



## FOREWORD

The Irish Government is committed to building an inclusive society both through national and EU policy measures. The establishment of EU National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPsincl) marks a further step in the most determined efforts yet by EU Governments to radically improve the situation of the most vulnerable people in our midst and enable them participate fully in society.

It has been made possible by a provision in the Treaty of Amsterdam proposed by Ireland. Further provisions proposed by Ireland to extend the process to modernising social protection and to provide a Treaty base for a high powered Social Protection Committee to drive the process forward are included in the Treaty of Nice.

The Treaty of Amsterdam provided for a co-operation process among Member States in combating social exclusion, similar to the provision made in the field of employment from which the Employment Action Plans emerged. At the European Councils last year, it was agreed to make the fight against poverty and social exclusion one of the central elements in the modernisation of the European social model. The NAPsincl aim to translate the Community level objectives into each Member State, taking into account national circumstances and policy priorities.

Ireland's NAPincl provides an overview of a wide variety of initiatives, being worked on by the Irish Government, to drive forward the social inclusion agenda, touching every aspect of Government. The Plan is grounded in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness and the National Development Plan and the actions ensuing from these programmes. The NAPincl is the result of a consultative process involving the Social Partners, Government Departments and relevant Agencies.

Ireland's NAPincl reflects the state of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) at present, as a work-in-progress. The Strategy is currently being reviewed and revised by way of an extensive process of involvement of stakeholders. This process will culminate in the publication of a revised Strategy in November 2001. Future plans submitted to the EU will be consistent with, and contingent upon, the findings of the NAPS review and will also reflect EU developments in this area.

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**Dermot Ahern TD**

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## SECTION 1: Major Challenges – Overview of Current Situation and Major Trends

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

**1.1.1 Introduction:** This chapter provides an overview of the current situation and major trends in relation to poverty and social exclusion, based on the four policy objectives agreed at the Nice Summit. There is a very favourable policy context for tackling social exclusion in Ireland. Among the main features of this policy context are:

- existence of National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) as a strategic policy framework on poverty with support of Social Partners;
- strong economic growth resulting in strong employment growth and a consequential substantial fall in unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment;
- active engagement of Community and Voluntary Sector in fight against social exclusion, with particular recognition and support for organisations representing socially excluded groups;
- availability of high-quality research and information on poverty trends through the Government and European Union (EU) -funded Living in Ireland/European Household Panel Survey;
- targeted and innovative programmes for specific needs/groups, with an emphasis on integration and participation;
- an established equality infrastructure and a growing understanding of the social inclusion/equality interface;
- National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 (NDP) and annual funding;
- recognition of need to ensure efficient, cost effective and timely delivery of the infrastructure provided for in the NDP;
- formal administrative structures and procedures for co-ordinating policy on social exclusion, including poverty-proofing, the NAPS Unit, Inter-Departmental Policy Committee, Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion and the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA).

#### 1.1.2 Partnership

1.1.2.1 Ireland has long recognised the particular importance of building a shared understanding of the challenges to be faced and of achieving a broad consensus in the strategies to be adopted. The first National Partnership Agreement was in 1987 and since then the involvement of the Social Partners and the consultative process under the national agreements has been central to economic and social progress. The core objective of the present national agreement, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF), is to build a fair, inclusive society in Ireland based on:

- a dynamic competitive economy;
- full employment and the effective elimination of long-term unemployment;
- equal opportunity;
- lifelong learning;
- adaptation to the Information Society;
- the promotion of research and development;
- balanced and sustainable development between and within regions and between urban and rural areas;
- an entrepreneurial culture; and
- Ireland playing its full part in the EU and the international community.

1.1.2.2 There are five operational frameworks within the PPF - living standards and workplace environment; prosperity and economic inclusion; social inclusion and equality; successful adaptation and continuing change; renewing partnership. There are extensive provisions concerning social inclusion and equality. The framework for addressing poverty and social exclusion reflects the overall view, as set out in the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) Strategy Report "Opportunities, Challenges and Capacities for Choice", that "citizenship rights encompass not only the core civil and political rights and obligations but also social, economic and cultural rights and obligations which are embedded in our political culture and which underpin equality of opportunity and policies on access to education, employment, health, housing and social services."

1.1.2.3 The updating of the NAPS is a specific commitment under the PPF including the review and revision of targets where necessary. The review is to include the new themes of child poverty, women's poverty, health, older people and housing/accommodation, as well as emerging issues of poverty such as racism. All the Social Partners are involved in the review process.

**1.1.3 Economic context:** Irish economic growth rates have defied most expectations by continuing to accelerate over the last two years. Output growth in 2000 is estimated to be 10.7% in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) terms, driven, in part, by strong export growth and reinforced by buoyant domestic demand. The growth in output, as measured by Gross National Product (GNP), is estimated to have reached 8.6% in 2000. Inflation in consumer prices averaged 5.6% in 2000 with the unemployment rate ending the year at 3.9% based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure. Against this exceptional performance, the prospects for output growth in 2001 and 2002 look more modest. Uncertainties arise from the prospects for the external environment given the slowdown in the United States and the economic threat posed by the foot and mouth crises within Europe. Growth in 2001 is forecast to be 6.7% in GDP and 6.1% in GNP terms. The challenge, as articulated in the PPF, is to ensure that this growth benefits all people in society thereby leading to a more inclusive society.

### 1.1.4 Poverty Trends

1.1.4.1 Significant progress has been made in relation to poverty reduction in recent years. The 1998 Living in Ireland Survey (LIIS) shows significant reductions in the levels of consistent poverty in Ireland since 1994. Consistent poverty (i.e. the numbers experiencing deprivation and with incomes under 60% of average) fell from 15% in 1994 to 8% in 1998. Thus, the combined income and deprivation measure suggests a marked decline in poverty since 1994 which, in practical terms, means that a significantly higher proportion of people are now able to afford an acceptable standard of living in areas such as food and clothing. However, the national challenge of addressing inequality in opportunities and life chances is recognised. The quality of life of children improved in the twelve month period from 1997 to 1998, when the level of consistent poverty among children dropped to 12% – a fall of almost 30% in the period. This accelerates the downward trend in child poverty figures with consistent poverty among children being halved from 24.8% in 1987 to 12% in 1998.

1.1.4.2 The number of people and households experiencing income as opposed to consistent poverty at the higher 60% relative income line has fallen over the period 1994 to 1998. However, the proportion experiencing poverty at the lower 40% and 50% relative income poverty lines had risen. In addition, the gap between the poverty lines and the incomes of those who fall below them is widening. In the context of the NAPS's aim to reduce poverty, social exclusion and inequality, one of the key PPF Working Groups, the Social Welfare Benchmarking and Indexation Working Group (BIG), has been asked to examine the issue of relative income poverty. That Group intends to complete its work by end July, 2001.

**1.1.5 Equality:** The central thesis of recent reports such as "Rich and Poor"<sup>1</sup> and "Bust to Boom"<sup>2</sup> is that equity should be a primary rather than a residual concern. It is accepted that inequalities can cause and perpetuate poverty and increased attention is being given to the promotion of equality as a strategy for eliminating poverty. The new legislative framework, which is in place for equality of opportunity, mediated particularly through the Employment Equality Act, 1998; the National Disability Authority Act, 1999 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 and the new organisations, established under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, to advance employment equality, equal status and disability related services and policy, namely the Equality Authority, the Office of Director of Equality Investigations and the National Disability Authority, highlight an increased emphasis on equality objectives in Irish social policy. The NDP will provide a structured framework, with funding over a seven-year period, where childcare and equality issues can be addressed. The goal is to bring about a more equal society, by promoting, monitoring and implementing the right to equal treatment and the accommodation of

diversity, having regard to gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community, through institutional, administrative and legal reforms and through programmes targeted at particular needs. A gender equality perspective has also been incorporated across the NDP through the strategy of gender mainstreaming, by which all programmes and measures must actively and openly be assessed at the planning stage for their possible effects on the respective situation of women and men.

**1.1.6 Access to Rights:** The Government has taken a number of steps to strengthen human rights and responsibilities in its jurisdiction in recent years. A wide range of rights are specifically provided for in the Irish Constitution. In addition, legislation including more recently, the Equal Status Act and enhanced Employment Equality legislation, has strengthened the rights available to the citizen. In the context of partnership and other relevant developments, a much greater focus, on outcomes and indicators to measure outcomes and (as outlined further in this Action Plan) on a range of proofing mechanisms in relation to policy proposals, should lead to improved access to quality public services.

**1.1.7 Objectives in the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion:** The following paragraphs deal with the major trends in each of the fields covered by the four objectives agreed by the European Council, i.e. facilitating participation in employment and access to resources, rights, goods and services for all; preventing the risks of exclusion; helping the most vulnerable and mobilising all relevant bodies. Policy measures relevant to each objective are included in Section 3.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVE 1 – FACILITATING PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND ACCESS BY ALL TO RESOURCES, RIGHTS, GOODS AND SERVICES

**1.2.1 Introduction:** Unemployment has declined to 3.7% and the long-term unemployment rate is now 1.2% amounting to 21,500 people who are more than 12 months unemployed. The labour market challenges that Ireland faces in the future have moved from being focused solely on tackling unemployment to pursuing policies that provide the economy with an adequate supply of appropriately skilled workers to sustain economic growth, promote employment for all who seek it, and promote the inclusion of excluded persons and eliminate long-term unemployment. In view of the significant barriers faced by people with disabilities in gaining access to the labour market, the policy focus in recent years has been to mainstream the provision of training by transferring responsibility for this from the National Rehabilitation Board to FAS and to adapt the State welfare system and other service areas so as to facilitate and encourage take up of available employment, training and educational opportunities. The key objectives

of labour market policy are shown in Ireland's Employment Action Plan 2001(EAP 2001). The EAP 2001 sets out in detail the policy mix to implement the labour market strategy which is based on the four-pillar framework, of promoting Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability and Equal Opportunities, of the EU Employment Guidelines.

**1.2.2 Family friendly policies:** Bringing a suitable balance between work and family life is a key issue for Government and the Social Partners. The Government is committed under the NDP to meeting the diverse needs of parents and children, including key target groups, through supporting the development of childcare services that are accessible and of high quality. The Government and the Social Partners have agreed to develop a strategy to support the development of family friendly policies in the workplace. A National Framework Committee for the Development of Family Friendly Policies at the Level of the Enterprise has been established.

**1.2.3 Social Protection:** Modernising and improving our systems of social protection is one of the major challenges currently facing EU Member States, including Ireland. In 2000, the percentage of expenditure on social welfare payments in the categories of old age was approximately 25.4%; widows/widowers and one-parent families 18.9%; illness, disability and caring 15.6%; child related 10.5% and unemployment supports 10.9%. Major challenges in the future relate to the pension and care areas, given the change in the demographic profile in the medium/longer term and the changes in family structures. The PPF set the following targets for social welfare rates over the three year duration of the Programme:

- all social welfare rates will be increased in real terms;
- substantial progress will be made towards a target of €126.97 (IR€100) per week for the lowest rates of social welfare;
- Child Benefit will be substantially increased over the period of the Programme, with a priority focus towards €126.97 (IR€100) per month for the third and subsequent children.

**1.2.4 Minimum Income:** In Ireland, there is recognition of the right to a guaranteed minimum income through the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme (SWA), which also provides for payments for exceptional needs. A major programme of reform of the SWA Scheme is now underway, with the twin objectives of mainstreaming supports that are delivered at present through the SWA Scheme and re-establishing the original focus of the Scheme as a vehicle to alleviate and prevent poverty. In addition, the introduction of the National Minimum Wage coupled with a balanced strategy of removing the low paid from the tax net, reducing the burden of personal taxation more generally, completing the changeover to a more progressive system of tax credits and other tax reform and substantially increasing the value of universal Child

Benefit improve the financial return from work. In addition, under the terms of the PPF, the Social Welfare Benchmarking and Indexation Working Group (BIG) was established in late 2000 to examine the issues involved in developing a benchmark for adequacy of adult and child social welfare payments.

**1.2.5 People with Disabilities:** A programme to make all public services accessible to people with disabilities within a five-year time frame will be implemented during 2002 to 2006. All Government Departments, and Agencies under their remit, will be required to take all reasonable steps to comply with the programme which will be overseen by the National Disability Authority (NDA) and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Legislation to provide for positive action measures to advance and underpin the participation of people with disabilities in society is being prepared by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The legislation will be broad-ranging in scope and will target areas of social exclusion of people with disabilities.

**1.2.6 Housing:** Housing, at rents related to ability to pay, is provided to almost 100,000 households by Local Authorities and over 13,000 households by voluntary housing bodies. Housing subsidies are provided for a further 42,000 tenants in the private rented sector. The Government launched a programme of initiatives "Action on Housing" in June 2000 which, inter alia, provides for increased availability of social and affordable housing through improvements to and expansion of the various measures available to meet social and affordable housing needs. The main challenges to be addressed in relation to social and affordable housing policy are to increase provision to meet expanding need, including the needs of especially vulnerable groups such as Travellers and the provision of additional accommodation and improved co-ordination of services for the homeless. A NAPS Working Group in relation to Housing/accommodation is examining the following issues – access to housing; issues of supply/affordability; homelessness; Traveller accommodation; housing standards; private rented sector.

**1.2.7 Healthcare:** The links between poverty and health are clearly documented. In particular, the impact of socio-economic inequalities has been shown to have a significant impact on health across all socio-economic groupings. A significant factor underpinning the relationship between poverty and ill-health is unequal access to health services. The PPF sets out a number of objectives in relation to health care including improved access to quality health care services in order to strengthen social inclusion and cohesion and to monitor socio-economic health inequalities. The review of the NAPS, detailed in Section 2, will examine the issue of possible targets in the health area. The Government intends to publish a comprehensive Health Strategy later this year which will address, inter alia, access issues.

