and agencies ³ and addressed in their Strategy Statements, Annual Reports and other documents.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
2	Government Departments and agencies will ensure appropriate, regular engagement with NGOs representing migrant groups.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
3	Drawing on existing resources to the extent possible, factual material will be made available to enable migrants to learn about Ireland, its history, culture and so on. This material will be in a suitable format and in a range of languages as appropriate.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020
4	Decisions on grants to community and sports organisations will include a criterion on promoting integration activities.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
5	Periodic evaluations measuring the outcomes of funding initiatives will be carried out.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020

3 This includes, but is not limited to, the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Health, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Social Protection.

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
6	The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration will make funding available to local and national groups to carry out integration initiatives, including once-off initiatives, with particular emphasis on local and regional effects. Activities may include, for example, measures to increase mutual understanding between the host community and migrants, actions to introduce migrants to Irish society and enable them to adapt to it, or measures to encourage migrant participation in civil and cultural life.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020
7	The Department of Justice and Equality will use EU funding to support migrants to access the labour market and to promote integration activities.	Department of Justice and Equality	2017 - 2020
8	A working group will be established to identify and address data gaps.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017

2. Access to Citizenship/Long Term Residency

9	Statistics on applications for citizenship disaggregated by age, gender and nationality will be published annually.	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)	Annually
10	The fees for naturalisation will be kept under regular review to ensure that costs are reasonable and do not deter applicants who are qualified.	INIS	Annually

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
11	A statutory scheme for Long Term Residency will be introduced.	INIS	2017
12	The introduction of civics and language tests for those seeking citizenship will be examined.	INIS	2017
13	Statistics on applications for Long-Term Residency will be published.	INIS	Annually
14	Arrangements to enable registration of non-EEA migrants aged under 16 years will be finalised as a matter of urgency.	INIS	2018

3. Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion

15	Information will be provided in language-appropriate formats and in a manner easily accessible by migrants.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
16	Government Departments and State Agencies will ensure that staff are trained to inform migrants accurately of their entitlements.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
17	Initiatives will be undertaken aimed at increasing the number of migrant representatives in local authority fora, like Public Participation Networks (PPNs), and other representative fora.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
18	Mechanisms for providing adequate interpreting facilities will be explored in order to facilitate equality of access to services.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
19	The availability of interpreting will be prominently displayed in a range of languages in relevant public offices.	Government Departments and Agencies	Ongoing
20	Progress on reducing poverty and social exclusion among migrants will be monitored in line with the national social target for poverty reduction.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
21	<p>Department of Social Protection (DSP) will continue to take measures to ensure that the habitual residence condition (HRC) legislation is applied correctly and consistently. These measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing and regularly updating guidelines for decision makers within DSP; • Publishing these guidelines on the website; • Provision of training in HRC for relevant decision makers; • Ongoing provision of advice to decision-makers, as needed. 	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
22	The Migrant Consultative Forum will continue to offer the opportunity for NGOs whose primary focus is dealing with migrants, to engage on migrant-related aspects of social protection services on an ongoing basis over the lifetime of the Strategy.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
23	The Department of Social Protection will continue to provide up-to-date information and training to staff on entitlements for all clients in relation to its schemes and services. In line with core values of the Department, awareness and respect for equality and diversity (including relevant legislation) is an integral component of all training activity. Provision of generic training across the public service via the shared learning and development curriculum (currently being developed under Action 9 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan) will address specific provision of anti-racism and cultural awareness training where a need is identified.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
24	The Department of Social Protection will continue to provide translation/interpretive/sign language services as required and the provision of information in alternative formats where feasible on request.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
25	Research will be undertaken to assess how mainstream services are meeting migrant needs.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant integration	2017 - 2018

4. Education

26	The Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016 will be enacted.	Department of Education and Skills	2017
27	Proactive efforts will be made to attract migrants into teaching positions, including raising awareness of the Irish language aptitude test and adaptation period for primary teaching.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020
28	The extension of the Free Fees initiative for Third Level Education to the children of migrants will be explored.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2018

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
29	The numbers of non-English speaking migrant children in schools will be monitored annually and details published.	Department of Education and Skills	Annually
30	Current school enrolment policies will be monitored over time to assess their effect on migrant students.	Department of Education and Skills	Annually
31	The effectiveness of training for teachers on managing diversity and tackling racism will be reviewed.	Department of Education and Skills	2018 - 2019
32	The provision of ESOL classes to cater for the language needs of adults from ethnic minorities will be reviewed following the development of ESOL policy guidelines.	Department of Education and Skills/ Education and Training Boards	2018 - 2019
33	The adequacy of language supports in schools to cater for the language needs of children from ethnic minorities will be kept under review.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020
34	Schools will be encouraged to support migrant parents' participation in the school life of their children	Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing
35	The use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for recognition of English language proficiency will be extended so that people can assess their progress.	SOLAS and Training Providers	2017 - 2020
36	The fostering and development of positive attitudes towards diversity and celebrating difference will continue to form part of the school curriculum.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020
37	Follow-on ESOL programmes will be delivered to enable migrants to acquire more intensive language skills to assist their integration into the workplace.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020

5. Employment and Pathways to Work

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
38	The Central Statistics Office will continue to publish disaggregated data on unemployment.	Central Statistics Office	Quarterly
39	The Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS) will through its funding and reporting requirements, require the Education and Training Boards to ensure that their Further Education and Training courses provision meet the specific needs of migrants e.g. language acquisition, knowledge of the Irish working environment, interview skills, c.v. preparation etc. This provision will be either directly on their principal courses or through part-time modular provision parallel to the learners' participation on their principal courses as appropriate.	SOLAS and Education and Training Boards	2017
40	Education or training programmes specifically catering for unemployed migrants whose language skills require development will contain a language component.	SOLAS and Education and Training Boards	2017 - 2020
41	Appropriate levels of quality engagement with migrants who are registered jobseekers will be ensured. The promotion of the availability of employment services to 'voluntary engagers'/'walk-in' immigrants not on the Live Register, if such person is entitled to work here, in the new Pathways to Work strategy will be undertaken.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
42	An analysis will be undertaken to assess the extent to which the level of joblessness among jobseekers of African origin exceeds that of other groups and determine what action, if any, is required to address any evidence that people of African origin face higher barriers to exit unemployment.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
43	The Quality and Qualifications Ireland's system for the recognition of vocational skills accredited in other countries will be promoted more widely.	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	2017 - 2020
44	Proactive outreach and support measures will be undertaken by all public sector employers to increase the number of persons from an immigrant background working at all levels in the civil service and wider public service. There will be a particular focus on increasing the numbers of people from immigrant backgrounds working in front-line services. This work will have regard to public service employment principles of merit and transparency, and to restrictions regarding non-EEA nationals working in the Irish Public Service.	Public Appointments Service	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
45	<p>To make the Civil Service fully representative of Irish society we will aim to have 1% of the workforce from ethnic minorities and will -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · put in place arrangements to identify the number of civil servants from ethnic minorities; · broaden our outreach in schools and ethnic communities to raise awareness, educate about the role of the Civil Service and showcase the career opportunities available; · review the composition of our applicant pool so that we can understand where applicants to the civil service come from and develop targeted measures to encourage those areas of society that are not applying. 	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	2017 - 2020
46	<p>Further activities will be undertaken to raise awareness of State board opportunities among key groups within society that are currently under-represented on State boards, working with Departments and the relevant State bodies in this regard.</p>	Public Appointments Service	2017 - 2020
47	<p>Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) will continue to undertake targeted initiatives to engage with migrant prospective entrepreneurs in line with local need. The LEO Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland will promote best practice activities in this area amongst all LEOs nationally.</p>	Enterprise Ireland/Local Enterprise Offices	2017 - 2020

6. Health

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
48	A second National Intercultural Health Strategy will be developed by the end of Q2 2017.	Health Service Executive	2017
49	An appropriate model will be developed for the provision of interpreting services to users within the health area who are not proficient in English.	Health Service Executive	2017 - 2020
50	The recording of ethnicity as part of ethnic equality monitoring across the health service will be promoted as a means of identifying unique needs of migrants and developing interventions to address these needs.	Health Service Executive	2017 - 2020

7. Integration in the Community

51	A Communities Integration Fund will be developed to support actions by local communities throughout Ireland to promote the integration of migrants and refugees.	Department of Justice and Equality	2017 - 2020
52	Integration strategies will be updated.	Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
53	A Migrant Integration Forum will be established in every local authority area, ideally through existing Public Participation Network (PPN) structures, and will meet regularly.	Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
54	An Integration Network will be established where migrant groups can engage with the Government and public bodies on issues of concern and on barriers to integration.	Dublin City Council	2017

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
55	<p>In carrying out the reform programme on youth work funding, there will be an added focus on ensuring that young people from ethnic or religious minorities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have access to youth services in which they will feel safe and protected and which will assist and enhance their integration.</p> <p>The National Youth Council of Ireland through funding provided by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will continue to promote implementation of the recently published toolkit “8 steps to Inclusive Youth Work” which is available to all youth workers. The toolkit is broken up into 8 easy-to-follow steps, to help youth workers to identify how good, inclusive practice is evident and measurable in their organisation’s youth work.</p>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	2017 - 2020
56	Encourage businesses to focus on integration.	OPMI	2017 - 2018
57	Invite speakers to present on integration to existing business sector relationships/engagements	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	2017 - 2020

8. Political participation

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
58	Migrants will be encouraged to participate in local and national politics to the extent that these areas are legally open to them.	Political parties NGOs	2017 - 2020
59	Migrants will be supported and encouraged to register to vote and to exercise their franchise.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	2017 - 2020
60	Multi-lingual materials on voter registration and on elections will be made accessible and available.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; Local Authorities	2017 - 2020

9. Promoting Intercultural Awareness and Combating Racism and Xenophobia

61	Intercultural awareness training will be provided by all Government Departments and Agencies and it will be reviewed at intervals to ensure that it is adequate and up to date. Front-line staff will receive on-going cultural awareness training appropriate to their role and operational requirements.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 – 2020
62	Local Authorities will take action to have migrant representation on all Joint-Policing Committees.	Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
63	An Garda Síochána will continue to implement a victim-centred policy and good investigative practices in racial and other similar crimes to encourage victims to report offences in line with recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate in this regard.	An Garda Síochána	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
64	Local Authorities will develop and publish their policy on the early removal of racist graffiti in their respective areas.	Local Authorities	2017
65	The current legislation with regard to racially motivated crime will be reviewed with a view to strengthening the law against hate crime, including in the area of online hate speech.	Department of Justice and Equality	2017
66	The issue of the under-reporting of racially-motivated crime will continue to be addressed including through the development of greater contact with marginalised communities.	An Garda Síochána	2017 - 2020
67	Public offices will display information on how to make a complaint of racist behaviour by a member of staff or other customer.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
68	All relevant public sector bodies will explore additional ways of working in cooperation with communities affected by stigmatisation and develop appropriate relationships with minority communities to avoid the danger of external groups having negative influences on marginalised communities.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration; An Garda Síochána;	2017 - 2020
69	Arts and culture programmes and policy will assist in the promotion of the arts and culture of diverse communities across Ireland.	Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
70	Schools outside the established education system will be encouraged to network with the aim of providing information on child protection and health and safety regulations to them and of developing relationships with them.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2018
71	Measures to combat racism and xenophobia will feature among the actions funded by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020

10. Volunteering

72	Volunteering will be promoted among the less well represented groups.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	2017 - 2020
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11. Sport

73	The potential of sport in the integration of migrants will be further explored through encouraging active participation, volunteering and involvement in governance.	Sport Ireland/Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020
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12. Implementation and Follow-Up

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
74	<p>To support the process of implementing recommendations arising from this review, a monitoring and coordination Committee will be established. This Committee will encompass a broad membership, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representatives of each relevant Government Department; • representatives of the relevant State Agencies, including the Health Service Executive; • representatives of the NGO sector. 	Department of Justice and Equality	2017 - 2020
75	The integration plan implementation process will be strengthened through the collation, analysis and development, where necessary, of relevant indicators which can be used to monitor the integration process.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
76	Progress on the implementation of these actions will be reviewed at the end of 2018 and a report prepared for Government.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2018

Appendix 1 – List of Departments/Bodies on Cross-Departmental Group

The membership of the Group includes senior officials from:

- The Department of the Taoiseach
- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- The Department of Justice and Equality
- The Department of Education and Skills
- The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (*previously the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government*)
- The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- The Department of Health
- The Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- The Department of Social Protection
- The Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (*previously the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*)
- The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- The Department of Defence
- The Central Statistics Office
- An Garda Síochána
- The Health Service Executive
- The County and City Managers Association

Appendix 2 – List of Contributors to the Call for Submissions

- Age Action
- Aidan Rowe
- AkiDwa
- Alistair Smith
- Andrew Sexton
- Anne Tannam
- Baha'i Information Office
- Balbriggan Integration Forum
- Black Irish Integration Forum
- Cairde
- Carlow Integration Forum
- Catherine Ann Cullen
- Centre for Creative Practices
- Children's Rights Alliance
- Afro-Irish Organisation
- Citizens Information Board
- Clonakilty Friends of Asylum Seekers
- Cormac McKay
- Crosscare
- Cultúr Migrants Centre
- Daniel Aviotis
- Daniel Ryan
- DICE Network
- Doras Luimni
- Antain Mac Lochlainn
- Cliodhna Murphy
- Ronit Lentin
- Wendy Cox
- Sam O'Brien-Olinger
- Eimear Gallagher
- Enrique
- ESRI
- Estelle Birdy
- Faith in Action Group Ballineaspig Parish
- Fiona Bolger
- Football Association of Ireland
- Forum Polonia
- Galway County Community and Voluntary forum
- Holocaust Education Trust Ireland (HETI)
- Irish Business Employers Confederation
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Ireland India Council
- Irish Refugee Council
- James Sinnott
- John Condon
- John Loesberg
- Joseph Nyirenda
- Joseph Wood
- Killarney Immigrant Support Group (KASI)
- Kilkenny Integration Forum
- Liam de Feu
- Mark Conroy
- Mark Lacey and Wando Avila
- Mayo Intercultural Action
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)
- Irish Immigrant Support Centre (NASC)
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- New Communities Partnership
- Newbridge Asylum Seekers Support Group
- Paula Geraghty
- Pavee Point
- Peadar O'Donoghue
- Polish Educational Society of Ireland
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland

- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Richard McAleavey
- S. Morrin
- SOS – European Support Network and Social Think Tank
- SOLAS
- SPIRASI
- Sport Against Racism in Ireland (SARI)
- The Integration Centre
- Tralee International Resource Centre
- UNHCR
- Vicky Donnelly
- Women's Integrated network (WIN)
- YMCA Cork
- Zoé Lawlor

Appendix 3: Issues Identified in the Consultation Process

A number of recurring themes emerged in the wide-ranging consultation process which included a call for submissions. Many of these issues are cross-Departmental in nature, demonstrating the need for a cross-Departmental approach to the development, implementation and maintenance of future integration policy.

The contributions from the consultation process can be summarised as follows:

Language training and acquisition

Contributors identified language acquisition as a key issue for integration. The importance of ensuring adequate support facilities in schools to assist children in benefitting and developing appropriately from education opportunities was highlighted. They also stated that there is a need to invest more resources in language training for adults with a view to improving employment and social interaction prospects. Priorities included the certification of participants' achievements and formal progression which could be benchmarked against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Education

Contributors highlighted the importance of ensuring that school enrolment policies do not put migrant pupils at a disadvantage. Training for teachers on managing diversity needs to be kept under regular review. Participants in the consultation process suggested that language support at secondary school level, where non-Irish national students struggle the most, is somewhat limited.

Some contributors noted that non-English speaking students tend to be concentrated in certain schools. Residential patterns, while important, alone do not fully explain this pattern: primary schools in close proximity to each other have a different share of migrant pupils. The effect of parental choice in school selection may be a factor in the development of such patterns. This needs to be closely monitored.

Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion

Information

Participants in the public discussions called for information from Government Departments and agencies, including the Health Service Executive, to be provided in language-appropriate forms.

Making public service information accessible to migrants arises at a number of levels and is impacting on their capacity to access public services. These include the availability of key information for newly arrived migrants and in languages other than English.

Interpreting

The availability of interpreting to enable migrants to access public services also emerged as a key issue. Participants in the public consultation process noted the need for the provision of suitably qualified high-

level interpreting facilities across all public services.

Social Protection

The main issue raised by contributors in this section was the application of the habitual residence condition and the need for its application to be consistent.

Poverty

Contributions indicated that migrants can face a higher risk of poverty, especially if coming from a situation where they previously experienced low living standards. Contributors stressed the importance from an integration perspective that the poverty rate among migrants should fall in line with the national target to reduce consistent poverty to 2% by 2020.

Health

In general, comments received on health issues were positive in relation to access to health care and the services available to migrants. Most groups had no specific recommendation to make and did not point to specific barriers to access.

In relation to the proposals made on the issue of health, some of these call for specific measures for migrants to be delivered by migrant led services. However, the issues raised were, in many cases, not migrant specific.

Employment and Pathways to Work

Public Sector Employment

The lack of representation of migrant communities in the public sector and the absence of role models in sectors such as education was raised. A number of submissions called for positive action programmes to increase representation. One of the barriers identified in an education context is the Irish language

requirement for primary school teachers.

Access to Employment

Migrant representatives suggested that a lack of networks impede migrants in their ability to gain employment.

Activation Services and Unemployment

It was suggested that labour market activation programmes for unemployed migrants whose language skills require development should contain a language component.

Childcare

Participants suggested that the provision of affordable childcare facilities would assist in the greater integration of female migrants in the workplace.

Qualifications

Discussions with those who participated in the public consultation phase called for the creation of some methodology for the recognition and certification of vocational skills. The recognition of qualifications was raised by migrants as an issue. The current role of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is important in this regard.

Registration

Some contributors considered that non-EU migrants under 16 years should have their immigration permission registered in the State.

Compliance

The requirement on third country nationals to register annually with the Garda National Immigration Bureau was considered to be a burden for compliant migrants who have been in the State for some time.

Long term residence

The lack of a statutory status of long term residence in Ireland was highlighted. As a result, the children of migrant workers in Ireland are often charged international fees for Third Level Education.

Naturalisation

Some commentators felt that citizenship tests should be introduced. Other contributors were opposed to such tests. It was also suggested that clear, detailed criteria for naturalisation should be set out in law.

It was contended that the fees for naturalisation should be kept under regular review to ensure that costs are reasonable and do not deter applicants who are qualified.

NGO Forums

Several contributors commented positively on the existence of NGO forums which provided a very useful avenue for organisations dealing with migrants to meet with representatives of Government Departments. Examples cited included the NGO forum in the Department of Social Protection, and that between the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, the Garda National Immigration Bureau and NGO organisations concerning immigration and naturalisation matters, the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration NGO Forum etc.

Political participation

Many contributors were of the opinion that migrants should be encouraged to participate in local and national politics and that political parties should foster greater participation where possible. Migrants should be made aware of their right to vote where applicable and should be encouraged to register to vote. It is noted that information regarding registering to vote is now distributed at citizenship ceremonies.

Volunteering

A number of submissions considered that migrants should be encouraged to participate in local communities through, for example, greater levels of volunteering.

Statistics from the 'Volunteer Ireland Status Report' (2013) suggest that in 2012, almost 70% (10,850 individuals) of new registrants with Volunteer Centres were non-Irish nationals, and Dublin City Volunteer Centre reports that in 2013 nearly 50% of volunteers newly registered in Dublin came from migrant backgrounds.

Intercultural Awareness and Racism

The importance of promoting intercultural awareness across all Government sectors was highlighted.

Issues concerning the adequacy of training in intercultural awareness for frontline staff delivering public services were raised by a large number of groups.

There were calls for the strengthening of the law on racially motivated crime as well as for improvements in reporting mechanisms. A concern raised was that of the under reporting of racist crime. Contributors reported that incidents were often reported to NGOs rather than to the Gardaí.

Racism

Some contributors highlighted the serious effects that can be experienced by those who may suffer from racism and the important role that the State has to play in combating racism.

Cultural Norms

The importance of cultural norms need to be

recognised and understood by all service delivery providers regardless of whether they are State, NGO or private sector. Service providers should take account of the cultural norms of migrants.

Services

Service specific issues

It was argued that there should be improvements in State service provision to migrants.

One of the issues identified was an apparent lack of familiarity on the part of some front-line staff with the entitlements of migrant applicants. While Government Departments have taken steps to ensure that this is not the case, it is important that processes are in place to ensure that such perceptions are addressed and action taken where appropriate.

Some applicants for services perceived themselves to have been subject to racism when availing of these services. It should be noted that members of the Cross-Departmental Group engaged proactively with stakeholders who had expressed concerns in this regard in order that appropriate follow-up could occur without delay.

Equality of access to services

It was argued in the consultation process that it was critical to ensure that there is equality of access to services across the entire range of facilities and entitlements provided by the State and its agencies. Contributors also said that the State has a responsibility to take steps to encourage equality in the provision of services and opportunities by the private sector. Where this is not successful, the State should take appropriate action to rectify any problems that are identified including the enactment of legislation in appropriate circumstances.

Ease of access to information

In order to fully realise equality in the provision of services, service users should be able to access information more easily in language-appropriate formats for service users. Service providers themselves should be familiar with their migrant customer base and particular issues which may arise in the provision of information to those customers. Access to electronic resources may be an area which could be leveraged to assist service users.

The requirement for the provision of language appropriate services

It is important to recognise that migrants attempting to avail of services may need assistance with completing forms and may, on occasion, require the provision of interpreting services in order for them to be able to engage with service providers.

Equality in provision of information

Those consulted stated that Government Departments and agencies must ensure, insofar as is possible, that all service users are equally informed as to their rights and entitlements and that the provision of information needs to take account of the fact that migrants may not have the same level of local knowledge as other service users.

Funding

Contributors raised the need for funding of NGO activities on migrant integration and for dedicated funds for local authorities.

Access to Opportunities

Contributors agreed that those seeking to live and work within the State as legally resident migrants should have access to appropriate developmental opportunities including, but not limited to, work and

labour market activation, education and personal development.

They stated that where barriers exist to participation, measures should be put in place by the State to reduce the negative effects of such barriers. One such barrier mentioned during the public consultation was the difficulty experienced by migrants as a result of poor English language skills.

Proficiency in the English language is important for labour market activation. While there are a number of English language progression accreditation programmes built around the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁴, it was stated that there are barriers including availability. Contributors also raised the costs of gaining formal recognition for proficiency in the English language.

It was also stated that Quality and Qualifications Ireland, through NARIC Ireland (*National Academic Recognition Information Centre Ireland*), operates a system for providing advice on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications including further education qualifications by comparing these, where possible, to awards at a certain level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. It is therefore possible for vocational awards from other countries to be recognised in Ireland and, in this context, greater use should be made of Quality and Qualification Ireland's system for the recognition of vocational skills accredited in other countries.

4 *The Common European Framework of Reference for Language is an international standard for describing language ability. It is used around the world to describe learners' language skills. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language has six levels – from A1 for the most basic beginner to C2 for the very highest level of ability.*

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY



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Travellers and Roma are among
the most disadvantaged and
marginalised people in Ireland.



Foreword

I am delighted, in my capacity as Minister of State for Justice with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, to present the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy for the years 2017 – 2021 inclusive. This Inclusion Strategy is a cross-Departmental initiative to improve the lives of the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland.

Travellers and Roma are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in Ireland. During the years of the financial crisis from which Ireland is emerging, those at the margins of our society frequently – and regrettably – suffered disproportionately from the effects of financial adjustments. Now that Ireland's economy is back on a firmer footing, it is a moral and societal imperative that we work together to address the real needs of these communities.

It is worth noting, however, that budgetary/ economic considerations are not the only factor at play in disadvantage or marginalisation; rather, we need to adopt an approach across Government that considers both the direct and indirect effects of policies on groups and individuals that are socially disadvantaged.

I also firmly believe that we need to adopt a partnership approach with marginalised groups, such as Traveller and Roma organisations,

to ensure that their concerns are considered when national policy is being developed. It is not a matter of the State deciding what is best for marginalised groups and individuals – that approach will not result in meaningful change or improvement in quality of life over the long term. We need to work together in a true partnership where Travellers and Roma groups and individuals work with Government to address the challenges that arise. Such a collaborative and participative approach is necessary so that Travellers and Roma will feel valued and empowered in our society and so that they will feel that they have ownership over, or input into, the decisions which affect their lives.

I am particularly concerned by the reported rate of mental health problems in both the Traveller and Roma communities. Reliable data has indicated that the suicide rate is almost seven times higher among Traveller males than in the general population. As a society, we cannot stand idly by and allow this situation to continue. In addition, especially as a former teacher, I am concerned by the poor education completion rates of both Traveller and Roma children and youths. Action is needed now, across the public sector, to address these and many other problematic issues.

This Inclusion Strategy is the result of painstaking work, participation and cooperation by a wide array of individuals, organisations and Government Departments over the past eighteen months. I am proud to say that it heralds a new era for Traveller and Roma inclusion in Ireland.

My Department held a comprehensive, three phase, public consultation to develop this new Inclusion Strategy. Phase 1 sought to identify the key themes for the new Inclusion Strategy, while the consultations in Phase 2 assisted in the identification and agreement of high level objectives under each of the agreed key themes. While all of the Traveller representative bodies did their utmost to contribute to this process, I would particularly like to pay tribute to Pavee Point who provided valuable administrative assistance in this regard in Phases 1 and 2. Phase 3 of the consultative process was used to identify an array of detailed actions (to achieve each agreed objective) as well as the core Departmental/organisational responsibilities needed for fulfilment of those actions.

Among the key initiatives and developments arising from the development of this Inclusion Strategy are the following:

1. State recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group of the Irish nation;
2. investment by the State in community-based support mechanisms to ensure greater retention of Traveller and Roma children and youths in the education system;
3. increased funding to be invested by the State to promote knowledge of, and pride in, Traveller culture and heritage;
4. in consultation with Traveller representatives, a culturally appropriate initiative will be designed to address feuding in the community;
5. a new system of ethnic identifiers will be developed across the public sector to help to track progress and/or challenges for the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland; and
6. reinvigorated efforts by the State to ensure that Travellers and Roma interact fully with the public health sector in order to address some of the underlying health-related challenges facing those communities.

I would like to thank officials from a range of relevant Government Departments and organisations who gave considerable time and effort to contribute to a meaningful and worthwhile discussion on the development of this Inclusion Strategy. Many of those officials did so despite depleted staffing resources and many other competing priorities. I am proud of our civil and public servants who give generously and wholeheartedly to processes such as this one.

Integral to the finalisation of this Inclusion Strategy was the work of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group that has members from relevant Government Departments as well as Traveller and Roma representatives and advocates. This Steering Group was formed specifically to work on development of this Inclusion Strategy and then to monitor implementation and progress. I feel strongly that a whole of Government approach is necessary to the achievement of meaningful change and progress for the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. Many of the objectives and actions identified during the consultative process cross traditional Departmental and organisational lines and will require close cooperation and ongoing consultation. We need to move away from the traditional model of delineated sectors of activity and move towards one where joined up Government is the

way to achieve true progress. This may put an additional burden on Government Departments initially but we all need to become accustomed to a new style of thinking and operating so that cooperation and inclusion become our automatic watchwords.

On 30 May 2017, the Government and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Steering Group considered, in parallel, the final draft of this Inclusion Strategy. The Government approved the proposed text of this Inclusion Strategy subject to any final adjustments agreed bilaterally with Departments and in the light of the Steering Group's deliberations.

The question of recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group in Ireland was considered in depth in the context of the development of this Inclusion Strategy. In September 2015, my predecessor - Aodhán Ó Riordáin, the then Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality - brought a paper to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform on the question of recognising Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within Irish society. This followed a process of dialogue with the national level Traveller NGOs during 2015 that culminated in the presentation of an agreed position paper by them and confirmation that there would be no legal or expenditure implications arising from such



recognition. The key point is that recognition of the distinct heritage, culture and identity of Travellers and their special place in Irish society would be hugely important to Traveller pride, to Traveller self-esteem and to overcoming the legacy of marginalisation and discrimination that the community has experienced.

I have had a longstanding interest in this area, most notably through my chairing of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality when it produced its report on the Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity (April 2014). The rapporteur in that instance was Senator Pádraig Mac Lochlainn who has continued to do sterling work on this issue. I made a presentation on this issue to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform in December 2016,

following which an invitation was extended to Traveller representatives to meet that Cabinet Committee to further those discussions. In what, I think, was an unprecedented step, four Traveller representatives subsequently made a presentation to that Cabinet Committee on 06 February 2017.

I would also note that the current Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality, chaired by Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, issued a report in early 2017 supporting the recognition of Traveller ethnicity; that report was an important contribution to the discussion.

It is noteworthy that Traveller representatives have been working, over the course of several decades, to attain ethnic recognition

for their community in Ireland. On behalf of the Government, I would like to thank those advocates for their tireless efforts and persistence in pursuing their objective.

I am delighted that, on 01 March 2017, An Taoiseach, supported by representatives of all parties, made a statement in Dáil Éireann to announce Ireland's recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group in Irish society. This was a momentous and unprecedented decision in our country's history and is one of which we should be justifiably proud. By taking this step, Ireland has shown its determination to value the unique culture, identity and heritage of Travellers in this country.

Recognition of the distinct heritage, culture and identity of Travellers and their special place in Irish society will be hugely and symbolically important to their pride and self-esteem and overcoming the legacy of economic marginalisation, discrimination and low self-esteem with which the Traveller community has struggled. This is not to ignore the real problems that the Traveller community faces but such a symbolic gesture will create a new platform for positive engagement by the Traveller community and the Government in together seeking sustainable solutions based on respect and an honest dialogue on these issues and challenges. To reiterate a point

made by An Taoiseach, this is an important and symbolic gesture that is very important to Travellers but it has no legislative implications, creates no new rights and has no implications for public expenditure.

As we move now towards implementation stage of this Inclusion Strategy, I would like to point out that this Inclusion Strategy should be regarded by all as a living document which will be subject to regular monitoring as well as amendment (where appropriate), particularly in the light of the outcome of a mid-term review planned for early 2019.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland and to achieving tangible improvements in their lives as important parts of Irish society.

Mr David Stanton TD

Minister of State for Justice at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration, and Integration

June 2017

The total number of Travellers
in Ireland as enumerated in
April 2011 was 29,573 according
to Census 2011...



Background and Context

Travellers

The Equal Status Act 2000 defines the term “Traveller community” as the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and by others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

The total number of Travellers in Ireland as enumerated in April 2011 was 29,573 according to Census 2011; this accounts for less than one per cent of the total population of Ireland.

Travellers in Ireland have the same civil and political rights as other citizens under the Constitution. The key anti-discrimination and other legislative protections (the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977, the Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts) specifically identify Travellers by name as a group protected. The Equality Act 2004, which transposed the EU Racial Equality Directive, applied all the protections of that Directive across all of the nine grounds contained in the legislation, including the Traveller community ground. All of the protections afforded to ethnic minorities in EU Directives and international conventions apply to Travellers because the Irish legislation giving effect to those international instruments explicitly protects Travellers.

In January 2017, the Economic and Social Research Institute issued a research paper (number 56) entitled “*A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland*”; that research paper had been commissioned and funded by the Department of Justice and Equality. The research found that Travellers stand out as a group that experiences extreme disadvantage in terms of employment, housing and health and that faces exceptionally strong level of prejudice. Extrapolation from the ESRI’s research shows the following:

- Travellers are a relatively young population. The 2011 Census show that the average age among Travellers is 22.4 years compared to 36.1 years in the general population.
- Over half of Irish Travellers are aged under 20 years.
- Irish Travellers tend to marry younger and have larger families (CSO 2012). One third of Travellers aged 15 – 29 years are married compared to 8% of the general population of the same age.
- Irish Travellers have an average of five children compared to a national average of three children.
- Census 2011 shows that the Traveller

population is not evenly spread across the country with the highest number of Travellers living in Galway county (8.4%) and South County Dublin (7.5%). The proportion of Travellers living in urban areas is 82%.

- The Irish Prison Service Traveller Census (2008) estimated a Traveller population of 320 (299 male prisoners and 21 female prisoners) which represents 8.7% of the prison population (despite Travellers representing less than 1% of the total population). Based on estimates from the Irish Prison Service, the risk of male Travellers being imprisoned was 11 times that of the general male population while Traveller women were 22 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Traveller women.

There is a steeper increase in poor health with age for Travellers, particularly in the 34-64 age range, than in the general community. Some of the difficult issues currently faced by Travellers, as set out by the ESRI, include declining family structures and religious certainty, lack of employment and pressure to engage in damaging group activities such as heavy drinking, coupled with a sense of exclusion and experiences of extreme prejudice. The ESRI states that these factors can result in generalised poor self-esteem and self-efficacy which is associated with depression and other mental health problems; these conditions are, in turn, related to higher incidences of suicide.

- The suicide rate is almost seven times higher among Traveller males than in the general population.



Allowing for differences in age between adult Travellers and the general adult population, Traveller mortality is 3.5 times higher than non-Travellers overall while infant mortality is 3.6 times higher among Travellers than among the general population.

- The average expected age of a Traveller man is 61.7 years compared to the national average of 76.8.
- Traveller women have a life expectancy of 70.1 compared to the national average of 81.6.
- Travellers have a 14.1% infant mortality rate, compared to the settled population at 3.9%.
- 31% of Travellers reported cost as a factor in eating healthily.
- 50% of Travellers expressed difficulty reading medication instructions.
- 66.7% of service providers believe that Travellers experience discrimination in their use of health services.
- Over 40% of Travellers stated that they were not always treated with dignity and respect.
- Waiting lists, embarrassment, lack of information, cost, difficulty getting to

services, health settings and refused services were identified as barriers to accessing health services.

Traveller access to health services is at least as good as that of the general population but Travellers are less likely to attend outpatient appointments or engage with preventative services.

There is a very large disparity between Travellers and non-Travellers in the level of education completed. The labour market disadvantage of Travellers is largely linked to that educational disadvantage. Poor levels of education can also affect many other aspects of life. Pavee Point has indicated the following statistics.

- 13% of Traveller children complete second-level education compared to 92% in the settled community.
- Of those Travellers who drop out of second level education, 55% have left by the age of 15.
- The number of Traveller children who progress to third level education represents just 1% of the Traveller community.

The majority of Travellers (70%) have only primary or lower levels of education.

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study questioned the often-cited mobility patterns and tradition of nomadic lifestyle as most Travellers responded that they are actually based in one place during term time. However, school attendance can be poor.

The ESRI research paper found that among the reasons for leaving school early are likely to be the negative experiences of Traveller children in school. Traveller children (along with immigrant children and those with a disability) are significantly more likely to report being bullied at school (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016).

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study pointed to a reluctance to continue in mainstream education as Travellers feel that it is not associated with any positive outcomes because of the high level of discrimination faced by Travellers when seeking employment.

Transgenerational issues are relevant as poor education levels among parents mean it is more difficult to read or interpret their children's educational material making it harder for Travellers to help their children with homework.

- Over two thirds (67.3%) of Traveller children lived in families where the mother had either no formal education or only primary education (Department of Health and Children, 2012).
- The low enrolment of Traveller children in preschools, noted by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children (2016) is of concern as Traveller children are entering primary school already at a disadvantage.

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study found that more Irish Travellers live in a house (73%) than in a caravan or mobile home (18%). Census 2011 found that 85% of Travellers were living in standard accommodation with only 12% in caravans or mobile homes; however, Travellers are much less likely than the general population to own their own home (20% v 70%) while four times as many Traveller families live in only one room.

According to the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee's Annual Report in 2013:

- 361 Traveller families lived on “unauthorised sites”;
- 188 Traveller families lived on “basic service bays”;
- 182 Traveller families shared permanent halting sites;
- 17 Traveller families shared basic service bays/transient halting sites;
- 663 Traveller families shared houses.

Recently there has been a significant decrease in Traveller families living in private rented accommodation. Between 2013 and 2015, 237 Traveller families left private rented accommodation. This figure correlates with an increase of 200 Traveller families sharing houses and an increase of 173 families on “unauthorised sites”. Pavee Point states that it would seem that Traveller families are responding to the accommodation crisis by relocating to sites that are already overcrowded or unsafe.

Of the 9,281 Travellers families identified by Local Authorities in a survey carried out for the

Housing Agency (2014), only 18% were living in Traveller-specific accommodation (mainly group housing schemes and permanent halting sites).

Traveller representative organisations point to inadequacies in the Local Authority statistics, noting that homelessness among Travellers is labelled as “sharing” of housing or halting site bays resulting in overcrowding or living on unauthorised sites.