<sup>1</sup> Cantillon, S. et al (2001) *Rich and Poor - Perspectives on Tackling Inequality in Ireland*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

<sup>2</sup> Nolan, B. et al (2000) *Bust to Boom? - The Irish Experience of Growth and Inequality*. Dublin: ESRI

**1.2.8 Education:** Educational disadvantage is a significant component of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland. Research shows that children experiencing poverty are more likely to leave school early and to be unemployed as adults. Estimates indicate that 16% of the school population may be regarded as educationally disadvantaged, taking into account literacy levels, early school leaving and the experience of poverty. The majority of educationally disadvantaged pupils (60.7%) live in rural areas followed by Dublin (25.5%), towns with populations of 10,000 - 40,000 (9.5%) and other urban areas 4.3%.<sup>3</sup> Under the 1994/99 Community Support Framework (CSF) and again now under the 2001/06 NDP/CSF, significant efforts were and are being made by the Department of Education and Science and FÁS and in the labour market context to address early school leaving and to effectively mobilise, those at risk, for work. This is the central aim of several measures, with significant commitments of European Social Fund (ESF) support under the Employment and Human Resources Development - Operational Programme (EHRD - OP) 2001-2006. The key challenges ahead, as recognised by the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, are to address not only the problems attached to school attendance, but also issues relating to the educational welfare of children in general. The need for basic skills for all is now a major priority of the EU. It is crucial, in the development of policies to address basic skills needs, that specific focus be given to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties. A NAPS Working Group in relation to Educational Disadvantage is examining the following issues - child/adult literacy, early school leaving and retention, second chance education, barriers to participation, access (e.g. for disabled, women, Travellers, refugees/asylum seekers/non-nationals) and closer integration of education and other State services.

**1.2.9 Public Transport:** The key objectives in relation to improved public transport provision are outlined in the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme of the NDP. Accessibility of public transport vehicles to both the general public and those who are mobility impaired will be greatly enhanced in line with the Government's commitment in this area and EU policy. New and upgraded bus and rail stations, light rail vehicles and new suburban rail cars will be fully accessible to mobility impaired and disabled people. Transport is a key social inclusion tool, particularly in rural areas and for the elderly.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVE 2 - TO PREVENT THE RISKS OF EXCLUSION

**1.3.1 Knowledge Based Society:** In an information society one of the key challenges is to ensure that those experiencing exclusion are not left behind. There are a number of initiatives, including initiatives under the eEurope Action Plan, which outline actions specifically targeted at people with special needs as part of the objective: 'Participation for All'. As part of the initiative to make public websites accessible to people with special

needs, Ireland has already set target dates in 2001 for the adoption of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Guidelines for Public Websites.

**1.3.2 Life Crises:** For those experiencing poverty, certain times in the lifecycle can exacerbate their position and specific targeted interventions are needed in these situations. Events such as separation or a death in the family, or more routine events such as going back to school, can put extra strain on the disadvantaged resulting in indebtedness. Homelessness and family breakdown are further crisis situations which require State intervention. A range of policies have been developed to address these areas.

**1.3.3 Homelessness:** The Government recognises that homelessness needs to be tackled urgently. The Government's Homeless Strategy provides for an integrated response to homelessness by all the Statutory and Voluntary Agencies and bodies involved in providing services to homeless persons. It recognises that homelessness is not just about accommodation, but that other areas including care and welfare, health, education, training and prevention must be addressed if homelessness is to be tackled. Three year local action plans are currently being prepared, at county level by Local Authorities and Health Boards, in conjunction with the relevant voluntary bodies. A Homeless Agency has been established and a Director appointed to oversee the implementation of the action plan and to manage and co-ordinate the delivery of all services by both Statutory and Voluntary Agencies to homeless persons in Dublin.

**1.3.4 Indebtedness - Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS):** In recognition of the problem of indebtedness, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA) is directly involved in activities to tackle the problems of moneylending and over-indebtedness. Currently 50 local projects provide advice on money management and budgeting to families and persons experiencing difficulty. A major evaluation of this programme is underway at present, focusing, inter alia, on the need for community education in this area.

**1.3.5 Support for Families:** Greater recognition is being given to the importance of families for social integration. A renewed emphasis is being placed on the adoption of measures to support families in their nurturing and educative roles and in reconciling work and the provision of care, as indicated earlier. In addition, a range of supports are provided across a wide area in the public service, including family support projects, increased child care places, appropriate training of child care workers and regulation of child care provision, increased out-of-school hours child care services by community groups and school managements, and further national fiscal and social policy measures to reconcile work and family life, including family-friendly policies in employment.

### 1.4 OBJECTIVE 3 - TO HELP THE MOST VULNERABLE

#### 1.4.1 Introduction

1.4.1.1 Specific groups at risk of social exclusion were identified in the NAPS. These are:

- the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed;
- children, particularly those living in large families;
- single adult households and households headed by someone working in the home;
- lone parents;
- people with disabilities;
- Travellers (a minority group which has a distinct nomadic and ethnic identity);
- homeless people.

1.4.1.2 The composition of groups experiencing, or in danger of, poverty and social exclusion is likely to change over time and the focus would change accordingly. Therefore, a broad number of groups at risk of exclusion, are kept under active review, including those on low pay. There is a significant interface between poverty and the new equality legislation and the naming of the nine grounds within the legislation is an indication of these groups' vulnerability. It is important to stress that disadvantage and unemployment affect virtually every area in Ireland and that the poor or the unemployed are not singularly clustered in the major urban centres. However, particular communities do suffer from cumulative disadvantage, and, for such people, it is likely that the cumulative impact is to intensify their experience of disadvantage. It is acknowledged that an important aspect of social inclusion is investment in a social (children and older people) care infrastructure. Substantial investment has been made in these areas and this will be kept under review.

**1.4.3 Child Poverty:** Child poverty has been identified as a central issue for consideration in the review of the NAPS. The Government's strategy to reduce child poverty is focused on reducing unemployment through the provision of supports which facilitate the transition from unemployment to employment and the development of family-friendly work policies. The more general initiatives recently taken in the area of childcare, which is critical to supporting enhanced participation of females in the labour market, will also act to meet the challenge of tackling child poverty. Child income support will be progressively increased over the next three years by €1.27billion (IRE1billion) per annum. The National Children's Strategy is a key instrument of Government Policy in relation to children and will be progressed over the period of the NAPIncl.

**1.4.4 People with Disabilities:** As set out in the PPF, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform will put arrangements in place to review and identify key statistical needs in relation to people with disabilities or categories of people with disabilities for the purposes of informing policy, planning and the delivery of services.

**1.4.5 Women:** Women are at a significant risk of poverty and some predominately female groups, such as lone parents, are at a very high poverty risk. One of the main principles underlying the NAPS is "the reduction of inequalities and in particular, addressing the gender dimensions of poverty". Women's poverty has been identified as a central issue for consideration in the review of the NAPS provided for in the PPF. The NDP provides specific funding to promote equality for women. Gender mainstreaming in this Plan is also likely to improve outcomes for women in the areas funded.

### 1.5 OBJECTIVE 4 - TO MOBILISE ALL RELEVANT BODIES

**1.5.1 Introduction:** The experience and perspectives of the Social Partners, including the Community and Voluntary Sector, have been invaluable in their ongoing role in the development and monitoring of social inclusion strategies and in the review of the NAPS, in the context of the partnership agreement. One of the key challenges in the next phase of the NAPS will be to establish mechanisms to further strengthen the involvement of the Social Partners in the Strategy.

**1.5.2 Supporting Voluntary Activity:** An active Community and Voluntary Sector contributes to a democratic, pluralist society, provides opportunities for the development of decentralised and participative structures and fosters a climate in which the quality of life can be enhanced for all. The Government White Paper, "Supporting Voluntary Activity" (2000), sets out a cohesive framework of support for the future development of the relationship. It forms an important context for the strengthening of consultative mechanisms generally, as envisaged in the PPF.

**1.5.3 Volunteering:** 2001 is the International Year of Volunteers (IYV). The objective of IYV 2001 is to enhance recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer services. Operating under this objective, the National Committee on Volunteering (NCV), provided for under the PPF, was launched in December, 2000, will run until the end of 2002 and will report to the Government at that time. Membership is drawn from relevant Government Departments and relevant stakeholders.

**1.5.4 Quality Customer Service Principles:** In recognition of the need to adapt services to the changing composition of the population, the Government agreed a revised set of Quality Customer Service Principles. In particular, during 2000, three new Principles were added, covering equality and diversity, official languages equality and the internal customer. These revised Principles provide a backdrop for improvements in service provision in the civil service, highlighting issues that need to be addressed.

<sup>3</sup>Kellaghan, T. et al (1995) Educational Disadvantage in Ireland. Dublin: Department of Education, Combat Poverty Agency and the Educational Research Centre

## 1.6 CONCLUSION

1.6.1 The future challenge can be categorised as one of optimising the current employment and labour market policy mix in Ireland consistent with maintaining a sustainable rate of economic and employment growth, and combining this approach with policies aimed at tackling social exclusion, poverty and inequality. The more traditional aspects of social exclusion such as unemployment (particularly long-term unemployment) and educational disadvantage must continue to be vigorously tackled. In addition, the PPF affords the opportunity to focus on other areas of potential exclusion (such as housing and health) with renewed emphasis. Finding effective and sustainable ways to tackle poverty and social exclusion is not a simple challenge. One of the core strengths of the NAPS is that it focuses attention on long-term solutions and moves debate away from short-term and reactive responses. The Irish Government is working on a number of levels to drive forward the social inclusion agenda and this Plan outlines a wide variety of initiatives touching every aspect of Government. The NDP and the PPF provide the building blocks for an inclusive Ireland. They also provide the background for the next stage of the NAPS process. The current period of review and consultation will strengthen the Strategy and targets are being reviewed and revised, to ensure that they remain relevant in the years ahead.

## SECTION 2: Strategic Approach and Main Objectives

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The analysis of the national situation outlined in the previous Section shows that, while significant progress has been made in the last few years in terms of social inclusion and poverty reduction, more remains to be done. This Section sets out the framework which has been adopted to enable further progress to be made.

### 2.2 NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

2.2.1 The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) is a cross-Departmental initiative which provides a framework for action to help achieve the objective of eliminating poverty in Ireland and highlights the national priorities for Ireland. The ten-year NAPS was developed following wide-ranging consultation with the Social Partners and launched by the Government in 1997, arising from commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. The NAPS is based on the shared understanding that: "people are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society." The NAPS is fully consistent with the key objectives of the National Development Plan 2000-2006:

- continuing sustainable national economic and employment growth;
- consolidating and improving Ireland's international competitiveness;
- fostering balanced regional development;
- promoting social inclusion.

2.2.2 The NAPS is underpinned by a number of principles. These are:

- ensuring equal access and encouraging participation for all;
- guaranteeing the rights of minorities, especially through anti-discrimination measures;
- the reduction of inequalities and in particular, addressing the gender dimensions of poverty;
- the development of the partnership approach building on national and local partnership processes;
- actively involving the Community and Voluntary Sector;
- encouraging self reliance through respecting individual dignity and promoting empowerment;
- engaging in appropriate consultative processes, especially with users of services.

### 2.3 GLOBAL POVERTY REDUCTION TARGET

2.3.1 Ireland was the first EU country to formally adopt an official global poverty target. Initially, the global target of the NAPS, over the period 1997-2007, was to aim at considerably reducing the numbers of those who are "consistently poor" from 9-15% of the population to less than 5-10%, as measured by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Data published in the 1999 ESRI report "Monitoring Trends in Poverty for the National Anti-Poverty Strategy" showed that, by 1997, the numbers of "consistently poor" had shown a sharp fall to 7% to 10%. In 1999, the Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs announced a new global target to reduce consistent poverty to below 5% by 2004. The most recent poverty data available relates to the 1998 LIIS, the Irish element of the European Community Household Panel, analysed by the ESRI. It shows that the number of households experiencing consistent poverty had fallen to 6-8% by 1998 - well on the way to attaining the consistent poverty target announced in 1999. Information from the LIIS, in relation to 2000, will be available later this year.

2.3.2 Consistent poverty is defined as being below 50%-60% of average household income and experiencing enforced deprivation. Basic deprivation is the presence of at least one of a list of eight indicators, e.g. not having two pairs of strong shoes, getting into debt to meet ordinary living expenses. Independent research by the ESRI has shown that the combination of income and deprivation allows the impact of resource depletion and life experiences to become inherent in the measurement of poverty. This measure retains the "relative" concept of poverty as basic deprivation indicators are likely to change over time as living standards in the community rise. It also lessens the likely scenario in times of recession where, if poverty measures were based on relative income lines only, one could see a reduction in poverty levels despite a marked decrease in living standards.<sup>4</sup> Attention is also being given at present to the relationship between deprivation and broader measures of income, including non-cash benefits provided by the Government, to establish the extent of poverty more accurately. A report by the ESRI on non-cash benefits (2001) identified that, based on data from the 1994 and 1997 LIISs, the benefits of schemes such as the medical card and free television licence, electricity and telephone allowances have a very substantial effect on relative income poverty levels.

### 2.4 NAPS KEY THEMES AND TARGETS

2.4.1 While NAPS examines poverty in the global context, it also set targets under key themes which are supported by particular policy responses. The original NAPS themes were unemployment, income adequacy, educational disadvantage, urban disadvantage, and rural poverty.

<sup>4</sup> Layte, R. et al (2001) Reassessing Income and Deprivation Approaches to the Measurement of Poverty in Ireland. Dublin: ESRI

These themes were selected in recognition of the multi-faceted nature of poverty, which goes beyond income and cuts across various aspects of participation and experiences in society.