Travellers have reported that Traveller-specific accommodation is not being used by Travellers for the following reasons: tension, conflict and intimidation within and between Traveller families, the location and design of sites and schemes, health, overcrowding and poor maintenance/management of sites.

There is a strong link between education attainment and employment in the Irish labour market and young people leaving school early face a far higher risk of unemployment. In 2012, only 35% of Irish people with no qualifications were active participants in the labour market compared to 50% of those with a Junior Certificate, 70% with a Leaving Certificate and 79% with a post-Leaving Certificate qualification (2012). Furthermore, lower qualifications generally lead to low skilled jobs and low earnings throughout the life course.



The All Ireland Health Study of 2010, found that 84% of Travellers during the study were currently unemployed.

Census 2011 reveals that out of a total labour force of 4,144 Traveller women, 81.2% were without work.

Many young Travellers indicate that there is very little point in staying on at school because there was no chance of gaining paid employment afterwards because of discrimination. They feel that the only way to get on and get jobs was to integrate, become like the settled population and deny one's identity.

Roma

The Roma community in Ireland consists of persons from a range of European countries including Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic (Czechia). Roma people have the same rights and responsibilities as any other European Union citizen when in Ireland. There are no official statistics on the number of Roma in Ireland but it is estimated to be in the region of 3,000 – 5,000.

The European Commission and the Council of Europe tend to use “Roma” as an umbrella term to refer to a number of different groups (such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom and Lom) and also include Travellers, without denying the specificities and varieties of lifestyles and situations of these groups.

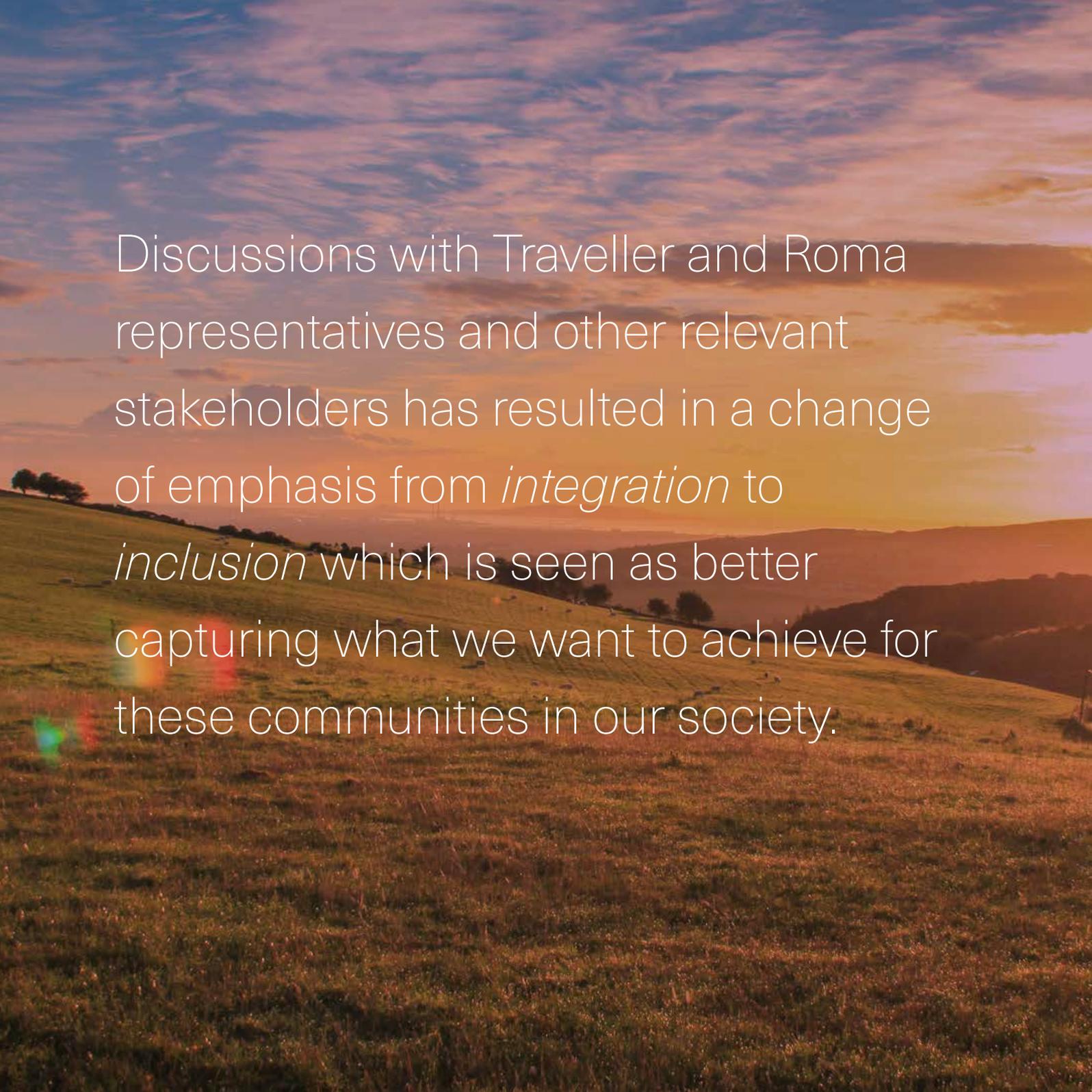
According to a Press Release (dated 28 June 2016) from the European Court of Auditors, EU policy initiatives and EU-funded projects to promote Roma integration have made significant progress but there are still obstacles and dilemmas which prevent the money from having the greatest possible impact with one of the most marginalised groups in Europe. In their special report Number 14/2016 entitled *“EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade but additional efforts needed on the ground”*, the auditors assessed

whether EU policy initiatives and financial support had contributed effectively to Roma integration during the last decade.

While the auditors noted a number of improvements, they pointed out that additional efforts are required by both the Commission and the Member States to ensure that EU-funded projects better contribute to Roma inclusion on the ground. The report recommends a number of steps for the Commission and for Member States to take including revision of National Roma Integration Strategies.

A press release by the Fundamental Rights Agency (on 29 November 2016) noted that 80% of Roma interviewed are at risk of poverty compared with an EU average of 17%.

During 2016, Slovakia in its role as President of the European Council sponsored Council Conclusions (“Accelerating the Progress of Roma Integration”). Ireland fully participated in the discussions on those Council Conclusions and supported the Slovakian Presidency in their efforts in this regard. Those Council Conclusions have been completed and agreed by all Member States of the European Union. Ireland must now act on the commitments made during that process in order to improve the quality of life of Roma in this country.

A landscape photograph of rolling green hills under a sunset sky. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds in shades of blue, orange, and pink. The hills are covered in lush green grass, and a few trees are visible on the left side. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Discussions with Traveller and Roma representatives and other relevant stakeholders has resulted in a change of emphasis from *integration* to *inclusion* which is seen as better capturing what we want to achieve for these communities in our society.

Development of this Inclusion Strategy

During 2014, the Department of Justice and Equality assessed the effectiveness of the structures in place for consultation with, and delivering better outcomes to, the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. It also considered the impact of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy that was produced by the Department in 2011.

Discussions with Traveller and Roma representatives and other relevant stakeholders has resulted in a change of emphasis from *integration* to *inclusion* which is seen as better capturing what we want to achieve for these communities in our society.

This Department established a National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group, chaired by the then Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality, to ensure that a renewed emphasis is given across Government to making progress in relation to implementation of a new National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. Minister David Stanton has chaired that Steering Group since mid-2016.

Following the establishment of the Steering Group, a comprehensive consultation process was undertaken to develop this new Inclusion Strategy. This process was led and coordinated by the Department of Justice and Equality.

The consultation process involved three phases, as set out below.

Phase 1: mid-2015

This phase commenced with an open call to NGOs, Traveller and Roma communities, and other interested parties/individuals to respond to a suggested list of proposed themes or policy areas to be covered in the new Inclusion Strategy. There was a positive and enthusiastic response to this open call and the following overall themes were selected for the Inclusion Strategy:

1. cultural identity
2. education
3. employment and the Traveller economy
4. children and youth
5. health
6. gender equality
7. anti-discrimination and equality
8. accommodation
9. Traveller and Roma Communities, and
10. public services.

It was also decided that the question of recognition of Traveller ethnicity would be considered in the context of this Inclusion Strategy.

Phase 2: February 2016 - June 2016

During the second phase, relevant NGOs, Traveller and Roma communities and other interested parties were invited to give their input in relation to a set of proposed priority, high level objectives that they would like to see achieved during the term of this Inclusion Strategy. In the case of each proposed high level objective, respondents were invited to say if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal as well as what they might like to change or add in relation to the proposed objectives.

This stage of the consultation involved regional meetings which took place in Sligo, Athlone, Limerick and Dublin in February 2016. In total, approximately 330 people took part in these consultations. Respondents were also given the opportunity to email their observations to the Department via a specific email address and/or to respond to an online questionnaire.

Phase 3: July 2016 - December 2016

The themes and high level objectives that were suggested for the Inclusion Strategy were revised in the light of views expressed by stakeholders in Phases 1 and 2.

This final phase of the consultative process focussed on drafting and discussing a set of proposed actions that would be needed in order to achieve each of the proposed high level objectives. Those proposed actions were the subject of public consultations which were held in Sligo, Athlone, Limerick and Dublin in September 2016. As in the previous phases, respondents were also welcome to submit observations in writing/email.

Attached, as the core of this document, is a list of actions which will be in effect the core of this new Inclusion Strategy.

It should be noted that, as well as new and revised actions, the Inclusion Strategy also contains details of continuation of programmes and services already underway and new developments already in the pipeline in addition to proposals which have been developed specifically as a result of the discussions on this Inclusion Strategy.

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group

At the end of each of the phases in the consultative process, the draft Inclusion Strategy was brought for further consultation to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group. The Steering Group was formed specifically to work on development of this Inclusion Strategy and then to monitor its implementation and progress. This inter-Departmental and cross-sectoral approach was central to the development of the Inclusion Strategy and will be key to its successful implementation.

The Steering Group consists of a range of relevant representatives from the following:

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Department of Justice and Equality
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of Social Protection
- An Garda Síochána
- Health Service Executive
- Higher Education Authority
- Local Government Management Agency
- TUSLA (the Child and Family Agency)
- Bray Travellers (Community Development Group)
- Exchange House
- Involve
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Minceirs Whiden
- National Traveller Women's Forum

- Navan Travellers' Workshops
- Parish of the Travelling People
- Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
- Traveller Counselling and Psychotherapy Service
- Western Traveller and Intercultural Development.

A draft of the new National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy was submitted by the Department to the Senior Officials Group on Social Policy and Public Sector Reform on 09 May 2017.

A final draft of the new National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy was discussed at a meeting of the Steering Group on 30 May 2017 on which date Minister Stanton also submitted the document to Government for consideration.

The Inclusion Strategy was approved by Government on 30 May 2017 for commencement of implementation with immediate effect. It is intended that the revised Inclusion Strategy will run to the end of 2021. The Strategy is a living document and will undergo a mid-term review, with adjustments being made to the committed actions in the light of developments.

Connection with other national Strategies

Actions to address the issue of drug and/or alcohol misuse as experienced among the Traveller and Roma communities are also being considered in the context of the Government's forthcoming National Drugs Strategy and through the measures identified under the Report of the Substance Misuse Steering Group.

Issues relating to Gender Equality are being also addressed in the context of the National Strategy for Women and Girls (2017 – 2020).

The Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (2016 – 2021) contains actions in relation to vulnerable groups, including Travellers and Roma.

As such, synergies in the implementation of these Strategies in conjunction with this Inclusion Strategy have been secured.

Monitoring and Implementation

As its first task following approval of this Inclusion Strategy, the Steering Group will consider the monitoring arrangements to be put in place in relation to implementation of the actions.

The Department of Justice and Equality will coordinate with relevant Government Departments in relation to the timing of work in relation to achievement of each relevant action; this may, in some cases, require cross-Departmental consultation and agreement. The Steering Group will then consider the actions identified by the Departments and discuss a set of key performance and output indicators for each year that the Inclusion Strategy is in place. In other words, each action will have an associated timescale; while such timescales are at the discretion of, and the primary responsibility of, the relevant Department, the Steering Group may seek to highlight actions which it feels should be prioritised bearing in mind the competing priorities and constraints (staffing, funding, etc.,) placed on Departments. The Steering Group will publish an annual report on progress for each year of the Inclusion Strategy.

Departments will incorporate elements of positive action measures and mainstreaming where possible in order to assist with implementation of this Inclusion Strategy.

As indicated above, the Strategy is a living document and the Department of Justice and Equality will conduct a mid-term review of implementation of the Inclusion Strategy, with adjustments to committed actions being made in the light of progress and developments in relation to the Traveller and Roma communities generally.

The Department of Justice and Equality, as key coordinator of this Inclusion Strategy, will compile periodic relevant reports as required, in order to fulfil the State's national and international (EU and Council of Europe in particular) obligations with regard to Traveller and Roma inclusion.

It is implicit in this Inclusion Strategy that all Departments and agencies will endeavour to fulfil the commitments relating to them while working in conjunction with Traveller and Roma organisations/representatives to the fullest extent practicable.

Further Information

Further information in relation to issues concerning Traveller and Roma inclusion as well as issues arising from this Inclusion Strategy may be obtained from:

Equality Division

Department of Justice and Equality

Bishop's Square

Redmond's Hill

Dublin 2

D02 TD99

or via email to: ntris@justice.ie.

A copy of this Inclusion Strategy is available on www.justice.ie.

Tá leagan Gaeilge den Stráitéis seo ar fáil.

Strategic Themes, High Level Objectives and Actions

Cultural Identity

Education

Employment and The Traveller Economy

Children and Youth

Health

Gender Equality

Anti-Discrimination and Equality

Accommodation

Traveller and Roma Communities

Public Services

Cultural Identity

Theme and Objectives	Actions
Traveller culture, identity and heritage is supported and valued within Irish society.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="497 181 1385 236">1. The Department of Justice and Equality will support, strengthen and expand Traveller Pride Week and increased national awareness of the event.<li data-bbox="497 268 1385 296">2. The Department of Justice and Equality will support International Roma Day.<li data-bbox="497 328 1394 414">3. The Department of Justice and Equality will develop other supports for members of the Traveller and Roma communities to develop new and ambitious initiatives exploring Traveller and Roma arts, culture and traditions.
Travellers and Roma should be supported to develop, preserve and promote their cultural heritage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="497 507 1390 676">4. The Department of Education and Skills has prepared intercultural guidelines for primary and post primary schools to support all member of the school community to develop an inclusive school community. These guidelines will support schools in collaboration with Traveller and Roma organisations to develop education resources on Traveller and Roma culture and history for use in primary, post primary and adult education settings.<li data-bbox="497 708 1350 877">5. We will support Traveller and Roma cultural heritage centres and communications media to develop and promote their culture, stories and music of Travellers and Roma, including support for accessible cultural archives, to ensure that Travellers, Roma and members of the settled population can utilise and engage with materials on Traveller and Roma cultural heritage.<li data-bbox="497 909 1385 1056">6. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will support a Traveller equine strategy to support Travellers to engage with knowledge and competence in the equine industry. Traveller horse owners/keepers must comply with all EU and national legislation relating to equine identification and animal welfare.<li data-bbox="497 1088 1394 1203">7. A targeted Traveller and Roma communications initiative will be supported to promote positive attributes and actions of both communities. It will facilitate counteracting negative mainstream media while engendering an increased sense of pride in the Traveller and Roma communities.
Intergenerational learning, cultural continuity and positive self- identity for Travellers and Roma should be facilitated.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="497 1241 1394 1350">8. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will support the development of regional Traveller horse projects in association with Local Authorities to promote knowledge and care of horses, with a focus on animal welfare and road safety.<li data-bbox="497 1382 1382 1528">9. The Department of Justice and Equality will support the development of intergenerational initiatives in collaboration with local Traveller and Roma organisations to support cultural continuity and promote positive self-identity to promote, pass on and preserve knowledge of traditional Traveller and/or Roma crafts and skills.

Education

Theme and Objectives	Actions
<p>Access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education should be improved to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. The Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and TUSLA will develop proactive, early intervention education welfare supports to promote and support Traveller and Roma attendance, participation and engagement with the education system and retention to the Leaving Certificate or equivalent. 11. The Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy will be reviewed by the Department of Education and Skills and the review will be published by early 2017. 12. All relevant Departments and agencies will promote the Early Childcare and Education (ECCE) pre-school scheme, as well as the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) for Children with a Disability, within the Traveller and Roma communities in order to facilitate access for every child to free pre-school from the age of three until they start school. 13. The Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and TUSLA will implement good practice initiatives to support parental engagement in education and increase children's school readiness. 14. In line with the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2015-2019), the Department of Education and Skills will support the development by the higher education sector of a network of peer support and mentoring for Travellers and Roma in third level education.
<p>Access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education should be improved to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. The Department of Education and Skills will support the development by the higher education sector of positive action measures to encourage and support Travellers and Roma to become teachers. The Department of Education and Skills will work with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to support those wishing to enter the workforce as early years educators. 16. The Department of Education and Skills will review policy on admissions to school in line with the Programme for Government commitment to publish new School Admissions legislation taking account of current draft proposals and addressing issues including publication of school enrolment policies, an end to waiting lists, introduction of annual enrolment structures, and transparency and fairness in admissions for pupils and their parents.

Access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education should be improved to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population.

17. The Department of Justice and Equality will fund Traveller community groups to implement community-based supports to assist retention of Traveller and Roma children in the education system. The intervention and the supports to be provided will be designed in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs/TUSLA, and Traveller interests.
18. In consultation with representative groups, the Department of Education and Skills will commission research on the effectiveness of their anti-bullying procedures and guidelines on Traveller and Roma experiences in the school system.

There should be a positive culture of respect and protection for the cultural identity of Travellers and Roma across the education system.

19. The Department of Education and Skills has introduced programmes for initial Teacher Education and for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) based on the concept of inclusive education. The Department of Education and Skills will ensure that such programmes enable teachers to deal with teaching and learning needs of all students from all cultural backgrounds and provide support for pedagogical practices that promote inclusion.
20. The Department of Education and Skills will request that the Teaching Council examine how the areas of intercultural, anti-racism and diversity are dealt with in Initial Teacher Education Programmes during the review of the “Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers of Initial Teacher Education”.
21. The Department of Education and Skills will continue to address the areas of anti-racism, identity-based bullying and cultural awareness through a suite of supports including the recently revised Stay Safe Programme and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provided by Department-funded support services to teachers at Primary and Post-Primary level.

There should be improved opportunities for Traveller and Roma men to engage in culturally appropriate apprenticeships, training and lifelong learning.

22. SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards will continue to provide training and education that supports Traveller men and women to develop literacy, numeracy and “soft” skills, in line with the Further Education and Training (FET) strategy.
23. The Department of Justice and Equality, in collaboration with Traveller and Roma organisations and employer bodies, will promote greater Traveller and Roma participation in apprenticeship and traineeships.

Employment and the Traveller Economy

Theme and Objectives	Actions
<p>There should be increased employment, training and apprenticeships opportunities for Travellers and Roma.</p>	<p>24. The Department of Social Protection will promote the availability of existing employment and training services (e.g. those provided by the Education and Training Boards) to the Roma and Traveller communities and continue to ensure promotional and information materials are available and accessible on any of its schemes and services including via the Department's website. The Department of Social Protection will provide tailored supports for the long-term unemployed and for young people to build their confidence and prepare them for the workplace.</p> <p>25. The Department of Social Protection will develop targeted initiatives to increase Traveller and Roma engagement with employment and training services.</p> <p>26. Anti-racism and cultural awareness training for staff will be developed under the new shared Civil Service learning and development curriculum and will be made available for Departments in 2017.</p> <p>27. The Department of Social Protection and the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will put in place liaison arrangements between INTREO and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) to enable Travellers and Roma to access relevant supports, training and opportunities.</p>
<p>Targeted positive public service recruitment to train and employ Traveller and Roma staff in public services should be introduced.</p>	<p>28. We will develop proposals for internships for Traveller and Roma in Government Departments, Local Authorities and other public bodies and will support provision of Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied and Youthreach work experience placements for Travellers and Roma in public services and statutory agencies as a route to meaningful employment.</p>
<p>Entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for Traveller and Roma should be supported.</p>	<p>29. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, in conjunction with Local Authorities, will arrange for the inclusion in Local Economic and Community Plans of provisions for Traveller and Roma economy supports including general policies and programmes as well as group-specific (targeted) initiatives to support Travellers and Roma in enterprise, mainstream labour market and the Traveller economy.</p>

Entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for Traveller and Roma should be supported.

30. The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are the “first stop shop” for providing advice and guidance, financial assistance and other supports to anyone interested in starting or growing their own business. A number of LEOs have undertaken targeted initiatives to engage with prospective entrepreneurs amongst the Traveller and Roma communities and other ethnic and minority groups. The LEO Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland will promote best practice activities in this area amongst all LEOs nationally.
31. SICAP Programme Implementers will ensure that Traveller and Roma participants availing of SICAP supports are made aware of the opportunities for local self-employment (which may include social entrepreneurship) and, where appropriate, receive training to enhance their skills to take up these opportunities.
32. The Department of Social Protection, in collaboration where appropriate with the Department of Justice and Equality, will support Traveller MABS.

There should be clear links and progression routes between education, training, and employment.

33. All Departments will equality proof measures to ensure they are accessible for Travellers and Roma.
34. The Department of Education and Skills will develop a national policy on recognition of prior learning by 2018, which will benefit Travellers and Roma as well as other target groups identified in the National Access Plan.
35. The Department of Education and Skills will develop an accessible and inclusive model of Recognition of Prior Learning in collaboration with Traveller and Roma organisations to support the accreditation and employment of Travellers and Roma.
36. The Department of Social Protection will ensure that Travellers and Roma under the age of 25 who register as unemployed claimants of Jobseekers’ payments will receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of registering, in line with commitments under the Youth Guarantee.

Children and Youth

Theme and Objectives	Actions
<p>Traveller and Roma children should be consulted appropriately in the development of policy, legislation, research and services.</p>	<p>37. TUSLA will consider and promote the human rights and equality impact of its strategic programmes to ensure that its child protection and welfare services balance the need to recognise and respect ethnic and cultural diversity with the need to promote and ensure child welfare and protection. TUSLA will encourage representations from the Traveller and Roma communities are included in all relevant participatory forums including Children and Young People Services Committees.</p> <p>38. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will further develop mechanisms to ensure Traveller and Roma young people are supported and facilitated to participate in Comhairle na nÓg as well as the Children and Young People's Participation Hub.</p> <p>39. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and its agencies will ensure the voice of Traveller and Roma children is included within the statutory educational welfare services.</p> <p>40. Traveller and Roma representatives will continue to be included in participation initiatives of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.</p> <p>41. The Department of Education and Skills (and its agencies) will review current practices on student participation in the school inspection process. A review of questionnaires for students administered as part of Whole School Evaluations is planned for 2017.</p>
<p>Appropriate, culturally sensitive, preventative and early intervention supports should be available for Traveller and Roma families, if and when required, to enable children to live in a safe and secure environment.</p>	<p>42. The Department of Health, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, will develop programmes to address mental health issues among children and youths in the Traveller and Roma communities</p> <p>43. All public bodies, particularly TUSLA and the Health Service Executive, who employ trained and appropriately qualified social workers who work with Traveller and/or Roma families, will deliver appropriate continuing professional development training to develop cultural awareness and competency relevant to the role of the social worker.</p> <p>44. TUSLA will active involvement by representatives of the Traveller and Roma communities in identifying need and developing needs-led responses in Family Resource Centres.</p>

Appropriate, culturally sensitive, preventative and early intervention supports should be available for Traveller and Roma families, if and when required, to enable children to live in a safe and secure environment.

45. TUSLA-led Child and Family Networks will encourage involvement from Traveller and Roma organisations/communities when engaging with Traveller and Roma families. The use of Meitheal (the TUSLA-led National Practice Model for early identification of need and practical help provision) will be encouraged where more than one agency involvement is needed to support children and families and concerns are not at a sufficient level of risk to require Social Work involvement. (Parents participate in Meitheal by their consent.)
46. All relevant public bodies, including the Health Service Executive and TUSLA, will develop initiatives in collaboration with Traveller and Roma organisations to inform and empower families about available resources and supports.
47. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will explore measures to encourage and support Travellers and Roma to become social workers and social care workers.

Traveller and Roma children should have opportunities to participate in culturally appropriate youth programmes that meet their needs.

48. Youth programmes and services will be developed in a culturally inclusive and appropriate manner. Grant bodies (the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Education and Training Boards and TUSLA) will include this as a requirement where relevant in Service Level Agreements with funded youth services.
49. Youth programmes and services will ensure the active participation of Travellers and Roma in their representative structures.
50. TUSLA and the Department of Education and Skills will endeavour to ensure Travellers and Roma have access to appropriate sexual health and relationship education.
51. The Health Service Executive will support the youth sector to develop targeted culturally appropriate programmes for Travellers and Roma which support mental well-being and resilience in youth work settings.

Traveller and Roma children should have opportunities to participate in culturally appropriate youth programmes that meet their needs.

52. The Department of Education and Skills and TUSLA and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (via the Education and Training Boards) will strengthen cooperation between formal education and non-formal learning sectors to address the high rate of early school-leaving in the Traveller and Roma communities based on best practice models and reviews of existing programmes.
53. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (via the Education and Training Boards) will provide accessible safe spaces for young Travellers and Roma e.g. access to school and community facilities in “out-of-school time”.
54. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Education and Training Boards will ensure improved engagement, participation, retention and progression of Travellers and Roma in youth work programmes.
55. SICAP Programme Implementers will continue to provide supports, which include homework clubs, additional tuition, career guidance/counselling support, community awareness of drugs programmes and youth work in collaboration with schools and other youth programmes/schemes to children and young people from target groups, including Traveller and Roma, who are at risk of early school leaving.

There should be a special focus on Traveller and Roma children’s rights.

56. All relevant Departments and Agencies will ensure that work undertaken with Traveller and Roma families is underpinned by the ten common basic principles on Roma inclusion adopted by the European Commission.
57. An Garda Síochána will develop revised protocols on the exercise of powers under section 12 of the Child Care Act 1991 which provide detailed instruction for members of An Garda Síochána in dealing with situations in which section 12 of the 1991 Act is most commonly invoked. An Garda Síochána will include, where appropriate, specific guidance on the more unusual situations in which the identity of children is in doubt. The findings of the independent audit of the exercise by An Garda Síochána of section 12 of the Child Care Act 1991 will inform these revised protocols.

There should be a special focus on Traveller and Roma children's rights.

58. TUSLA will consider the human rights and equality impact of its policies, services, procedures and practice to ensure that its alternative care strategy balances the need to recognise and respect ethnic and cultural diversity with the need to promote and ensure the best interests of the child and will consult with the Traveller and Roma communities in relation to the development of an implementation plan to support the provision of culturally-appropriate care placements for Traveller and Roma children who are in care under the provisions of the Child Care Act 1991.
59. TUSLA will highlight the need for culturally sensitive placements and a diversity of carers in its national recruitment campaigns for foster families.
60. TUSLA will ensure that Care Plans will consider the cultural needs of children in care.
61. Local Authorities, when designing Traveller specific accommodation, will consider the need for access to safe, appropriate play areas.



Health

Theme and Objectives	Actions
Travellers and Roma should have improved access, opportunities, participation rates and outcomes in the health care system.	<p>62. The Health Service Executive will examine how drug and alcohol services engage and educate family members, as appropriate, in the development and delivery of service user care plans.</p> <p>63. The Health Service Executive will ensure that the new Mental Health Clinical Programme to tackle dual diagnosis will take account of the needs of Travellers and Roma with co-morbid mental health and substance abuse problems.</p> <p>64. The Health Service Executive will facilitate the establishment of a network of regional Traveller peer support workers through Traveller organisations and/or primary healthcare projects to support service users in accessing addiction rehabilitation services.</p> <p>65. The Department of Health and the Health Service Executive will ensure that there is Traveller and Roma representation on their national and local health-related structures relating to Travellers and Roma, as appropriate.</p> <p>66. The Health Service Executive, in consultation with Traveller organisations, will continue to address the prevalence, range and treatment of chronic health conditions amongst travellers e.g. diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular and circulatory conditions, poor mental health and suicidal ideation.</p> <p>67. The Health Service Executive and other relevant bodies, in consultation with Traveller organisations and other stakeholders, will work towards a phased, incremental implementation of a standardised ethnic identifier across all health administrative systems to monitor access, participation and outcomes of all groups, including Travellers and Roma, and to inform the development of evidenced-based policies and services.</p> <p>68. The Department of Health and the Health Service Executive will support the implementation of the findings of the National Roma Needs Assessment for Roma in Ireland.</p> <p>69. The Health Service Executive will review the legislative and policy restrictions that impact on the provision of medical cards for Roma with no income.</p>

Travellers and Roma should have improved access, opportunities, participation rates and outcomes in the health care system.

- 70. The Health Service Executive will promote immunisation uptake among members of the Roma community, with a particular emphasis on early childhood vaccinations.
- 71. The Health Service Executive, in consultation with Roma representatives, will assess the primary care and basic needs of vulnerable Roma.
- 72. Acknowledging the results of the National Roma Needs Assessment for Roma in Ireland, the Health Service Executive will support Roma women to access maternal health services in a timely and appropriate manner.

Health inequalities experienced by Travellers and Roma should be reduced.

- 73. The Health Service Executive will develop and implement a detailed action plan, based on the findings of the All Ireland Traveller Health Study, to continue to address the specific health needs of Travellers, using a social determinants approach.
- 74. The Department of Health and the Health Service Executive will review the existing arrangements for engagement between them and Traveller representative organisations with a view to agreeing improvements to the current arrangements.
- 75. The Department of Health and the Health Service Executive will continue to ensure that specific funding is allocated for Traveller and Roma health initiatives.
- 76. Pending a review of service, the Health Service Executive will develop a plan to expand the Primary Healthcare for Traveller projects and take into account also the needs for targeted initiatives for men.
- 77. The Health Service Executive, in conjunction with the Education authorities and local Traveller organisations, will examine how primary healthcare programme workers can access and receive accreditation for their work so as to improve employment prospects for members of the Traveller and Roma communities who are employed on these programmes.
- 78. The Health Service Executive will develop primary healthcare projects for Roma based on the Traveller Primary Healthcare Project model and informed by the findings of the National Roma Needs Assessment for Roma in Ireland.
- 79. The national framework for action to improve health and wellbeing, Healthy Ireland, will continue to take a whole of Government approach to drive change at population level and will focus on specific targeted actions and interventions for disadvantaged communities and at-risk groups including Travellers and Roma.

Health services should be delivered and developed in a way that is culturally appropriate.

80. The Department of Health and the Health Service Executive will work with the relevant training bodies and the Higher Education Authority and also with Traveller organisations to include training on Traveller health status and Traveller and Roma cultural awareness as well as anti-racism training on the undergraduate and graduate curricula for health professionals.
81. The Health Service Executive will design and disseminate culturally appropriate and culturally competent, accessible information and healthcare materials in partnership with Traveller and Roma organisations.
82. The Health Service Executive will support and train healthcare staff to use clear language in dealing with diagnosis and treatment options.
83. The Department of Health and other relevant Departments will collaborate with educational institutions and programmes including the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery and the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) programme to develop initiatives that promote access by Travellers to education and accreditation programmes that enhance their ability to compete on an equitable basis for mainstream health posts.
84. The Health Service Executive will engage with Traveller representative organisations to establish pathways to employment and support existing employees.
85. The Health Service Executive will seek funding for Roma health advocates on the basis of a needs assessment.
86. The Health Service Executive will work towards ensuring access to interpreters for Roma in GP consultations and across health services as appropriate.

The rate of suicide and mental health problems within the Traveller and Roma communities should be reduced and positive mental health initiatives should be put in place.

87. The Health Service Executive will support and further develop culturally appropriate services to respond to the mental health needs of Travellers and Roma in consultation with Traveller and Roma organisations.
88. The Health Service Executive will develop targeted interventions and educational materials to support good mental health, suicide prevention and promote self-esteem and self-acceptance for young Travellers.
89. The Health Service Executive (National Office for Suicide Prevention) will develop communication campaigns to reduce stigmatising attitudes to mental health and suicidal behaviour at population level and within priority populations including the Traveller and Roma communities.

The rate of suicide and mental health problems within the Traveller and Roma communities should be reduced and positive mental health initiatives should be put in place.

90. A review by the National Office for Suicide Prevention of its funding of Traveller projects will assess the effectiveness of existing programmes and provide guidance in relation to future initiatives.
91. The Health Service Executive (National Office for Suicide Prevention), in consultation with Traveller organisations, will conduct research on suicide and self-harm in the Traveller community, as part of the implementation of Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015 – 2020.
92. In collaboration with Traveller organisations and other relevant stakeholders, the Health Service Executive (National Office for Suicide Prevention) will provide training and guidance to improve recognition of, and response to, suicide risk and suicidal behaviour among Travellers through programmes such as Assist and SafeTALK. The National Office for Suicide Prevention will link with the Health Service Executive's Social Inclusion Unit to ensure effective approaches are taken.
93. The Department of Justice and Equality will review the Traveller Counselling Service with a view to supporting its continuation.
94. The Health Service Executive will explore prescribing practices to Travellers as evidenced amongst a cohort of the Traveller community with a view to rationalising prescribing patterns and medication management for individuals. Relevant recommendations will be integrated into policy, guidance, protocol and training programmes.
95. The Health Service Executive will review the access and barriers to primary and secondary mental health services for Travellers and Roma, in the context of the implementation of the ethnic identifier, and in partnership with Traveller and Roma service users, carers and families in order to develop and implement appropriate steps to ensure greater inclusion and continued use of these services by Travellers and Roma.
96. The Health Service Executive will recruit nine Mental Health Service Co-ordinator posts to support access to, and delivery of, mental health services for Travellers, in each Community Health area, as outlined in the Mental Health Division's strategic priorities in its Operational Plan for 2017.

Gender Equality

Theme and Objectives	Actions
The multiple disadvantages face by Traveller and Roma women should be addressed.	<p>97. We will provide targeted supports for Traveller and Roma women to engage effectively with stakeholder groups, including children and young people, which are consulted in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions under the Strategy.</p> <p>98. The Department of Justice and Equality will support the development of community leadership in gender equality with men and women from the Traveller and Roma communities with a view to developing gender equality.</p>
Traveller and Roma women should be supported in key areas including education, employment and economic development.	<p>99. All relevant Departments will resource the development and implementation of local Traveller and Roma women's forums/groups to provide support in health, education, training, employment and accommodation issues.</p> <p>100. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will, through a Single Affordable Childcare Scheme, support the provision of accessible and affordable childcare to facilitate Traveller and Roma women's engagement in education and the labour market.</p> <p>101. The Department of Education and Skills will consider measures targeted at Travellers and Roma as part of any future proposals extending student supports to part-time students.</p>



The incidence of violence against Traveller and Roma women should be addressed.

102. All Departments and agencies will be mindful of the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence and will implement and report on the commitments in that Strategy appropriately in accordance with the structures set out in that Strategy.
103. The Health Service Executive and TUSLA will develop joint approaches, as needed, to implementing community-based outreach and referral programmes that can achieve the best outcomes for victims of gender-based violence in the Traveller and Roma communities.
104. TUSLA will engage with Traveller and Roma communities as part of its commissioning process in order to identify and implement evidence-informed responses to gender-based violence in these communities.
105. The Health Service Executive will continue to deliver training to service providers on violence against Traveller and Roma women to remove barriers to services.
106. TUSLA, and the Health Service Executive, will ensure that policy and practice across all components of specialist domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services, including Sexual Assault and Treatment Units, is non-discriminatory towards service users from the Traveller and Roma communities.
107. We will introduce positive action measures to enable Traveller and Roma women to access gender-based violence training and employment opportunities in state and voluntary sector services, including refuges, counselling roles, An Garda Síochána and social work.
108. TUSLA will work with stakeholders on the specific needs of Roma women experiencing violence to enable them to access supports, including women's refuges.