2.4.2 Targets were set in a number of areas in the NAPS. An example of the target in relation to educational disadvantage is "to eliminate the problem of early school leaving before the junior certificate (an examination taken at second level by those in the 15-16 age group), and reduce early school leaving such that the percentage of those completing the senior cycle will increase to at least 90% by the year 2000 and 98% by the year 2007, and having regard to the assessment of their intrinsic abilities, there are no students with serious literacy and numeracy problems in early primary education within the next five years." This target is complemented by policy initiatives in areas such as pre-school education, special educational needs, preventing educational disadvantage, and life-long learning. It should be noted that the educational disadvantage target is representative of school leavers to completion of senior cycle only and does not take sufficient cognisance of those leavers who entered legitimate education and training programmes, e.g. apprenticeships, or other further education opportunities on leaving the second level system. This issue will be considered when re-examining targets as part of the NAPS review. The key challenge will be to ensure a limited number of realistic but stretching targets to focus on the most urgent and acute needs.

## 2.5 SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:

2.5.1 A distinctive feature of the Irish political landscape since 1987 is the existence of national social partnership agreements, whereby a shared understanding of the challenges to be faced is built and a broad consensus is adopted. It represents a collective determination to ensure improvements in living standards and the quality of life for all, including the marginalised. In the period since 1997, the NAPS has been a central focus of the national partnership agreements. The current national agreement, the PPF, which covers the period 2000-2003, recognises that, for many people, poverty and social exclusion are still a stark reality and aims to address this challenge in a number of ways, including substantially increasing the resources allocated to social inclusion. The PPF is underpinned by a commitment of €1.9billion (IR£1.5billion) over the three year period for social inclusion measures. In this context, it should be noted that Budget 2001 has already provided for the expenditure of €1.52billion (IR£1.2billion) in a full year. A key objective within the fiscal framework underpinning the PPF is the pursuit of policies which reduce poverty and social exclusion, build an inclusive society, reduce marginalisation and strengthen recognition of citizenship obligations in those contexts. Moreover, many of the PPF proposals are process-led as distinct from money led including the identification of targeted intervention

measures for areas where cumulative disadvantage is pervasive, the encouragement of economic and social development in rural communities and the promotion and consolidation of the emerging social economy. The PPF also involves a concerted effort to address the issues affecting the quality of people's lives, such as housing, public transport and healthcare.

## 2.6 NAPS REVIEW

2.6.1 **Social Partnership and NAPS review:** The PPF provides for a review of the NAPS to be undertaken over the first 18 months of the Programme, whereby existing targets and the underlying methodology will be reviewed and revised where appropriate and possible new targets considered in consultation with the Social Partners under the themes of child poverty, women's poverty, older people, health and housing/ accommodation. The NAPS analysis will be expanded to include emerging causes of poverty such as racism and attention will also be given to data collection systems for the monitoring and evaluation of poverty, including systems of measuring poverty among groups not currently included in the LIIS (e.g. Travellers, homeless people). Mechanisms for strengthening the involvement of the Social Partners will also be considered. The PPF also provides for the extension of the NAPS to local level and for a Working Group to identify the scope for developing a NAPS framework within the health sector. Information on the CPA and National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) recent evaluations of the NAPS is in Section 4.

2.6.2 **NAPS review - progress to date:** As agreed with the Social Partners, issues to be examined as part of the review are being considered initially by Working Groups established under the aegis of relevant Departments under 6 themes i.e. Educational Disadvantage, Employment, Rural Poverty, Urban Disadvantage, Housing/Accommodation and Health. The concerns of women, children, older people and minority ethnic groups are to be addressed by each Working Group. Income adequacy issues are initially being dealt with separately by the Benchmarking and Indexation Working Group (BIG) established to examine the issues of developing a benchmark for adequacy of adult and child social welfare payments, including the implications of adopting a specific approach to the ongoing up-rating or indexation of payments. Key issues emerging or likely to emerge from the deliberations of the Working Groups are as follows:

**Health:** consultation/communication in needs assessment, policy formulation, implementation and monitoring; access to services, in particular to comprehensive holistic primary care with a focus on health promotion and prevention; eligibility issues; development of information and research base for NAPS and health – in particular the disaggregation of access and outcomes data for groups experiencing

poverty or social exclusion; assessment of the impact of other public policies on health; equity and rights based approaches.

**Urban Disadvantage:** drugs (particularly Heroin) and crime; family support services; youth participation in education and training; integration of State services.

**Employment/unemployment:** improving the progression prospects of people at the lower end of the employment scale and disincentives to employment/training, including secondary benefits.

**Rural Poverty:** access to health services, transport, care of older people, childcare, employment.

**Education:** child/adult literacy, early school leaving and retention, second chance education, barriers to participation, access (e.g. for disabled, women, Travellers, refugees/asylum seekers/non-nationals) and closer integration of education and other State services.

**Housing/accommodation:** access to housing; issues of supply/affordability; homelessness; Traveller accommodation; housing standards; private rented sector.

**Benchmarking and Indexation Group (BIG):** benchmarking options; child income support; indexation policy; issues relating to use of relative poverty measures. The BIG's recent interim report indicated that, amongst the various other criteria, it will examine the impacts of various benchmark and indexation options on relative income poverty levels and consider the relative merits of the consistent poverty and relative income poverty measurements. The BIG intends to complete its work by end-July, 2001.

2.6.3 **NAPS review process:** The various Working Groups provide an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to contribute to the indicator and target-setting processes, including the Social Partners and the CPA. In addition, an advertisement was placed in national newspapers inviting submissions on the NAPS review for consideration by the relevant Working Groups. Each of the Working Groups will be expected to hold at least one national consultative seminar. Following from the conclusion of the NAPS Working Groups, a Steering Committee, with Social Partner representation, will advise on issues and directions for the new NAPS, including any gaps arising. The NAPS will be amended/refined in the light of the ongoing discussions at the Steering Committee and of feedback from a National Seminar. The final format of the new NAPS, expected to be published in November 2001, will reflect the template specifications of the EU in relation to the NAPincl, as far as possible. The final decision in relation to the targets will be for Government.

## 2.7 INSTITUTIONAL AND CONSULTATION MECHANISMS

2.7.1 **NAPS institutional structures:** The need for strong institutional structures to underpin the development of the NAPS was identified early on in the formation of the Strategy and will be re-examined in the context of the NAPS review to ensure their continued effectiveness. There is now a set of structures in place - both at the political and administrative levels - to ensure that the issue of social inclusion is central to policy formulation and implementation, as follows:

- **Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion** (chaired by the Taoiseach and includes all Ministers whose brief is relevant to poverty and/or social inclusion);
- **Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion** (comprises high level civil servants from relevant Departments);
- **Inter-Departmental Policy Committee (IDPC)** (comprises senior civil servants and representatives from relevant stage agencies (FÁS, Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM), CPA) and provides the principal strategic focus for the NAPS);
- **NAPS Liaison Officers** (one in each Department to act as first point of contact in relation to NAPS issues);
- **NAPS Unit** (supports the IDPC and co-ordinates anti-poverty and social inclusion initiatives across Departments).

2.7.2 **The NDP Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee:** There is a new emphasis on tackling inequality and social exclusion under the NDP. There is an emphasis on monitoring outcomes under the NDP for particular categories such as women and those experiencing poverty. The poverty and gender equality impacts will be monitored at the monitoring committees for each of the six operational programmes and also at the umbrella NDP/CSF Monitoring Committee. The monitoring committees meet twice a year and review annual and mid-year returns. In addition, a new committee, called the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee, has been established to secure the maximum application of commitments on equal opportunities, particularly gender equality, and social inclusion across the Plan. The membership of the Committee reflects the different Government Departments and State Agencies with responsibility for implementing measures and the Social Partners. One of the tasks for this Committee is to identify ways of promoting equality and social inclusion as a central part of mainstream Government policy. The Committee will be supported by the NAPS Unit, DSCFA, a new NDP Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, a new Equality Unit in the Department of Education and Science and a new Unit in the Equality Authority.

2.7.3 **Consultation with Relevant Stakeholders:** The Community and Voluntary Sector and other Social Partners have an ongoing role in relation to the monitoring of the NAPS in the context of the arrangements for monitoring the PPF. As previously



outlined, the relevant stakeholders have an integral role in the review of the NAPS. Consultation, with and the involvement of the Community and Voluntary Sector, users of services and those with a first hand experience of poverty, has been a central feature of the development of the NAPS and it is essential that the partnership between all the relevant key actors in the process continues and develops. Policy measures in relation to the mobilisation of the relevant actors are outlined in Section 3 of this plan.

**2.7.4 Poverty Proofing:** Given its multi-dimensional nature, poverty cannot be the sole concern of a particular Government Department and the structures outlined above were developed on the basis of this understanding. Poverty alleviation has to be a central priority for all policy-makers and not just a marginal activity. Poverty proofing is a process which aims to provide policy makers with a system whereby policies are examined, particularly at design stage, to assess their potential impact on those in poverty, with a particular emphasis on groups who have been identified as being at a high risk of poverty. An independent review of the poverty proofing process, introduced in July 1998, is being conducted by the NES. It is expected that this review will point to any difficulties with the process and provide recommendations for its further implementation. In addition, the review will examine the potential for the integration of poverty proofing with other proofing mechanisms (e.g. equality proofing, rural proofing, eco-proofing) to avoid bureaucratic overload. Initial findings from the review indicate that significant investment in training and data collection mechanisms will be necessary over the next two years to ensure proofing is further embedded in the administrative system.

**2.7.5 The White Paper, "Supporting Voluntary Activity",** published in September 2000, aims to set out a cohesive framework of support and to address issues relevant to the future development of the relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector. It will form an important context for the strengthening of consultative mechanisms generally, as envisaged in the partnership agreement. The White Paper provides for the establishment of an Implementation and Advisory Group consisting of representatives from both the Community and Voluntary Sector and the Statutory Sector. This Group will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the decisions contained in the White Paper and will identify unresolved issues arising in a national context.

**2.7.6 NAPIncl Development:** A seminar with officials from the relevant services of the EU Commission was held on 28th March. The purpose of the seminar was to have an open exchange of information and debate with relevant stakeholders from Ireland and the Commission about the process of co-ordination on social inclusion and the preparation of the NAPIncl. Representatives of the relevant stakeholders in Ireland were invited to attend and 24 Irish

representatives attended. These included representatives of the relevant Government Departments, Social Partners (including the Community and Voluntary Sector) and relevant Government Agencies, such as the CPA, the Equality Authority and the ESRI. The preparation and drafting of the NAPIncl used the administrative structures and the processes for consultation already in place for the NAPS, and for the review of the NAPS. The CPA had a key role in drafting elements of the NAPIncl. Government Departments were asked to submit material, for inclusion in the NAPIncl, to the NAPS Unit. The advertisement in the national newspapers requesting submissions on the NAPS review provided a further opportunity for stakeholders to express their views on national anti-poverty policies. Each of these submissions was considered as part of the NAPIncl production process. On request from the Community and Voluntary Sector, a Round Table on the integration of equality and poverty perspectives in to the NAPIncl took place on 2nd May under the aegis of the DSCFA. A draft of the NAPIncl was circulated to Government Departments and Agencies and the Social Partners for consideration before being submitted to Government for approval. The NAPIncl process will facilitate reviews, every two years, of national anti-poverty policies and stakeholders will continue to play an active part in this process.

## 2.8 RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION 2001-2003

**2.8.1** The financial commitment to social inclusion measures is obviously a central element in the success or failure of an anti-poverty strategy. In relation to the agreed multi-annual budget commitments compiled on a no policy change basis, almost €10.16billion (IRE8billion) has been made available in 2001 and at least this amount will be available in 2002 and 2003 (calendar years), for social inclusion measures. Examples of expenditure proposals plus details with regard to the specific links with European funding programmes over the next few years are outlined in Section 3 of this report and key commitments are included in Annex C.

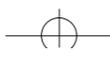
## 2.9 CONCLUSION

**2.9.1** This Section has highlighted some key features of the NAPS which form the basis of the NAPIncl i.e.

- a consensual definition of poverty and social exclusion;
- the fundamental importance of promoting employment opportunities and participation in the labour market as the best protection against poverty and social exclusion;
- an examination of poverty and social exclusion, including its measurement, in a multi-faceted way, beyond concentration on income alone;
- a number of specific target areas but avoiding proliferation of targets;

- strengthening of political and societal consensus that there is a need to reduce levels of poverty in Ireland;
- co-ordination and consultation around poverty issues;
- institutional structures to underpin the NAPS process;
- the potential for inequality and discrimination to cause poverty;
- a process to monitor policy at design stage to determine its potential impact on the poor/excluded, through a system of poverty proofing.

**2.9.2** The ten year NAPS was due to conclude mid-2007. This Irish NAPIncl will be the first in a series which will outline measures towards eliminating poverty and social exclusion for the two year periods July 2001 - June 2003, July 2003 - June 2005 and July 2005 - June 2007 - coinciding with the culmination of the NAPS. The development of each subsequent NAPIncl will provide an opportunity for review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the NAPS and its continuous improvement. The next Section of the NAPIncl outlines the policy measures which will be progressed and developed over the next two years towards eliminating poverty and social exclusion in Ireland. Other policy measures may be developed following completion of the NAPS review.



## SECTION 3: Policy Measures

### 3.1 Introduction

For each of the four common objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion agreed in Nice, this Section sets out in detail the policy measures which Ireland intends to implement over the period July 2001 to June 2003. Most of the policy and programme delivery set out in the NAPS, the PPF and other contexts is provided for under the Operational Programmes of the NDP, under which €46billion (IR£37.8billion) will be invested over the period 2001 – 2006. The outline provided by the EU requires that this Plan indicates how the gender dimension has been taken on board, in particular by assessing the implications for both men and women of the policy actions described; this has been done, where available.