Anti –Discrimination and Equality

Theme and Objectives	Actions
<p>Incidences of direct and indirect discrimination should be addressed through targeted interventions for Travellers and Roma.</p>	<p>109. The Department of Justice and Equality has published the National Migrant Integration Strategy, which includes a strong anti-racism component. That Strategy will be fully implemented with ongoing review and consultation with stakeholders.</p> <p>110. The Department of Justice and Equality will develop national initiatives to promote positive representations of, and respect for, Travellers and Roma.</p>
<p>Robust measures to address racism and hate speech in the mainstream media and public sphere should be adopted and implemented.</p>	<p>111. The Department of Justice and Equality will review the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 in the light of reports by civil society, international obligations and the experience of other jurisdictions, given the age of the legislation, the changes in Irish society and the use of the internet and social media since its enactment to ensure that it is updated as necessary to respond to contemporary issues and the needs of our more diverse society.</p> <p>112. Members of the Traveller and Roma communities will be supported in the reporting of racist crimes.</p> <p>113. Members of An Garda Síochána will continue to receive adequate training on processing reports of racist crime, including relevant legislation and proper recording.</p> <p>114. The Garda Bureau of Community Diversity and Integration will continue to develop good relationships between An Garda Síochána and the Traveller and Roma communities and carry out awareness-raising with the Traveller and Roma communities on how to report racist crime.</p>
<p>Culturally appropriate supports should be developed so that LGBTI Travellers and Roma are included, accepted and protected in their own communities and wider Irish society.</p>	<p>115. Traveller and Roma organisations will be encouraged and supported to develop links with LGBTI organisations.</p> <p>116. The needs of LGBTI Travellers and Roma will be one specific focus in the development of the LGBTI Inclusion Strategy, to be led by the Department of Justice and Equality, and on which a consultation process will commence in 2018.</p> <p>117. The Department of Justice and Equality will support the development and delivery by Traveller and Roma organisations of initiatives aimed at challenging homophobia and transphobia within the Traveller and Roma communities including support for Traveller and Roma families who have children/partners coming out.</p>

<p>There should be access to redress in cases of discrimination in a timely and accessible manner.</p>	<p>118. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will ensure the Workplace Relations Commission has adequate staff and financial resources to adjudicate complaints in relation to discrimination in a timely manner.</p> <p>119. The Department of Justice and Equality will support a legal advice and advocacy service for Travellers and Roma.</p>
<p>Travellers and Roma should have access to mainstream and targeted financial services such as savings and affordable credit options.</p>	<p>120. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will review the caravan loan scheme through which local authorities provide loans to Travellers for caravans.</p> <p>121. The Department of Justice and Equality, in collaboration with relevant Departments and Agencies, will explore possibilities for low cost loans and affordable credit options for members of the Traveller community.</p>
<p>Travellers and Roma who come into contact with the criminal justice system should be supported, including throughout sentences and post release to reintegrate into the community.</p>	<p>122. The Department of Justice and Equality (Irish Prison Service) will, in conjunction with the Education and Training Boards, provide access to Travellers and Roma to education while in prison, including literacy education.</p> <p>123. The Department of Justice and Equality (Irish Prison Service) will make specific supports and resources available for Traveller and Roma prisoners including access to appropriate in-reach services, as well as information about housing, health and social protection services.</p> <p>124. The Department of Justice and Equality (Irish Prison Service and Probation Service) will, in conjunction with the Community and Voluntary sector, enhance services to Travellers through the Travellers in Prison Initiative, including supports for female Travellers in custody, targeted reintegration supports, supports for families affected by imprisonment and peer support services to those in custody.</p> <p>125. Ireland (via the Department of Justice and Equality) will implement the CERD Committee's General recommendation XXXI on the prevention of racial discrimination in the criminal justice system with a focus on data collection by an independent body for the purposes of identifying trends in racial discrimination.</p>

Accommodation

Theme and Objectives	Actions
<p data-bbox="197 188 523 331">There should be adequate provision of accessible, suitable and culturally-appropriate accommodation available for Travellers.</p> <p data-bbox="197 367 523 596">Delivery of Traveller accommodation should be underpinned by a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, with a view to ensuring full expenditure of funds allocated for Traveller-specific accommodation.</p>	<p data-bbox="561 188 1460 450">126. The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC), which includes all key stakeholders, is awaiting a review of funding, allocations, spending and outputs in relation to Traveller accommodation from the Housing Agency, which is expected imminently (June 2017). The NTACC has agreed a sub-group to examine and analyse the findings of the review, with a view to preparing a report and recommendations for the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal as soon as possible after its receipt, which will include a review of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.</p> <p data-bbox="561 485 1460 628">127. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will ring-fence its Capital budget for Traveller accommodation and put robust mechanisms in place to monitor expenditure and delivery, including periodic reviews to assess progress in meeting needs and to identify new and emerging needs.</p> <p data-bbox="561 663 1460 775">128. The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will examine how best to develop the capacity and operation of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees to maximise their contribution to local accommodation programmes and policies.</p> <p data-bbox="561 810 1460 954">129. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will ensure that any guidelines developed by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in relation to the operation of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees are promulgated across all Local Authorities.</p> <p data-bbox="561 989 1460 1069">130. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will assess if there are any barriers to Travellers accessing social housing waiting lists.</p> <p data-bbox="561 1104 1460 1216">131. The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees will examine how best they can further develop the involvement of Traveller-specific accommodation tenants in issues relating to their scheme or site.</p>

Traveller and Roma Communities

Theme and Objectives	Actions
Traveller and Roma people should be supported to participate in political processes at local and national levels.	132. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will support the work of Traveller and Roma organisations on voter education and voter registration initiatives for the Traveller and Roma communities.
Traveller and Roma organisations should be resourced to support and facilitate political engagement and leadership in the Traveller and Roma communities.	133. The Department of Justice and Equality will support the development of mentoring programmes to build and develop the capacity of Travellers and Roma to represent their communities at a local, national and international level.
A strong Traveller and Roma infrastructure, underpinned by community development principles should be supported and resourced.	134. The Department of Justice and Equality will continue to support and fund local Traveller Community Development Projects, and additional funds will be made available (where possible) to include new projects in counties not currently served. 135. The Department of Justice and Equality will continue to support and resource Traveller organisations at national and local level, underpinned by community development principles. 136. The Department of Justice and Equality will provide dedicated funding for Roma initiatives and projects, underpinned by community development principles.
Effective measures should be collaboratively undertaken by Government Departments, statutory agencies and Traveller and Roma organisations to protect support the Traveller and Roma communities in addressing conflict, feuding and anti-social behaviour.	137. The Department of Justice and Equality will ensure Traveller access to victim support services. 138. The Department of Justice and Equality will put in place and fund an effective and sustained programme, in partnership with the Traveller community and all relevant Departments and agencies, to bring feuding to an end definitively over a period of time. This will include development of mediation services and embedding of mediation services and capacities in local Traveller organisations. 139. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will promote and support Travellers' civic involvement in their own communities and local areas. 140. An Garda Síochána, in consultation with Traveller interests, will ensure that crime and anti-social behaviour within the Traveller community is responded to effectively and that the community is protected, including provision to Garda members of pre-service and in-service training to ensure Gardaí gain a greater understanding of the diversity of the Traveller community and recognise the traumatic impact of criminality.

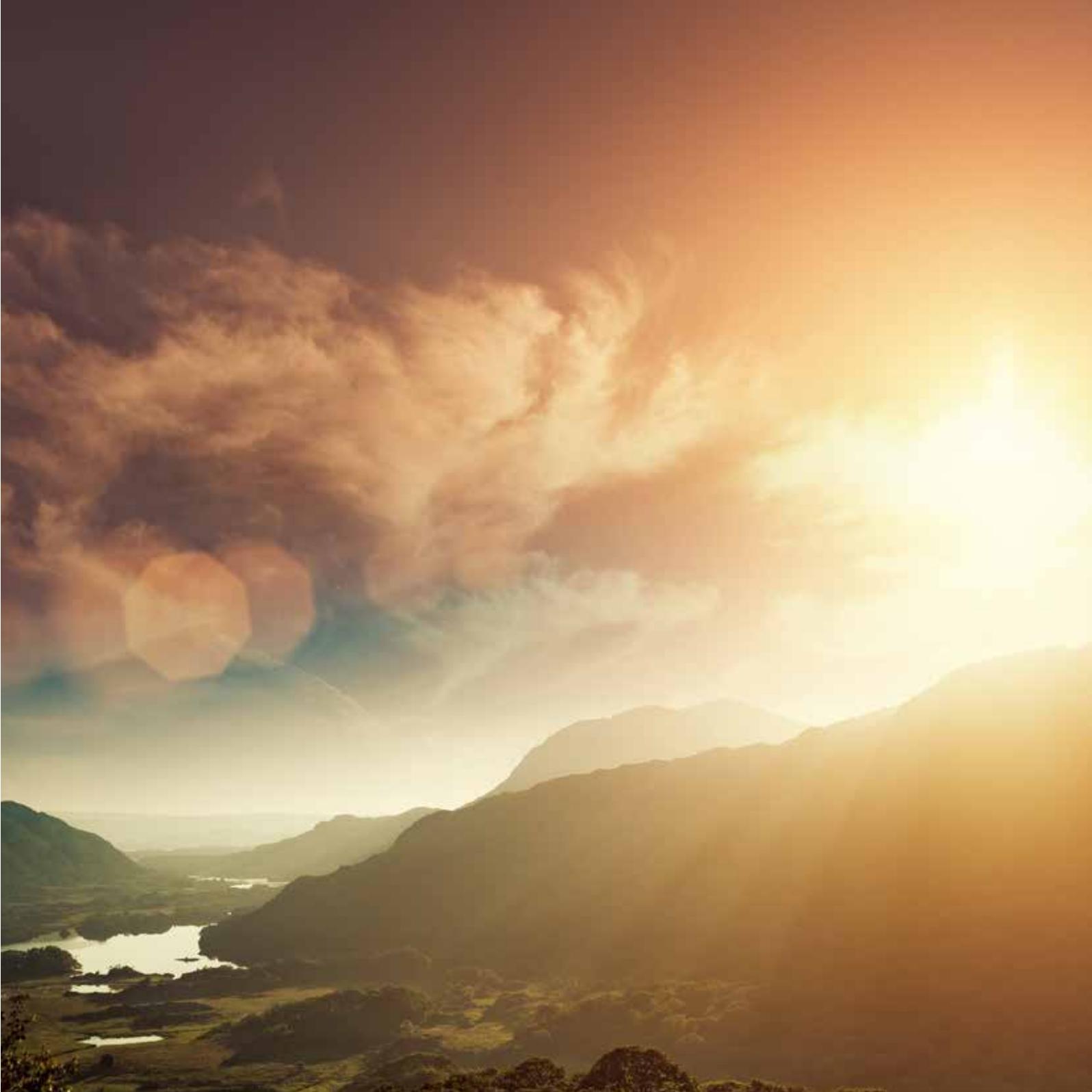
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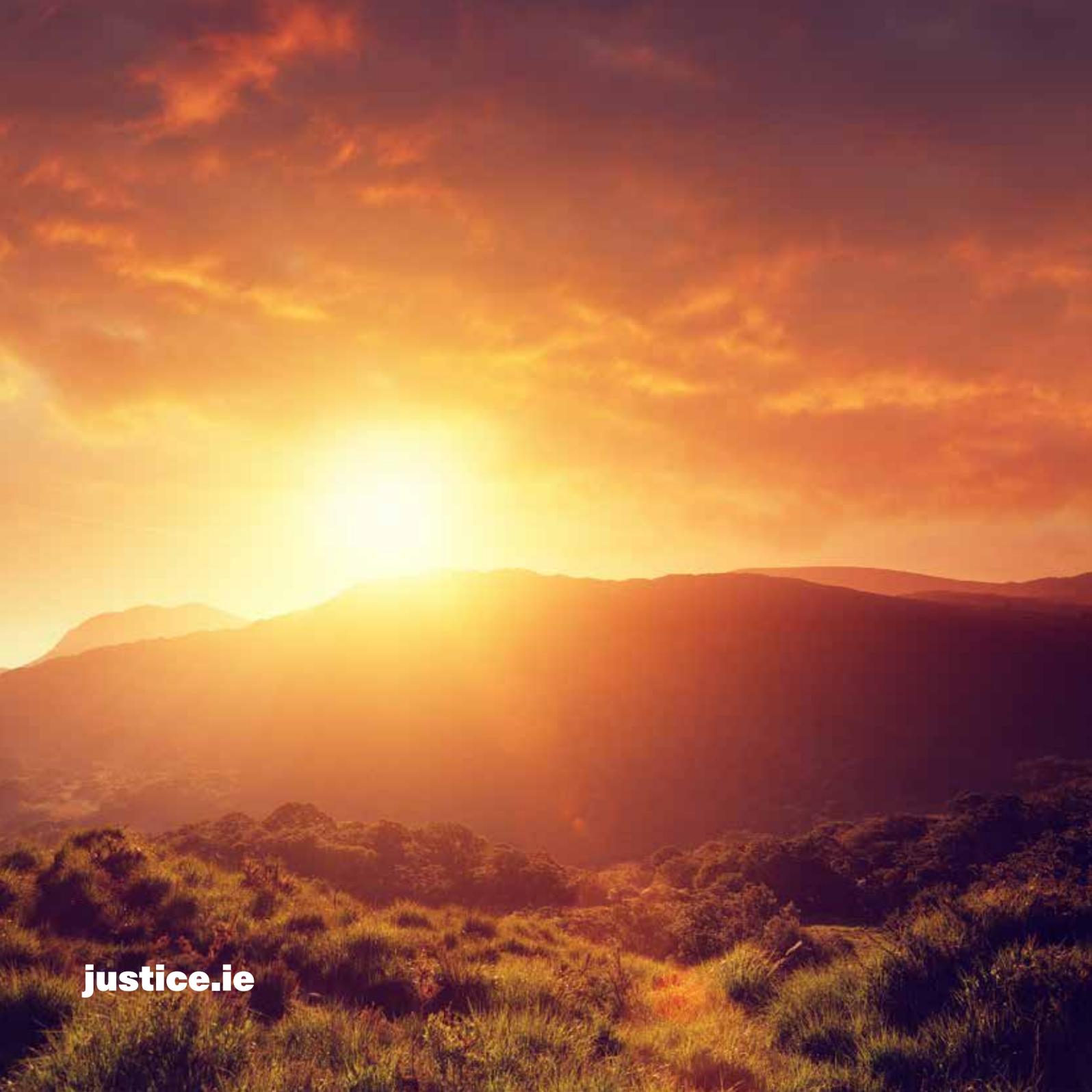
Theme and Objectives	Actions
<p>Traveller and Roma organisations should be consulted on and meaningfully involved in the design and delivery of relevant services and programmes that affect them.</p>	<p>141. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (and Local Authorities) will ensure that Travellers and Roma are represented on the joint steering groups established to oversee the common economic and community elements of Local Economic and Community Plans.</p> <p>142. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (and Local Authorities) will include consultation with Traveller and Roma representative organisations as part of the consultation processes for the completion of Local Economic and Community Plans.</p>
<p>Relevant public services staff should be trained in anti-racism and cultural awareness and understand their obligations under the section 42 (positive duty) in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.</p>	<p>143. All Departments and relevant agencies will ensure that all relevant public service staff members receive anti-racism and cultural awareness training.</p> <p>144. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, in consultation with Traveller and Roma representative organisations will develop training for Government Departments, statutory agencies and Local Authorities on implementing the Public Sector Duty as a means of systematically pre-empting and addressing equality and human rights issues in their daily work in relation to Travellers and Roma communities.</p>
<p>Public services should be provided in a way that is non-discriminatory and respectful of Traveller and Roma culture and identity.</p>	<p>145. All Departments, statutory agencies and Local Authorities will ensure the ten common basic principles on Roma inclusion adopted by the European Commission underpin the strategic and operational activities of all Government Departments, statutory agencies and Local Authorities.</p>
<p>Data disaggregated by ethnicity and gender should be collected across all Government Departments and statutory agencies to monitor and evaluate the impact of existing policies and strategies and to support evidence-based policy making.</p>	<p>146. The Department of Justice and Equality will chair a cross-Departmental working group, with involvement from Traveller and Roma representatives, with a view to developing a methodology for the introduction of an ethnic identifier on all data sets to facilitate the monitoring of access, participation and outcomes to services for Travellers and Roma.</p> <p>147. The Department of Justice and Equality (Irish Prison Service) will pilot an initiative to better capture information on Travellers on committal.</p> <p>148. All Departments and agencies will explore the development of a system for capturing data on the participation of Travellers and Roma (as well as other minority ethnic groups) across all Government Departments and statutory agencies in all thematic areas and actions within their remit.</p> <p>149. All Departments and agencies will explore the introduction of stratified sampling to gather statistically significant data on Travellers and Roma.</p>



Note: the addition of another column (“progress to date”) will convert the above table into the annual report on progress. The Inclusion Strategy itself will be a living document with further consultation processes in future years building on progress and leading to publication of revised versions.

NB This document constitutes Version 1 of this Inclusion Strategy - June 2017.





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National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020: creating a better society for all

Department of Justice and Equality
April 2017



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Foreword by Ms Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality

The development of this National Strategy for Women and Girls has been a priority for me as Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality. I recognise that women continue to be treated unequally and this Strategy will provide a crucial framework for action to address the remaining obstacles to women's equality.

The Strategy is intended to respond to women's needs across a diversity of identities and situations. It focuses on the needs of working women by proposing to continue to increase investment in childcare, to take action to tackle the gender pay gap, to improve the conditions of women in precarious employment, and to provide additional help to women entrepreneurs. Lone parents and socially excluded women will have improved access to education, training and employment opportunities as a result of this Strategy.

The Strategy's key thread is that of visibility. We need to see more women participating in decision-making across Irish society so that decision-making can be more representative and reflective of both women's and men's priorities. If women are to change their circumstances fundamentally, they need to have greater access to the levers of power across Irish society. We also need to ensure that disadvantaged women, older women, women with disabilities, Traveller and Roma women and migrant women can participate in

key decisions concerning their lives.

Taking the mantra "if you can see it, you can be it", this Strategy aims to shine a light on equal roles for women and girls in all aspects of society - in the domestic and family sphere; in their communities; in education; in working life; in Ireland's cultural and sporting sectors; as pioneers in business, in academic life, in the sciences; and as leaders.

This 'living document' will evolve to respond to the changing patterns of girls' and women's lives. New actions will be added over the coming years. It will support women having children later in life. It will protect the safety of young girls and women online. It will combat the enduring threat of gender-based violence.

Achieving greater equality for women will build a prosperous world for all of us. There is an incalculable gain for society if its members, women and men alike, can expect to enjoy respect, opportunities and the benefits of fulfilling lives.

The National Strategy for Women and Girls sets this ambitious vision for the Ireland of 2021. It is crucial that we take action now so that by 2021, we will be well advanced on the journey to full equality for women and girls.



Foreword by Mr David Stanton T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration

I welcome the publication of the National Strategy for Women and Girls as an important step forward on the journey to equality for women in Ireland. I was pleased to serve as Chair of the Strategy Committee tasked with its development.

The Strategy sets out a series of actions to promote women's equality in the workplace, in sport, in politics and in the arts. It is for the diversity of women, rich and poor, old and young, from all communities, rural and urban. It provides concrete measures to tackle issues such as the gender pay gap, precarious employment or promoting female entrepreneurship. It recognises that women have to get an equal seat at the table if they are to be in a position to influence the decisions that will affect their lives. As a result, it puts a focus on promoting women's leadership, in politics, business, sport, the arts and in local communities. The Strategy seeks to make women more visible so that their voices can be heard on issues of concern for them. The aim is to enable women to be equal and active citizens within Irish society.

Achieving progress on women's equality is in all of our interests. If we enable mothers to realise their potential, their children will have

higher aspirations as a result. Girls and boys will have positive role models for their futures. Getting it right on women's equality will help us to understand how to tackle male disadvantage and inequalities that affect other groups as well.

I am calling on men and boys to play their part in supporting women's equality, to act as equality champions in their families, their schools, their workplaces, among friends and within the community. We can show that women's equality matters to us, that we want our wives, daughters, mothers and girlfriends to have equal opportunities in our society.

Acting together, we have the ability to reach the Strategy's goal of an Ireland where women enjoy equality with men, reach their potential and have fulfilling lives.

“an Ireland where all women
enjoy equality with men and
can achieve their full potential,
while enjoying a safe and
fulfilling life”



1. Background and Context

The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 has as its vision to work towards:

“an Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life”.

The Strategy is a living document, which is influenced by its context and will evolve as circumstances change over the period to 2020.

It is underpinned by the societal values of equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, generosity, intersectionality, diversity and respect for human rights. It recognises that achieving its vision will involve shared responsibility between Government, business, civil society and individuals of all genders at national and local level. It will require accountability from public and private sector organisations in the delivery of the actions outlined in the Strategy.

The Strategy’s success will depend on the shared engagement of women and men, girls and boys, in building a fairer society which allows women and men alike to flourish.

1.1 Why do we need a National Strategy?

The National Strategy is the framework through which the Government will pursue actions to advance the rights of women and girls and to enable their full participation in Irish society. A strategic approach is needed to identify remaining barriers which prevent women from achieving their full potential and from enjoying opportunities on a par with men. As opportunities and outcomes can differ for women and girls depending on their age, sexual orientation, gender identity, civil status, beliefs, ethnicity or ability, a national strategy is needed to address instances of multiple discrimination and to put forward positive action measures for women and girls who experience particular disadvantages arising from the intersection of gender with other aspects of their identity. There is an intrinsic right to equality that needs to be addressed.

Action to promote women’s equality will benefit society more broadly. It is recognised that enabling women to exercise rights and opportunities will generate wider prosperity for the country. The OECD has estimated that achieving gender parity would add 0.6 percentage points to the world’s annual GDP growth rate. It has calculated the economic gain for the world at US\$12 trillion.

More broadly, changes in gender norms should enable men to share more fully in caring roles for their children and families and thereby to enjoy the benefits of family life. Equally, a society committed to supporting the potential of all will be more attuned to the needs of men and boys. In addition, policy responses aimed at tackling multiple discrimination against women will benefit men who experience similar disadvantages. The wellbeing of society will gain from an increased priority on equality and from reduced tolerance for violence in all its manifestations.

1.2 European and international context

This Strategy needs to be seen in the context of the promotion of gender equality in the EU and the wider international community. The challenges facing societies in this endeavour vary to an extent from one country to another but have large elements in common as well.

Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union states that the EU shall promote equality between women and men. The same objective is reflected in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 8) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article 23).

On 7 March 2011, the Council of Ministers adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020). This covers, in particular, measures to close gender gaps and combat gender segregation in the labour market, to promote better work-life balance for women

and men, and to tackle all forms of violence against women.

The current strategy statement of the European Commission is the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 which prioritises the following areas: equal economic independence for women and men; equal pay for work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence; and promoting gender equality beyond the EU.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, adopted a Declaration and Platform for Action setting out a comprehensive agenda for the achievement of gender equality. The latter called on governments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to take action in the following critical areas of concern: the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training, and in health care and related services; violence against women; the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation; inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources; inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels; insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women; lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of

the human rights of women; stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to, and participation in, all communication systems, especially in the media; gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment; and persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child. The implementation of the Platform for Action is reviewed on an ongoing basis by the UN Commission on the Status of Women. At the Commission's session in 2015, governments agreed to strive for full gender equality and the empowerment of women by 2030. Ireland has been elected to the Commission for 2017-2021 and will chair the Commission for two years from 2018. Ireland will use this opportunity to prioritise the promotion of gender equality and the

implementation of agreed commitments.

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was agreed at a UN Summit in New York in September 2015, and sets out a plan of action for the world and its people in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. SDG 5 is concerned with the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Targets are set under this goal with a view to ending discrimination, eliminating violence against women and harmful practices, recognising unpaid care and domestic work, ensuring women's full and effective participation in leadership and decision-making, universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance



with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, equal access to economic resources, and enhancing the use of enabling technology to promote women's empowerment. In addition, the Declaration adopted with the 2030 Agenda recognises that the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial. Other SDGs which are relevant are SDG 8 on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all and SDG 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are at the core of Ireland's programme for international development, Irish Aid, which is overseen by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *The Global Island*, Ireland's foreign policy for a changing world, also commits to advancing gender equality, particularly at the multilateral level.

Ireland has been a Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women since 1985. In September 2016, we submitted our Sixth and Seventh Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (established under the Convention). The Reports were considered by the Committee on 15 February 2017. In its Concluding Observations, the Committee welcomed the

progress achieved in undertaking legislative reforms since the consideration in 2005 of the Fourth and Fifth Periodic Reports. It also welcomed Ireland's efforts in improving its policy framework in accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women. The Committee made recommendations or urged particular courses of action in relation to the following issues:

- Ireland's reservations to the Convention;
- the elimination of discriminatory stereotypes, the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, Article 41.2 of the Constitution, and section 14 of the Equal Status Act;
- maternity services, abortion and contraception;
- Magdalene laundries, children's institutions, Mother and Baby homes, and symphysiotomy;
- resources for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, and funding of non-governmental organizations;
- the formulation of indicators, benchmarks and timelines in this Strategy, gender mainstreaming, and the collection of data disaggregated by sex and other characteristics in order to inform policy and programmes and track progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

- use of temporary special measures;
- intersex children;
- violence against women, human trafficking, prostitution;
- women's participation in political and public life;
- women, peace and security;
- education, the labour market, social protection;
- disadvantaged women, rural women;
- women prisoners;
- family relations and maintenance;
- the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and ratification of certain treaties.

The Committee's observations are being considered by the relevant Government bodies.

The realisation of equality between women and men has been high on the agenda of the Council of Europe as well. Its current Gender Equality Strategy covers 2014-2017 and builds upon the vast legal and policy acquis of the Council as regards gender equality. The overall goal of the Strategy is to achieve

the advancement and empowerment of women and hence the effective realisation of gender equality in Council of Europe Member States by supporting the implementation of existing Council of Europe standards. Two of the standards that are relevant are the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, to which Ireland is a Party, and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which we are committed to ratifying.

Ireland has been a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since shortly after its establishment in 1961. The OECD is promoting gender equality in the areas of public governance, corporate governance, development, financial education, health, science, taxation and wellbeing.

The primary goal of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Gender equality is a key element in reaching this goal and is a cross-cutting policy driver for all ILO policy outcomes. The ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming supports a two-pronged approach of gender mainstreaming: analysing and addressing in all ILO initiatives the specific needs of both women and men, and targeted interventions to enable women and men to participate in, and benefit equally from, development efforts.

1.3 The National Women's Strategy 2007-2016

The National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 was adopted after extensive consultation with civil society and stakeholders in the public and private sectors. It set out to achieve progress under three overarching themes: equalising socio-economic opportunity for women; ensuring the wellbeing of women; and engaging as equal and active citizens.

Shortly after publication of the 2007 Strategy, Ireland suffered a severe recession, meaning the priorities for implementation changed and reduced funding was available. However there has been significant progress during the period across a range of areas:

- A robust legal framework for gender equality and to address violence against women is in place, with a substantial body of new legislation introduced over the past decade.
- The policy framework has been fleshed out, and detailed strategies are now in place addressing issues such as human trafficking, domestic violence, and women in peace and security.
- The institutional mechanisms for equality and human rights have been consolidated with the establishment in 2014 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and in 2015 of the Workplace Relations Commission. Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, was established

in 2007 and recently published the *Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021*. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit was established in the Department of Justice and Equality in 2008 and has published the *Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland*. The Child and Family Agency, Tusla, was established in 2014.

- Services to assure the reproductive and sexual wellbeing of women have improved and a first national maternity strategy is in place. Under the strategic direction of the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, births to teenage mothers have halved over the past 14 years and now represent only 2% of all births.

Moreover, gender equality increasingly features in mainstream public discourse, particularly in regard to business and political leadership, healthcare, academia, sports and the arts.

1.3.1 Employment

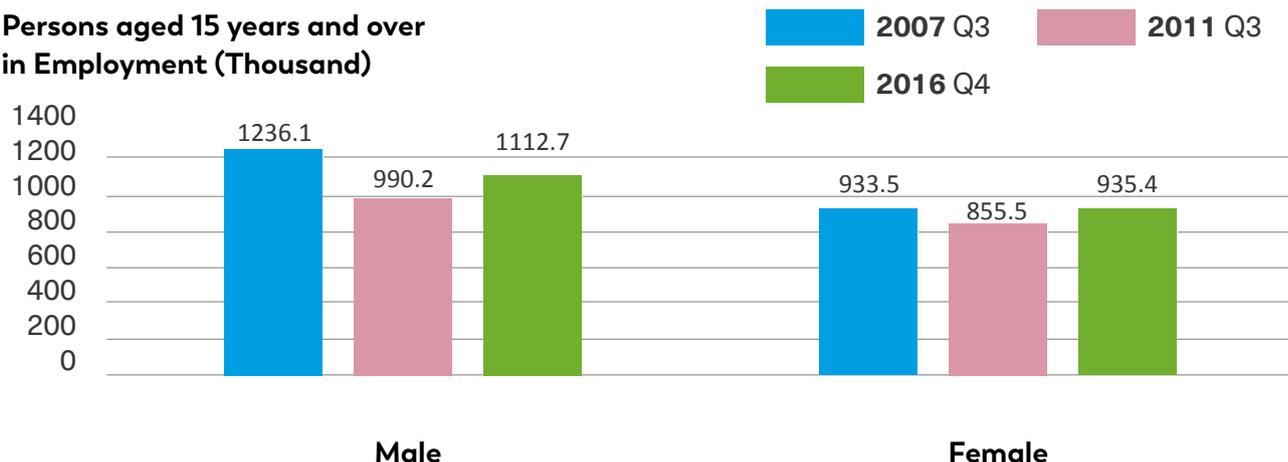
Despite the economic downturn, and consequent shrinkage of employment opportunities from 2008, the number of women in employment has already returned to the levels seen at Q3 of 2007¹.

1.3.2 The Oireachtas and the Judiciary

The enactment of the Electoral (Amendment)

¹ CSO; QNQ19: Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment by Employment Status, Sex and Quarter

Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment (Thousand)



(Political Funding) Act 2012 introduced gender quotas for national politics, requiring political parties to select at least 30% of candidates of each gender for national elections or else lose 50% of their State funding for the parliamentary term. The outcome was an increase in the number of female candidates running in the 2016 general election. 35 women were elected to the Dáil in 2016, an increase of 10 on the 2011 general election and the highest number of female TDs ever. The percentage of women among Dáil members rose to 22% from 15% in 2011. The report by the Sub-Committee on Dáil Reform adopted in May 2016 made proposals for changes to Dáil procedures to make the sitting hours more family-friendly, including by holding many of the House's votes on Thursday afternoons.

There has been a significant increase in the percentage of women serving as judges. Women have been appointed to senior legal and judicial positions in the State. At present, 34% of Irish judges are female. In the District Court, 31% or 19 out of 61 are female. The

Circuit Court has 43% female representation. In the High Court, women constitute 26% of judges and in the Supreme Court, four of the 9 judges are women, including the Chief Justice. The number of female judges has almost tripled in the past two decades.

Other highly visible senior positions in the justice system currently held by women include the Attorney General, the Chief State Solicitor, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the State Pathologist, the Director General of Forensic Science Ireland, the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána, and the Chair of the Policing Authority.

1.3.3 Board Appointments

Progress continued to be made over the past decade to meet the target, set in 1993, that women should constitute at least 40% of the membership of State boards. In 2006, women comprised 34% of all board members. The Government introduced new Guidelines on

Appointments to State Boards in 2014, which included a package of measures to meet the 40% target, including the requirement for Government Departments to establish implementation plans. The Government also set an enhanced target of 45% for boards already meeting the 40% target.

Since the launch of the Guidelines, 30% of over 7,500 applications received for state board appointment came from women, who made up some 45% of the appointments. As of February 2017, women constitute 38% of board members, the highest percentage since the target was introduced. The 40% target has been met by 101 boards (47%), which represents an increase of 8 percentage points since December 2013.

1.3.4 Women in the Civil Service

Significant progress has been made to advance women into senior and middle management positions in the Civil Service. The previous National Women's Strategy set a target for 27% of all Principal Officers to be women. That target has been exceeded significantly. Women now constitute 40% of all Principal Officers, 33% of all Assistant Secretaries and 20% of all Secretaries General. Since 2009, there has been an increase of 13 percentage points in the percentage of Principal Officer positions held by women (27% in 2009) and an increase of 3 percentage points in the percentage of women at Assistant Secretary and Secretary General levels. As part of its wider gender equality programme, the Department of

Foreign Affairs and Trade, has also prioritised increasing gender equality in staff assignments at home and abroad. As of March 2017, women are serving as Heads of Mission (at Assistant Secretary and higher level, at Counsellor level and at First Secretary level) in 25% of Irish Embassies or Consulates General (20 of 80) around the world. This represents an increase from 18% in 2011.

Improving gender balance is a key strand within the Civil Service Renewal Programme. In January 2017, the Government announced further measures designed to foster greater gender equality. The measures announced include a new target of 50/50 for senior level appointments. The merit principle of "best person for the job" will continue to apply in recruitment and promotion competitions and all senior level vacancies are filled by open competition. Where two candidates of equal merit come to the Top Level Appointments Committee for an Assistant Secretary vacancy, preference will be given to the female candidate where women are under-represented on the Management Board of the Department in question.

1.3.5 Changing Families / Changing Gender Norms

Ground-breaking legislative reforms were enacted over the past five years which have advanced the rights of diverse families and have recognised changing family situations and gender norms.

Ireland introduced civil partnership for same-sex couples in 2010 and many children are now being raised by same-sex parents. Ireland then made history on 22 May 2015 when it became the first country in the world to bring in marriage equality for same-sex couples through a popular vote. The Marriage Act 2015 came into operation on 16 November 2015 and provided that same-sex couples could marry and have their relationships recognised by society as equal and enjoying the protection of the Constitution. This also provides legal certainty for the children of same-sex couples. The Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 was enacted in April 2015. The Act is child-centred and addresses the rights of children to legal security, to the care of their parents and important adults in their lives, and to equality before the law. Step-parents, civil partners and cohabiting partners can now apply for custody, or to become guardians of a child. The Act also makes it easier for grandparents and other key people in a child's life to apply for access. These

reforms in family law recognise the crucial role of parents and the need for a child to maintain meaningful relationships with both parents. The Department of Health is currently undertaking the preparatory work necessary to enable Parts 2 and 3 of the Act, which provide for parentage through donor-assisted reproduction, to be brought into operation.

The Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016 introduced paid statutory leave for new fathers for the first time in Ireland. Fathers of newborn children are now entitled to a combined package of two weeks leave and benefit of €230 a week, which they can avail of within six months of the baby's birth. It recognises the importance of enabling fathers to take on a greater sharing of caring responsibilities for their children. The Programme for Government committed to support families where one parent stays at home to care for their children through an increase in the Home Carer's Credit. The credit was increased by 10% (from €1,000



to €1,100) in Budget 2017, providing additional support to jointly assessed couples where one partner works primarily in the home to care for children or incapacitated persons.

Legislative reform has also enabled transgender persons to be recognised in their preferred gender. The Gender Recognition Act 2015 provides for a person to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate to have their preferred gender recognised by the State.

1.3.6 Education

Educational attainment rates for women have risen significantly since 2007 and continue to be higher than they are for men. In 2016, 82.9% of women aged 25-64 had completed at least upper secondary education compared to 71.2% in 2007 (the comparable rates for men are 76.9% in 2016, up from 64.6% in 2007) and 58.4% of women aged 30-34 had successfully completed tertiary education compared to 48.9% in 2007 (the comparable rates for men are 46.4% in 2016, up from 38.7% in 2007). In addition, early school leaving rates for females

have decreased to 4.8% in 2016² from 8.6% in 2007.

1.3.7 Embedding gender in decision-making

The introduction in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 of a positive duty which requires public bodies to have due regard to equality and human rights has provided a mechanism to apply a gender lens to decision-making.

The Department of Social Protection undertakes rigorous and extensive ex-ante and ex-post social impact assessments of the main welfare and direct tax budgetary policies as does the Department of Finance in the case of tax policy changes. This assessment uses a tax-welfare simulation model known as SWITCH, developed by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), to measure the distributive and poverty impacts of policies on family types, lifecycle groups and gender. Since 2013, integrated social impact assessments, which include the main welfare and direct tax measures, have been published in annual budgets. Their purpose is to inform public understanding on the cumulative effect of budgetary policies on income distribution and social equality.

In addition, based on the Programme for a Partnership Government commitment to develop a process of budget and policy proofing as a means of advancing equality, reducing poverty and strengthening economic and social

2

Eurostat education and training database. 2016 figures are provisional.



rights, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has developed a new ex-post Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Framework as a first step towards supporting a more comprehensive assessment of the impacts of certain budgetary measures on household outcomes.

This new Framework has been designed to complement the current distributive analysis of the proposed tax and social welfare measures set out in the Budget each year by the Departments of Finance and Social Protection and which is published immediately post-Budget. This work will now be supplemented by a series of papers published by the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) each year. These papers will focus on policy areas that cannot easily be incorporated into the SWITCH model. In this regard, the papers will largely focus on the impacts of public expenditure on recipients.

As the first step in this iterative process, it is intended to undertake point-in-time exercises examining current expenditure in certain policy areas in order to establish a baseline position. This baseline position should identify the level of spend in a given policy area, and the key drivers of expenditure and will aim to generate a profile of those impacted by the expenditure. This should facilitate the analysis in future years of the impacts of future Budgetary policy changes in those areas. The first two papers under this new Framework were published at Budget time last year and a number of other papers are being developed for publication in 2017.

The Government has committed in the Programme for a Partnership Government to developing the institutional arrangements to support equality and gender proofing in the new independent fiscal and budget office and within key government departments and to draw on the expertise of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) to support the proofing process.

1.4 Challenges

The key challenge is to retain an ambition for women's equality in the context of competing demands for action on other equality issues. A mistaken impression that women's equality has essentially been achieved has served to sap energy and attention from the issues still needing to be addressed. There is a renewed need to make the case, particularly among young women, for continued action on gender equality.

There are particular challenges in the following areas:

1.4.1 Leadership and decision-making

While progress has been made to improve female representation in national politics and on State boards, women remain under-represented in decision-making roles in many areas of Irish life.

Women continue to be under-represented on corporate boards. While the percentage of women non-executive directors of corporate

boards³ increased by 9 percentage points between 2007 and 2016, the percentage still remains low at 16%. Women are similarly under-represented in senior positions in the financial sector. The Central Bank indicated in March 2017 that women occupied only 20% of senior management positions in the financial services sector between 2012 and 2016. As Ireland continues to promote, develop and grow its international financial services sector, diversity and inclusion feature as key elements of the IFS2020 Action Plan 2017. The 30% Club is also preparing a Women in Finance Charter to promote greater participation of women in senior positions in the financial sector.

While gender equality is well-established in Irish higher education legislation, there remains a gender imbalance in the staffing of Irish higher education institutions, particularly at senior levels. Although there is gender-balance at entry-level academic grades, serious gender imbalances occur for higher level academic positions. Currently 81% of academic professor positions are filled by men. Men also represent 72% of the highest paid non-academic staff. This is not a problem that is unique to Ireland. Gender inequality in employment in higher education is an internationally observed issue. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions, published in 2016, highlighted the importance of achieving gender equality in employment in higher education institutions as a “means to maximise their pursuit of excellence and successfully meet the many social, economic and cultural challenges

of the future”. Progress on this ambition will be a focus during the lifetime of this Strategy.

1.4.2 Employment and gender gaps

Labour market participation rates for women have returned to 2006 levels and stood at 53.3% in quarter 4, 2016⁴. The number of women employed increased by 2.7% in quarter 4, 2016 as compared to quarter 4, 2015. However, there continues to be a gap of almost 14 percentage points between the labour force participation rate of women and that of men, which was 67.1% in quarter 4, 2016. While the proportion of men working part-time has doubled since 2006, in quarter 4, 2016 women were still almost three times more likely than men to work part-time, with a third of employed women in that situation.

1.4.3 Income

Consistent poverty levels are higher for women than men. In 2015, the consistent poverty rate for women was 9.1% compared to 8.3% for men. The risk of poverty for women over 65 is 2.6%, slightly less when compared to 2.9% for men over 65. The Government has taken a series of actions to address consistent poverty levels. Budget 2017 increased social welfare payment rates for pensioners, people with disabilities, carers, widows, lone parents and job seekers by €5 per week. In January 2017, the Government increased the level of the National Minimum Wage to €9.25 an hour.

3 Statistics on board membership of ISEQ20 companies, Eurostat, October 2016

4 CSO, Main QNHS Release Time Series Tables, QNHScoreQ42016

1.4.4 Violence Against Women

Domestic and gender-based violence continues to be experienced by women across social classes and situations. According to the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)* study published in 2014, 8% of women surveyed in Ireland experienced sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15. According to the same survey, 24% of women surveyed in Ireland experienced physical violence by a partner or by a non-partner since the age of 15. The Domestic Violence Bill will enhance the legislative measures available within the civil law system to support and protect victims.

1.4.5 Education and Training

While women continue to outperform their male counterparts in educational attainment rates, it is notable that females remain underrepresented in STEM type courses and careers. The Department of Education and Skills is committed to addressing the gender imbalance in STEM subject uptake and will be preparing a STEM Education Policy Statement and implementation plan during 2017. Initiatives to address negative stereotypes around STEM careers for women are also being undertaken by employers and employer bodies, in recognition of the importance of addressing the imbalanced representation of women in the sector.

The numbers of women in apprenticeship remains low, as acknowledged in the 2014 Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland,

reflecting the concentration of apprenticeships in sectors that have traditionally low levels of female employment. While SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, offers a bursary to employers to encourage them to employ female apprentices in these areas, the level of takeup of apprenticeships by females remains low. The Apprenticeship Council, established on foot of the 2014 Review, is overseeing the expansion of the apprenticeship system into a range of new areas of the Irish economy. In recent months the first of these new programmes has commenced and further new apprenticeships will get underway in 2017, many in sectors with a more gender balanced workforce. As set out in the recently published Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020, SOLAS will review the pathways to participation in apprenticeship in a range of diverse groups, including female participation, in light of the broadening of the apprenticeship system into new areas. The review will be completed in 2018 and any recommendations made will be implemented immediately. As part of the plan to expand apprenticeship, SOLAS will introduce a new branding and marketing campaign which will promote the value of apprenticeship to women and their potential employers.

1.4.6 Women with particular disadvantages

The diversity of women poses a challenge as outcomes on employment, poverty, leadership, and wellbeing can vary widely depending on a woman's situation. Outcomes are significantly poorer for Traveller women across a range

of areas. Lone parents and women with disabilities continue to have much lower rates of labour market participation. Roma and some migrant women also experience significantly poorer outcomes in terms of employment and access to resources. The needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons are less well understood, with less evolved policy responses as a result. Positive action measures are needed where specific categories of women experience particular disadvantages.

1.4.7 Constitutional Issues

The question of Article 41.2 of the Constitution regarding a 'woman's life within the home' was examined by the Convention on the Constitution which reported on it in May 2013. The recommendations of the Convention were subsequently examined and reported on by a Task Force of officials in the Department of Justice and Equality. There is a commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government that a referendum will be held on this provision. Taking account of this, proposals will be brought forward, for the Government's consideration, for a Bill to amend the Constitution.

The Government established a Citizens' Assembly in 2016, in line with its Programme for Partnership Government commitment to consider the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution (Article 40.3.3) and their conclusions on the matter will be submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas for further debate

later in 2017.

The effect of the Eighth Amendment (Article 40.3.3.) is to prohibit abortion in Ireland except where the life of a pregnant woman is at risk. The Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013 regulates access to a termination of pregnancy - the main purpose of the Act is to restate the general prohibition on abortion in Ireland while regulating access to lawful termination of pregnancy in accordance with the X case and the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the A, B and C v Ireland case.

1.5 What the Strategy will do

The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 provides the policy framework on which the Government's agenda and priorities in relation to the advancement of equality for women over the next four years are set out. It represents a whole of Government approach to improve outcomes for women, recognises the shared responsibility for achieving these results and the importance of taking measures to the maximum of available resources.

The four-year timeframe has been selected to allow for a focus on early achievement of concrete outcomes, contributing to incremental advances across several fields.

The overall goal is to change attitudes and practices preventing women's and girls' full participation in education, employment and public life at all levels, and to improve

services for women and girls, with priority given to the needs of those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes. In promoting equal treatment and the empowerment of women and girls, this Strategy is inclusive of individuals whose sex characteristics, gender identity or gender expression is female.

The policy framework will focus on the following outcomes – that women and girls in Ireland should

- enjoy economic security and equal socio-economic opportunity with men and boys;
- experience improved physical and mental health;
- exercise equal and active citizenship;
- participate equally in leadership in all areas of Irish life;
- experience a reduction in gender-based violence;

and that a gender perspective is taken into account by the machinery of government.

These outcomes are in line with the global agenda to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in Goal 5 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Strategy sets out the actions to be taken towards achieving these outcomes, the measures enabling and supporting their implementation, and the arrangements by which progress will be tracked and reviewed. Recognising the diversity of women and girls, broad-based actions will aim to take account, where possible, of women's and girls' diversity. In addition, specific actions are proposed to address issues affecting specific groups of women and girls.

The development of proposals to implement the actions included in the Strategy should be strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Public Spending Code to ensure that the best possible value-for-money is obtained whenever public money is being spent or invested, to support the achievement of objectives to which the actions relate and to provide the data required to assess impact and effectiveness.



2. Consultation

2.1 Consultations with civil society and with the public

A public consultation paper was published on 23 November 2016 and written submissions invited on the high level objectives and desired outcomes for the Strategy, and the priorities for action over the next 4 years. The consultation was launched on social media by the Tánaiste, Frances Fitzgerald TD and Minister of State David Stanton TD, who also took an active part in the consultations. The process remained open for written submissions until the end of January 2017, with 95 written submissions received.

A series of public meetings with stakeholders and the wider public also took place during December and January, in Cork, Athlone, Dublin and Sligo, based on the public consultation paper. A summary report of views expressed by participants at these meetings will be published on www.genderequality.ie.

2.2 Contribution of the Strategy Committee

A Strategy Committee was appointed in February 2017 to advise the Department of Justice and Equality on the preparation and implementation of the new Strategy. Its membership included representatives of each

Government Department, the HSE, Enterprise Ireland, the County and City Management Association, Ibec, ICTU, the National Women's Council of Ireland, the USI, the IFA, The Wheel and the Community Platform. The membership of the Strategy Committee is set out at **Appendix I**.

The terms of reference of the Strategy Committee were as follows:

1. The Strategy Committee (“the Committee”) shall advise on the development and implementation of the new Strategy by the Department of Justice and Equality.
2. The Committee shall advise the Department of Justice and Equality on the following, having regard to the results of the public consultation to inform the new National Women's Strategy, and to the individual members' expertise and experience:
 - key issues for women and girls in Ireland that are most relevant to address over the next four years;
 - the priority high-level objectives to be pursued under the new National Women's Strategy;

- the outcomes which the Strategy should aim to achieve; and
 - actions which could be taken to advance those objectives and achieve those outcomes.
3. The Committee shall provide information to the Department of Justice and Equality on:
- data relevant to the situation as regards gender equality in Ireland;
 - indicators, targets and means of monitoring progress towards the achievement of gender equality in Ireland;
 - any other relevant matters.

The Committee met on three occasions during February and March 2017.



3. Structure of the Strategy

The overall goal of the Strategy for the 2017-2020 period is

to change attitudes and practices preventing women's and girls' full participation in education, employment and public life, at all levels, and to improve services for women and girls, with priority given to the needs of those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes.

It is proposed to advance this goal through six high-level objectives, as follows:

- Advance socio-economic equality for women and girls
- Advance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of women and girls
- Ensure the visibility in society of women and girls, and their equal and active citizenship
- Advance women in leadership at all levels
- Combat violence against women
- Embed gender equality in decision-making

Actions to be undertaken on each of these objectives are set out in chapters 5 to 10.

The Strategy is intended to be a living document. Further actions will be added where necessary over its lifetime.



4. Monitoring and Reporting on Implementation

4.1 Strategy Committee

The Strategy Committee, chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for gender equality, will continue to meet on a regular basis after publication of the Strategy to advise on its implementation. The Committee will also have the task of assessing whether further action is required on specific issues or if actions need to be added to the Strategy or changed to respond to changing needs, and making recommendations to the Department of Justice and Equality in that regard.

It is intended that the facility will exist to add further actions to the Strategy over its lifetime. A prioritisation exercise will take place in relation to the actions to be implemented first. During the initial implementation phase, a traffic light system will be developed aimed at enabling the Strategy Committee to monitor progress on individual actions and across each objective.

Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality will support the Strategy Committee in its work and will also coordinate the implementation of the Strategy, with ongoing engagement with relevant Departments, agencies and stakeholders to ensure that progress is on track.

Inter-Departmental teams will be established to problem solve on issues where problems emerge in the implementation of actions.

Audits will be undertaken of the Strategy in terms of value for money and overall impact. A mid-term review will be carried out on the Strategy in mid-2019 as will an independent evaluation in 2021.

On the basis of the Strategy Committee's work, progress reports will be presented to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform and published annually on the Department of Justice and Equality gender equality website, www.genderequality.ie.

4.2 Definition of Targets and Indicators

Gender Equality Division will develop targets and appropriate indicators against which the outputs and impact of the Strategy's actions will be measured. The Strategy Committee will advise on the development of targets and indicators for monitoring progress on implementing the Strategy.

4.3 Monitoring and review timetable

Action	Timeframe
Targets and indicators agreed for all actions.	Q3 2017
1 st progress report submitted.	Q2 2018
2 nd progress report submitted.	Q2 2019
Mid-term review concluded.	mid 2019
3 rd progress report submitted.	Q2 2020
Final evaluation report submitted.	Q2 2021



5. Objective One: Advance Socio-Economic Equality for Women and Girls

Women and girls continue to experience barriers to full socio-economic equality. The issues that need to be addressed include the gender pay gap, the higher percentages of women in low-paid and precarious employment, the higher risk of poverty experienced by lone parents, the need to ensure the availability of affordable and quality childcare, the continuing occupational segregation of women and the lower rates of female entrepreneurs.

The Strategy proposes to support mothers in paid employment by extending the family leave entitlements available to parents of young children and by implementing a new national scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of childcare.

A series of measures are proposed to address the gender pay gap. These will include the introduction of wage surveys to be undertaken by companies with more than 50 employees and the development of practical tools to enable companies to calculate and to address the gender pay gap.

Female entrepreneurs will be supported through a series of funding programmes and through networking opportunities at local level.

The situation of disadvantaged working women will be addressed through the increase in the National Minimum Wage, the introduction of legislation to regulate precarious work and through the introduction of a new Working Family Payment.

Measures are proposed to enhance access to education and training opportunities, particularly for lone parents and for socially excluded women living in poverty.

A National STEM⁵ Education Policy Statement will be developed to promote greater uptake by girls of science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. A review will also be undertaken aimed at identifying how female participation in apprenticeships can be improved. The aim is to widen the opportunities available to girls and to reduce occupational segregation of women.

With the aim of ensuring that pension policy takes account of the women's differing work patterns, future pension policy reforms will be gender proofed to assess their impact on women as well as men.

5 Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

Government Departments, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Acting on poverty and social inclusion through the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion*.
- Advancing the specific socio-economic situations of particular groups such as migrant, Traveller and Roma, and LGBTI women and women with disabilities, through the *Migrant Integration Strategy*, and the *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities* and through the forthcoming *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy*, *National LGBTI Inclusion Strategy*, and *National Disability Inclusion Strategy*, all currently being drafted. The implementation of these strategies will each be monitored and reported on a gender-disaggregated basis.
- Delivering 47,000 social housing units through *Rebuilding Ireland*.
- Reviewing the level and trend in female participation in apprenticeships in 2018 and implementing the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, the *ICT Skills Action Plan 2014-2018* and the *Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship 2016-2020*. They will also review guidance services, tools and careers information for school students and adults and recommend changes to improve the services available.
- Ensuring access to further and higher education is not determined by gender, socio-economic disadvantage, etc., by implementing the *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019* and the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*.
- Placing an emphasis on female labour market participation and female entrepreneurship by implementing the *Action Plan for Jobs* and the *Pathways to Work* programmes.
- Enhancing career progression for researchers and initiatives currently in place to improve participation of women in research and innovation activities through *Innovation 2020: national strategy on research and development, science and technology*.
- Promoting female entrepreneurship as a topic of importance in the mid-term review of the *National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland*.
- Promoting female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland by implementing the “*Realising our Rural Potential*” *Action Plan for Rural Development*.
- Implementing the *National Youth Strategy*, the overall aim of which is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential by respecting their rights and hearing their voices while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood. A key principle ingrained in the

strategy is to ensure an equality perspective is integrated into all policies and practices.

- Implementing the *Action Plan on School Age Childcare (March 2016)* which highlighted the importance of after-school childcare for continued growth in female labour market participation.
- Implementing the *White Paper on Defence 2015*, which addresses both the current

gender imbalance in the Defence Forces and our commitment to include a gender perspective in our approach to defence policy, planning and operations.

- Implementing the *Framework for Action for One World, One Future, Ireland's policy for international development*.



Strategy Actions for 2017-2020 are as follows:

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Improved supports for working parents	1.1 Provide a platform of parenting supports for families and working parents.	2020	DCYA
Increased availability of family leave and work-life balance to support parents in their caring role for children	1.2 Publish proposals for the implementation of the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to expand paid leave in the first year of a child's life by end-2017 and legislate for them as soon as possible thereafter.	2017-2020	DJE (lead), relevant Depts and agencies
	1.3 Promote initiatives to support women returning to work from maternity leave.	2017-2020	DJE (lead), relevant Depts and agencies
All parents have access to quality, affordable childcare	1.4 Implement, on a phased basis, a new national scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of quality childcare.	2017	DCYA
	1.5 Maximise use of schools and existing community facilities which have suitable environments available for school-age childcare where demand exists and where it can be facilitated by the school patron/trustees. Consider how increased use of school buildings could be facilitated, taking into account the issues raised to date, and engage with property owners and school authorities to facilitate increased use of school buildings where feasible. Engage further with the relevant education stakeholders and school property owners to formulate guidelines for schools to facilitate the use of school buildings out-of-hours.	Q2 2017	DES (lead), DCYA
Information gathered to support Government investment in childcare	1.6 Conduct and publish an independent review of the cost of providing quality childcare in private and community settings, consistent with the principle of ongoing professionalization of the sector.	2018	DCYA

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Increased access to training opportunities for women	1.7 Fund the provision of locally delivered courses for women, comprising a series of training opportunities on self-development and work related skills, to assist a return to the labour market and promote entrepreneurship.	2017-2020	DJE
The gender imbalance in STEM education and careers is tackled	1.8 Produce a National STEM Education Policy Statement along with a detailed implementation plan with responsibilities and timelines clearly outlined.	Q2 2017	DES
	1.9 Review the existing research base on barriers to the uptake of STEM careers by females including subject uptake at post-primary level.	Q3 2017	DES
	1.10 Commence guidelines for promotion of STEM careers to young people and parents (of primary and post primary children), in conjunction with Science Foundation Ireland, parents, guidance counsellors, higher education institutions, the Further Education sector, students and industry, having particular regard to gender imbalance. The guidelines should take account of exemplars of best practice and resource implications.	Q4 2017	DES
Increased female participation in apprenticeships	1.11 Commission a review on pathways to participation in apprenticeship and implement recommendations thereafter. The review will examine patterns of participation by diverse groups in apprenticeship, including female participation, and will identify any barriers existing and will make recommendations for the future.	2018	SOLAS, DES
Increased number of women returners to the labour market	1.12 Publicise the eligibility of homemakers to apply for Springboard+ courses ⁶ from June 2017 and monitor takeup by gender.	from June 2017	DES, HEA
The employment rate of women is brought closer to 69-71% to meet the Europe 2020 target for Ireland	1.13 Consider an action specifically directed at increasing the employment rate of women, having regard to the different needs of different groups (e.g. lone parents).	2017-2020	DJE, relevant Depts and agencies

6 From 2017, the eligibility criteria for ESF-funded Springboard+ programmes has been expanded to include homemakers. It provides free full-time and part-time higher education courses, at level 6 (higher certificate) to level 9 (masters degree) on the National Framework of Qualifications, in areas where there are identified skills needs and/or employment opportunities. Courses to date have been delivered in areas such as ICT, the biopharma sector, construction, entrepreneurship, cross-enterprise skills, the hospitality sector and international financial services.

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Improved position of women on low pay, and/or in precarious or low hours work	1.14 Aim to increase the minimum wage to €10.50 per hour over the next five years, relying on the recommendations from the Low Pay Commission on the level of adjustment each year.	2017-2020	DJEI, Low Pay Commission
	1.15 Bring forward legislation in response to problems caused by the increased casualization of work and to strengthen the regulation of precarious work (among men and women).	By 2020	DJEI
Female participation in the Defence Forces increased	1.16 Develop further initiatives to encourage more women to apply for the Defence Forces and to increase female participation at all ranks. This will include a survey to identify any impediments to the advancement of women in the Permanent Defence Force, as well as the impact of the requirements of career courses and overseas service on female retention and advancement.	2017-2020	DDefence
Increased awareness among women, and among employers of employment rights, and redress mechanisms	1.17 Publish statistics every six months on employment equality decisions by the Workplace Relations Commission, disaggregated by the nine grounds of discrimination.	Ongoing	WRC
Increased action by businesses on equality and diversity	1.18 Consider the feasibility and benefits of an “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mark” for business.	2018-2019	DJE (lead), in consultation with DJEI, Ibec and ICTU.
Socially excluded women, particularly those living in poverty, are supported to access education, training and employment opportunities	1.19 Support and resource women’s community development, as a means to provide services and support for socially excluded women. Support community organisations, such as the National Collective of Community-based Women’s Groups, who engage with women who experience disadvantage in order to build capacity and increase participation in existing community-based socio-economic programmes.	2017-2020	DJE (lead) and relevant Depts

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Improved access to education, training and employment opportunities for Traveller and Roma women	1.20 Include actions in the forthcoming National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2017-2020) to support initiatives in relation to Traveller and Roma women's education and employment, including by provision of community-based supports for retention of Traveller and Roma children in the education system.	2017-2020	DJE (lead)
Reduce the gender pay gap	1.21 Undertake a package of measures to tackle the gender pay gap.	2017-2020	DJE (lead), with DJEI, Ibec and ICTU
	1.22 Initiate dialogue between union and employer stakeholders to address the gender pay gap. Develop and promote practical information resources to explain and increase understanding of the multifaceted aspects of the gender pay gap and its causes (i.e. traditional role models, gender-segregated education and labour market, the challenges of balancing work and family life, the difference in participation of men and women in family responsibilities, the availability of quality, affordable childcare facilities and out-of-school hours care, and processes within organisations where imbalance needs to be addressed). Develop practical tools to assist employers to calculate the gender pay gap within their organisations and to consider its aspects and causes, mindful of obligations regarding privacy and data protection.	2017-2020	DJE (lead), relevant agencies, Ibec and ICTU
	1.23 Promote wage transparency by requiring companies of 50 or more employees to complete a wage survey periodically and report the results.	2017-2020	DJE (lead) and relevant agencies

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Increased numbers of women engaged in entrepreneurship	1.24 Provide support for rural female entrepreneurs at start-up stage, e.g. through the 'ACORNS' programme	Ongoing	DAFM
	1.25 Publicise and encourage participation by women in start-ups, including a targeted Competitive Start Fund.	2017-2020	Enterprise Ireland, DJEI
	1.26 Support and publicise women specific entrepreneur awards and events.	2017-2020	Enterprise Ireland, DJEI
	1.27 Deliver the National Women's Enterprise Day on a regional basis.	Q4 2017	Enterprise Ireland, LEOs ⁷
	1.28 Support women in business networks to establish female specific peer learning.	2017-2020	LEOs
	1.29 Provide funding for female entrepreneurship.	2017-2020	DJE
	1.30 Examine, as part of the mid-term review of the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship, measures that could ensure an increased number of women start and run their own businesses.	Q4 2017	DJEI
	1.31 Continue to publicise the Department's dedicated female entrepreneurship webpages.	Ongoing	DJEI

7 Local Enterprise Offices

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Poverty reduction of female-headed households, including lone parent families	1.32 Reduce the gap in poverty rates between female-headed households and male-headed households. Measures to be undertaken to include programmes to assist return to the labour market and encourage entrepreneurship.	2017-2020	DSP (lead), SOLAS, ETBs
	1.33 Examine the existing suite of in-work supports for families, including lone parent families. Based on this examination, finalise proposals for an approach to the Working Family Payment. The main principles guiding this approach are to make work pay and to reduce child poverty.	2017-2018	DSP
	1.34 Publish an Action Plan for Jobless Households, containing targets aimed at supporting those in jobless households into employment and reducing child poverty.	2017	DSP
	1.35 Promote awareness of and access to Department of Social Protection employment supports, in particular in the area of entrepreneurship (Back to Work Enterprise Allowance), via DSP Case Officers and promotional campaigns, as appropriate.	Ongoing	DSP
The findings of the Independent Review of the amendments to the One-Parent Family Payment are laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas	1.36 Commission an independent review of the financial and social effects of the amendments to the One-Parent Family payment made since 1 January 2012, taking into account the effects on welfare dependency and the poverty rates of those in receipt of the one-parent family payment.	2017	DSP
Reform of divorce process	1.37 Seek to reduce the number of years for which spouses must have lived apart before granting a divorce, as per the Thirty-Fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Divorce) Bill 2016.	2018-2020	DJE

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Increased visibility of women's contribution to agriculture	1.38 Clarify any perceived taxation barriers to registering farms in joint ownership, and publicise outcomes.	2017-2020	DAFM, DFinance, Revenue
	1.39 Improve statistics and reporting on women's involvement in the agri-food sector.	2017-2020	DAFM, CSO, Teagasc, Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland
Future pensions policy to safeguard outcomes for women under the State pension system	1.40 All state pensions reform plans proposed by the responsible Department (DSP) (including the current Total Contributions Approach (TCA) reform process) will be analysed for expected gender impact.	2017-2020	DSP, DFinance
Reduce the gender pension gap	1.41 Increase women's access to pensions in their own right by improving their access to private and occupational pensions. Assess the impact of any future reforms to pension policy in this area on women and take actions if appropriate.	2017-2020	DSP, DFinance

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
The gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is promoted in Ireland's international relations	1.42 Support programmes to ensure that women have equal access to and control over resources, services and opportunities.	2017-2020	DFAT
	1.43 Support national and sub-national education strategies that focus on improving access to quality education and skills training to enhance employment opportunities for women and girls.	2017-2020	DFAT
	1.44 Support the development and implementation of social protection policies and programmes that address gender inequality - with a focus on the most vulnerable such as female headed households.	2017-2020	DFAT
	1.45 Ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is prioritised in Ireland's overseas development assistance programme, particularly in relation to agriculture and nutrition.	2017-2020	DFAT, DAFM



6. Objective Two: Advance the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing of Women and Girls

Health and wellbeing of women and girls over their life course

The Healthy Ireland Framework provides the over-arching context for progressing actions under this objective. Healthy Ireland takes a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to improving health and wellbeing, with a focus on prevention, reducing health inequalities and keeping people healthier for longer. It also seeks to address the many social and environmental determinants that can impact on health and wellbeing, such as education and employment. In that sense, achievement of the other strategic objectives of this Strategy will also significantly contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of women and girls living in Ireland. Healthy Ireland takes a lifecourse approach so the principles of healthy lifestyles are supported throughout life, from childhood to older age, and recognises the significant influence that maternal health can have on the health and wellbeing of babies and children. It is important that a focus on healthy lifestyles is permeated through the various supports provided to parents and families, through various early years and educational settings, as well as through the wider community and workplaces.

The first National Maternity Strategy (2016-2026) endorses a health and wellbeing approach which supports and empowers mothers and families to improve their own health and wellbeing as a strategic priority, in addition to access to safe, high quality woman-centred maternity care, and facilitation of a woman's choice of care pathway.

In recognition of the increased demand for assisted human reproduction, in February 2016 the Health Research Board was engaged to conduct a comprehensive review of international public funding models for assisted human reproduction. This Health Research Board evidence review was published early in 2017 and will be analysed by officials in the Department of Health in the context of considering policy options for a potential public funding model for assisted human reproduction treatment.

Separately, and as committed to in the Programme for a Partnership Government, officials in the Department of Health are currently drafting the General Scheme of legislative provisions on assisted human reproduction and associated research. It is intended that the General Scheme will be completed in 2017. This comprehensive piece of legislation will regulate a range of practices

for the first time, including: gamete (sperm or egg) and embryo donation for assisted human reproduction and research; surrogacy; pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) of embryos; posthumous assisted reproduction; and stem cell research. The General Scheme will also provide for an independent regulatory authority for assisted human reproduction.

There are currently a number of issues of focus where further improvements in the health and wellbeing of girls and women could have significant impacts.

The Healthy Ireland Surveys 2015 and 2016 show that while women are generally less likely to be overweight than men, the proportions that are obese are more closely aligned, and women aged 15-24 are much more likely to be obese than men in that age range. In addition, younger women are much more likely to have a substantially increased metabolic risk (waist measurements showing levels of abdominal fat considered to be a predictor of strokes and

premature death due to obesity). Women aged 15-24 also spend longer sitting than any other group in the population. In addition, while men are generally more likely to smoke, no difference exists between men and women aged 15-24. Some of these findings, particularly around levels of overweight and physical inactivity among women aged 15-24, raise concerns about the potential implications not only for their own health in terms of risks of developing chronic disease later in life, but also in terms of their health as parents of the next generation and the effects their health may have in terms of fertility, pregnancy, birth, and neonatal complications and also in the establishment of healthy behaviours in their children. These findings point to the need to empower young girls and women to make healthy lifestyle choices and, through enhanced supports, to improve the health, wellbeing and resilience of women of all ages.

Other specific health issues where further focus is needed to improve awareness and support



healthier choices include smoking cessation, safer alcohol consumption, uptake of the HPV vaccine and consumption of folic acid.

While carers include both men and women, a majority of carers are women, in particular older women. Women also represent a majority of older people with dementia. The continued implementation of both the Dementia Strategy and the Carers' Strategy will improve the situation of women both as carers and cared-for.

The 2016 Programme for a Partnership Government sets out the Government's commitment to the roll out of BreastCheck to women aged 65 to 69 years of age. This extension is currently being rolled out on a phased basis, and will provide important cancer screening to women in this age group. The new National Cancer Strategy sets out the future development of cancer services in Ireland. The number of cases of cancer in women increased year on year between 1994 and 2014. The National Cancer Strategy has a significant focus on prevention and early diagnosis which will help to address the rising numbers of women with cancer in Ireland. At the same time, more women are surviving cancer than ever before, and the new Strategy will ensure that services are provided to enable all cancer survivors to return to as normal a life as possible.



Government Departments, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Implementing *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the national policy framework for children and young people* and supporting the *National Youth Health Programme*.
- Implementing the *Healthy Ireland Framework* and a range of policies and strategies under the Framework, including *Tobacco Free Ireland*, the *National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland: Get Ireland Active*, the *National Sexual Health Strategy* and the *Obesity Policy and Action Plan: A Healthy Weight for Ireland*.
- Implementing the *Action Plan on Bullying* which sets out that all grounds for harassment under the Equal Status Acts should be listed in anti-bullying policies (i.e. gender (including transgender), civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).
- Implementing *Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020*.
- Addressing the specific health needs and wellbeing of Traveller, Roma, LGBTI women and women with disabilities will be in the *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy*, the *LGBTI Inclusion Strategy*, and the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy*, respectively.
- Implementing the *Joint Probation Service-Irish Prison Service Strategy: an Effective Response to Women Who Offend 2014-2016*.



Strategy Actions for 2017-2020 are as follows:

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Improved physical and mental health & wellbeing of women and girls	2.1 Strengthen partnership work with the National Women's Council of Ireland in identifying and implementing key actions to address the particular physical and mental health needs of women and girls in order to advance the integration of their needs into existing and emerging health strategies, policies and programmes through an action plan for women's health.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE, NWCII
Improved outcomes for carers and cared-for women	2.2 Continue to implement the <i>National Carers' Strategy</i> and the <i>National Dementia Strategy</i> . Exploration of the regulation and financing of the home care sector.	Ongoing	HSE
Increased availability of primary care services	2.3 Provide maternity cover for staff absences in primary care centres where possible. This will help to ensure continuity of the existing level of service where there is a high concentration of women in the health care workforce.	Ongoing	DHealth
Girls and young women are supported in their social and emotional development through the provision of community based youth services	2.4 Ensure a gender perspective is brought to the ongoing reform programme of targeted youth service provision.	2017-2018	DCYA
Increased proportion of women and girls are physically active	2.5 Implement relevant actions in the <i>National Physical Activity Plan</i> to support increased participation by girls and women in physical activity, including the development of programmes to address transitions and drop out from physical activity and sport.	2017-2020	DHealth, DTTAS, DES
Improved health and wellbeing of women over 65	2.6 Extend the Breastcheck programme to women aged 65-69 years.	2017-2020	DHealth
Improved healthcare support for women and girls from an intercultural perspective	2.7 The second HSE <i>National Intercultural Strategy</i> will include a specific section directed to the care and support of women and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds.	Q4 2017	HSE

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Improved healthcare services and health outcomes for women and girls who have undergone FGM	2.8 Continue to raise awareness among healthcare professionals of the Akidwa/Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland resource “FGM: Information for health-care professionals working in Ireland”, developed with funding from the HSE National Social Inclusion Office.	2017-2020	HSE
Improved health outcomes for Traveller and Roma women	2.9 Include actions in the forthcoming <i>National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy</i> (2017-2020) to support initiatives in relation to Traveller and Roma women’s health including by further developing and enhancing the Traveller Primary Healthcare Projects, and continued engagement with national Traveller organisations.	2017-2020	DJE (lead)
Improved health outcomes for LGBTI persons	2.10 Consider in the forthcoming <i>National LGBTI Inclusion Strategy</i> how best to improve health outcomes for LGBTI persons.	2020	DJE (lead)
Enhanced wellbeing and inclusion of LGBT+ young people	2.11 Issue Ireland’s first national Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT+) Strategy for Young People.	2017-2018	DCYA
Improved health, wellbeing and rehabilitation of women offenders	2.12 Implement the recommendations of the Penal Policy Review Group in respect of women (sub-actions 15, 18, 21-25 relating to improving the standard of female accommodation in Limerick Prison, conducting further research into the particular needs and circumstances of female offenders and the reasons behind the growth in use of imprisonment for women, placing greater focus on step down facilities for female offenders, the use of gender-appropriate community sanctions, promoting greater contact between offenders and their children and family members) and also the greater use of supported and structured temporary release, access to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and development of alternative sanctions to imprisonment.	ongoing	DJE (IPS)
	2.13 A step down facility from prison for female offenders to be opened.	Q1 2018	IPS, Probation Service

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Reduction in smoking by women and girls	2.14 Awareness campaigns and smoking cessation supports, targeted at groups of women and girls with greatest smoking rates. In conjunction with the Irish Cancer Society, continue delivery of the 'We Can Quit' programme which supports women in disadvantaged areas.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE
Reduction in prevalence of smoking in pregnancy	2.15 Implement the recommendations in the <i>National Maternity Strategy (2016-2026)</i> to provide on-site smoking cessation services in maternity hospitals/units and provide formalised smoking cessation training for midwives and other frontline health professionals.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE
Reduction in unsafe alcohol consumption by women and girls	2.16 Conduct awareness campaigns and support programmes aimed at reducing alcohol consumption among young women, and other targeted groups. This includes relevant recommendations in the <i>National Maternity Strategy (2016-2026)</i> and the aim of the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill to specifically provide for health warnings on the harms of drinking during pregnancy on all alcohol labels.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE
Increased proportion of mothers who breastfeed	2.17 Implement the HSE <i>National Breastfeeding Action Plan 2016-2020</i> to advance public support of breastfeeding. This would include the establishment of an inter-agency group to address cultural and other barriers and to normalise breastfeeding.	2017-2020	HSE and others
	2.18 Extend provision for breastfeeding breaks under employment legislation (currently available to mothers of children under 6 months).	Q2 2018	DJE, DCYA, DHealth, DJEI
Improved and standardised maternity care	2.19 Implement the <i>National Maternity Strategy (2016-2026)</i> . The Strategy aims to ensure that appropriate care pathways are in place in order that mothers, babies and families get the right care, at the right time, by the right team and in the right place. It recognises that, while all pregnant women need a certain level of support, some will require more specialised care. Accordingly, it proposes an integrated model of care that encompasses all the necessary safety nets in line with patient safety principles.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Data to guide effective supports for women with disabilities before and after they have children	2.20 Undertake further research to guide maternity services and supports for women with disabilities during and post pregnancy.	Q4 2019	NDA
The supports to all mothers, as provided by the statutory National Healthy Childhood Programme, are comprehensively delivered	2.21 Within the context of the <i>National Healthy Childhood Programme</i> (based on a model of progressive universalism), continue to provide the totality of the universally delivered programme of support to mothers.	Ongoing	HSE, DHealth
Improved services to meet mental health needs of women during pregnancy and post-natally	2.22 Design and develop peri-natal mental health service capacity.	2017-2020	HSE
Enhanced nutrition outcomes through increased awareness	2.23 Increase awareness of the importance of healthy eating and folic acid supplementation, particularly among younger women.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE
Drug services meet needs of pregnant women and mothers of young children	2.24 The new Drug Strategy will aim to increase the range of wrap-around services to meet the needs of women who are using drugs and/or alcohol in a harmful manner, including those with children and those who are pregnant.	2017	DHealth
Surrogacy and assisted human reproduction regulated	2.25 Publish the General Scheme of legislative provisions for regulation of surrogacy and assisted human reproduction. Consider policy options for a potential public funding model for assisted human reproduction treatment.	2017; 2017-2018	DHealth
Women and girls experience improved sexual health and wellbeing and reduced incidences of negative sexual health outcomes	2.26 Implement key recommendations of the <i>Sexual Health Strategy</i> , including those related to sexual health, relationships and sexuality education, and the provision of accessible, friendly sexual health services for all women; and improve HPV vaccination rates in girls and counter misinformation related to this important cancer-preventing vaccine.	2017-2020	DHealth, HSE

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Response to the findings of the Citizens' Assembly put in place	2.27 A Special Oireachtas Committee has been established to consider the Citizens' Assembly report and recommendations on the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution and report to both Houses of the Oireachtas within three months of its first public meeting.	Ongoing	Relevant bodies
The gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is promoted in Ireland's international relations	2.28 Further address the specific hunger and nutrition priorities of maternal and child nutrition. Work to scale up nutrition specific interventions, in particular those which target the 1000-day window of opportunity and prevent stunting (maternal nutrition, breast-feeding and complementary feeding).	2017-2020	DFAT
	2.29 Within the context of national legislative frameworks, support universal access to quality maternal and reproductive healthcare (including ante-natal care and family planning services).	2017-2020	DFAT





7. Objective Three: Ensure the Visibility in Society of Women and Girls, and their Equal and Active Citizenship

Women and girls continue to be less visible than men and boys in key areas of Irish life, such as in sport or in the arts. Women athletes enjoy less visibility on broadcast media. Women are seriously under-represented as writers and directors in the theatre and in film. This inhibits women's ability to participate on an equal basis in these areas of life, leading to a loss of opportunity for the women concerned. The loss of the potential contribution of diverse women and girls is also to the detriment of society and communities. Social, cultural and sporting activities would benefit from more active engagement by women and girls. There is also a need for women and girls to be encouraged to engage more strategically as equal and active citizens. While women and girls volunteer at the same rates as men, they tend to do so outside formal structures. Consequently, the community engagement of women and girls may not create the same access to decision-making opportunities and influence as that enjoyed by men and boys.