### OBJECTIVE 1 - TO FACILITATE PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND ACCESS BY ALL TO RESOURCES, RIGHTS, GOODS AND SERVICES

#### Objective 1.1. Facilitating participation in employment

### 3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 This part of the NAPincl deals with the following objectives:

- (a) to promote access to stable and quality employment for all women and men who are capable of working, in particular:
- I. by putting in place, for those in the most vulnerable groups in society, pathways towards employment and by mobilising training policies to that end;
  - II. by developing policies to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, including the issue of child and dependent care and
  - III. by using the opportunities for integration and employment provided by the social economy
- (b) to prevent the exclusion of people from the world of work by improving employability, through human resource management, organisation of work and life-long learning.

#### Objective 1.1 (a) (I) Putting in place, for those in the most vulnerable groups in society, pathways towards employment and mobilising training policies to that end

### 3.3 Employment Action Plan 2001 (EAP 2001) and Employment and Human Resource Development – Operational Programme (EHRD – OP)

3.3.1 The thrust of policies and actions in Ireland's EAP 2001 sets the employment and labour market framework for the period ahead. Key objectives include:

- employment growth and employment for all who seek it;
- mobilising labour supply, through, for example, increased female participation, equal opportunities and a balanced increase in immigration, in order to contribute to a consistently strong, sustainable and non-inflationary level of economic growth;
- enhancing labour quality through education, training and in particular life-long learning in order to strengthen the employability of individuals and to promote competitiveness and adaptability in firms;
- promoting the economic and social inclusion of excluded persons, eliminating long-term unemployment and preventing future drift into long-term unemployment.

3.3.2 The strategy being adopted to achieve the above objectives is to provide incentives and mobilise labour supply from all available sources and to provide the necessary education, training and life-long learning opportunities to ensure that demand matches supply and that employed persons and those seeking employment have the required skills. The EAP 2001 sets out in detail the policy and programme mix for the purposes of facilitating participation in employment. Key aspects include:

- significant tax reform and reduction in the tax burden;
- targeted labour market programmes;
- implementation of a National Minimum Wage;
- better interaction of Tax/Welfare systems;
- actions with respect to adult literacy;
- actions in the area of equality and anti-discrimination.

3.3.3 The above measures are complemented with the implementation of a preventive strategy under the requirements of EU Employment Guidelines, of engaging systematically with persons at an early stage of unemployment in order to prevent their drift into long-term unemployment. Strategies to address the labour market and human capital development needs of the Irish economy are set out in Ireland's NDP. The Employment and Human Resource Development – Operational Programme (EHRD – OP) accounts for 25% of total planned expenditure. As required by the NDP, an explicit poverty criterion was considered in framing the OP proposals. The OP identifies the following Employability measures as contributing to the Social Inclusion Objective:

assist long-term unemployed (LTU) and socially excluded to contribute to society and improve prospects of 'regular' employment;

assist persons with disabilities to get employment;

increase retention of Traveller pupils to completion of post-primary senior cycle and to provide them with

further education/training options;

promote the access of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, mature second-chance students and students with disabilities to third-level education;

facilitate the integration of refugees into the education system and labour market.

3.3.4 Actions under other priorities can also, however, be seen as having social inclusion dimensions:

- **Early Literacy:** to prevent literacy difficulties at an early stage;
- **Early Education:** to encourage long-term education participation with a particular focus on the target groups of the disadvantaged and those with special needs;
- **School Guidance Service:** to ensure that difficulties encountered by students do not hinder their participation in the education system and provide guidance re further education/training options;
- **School Completion Initiative:** to seek to retain pupils to completion of senior-cycle post-primary education;
- **Early School Leaver (ESL) Progression:** to reduce early school leaving by developing foundation and progression places and services
- **Early School Leavers - Youthreach and Travellers:** to meet the needs of those who have left school early with no educational / vocational qualifications
- **National Employment Service:** to expand services to meet job-seekers and changing needs;
- **Employment Support Services:** to assist unemployed people to return to the labour market through employment or self-employment
- **Action Programme for the Unemployed:** to prevent persons on the Live Register drifting into long-term unemployment.

3.3.5 The above actions are delivered through a number of Government Departments and Agencies. Co-ordination of the implementation of those measures within the EHRD-OP is the responsibility of its Monitoring Committee supported by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Co-ordination of the wider group of employment-market measures and/or ESF-supported measures in this and other OPs within the CSF/NDP is the responsibility of the Employment and Human Resource Development Co-ordinating Committee which is chaired and serviced by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. In addition there are a range of ancillary, yet innovative services and supports designed to address social inclusion issues across a number of areas. Details are set out in the following paragraphs.

**3.4 Family Services Project:** Under the NDP, the Government provided €15.24million (IR£12 million) towards "the establishment of a Family Services Project which will involve working with people on an individual basis to enhance their capacity to improve their personal and family circumstances and to access opportunities for

education and employment". Pilot Family Services Projects are underway in local offices of the DSCFA in Waterford, Finglas in Dublin and Cork. The aim of the pilot projects is to provide enhanced access to information services for families in their own locations through development of the one-stop-shop concept. Within the pilots, an enhanced programme of support is available to a small group of families with complex needs, for example, very young lone mothers, other parents rearing children alone, dependent spouses in households depending on social welfare and carers. The projects have been subject to ongoing evaluation and a recent report recommends, inter-alia, mainstreaming of the pilots.

### 3.5 Training and Work for People with Disabilities:

Following the mainstreaming of services for people with disabilities, the Department of Health and Children retained responsibility for rehabilitative training via the Health Boards. Responsibility for the vocational training and employment of people with disabilities was transferred to FÁS. Extra funding provided in Budget 2001 will allow for increases in funding to specialist training organisations which provide vocational training to people with disabilities on behalf of FÁS. Funding was also provided in Budget 2001 to improve training allowances to people with disabilities in vocational training. A National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) on Training, Work and Employment for people with disabilities has been established to ensure coordination between the activities of the Health Boards and FÁS. Commitments in the PPF in relation to employment and training of people with disabilities will continue to be addressed progressively by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and FÁS, as follows:

- there will be increased emphasis on progression to employment for people with disabilities, with support from FÁS's Placement Services;
- a new national Supported Employment Programme, with funding of €6.35 million (IR£5 million) per annum, has been introduced to place people with disabilities into open employment;
- additional funding will be provided to improve training allowances for people with disabilities and for the delivery of vocational training programmes;
- FÁS will continue to improve the accessibility of its premises;
- additional funding is being provided in Budget 2001 to increase the Employment Support Scheme and the Workplace/Equipment Adaptation Grant scheme;
- new schemes for Disability Awareness Training grants and Employee Re-Training grants are being introduced by FÁS;
- there will be a review of the Positive to Disability Scheme, which recognises enterprises that take a positive approach to the employment of people with disabilities. The objective is to strengthen and promote this scheme.
- Sheltered employment models will be reviewed in



2001 to determine their role in contributing to employment for people with disabilities.

- Funding will be provided to the Social Partners to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

**3.6 Employability Study:** The DSCFA has now completed its study into "employability" and its relevance for the management of the Live Register. The study, which has just been published, recognises the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in addressing employability issues and makes a number of recommendations e.g. that training and employment schemes are still required; for some people the assistance of the Departments of Health and Children and Education and Science would still be required, and there is need for more co-ordination between the DSCFA and FAS.

**Other relevant material, in relation to Objective 1.1 (a) (I), is included in Annex D.**

[Objective 1.1 \(a\) \(II\) Developing policies to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, including the issue of child and dependent care](#)

**3.7 Introduction**

3.7.1 Having regard to the national objective of the continued development of an efficient and modern economy, capable of high and sustainable economic and employment growth, which is essential to the future well-being of all families, it is recognised that a better balance between work and family life would best be brought about through a range of approaches to policy in relevant areas. These policy areas include:

- the role of income support in meeting the needs of families when their responsibilities are at their most demanding;
- a policy approach which supports and promotes the introduction of family-friendly initiatives in the workplace;
- protection for workers and their families in a changing work environment.

3.7.2 Key developments include the following:

**3.8 Child Income Support:** The PPF provides that, over the course of the Programme, Child Benefit (which is a universal payment) will be substantially increased, with a priority focus towards €126.97 (IRE100) per month for the third and subsequent children. Investment in Child Benefit will rise by €1.27billion (IRE1billion) by 2003.

**3.9 Widening the standard rate band:** The policy of widening the standard rate band and putting it on a per person basis, which commenced in Budget 2000, is designed to meet the objective set out in the Government's Action Programme for the Millennium that 80% of taxpayers should pay tax at no more than the standard rate. In the PPF, the Social Partners supported the policy of establishing a single standard rate band for all taxpayers. One of the main problems with the income tax system in Ireland has been the low level of income at which single people became liable to the top rate of tax. In the 1999/2000 tax year, single persons were paying the top rate of tax (then 46%) on earnings of €0.018million (IRE0.014million). That income level was far less than the average industrial wage, which at that time stood at approx. €0.022million (IRE0.017million). This was mainly due to the band structure which, since 1980, meant that the single person's tax band was doubled for all married couples. The Government decided to move to widen the standard rate band, a development which will ultimately involve each person having his/her own standard rate band. The effect of this change, upon completion, will be to reduce the percentage of income earners on the top rate of income tax to 12%. It ensures that the second spouse no longer faces a high marginal tax rate on entering employment. The tax credit for married couples continues to be transferable regardless of whether one or both spouses are in employment.

**3.10 Carer's Leave:** In the context of Budget 2000, the Government announced an intention to introduce the Carer's Leave Bill in parallel with its decision to introduce a new insurance-based Carer's Benefit, as provided for in Budget 2001. The purpose of the legislation is to protect the employment rights of employees who take carer's leave. The Carer's Leave Bill provides that all eligible employees will have the right to temporarily leave their job for up to 65 weeks in order to look after someone in need of full time care. Employers will not be in a position to refuse this leave.

**3.11 Carer's Benefit:** The purpose of the Carer's Benefit scheme is to support people who must leave the workforce temporarily to care for someone who is in need of full-time care and attention. The scheme invokes two central elements, both of which are regarded as essential to the recipient. The first of these is a weekly non-means tested income support payment, to be operated and paid by the DSCFA. Unlike Carer's Allowance, this is a social insurance benefit and is paid provided the relevant Pay-Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions have been met. The second entitlement is the protection of the carer's employment rights for the duration of the caring period.

**3.12 Carer's Allowance:** In 2000, there were 14,678 recipients of Carer's Allowance in Ireland, of whom 79% were female. Only 38% of these claimants have children. In the 2000 Budget, the existing tax allowance for the employment of a carer can be claimed if a person or his/her spouse is totally incapacitated for a tax year, and he/she employs a person to care for either himself/herself or his/her incapacitated spouse. This tax allowance is now being extended to family members who employ a carer in respect of a totally incapacitated person.

**3.13 Family-Friendly Work Initiatives**

3.13.1 Currently there are a number of family-friendly working arrangements in place in the civil service, such as job-sharing, job-splitting, flexi-time, work-sharing, and term time. It is generally agreed that the effective use of such arrangements can contribute positively to the way work is organised and also help address a number of important human resource management challenges facing organisations. A recent study commissioned by the DSCFA on "Balancing Work and Family Life" found that flexible work practices were confined mainly to State and Semi-State Sectors. In the PPF, agreement was reached on a "National Framework for the Development of Family-Friendly Policies at the level of the Enterprise". A fund of €1.9million (IRE1.5million) was provided under the NDP to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for this purpose and work, under the Framework, has commenced.

3.13.2 Government approval has been given for the establishment of the Family Support and Mediation Service on a Statutory basis. This new Service will co-ordinate the main Government programmes designed to help prevent marital breakdown, assist couples who have decided to separate, support ongoing parenting relationships, raise awareness about family and parenting issues and work with voluntary groups in an empowering way to promote the well-being of families. It will provide a comprehensive and coherent response for families who have need of support services.

**3.14 Childcare Issues:** The Government is committed under the NDP to meeting the diverse needs of parents and children, including key target groups, through supporting the development of childcare services that are accessible and of high quality. A further aim, addressing the need for maximum mobilisation of the available labour force, is to enhance the opportunities and remove disincentives to participation by parents, particularly mothers, in economic and social activity through adequate childcare provision. Provision will be given to the development of childcare services in areas of disadvantage. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is leading the co-ordination of childcare service delivery over the course of the NDP and has

established structures to bring the key players together at national and local level to ensure effective development. In October 2000, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced details of a new Government €50.8million (IRE40million) package, over and above the €317.5million (IRE250million) allocation in the NDP, to expand the number of childcare places available throughout the country. In March 2001, a decision was taken by the Government to re-allocate childcare funding from other Government Departments to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, bringing the total childcare allocation of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for the period 2000 to 2006 to €436.79million (IRE344million). A significant proportion of this funding is being made available through the European Structural Funds and the European Regional Development Fund. Over 6,700 requests have been received to date for application forms in relation to the above measures; 867 applications for staffing and capital measures and other childminder initiatives have been received up to the end of April, 2001. The Government expects to increase the number of childcare places by 30% and establish 450 new childcare facilities by 2003. The Government has also set targets for upgrading 680 existing childcare facilities and training 450 new childcare workers as shown in the following table. The investment in childcare will be carefully monitored to ensure that it is achieving its targets and objectives. The following targets are provided for in the NDP:

**NDP targets for childcare measures for the period up to 2003:**

	S & E Region	BMW Region	National
No. of new facilities established	330	120	450
No. of facilities updated	500	180	680
Increased no. of childcare places	30%	30%	30%
No. of childcare workers supported	1100	450	1550
Increased no. of trained childcare workers	300	150	450
No. of local childcare networks established	20	13	33
No. of National Voluntary Childcare Organisations	9	9	9

**Other material, relevant to Objective 1.1 (a) (III), is included in Annex E.**

[Objective 1.1 \(a\) \(III\) Using the opportunities for integration and employment provided by the Social Economy](#)





**3.15 Introduction**

3.15.1 The key aims of the Social Economy Programme are to support the regeneration and quality of life of local disadvantaged areas and to maximise employment opportunities for long term unemployed and other disadvantaged persons. The Programme supports the development and operation of Social Economy Enterprises that provide social services and employment opportunities in and for disadvantaged communities. Financial grants and technical supports are provided for the development of Social Economy businesses for up to three years. This includes grant support for the development of a Business Plan.