The Strategy proposes a series of measures to promote greater visibility of women in sport, of women athletes on broadcast media and of women in the arts, film and the media. It proposes targeted measures to encourage Traveller and Roma women to engage as equal and active citizens. Recognising the

importance of developing the capacity of young women to become future leaders through their engagement as active citizens, the Strategy includes measures to promote greater participation by young women in the youth sector.

As restrictive gender norms may create barriers preventing women from enjoying visibility on an equal basis with men, action will be taken to encourage organisations to highlight restrictive norms and to develop an agenda for promoting more enabling gender norms.

Government Departments, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Promoting the effective participation in public life of groups such as Traveller, Roma, migrant, LGBTI women and women with disabilities through the *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy*, the *Migrant Integration Strategy*, the *LGBTI Inclusion Strategy*, and the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy*, respectively.
- Developing *Ireland 2040 - the new National Planning Framework*, and developing *National Guidelines for Child-friendly Communities*.



- Implementing the *National Cultural Policy: Culture 2025* (forthcoming).
- Continued support of the Sport Ireland *Women in Sport* programme.
- Implementing *Our Communities: A framework policy for local and community development in Ireland* (2015) and the *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017*.
- Implementing *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World, 2015*, which commits to advancing gender equality globally and *Global Irish: Ireland's diaspora policy*.

Strategy Actions for 2017-2020 are as follows:

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Positive gender norms promoted	3.1 Hold a referendum on Article 41.2.1 of Bunreacht na hÉireann regarding a “woman’s life within the home”.	By 2020	DJE
	3.2 Develop an initiative to explore how to consult children and young people on addressing gender-stereotyped norms.	2017-2020	DCYA, DJE
	3.3 Establish a programme of activity, including research, awareness-raising and cultural activities, to promote positive gender norms and to challenge negative gender norms.	2018-2020	DJE
	3.4 Support initiatives to encourage men and boys to be champions of gender equality, drawing on the Men Advocating Real Change, HeForShe, MAN Up and WhiteRibbon initiatives.	2017-2020	DJE, DCYA
Greater female participation in sport and physical activity	3.5 Implement actions recommended in a new national sports policy framework currently being developed by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and expected to be launched in mid-2017.	2017-2020	DTTAS & Sport Ireland
	3.6 Promote greater visibility of, and funding for, women’s sport and physical activity, including specific initiatives in areas such as Get Walking, Get Running, Get Cycling and Get Swimming.	2017-2020	DTTAS & Sport Ireland
	3.7 Undertake measures to promote greater visibility of women’s sport in broadcast media. Designate the Ladies Football and Camogie Finals as Events of Major Importance, to ensure they are available for free-to-air broadcasting.	2017-2020	DCCA

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Greater visibility of women in the arts, as participants and in content	3.8 Continue to increase the visibility of women in arts and heritage, including as contributors, creators, curators, in governance and in content through the introduction of gender policies in our National Cultural Institutions, the Irish Film Board and the Arts Council.	2017-2018	DAHRRGA, National Cultural Institutions, Arts Council, Irish Film Board
	3.9 Continue to support the increasing visibility of female creative talent, in the film industry by implementing the Irish Film Board's Gender Equality Six Point Plan, and in the audiovisual sector.	ongoing	DAHRRGA, Irish Film Board, DCCAE
	3.10 The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) will, as part of the implementation of its Statement of Strategy 2017-19, take action to support increased representation of the diversity of Irish society in the broadcast media, with particular focus on gender equality.	2017-2019	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
Greater levels of participation by Traveller and Roma women in public life	3.11 The forthcoming National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2017-2020) includes commitments to facilitate participation in public life by Traveller and Roma women, including by continuing to fund and support the National Traveller Women's Forum, Mincéirs Whiden, and relevant local community Traveller and Roma projects.	2017-2020	DJE (lead)
Improved data and information with regard to the impact on quality of life for women with disabilities moving to new models of independent living in the community	3.12 Analyse data to evaluate the impact of the policy of moving from institutional care to living in the community, in terms of the extent of community integration for women with disabilities compared to men with disabilities over the period 2016 to 2019.	Q2 2020	NDA
Greater levels of participation in public life by deaf women and girls	3.13 Extend hours of Irish Sign Language (ISL) remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends. Propose legislation to ensure that all public bodies provide Irish Sign Language (ISL) users with free ISL interpretation when accessing or availing of their statutory services.	Q2 2018	DJE (lead)

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Greater gender perspective in youth work	3.14 The Youth Service Grant Scheme supports the provision of volunteer-led youth services; reform of this funding programme will be undertaken with a greater focus on gender and on encouraging the participation of girls, including ethnic minority girls, in youth activities.	2020	DCYA
Women's role in development, peace and security promoted	3.15 Implement the Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2015-2018.	2017-2020	DFAT (lead)
The gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is promoted in Ireland's international relations	3.16 Support programmes which focus on empowering women, and on strengthening their decision-making role at all levels.	2017-2020	DFAT





Objective Four: Advance Women in Leadership at All Levels

This Strategy's priority will be to advance women's leadership in a wide range of areas – in politics, State boards, corporate boards, the civil service, diplomacy, local communities, the youth sector and in sport. The aim is to ensure women's full and effective participation in, and equal opportunities for, leadership, at all levels.

The objective to advance women in leadership is important for the following reasons:

- women should have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives;
- a key aspect of a representative society is that its leaders are representative of that society;
- it is recognised that the decision-making process benefits from the contribution of a wider range of perspectives.

The Strategy will provide renewed impetus for action to ensure that all State boards achieve the 40% target for representation of women and men. Where the 40% target has been reached, Ministers and nominating bodies will be encouraged to move to a 45% target aimed at achieving gender parity in State board representation.

The Strategy will be the framework for

measures to increase the participation of women on corporate boards which will begin with a review of the current situation to identify recommendations for change.

Action will be taken to increase the participation of women in local government and to support women to have greater visibility in decision-making at community level.

In view of the historic under-representation of Traveller and Roma women in leadership positions, measures will specifically be taken to provide greater opportunities for Traveller and Roma women to participate in leadership, including in the community and voluntary sector.

Government Departments, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Implementing actions under the *Civil Service Renewal Plan* to increase gender balance at senior levels in the Civil Service. This includes new 50/50 targets agreed by Government for senior level appointments and the stipulation that, where two candidates for an Assistant Secretary position are deemed of equal merit by the Top Level Appointments Commission (TLAC), priority would be given

to the female candidate where women are under-represented on the Management Board of the Department/Office in question. The measures proposed by the Civil Service Management Board (CSMB) and agreed by Government also extend a range of supports for staff at all levels. These will include: supporting women during and after maternity leave; extending flexible working; increased

mentoring and focus on career development; raising awareness of gender inequality and unconscious bias; and monitoring trends as we progress towards a more equal workplace. The CSMB has also agreed on a statement of objectives and guiding principles which will guide the CSMB, HR managers and Departments/Offices in taking forward this work.

Strategy Actions for 2017-2020 are as follows:

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Business leadership is more gender-balanced	4.1 Commission an independent review of the situation of women in the governance and senior management of companies in Ireland and of measures to promote and to increase women's representation, such as targets for business.	2018	DJE (lead) and relevant organisations
	4.2 Informed by the recommendations of the independent review (at action 4.1), develop and implement a package of measures to promote greater representation of women on corporate boards and in the senior management of companies.	2018-2019	DJE (lead) and relevant organisations
Greater female representation in leadership in the agriculture sector	4.3 Encourage female involvement in decision-making and leadership in all parts of the agri-food sector, especially through mentoring and positive case studies.	2017-2020	Agri-food stakeholders
Greater female representation in the leadership of sports organisations	4.4 Implement actions recommended in a new national policy framework currently being developed by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and expected to be launched in mid-2017.	2017	DTTAS & Sport Ireland

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Greater female representation in politics	4.5 In line with the Action Programme for Effective Local Government 'Putting People First' (Chapter 11.8), work with local authorities, the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) and political parties to promote and assist women candidates. Investigate potential supports to promote the participation of women in the 2019 local government elections.	2017-2020	DHPCLG
Greater focus on women's participation and on gender issues at community level	4.6 In the context of supporting a greater focus on women's participation and on gender issues at community level, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) will provide key supports to those most in need in our communities, including disadvantaged women, Traveller and Roma women and women with disabilities, in all Local Authority areas throughout the country. Programme Implementers (PIs) will also ensure gender equality is reflected in their own internal practices regarding their employees and relationships with sub-contractors and suppliers, etc. This will depend on PIs reflecting on their human resources processes to tackle unconscious gender bias and to create a workplace where both women and men can advance into leadership position.	2017-2020	DHPCLG
Achieve gender balance on State Boards	4.7 All Government Departments and State Agencies, together with the Department of Justice and Equality and PAS, to implement measures aimed at accelerating progress towards the target of 40% representation of each gender on all State Boards. Such measures may include engagement with external nominating bodies and awareness raising among eligible groups of women. The actions taken should be reported to DJE on an annual basis, highlighting the proportion of boards under the Department's aegis for which the target has been met.	2017-2020	All Depts (except DFAT), PAS
	4.8 Consider the gender impact of the new arrangements for appointments to State Boards and report annually on the stateboards.ie website on the effectiveness of the process in ensuring an increase in participation by women on State Boards. (Under these arrangements, the 2014 Government-approved Guidelines require the Public Appointments Service (PAS) to conduct an independent application and assessment process to support Ministers in making appointments to State Boards.)	Ongoing and annual reporting	PAS (lead), DPER

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Greater representation of women in senior positions in the civil and public service	4.9 Research with the ESRI on barriers preventing women from application for senior positions in the Civil Service, and follow-up action.	2017	DJE, DPER
	4.10 Conduct a mapping exercise on gender balance in senior positions in the public service and assess possible barriers to achieving greater representation of women in senior positions. Based on the outcomes of actions to increase gender balance at senior level in the Civil Service and related learning in the public service, evaluate and prioritise actions which could increase the representation of women in senior positions in the public service.	2017-2020	DPER, DJE
	4.11 The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will continue to implement agreed actions arising from the “Gender and Culture Review of DAFM 2015” and provide dedicated resources at senior level with responsibility for progressing these actions. The Department’s Gender Balance Steering Group will identify progress, propose solutions in the event of blockages, promote gender balance within the organisation, and help to address gender balance issues that may arise.	2017-2020	DAFM
Increased gender balance at all levels of the diplomatic service	4.12 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will continue to implement actions under its Gender Equality Action Plan aimed at ensuring greater gender equality at senior levels and in assignments at home and abroad. Among other measures, this commits the Department to seek to eliminate obstacles to greater representation of women at senior levels by extending training on unconscious bias (including for all interview boards); to increase mentoring and executive coaching for women; to integrate gender considerations into a new Human Resources Strategy; to discourage presenteeism; and to ensure gender equality in assignments.	2017-2020	DFAT

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Gender balance promoted in higher education leadership	4.13 A new Systems Performance Framework for Higher Education Institutions will include a High Level Systems Level Indicator in relation to Gender Balance and a series of sub-indicators to monitor progress in relation to the governing authority/body, academic council, executive management, academic staff at each grade; professor grades (universities only); senior non-academic staff; achievement and retention of Athena SWAN awards; and level of perceived gender inequality amongst staff members.	Q2 2017	DES, HEA
Greater visibility and voices of socially excluded women represented in policy and decision-making fora	4.14 Support women's community organisations to identify relevant local structures for participation, and support the participation and progression of women within these structures locally, regionally and nationally.	2017-2020	Relevant Departments
Greater participation of Traveller and Roma women in leadership positions	4.15 Undertake initiatives to promote the participation of Traveller and Roma women in leadership positions, including in the community and voluntary sector.	2017-2020	DJE
Gender perspective brought to Youth leadership programmes.	4.16 Youth leadership programmes supported through Department of Children and Youth Affairs funding will be required to integrate a gender perspective and reporting on participation will include gender identification.	2017-2020	DCYA
Greater gender equality in decision-making is promoted in Ireland's international relations	4.17 Support increased and enhanced participation of women in parliaments and the development of more gender-sensitive parliamentary institutions that deliver on gender equality.	2017-2020	DFAT



9. Objective Five: Combat Violence Against Women

It is recognised that too many women experience violence, particularly in intimate relationships. At the same time, new issues are emerging which include sexual exploitation of women, sometimes trafficked or migrant women, by those purchasing sexual services. Provisions in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 address this problem and these were commenced by the Tánaiste on 27 March 2017. Equally, an increasing number of women, particularly younger women, are experiencing instances of harassment online, such as revenge pornography.

The Strategy proposes a multi-faceted approach to the issues needing to be addressed under the objective of combating violence against women. It will involve actions to raise awareness, to provide increased protections for victims and to tackle new issues.

A target is set for ratification of the Istanbul Convention (quarter 1, 2018). Action to combat domestic violence will be undertaken within the framework of the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. A national awareness raising campaign will run annually for a 6 year period, which commenced in 2016, to raise awareness among the general public and to highlight for victims the options available to them to seek protection in relation

to domestic and sexual violence. Legislative reforms will be undertaken to provide enhanced protections for women experiencing domestic violence. Legislation is also proposed to protect victims of crime and against sexual offenders. The Government will continue to work with NGOs and with the National NGO Observatory on Violence Against Women on this issue.

The Strategy will involve the commencement of the provisions of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 that have not already been commenced. These include provisions intended to reduce for alleged victims of sexual offences the trauma associated with the criminal process and a section on harassment orders. The Strategy also proposes to introduce a new offence to tackle revenge pornography.

Government Departments, State agencies and partners are already committed to:

- Implementing the *Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021*.
- Implementing the recommendations of the *Internet Content Advisory Group 2014*, which highlights the potential harmful

effects of online content on teenage girls and cyberbullying more generally.

- Implementing the *Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2016*, which outlines 65 actions to combat this heinous crime, primarily affecting women and young girls.

Strategy Actions for 2017-2020 are as follows:

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Istanbul Convention ratified and Strategy implemented	5.1 Implement the actions contained in the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021 required to enable Ireland to ratify the Istanbul Convention.	Q1 2018	Cosc
	5.2 Monitor the implementation of the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence.	Ongoing	Cosc
Increased awareness of domestic and sexual violence	5.3 Implement the national, multi-annual awareness raising campaign - #whatwouldyoudo – to increase the awareness of domestic and sexual violence, and to bring about a change in long-established societal behaviours and attitudes by activating bystanders. It is intended that 2016-2018 will focus on domestic violence and 2019-2021 will focus on sexual violence, with elements of each featuring in each phase of the campaign.	Ongoing	Cosc
Access to civil legal aid improved for persons experiencing domestic violence	5.4 Examine proposals to amend the Civil Legal Aid Regulations to give effect to a reduction in the Civil Legal Aid contribution in domestic violence cases.	2017-2020	DJE, Legal Aid Board

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Enhanced implementation and monitoring	5.5 Requests from non-governmental organizations in relation to targets, outcomes and indicators in the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021 to be examined.	2017-2020	DJE
	5.6 Implement the phased 2017 prioritised, health related actions in line with the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, 2016-2021, (Actions 1.500, 2.100 and 2.400 refer). Train a minimum of 2 staff in each Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) in domestic, sexual and gender-based violence on a train the trainer basis. On completion of training, each CHO to develop a quality improvement plan incorporating further roll out of this training to frontline staff. Develop culturally appropriate toolkits and guidance to support staff dealing with victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.	2017-2020	HSE
	5.7 Ensure adequate funding continues to be allocated to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, which has statutory responsibility for the care and protection of victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, whether in the context of the family or otherwise.	2017-2020	DCYA



Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Enhanced legislative protections and supports put in place for victims of gender-based violence	5.8 Commence the provisions of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 which have not yet commenced, including those relating to harassment orders, evidence, the cross-examination of complainants and regulating the disclosure of counselling records.	End 2017	DJE
	5.9 Complete a review of Section 25 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, specifically focusing on the offence of criminalising the purchase of sexual services. The Report will include information as to the number of arrests and convictions arising, and an assessment of the impact of the operation of that section on the safety and wellbeing of persons who engage in sexual activity for payment.	Q1 2020	DJE
	5.10 Examine the defence of honest belief as it applies to the element of knowledge or belief in the definition of rape in light of any recommendations from the Law Reform Commission.	2018	DJE
	5.11 Through the enactment of the Victims of Crime Bill, victims will be provided with information, support and assistance across all of their interactions with criminal justice agencies; victims will be individually assessed to identify any protection measures – such as safety orders and barring orders – or special measures during an investigation or court proceedings which may be of benefit in protecting them from secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation. Special measures may include interviews being conducted by a specially-trained person, by the same person or by a person of the same sex, in specially-designed premises. Evidence given through live television link or through an intermediary will also be facilitated.	Q3 2017	DJE
	5.12 Enact the Domestic Violence Bill which will enhance the protections available to victims of domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence who are cohabiting with or are parents of the perpetrator will be able to apply for an emergency barring order lasting for 8 working days. Courts will be able to prohibit a perpetrator from communicating with the victim electronically. Victims can be accompanied to court by a person of their choice to provide support during the hearing. Anonymity of victim, dependants and perpetrator will be protected in criminal proceedings for breaches of orders. A new criminal offence of forced marriage will be introduced.	Q3 2017	DJE

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Increased supervision of sex offenders	5.13 Enact legislation to strengthen the supervision of sex offenders.	Q2 2018	DJE
Legislative mechanisms developed to address revenge pornography	5.14 Bring forward legislative proposals to provide for offences relating to harmful communications, including an offence to target revenge pornography. A new offence of stalking will be created and the offence of harassment will be extended to include all forms of communication including through online or other digital communications. A new offence for a once-off non-consensual intentional victim-shaming by distribution of intimate images with intent to cause harm or distress will also be created. This is sometimes referred to as "Revenge Pornography". A similar offence for posting images online, even where there is no intention to cause harm, will also be created. The offence of sending threatening or indecent messages in the Post Office (Amendment) Act 1951 will be extended to apply to all online communications.	2017	DJE
The gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is promoted in Ireland's international relations	5.15 Continue to prioritise protection, gender mainstreaming, and the prevention of gender-based violence across programmes, including in humanitarian situations.	2017-2020	DFAT
Addressing gender-based violence is highlighted in international relations	5.16 Support the Gender-Based Violence Consortium tracking the links between active membership of the Consortium and proposals submitted/programmes addressing gender-based violence (including support for the implementation of the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in relation to women, peace and security or female victims in conflict zones).	ongoing	DFAT



10. Objective Six: Embed Gender Equality in Decision-making

The Strategy will integrate a gender perspective into decision-making across a wide range of policies as a means of promoting women's equality and of ensuring that existing policies do not give rise to inequalities for women. The United Nations and the European Commission advocate the integration of a gender perspective in policy-making through the gender mainstreaming process as an effective means of promoting gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is a crucial element in the implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the European Commission's Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019.

The Strategy proposes that all reviews of existing policies should include a gender perspective as should all policies developed over the lifetime of the Strategy. It proposes that public bodies should assess the human rights of women and girls and any gender equality issues when complying with the public sector duty under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 which requires public bodies to have due regard to equality and human rights.

The Strategy recognises that the capacity of public sector organisations will need to be enhanced to enable them to undertake gender

mainstreaming processes effectively. An action is included to build capacity within the civil and public service on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. As effective gender mainstreaming requires data which is gender disaggregated and which enables policy-makers to see the differing outcomes for men and women, an action has been proposed to promote the collection of gender disaggregated data.

Government Departments are already committed to:

- Implementing Cabinet procedures which require policy proposals put to Government for approval to clearly indicate the impact of the proposal for gender equality.

Strategy Actions for 2017-2020 are as follows:

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Gender equality formally addressed by public bodies, in their implementation of the public sector duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment, and protect human rights	6.1 All public bodies will assess and identify the human rights of women and girls and the gender equality issues that are relevant to their functions and address these in their strategic planning, policies and practices, and annual reports, in line with the public sector duty under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.	Ongoing	All public bodies
	6.2 Ensure all National Cultural Institutions have gender equality plans in place.	By 2018	DAHRRGA
A public service that demonstrably values diversity, is inclusive and representative of the wider population, and promotes equality of opportunity and protects the human rights of its employees	6.3 Bearing in mind the existing public sector duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights, take measures to review gender equality outcomes in recruitment and promotion in the public service and, in line with the related actions on women and leadership (4.9 and 4.10), identify barriers to equality and evaluate and prioritise actions which could address those barriers.	2018-2020	All Depts and Public Sector bodies
	6.4 Assess the impact of unconscious bias awareness and training initiatives in the public service and consider possibilities to extend these initiatives.	2018-2020	DJE (lead), all relevant bodies
	6.5 Departments to develop in-house expertise in gender mainstreaming activities, including through interdepartmental seminars and provision of guidance and training materials.	2017-2020	DJE (lead), all Depts

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
Key strategies are gender-proofed	6.6 Consider gender impact in the development of new strategies and the review of existing strategies.	2017-2020	All Depts
	6.7 Take gender equality issues into account in the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Energy Poverty, which commits to ensuring that new energy policy measures developed by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment are evidence-based and consider the distributional impacts of these policies.	2017-2020	DCCAE
	6.8 Address gender equality across Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) programmes, including its research programmes, applying best practice from other organisations, such as Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) on how to improve gender equality in research organisations.	2017-2020	SEAI
	6.9 Take gender equality into account in the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan for Rural Development: Realising our Rural Potential.	2017-2020	DAHRRGA, DJE
Gender equality is embedded within funding programmes and service provision	6.10 Ensuring young people are part of the decision-making processes within youth services is a core principle of youth service funding; the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will ensure that a gender equality perspective is included in the implementation of this principle.	2017-2020	DCYA
	6.11 Ensure that the design and review of funding and grant schemes includes measures to ensure gender equality. Where required, initiate positive steps to eliminate sources of bias, including unconscious bias, in the design and operation of schemes.	ongoing	All relevant Depts
	6.12 Require higher education institutions to have Athena SWAN gender-equality accreditation in order to be eligible for research funding from Science Foundation Ireland, the Irish Research Council and the Health Research Board.	2019	SFI, IRC, HRB

Outcome	Actions	Time Scale	Responsible Body
The evidence base for gender proofing is further developed	6.13 Identify knowledge gaps in relation to gender inequality and use this as a base to drive improvements in the data infrastructure and analysis required to close those gaps. Ensure that evidence generated through improved data infrastructure and analysis regarding gender inequality is linked to relevant policies.	2017-2020	All Depts
Gender Budgeting advanced	6.14 Take measures to build capacity within the Civil and Public Service with regard to gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, contributing to implementing the positive duty on public bodies to promote gender equality. Continue to engage with International organisations such as the OECD to identify best practice in the budgetary processes including gender budgeting.	2017-2020	DPER (lead), DFinance
	6.15 Application of the Social Impact Assessment framework in the area of Early Years policy and programmes.	2017-2020	DPER, DCYA
Civil society is enabled to advocate on behalf of women and ensure that women's interests are mainstreamed in the work of Government	6.16 Continue to support the core funding of the National Women's Council of Ireland, which is recognised by Government as a key body which puts forward women's concerns and perspectives.	2017-2020	DJE



Appendices



Appendix I: Membership of the Strategy Committee

Membership of Strategy Committee

Minister David Stanton TD	Chair
Niamh Allen	Head of Development, National Women's Council of Ireland
Paula Barry Walsh	Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Carol Baxter	Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice and Equality
Grace Bolton	Assistant Principal, Early Years Policies and Programmes, Department of Children & Youth Affairs
Nina Brennan	Principal Officer, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Valerie Byrne	Assistant Principal, Defence Forces Personnel Policy Branch, Department of Defence
Siona Cahill	Vice-President for Equality & Citizenship, Union of Students in Ireland
Tessa Collins	Pavee Point, representing the Community Platform
Gerard Considine	Principal Officer, Policy Team Lead on Governance, Gender Equality and Human Rights, Policy Unit, Development Cooperation Division, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
Anne Donegan	Principal Officer, Tax Division, Department of Finance
Fergal Fox	A/General Manager, Health Promotion and Improvement, Health and Wellbeing Division, Health Service Executive
Deirdre Garvey	CEO, The Wheel

Nichola Harkin	Solicitor, Ibec
Dr. Cate Hartigan	Head of Health Promotion and Improvement, Health and Wellbeing Division, Health Service Executive
John Healy	Principal Officer, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Miriam Holt	National Coordinator, National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (representing the NWCI)
Ann Howard	Defence Forces Personnel Policy Branch, Department of Defence
John Hurley	Principal Officer, Gender Equality Division, Department of Justice and Equality
Maria Hurley	Principal Officer, Cork Central Division, Department of Social Protection
Sarita Johnston	Female Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Ireland
David Joyce	Equality Officer & Global Solidarity Officer, ICTU
Paul Lemass	Assistant Secretary, Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government
Orlaith Mannion	Assistant Principal, Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation
Orla McBreen	Principal Officer, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Dr Kara McGann	Senior Labour Market Policy Executive, Ibec
Sinéad McPhillips	Principal Officer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Rebecca Minch	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Gráinne Morrissey	Assistant Principal, Department of Education & Skills
Moira Murrell	Chief Executive of Kerry County Council, representing the City and County Management Association
Orla O'Connor	Director, National Women's Council of Ireland

Kate O'Flaherty	Principal Officer, Department of Health
Gavan O'Leary	Principal Officer, Department of Education and Skills
Karen O'Loughlin	National Campaigns and Equality Organiser, SIPTU
Geraldine O'Sullivan	Farm Family & Social Affairs Executive, Irish Farmers' Association
Kay Ryan	Principal Officer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Eoghan Richardson	Assistant Principal, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Marion Walsh	Executive Director, Crime and Security, Department of Justice and Equality
Olive Walsh	Assistant Principal, Policy and Governance Coordination Division, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
Kathryn Whyte	Assistant Principal, Human Resources, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Appendix II: Public Consultation Questions

A public consultation was launched on 23 November 2016 by the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Frances Fitzgerald, TD, and the Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration & Integration, David Stanton TD, and concluded on Tuesday 31 January 2017.

Views were invited on a consultation document “Towards a new National Women’s Strategy 2017-2020”, which posed the following questions:

- a) what do you think are the issues for women and girls in Ireland that are most important to address over the next four years?
- b) do you agree with the high level objectives proposed below?
- c) what outcomes should we aim to achieve?
- d) what actions could be taken to advance those objectives?

Proposed High-level Objectives

To advance gender equality in the period to 2020, five objectives are proposed as follows:

- Advance socio-economic equality for women and girls;
- Improve women’s and girls’ physical and mental health;
- Promote women’s and girls’ equal and active citizenship;
- Advance women in leadership; and
- Embed gender equality in decision-making.

Appendix III: List of written submissions to the public consultation

Contribution received from
Audrey Mac Cready
John B Dillon
Genevieve Becker
Mary Matthews
Ruth O'Regan
Women's Aid
Sharon Hutchinson, Sportswomen.ie
AONTAS
Julie Hogan
Early Childhood Ireland
County Carlow Women's Network
Mary Courtney and group of grandmothers
Anastasia P. Kiourtzoglou
We Are Church Ireland
St. Catherine's Community Services Centre, Carlow
Anne Murray
Waterford IT Students' Union (WITSU)
Basic Income Ireland
County Wicklow Public Participation Network
Dr. Josephine Browne, IADT Dun Laoghaire

Contribution received from
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber
Institute of Public Health in Ireland
Higher Education Authority
Equality Budgeting Campaign
Ibec
Patricia Conlon, International Law Federation
London Irish Abortion Rights Campaign
Cork Anti-Poverty Resource Network (CAPRN)
National Deaf Women of Ireland
Mary Farrell
Ruth Foley
Amplify Women
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Ireland
Therese O'Donohoe
Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance (CESCA)
30% Club Ireland
Longford Women's Link
Micheline Sheehy Skeffington
Roisin Healy

Contribution received from
Inclusion Ireland
Monica Murphy
Women in Technology and Science (WITS)
Aprille Scully, ROSA, Limerick
Louise O'Leary, St. Patrick's Mental Health Services
Age Action
Margaret Walshe
Oversight Group to Ireland's 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
Sligo Traveller Support Group
Simon Communities in Ireland
Irish Cancer Society
Women for Election
Women On Air
Cultúr Celebrating Diversity
National Traveller Women's Forum
Abortion Rights Campaign
Dr Kathryn McGarry & Dr Sharron Fitzgerald
Alliance of Older Persons Organisations (Age and Opportunity, Third Age, Active Retirement Ireland, Alone, Senior Citizens Parliament, and Age Action)
Immigrant Council of Ireland
SWAI
Limerick Chamber

Contribution received from
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)
Chambers Ireland
Focus Ireland
Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell
Women and Child Health Research Cluster in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Limerick
Stay-At-Home Parents Association of Ireland
Julie Douglas
Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)
Pavee Point
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
National Disability Authority (NDA)
Irish Family Planning Association
Irish Farmers' Association (IFA)
Community Work Ireland
Sonas
Irish Second-level Students Union (ISSU)
Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (DVAS)
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)
Union of Students in Ireland (USI)
Irish Rural Link
Dr Catherine Molyneaux
Fiona English

Contribution received from

SAFE Ireland

National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (NCCWN)

National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks, Limerick Women's Network

National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks, Clare Women's Network

Limerick Feminist Network

National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCII)

YouthRISE Students for Sensible Drug Policy and Help Not Harm

Fiona Walsh, Recovery Experts by Experience (REE)

Pro Life Campaign

Dr Katie Liston

5th Year Politics & Society Class, Laurel Hill Secondary School, Limerick

5050 North West

Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE)

Irish Federation of University Women

Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



justice.ie



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020

*LGBTI+ young people:
visible, valued and included*

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Foreword

I am delighted to present the first *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI+) National Youth Strategy* in Ireland and the world. It is informed by the views of thousands of young people and those who campaign on their behalf.



This is a three-year action-oriented Strategy which recognises that young LGBTI+ people can flourish when they have consistently positive interactions with those around them and

supportive experiences in the services with which they most engage.

As a country we have taken big steps forward, starting with decriminalisation of homosexuality a quarter of a century ago. There have been many milestones, not least the passing of the Marriage Equality Referendum in 2015. This Strategy is another milestone as we move to become a country where everyone can expect equality, fairness and respect.

My sincere thanks go to the Oversight Committee which was established to oversee the development of the Strategy, representing a broad cross-sectoral grouping of relevant organisations, State Agencies and Government Departments, and expertly chaired by Una Mullally.

While the development of the Strategy has been highly consultative overall in order to gather the broadest range of views possible, it is the voices of young people that have been front and centre throughout the process.

The Youth Advisory Group, which was established to support the development of the Strategy, has ensured that it truly reflects the reality our young people face every day at home, at school and in their wider local community.

I truly hope they gained as much from their involvement in the process as those of us who worked with them and benefited from their genuine expertise, energy, creativity, and understanding of the issues faced by young people in their daily lives.

As well as their own consistently high quality contributions, the Youth Advisory Group was central in designing the consultation process, which allowed us to consult with almost 4,000 young people through workshops around the country and via an online survey.

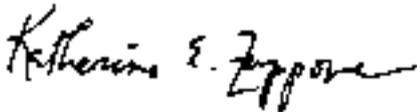
This input informed the ground-breaking findings that were presented in the Youth Consultation Report, which I launched in December 2017 at a wonderfully vibrant and youth-led event in Dublin.

The Youth Advisory Group also created a powerful short video summarising the key points of that report. It is important to note that the inspiring report, video and launch event which emerged from the widespread consultation process provided us with the findings that represent the cornerstone of this Strategy.

My most sincere thanks go to all of the young people who have participated in any way in the development of this Strategy.

And now it is over to you as relevant friends, family, educators and service providers to use the results of all this hard work to further enrich the lives of all young people in Ireland.

My Department will provide leadership on this and I, along with my officials, look forward to engaging with stakeholders over the next three years. I also look forward to engaging with the Department of Justice and Equality as they develop a National LGBTI+ Strategy for the broader population in the near future. I am truly confident that we can all work together to make Ireland the best place in the world to grow up.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katherine E. Zappone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Katherine Zappone TD
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Introduction & Welcome

This Strategy is a world first. Ireland has an opportunity to emerge as the best country in the world in which to grow up LGBTI+, and we are very well positioned to take that challenge on and inspire other countries to follow our leadership.



The progressive legislative context of LGBTI+ rights in Ireland reflects the large social change that has occurred in this country over the past decade. Changing attitudes,

the leadership of LGBTI+ rights groups and campaigners, as well as the generosity, maturity, and compassion of the Irish people and its diaspora, have brought Ireland to a point where a Strategy such as this can exist.

2015 saw Ireland become the first country in the world to pass marriage equality by popular vote, a seismic moment, which was then followed by the Gender Recognition Act. Ireland has emerged as a global leader in LGBT rights. Many nations now look to our example for similar legislative progress.

Yet legislation is one part of a much larger machine. While legislative progress is extremely welcome, the lived experiences of LGBTI+ young people are often removed from such progress. We need to address gaps in infrastructure, supports, resources, training and funding to make this progress a reality for LGBTI+ young people across the country.

The importance of schools being spaces where LGBTI+ young people feel included, respected and safe cannot be overstated, and any barriers to making them so must be removed. While technology has enabled a generation to expand its horizons in unprecedented ways, schools remain central

to the daily lives of young people. The dominance of religious patronage in Irish schools can present challenges for LGBTI+ young people. While the Department of Education and Skills' anti-bullying guidelines are in place, the experiences of young people vary from school to school, with support structures, including initiatives such as workshops addressing LGBTI+ experiences, functioning on an ad hoc basis. We must properly address these issues, listen to young people and value their experiences as truth, celebrate schools that are leading in this area, and collaborate with all relevant entities – the Department of Education and Skills, boards of management, school administrators, religious bodies, staff, LGBTI+ rights organisations, and so on – to make Ireland the best country in the world to go to school in as an LGBTI+ young person.

This Strategy also attempts to build on, and support, the work that has been happening around this country for decades with LGBTI+ young people who found safety and support when they needed it most. Much of this work has been carried out by individuals and organisations that have struggled with limited budgets and stretched resources, yet still managed to achieve life-changing and life-saving impacts for young LGBTI+ people.

The dynamic nature of progress in LGBTI+ rights was represented in real time as this Strategy was being developed. During the development of the Strategy, the Gender Recognition Act review commenced, the Department of Education and Skills

announced a review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) became more widely available. These are all very welcome developments, and display how this Strategy is coming at a time when Ireland is ready to progress further.

I would like to commend the great work done by all of the young people who assisted with the development of this Strategy. Across the national consultation events, and within the Youth Advisory Group, which worked with and parallel to the Oversight Committee, their insights, enthusiasm and perspectives were invaluable. I feel proud to be part of a Government Strategy that has been developed with young people for young people. I think I speak for everyone who worked on this Strategy, when I say that the close participation of young people taught us all lessons in respect, collaboration and inclusion.

It was an honour to be the Independent Chairperson of the Oversight Committee that developed this Strategy, and I must pay tribute to the fantastic work done by my colleagues in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, my colleagues on the Oversight Committee, in the Youth Advisory Group, and also colleagues in all Government Departments and Agencies that have engaged with this Strategy at every stage, as well as the leadership of Minister Katherine Zappone.

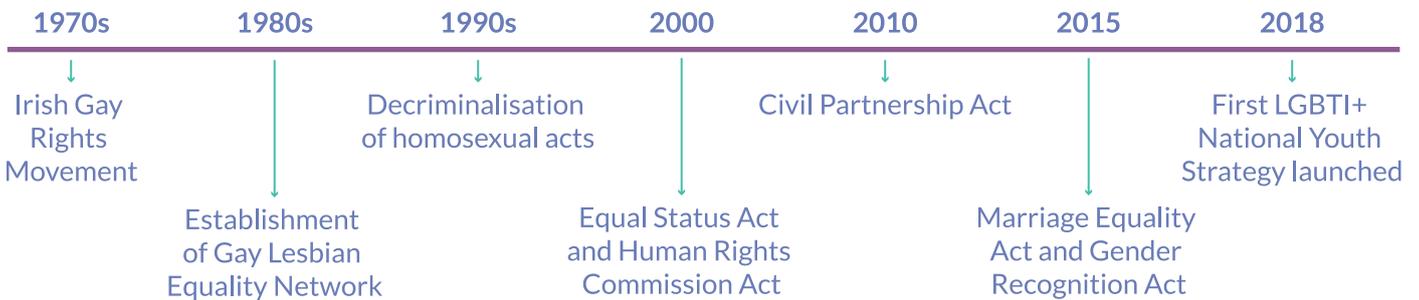
While this Strategy is a world first, it is important to highlight the fact that it is also a first for Ireland. The Strategy is ambitious, and action-focused. Crucially, it attempts to lay vital groundwork that must exist for future strategies to be developed, so that every three years, more ambitious, world-leading actions and initiatives become part of the LGBTI+ youth landscape in Ireland.



Una Mullally
Independent Chair

Executive Summary

In 2016 the Programme for Partnership Government committed to the development of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy. This Strategy builds on the significant progress Ireland has made for LGBTI+ young people.



LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Development Process



Oversight Committee



Youth Advisory Group



Environmental Scan

Research Reports
Literature
Data & Information



Youth Consultation

What's good about being LGBTI+?
What are the issues?
What needs to change?



Stakeholder Consultation & Open Call for Written Submissions

What challenges are there?
What opportunities exist?
What are the key priorities?

Challenges still remain for LGBTI+ young people today and need to be addressed

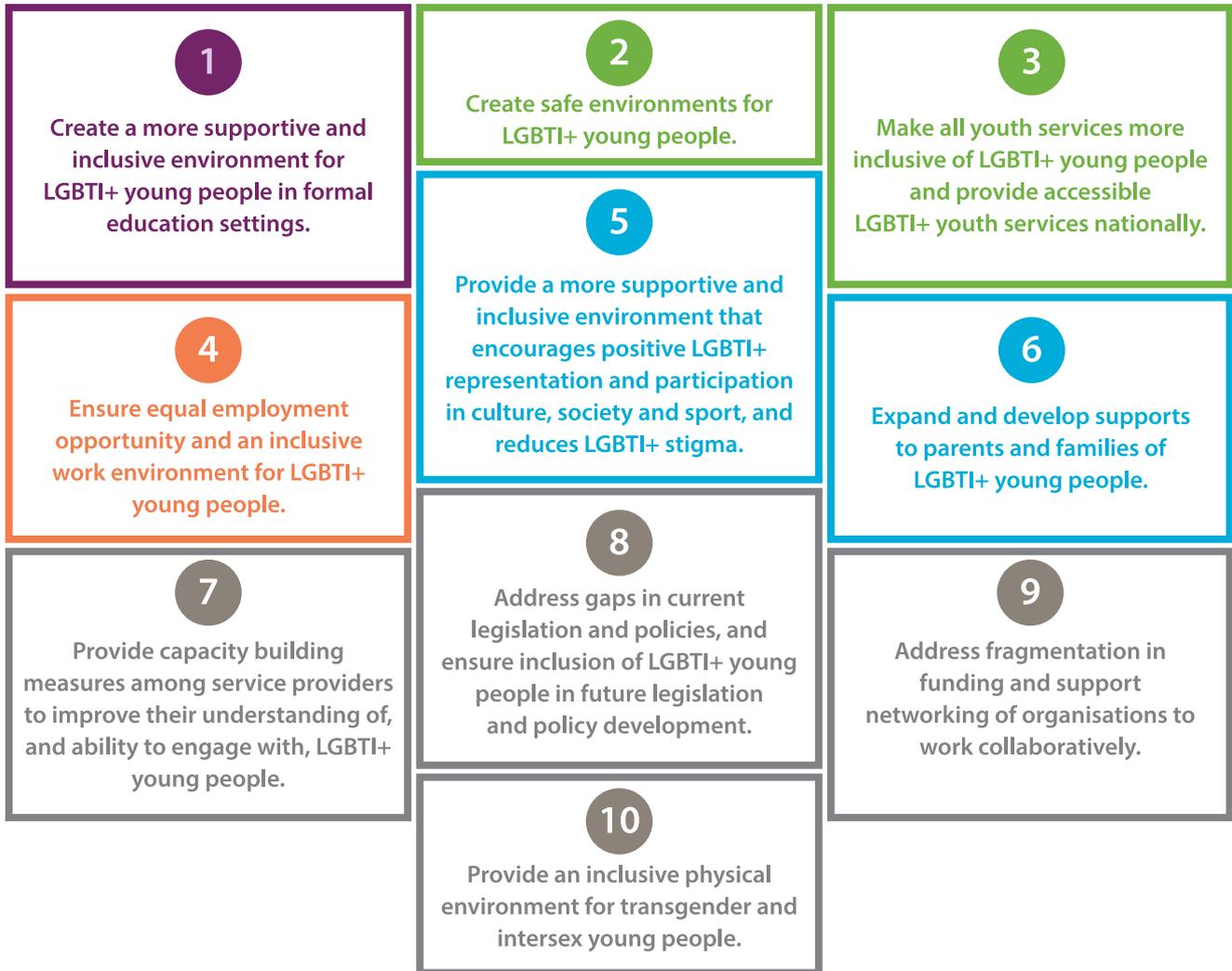
- ▶ Discrimination, victimisation, stigmatisation and abuse
- ▶ Bullying and harassment in schools, colleges, workplaces and the community
- ▶ Difficulties coming out to family and in their communities
- ▶ Limited understanding by professional service providers and broader society of LGBTI+ issues
- ▶ Mental, physical and sexual health challenges

LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Goals



LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1 Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people



GOAL 2 Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people



GOAL 3 Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people



The objectives are colour-coded to indicate alignment with BOBF national outcomes or the fact that they are cross-cutting.



Background & Context

Introduction

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) landscape in Ireland has transformed significantly in recent decades. Irish society is far more inclusive of the LGBTI+ community today than at any other time in Irish history, with many LGBTI+ young people living visibly happy, successful and fulfilling lives.

This changing environment stems from a number of significant positive initiatives which have taken place in Ireland in recent decades and have resulted in substantial progress and improved outcomes for LGBTI+ young people.

Recent legislative changes have advanced greater equality for the LGBTI+ community as a whole, most noticeably through the passing of the Gender Recognition Act and the Marriage Equality Act in 2015. Measures continue to be taken with a view to improving and enhancing the lives of LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

'I'm very lucky to be alive at a time when the LGBTI+ community are loved, supported, embraced – it's fantastic!'

'The support and love from the community, being able to see older generations see what they only dreamed of for themselves come true for us younger people.'

'... the Marriage Equality Referendum was a pivotal moment in terms of wider society's acceptance of the LGBTI+ community ...'

The Policy Context

The development of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* (the Strategy) is a key commitment for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) as part of the 2016 Programme for Partnership Government. The Strategy seeks to ensure a cross-governmental approach to put additional measures in place to further enhance the lives of LGBTI+ young people, and address some of the key challenges they may face as part of their day-to-day lives. It is envisaged that this Strategy will make a significant contribution towards the Government's broader commitments to continue to strive for the full inclusion of LGBTI+ people in Irish society and to build a more inclusive Ireland for LGBTI+ young people.

In 2014 DCYA launched the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children & young people 2014–2020 (BOBF)*. The BOBF Framework is a whole-of-government policy that operates across all Government Departments and Agencies, and also extends to statutory and non-statutory organisations that work with, and for, children and young people.

The vision of the BOBF Framework is ‘to make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are, supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

The BOBF Framework identified five national outcomes for children and young people, to seek to ensure that they:

1. **Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing**
2. **Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development**
3. **Are safe and protected from harm**
4. **Have economic security and opportunity**
5. **Are connected, respected and contributing to their world**

The *National Youth Strategy* that followed in 2015 sought to address the needs of children and young people from 10–24 years of age. Its aim is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Despite the recent improvements in the LGBTI+ landscape in Ireland, the *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020* identified LGBTI+ young people as a specific group to be considered in the context of focused provision for marginalised young people. While their situation has improved considerably over recent years, significant challenges still remain for LGBTI+ young people today. It is on this basis that the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy has been developed, with the aim of ensuring that LGBTI+ young people can achieve the same outcomes as all young people in Ireland.



The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* sets out the goals and objectives for serving the needs of LGBTI+ people aged 10–24. The Department of Justice and Equality is also currently in the process of developing a National LGBTI+ Strategy, which will seek to address the needs of the wider LGBTI+ population. Together, both strategies should lay the foundations for a more inclusive Ireland for LGBTI+ people in the future.

Building an Inclusive Society for LGBTI+ Young People in Ireland

As a society, we have made significant strides in recent decades towards a more inclusive LGBTI+ landscape in Ireland. From the establishment of the Irish Gay Rights Movement in the 1970s, to the eventual decriminalisation of homosexual acts in the 1990s, and ultimately the passing of the Marriage Equality Act in 2015, there has been marked progress for the LGB community. The pace of change in policy on transgender issues has been slower. However, the passing of the Gender Recognition Act in 2015 was a monumental step that has put foundations in place for greater recognition of transgender identities and rights. Intersex developments continue to remain in their infancy but it is hoped that foundations can be put in place over the life of this Strategy to support greater progress in this space in future years.

The developments to date, detailed below, have resulted in greater equality, inclusivity and celebration of the LGBTI+ community and this is something that Irish society should be extremely proud of.



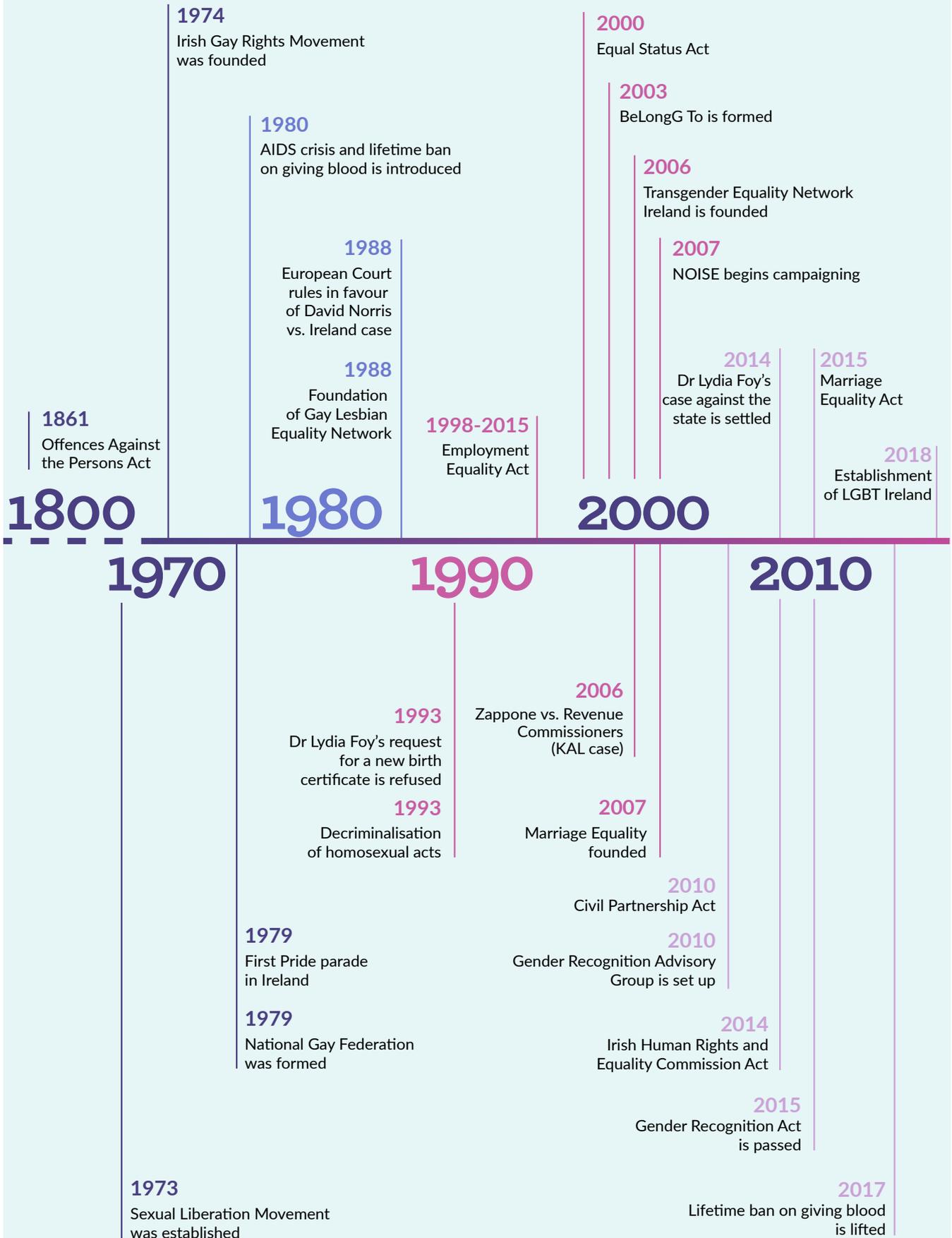
'Very grateful for where and when I was born. I have had a very positive experience in a mostly accepting society.'

'No one cares ...
(in a good way).'

'Coming out
was easy.'

'Being gay
is fab.'

LGBTI+ Timeline – Ireland



Each new milestone reached, whether small or large, has contributed to shaping an Irish society more accepting of LGBTI+ people. A number of further measures that have recently been implemented, underway at the moment, or about to commence, highlight how our national landscape continues to evolve towards a more inclusive Ireland for LGBTI+ young people. These include:

- The establishment of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the legal obligations on publicly funded organisations to adhere to their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as set out in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.
- The development of a number of national strategies targeting at risk groups such as LGBTI+, including:
 - » *Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020*¹
 - » *Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025*²
 - » *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – the National Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017-2025*³
 - » *National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020*⁴
- The joint publication of the *Well-Being* mental health promotion guidelines by the Department of Health, the HSE and the Department of Education and Skills for post-primary schools⁵ (2013) and primary schools⁶ (2015).
- The establishment of the National Youth Mental Health Task Force in 2016 and publication of the *National Youth Mental Health Task Force Report* in 2017.⁷
- The publication of the *Action Plan on Bullying*⁸ and *Anti-Bullying Procedures*, and the introduction of a national anti-bullying website – www.tacklebullying.ie – by the Department of Education and Skills, with a particular focus on promoting inclusion and tackling identity-based bullying.
- The development of a series of LGBTI+ guidance documents, resources and initiatives for primary and post-primary schools, including *Being LGBT*, *Growing Up LGBT*, *RESPECT*, *Different Families Same Love*, a variety of picture books, *Safe and Supportive Schools Toolkit* and *Stand Up! Awareness Week*.
- The enhancement of child protection legislation through the introduction of the *Children First Act 2015*.
- The publication of the *General Scheme of an Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill 2016* by the Department of Education and Skills, in order to improve information and complaint procedures for parents and students relating to schools.
- The ongoing review of the *Gender Recognition Act 2015*.
- A 2017 Programme for Government commitment to increase the number of non-denominational schools to 400 by 2030.⁹

'Some older people, such as grandparents of children who are gay, are accepting.'

'Under-16s not being able to change their gender marker ... Non-binary people do not exist according to the law.'

continued

- The initiation of a review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools in 2018, to include content of the RSE curriculum, support materials and delivery approach.¹⁰
- The availability of anti-HIV drug Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to purchase from pharmacies with a prescription since December 2017.
- The ongoing work of a number of organisations focused on supporting LGBTI+ young people and advocating for their rights, such as BeLonG To, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), LGBT Ireland and ShoutOut.
- The planned development of the National LGBTI+ Strategy by the Department of Justice and Equality in 2018.
- An HSE commitment to introduce an LGBTI+ Health Strategy in 2018.

'More needs to be done in schools to ensure that sex education or the inclusion of LGBTI+ is improved.'

'Legalise PrEP!'

Such ongoing developments continue to build on the milestones that we have achieved as a nation over recent decades, and to contribute to a more inclusive society for LGBTI+ young people. The progress made as part of these initiatives will complement the goals and objectives set out in this *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*.

LGBTI+ Young People in Ireland today

Census 2016 informs us that one third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25 years, with 10–24 year-olds representing 18.8%¹¹ of the total population of 4.79 million. What is not known, however, is how many of these young people are LGBTI+, given that limited data collection methods exist to capture LGBTI+ information. While Census 2016 showed additional demographics in relation to gay and lesbian couples as a result of the Civil Partnership Act and the Marriage Equality Referendum, there is still no official data on transgender or non-binary people. Intersex young people are another cohort that is difficult to quantify given the complexities surrounding a clear definition of this group. Research and data-gathering mechanisms for LGBTI+ people in Ireland and internationally remain in their infancy and require substantial development.

Notwithstanding the positive developments that continue to take place, the *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020* identifies lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people as a marginalised group in Irish society. This categorisation suggests that this group would benefit from greater support to ensure that they can achieve the same positive outcomes as all other young people. However, the provision of this support is challenging when the population cannot be easily mapped or quantified with empirical data.

In 2015 a national study was conducted of the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ people living in Ireland. The findings of this *LGBTIreland Report*¹² suggested that the majority of participants aged 26 and over reported good self-esteem, happiness and life satisfaction as well as being very comfortable with their LGBTI+ identity. However, the study also

'I wish straight people had to come out too ...'

'More support and celebration in rural areas.'

found that a very significant number of younger people, i.e. those aged under 25, did not experience the same levels of positive mental health and wellness as the general population.

The *LGBTIreland Report*, and other LGBTI+-related research and data sets, indicate that challenges remain for LGBTI+ young people with respect to:

- Discrimination, victimisation, stigmatisation and abuse^{13, 14, 15}
- Bullying and harassment, particularly in the school environment^{16,17}
- High drop-out rates in schools and colleges¹⁸
- Difficulties coming out in the workplace, particularly for transgender people^{19,20}
- Difficulties associated with acceptance of LGBTI+ identity by families, communities and broader society^{21, 22}
- Limited knowledge and understanding of LGBTI+ issues by mainstream service providers and professionals who encounter LGBTI+ young people²³
- Gender-segregated spaces, such as single-sex schools, toilets and changing facilities, for transgender and non-binary young people^{24,25}
- High levels of smoking, drug use and alcohol consumption^{26, 27, 28}
- Access to adequate healthcare services and supports, particularly for transgender individuals, due to limited knowledge of healthcare staff of relevant LGBTI+ issues^{29,30, 31}
- Poorer sexual health outcomes, including increased instances of sexually transmitted infections (STIs³²), and lower levels of relevant sex education and awareness^{33, 34}
- Mental health problems, including higher rates of severe stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and attempted suicide^{35, 36}
- Other physical health problems, including instances of obesity and eating disorders, which can lead to a higher risk of diabetes and heart disease^{37, 38, 39, 40}

'I'm not out yet for fear that my family will reject me.'

'As a teenager, hiding my sexual orientation contributed to me suffering from depression and severe anxiety, which I still struggle with today.'

This list represents a high-level overview of some of the key challenges faced by LGBTI+ young people, and further context is provided in the LGBTI+ Environmental Scan document⁴¹.

The Strategic Planning Process

Strategy Development Structures

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs put the following structures in place to enable the development of the Strategy.

An **Oversight Committee** was established to assist in overseeing the development of the Strategy, with Una Mullally as the Independent Chairperson appointed by the Minister. The committee comprised representatives from Government Departments, LGBTI+ organisations, young people and others with expertise relevant to the development of the Strategy.

In addition, a **Youth Advisory Group (YAG)** was created in order to ensure that young people remain at the heart of the strategic planning process. This initiative came from one of the transformational goals set out in the BOBF Framework: 'to listen to and involve children and young people'. Arising from this goal is the 2015 publication of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making*. A key objective of this Strategy is to 'mainstream the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation and research.' In line with this approach, the participation and inclusion of young people was central to the development process for the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*, and their voices are embedded at the heart of the Strategy. Three members of the YAG were appointed as members of the Oversight Committee, and attended the monthly meetings. The YAG provided critical insight into the strategic planning process from the perspective of young people in Ireland.

Stages of the Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process used in developing the Strategy was built around a rigorous framework to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Strategy were designed to address the priority needs of LGBTI+ young people. There were multiple layers in the process, including:

Phase 1: Environmental Scan

A detailed review was undertaken of the LGBTI+-related research carried out both nationally and internationally. The purpose of this review was to gain an understanding of the LGBTI+ environment and the challenges that exist within it. The review included research related to LGBTI+ people of all ages, but had a specific focus on young people where such information was available. The review was undertaken in the period from May to July 2017. This document is published separately as a supporting document to the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*.

Phase 2: Youth Consultation

The youth consultation process reached almost 4,000 young people through a combination of 1) an online survey run by SpunOut, and 2) attendance at seven youth consultation events held across the country, in Dublin (two events), Sligo, Dundalk, Galway, Waterford and Cork. The survey and the consultation events represented the views of both LGBTI+ and non-LGBTI+ young people and were a key input in the preparation of the Strategy.

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy - Report of the Consultations with Young People in Ireland* was published by DCYA in December 2017 and sets out in detail the key messages from the youth consultation process.⁴²

The consultations focused on **three** questions:

1. What is positive about being a young LGBTI+ person in Ireland today? (**Positives**)
2. What issues are faced by young LGBTI+ people in Ireland today? (**Issues**)
3. What changes would improve the lives of young LGBTI+ people? (**Changes**)

Positives

The feedback suggested an increased sense of acceptance and social support for young LGBTI+ people. Of particular note were:

- Positive legal reform, including marriage equality, employment equality, equal status and gender recognition legislation
- Increased visibility and tolerance
- Support from the LGBTI+ community
- Improved resources and support for the LGBTI+ community

Issues

Despite the positives, the feedback also highlighted a number of issues that continue to present challenges for LGBTI+ young people, including:

- Discrimination and stigma
- Bullying and harassment
- Lack of education on gender, sex and LGBTI+ issues
- Poor school policies
- Lack of gender-neutral bathrooms and uniforms
- Isolation and exclusion
- Generation gaps in the acceptance of LGBTI+
- Problems with parents and family members
- Poor health and wellbeing

Changes

A number of priority changes were identified by LGBTI+ young people, and these are outlined, under six themes, in the table below. The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* seeks to advance these changes to build a more inclusive society and support better outcomes for LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

'Bring the younger generations up in a way so that one day being gay is accepted universally. If they are taught in this way, this is what they will teach their children. As the generations go on, I hope that being gay is just as "normal" as being straight.'

'I have been discriminated against, marginalised, intimidated, abused and even assaulted for my sexuality by peers, strangers, business owners and family members.'

Theme 1: Education and training

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- Introduction of mandatory LGBTI+-inclusive education in primary and post-primary schools
- Implementation of anti-bullying policies
- Introduction of school policies on gender-neutral uniforms, gender-neutral toilets and transgender policies
- Provision of support such as Gay Straight Alliances, LGBTI+ Week, counselling, safe spaces and student staff networks
- Inclusion of gender theory and LGBTI+ history within the curriculum
- LGBTI+ and diversity training for all professionals
- Longer term actions such as removing religious patronage in schools and rethinking single-sex schools

'Some schools are very progressive and inclusive in their educational programmes regarding the LGBTI+ community.'

Theme 2: Spaces and places

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- More alcohol-free/quiet spaces for LGBTI+ young people
- More safe spaces – inclusive and exclusive spaces within the wider community and in accessible locations
- More gender-neutral toilets and changing rooms
- More services and spaces in rural areas
- More welcoming and inclusive communities
- More safe spaces and sheltered accommodation for young people excluded from the family home

'I think doctors need better training on trans issues.'

Theme 3: Awareness, acceptance and inclusion

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- More positive and inclusive representation in the media
- More awareness training and education across society
- Raising awareness of negative stereotypes and creating more supportive environments
- Education of the wider community on gender, sexuality and non-binary issues and use of pronouns
- Removal of discrimination in sport for transgender people

'Raise awareness of negative stereotypes and create more supportive environments.'

continued

Theme 4: Legal reform

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- Introduction and enforcement of clear hate crime legislation
- Inclusion of non-binary within the Gender Recognition Act
- Improved gender recognition for under-18s
- Simplification of the process of changing one's name
- Removal of legal obstacles to adoption, fostering and surrogacy
- Legislation to provide gender-neutral toilets
- Introduction of more protective legislation for LGBTI+ people, e.g. make religious organisations abide by the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977–2015

Theme 5: Health and wellbeing

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- More inclusive healthcare for non-binary people
- Overhaul of the transgender healthcare system
- Ensuring that all healthcare staff receive LGBTI+ awareness training
- Improving access to mental health services
- Improving sexual health services
- Removal of the requirement for parental consent to access services

Theme 6: The LGBTI+ community

YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- Improved LGBTI+ services for young people who are 'out' or coming out
- Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) awareness training and ASD-friendly spaces
- More daytime and alcohol-free LGBTI+ social spaces
- Challenge stereotypes within the community
- Bridge gaps between older and younger LGBTI+ generations
- Greater cooperation within LGBTI+ groups and between all youth and community-based groups

Phase 3: Stakeholder Consultation and Open Call for Written Submissions

Other key stakeholders were engaged through a combination of group consultations and written submissions. Approximately 90 representatives from Government Departments, State Agencies, sporting organisations, education bodies, mental health organisations, youth organisations and LGBTI+ organisations attended a major consultation event held in Farnleigh House in June 2017. In addition, 34 organisations made written submissions to the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* following an open call in October 2017.

Ongoing consultation and engagement with both the Oversight Committee and the Youth Advisory Group also played a key role in the strategy development process.

Phase 4: Development of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* was developed by bringing together outputs from each of the phases above, and focused on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of these goals and objectives.

This work resulted in the development of three goals (as set out below), 15 objectives, and 59 actions:

- 1. Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people**
- 2. Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people**
- 3. Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people**

These goals are set out in more detail in the later sections of this Strategy. Each goal is individually presented and supported by some opening context that reflects the nature of the discussions among the Oversight Committee members, taking account of the feedback obtained from young people in the consultations.

In seeking to realise the goals and objectives of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*, a number of actions have been identified. These actions have been developed in alignment with other key strategies and policies in Government Departments and have been refined through a process of bi-lateral discussions and consultation with the relevant Government Departments and Agencies that will be responsible for their delivery.

Each action has been assigned an 'owner', and relevant 'partners' in delivery have also been identified. The timeline for implementation of actions has been phased across the three-year duration of the Strategy. This will allow for key enabling actions to be prioritised sooner rather than later, setting the foundation for future progress in other areas.

Mission

Our mission is to ensure that all LGBTI+ young people are visible, valued and included.

Vision

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* vision is aligned to the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* vision, which strives to:

‘Make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.’

In addition the Strategy will:

- Improve environments and services for LGBTI+ young people
- Support better training for professionals engaging with LGBTI+ young people
- Ensure the implementation of anti-bullying policies and address anti-LGBTI+ discrimination
- Address the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people
- Expand legislation to include and protect LGBTI+ young people
- Generate evidence and data to understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people

Values

The core values that underpin this Strategy and influence how we achieve results include:

Inclusiveness: We advocate for a world that embraces diversity and promotes an integrated and supportive society.

Equality: We celebrate difference and support equal opportunity for LGBTI+ young people that enables them to achieve their potential.

Rights: We promote the right to be LGBTI+ in a safe environment that is free from negativity and supports freedom of expression.

Empowerment: We foster an environment where LGBTI+ young people are supported and encouraged to co-produce and partner on initiatives.

Respect: We treat all LGBTI+ young people with respect by being considerate of people's differences and choices, learning from our peers and bridging the intergenerational gap.

Positivity: We promote the collective expression of success among the LGBTI+ community, cheering the small wins as much as the big wins.

Acceptance: We encourage all LGBTI+ young people to express themselves openly and promote the recognition of people's preferences (e.g. pronouns) so that they know they will be accepted in this safe and inclusive and environment.

Strategic Goals for 2020

Three strategic goals were identified to support the achievement of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* vision to 2020. These goals are aligned to the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* five national outcomes and are necessarily ambitious in order to achieve a major impact for the lives and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

GOAL 1

Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people



GOAL 2

Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people



GOAL 3

Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people

Colour Coding

The objectives in the following tables are colour-coded to indicate alignment with BOBF national outcomes outlined above.



Strategic Alignments

The actions in the Strategy have been developed in alignment with a number of strategies and policies in other Government Department, including but not limited to those listed below:

<p>Department of Education & Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Action Plan on Bullying 2013 <i>Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019</i> Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill 2016 	<p>Department of Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025</i> <i>National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020</i> <i>Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019</i> <i>Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025</i> <i>National Youth Mental Health Task Force Report 2017</i>
<p>Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015 	<p>National Office for Suicide Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Connecting for Life Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015-2020</i>
<p>The Central Statistics Office (CSO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census 2021 	

GOAL 1:**CREATE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE***Considerations of the Oversight Committee*

The day-to-day experiences of young LGBTI+ people are improving. The safety, supportiveness and inclusivity of their environments depend on the architects of and participants in those environments. Increasing visibility of LGBTI+ people, increasing awareness of LGBTI+ rights, and attitudinal changes in society at large are creating a country that would be unrecognisable to many older LGBTI+ people in Ireland.

‘Education surrounding the LGBTI+ community needs to be standardised across the education sector in order to give all students an equal education and opportunity to be informed, regardless of the religious ethos of the school.’

Young people are coming out earlier, have a diverse set of role models available to them, can access information about sexuality and relationships, and communicate with likeminded peers all around the world. The messages received from the consultation process told us about the lived experiences of young LGBTI+ people. We heard stories about supportive schools and initiatives, the contributions LGBTI+ youth groups make to young people’s lives, and the value of LGBTI+ societies at third level, as well as initiatives such as Pink Training.

Collectively, the objectives and actions associated with this goal will work towards the continued improvement of safe, supportive and inclusive spaces for LGBTI+ young people in all walks of life. This Strategy envisages a future where LGBTI+ young people are widely supported and have the confidence to be themselves and actively participate in all aspects of society without fear of harassment and discrimination.

There are multiple examples of schools creating and participating in initiatives that young LGBTI+ people find hugely supportive. It is important to see what’s working well and where, and build on those successes. Valuing diversity and promoting inclusion in schools has a large impact on the school body as a whole, and creates an atmosphere where LGBTI+ young people and their peers can excel and support one another.

However, the religious patronage and/or ethos of schools was cited again and again as problematic for young LGBTI+ people. They repeatedly expressed a desire for the number of non- and multi-denominational schools to be increased. In a country where a significant number of primary and post-primary schools remain under religious patronage, the impact of unsupportive attitudes towards homosexuality and transgender issues cannot be ignored. There is a reliance on a ‘school-to-school’ approach, where an inclusive, open and celebratory attitude towards the diversity of gender and sexual identities is driven by individuals rather than policy. That is helpful to a young LGBTI+ person only if they are in a school where that attitude prevails. Young LGBTI+ people are demanding the assurance that school does not negatively impact on them.

The capacity of schools to engage in anti-LGBTI+ bullying initiatives should also be increased, and there should be greater awareness of the damage identity-based bullying can cause, as well as how important supportive interventions are at an individual and structural level. Young people who have experienced bullying or discrimination and do not have access to supportive interventions at school are at increased risk of early school leaving. There is a close correlation between the level of educational attainment and unemployment, with unemployment levels running at approximately 70% for those who leave school early⁴³. Schools that are leading by example should be commended and celebrated, and other schools can learn from their approach. The mechanism of genders and sexualities alliances (GSAs) and similar initiatives are of particular interest in this case.

Similarly, where young people encounter welfare and protection services, it is important that those services are sensitive to LGBTI+ issues and identities. This LGBTI+ lens is likewise important for young people accessing sexual health services, and in continuing current clinical actions in relation to HIV and STIs as well as in providing post-diagnosis support for young LGBTI+ people. Counselling services that are inclusive of LGBTI+ students in colleges and HEIs should be supported. Provisions also need to be made for young people who may be experiencing discrimination on more than one front, such as travellers, migrants and other minorities.

'Do not forget rural LGBTQI+ youth! We are here, and our communities need to be safe for us to occupy.'

LGBTI+ youth groups were repeatedly cited as having a hugely positive impact on the lives of young LGBTI+ people. These groups and organisations should be supported with increased funding and helped to grow their capacity.

Achieving inclusion and creating safe and supportive environments means bridging the urban/rural divide when it comes to the provision of and access to services. Young LGBTI+ people in Dublin have access to more services than those outside the capital. Young LGBTI+ people identified the potential for bridging this divide in a variety of ways; from building capacity of existing services outside of Dublin to providing transport to those services, the goal being that every LGBTI+ young person in the country has access to the services and supports they need regardless of where they live.

There are many opportunities to build on what is working well, and on recent progress in Irish society – especially regarding changing attitudes, changing behaviours, the introduction of Marriage Equality, the Gender Recognition Act and Repeal of the Eighth Amendment – and it is important to view these as connected aspects of broader social change which is improving the lives of LGBTI+ young people. When specific areas of legislation are being amended or policies updated, young LGBTI+ people should be included in the development of this work. The demonstration of vocal or visible support for LGBTI+ issues is cited as having a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of young people, and therefore increasing visibility and visible support. As detailed in the proposed communications and awareness initiatives, this is a low-cost, high-impact mechanism for improving environments as well as driving positive social change.

'A more progressive environment in Ireland is making it easier to come out than in past years.'