3.15.2 A National Monitoring Committee made up of representatives from the Social Partners and relevant Government Departments and chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment monitors progress on an ongoing basis. This Monitoring Committee reports, in turn, on this ESF-funded measure to the EHRD-OP Monitoring Committee. The NDP provides for expenditure of €270.45million (IRE213 million) on the Social Economy Programme over the period 2000-2006. €21.58million (IRE17million) has been allocated to the Programme in 2001 and expenditure is forecast to rise to €52.06million (IRE41 million) per annum as the demand for the programme increases. The objective is to create employment for 2,500 people by the end of 2003. The Local Social Capital Initiative, a further smaller social economy measure under the EHRD-OP, is to be implemented by FÁS from 2002. Local Working Groups have been established by FÁS in consultation with Area Partnership Companies, in the thirty-eight designated disadvantaged areas to draw up an agreed local strategy for the development of the Programme. This includes the identification and prioritisation of new and innovative sectors of work activity where social economy enterprises will support the economic and social regeneration of the locality. The main partners represented on the local Working Groups include the Trade Union and Employer Organisations, Area Partnership Companies, Community and Voluntary Groups, Local Authorities, Health Boards, County Enterprise Boards and Farmers Interests. Local Working Groups have also been set up by FÁS in non-Partnership Areas.

[Objective 1.1 \(b\) Preventing the exclusion of people from the world of work by improving employability through human resource management, organisation of work and life-long learning](#)

**3.16 Life-long Learning (LLL) Task Force:** A LLL Task Force was established in the first quarter of 2000 in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science, the Social Partners and relevant implementation bodies. Key tasks followed by the Task Force are to identify existing LLL providers and programme provision,

map existing provision in terms of its adequacy and cover; and identify propose and cost priority actions on LLL, based on expanding or modifying existing provision or the development of new initiatives. There was a focus on developing, as a key aim of the LLL Task Force, specific initiatives to upgrade the skills of workers in low-paid work and those with low or obsolescent skills. Such initiatives would be based around promoting and enhancing access to training, the development of new skills, the acquisition of recognised qualifications and progression to higher level qualifications.

**See Annex F for additional material in relation to Objective 1.1 (b)**

**Other important areas under the theme of facilitating access to employment include those relating to equality issues.**

**3.17 NDP**

3.17.1 Among the objectives of the EHRD - OP are the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women and the adoption of a comprehensive gender mainstreaming approach, including measures to tackle gender employment gaps and monitoring of progress through data collection. A gender equality perspective has also been incorporated across the NDP through the strategy of gender mainstreaming, by which all programmes and measures must actively and openly be assessed at the planning stage for their possible effects on the respective situation of women and men. It is a requirement in the NDP that indicators to assess the progress of measures be broken down by gender 'where the nature of the assistance permits'. In the EHRD-OP, commitments have been made to disaggregate 104 indicators, by measure, between 2000 and 2006. A databank of pre-existing gender disaggregated statistics has been compiled. Many of these statistics relate to the issue of women in employment and training.

3.17.2 The NDP Gender Equality Unit has been set up in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to support policy makers in Government Departments and Agencies. For comprehensive information on gender mainstreaming and the work of the Unit, see [www.irigov.ie/justice/equality/gender](http://www.irigov.ie/justice/equality/gender). During 2000, the NDP Gender Equality Unit provided training on gender mainstreaming to over 300 officials from Government Departments, implementing Agencies and Social Partner organisations. The implementation of the equal opportunities commitment in the NDP will be monitored over the life of the NDP, and progress reports on equal opportunities will be presented to the monitoring committees which oversee spending in the NDP. In addition, the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee, which is being chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, will report to the NDP/CSF monitoring committee on equal opportunities, particularly gender equality, and social inclusion.

**3.18 Equal Opportunities at the level of the Enterprise:**

The outcomes of the work of the Framework Committee established under the PPF to develop equal opportunities at the level of the enterprise will be disseminated across the public and private sectors. The implication of this work for the further development of institutional supports for promoting equality at the level of the enterprise will be identified and developed by the relevant bodies.

**3.19 EAP 2001- Equal Opportunities for Women and Men:**

The EAP 2001, sets out the employment and labour market objectives being pursued in Ireland consistent with the strategy being promoted under the Equal Opportunities Pillar of the EU Employment Strategy. Key issues addressed relate to several policy headings, including gender mainstreaming, gender gaps and reconciling work and family life.

**3.20 Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs):**

Recommendations in the Report on Access by Women to the labour market were substantially implemented by FÁS insofar as they relate to enhancing the prospects of women returning to the labour market. In 2000, of FÁS' total training and total employment programmes throughput, 56% were women. Of total starts on programmes in 2000 (which amounted to 97,879), 46.7% were women. In 2001, FÁS will provide allowances for childcare in respect of persons who wish to take up training for the purposes of returning to work. Eligibility for the Community Employment programme was extended to adult dependants of long-term unemployed persons (Qualified Adults), Widows/Widowers, persons in receipt of Deserted Wives Benefit, and persons previously in receipt of Carers Allowance for a minimum of 12 months.

**3.21 Gender Gaps**

**3.21.1 The Unemployment Gap:** In the most recent Quarterly National Household Survey figures, the unemployment rate for men and women was the same at 3.7% for the First Quarter 2001. For the same period the average overall growth in employment levels was 3.6%, compared to the year ended First Quarter 2000, with an annual average increase for men of 2.9% and for women of 4.6%.

**3.21.2 Equal Pay:** The ESRI study, "How Unequal? Men and Women in the Irish Labour Market" was launched in

October 2000. Using 1997 data covering all economic sectors and benefits, including pensions, the research shows a narrowing of the gap in hourly earnings between men and women to 15.5% across all economic sectors. In accordance with a commitment in the PPF, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has set up the Consultative Group on Male/Female Wage Differentials, including representation from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Social Partners, to consider the recommendations of the ESRI research (including the case for a sectoral analysis in both the public and private sectors) and develop proposals for action/s to address issues identified in the study for consideration by Government. The first meeting of the Group took place on 22 May, 2001.

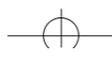
**3.22 Key Indicators relevant to Facilitating Participation in Employment:**

Policy indicators for measuring progress in relation to Objective 1.1 include employment and educational attainment rates as set out as follows:

**3.22.1 Employment Rate:** The Lisbon European Council stated that the overall aim of employment, social and economic policies (outlined in the Lisbon conclusions) should be, "on the basis of the available statistics, to raise the employment rate from an average of 61% today to as close as possible to 70% by 2010 and to increase the number of women in employment from an average of 51% today to more than 60% by 2010. Recognising their different starting points, Member States should consider setting national targets for an increased employment rate. This, by enlarging the labour force, will reinforce the sustainability of social protection systems." Ireland, on the basis of the employment and labour market policies being pursued, is fully committed to the goal of full employment. This goal, has been clearly articulated from the first EAP commencing in April 1998 and underpins the policies, strategies and actions notified in all subsequent annual EAPs to date. Strong economic growth in Ireland has translated into substantial and sustained employment growth in recent years (see following table). Significant improvements in the employment rate are being achieved with both male and female employment rates increasing by 8 percentage and almost 9 percentage points, respectively, since 1997. The result is that substantial progress on the path towards the Lisbon goal is proceeding apace and the ambition is for the upward trajectory in the employment rate into the future to be maintained.

Employment Rate	'95	'97	'99	'00	EU Average '00
Male	66.5%	67.5%	73.5%	75.6%	71.6%
Female	41.4%	44.6%	51.3%	53.3%	52.6%
Total	54.0%	56.1%	62.5%	64.5%	62.1%

Source: Central Statistics Office: Labour Force Survey 1995,1997, Quarterly National Household Survey Quarter 2 1999, Quarter 2 2000



Quarter 1, 2001 - Unemployment Rates

- Unemployment Rate 3.7%
- Long-Term Unemployment Rate 1.2% (i.e. 21,500 people who are more than 12 months unemployed).

Referrals to FAS

- in 2000 almost 55,000 people were referred to FAS and in the region of 70% left the Live Register.
- proportion of long-term unemployed on FAS courses has increased from 11% to 22% since 1998.

**3.22.2 Educational attainment level of the adult population (15-64):** Overall, in Ireland more than 55% of the adult population, aged between 15 and 64, have attained levels of education higher than upper secondary (See following table). A further breakdown of the figures shows the high proportion of adults in the older age groups who had not had the opportunity to access education beyond the primary level. The favourable situation for younger generations is dramatically illustrated by the fact that roughly 75% of those aged between 25 and 34 have attained upper secondary level education or higher as compared to the overall education attainment of 55% for all adults. There is little disparity between the educational attainment levels based on gender with the educational attainment levels of young women being slightly ahead of their male counterparts.

	1-24 %	25-34 %	35-44 %	45-54 %	55-64 %	Totals 15-64 %
Primary	14.5	7.9	14.8	31.8	48.9	23.6
Lower-Secondary	31.3	18.1	21.8	19.8	14.4	21.1
Upper-Secondary	35.7	24.7	25.5	18.6	14.0	23.7
Non-University	11.9	28.4	22.5	16.9	12.4	18.4
Degree or above	5.3	18.2	13.2	10.8	8.3	11.2
Other	0.7	1.6	1.3	1.0	0.7	1.1
Not stated	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.0
Overall Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Quarterly National Household Survey Q2 2000

Objective 1.2 Facilitating access to resources, rights, goods and services for all

**3.23 Introduction**

- 3.23.1 This Section of the NAPIncl deals with the following:
- To organise social protection systems in such a way that they help in particular to:
    - guarantee that everyone has the resources necessary to live in accordance with human dignity;
    - overcome obstacles to employment by ensuring that the take-up of employment results in

increased income and by promoting employability.

(b) To implement policies which aim to provide access for all to decent and sanitary housing, as well as the basic services necessary to live normally having regard to local circumstances (electricity, water, heating etc.).

(c) To put in place policies which aim to provide access for all to healthcare appropriate to their situation, including situations of dependency.

(d) To develop, for the benefit of people at risk of exclusion, services and accompanying measures which will allow them effective access to education, justice and other public and private services, such as culture, sport and leisure.

3.23.2 The social welfare system has a range of objectives including the alleviation of poverty, protection of living standards and redistribution across the lifecycles. The broad structure of the Irish social welfare system comprises a system of social insurance, with contributions from employers, employees and the State financing contributory benefits, and a system of social assistance with means-tested payments for many of the same contingencies (old age, unemployment, etc.). A universal child benefit payment was introduced as early as 1944, but operates alongside payments made as "qualified child dependant" additions to recipients of most social welfare schemes. Social welfare recipients with a dependent spouse, who has no income or limited income, also receive an additional "qualified adult allowance". Payments are almost always flat-rate rather than earnings-related.

3.23.3 The safety-net Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme (currently being reviewed) was established in 1975. It provides a guaranteed minimum income to those, residing in the State, whose means are insufficient to meet their needs.

3.23.4 The fundamental purpose of the income support system, together with secondary benefits, is to provide an adequate level of resources to people in times of need, in a manner which preserves the dignity of the client. The primary goal of providing income support highlights a number of related objectives and issues including the alleviation and prevention of poverty. If poverty is viewed as exclusion from the generally approved standards and styles of living in society as a whole, then income support should ensure that no person falls below a minimum living standard.

Objective 1.2 (a) (i) Guaranteeing that everyone has the resources necessary to live in accordance with human dignity

**3.24 Income Adequacy**

3.24.1 The NAPS objective relating to income adequacy is to ensure that all policies in relation to income support (e.g. employment, tax, social welfare, pensions) provide sufficient income for a person to move out of poverty and live in a manner compatible with human dignity. Developments under this approach are set out as follows:

3.24.2 The PPF set the following targets for social welfare rates over the three year duration of the Programme:

- all social welfare rates will be increased in real terms;
- substantial progress will be made towards a target of €126.97 (IRE100) per week for the lowest rates of social welfare;
- Child Benefit will be substantially increased over the period of the programme, with a priority focus towards €126.97 (IRE100) per month for the third and subsequent children.

3.24.3 Under the terms of the PPF, a Social Welfare Benchmarking and Indexation Working Group (BIG) was established in late 2000 to examine the issues involved in developing a benchmark for adequacy of adult and child social welfare payments. The main issues being dealt with by the Group are outlined in Section 2 and include child income support, indexation policy and issues relating to use of relative poverty measures. The BIG's recent interim report indicated that, amongst the various other criteria, it intends to consider the impact of various benchmark and indexation options on relative income poverty levels, and to consider the relative merits of the consistent poverty and relative income poverty measurements. The BIG intends to complete its work by end-July, 2001.