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

Objective 1	Create a more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings
Objective 2	Create safe environments for LGBTI+ young people
Objective 3	Make all youth services more inclusive of LGBTI+ young people and provide accessible LGBTI+ youth services nationally
Objective 4	Ensure equal employment opportunity and an inclusive work environment for LGBTI+ young people
Objective 5	Provide a more supportive and inclusive environment that encourages positive LGBTI+ representation and participation in culture, society and sport, and reduces LGBTI+ stigma
Objective 6	Expand and develop supports to parents and families of LGBTI+ young people
Objective 7	Provide capacity building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people
Objective 8	Address gaps in current legislation and policies and ensure inclusion of LGBTI+ young people in future legislation and policy development
Objective 9	Address fragmentation in funding and support networking of organisations to work collaboratively
Objective 10	Provide an inclusive physical environment for transgender and intersex young people

These objectives will be achieved through the realisation of the following key actions:

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 1: Create a more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings						
1(a)	Encourage schools in the development of a whole-school policy to ensure the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people, with particular regard to exploring opportunities for the appropriate inclusion of LGBTI+ lives in the teaching curriculum as part of curriculum review at both primary and senior-cycle levels. Schools will be required to consult with parents and students on all school policies, including school uniform policy.	Department of Education and Skills	All education partners, including student representatives	✓	✓	✓
1(b)	Review and update professional development supports for teachers to take account of the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy.	Department of Education and Skills	PDST JCT	✓	✓	✓
1(c)	Conduct a thematic evaluation of SPHE (including RSE) and related culture of inclusion in schools and publish a composite report. The evaluation will address all aspects of that programme, including how issues of different types of sexuality and the different types of gender are treated.	Department of Education and Skills			✓	✓
1(d)	Maintain the high standard of LGBTI+ leadership within third level institutions.	Higher Education Institutions	USI, HEA	✓	✓	✓
1(e)	Develop and pilot a student-centred evidence-based model of peer support for LGBTI+ and their alliances within post-primary schools.	Department of Education and Skills		✓	✓	✓
1(f)	A policy template on LGBTI+ inclusion with particular emphasis on transgender and intersex will be developed for adaptation and adoption across all Further Education and Training (FET) provision services.	Education and Training Boards Ireland	FET Institutions, USI, Department of Education and Skills		✓	
1(g)	Support the provision of student-led LGBTI+-specific awareness-raising initiatives in Higher Education Institutions and Further Education and Training (FET) Institutions. Such initiatives may include provision of Pink and Purple Training.	Union of Students in Ireland Education and Training Boards Ireland	Third level institutions and FET Institutions, HEA, Department of Education and Skills, Solas	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 2: Create safe environments for LGBTI+ young people						
2(a)	Commence implementation of recommendations of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate to reinstate the role of LGBTI+ liaison officer to An Garda Síochána. There should be a minimum of two trained LGBTI+ liaison officers in each Garda Division.	An Garda Síochána	NGO and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓
2(b)	Joint Policing Committees to consult and engage with LGBTI+ organisations and to include actions to address LGBTI+ issues in their plans.	Joint Policing Committees	Policing Authority, An Garda Síochána, LGMA, Public Participation Networks, Local Authorities and Comhairlí na nÓg	✓	✓	✓
2(c)	Enable collection of data on LGBTI+-related crimes through the PULSE system to advance data collection regarding LGBTI+-related crimes.	An Garda Síochána	Department of Justice and Equality	✓	✓	✓
2(d)	Advance data collection regarding LGBTI+-related crimes.	An Garda Síochána Garda Síochána Analysis Service	Department of Justice and Equality, CSO	✓	✓	✓
2(e)	<p>Work with relevant State Agencies to ensure that compliance criteria and standards are developed and implemented for reception centres and accommodation centres for persons seeking or granted international protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement measures to ensure these centres are inclusive of LGBTI+ young people, with particular consideration of transgender issues. • Provide support relating to homophobic and transphobic allegations made by refugees/asylum seekers in these centres. • Provision of support to those who may have experienced or report homophobic or transphobic bullying or harassment in their country of origin. 	Department of Justice and Equality (including IPO and IPAT)	Accommodation centre managers and staff Tusla (for unaccompanied minors)	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
2(f)	Map existing LGBTI+ youth services and groups and increase the awareness of these services and consider increasing the provision of non-alcoholic safe spaces which are inclusive of LGBTI+ young people.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Education and Training Boards Ireland	Department of Rural and Community Development, all youth services, including private providers and youth cafés, and recreation providers, Local Authorities	✓	✓	
Objective 3: Make all youth services more inclusive of LGBTI+ young people and provide accessible LGBTI+ youth services nationally						
3(a)	Ensure all youth services in receipt of public funding have a policy on the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	National Youth Council of Ireland	✓	✓	✓
3(b)	Address gaps in provision, with particular reference to access to services and groups in rural areas.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	CYPSC, relevant NGOs and youth sector	✓	✓	✓
Objective 4: Ensure equal employment opportunity and an inclusive work environment for LGBTI+ young people						
4(a)	Provide information and guidelines to employers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind them of their obligations with regards to equality and anti-discrimination laws. Advise on ways of providing a safe and supportive working environment for LGBTI+ people, particularly in relation to transgender people. 	Department of Justice and Equality	NGO and youth sector partners, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, WRC		✓	✓
4(b)	Develop guidance information for transgender young people to support their continued participation in the workplace, particularly during their time of transitioning.	Department of Justice and Equality	NGO and youth sector partners, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, WRC		✓	✓
4(c)	Develop and distribute Further Education & Training information aimed at LGBTI+ young people who may have left school early to ensure they can avail of opportunities that facilitate them re-integrating back into school, progressing within Further Education & Training and/or into and within the workplace.	Education and Training Boards Ireland	Department of Education and Skills, Solas, NGO and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 5: Provide a more supportive and inclusive environment that encourages positive LGBTI+ representation and participation in culture, society and sport, and reduces LGBTI+ stigma						
5(a)	Develop a public recognition marker for sports clubs, cultural bodies, arts organisations, youth groups and businesses to declare their support for diversity, inclusion and visible representation of public support for LGBTI+.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Department of Justice and Equality	NGO and youth sector partners, businesses, youth organisations, IBEC/ISME, educational institutions, ICTU, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, sports bodies, arts organisations and youth sector (NYCI)	✓	✓	✓
5(b)	Develop policy and guidelines, based on international best practice, to support the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people in sport. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mechanism to support continued participation of LGBTI+ young people in sport at all levels. • Guidance on supporting progression of LGBTI+ people to participate at advanced/professional levels. • Particular reference to the inclusion of transgender and intersex young people in sporting activities. 	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Sport Ireland, National Governing Bodies of sport and LGBTI+ sports organisations	✓	✓	✓
5(c)	Develop a communications campaign to promote diversity, provide information and raise awareness of LGBTI+ resources and promote help-seeking behaviour. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the diversity that exists within families beyond the traditional family stereotype. • Encouraging LGBTI+ young people to look after their mental health, reducing stigma and eliminating taboos on mental health. • Portraying positive images of LGBTI+ people that normalise LGBTI+ and challenge negative stereotypes. • Developing intra-community awareness campaigns. • Highlighting positive representation of LGBTI+ people in sport, culture and society. 	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Tusla, HSE, NYCI, relevant NGO and youth sector partners, Sport Ireland	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
5(d)	Develop a leadership programme for young LGBTI+ leaders and potential leaders.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	NGO and youth sector partners, businesses, youth organisations, IBEC/ISME, educational institutions, ICTU, sports bodies, arts organisations	✓	✓	✓
5(e)	Develop a biennial national event to publicly celebrate LGBTI+ young people and young leaders.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	NGO and youth sector partners		✓	
5(f)	Publish the annual data on complaints that have been made under the BAI code of programme standards, which requires that broadcasters must have respect for persons and groups in society.	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	✓	✓	✓
5(g)	Develop programmes to address intra-community identity-based stigma and discrimination within the LGBTI+ community.	NGOs		✓	✓	✓
Objective 6: Expand and develop supports to parents and families of LGBTI+ young people						
6(a)	Provide parents and families with access to both online and off-line resources and information, to support children and young people in their families as they come out, including specific transgender health pathways.	Tusla, Health Service Executive	NGO and youth sector partners, Family Resource Centres	✓	✓	✓
Objective 7: Provide capacity building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people						
7(a)	<p>Implement evidence-based LGBTI+ training, CPD initiatives and guidelines targeted at professional service providers and youth services, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, boards of management, school inspectors, NEPS Educational Psychologists School Completion Programme and Education Welfare Service Family Resource Centres Health and social care professionals An Garda Síochána Judiciary and legal services Youth services and youth helpline personnel Traveller service providers Disability service providers 	<p>Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p>Department of Children and Youth Affairs</p> <p>Department of Education and Skills</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>Tusla</p>	All relevant Departments/ Agencies and NGO and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless service providers • Addiction counsellors and facilities • Employers • Sports bodies Training and guidance should include a particular focus on trans- and gender-related issues.					
7(b)	Provide information relating to European funding opportunities as they arise to support LGBTI+ initiatives.	Léargas	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	✓	✓	✓
7(c)	Provide specific prevention initiatives for LGBTI+ identity-based bullying in schools.	Department of Education and Skills	All education partners, NGOs (for example, ShoutOut)	✓	✓	✓
Objective 8: Address gaps in current legislation and policies and ensure inclusion of LGBTI+ young people in future legislation and policy development						
8(a)	Consider the nine grounds of discrimination outlined in the Equal Status Act and Employment Equality Act to establish if sufficient protection is afforded to transgender young people	Department of Justice and Equality	Employers' bodies	✓	✓	✓
8(b)	Prohibit the promotion or practice of conversion therapy by health professionals in Ireland.	Department of Health	Health professional regulatory bodies, Irish Medical Council, CORU (Health and Social Care Regulator), NMBI (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)	✓	✓	
8(c)	Review current legislation to identify if any gaps exist in the areas of hate crime and hate speech. Where gaps exist, they should be corrected.	Department of Justice and Equality		✓	✓	

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
8(d)	Commence Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, specifically Parts 2, 3 and 9.	Department of Health Department of Justice and Equality	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	✓	✓	
8(e)	Recommendations arising from the review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015 in relation to gender recognition for people who are non-binary or (for people under age 18) should be advanced as quickly as possible.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection		✓	✓	✓
Objective 9: Address fragmentation in funding and support networking of organisations to work collaboratively						
9(a)	Ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of effective LGBTI+ services and funding of services for young people through inter-agency cooperation.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	NYCI, NGO and youth sector partners, ETBI, CYPSC, LCDCs, HSE	✓	✓	✓
9(b)	Hold an annual implementation forum to review progress in implementation.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs		✓	✓	✓
Objective 10: Provide an inclusive physical environment for transgender and intersex young people						
10(a)	Review the feasibility of including a provision for gender-neutral/single stall bathrooms and changing rooms in the design guidelines for schools.	Department of Education and Skills		✓	✓	✓
10(b)	Commence consultations on how to achieve universal design gender-neutral sanitary facilities in both new and existing buildings to which the public have access.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Department of Justice and Equality Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the National Disability Authority, Office of Public Works, HSE Estates	✓	✓	✓

GOAL 2:**IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SEXUAL HEALTH OF LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE***Considerations of the Oversight Committee*

As a society, we are increasingly aware of the physical, mental, and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people, and with this growing awareness comes opportunities to name and address the challenges in these areas that are more pronounced for LGBTI+ young people.

The announcement in April that the Department of Education and Skills will review the relationships and Sexuality Education programme (RSE) in schools is another development occurring during the formulation of this Strategy. It is a very welcome one, especially the inclusion of 'LGBTQ+ matters' cited in that announcement.

The positive changes in attitudes and education that Irish society has undergone when it comes to the celebration, inclusion and support of LGBTI+ people are essential to the wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people, and were acknowledged throughout the consultation process. As a country, we should be proud to be a world leader on LGBTI+ rights, as such progress has a profound impact not just on LGBTI+ young people specifically, but on us all as a society.

However, during the consultation process, young people highlighted a number of challenges relating to the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people. These challenges largely related to difficulties accessing appropriate services and treatments. Also highlighted was a frustration regarding the sometimes limited knowledge and understanding of LGBTI+ issues by healthcare personnel, and a limited availability of relevant LGBTI+ health information. These challenges associated with health and wellbeing were a common theme across all cohorts of LGBTI+ young people. They were particularly highlighted by transgender and non-binary young people, as well as emerging conversations around intersex young people. Similar challenges are identified in existing research and surveying of the LGBTI+ population with regards to physical, mental and sexual health.

'I have been lucky, but every LGBTI+ person I know has suffered mental health issues.'

The objectives and actions associated with this goal are focused on supporting the identification, tailoring and implementation of health services and initiatives that support the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people and promote positive lifestyle choices.

'Counselling should be available for everyone for prevention of depression ... There should be trained counsellors in schools (not guidance counsellors).'

The mental health challenges young LGBTI+ people face are often the product of broader social attitudes, and so it is acknowledged implicitly throughout this Strategy that changing attitudes of non-LGBTI+ people towards LGBTI+ people through awareness and education improves the lived experiences of LGBTI+ young people themselves. We need to ensure that any LGBTI+ young person who is experiencing challenges with their mental health has the proper supports they require, and encounters informed and respectful health care professionals. Work is ongoing, building on the recommendations of the Youth Mental Health Task Force.

'I feel sexual health is very much brushed under the carpet when it comes to LGBT people.'

It is also important to point out the different requirements within the LGBTI+ population. Transgender young people in particular have different needs, including healthcare needs, to their LGB siblings. This is something that emerged strongly from the consultation process.

Like many issues relevant to this Strategy, the landscape of sexual health has changed since the Strategy development began. In reaction to the alarming rate of new HIV infections in Ireland, provisions have been made for the availability of PrEP. This Strategy calls for an increase of access to and availability of the drug through the HSE, as well as access in rural areas from GPs. In wider society in Ireland, discourse around the issue of consent has increased, yet the LGBTI+ lens has largely been absent from this conversation. It is important when we are talking about sexual health, relationships and consent that LGBTI+ young people's experiences – and information tailored to them – is included. Although there are specific sexual health needs for the LGBTI+ community, particularly amongst men who have sex with men, healthy, respectful relationships should be the experience of all young people who choose to be in relationships, or have sexual partners, regardless of their gender expression or sexual identity. That said, the frequent emphasis on male sexual health should not overshadow the sexual health needs of young lesbian and bisexual women, which are often missing from the conversation.

With regards to sexual health education it is important for LGBTI+ experiences to be incorporated, and this goes for sexual health services too.

'More signposting to services.'

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

- Objective 11** Respond effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people
- Objective 12** Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people, including in the area of sexual consent
- Objective 13** Improve the physical and mental health of transgender young people
- Objective 14** Improve the understanding of, and the response to, the physical and mental health needs of intersex young people

These objectives will be achieved through the realisation of the following key actions:

Goal 2: Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 11: Respond effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people						
11(a)	Implement the recommendations from the Pathfinder and Youth Mental Health Task Force including the introduction of same day referrals and consideration of age of consent for access to mental health services and supports.	Department of Health	CAMHS, HSE	✓	✓	✓
11(b)	Develop targeted early intervention initiatives and services to reduce the risk of mental health problems for LGBTI+ young people, including suicide and self-harm.	Department of Health	DCYA, HSE	✓	✓	✓
Objective 12: Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people, including in the area of sexual consent						
12(a)	In line with the <i>National Sexual Health Strategy</i> , improve accessibility of sexual health services to LGBTI+ young people, including HIV/STI diagnosis and treatment, and immunisation services; consideration of reduction of the age of consent for sexual health services to 16 years.	Health Service Executive	Department of Health, LGBTI+ NGOs	✓	✓	✓
12(b)	Improve accessibility and availability of HIV prevention strategies including PrEP and PEP in line with the <i>National Sexual Health Strategy</i> .	Health Service Executive	Department of Health	✓	✓	✓
12(c)	Continue to include issues of gender identity and sexual orientation in the National 10 Day Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion and ensure its delivery.	Health Service Executive	Department of Health, SHCPP	✓	✓	✓
12(d)	Ensure that the education and information made available relating to sexual health, sexual consent and coercion, and sexual violence, includes LGBTI+ experiences and also provides LGBTI+-specific education and awareness, including but not limited to men who have sex with men.	Health Service Executive	Department of Education and Skills	✓	✓	✓
12(e)	Ensure that in implementing the recommendations from a strategic review of communications for sexual health, the needs of young LGBTI+ people are included and, in particular, relevant information and awareness campaigns specific to men who have sex with men.	Health Service Executive	Department of Health, LGBTI+ NGOs and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 2: Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
12(f)	Review and clarify international best practice on the issue of blood donation from men who have sex with men.	Department of Health	IBTS	✓	✓	✓
12(g)	Ensure equal treatment for LGBTI+ people under the proposed assisted human reproduction legislation.	Department of Health		✓	✓	✓
Objective 13: Improve the physical and mental health of transgender young people						
13(a)	Ensure appropriate resources are available in order that the HSE Service Development model of care is implemented and accessible to support trans young people. These services should include the provision of appropriate mental health services at primary and specialist services.	Department of Health	HSE, Tusla	✓	✓	✓
13(b)	Develop a policy to ensure all health programmes take account of young people who have transitioned, e.g. immunisation programmes (HPV) in line with WPATH or other appropriate professional transgender health guidelines.	Department of Health	HSE	✓	✓	✓
13(c)	Provide clear guidelines to health practitioners on referral pathways for trans young people and their families to specialised services.	Health Service Executive		✓	✓	✓
13(d)	Work with parents and young people seeking to access healthcare outside the state under the provisions of the Cross Border Directive and Treatment Abroad Scheme to ensure the available options for access to care are communicated effectively.	Health Service Executive		✓	✓	✓
Objective 14: Improve the understanding of, and the response to, the physical and mental health needs of intersex young people						
14(a)	Establish a working group on intersex healthcare for children and young people with a view to considering how Resolution 2191/2017 Council of Europe and other relevant health care recommendations can be taken account of in healthcare provision in Ireland.	Department of Health	Department of Children and Youth Affairs, HSE, Tusla	✓	✓	✓

GOAL 3:**DEVELOP THE RESEARCH AND DATA ENVIRONMENT TO
BETTER UNDERSTAND THE LIVES OF LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE***Considerations of the Oversight Committee*

Across the board, awareness and knowledge of young LGBTI+ lives is increasing. The courage young people show in coming out and expressing their true selves, and the associated increased visibility of young LGBTI+ people, is to be commended. It's now time for research and data to reflect the diversity in our society.

One of the challenges of developing this Strategy lay in the limited availability of Irish-specific data, statistics and quantitative research relating to young LGBTI+ people in Ireland and, more broadly, the general LGBTI+ population in Ireland. Consultations, surveys, and so on, collate information from population samples, yet at a fundamental level, the challenges of measuring the LGBTI+ population remain. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) measures civil partnerships and same-sex marriages, and we should examine the role the Census may have in measuring the LGBTI+ population, although we understand the limitations of this tool for measuring such a population.

Another challenge with measuring a young LGBTI+ population is how the population is dependent on self-identifying, which is a process different for every individual and occurs at different stages of life. An individual who does not identify as LGBTI+ at one stage may identify as LGBTI+ at another stage. Identity is fluid in many ways, not least in recent years where sexuality and identity expressions that were previously lesser known have emerged and are increasingly diverse, particularly amongst young people. This creates challenges in measuring population as there is a tendency to narrow the field of categorisation, which perhaps fails to capture – or worse, risks minimising or making invisible – the complex spectrum of sexuality and gender identity within the population.

Research and evaluation metrics should be included in programme and intervention design to facilitate collecting evidence and measuring the impact of these initiatives on young people's lives.

While the infrastructure of this Strategy itself, and the *Report of the consultations with Young People in Ireland*, offers a good insight into the lives of LGBTI+ young people, the limited availability of data relating to LGBTI+ people in Ireland was evident at all stages of the strategy development; during the environmental analysis, throughout the consultation process, and during Oversight Committee and Youth Advisory Group discussions regarding specific issues and actions. The reliance on limited data and surveys, as well a tendency for the LGBTI+ sector to refer to British or American data where Irish data is not available, hinders a strategic assessment of the LGBTI+ population's needs and the development of appropriate responses.

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

Objective 15 Enhance the quality of LGBTI+ data and commission research to ensure evidence-informed policy and service delivery

This objective will be achieved through the realisation of the following key actions:

Goal 3: Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 15: Enhance the quality of LGBTI+ data and commission research to ensure evidence-informed policy and service delivery						
15(a)	Conduct a commissioned landscape analysis of existing research and data as relevant to Irish LGBTI+ youth. Use this information to complete an LGBTI+ research needs analysis based on the research gaps identified.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	HRB/IRC	✓	✓	
15(b)	Based on identified research and data gaps, develop and implement research to meet the identified gaps.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	HRB/IRC		✓	✓
15(c)	Include LGBTI+ matters in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education	Department of Education and Skills		✓	✓	✓
15(d)	Commission a review of international and Irish best practice study on appropriate language and ways to ask about gender identity and sexual orientation to inform the development of best practice instrumentation for inclusion in surveys and/or Census. Participate in piloting of questions with CSO and other research bodies, as relevant.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	CSO, other relevant research bodies		✓	✓
15(e)	Maintain, develop and enhance the Irish Queer Archive.	Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht National Library of Ireland		✓	✓	✓
15(f)	Develop research into the factors that support positive mental health for LGBTI+ young people and ascertain how these positive factors can be replicated.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs			✓	✓
15(g)	Explore Growing Up in Ireland Wave 3 data that captures sexual orientation and other relevant information.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs			✓	

Governance & Implementation

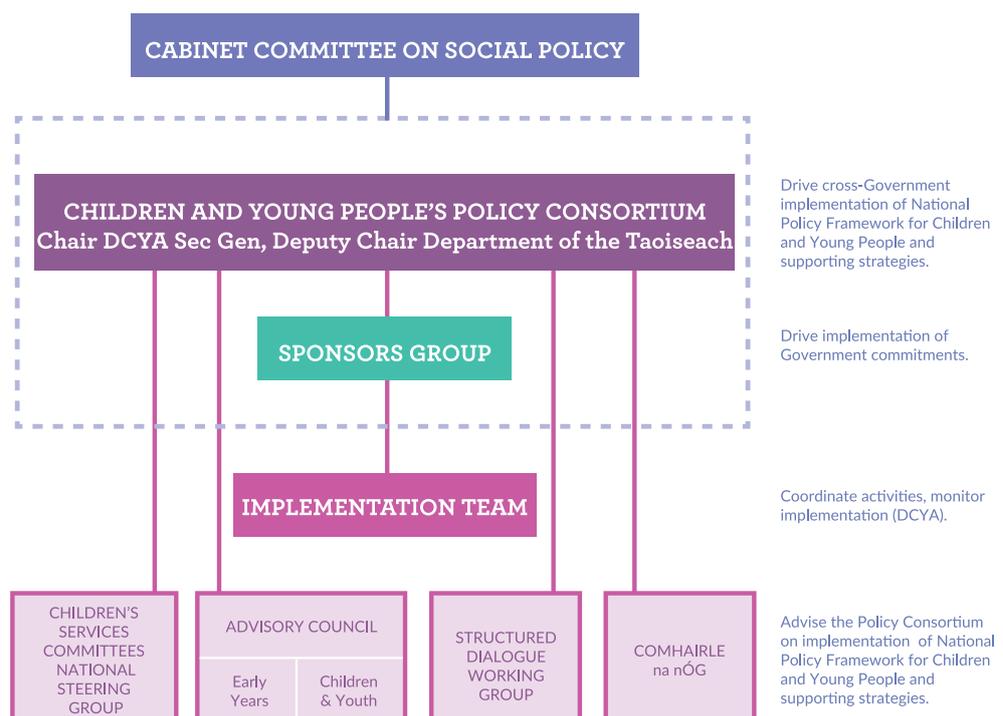
Strategic Implementation & Governance

Successful implementation of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* requires significant collaboration and engagement between a number of Government Departments, State Agencies and non-governmental organisations in order to ensure that LGBTI+ young people can achieve the same positive outcomes as all young people.

A number of actions will be dependent on the provision of funding and resources, and indeed on the completion of other actions. Such dependencies have been recognised where possible. Furthermore, it will be necessary for a number of actions to dovetail with work that is taking place elsewhere, and therefore the strategic alignment of these actions with other national strategies, initiatives and developments has been considered to ensure that synergies can be achieved.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Implementation Framework

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* was developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the context of the overall *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* (BOBF) Framework. Reflecting the cross-government remit of the BOBF Framework, comprehensive structures have been established to drive implementation. These same structures have been used to support implementation of constituent strategies that sit within the Framework, including the *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020*. It is intended that implementation of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* will also feed into the BOBF implementation structures.



The BOBF Framework has established a Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium, whose role is to oversee and drive the effective implementation of BOBF and its constituent strategies across Departments, Agencies and sectors. The Consortium includes representation from various Government Departments and Agencies, and expertise from a range of sectors focused on working with children and young people. The work of the Consortium is enabled by the following supporting structures:

- **Sponsors Group:** Comprising the Lead Department for each of the five BOBF National Outcomes, and a sponsor for the BOBF Transformational Goals.
- **Implementation Team:** Established within the DCYA to project manage implementation and coordinate activities and work relating to the implementation of BOBF.
- **Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) National Steering Group:** Supports the link between national and local implementation infrastructures to ensure effective interagency working.
- **Advisory Council:** Harnesses expertise and experience from the community and voluntary sectors, from academia, and from independent experts who have specific experience in working with and for children and young people.
- **EU Structured Dialogue Working Group:** Provides a national participation and consultation process whereby young people aged 15–25 years can feed into European youth policy.
- **Comhairle na nÓg National Executive:** The national participation structure for young people aged 12–18 years.

Governance of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*

Using the overall BOBF Implementation Framework, the following additional measures are intended to support implementation of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*:

1. Leadership and coordination of implementation for the Strategy will come from DCYA. Timelines and KPIs will be established and agreed for each of the actions included in the implementation plan.
2. An annual implementation forum will be held to review progress in implementation in June of each year.
3. A representative of the current Oversight Committee will be nominated to the Advisory Council with a specific remit to represent the relevant issues from the Strategy in the broader BOBF context.
4. A Youth Forum, to ensure the voice of young people remains central to the Strategy implementation process, will be put in place.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Acronyms

The following list provides an overview of acronyms used throughout this document:

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BeLonG To	BeLonG To Youth Services
BOBF	<i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i>
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSC	Children and Young People’s Services Committees
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FETs	Further Education and Training Institutions
GLEN	Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
GSA	Genders and Sexualities Alliance
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
HRB	Health Research Board
HSE	Health Service Executive
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
IBTS	Irish Blood Transfusion Service
IPAT	International Protection Appeals Tribunal
IHREC	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
IPO	International Protection Office
IRC	Irish Research Council
ISME	Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers

KPI	Key Performance Indicator
L & D	Learning and Development
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
LGB	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBTI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV prevention strategy)
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SHCPP	Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TENI	Transgender Equality Network Ireland
Trans	Transgender
USI	Union of Students in Ireland
WPATH	World Professional Association for Transgender Health
WRC	Workplace Relations Commission
YAG	Youth Advisory Group

Appendix 2 – LGBTI+ Glossary of Terms

Gender expression: How someone presents their gender externally, for example through clothes, appearance and behaviour.

Gender identity: Someone's internal perception of their gender – how they feel inside about their gender.

Intersex: A term used to describe people born with physical or biological sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies.

Non-binary: Gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine.

Sexual orientation: Refers to the attraction people feel towards others based on their gender.

Transgender: An umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans: A commonly used shorthand version of transgender.

Transitioning: The process of transitioning from one sex or gender to another. This can be done by dressing in different clothes, changing the way you talk, using make up, changing your hair, changing your name, taking hormones, or surgery. Transitioning does not always involve all of these steps and is ultimately up to how an individual feels about it themselves.

Trans-man: A person who was assigned a female sex at birth, who now identifies as a man.

Trans-woman: A person who was assigned a male sex at birth, who now identifies as a woman.

Appendix 3 – Members of the Oversight Committee

Una Mullally (Independent Chair)

Olive McGovern, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Mary Robb, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Gavan O’Leary, Department of Education and Skills (alternate: Grainne Morrissey). Replaced by Neville Kenny

Michael Duffy, Department of Justice and Equality (alternate: Adam Egan). Replaced by Caroline Mellows

Diane Nurse, Health Service Executive

Cormac Quinlan, Tusla (alternate: Nerilee Ceatha)

Mary Cunningham, National Youth Council of Ireland

Síona Cahill, Union of Students in Ireland

Una May, Sport Ireland (alternate: Bernie Priestley)

Fiona Dunne, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Moninne Griffith, BeLonG To

Catherine Cross, Transgender Equality Network Ireland

Paula Fagan, LGBT Helpline/LGBT Ireland

Ayrton Kelly, Youth Advisory Group Member

Imelda Morrissey, Youth Advisory Group Member

Ruan Walsh, Youth Advisory Group Member

Assisted by Mazars Ireland: Brendan Waters, Gráinne McAuley and Laura O’Neill

Appendix 4 – Members of the Youth Advisory Group

Séamus Byrne

Lesley Fitzpatrick

Chelsea Gibson

Amy Hunter

Ayrton Kelly

Tara Kileen

Katie McCabe

Martin McDonagh

Imelda Morrissey

James Murray

Jayson Pope

Niamh Scully

Ruan Walsh

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AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

**National Disability
Inclusion Strategy
2017-2021**



Foreword

I am delighted, in my capacity as Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability Issues, to present the National Disability Inclusion Strategy for the years 2017 – 2021 inclusive. This Strategy is a whole of Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities both in a practical sense, and also in creating the best possible opportunities for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

One of my key priorities when I became Minister of State was to meet with as many people with disabilities as possible. For me, it was essential to learn first-hand about the challenges and practical difficulties that they face. It was also vitally important to hear about what people's real needs were, and to get advice on what things would make a measurable difference in their lives. I have been inspired by the goals and achievements of the people I met, and am more determined than ever to realise the priorities agreed by the Government and make the changes that are needed.

Disability is an issue that will affect us all in our lifetimes. According to the 2011 census, there are almost 600,000 people living with a disability in Ireland. Many of us have family members, friends or colleagues with disabilities, and in an ageing society we are all likely to live to an age when we will experience disability ourselves. Disability is about all of us, and the Strategy should be of interest to everyone. It is underpinned by a vision of an Irish society in which people with disabilities enjoy equal rights and opportunities to participate in social and cultural life, can work if they want to do so, have choice and control over how they live their lives, and can reach their full potential.

Since my appointment as Minister of State, I have said that ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is one of my key goals, and even though the process is taking longer than I had hoped, I remain completely committed to this outcome. Before we ratify the Convention, enactment of new legislation and amendment of existing legislation is required to ensure obligations will be met upon entry into force for Ireland. Ratification of a Convention before we have amended domestic legislation that contradicts it makes no sense and does nothing to ensure compliance or to protect the people for whose benefit the Convention exists. Considerable progress has already been made - the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016, the primary purpose of which is to address the remaining legislation barriers to Ireland's ratification of the CRPD was published prior

to Christmas and completed Second Stage in February 2017. The work that remains to be done is outlined in the Strategy, and I am working closely and determinedly with all of the stakeholders to ensure that the remaining barriers are removed without unnecessary delay.

This Inclusion Strategy is the outcome of a broad and comprehensive consultation process that comprised three distinct phases. Phase one included an initial round of consultations, the aim of which was to identify the priority themes to be addressed in a new Strategy. A second phase was then commenced to identify and agree specific objectives under each of the themes identified in Phase one. Phase three focused on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of each of the objectives that emerged from Phase two. For the last 12 months, I have been working with the National Disability Authority (NDA) and senior officials across multiple government departments to identify which of the actions generated in phase three can be implemented over the next four years. These actions have the full backing of the Taoiseach and ministers through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. All of the identified initiatives have been developed to have the maximum beneficial impact for people who have disabilities. However, to my mind, there are a number that are clear priorities, not just because of the potential that they have to transform people's lives when fully implemented, but because when taken together they have the power to promote a fundamental culture shift in relation to disability. By this, I mean that the initiatives, when they have moved off the pages of a document and become the established way of doing things, have the capacity to significantly impact on the way in which services support people with disabilities. All of us – people with disabilities and people without disabilities – will be the beneficiaries of this. Individually, I believe the following initiatives will in their cumulative effect be life-changing for very many people:

- Extension of Irish Sign Language remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends;
- Resourcing of the Sign Language Interpretation Service to increase the number of trained Sign Language and Deaf Interpreters, the establishment of a quality-assurance and registration scheme for interpreters, and on-going professional training and development;
- Legislation that will ensure that all public bodies provide Irish Sign Language users with free interpretation when accessing or availing of their statutory services;
- Examination of the recommendations of the Make Work Pay Working Group

with a view to introducing meaningful reforms that make it financially worthwhile for a person with a disability to take up employment;

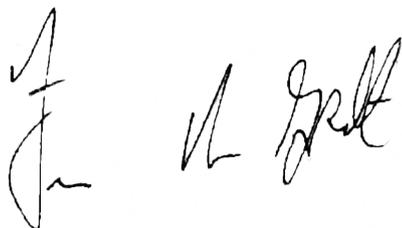
- Implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, including an increase of the public service employment target from 3% to 6%, the arrangement of special public service competitions and the opening up of alternative recruitment channels;
- A review of transport supports to determine the type of cross departmental transportation options that will best help people with a range of disabilities to get to work, and implementation of the most viable proposals;
- Development of proposals to address access to, or affordability of, necessary aids, appliances and assistive technologies required for everyday living, for those people with disabilities whose entry, retention or return to work could be jeopardised due to being unable to afford these items;
- Introduction of a scheme that will significantly reduce the notice time for travelling for mobility-impaired customers requiring assistance;
- Development of proposals in relation to attaching conditions regarding wheelchair accessibility on passenger licensed services;
- Examination of the recommendations of the report of the Personalised Budgets Task Force, with a view to introducing the option of availing of a personal budget as one approach to individualised funding;
- Development of Codes of Practice to support implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015;
- Full implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model of supports for children with disabilities to allow every child to participate meaningfully in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme; and
- Full implementation of the Transforming Lives programme, with particular reference to advancing the Time to Move On agenda (decongregation), the New Directions programme (reforming adult day services), and the move towards person centred planning for residential and day services.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to and participated in the consultative process, including civil society organisations across the Disability Sector, individuals with lived experience of disability, the Disability Stakeholders

Group (DSG), the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group (NDISSG), the NDA, the National Disability Strategy Interdepartmental Committee and officials from a range of relevant government departments. Through my chairing of the NDISSG, I was able to observe first-hand how the Strategy improved and took shape as a result of the collaboration and collegiate approach of stakeholders, and the incorporation of their incisive inputs and suggestions.

Disability is the responsibility of every government minister, and that is why I have been working to ensure a whole of Government approach is taken. However, it is not just the Government that can be an agent of change. Organisations in the Disability Sector have a critical role to play in ensuring the Strategy is a success. As individuals, there is an onus on us all too, to care about and engage with the issues and to be proactively involved in positive changes to the world we live in.

Although departments and statutory bodies are responsible for implementing the actions in the Strategy, I view the Strategy as a collaborative effort. The best chance of success lies in us working together, and not letting up until each disabled person in this country has the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential, and lead a full and active life that is valued by society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Finian McGrath', written in a cursive style.

Finian McGrath T.D.

Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability Issues
July 2017

Disability in Ireland

According to the 2011 Census, 595,355 people reported having a disability in Census 2011 which is equivalent to 13% of the population of Ireland. However, the National Disability Survey (2006), which uses a broader definition of disability and chronic illness, recorded a disability rate of 18%, comparable to other developed countries. As one would expect, disability is age-related and increases sharply with age. Three out of every five people aged over sixty years has at least one chronic condition.

Living with a disability poses many complex challenges. In 2005, people with disabilities in Ireland had an employment rate of 32%, according to the OECD (2010). In 2011, following a period of challenging economic conditions, the employment rate for people with disabilities had fallen to less than 30%.¹ More recently, an NDA commissioned analysis of data compiled under the Quarterly National Household Surveys 2010-2015 concerning employment transitions of people with disabilities shows that in the 20-59 age group, 31% of people with a disability are in paid employment, compared to 71% of those without a disability.

People with disabilities are also more likely to work part-time if they are in employment.² Among those at work, one-third of people with a disability are working part-time, compared to one-fifth of people without a disability. The chances of exiting employment are twice as high for someone with a disability compared to an otherwise identical individual without a disability. While those aged 20-24 are most likely to move into employment, those over the age of 45 with a disability have a considerably reduced opportunity of entering employment if not currently at work. All this being said, nearly half of all those with a disability in Ireland are either at work or are interested in work (NDA, forthcoming).

People with disabilities are more likely to live alone and 42% live in a jobless household, putting them at high risk of poverty. Overall, people with disabilities experience high levels of consistent poverty.³ Families where the head of the household was not at work due to illness or disability, with the exception of students, had the lowest average annual disposable income in 2014. This was

¹Since 2004 the unemployment rate for people with disabilities rose from 8% to 22% in 2010 (Watson et al, 2013) D.Watson, G Kingston, F. McGinnity (2013), *Disability in the Irish Labour Market: Evidence from the QHNS Equality Model 2010*. ²F.McGinnity, H. Russell, D. Watson, (2014) *winner or losers? The equality impact of the great recession in Ireland. Equality & Authority & ESRI, P.35. SIL 2015, Cited Social Inclusion Monitor 2015, DSP*. ³SIL 2015, cited in *Social Inclusion Monitor 2015, DSP*

€24,914 compared to €54,430 for those at work. This represents a 21% drop since 2009 compared to a 7% drop for those at work.

People with disabilities have poorer educational participation and outcomes, thereby further reducing economic prospects (NDA). For instance, just 24.5% of people with a disability have completed third-level education, compared to 38.7% of the general population (Census 2011 figures). In 2010, 50% of people with a disability had not completed full second-level education, compared with 22% without a disability. In fact, among people with disabilities generally, 43% have not progressed beyond primary education. This compares with 19% of all adults. About a third of people with disabilities have been found to leave education before they intended to, because of their disability or illness.

Mainstreaming

For the last 15 years it has been established Government policy that mainstream public services include and serve people with disabilities. This is underpinned by the Disability Act 2005. Accordingly, a wide range of government departments are included in the Strategy, and mainstream as well as dedicated disability services are incorporated.

Other Strategic Developments

In conjunction with the policy of mainstreaming, a number of other significant developments in the Irish policy landscape are also relevant to improving the lives of people with disabilities, and these are reflected in the actions contained in the Strategy. The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities is aimed at improving employment participation and outcomes for people with disabilities. The Transforming Lives programme is dedicated to improving the delivery of health and social care services to people with disabilities, arising out of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services in Ireland (2012), based on enshrining the principles of self-determination and autonomy in all service provision for those with disabilities. The Department of Health's report, A Vision for Change takes a similar approach for persons with mental health difficulties. These and other developments sit against the backdrop of the CRPD which will be ratified as soon as we have ensured that all the legislation on the statute book complies with the Convention. We are not waiting for ratification, of course, to advance the aims and principles of the CRPD, and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy provides the means for doing so on an operational level. The Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures programme contains a number of commitments from across Government that are relevant to children and young people with a disability. The

goal of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020 is that children and young people, particularly those who are seldom heard, have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives. The aim of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Development of the Strategy

The previous National Disability Strategy ran from 2013 to 2015, a period of time when the severest of economic and fiscal conditions applied, which frustrated implementation of the Strategy. We now have an opportunity - and an obligation - to make up the lost ground against a backdrop of renewed economic growth, and to ensure that we address the real needs of persons with disabilities.

Development of the new Strategy began in 2015 when the Department of Justice and Equality, together with the NDA and the Interdepartmental Group, launched a consultation process in order to provide interested parties with the opportunity to make recommendations in proposed key areas such as service provision, accommodation, health, employment, transport and education.

The consultations took the form of a three-stage process as follows:

Phase One – This phase commenced in mid-2015, and was an open call to people with disabilities, their families and disability organisations to respond to a suggested list of policy areas to be covered in the Strategy. The themes agreed for inclusion in the Strategy were:

- Education;
- Employment;
- Health and well-being;
- Person-centred disability services;
- Housing;
- Transport and accessible places;
- Equality and choice; and
- Joined-up services.

Phase Two – The aim of this phase was the identification and agreement of specific objectives under each of the themes identified in phase one. A provisional set of objectives was prepared by the NDA and again, people with disabilities, their families and the Disability Sector were invited to give an input on the priority objectives they would like to see achieved in the next four years. This stage of the

consultation, which took place at the end of 2015 involved several regional meetings and an opportunity to send in written comments or to comment on-line.

Phase Three (September 2016 – December 2016) focused on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of each of the objectives that emerged from phase two. Following this phase, a draft proposal for a revised Strategy was prepared by senior officials, in collaboration with the DSG and was submitted to Government for approval on 30 May 2017.

The NDISSG comprises key government departments, the NDA, and the DSG. The Group is chaired by the Minister of State, and the Department of Justice and Equality provides secretariat functions to the group.

The NDA is an independent statutory body with responsibility for providing information and advice to the Minister of State, and to assist him in the coordination of national policy.

The DSG comprises an independent chair, individuals with lived experience of disabilities and representatives of the key disability umbrella bodies, including:

- Centre for Independent Living;
- Disability Federation of Ireland;
- Federation of Voluntary Bodies;
- Mental Health Reform;
- AslAm Autism Spectrum;
- Brothers of Charity Services;
- Cheshire Ireland;
- Deaf Hear;
- Inclusion Ireland;
- Irish Association of Supported Employment; and
- National Council for the Blind Services.

Monitoring and Implementation

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

Strategy can be regarded as a living document that will be reviewed periodically and will incorporate additional and revised actions as progress is made on the initial set of commitments it contains.

The NDISSG will monitor the implementation of the Strategy based on annual work plans and will meet four times a year, or as directed by the Minister of State. Departments will progress the implementation and monitoring of relevant actions of the Strategy at local level through their departmental consultative committees. In advance of each meeting, these consultative committees will submit progress reports to the NDA, which in turn will develop a briefing paper based on information received to help identify key themes and issues to inform discussion. In particular, information received will highlight areas of difficulty in implementation or cross-departmental issues, solutions to which will become the focus of discussions at the NDISSG meetings.

The Minister of State will, through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform, keep the Taoiseach and his cabinet colleagues informed in relation to the work of the Group, on a regular basis. The Strategy will therefore have the involvement of the Taoiseach and other ministers with social policy and public service reform functions, whenever such involvement becomes necessary to remove blockages, and keep all relevant parties informed. This will be particularly useful where there are cross-sectoral issues, as the Minister of State will be able to discuss the issues with his Cabinet colleagues, ensuring cross-sectoral co-operation on issues from the top down.

The Department of Justice and Equality will continue to provide the secretariat function to the NDISSG and will also continue to chair the NDISSG, where issues arising can be discussed and resolved.

The voice of people with disabilities will continue to be heard throughout the monitoring and implementation process. Since the Strategy is a living document their continued input will be sought and recorded on an on-going basis. A midterm review and consultation meetings where departments will report on their commitments will also form a key part of the implementation process.

The NDISSG will publish an annual report on progress made in each year and a revised iteration of the Strategy will be prepared following the mid-term review at the end of 2018.

Outcome indicators

Implementation of the Strategy will also be monitored in terms of outcomes for people with disabilities through a suite of indicators developed by the NDA and agreed by the NDISSG. The indicators will enable measurement of change in key areas addressed by the Strategy and have been determined by data that is available at regular intervals. This includes longitudinal surveys such as Growing up in Ireland and other statutory reports, complemented by periodic surveys carried out by the NDA.

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

Further Information

Further information in relation to issues arising from this Inclusion Strategy may be obtained from:

Equality Division
Department of Justice and Equality
Bishop's Square
Redmond's Hill
Dublin 2
D02 TD99

Or via email to: disabilityinbox@justice.ie

A copy of this Inclusion Strategy is available on www.justice.ie

Tá leagan Gaeilge den Stráitéis seo ar fail.

1. Equality and Choice

Persons with disabilities are recognised and treated equally before the law. They have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
1.	We will progress the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to enactment so as to address outstanding obstacles to ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).	Department of Justice and Equality	2017
2.	The National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group will review and advise on progress on implementation of the Convention in the State.	Department of Justice and Equality	Ongoing, post ratification
3.	We will ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRPD as soon as possible following ratification of the Convention itself.	Department of Justice and Equality	Post ratification
4.	We will commence the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, develop the associated Codes of Practice, and promote and provide training for both.	Department of Justice and Equality National Disability Authority Department of Health Health Service Executive Mental Health Commission	Early 2018
5.	We will establish the Decision Support Service.	Mental Health Commission	2017

Persons with disabilities are recognised and treated equally before the law. They have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
6.	We will embed and promote presumption of capacity into the way services are designed and delivered.	All departments and agencies	Ongoing
7.	We will proof all new Government policies and programmes against their potential impact on women with disabilities. As a first step, consideration will be given to whether a new Impact Assessment should be developed to support this action, or whether the current (separate) Disability and Gender Impact Assessments are sufficient.	Department of Justice and Equality	Q4 2017
8.	We will complete our examination of the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Group tasked to examine issues relating to people with mental illness who come in contact with the criminal justice system, and prepare proposals in that regard for consideration by Government.	Department of Justice and Equality	Q4 2017
People with disabilities make their own choices and decisions.			
9.	We will run an accessible public information campaign and raise awareness among persons with disabilities about their options for supported	Decision Support Service (DSS) Health Service Executive	The Health Service Executive will work with the DSS once the Act is

People with disabilities make their own choices and decisions.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	decision-making under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act.	Disability service providers	commenced.
People with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are free from all forms of abuse.			
10.	We will implement and monitor the Health Service Executive's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy.	Health Service Executive	Ongoing
11.	We will develop and roll out a reform and culture change programme.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing to Q4 2019
12.	We will introduce statutory safeguards to protect residents of nursing homes and residential centres, and ensure that they are not deprived of liberty, save in accordance with the law as a last-resort measure in exceptional circumstances.	Department of Health Department of Justice and Equality	Q4 2017
	We will develop related guidance and training for staff and carers.	Health Service Executive	Q4 2017
13.	We will develop proposals to reform mental health legislation to align it with the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act and the Expert Group report on Review of the Mental Health Act 2001.	Department of Health Department of Justice and Equality	General scheme of a Bill being prepared in 2017

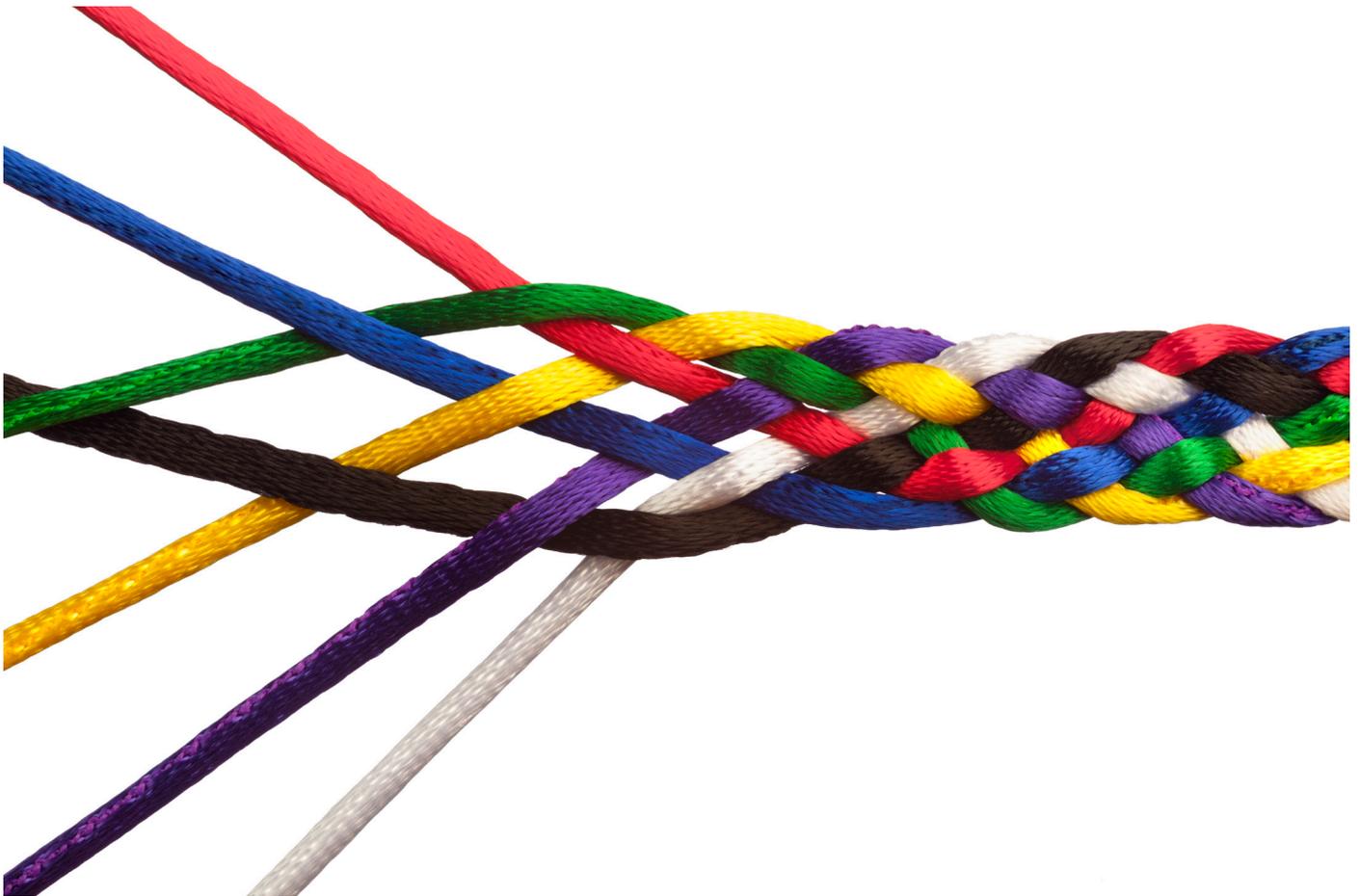
People with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are free from all forms of abuse.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
14.	We will implement the EU Victims of Crime Directive. The transposing Bill will take account of the specific needs of vulnerable witnesses, and provide a framework for targeted actions to be developed (e.g. statutory guidance for assessment of vulnerable witnesses.)	Department of Justice and Equality An Garda Síochána The Prison Service The Probation Service	Q4 2017
15.	We will ensure enhanced protection for people with disabilities against hate crime in our review of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, including support for reporting incidents. This will also include the development and implementation of guidelines for Gardaí and other relevant personnel in relation to engagement with people with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service An Garda Síochána	Q4 2018
Public sector information is available in accessible formats that are easy to understand.			
16.	We will promote accessibility and universal design principles in the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy.	All public bodies Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Ongoing
17.	We will encourage compliance with the obligations set out under section 28 of the Disability Act 2005 regarding	All public bodies Department of Justice and Equality	Ongoing

Public sector information is available in accessible formats that are easy to understand.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	access to information and communication including electronic communication.	Centre for Excellence in Universal Design	
18.	We will ensure courts, Garda services and information are accessible to and supportive of all users with disabilities.	An Garda Síochána The Courts Service	Ongoing
Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.			
19.	We will review and monitor progress by public bodies against the Code of Practice on Accessible Services and Information.	National Disability Authority	Ongoing as part of the National Disability Authority's statutory remit
20.	We will provide disability awareness training for all staff.	All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
21.	We will implement the Action Plan on Autism.	All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
22.	We will review the Accessibility Toolkit on our website including links to appropriate resources. We will also promote use of the toolkit by civil and public servants.	National Disability Authority	Q3 2017
23.	We will promote the design of public sector websites in accordance with universal design principles.	All departments and public bodies Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Ongoing
24.	Where not already achieved, we	The Office of Public Works	Ongoing

Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	will set out commitments in our strategy statements and business plans to ensure compliance with the obligations on public bodies to make their buildings and services accessible in line with Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005.	All departments and public bodies	
25.	We will bring all public sector buildings into compliance with the revised (2010) Part M accessibility standards by 2022.	The Office of Public Works All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
26.	We will conduct an operational review of the effectiveness of Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005 and make recommendations to facilitate the obligation for public bodies to bring their buildings into compliance with Part M 2010 by 2022.	The Office of Public Works National Disability Authority	Q3 2018
27.	We will ensure that public procurement of buildings, facilities, goods and services complies with the accessibility requirements of planning regulations including the relevant legislation in relation to the Planning Code and relevant EU Law and the EU Web Directive 2016.	All departments and public bodies	Ongoing
	We will ensure that commissioning or other funding of public services also comply		Ongoing

Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	with these accessibility requirements.		
28.	<p>We will extend hours of Irish Sign Language (ISL) remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends.</p> <p>We will resource the Sign Language Interpretation Service to increase the number of trained Sign Language and Deaf interpreters, to put a quality-assurance and registration scheme for interpreters in place and to provide on-going professional training and development.</p> <p>We will support legislation to ensure that all public bodies provide ISL users with free interpretation when accessing or availing of their statutory services.</p>	<p>Department of Social Protection</p> <p>Department of Justice and Equality</p>	Over the lifetime of the Strategy
The participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life is improved.			
29.	We will progress the accessibility of voting and voter information, building on learning from National Disability Authority research and from experience and best practice.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	Ongoing

2. Joined up policies and public services



“

We will work together to ensure joined-up public services for persons with disabilities.

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Different public services work together to ensure joined-up services for children with disabilities.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
30.	The Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health, along with the Health Service Executive will discuss opportunities for local health and education forums to facilitate improved co-ordination of services for children with disabilities at local level. We will link in as appropriate with existing local inter-agency vehicles.	Department of Education and Skills (Joint Lead) Department of Health (Joint Lead) Health Executive Service	Q2 2018

Children and young people with disabilities are supported to make smooth transitions from one stage of life to the next.

31.	We will consider how best to build on and progress work completed to date to facilitate smooth transitions into, within and out of education on a cross departmental and agency basis.	Department of Education and Skills (Joint Lead) Department of Health (Joint Lead) Department of Children and Youth Affairs Relevant agencies	Q4 2017
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Public services actively engage with people with disabilities and their representatives in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of public services.

32.	Departments and agencies will actively engage people with disabilities through consultative committees and / or other appropriate fora. The national steering group will elaborate on timeframes in relation to the actions in this	All departments Department of Justice and Equality National Disability Authority	Ongoing
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Public services actively engage with people with disabilities and their representatives in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of public services.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>Strategy.</p> <p>We will produce an annual report in relation to implementation of the Strategy.</p> <p>We will carry out a midterm review of the Strategy in consultation with disability interests.</p>		
33.	<p>We will embed a culture and process of early engagement with people with disabilities in mainstream service design and evaluation.</p>	All departments	Ongoing

3. Education

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
34.	We will ensure the full implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model of supports for children with disabilities to ensure each child has the opportunity to access and meaningfully participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Department of Education and Skills Health Service Executive	Ongoing
35.	We will continue our review of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme, and issue a report and recommendations in relation to the current scheme.	Department of Education and Skills National Council for Special Education	Q3 2017
36.	We will continue to require schools to link SNA support to individualised planning for each pupil.	Department of Education and Skills National Council For Special Education	Ongoing
37.	We will develop an implementation plan for National Council for Special Education policy advice on autism.	Department of Education and Skills National Council For Special Education	Q3 2017
38.	We will continue to develop and implement a systematic programme of initial teacher education, induction, probation and Continuing Professional Development to enable all teachers to teach all students, including students with special educational needs. Teachers and schools will	Department of Education and Skills The Teaching Council	Ongoing

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.		
Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
<p>continue to be supported in established and new ways to enhance teachers' skills and thereby enrich learning experiences and opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>We will ensure that ongoing developments in legislation (e.g. Teaching Council, School Admissions) and national priority areas including Junior Cycle Reform, Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, Digital Strategy and National Council for Special Education policy advice will influence and support teacher learning in inclusion, differentiation, and special educational needs across the continuum of teacher education.</p>		
<p>39. We will expand the number of NEPS psychologists to the current sanctioned level of 173 whole-time equivalent psychologists. This will increase the capacity of NEPS to provide a comprehensive educational psychological service to all schools, to include case-work, consultation and support and development for teachers. This, in turn, will increase school capacity to support and intervene with children and young people in schools with special education needs.</p>	<p>Department of Education and Skills</p>	<p>Q3 2017</p>

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>In line with the commitment in the Programme for Government we will further expand NEPS psychologist numbers by 65, in order to further increase its capacity to provide a comprehensive educational psychological service to all schools. Initially, ten psychologists will be appointed in 2017 with the remaining 55 appointed over the period of 2018 - 2019.</p> <p>The remaining 55 psychologists will be appointed over the period 2018 - 2019.</p>		<p>Q3 2017</p> <p>Q4 2019</p>
40.	We will amend the Department's Technical Guidance Documents for school and educational buildings to ensure universal design principles and guidelines are fully considered in all designs for new building and, where possible, in the retrofit of existing buildings.	Department of Education and Skills	
41.	SOLAS will develop a social inclusion resource to enhance the capacity to support active inclusion of all people in further education and training including people with a disability.	<p>Department of Education and Skills</p> <p>SOLAS</p>	Q3 2017
42.	We will promote participation in third level education by persons with disabilities.	Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing

People with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
43.	We will disseminate guidance on transitions to schools and parents.	Higher Education Authority	Completed
44.	We will support schools with the implementation of the Well-being in Post Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013) and Well-being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (2015) in order to build resilience among the younger population and improve mental health outcomes, including young people with existing mental health difficulties.	National Council for Special Education Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing
45.	In line with the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 we will ensure that schools can use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a tool for inclusive learning through guidance, advice and support on the use of accessible ICT and digital learning tools for teaching, learning and assessment for students with special educational needs.	Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing 2017-2020

4. Employment



“ We will ensure that people with disabilities are supported to achieve their employment ambitions. ”

People with disabilities are encouraged and motivated to develop to the maximum of their potential, with a view to participating in further education and employment.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
46.	<p>Ensure that all training courses offered to people with disabilities provide real value, are worthwhile, motivate and challenge participants and support each individual to reach their full developmental potential.</p> <p>Raise awareness amongst persons with disabilities that further education and employment, post school leaving, are viable and potential alternatives.</p> <p>Coordinate Government policy to ensure the effective transition from school to further and higher education for students with special education needs.</p> <p>Assist persons with disabilities, by providing proper guidance concerning further education, training and career options.</p> <p>Create opportunities for persons with disabilities to experience training, work experience and employment sampling during their school years.</p> <p>Increase participation by under-represented groups, including students with physical, sensory and multiple disabilities</p>	All relevant departments and agencies	Ongoing

People with disabilities are encouraged and motivated to develop to the maximum of their potential, with a view to participating in further education and employment.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	in further / higher education.		

People with disabilities have the opportunity to work and have a career.

47.	We will fully implement the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for persons with disabilities.	Department of Justice and Equality All departments and relevant agencies	Ongoing
48.	We will continue to support people with disabilities to access further training and employment opportunities through relevant programmes including the Employability Service, the Wage Subsidy Scheme, and the Reasonable Accommodation Fund.	Department of Social Protection	Ongoing
49.	We will increase the public sector employment target of persons with disabilities from 3% to 6% by 2024, and will embed this target into all public service workforce planning and recruitment.	All relevant departments	Ongoing to 2024
50.	We will work with Government and other interested parties to embed design, incorporating a Universal Design approach, in existing and future innovation and design-led programmes.	Enterprise Ireland	Ongoing to 2024
51.	We will implement the actions	Department of Social	Ongoing to

People with disabilities have the opportunity to work and have a career.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	<p>set out in Pathways to Work 2016-2020 including in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Employer Support Services and Schemes such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme; • Restructure First Steps Programme to improve take-up; and • Offer opportunities to engage with Intreo supports. 	Protection	2020

People who become disabled are given the supports they need to remain in or return to work if they so choose.

52.	We will implement when agreed by Government the reforms proposed by review of the Partial Capacity Benefit Scheme.	Department of Social Protection	Over the lifetime of the strategy
53.	We will develop proposals to address access to, or affordability of necessary aids, appliances or assistive technologies required for everyday living, for those people with disabilities whose entry, retention or return to work could be jeopardised due to being unable to afford these items. We will develop plans to implement the most viable proposals.	Department of Justice and Equality National Disability Authority	Q3 2018

People with disabilities are financially better off in work.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
54.	The Make Work Pay Working Group will report to the Government by Q2 2017 and its recommendations will be considered by Government with a view to introducing meaningful reforms to ensure that it is financially worthwhile for a person with a disability to take up employment.	Department of Social Protection	2017
55.	We will develop a Ready Reckoner of net income in employment taking into account the interaction of benefits.	Department of Social Protection	Q4 2017
Employers can easily access information about employing a person with a disability.			
56.	We will raise awareness of and continue to support the Employer Disability Information service.	National Disability Authority	Q4 2018

5. Health and Wellbeing

People with disabilities are supported to achieve and maintain the best possible physical, mental and emotional well-being.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
57.	We will continue to coordinate the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework.	Department of Health	2013 - 2025
58.	We will invest in the development of early intervention services which specifically target the mental health needs of infants, young children and their families.	Department of Health Health Service Executive	Ongoing
59.	We will develop the intellectual disability and mental health service capacity as set out in Vision for Change.	Department of Health Health Service Executive	Ongoing
60.	We will examine the need to establish statutory, national advocacy services for children and adults with mental health difficulties in hospitals, day centres, training centres, clinics, and throughout the community, building on existing services.	Department of Health	Ongoing
61.	We will ensure through targeted measures that health services provide care on an equal basis to people with mental health difficulties.	Department of Health	Ongoing
62.	We will amend legislation under the review of the Mental Health Act 2001 to deal in a more complete and comprehensive manner with the operation of advance healthcare directives in the area of mental health in the	Department of Health	Text of amendment Bill to be finalised by Q4 2017

People with disabilities are supported to achieve and maintain the best possible physical, mental and emotional well-being.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	longer term.		
63.	We will continue to develop services. In common with previous years, the Health Service Executive's Service Plan 2017 emphasises recovery as central to quality, evidence-based and person-centered services.	Department of Health	Ongoing
Mainstream primary, specialist and hospital services provide accessible information, communication, and facilities for people with disabilities.			
64.	We will further develop the capacity of mainstream Health Service Executive funded services to provide accessible services and information to people with disabilities.	Health Service Executive	Ongoing
65.	We will develop policy advice for consideration by relevant Government Departments based on international research, to guide the development and implementation of a national programme for vocational rehabilitation, with due regard to the neuro-rehabilitation strategy and other medical rehabilitation programmes as appropriate.	National Disability Authority	Q1 2018

6. Person-Centred Disability Services



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We will support people with disabilities to live a fulfilled life and enable them to participate fully in the activities of their communities.

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Disability services support individuals to live a fulfilled life of their choosing.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
66.	We will continue to implement the Transforming Lives Programme with a focus on supporting people with disabilities to live ordinary lives in ordinary places.	Health Service Executive National Disability Authority Disability service providers	Ongoing
67.	We will continue to support and monitor a new evidence-based framework for person-centred planning across residential and day services.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing
68.	We will continue to provide guidance on person-centred planning, informed by research projects for Transforming Lives WG2.	Health Service Executive National Disability Authority Disability service providers	Ongoing
Achieve maximum independence.			
69.	We will strengthen the focus on culture change from the 'care' to the 'support' model.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing
70.	We will roll out the 'Informing Families' guidance.	Health Service Executive Maternity Units Paediatricians Multi-disciplinary teams General practitioners	Ongoing

Achieve maximum independence.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
		Disability service providers	
71.	We will deliver a model of disability services that provides support for empowering people to make decisions in their own lives.	National Disability Authority Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing
Participate in the everyday life and activities of their communities.			
72.	We will roll out an implementation programme for the New Directions Personal Support Services for Adults with Disabilities.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Ongoing
73.	We will evaluate outcomes of Local Area Co-ordination pilots.	Pobal Health Service Executive Department of Health Disability service providers	Ongoing
74.	We will develop actions at community level to build and sustain for disability - competent and welcoming communities.	Local authorities	Ongoing
75.	We will ensure that new buildings and facilities for arts, sport or leisure are based on universal design principles.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Sport Ireland	Ongoing

Participate in the everyday life and activities of their communities.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
		Local authorities	
76.	We will foster disability awareness and competence in voluntary, sporting, cultural and other organisations. We will ensure that disability inclusion is fully integrated into funding programmes, monitored and linked to further funding.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Sport Ireland	Ongoing
Be an active citizen.			
77.	We will fully support persons with disability in the achievement of active citizenship and engagement.	All departments Disability service providers	Ongoing
Children and adults with disabilities have timely access to assessment and early intervention, and the therapy, rehabilitation or mental health services they require.			
78.	We will complete the programme to provide area-based multi-disciplinary therapy teams for early intervention and school-age services in all areas.	Health Service Executive Disability service providers	Q4 2017
79.	We will implement the Outcomes for Children and their Families Framework, which applies to all children and families accessing children's disability services, including children with autism.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Demonstration sites for implementation of the Outcomes Framework will be completed by 30 September 2017.
80.	When implemented, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the Progressing Disability Services	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Q4 2019

Children and adults with disabilities have timely access to assessment and early intervention, and the therapy, rehabilitation or mental health services they require.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	for Children and Young People Programme in meeting the needs of children with disabilities.		
81.	We will agree protocols between disability services and mental health services to ensure appropriate access for people with disabilities and mental health issues to mental health services.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Ongoing
82.	We will develop an implementation framework for the Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy making links to National Clinical Programmes for Medical Rehabilitation and make a major capital investment in the National Rehabilitation Hospital.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Phase One (community services) of Implementation Plan to be finalised by Q3 2017.
83.	We will ensure full implementation of a Vision for Change.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Ongoing
84.	We will develop and implement effective national joint working protocols between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), disability services and education to ensure children and young people with disabilities can access CAMHS.	Health Service Executive Department of Health TUSLA	Q4 2017

Children and adults with disabilities have timely access to assessment and early intervention, and the therapy, rehabilitation or mental health services they require.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
85.	We will consider, in the context of the forthcoming review of mental health legislation, how best to support people within the system including the provision of an advocacy service.	Health Service Executive Department of Health	Will be considered as part of the new Bill referred to under Action 11.

Disability services are delivered to high quality standards and in line with international best practice.

86.	We will ensure continued Health Information and Quality Authority registration, regulation and inspection of disability services against standards and regulations, and provide for the next round of inspections with particular focus on thematic inspections against key quality of life outcomes.	Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)	Ongoing
87.	We will undertake a review of the regulations in a consultative process, which will be informed by the National Disability Authority review of the first year of inspection process for disability residential services.	Department of Health	Q2 2018
88.	We will continue the work of the Quality Improvement Team in Health Service Executive Disability Services, and extend it to key non-Health Service Executive providers. We will also complete a review of quality frameworks and	Health Service Executive	Q4 2018

Disability services are delivered to high quality standards and in line with international best practice.		
Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
implement the findings.		
People with disabilities are involved in the planning, design and evaluation of disability services.		
89. The National Disability Stakeholders Group, which includes a number of individuals appointed in their own personal capacity to bring their lived experience to the table, will continue to have a central role in monitoring the implementation of the new National Disability Inclusion Strategy.	Department of Justice and Equality National Disability Authority	Ongoing
90. We will progress proposals of the Reference Group on mental health service users' involvement.	Health Service Executive Mental Health Services	Ongoing
Individualised funding to be introduced and the option of a personal budget.		
91. The Personalised Budgeting Task Force will report to the Government by Q4 2017 and its recommendations will be considered by Government in line with the commitment in the Programme for Partnership Government.	Personalised Budgeting Task Force (PfG Commitment) Relevant departments and agencies	Q4 2017
92. We will adopt and implement a single needs assessment tool for disability services.	Department of Health Health Service Executive	Q2 2017

7. Living in the Community

People with disabilities are supported to live an independent life in a home of their choosing in their community.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
93.	<p>We will continue to implement Time to Move On to give people with disabilities who currently reside in institutions the choice and control over where and with whom they live, within the community.</p> <p>We will ensure the timely involvement of the individual and the family in managing the transition.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>National Disability Authority</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Disability Sector</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
94.	<p>The Programme for Partnership Government aims to reduce the number of people living in congregated settings by at least one-third by 2021 and to ultimately close all congregated settings.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Disability Sector</p>	Q4 2017
95.	<p>We will examine the need to extend the remit of the Mental Health Commission, including thematic inspections against key quality of life outcomes, to empower it to regulate community based services as recommended by the Expert Group on review of the 2001 Mental Health Act, and to require the Inspector of Mental Health Services to conduct annual inspections of 24-hour staffed community residences.</p>	<p>Department of Health</p>	Q4 2017

People with disabilities are supported to live an independent life in a home of their choosing in their community.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
96.	The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 has been affirmed and extended to 2020, to continue to deliver on its aims as part of the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.	Department of Housing Planning, Community and Local Government Department of Health Health Service Executive Disability Sector	Ongoing to 2020
New homes are designed to Universal Design standards and can be readily adapted to people's changing needs.			
97.	<p>We will prepare policy advice on ways of achieving universal design solutions for new housing so that new homes can be accessed and used by all persons, irrespective of size, age, ability or disability.</p> <p>We will advise on any implications of same for stakeholders including designers, builders, homeowners and tenants.</p> <p>Our recommendations will be considered and proposals prepared for submission to Government as appropriate.</p>	National Disability Authority	Q2 2018
98.	We will review the suite of housing adaptation grant schemes, for the purpose of evaluating how the application process can be streamlined for older people and people with a disability.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government National Disability Authority	Q4 2017

New homes are designed to Universal Design standards and can be readily adapted to people's changing needs.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
99.	We will engage local authorities and stakeholders in a review process in Q2 of 2017 and make any necessary changes to the application and approval process.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government National Disability Authority	Q4 2017

8. Transport and Accessible Places



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We will improve the accessibility and availability of public transport for persons with disabilities.

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Persons with disabilities can get to and from their chosen destination independently (without driving a car) in transport that is accessible to them.

	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
100.	We will improve the accessibility and availability of public transport, especially inter-city buses and rural transport and accessibility of train and bus stations. We will focus on linking up the different forms of transport and make connections accessible as well as transport information, including audible announcements. We will prioritise the maintenance, management and monitoring of systems and services which make transport accessible.	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport National Transport Authority Local authorities	Ongoing
101.	We will introduce a pilot scheme on the DART for mobility-impaired customers requiring assistance that will significantly reduce the advised notice time for travelling, and ensure a better response when customers requiring assistance cannot give notice.	Irish Rail	Q3 2017
102.	We will undertake a market consultation exercise with bus vehicle manufacturers who engage with us to establish the feasibility and availability of certain wheelchair accessibility options suitable for use in Ireland, and develop proposals in relation to attaching conditions regarding wheelchair accessibility on commercial licensed services.	National Transport Authority	Q4 2017

Persons with disabilities can get to and from their chosen destination independently (without driving a car) in transport that is accessible to them.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
103.	We will monitor user experience of public transport and make recommendations as appropriate based on the findings.	National Disability Authority	Q4 2017
104.	We will lead a review of transport supports encompassing all Government funded transport and mobility schemes for people with disabilities, to enhance the options for transport to work or employment supports for people with disabilities and will develop proposals for development of a coordinated plan for such provision. This plan will have regard to making the most efficient use of available transport resources.	Department of Justice and Equality Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport National Disability Authority Department of Social Protection Pobal Revenue Commissioners	Q4 2017
105.	We will develop a code of practice for accessible public areas of public sector buildings.	National Disability Authority	2019
106.	We will keep the Code of Practice for heritage sites under review and examine recommendations for amendments made in the light of experience of its application.	National Disability Authority	Q4 2018
107.	We will develop access to outdoor recreation facilities especially footpaths and trails.	Local authorities Sport Ireland	Ongoing

Persons with disabilities can get to and from their chosen destination independently (without driving a car) in transport that is accessible to them.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
108.	We will implement the programme of dishing of footpaths in urban areas, in line with guidance from the National Disability Authority's publication: Building for Everyone.	Local authorities	Ongoing
Public transport in both urban and rural areas is accessible.			
109.	We will ensure further roll-out of accessible inter-city coaches and accessible regional / rural coach and bus stops.	Bus Éireann Local authorities National Transport Authority	Ongoing
110.	We will review operational issues in relation to the need for advance notice of accessibility requirements for train travel with a view to removing barriers for service users with disabilities.	Iarnród Éireann Bus Éireann (coach travel)	Q4 2017
111.	We will commit to the implementation of consistent and reliable on-board audio and visual announcements on all public transport vehicles including buses, coaches DART, trains and trams and to monitoring and maintaining this aspect of accessibility.	Córas Iompair Éireann Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport National Transport Authority Public transport operators	Ongoing
Persons with disabilities are able to access buildings and their facilities on the same basis as everyone else.			
112.	We will introduce Continuous Professional Development on	National Disability Authority	Q1 2018

Persons with disabilities are able to access buildings and their facilities on the same basis as everyone else.			
	Actions	Responsible Body	Timeframe
	Universal Design for architects, to encourage application of National Disability Authority guidance such as Building for Everyone and Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland.		
113.	We will promote and integrate ISO Guide 71/CEN Guide 6: 2014 Guide to address accessibility in standards, and ensure that terminology used is consistent with international best practice guidelines.	<p>National Standards Authority of Ireland</p> <p>Government Departments and agencies with a role in developing standards and guidelines</p> <p>National Disability Authority</p>	Q4 2017
Planning and design of public buildings and public spaces is informed by engagement with people with disabilities and other users across the spectrum of age, size, ability and disability.			
114.	We will ensure, as far as practicable, the promotion of accessible user engagement in design and planning, including public procedures under Planning Acts.	Local authorities	Ongoing

Note:

The Inclusion Strategy should be regarded as a 'living document' and revised iterations of it will be published periodically, that contain renewed and more ambitious actions in the light of progress to date. This document constitutes Version 1 of this Inclusion Strategy – July 2017.