**3.25 Pensions**

3.25.1 The main components of pensions provision are the social welfare pension and occupational pensions; the latter building on the former. Some people also have savings and/or continue to work part-time. The social welfare pension equates to some 31% of gross average industrial earnings. At present only half of those at work have occupational pensions - employers are not obliged to provide these. The main policy issues revolve around:

- the level of the social welfare pension;
- the eligibility conditions for social welfare pensions including the position of older women who left the paid workforce to become homemakers;
- the extension and enhancement of occupational/personal pensions coverage.

3.25.2 One of the main objectives in recent decades has been to increase coverage under social insurance which provides entitlement to non means-tested pensions. This

removes the disincentives to saving, including acquiring entitlement to supplementary pensions, and earnings from employment/self-employment, which can result from means-testing. In the period since 1973 social insurance cover has been extended to all employees, including part-time employees, public servants recruited after 1995 and the self-employed. Provision is also made for the award of credited contributions to maintain pension cover during periods of absence from the workforce as a result of full time caring for children and other dependent relatives, incapacity for work and unemployment. As a result of these extensions, the proportion of social security pensioners receiving means-tested pensions under social assistance has fallen from 36% of the total in 1990 to 25% in 2001, and is projected to fall further to 14.5% in 2011, 6% in 2026 and 3% in 2056. Since 1980 pension increases have broadly kept pace with increases in earnings. This time scale, however, includes periods of percentage increases higher than the rate of increases in earnings (e.g. 1980/85 and 1995/2000) and, on the other hand, lower than earnings changes (e.g. 1985/95). A commitment was made in the Programme for Government to increase all social security payments to pensioners to €127 (IRE100) per week by 2002 and this will apply also to social assistance pensioners. The Programme also commits to earnings indexation of pensions over the term of the current Government.

3.25.3 The Pensions Board which, inter alia, advises the Government on pensions policy, recommended in a report, *Securing Retirement Income (1998)*, that the target social welfare pension rate should be 34% of gross average industrial earnings and significant progress towards this target has been made. The State in Ireland relies on voluntary occupational and personal pension plans to provide supplementary pension cover for those on higher earnings, designed to maintain their pre-retirement earnings. Overall, less than half the work force have supplementary pension cover. The Pensions Board, in its report, indicated that the objective should be that up to 70% of the workforce should have supplementary coverage leaving a shortfall of over 20% without cover who need it. Virtually all employees in the public sector are members of supplementary schemes and some 38% of all employees in the private sector. The majority of private sector workers with no supplementary pension cover are employees of smaller companies, part-time, temporary and contract employees and those working in the agricultural and fishing sectors.

3.25.4 Under the PPF, the Social Partners are committed to improvements in the coverage rate of occupational pensions and, in this context, the main vehicle is seen to be the Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA). This will be a low-cost, easy-access personal investment account designed to allow people, regardless of their employment status, to save for retirement in a flexible manner to complement the social welfare pension. The framework for the PRSA is a significant component of

forthcoming pensions legislation. Other aspects of the legislation, the broad objective of which is to improve the position of occupational pension members, include the treatment of pension scheme surpluses, the establishment of a Pensions Ombudsman and the indexation of occupational pension schemes. It is expected that this Bill will be enacted by the end of 2001. In this regard, it is hoped that PRSAs will come on the market in early 2002.

3.25.5 One of the main challenges in the future relates to the pension and long-term care areas given the change in the demographic profile in the medium/longer term and the change in family structures. A significant development in this area is the establishment of a Pensions Reserve Fund under which 1% of GNP will be transferred each year to partly pre-fund the future cost of State pensions. There can be no withdrawals from this Fund until 2025. Specific research initiatives are also underway in the long-term care area with particular focus on the rate of the public and private sections and the feasibility of partnerships in this regard. It is significant that the main developments in the pensions area have been progressed via a partnership process involving the Government, the Social Partners, pensioner groups and the pensions industry and it is envisaged that this approach will continue.

**3.26 Supplementary Welfare Allowance:** In addition to income maintenance payments covering pensioners, the unemployed, lone parents and others, a guarantee of minimum income is also provided through the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme. Entitlement to SWA is based solely on need and, thus, SWA complements the categorical schemes by providing a "safety net" for people who do not qualify for payment under one of the categorical schemes. Most beneficiaries are recipients of rent supplement, a periodic SWA payment made in respect of private sector rent costs, mainly to people whose main, or sole, source of income is a primary weekly social welfare payment. A fundamental review of the SWA system, and of the role of the Community Welfare Officers, who administer the scheme at a local level, is currently underway. It is proposed that housing needs, currently addressed through local long term Rent Supplement Payments, be in future met in the main by Local Authorities, through a combination of social housing provision and private sector rental assistance.

**3.27 Administrative Individualisation within the social welfare system:** The Working Group Examining the Treatment of Married, Cohabiting and One-Parent Families under the Tax and Social Welfare Codes (1999) looked at a number of options for individualising the social welfare code and considered the social insurance system to be the most suitable vehicle for expanding the system of individual rights and entitlements. This would be in keeping with the

policies of successive Governments which have sought to expand social insurance coverage so that more people could establish their own individual entitlements. At this stage we have a fairly comprehensive social insurance system with almost all workers and self-employed people contributing. The DSCFA currently has a scheme in place known as the Homemakers Scheme which is designed to protect the pension entitlements of those who take time out of the workforce for caring duties. The scheme, which operates from 1994, involves disregarding these periods when a person's average contribution record is being assessed for pension purposes. At present the scheme is being reviewed as part of a second phase report on qualification conditions for pension purposes which will be completed later this year. The expansion of the existing arrangements for separate payments was also recommended by the Working Group mentioned above so that the Qualified Adult Allowance (QAA) could be paid direct to a spouse or partner on a more general basis. This system, known as administrative individualisation, is at present being examined by a working group, set up under the PPF. Proposals in relation to administrative individualisation will enhance proposals for significant increases in QAA paid to pensioners announced in Budget 2001.

See Annex G for additional material in relation to Objective 1.2 (a) (I).

[Objective 1.2 \(a\) \(II\) Overcoming obstacles to employment by ensuring that the take-up of employment results in increased income and by promoting employability](#)

### 3.28 Introduction

3.28.1 The shift from passive income support for unemployed people towards an active approach has been a feature of labour market and social security policy for a number of years. This is manifest in the large range and scale of active labour market programmes encompassing wage subsidy, training and work experience programmes. The main aim of the Back to Work Allowance scheme is to allow, and encourage, people who have been long-term welfare-dependent to test employment options and regain a foothold in the labour market while retaining some degree of financial security during the early years of employment or self-employment. The EAP 2001 sets out the principal policy actions being pursued within an overall policy of enhanced employability - see Objective 1.1. Ireland has one of the highest levels of expenditure on active labour market programmes in Europe and well exceeds the EU target of 20% participation for unemployed people on training and other employability support programmes. In addition to taxation changes and active labour market programmes, initiatives such as life-long learning have a significant part to play in ensuring that the take-up of employment results in increased income.

3.28.2 A key aspect of activation is the need to increase the reward for work. This is being achieved through a balanced strategy of removing the low paid from the tax net, reducing the burden of personal taxation more generally, completing the changeover to a more equitable system of tax credits and widening of the standard rate band. There has been fundamental **reform of the taxation system**. Budget 2001 completed the move to tax credits and further reduced both the standard rate and higher rates of tax by 2% (to 20% and 42% respectively) and widened tax bands considerably. The threshold for the top rate of tax was increased to €25,400 (IRE20,000) which is about 110% of the average industrial wage. The tax changes will remove approximately 133,000 taxpayers on low incomes from the tax net and approximately 106,600 will be removed from the top rate of tax. The number of income earners outside the tax net now stands at 38% while at the same time only 23% of income earners are subject to the higher rate of tax.

3.28.3 On the matter of **tax/benefit interaction**, poor co-ordination between tax and welfare policies can weaken work incentives. This can make the transition from unemployment to work less attractive and can lessen the incentives for persons to remain in employment or extend their working hours. Targeted changes to tackle unemployment and poverty traps, e.g. moving the Family Income Supplement (FIS) from a gross income means assessment to a net basis, allowing long-term unemployed retain medical cards for three years after transition to work, tapering off Supplementary Welfare Allowance and rent and mortgage support through participation in ALMPs, have been a significant feature of reforms in this area in recent years. One of the principal policy changes to decouple low income supports from employment status is to increase Child Benefit, the only universal scheme payable to families without regard to insurance contributions or family income.

3.28.4 The various social welfare payments for **lone parents** have been reviewed and modified in recent years in order to streamline their effectiveness, provide for equality of treatment of men and women, and respond to developments in society. The most notable development involved the introduction of a new One Parent Family Payment in January 1997. The means-tested One Parent Family Payment aims to strike a reasonable balance between maintaining an adequate level of financial support for those parents choosing to look after their children full-time, while at the same time facilitating those lone parents who wish to enter/re-enter the workforce (or at least retain contact with the labour market to facilitate them taking up employment when their children get older). A central feature of the One Parent Family Payment is the income disregard which is intended to encompass working expenses including childcare. The scheme also aims to ensure that lone parents can more easily assess the implications of returning to work/training.

3.28.5 The introduction of a **National Minimum Wage**, in April 2000, aims to improve the financial return from work. It is set to increase from an hourly rate of €5.59 (€4.40) to €5.97 (€4.70) from July 2001.

[Objective 1.2 \(b\) Implementing policies which aim to provide access for all to decent and sanitary housing as well as the basic services necessary to live normally having regard to local circumstances \(electricity, water, heating etc.\)](#)

### 3.29 Introduction

3.29.1 The stock of public infrastructure in an economy is a major determinant of society's capacity to address its major social needs. Infrastructure is a priority of this Plan because of the need to sustain the level of activity, improve access for all to basic services and enhance the potential of less developed areas.

### 3.30 Housing

3.30.1 The inclusion of housing in the NDP for the first time reflects the Government's commitment to addressing the infrastructural deficit in the size of the national housing stock in relation to the growing housing requirements of an expanding and changing population. Failure to address these issues effectively would impose significant costs and constraints upon Ireland's economic growth, competitiveness and social development. The ESRI, in presenting its views on national investment priorities, clearly outlined four public policy priorities in relation to housing: the preparation of a long-term strategic planning framework, increased resources for servicing residential lands, increased resources for public transport and adequate funding for an increased level of social housing provision. The NDP includes investment provisions to act on all these recommendations, including a significant increase in investment funding for the provision of social and affordable housing. Annual private housing output exceeded 46,000 in 2000 in response to increased demand and is forecast to remain at high levels over the NDP period. Coupled with increased social and affordable housing provision, annual total housing output will be in excess of 50,000 units per annum over the remainder of the NDP period.

3.30.2 It is estimated that it will be necessary to provide over 500,000 additional new dwellings over the coming ten years to meet demand, over 70% of which will be required in the Southern and Eastern region. In terms of quantifying the housing deficit, Ireland's housing stock per thousand of population is the lowest in the EU at 327 housing units per thousand of population as compared to 435 per thousand in the UK and a European average in the region of 450 per thousand. It is estimated that the construction of 500,000 dwellings over the next ten years

would bring the Irish housing stock to about 395-400 units per thousand of population. Average household size in Ireland has fallen from 3.28 in 1991 to 3.04 in 1998 and is forecast to converge rapidly to the European average of 2.63. As the average Irish household size converges towards European norms a significant demand for additional housing is created. In addition, the rapid growth in incomes and employment, the significant increase in the number of people in the key household formation age groups, and, particularly, high immigration, have all impacted very significantly on demand for housing. These factors have resulted in demand for housing escalating at an unprecedented rate in recent years and it is likely that this high level of demand will continue for the period of the NDP. The most significant symptom of this increased level of demand, and the inability of the supply response to keep pace, has been rapid increases in house prices and rents over recent years. The priorities for investment in housing under the NDP will be to provide the necessary infrastructural investment to facilitate the overall level of housing output required to meet the current and anticipated levels of demand in a planned coherent fashion.

**3.31 Traveller Accommodation:** All Local Authorities, required to do so, adopted 5 year programmes as required by the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998, and have now proceeded to implementation stage. The Department of the Environment & Local Government continues to cover 100% recoupment of the capital cost, incurred by Local Authorities, in meeting Traveller accommodation needs, amounting to €15.11million (IR£11.9million) in 2000. The capital allocation for the provision and improvement of Traveller specific accommodation for 2001 is set at €16.51million (IR£13million). Seminars were held for Local Authority staff and Traveller representatives to improve the take-up of the scheme of pilot initiatives to improve management and maintenance of Traveller accommodation. The Department continues to recoup 90% of the salaries of Local Authority social workers dealing with the provision of accommodation of Travellers, amounting to €1.4million (IR£1.1million) in 2000. In addition, the Department recouped 90% of the salary of a National Accommodation Officer for Travellers, employed by the Irish Traveller Movement. The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee meets regularly. A review of the operation of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultation Committees was undertaken in 2000, and a report will issue in 2001. Guidelines on the provision of transient sites and a booklet on 'Accommodation Options for Travellers' were issued in 2000.

**3.32 ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** All new and upgraded rail and bus stations financed under the NDP, will be accessible to mobility impaired and disabled people. All light rail vehicles and suburban railcars, financed under the NDP, will also be accessible. All buses purchased by Córas Iompair Éireann (CIE – State transport company) from 2000 onwards, for use on urban services, will be low floor. Policy with regard to introducing only low-floor buses in urban areas is being implemented.

**Further details on areas relating to Objective 1.2 (b) are contained in Annex H.**

Objective 1.2 (c) Putting in place policies which aim to provide access for all to healthcare appropriate to their situation, including situations of dependency

### 3.33 Introduction

3.33.1 The 1990s, and, in particular, the period since the publication of the National Health Strategy 1994-1998, Shaping a Healthier Future, has been characterised by accelerated progress in strategic planning and policy development in the health services in Ireland. The Health Amendment (No. 3) Act, 1996 requires Health Boards to adopt service plans and to operate within these plans throughout the year. This binding legislative requirement has given a structure to the review and planning of service delivery. The recent Health (Eastern Regional Authority) Act is a further step in ensuring that the optimum structure and systems are in place to facilitate best practice in planning and delivery of service. Following a period of fiscal restraint in the mid-to-late 1980s, the 1990s has seen a resurgence in public spending on health. Since 1994, there has been a real increase of 7% per annum in voted health expenditure. Over the three years 1998 to 2000, the average annual real increase has been 15.9%. The NDP provision for health investment in our health infrastructure is to be taken to a new level so that we will be in a position to meet the real challenges facing future service provision in the sector. The priorities for spending the funds allocated through the NDP are:

- to provide facilities for persons with an intellectual disability with the aim of ensuring that appropriate services are available as required;
- to develop a range of facilities for the elderly;
- to address major unmet needs in the provision of modern accommodation for the mentally ill and the physically disabled;
- to provide a comprehensive, quality and accessible acute hospital infrastructure;
- to address child care needs;
- to remedy deficiencies in the network of health centres;
- to maximise the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) in the health care sector.

3.33.2 A National Steering Group has been established to oversee the development of the National Health Strategy. Currently, seven Working Groups have been established to examine a number of issues relevant to the Strategy, in particular, eligibility, funding, delivery systems (including human resources), e-health, quality, health promotion/population health and the future ahead for the health care system. An extensive consultation process is seen as crucial to the process of developing the new strategy including a National Consultative Forum. The Strategy will be completed in mid 2001. The findings of the NAPS review Health Working Group, referred to in Section 2 of this Plan, will feed into the revised NAPS later in 2001.

Objective 1.2 (d) Developing, for the benefit of people at risk of exclusion, services and accompanying measures which will allow them effective access to education, justice and other public and private services, such as culture, sport and leisure

### 3.34 INTRODUCTION

3.34.1 The rate of investment in education and training has been identified as one of the primary contributors to our economic development. The Government recognises that raising educational attainment reduces the equilibrium rate of unemployment and the level of social exclusion. There is an additional need to ensure that social inclusion is promoted through providing effective access to justice and other public and private services.

### 3.35 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

3.35.1 "Giving Children an Even Break": Primary School Level Programme: The objective of this programme, operated by the Department of Education and Science, is to make a significant impact in addressing educational disadvantage in primary schools and enhancing the life chances of many young people who might not otherwise reach their true potential. This programme will benefit 2,276 primary schools, involve the appointment of 204 extra teachers and involve extra funding of over almost €33million (IR£26million) to be spent over a three-year period 2001-2003 targeting children who are most at risk of not reaching their potential in education. These children were identified in a survey carried out by the Educational Research Centre, which was the most comprehensive survey ever of the incidence of educational disadvantage in primary schools in Ireland.

3.35.2 **Adult Literacy:** The White Paper " Learning For Life" was published in August, 2000 and identified adult literacy as the first priority in the field of adult education and, notwithstanding increased provision to date, very significant investment will be made over the next three

years to combat illiteracy. The work of the Inter-Departmental Group on Literacy for the Unemployed will be maintained. This Group has already made an interim report to the Government and its recommendations are being implemented as part of the White Paper and with funding from the NDP. The aim is to enable up to 46,000 to benefit from the programme. In 2001 the adult literacy budget will be €13.56million (IR£10.677million). €93.7million (IR£73.8million) is provided for this area under the NDP. Other education initiatives are outlined under Objective 3 (b).

### 3.36 Access to Justice

3.36.1 **Drugs Courts:** A Pilot Drugs Court Programme was launched in the Dublin District Court in January 2001 and will run in Dublin's North Inner City for a period of 18 months. The development of the Drugs Court is designed as an alternative measure for dealing with less serious and non-violent drug offenders. The Pilot Court will be available to persons aged 17 and over who plead guilty or have been found guilty of a drug or drug related offence of a non-violent nature that would ordinarily warrant imprisonment. A rehabilitation programme, capable of being tailored to meet the individual needs of each offender, will be provided by the Eastern Regional Health Authority, the Probation and Welfare Service, FÁS, and the Department of Education and Science with further services sought from other Agencies as, and when, necessary.

3.36.2 **Civil Legal Aid and Advice:** The Legal Aid Board which provides legal aid and advice to persons of modest means at little cost in civil matters was established on a Statutory footing in 1996, when the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995 came into effect. The Board provides legal services from 31 law centres which are located throughout the country. Each law centre is staffed by solicitors and administrative staff who are permanent employees of the Board. To supplement this service, the Legal Aid Board operates a "private practitioners scheme" which makes the services of private solicitors, who have agreed to participate in the scheme, available to applicants in cases of geographic remoteness or where the exigencies of the law centre service so require. The Mission Statement of the Legal Aid Board is "to provide the clients of the Legal Aid Board with a professional, efficient and cost effective civil legal aid service". The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform also provides financial support to Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) which operate at a number of locations throughout the country.

### 3.37 Access to Services

3.37.1 **Access to the Built Environment:** In June, 2000, the Minister for the Environment and Local Government amended Part M of the Building Regulations and

published a revised edition of the related Technical Guidance Document M – Access for People with Disabilities. New dwellings commencing on or after 1 January, 2001 must be visitable by people with disabilities. The Minister also amended the Regulations to impose a more stringent legal requirement for suitability of disabled access to new non-residential buildings (e.g. places of employment and leisure – hotels, cinemas etc.). Such access will now have to be "adequate", not just "reasonable". The Department will continue to monitor enforcement of the building code by local Building Control Authorities during the period 2001 – 2003.

**3.37.2 Wheelchair Accessible Taxis:** By end 2003, the process will commence of making all taxi vehicles wheelchair accessible. It is intended to consult extensively with representatives of consumer groups, of disabled persons and of taxi service providers to develop further quality improvements for taxi services in the medium term.

**3.37.3 Community Arts For Everyone:** The report of the Arts Intervention Project Scheme II - a programme which examined how the arts can be used for social and vocational integration of the long term unemployed - will inform future policy in all areas of the arts and community development.

**Further details on areas relating to Objective 1.2 (d) are contained in Annex I.**

## OBJECTIVE 2 - TO PREVENT THE RISKS OF EXCLUSION

### 3.38 Introduction

3.38.1 This part of the NAPincl deals with the following objectives:

(a) To exploit fully the potential of the knowledge-based society and of new information and communication technologies and ensure that no-one is excluded, taking particular account of the needs of people with disabilities.

(b) To put in place policies which seek to prevent life crises which can lead to situations of social exclusion, such as indebtedness, exclusion from school and becoming homeless.

(c) To implement action to preserve family solidarity in all its forms.

[Objective 2\(a\) Exploiting fully the potential of the knowledge-based society and of new information and communication technologies and ensuring that no-one is excluded, taking particular account of the needs of people with disabilities](#)

### 3.39 Introduction

3.39.1 In an information society one of the key challenges is to ensure that no group be left behind. The following are a number of key initiatives which, when implemented, will help address the digital divide and also improve access for everyone to State services.

#### 3.40 CAIT Initiative:

The CAIT (Community Application of Information Technology) Initiative was launched by the Minister for Public Enterprise on 1 December 2000. The initiative will provide funding of up to €3.17million (IRE2.5million) over the period June 2001 to December 2002 for Community and Voluntary Sector projects which harness the new information and communication technologies for social development purposes. Grants of up to €0.13million (IRE0.1million) per project are available for 25 plus projects, expected to be commissioned by early June 2001. In order to ensure a regional balance in the portfolio of projects supported, it is intended that at least one project will come from each of the eight regional authority geographical areas.

**3.41 "Universal Participation" initiative:** This initiative, to be launched Summer 2001, is designed to stimulate a demand for access and participation in the information age, and will focus on locally based community workers or 'champions' who will work within their communities to encourage participation through the promotion of literacy (including technology literacy), beneficial links with industry, education and other local players and promote participation in e-learning and community building using the Internet. This will complement the CAIT initiative and link up with other community based initiatives focused on participation which will emerge over the coming year.

**3.42 REACH:** REACH is a cross-departmental Agency, launched in September 2000, to improve the quality of service to customers of the Irish Public Service. REACH's particular mandates are to develop a framework to integrate public services and to specify and establish a single gateway to Government – the Public Services Broker. The Public Services Broker is a new model for the electronic delivery of public services. The Public Services Broker Bill proposes to provide the necessary legislative framework for the establishment and operation of the Public Services Broker. The Bill will be enacted by end 2001.

**3.43 eEurope Action Plan and Benchmarking:** Rapid progress in developing the Information Society agenda is seen as vital for Ireland's future competitiveness. Electronic Government (eGovernment) forms an essential part of an Information Society and its implementation is also an integral part of reform of the public service and improved service delivery to public service customers. The eEurope Action Plan has been adopted to advance the development of the Information Society at European level. A set of benchmarking targets have been adopted to measure progress in each of the Member States to be measured. A list of twenty common public services has been agreed as the basis for the benchmarks. The degree to which these services are available online will be an indicator of progress in each Member State.

**3.44 Public Internet Access Pilot Project:** The Government's Information Society Action Plan<sup>5</sup> included the objective of enabling internet access for those who do not have PC/internet access at present. Four Internet Kiosks, for use by members of the public, are expected to be installed in the public office area of Ballyfermot (Dublin) Social Welfare Local Office in mid-June, 2001.

**Additional material in relation to Objective 2 (a) is contained in Annex J**

[Objective 2\(b\) Putting in place policies which seek to prevent life crises which can lead to situations of social exclusion, such as indebtedness, exclusion from school and becoming homeless](#)

### 3.45 Introduction

3.45.1 For those that experience poverty, certain events in the lifecycle can exacerbate their position and specific targeted interventions are needed in these situations. These interventions include the activities of the DSCFA in tackling the problems of moneylending and over-indebtedness and the Government's Homeless Strategy which recognises that homelessness is not just about accommodation, but that other areas including care and welfare, health, education, training and prevention must be addressed if homelessness is to be tackled.

**3.46 Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS):** The DSCFA is involved in activities to tackle the problems of moneylending and overindebtedness. Currently 50 local projects provide advice on money management and budgeting to families and persons who are experiencing difficulty. Challenges for the future include deepening the "community education" aspect of the service and strengthening the policy framework for the delivery of the MABS. The service will also be put on a Statutory basis this year.

**3.47 Homelessness:** The Government's Homeless Strategy, which is based on the work of the Cross Department Team, was launched in May 2000. The strategy, for the first time, provides for an integrated response to homelessness by all the Statutory and Voluntary Agencies and bodies involved in providing services to homeless persons. It recognises that homelessness is not just about accommodation, but that other areas including care and welfare, health, education, training and prevention must be addressed if homelessness is to be tackled. Substantial additional funding has been made available to ensure that the recommendations of the Government's Strategy are implemented. Capital funding for the direct provision by Local Authorities of accommodation for homeless persons is being doubled from €25.39million (IRE20million) to €50.79million (IRE40million) over the next five years and current funding is being increased by €7.62 million (IRE6 million) per annum to increase bednight contribution rates to voluntary bodies and to fund other support services such as settlement and outreach services. Additional funding of €7.62 million (IRE6million) will also be available from the Department of Health and Children to fund the provision of in-house care in hostels providing accommodation for homeless people. In addition, a special provision of €6.35million (IRE5million) over 2000/2001 was announced in Budget 2000 for the provision of two high support hostels for alcohol and drug users in Dublin. As part of the Homeless Strategy, a Homeless Services Agency has been established for the Dublin area to manage and co-ordinate the delivery of all services by both Statutory and Voluntary Agencies to homeless persons in Dublin. A Preventative Strategy to target key groups at risk of homelessness, particularly those leaving custodial or health-related care, is currently being prepared at national level by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, together with the Departments of Health and Children, Education and Science and Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This Strategy is currently being finalised and will be published shortly.

**3.48 New National Drugs Strategy:** The National Drugs Strategy (NDS) 2001-2008 was launched on 10 May. The review of the previous NDS, initiated in 2000, was managed by a review Group comprising members of the Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) on Drugs and the National Drugs Strategy Team (NDST). Independent consultants were commissioned to assist with the review process which included a nation-wide consultation process over the Summer months in 2000. The objective was to review the current National Drugs Strategy, identify any gaps and deficiencies, develop revised strategies and, if necessary, new structures through which to deliver them. The new Strategy contains a number of objectives with appropriate performance indicators around the four pillars of supply reduction; education/prevention/awareness; treatment and rehabilitation (including risk reduction) and research and information.

<sup>5</sup> Department of An Taoiseach, *Implementing the Information Society in Ireland: An Action Plan*, (January, 1999)

**3.49 Special Projects for Disadvantaged Youth:** Under this Scheme, grants are allocated in respect of special out-of school projects for disadvantaged young people. The projects are aimed at facilitating the personal development and social education of youth at risk of drug abuse, juvenile crime, early school leaving, social exclusion, unemployment, welfare dependence, homelessness and marginalisation. In particular they seek to realise the potential of young people and to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for their appropriate integration in society.

Objective 2(c) Implementing action to preserve family solidarity in all its forms

**3.50 Family Affairs Unit:** In line with its pro-family approach to the development of policy and services as set out in the Programme for Government "Action Programme for the Millennium", the Government established a Family Affairs Unit (FAU) in the DSCFA. The functions of the FAU are to:

- co-ordinate family policy;
- undertake research;
- promote awareness of family issues, including parenting issues;
- support marriage, child and bereavement counselling services;
- support and develop the Family Mediation Service;
- develop the Family Services Project.

**3.51 Family Mediation Service:** The Family Mediation Service is a free, professional confidential service which enables couples, who have decided to separate, to reach agreement on all issues related to their separation. Government approval for the establishment of this service on a Statutory basis, as part of the newly proposed Family Support and Mediation Service, has now been obtained. The new Service will co-ordinate the main Government programmes designed to help prevent marital breakdown, assist couples who have decided to separate, support ongoing parenting relationships, raise awareness about family and parenting issues and work with voluntary groups in an empowering way to promote the well-being of families. It will provide a comprehensive and coherent response for families who have need of support services. The Service will be accountable for investment amounting to some €15.24million (IR£12million) in 2001.

**3.52 Families Research Programme:** The Families Research Programme was established to support innovative, original research in the field of family policy and family services and in areas highlighted by the Commission on the Family in their report 'Strengthening Families for Life' as being in need of further investigation.

12 research projects will be completed in 2001 - 2002 and a framework will be developed to follow up on the recommendations of the completed research projects.

**3.53 Grants for Marriage, Child and Bereavement Counselling Services:** The FAU administers a Scheme of Grants to voluntary organisations providing marriage counselling services, marriage preparation courses, child counselling services in relation to parental separation and bereavement counselling and support services. Some €6.09 million (IR£4.8 million) has been made available for the further development of this programme in 2001.

**3.54 Family Services Pilot Projects:** Community involvement is the key to successfully delivering the support that families need from time to time. The aim of these pilot projects is to provide enhanced access to information services for families in their own locations through development of the one stop shop concept. An enhanced programme of support is available to a small group of families with complex needs, e.g. very young lone mothers, other lone parents, and dependent spouses in households depending on social welfare. The pilot projects are underway in three local offices:- Waterford, Cork and Finglas in Dublin. An evaluation of the first phase of the pilot period was completed in 2000 and is under consideration by the Department. The Government have provided €15.24million (IR£12million) in the NDP for the development of the successful aspects of the pilot project over the years 2000 - 2006. Total funding for the Family Services Projects for 2001 is €1.27million (IR£1million). See also under Objective 1.1.

**Additional material in relation to Objective 2 (c) is contained in Annex K.**

## OBJECTIVE 3: TO HELP THE MOST VULNERABLE

### 3.55 INTRODUCTION

3.55.1 This part of the NAPincl deals with the following objectives:

(a) To promote the social integration of women and men at risk of facing persistent poverty, for example because they have a disability or belong to a group experiencing particular integration problems.

(b) To move towards the elimination of social exclusion among children and give them every opportunity for social integration.

(c) To develop comprehensive actions in favour of areas marked by exclusion.

### Objective 3 (a) Promoting the social integration of women and men at risk of facing persistent poverty, for example, because they have a disability or belong to a group experiencing particular integration problems.

#### 3.56 Introduction

3.56.1 Equal status is a deeper and more subtle objective than can be achieved through anti-discrimination measures alone. Equality of opportunity and measures to combat discrimination are now an essential part of EU social policy. The development of new community actions to promote equality across a number of grounds and the increasingly important emphasis now given to mainstreaming equality means that EU and national legislation and policy making increasingly have to take account of equality objectives and perspectives. Equality and anti-discrimination actions are closely linked to social cohesion policies as seen from the objectives set out in the new Social Policy Agenda:

*"Social cohesion, the rejection of any form of exclusion or discrimination and gender equality are all essential values of the European Social Model....Employment is the best protection against social exclusion. Growth should benefit all, but for this to be so proactive measures, especially in problem districts should be continued and stepped up to deal with the complex nature and multiple facets of exclusion and inequality."*

3.56.2 Thus the links between poverty, exclusion and inequality are now better understood and it is also recognised that the groups that are likely to experience discrimination and inequality may also be those groups likely to experience poverty and exclusion.

3.56.3 **Women and Men at Risk of Poverty:** The focus of this Section is on women and men who are experiencing or are at particular risk of poverty. Specific groups at risk of poverty, identified in the NAPS, are the unemployed (particularly the long-term unemployed), children (particularly those living in large families), single adult households and households headed by someone working in the home, lone parents, people with disabilities and homeless people. It is recognised that ethnic minorities, including Travellers and newly-arrived refugees and asylum seekers, experience high levels of poverty, social exclusion and disadvantage. In the context of an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers entering Ireland, there is a growing emphasis on the risks of poverty for ethnic minorities. This Action Plan provides an important opportunity to focus on equality/anti-discrimination measures. Ireland has a comprehensive framework in place for addressing these concerns, as outlined below. Under this Action Plan, attention will be given to the measurement of persistent poverty across the nine grounds, particularly concerning people with

disabilities, women, minority ethnic groups including Travellers, gay men and lesbians and older people.

3.56.4 Guidance for action to help the most vulnerable will be drawn from the recommendations, which emerge from the following reports, and particular attention will be given to the implementation of these recommendations:

- Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities
- National Plan for Women
- Report on the Task Force on the Traveller Community
- Outcomes of the Global Conference on Racism
- Recommendations of the Equality Authority Advisory Committee on Older People and the Equality Authority Advisory Committee on Sexual Orientation
- Review of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and areas that refer directly to the nine grounds.

#### 3.57 Equality Infrastructure

3.57.1 The Employment Equality Act, 1998, prohibits discrimination in relation to employment on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community. The Equal Status Act, 2000, prohibits discrimination outside the employment context, including education, provision of goods, services and accommodation and disposal of property on the same nine grounds. The Equality Authority and the Office of the Director of Equality Investigations were established in October, 1999, under the Employment Equality Act, 1998. The role of these bodies was extended in 2000 on implementation of the Equal Status Act, 2000. The Equality Authority has a mandate to combat discrimination and to promote equality in relation to the areas covered by the Equal Status Act, 2000 and the Employment Equality Act, 1998. The Equality Authority is an independent body with a Board appointed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

3.57.2 The Equality Authority is currently working to three objectives:

- to promote and defend the rights established in equality legislation;
- to support the development of a capacity to realise equality outcomes in the workplace and in the provision of goods, facilities, services, education and accommodation;
- to contribute to a focus on equality considerations within the private and public sectors and across society.

3.57.3 The Office of the Director of Equality Investigations is an integral part of the equality infrastructure which is designed to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. It is an independent Statutory body under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform which contributes to the

achievement of equality by investigating or mediating complaints of discrimination contrary to the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000.

**3.58 Equality Proofing:** Equality proofing is a process whereby policies are evaluated for any possible adverse impact on groups protected by the equality legislation. As recommended in the PPF, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform convened a Working Group on Equality Proofing in October 2000 to provide an ongoing focus on equality proofing issues. The first phase or 'learning phase' of the Group's work includes the organisation, by the Group, of two pilot projects, from programmes run by FÁS and the Department of Education and Science, in order to test the feasibility of equality proofing.

### 3.59 Equality for Women Measure

3.59.1 The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has been allocated a sum of €29.46million (IRE23.2million), under the Equality for Women Measure of the NDP, to promote equality for women. This funding will be used to develop initiatives in the following areas:

- up-skilling and re-training of women employees;
- encouraging entrepreneurship and career development among women;
- innovative projects for disadvantaged women and women over 50 years of age;
- support women in decision making;
- gender proofing of personnel practices;
- employer family-friendly project and sharing of family responsibilities(covered under Objective 1 also);
- a research and information campaign for return to work women.

3.59.2 The Equality Authority is delivering the "gender proofing" of personnel policies on behalf of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform through a programme of equality reviews and action plans. In addition, a number of research projects are being funded under the measure including research on the information, guidance and supports needed for women returners.

### 3.60 Disabilities

3.60.1 The 1998 ESRI Living in Ireland Survey highlighted the fact that, even before their special needs are taken into account, people with disabilities face a very high risk of consistent poverty. For households where the reference person was ill or disabled the risk of being below half average income rose from 1997 to 1998 to an even higher level than for the unemployed (It should be noted, in this regard, that the ESRI study concentrated on cash income and did not take into account the value of

non-cash benefits such as free travel, medical card etc. These schemes are of particular importance to people with disabilities).

3.60.2 The Government sponsored Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (1996) (60% of the membership of which had disabilities or were parents and carers of people with disabilities) made a number of recommendations geared towards ensuring that people with disabilities could participate to the greatest extent of their potential in all aspects of society. Since then, significant progress has been made in promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities in Ireland. This Plan outlines further measures which will be undertaken in this regard between July 2001 and June 2003. Initiatives in relation to accessibility of public transport, identified under Objective 2 (c) are also relevant here.

**3.61 Older people**, particularly those who are dependent on non-contributory old age pension, are vulnerable to an increasing risk of poverty; this is particularly the case for elderly women. This group, particularly as they become older, have needs, both income and non-income related covering e.g. their medical, dietary, caring and security needs. These needs must be addressed in an efficient and co-ordinated way by the relevant Departments. Particular attention is given in this section to services for older people and free schemes. Other issues in relation to older people are detailed elsewhere in this plan, e.g. pensions. In 2001, additional funding of €72.92million (IRE57.427million) is being provided for the development of services for older people. Between 2000 and 2006, over €253.95million (IRE200million) has been earmarked for the provision of new or upgraded facilities for older people as part of the NDP. This will result in approximately 1,550 new beds/places being provided in 33 new community hospitals and in the expansion of existing facilities. It is also proposed to create 21 new day care centres and 12 new social centres.

**3.62 Racism:** As part of the NAPS review, the PPF provides that the NAPS analysis will be updated to include emerging causes of poverty (e.g. racism). The NAPS review thematic Working Groups have been asked to consider minority ethnic groups as a cross-cutting issue. The outcome of the United Nations (UN) World Conference on Racism and the ongoing work of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Inter-culturalism will inform future policy interventions in this area. The Reception and Integration Agency will commission a research project shortly. The research will identify how the needs of refugees are currently being met by existing services and obtain a complete inventory of organisations and groups, at all levels, which have, or might have the capability to be involved in integration initiatives. The purpose of the research is to inform the development of a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of integration policy. The research will seek to establish the factors behind issues and trends identified, such as those

giving rise to unemployment or employment as the case may be, factors giving rise to low take up of education and training programmes, research on the health status and health needs of refugees and the impact of racism on the refugee population. This research will inform action to improve access to mainstream services.

**3.63 Migrants:** During the course of the last 10 years there has been a significant increase in the numbers of non-nationals coming to work and reside in Ireland. Due to anticipated labour shortages in certain sectors, it is expected that there will be further significant immigration into Ireland during the reference period for this NAPincl and beyond. Non-nationals, coming from different countries and cultures, experience difficulties and obstacles in fully integrating into their new country of residence and, thus, are among the most vulnerable to social exclusion. This vulnerability can intensify as they get older and reach old age and it can also apply to the next generation born in the country of residence. A research study, on how best to reduce and prevent the risk of exclusion for migrants, will be commissioned during the reference period. Its terms of reference will include examining the extent to which migrants are more at risk of social exclusion than other residents and how the migration experience contributes to this. The study will examine the type of measures being taken by countries of residence to counter negative effects of migration and identify best practice in this regard. Supports and services provided by migrant communities themselves and by the countries of origin of migrants may also be examined. The study will encompass the position in Ireland and also the position of migrant communities in other selected European countries, including the Irish in Britain, one of the older migrant communities in Europe, and migrant communities in certain continental Member States. The study findings should greatly assist in developing effective policies to reduce and prevent the risk of exclusion for migrants and should be of general interest to other European countries. An application to have the study included as a project under the Commission's action plan on social exclusion, when adopted, will be made.

See Annex L for further material in relation to Objective 3 (a).

[Objective 3 \(b\) Moving towards the elimination of social exclusion among children and giving them every opportunity for social integration](#)

### 3.64 National Children's Strategy

3.64.1 The National Children's Strategy was published in November, 2000. This Strategy contains many objectives and measures which are relevant to the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and will be implemented by the Children's Office over a ten year period. The structures to be implemented over 2001 include:

- a Cabinet Committee for Children;
- an expanded role for the Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Children;
- a National Children's Office;
- a National Children's Advisory Council;
- a Research Dissemination Unit;
- a Research Development Advisory Group.

3.64.2 The National Children's Office will prepare a plan to implement and commence the Strategy in 2001. This plan will include work on the implementation of the three National Goals viz.

- National Goal 1: Children will have a voice
- National Goal 2: Children's lives will be better understood
- National Goal 3: Children will receive quality supports and services

3.64.3 A number of national seminars will take place during 2001 to discuss the implementation of the National Children's Strategy. Statutory and non-Statutory organisations dealing with children, including organisations dealing with children who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, will be invited to attend. The National Children's Strategy contains many objectives and measures which are relevant to the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. The National Children's Office will oversee the implementation of these objectives and measures over the next ten years, commencing in 2001.

3.64.4 The Government are committed to implementing a range of measures towards the further reduction in the numbers of children experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The reduction in jobless households will continue to contribute to improving children's lives. Initiatives outlined under Objective 1.1 and the incentives to increase the reward for work, as outlined under Objective 1.2 - such as FIS and Child Benefit, are critical in this regard.



### 3.65 Educational Disadvantage Strategy

3.65.1 The key principles underlying the approach of the Department of Education and Science to countering educational disadvantage are:-

- prevention;
- early intervention;
- targeting;
- individual needs identification;
- parental involvement and development;
- positive discrimination;
- curricular adaptation;
- methodological adaptation;
- in school and out of school services;
- mentoring;
- allocation of resources to school subject to specific conditions.

3.65.2 In February 2001, the Minister for Education and Science launched a Strategy to tackle educational disadvantage. The Strategy has three main platforms – a new Statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee, a larger Forum to Address Educational Disadvantage and the appointment of the acting Director of Programmes to tackle disadvantage in the country's 3,200 primary schools. The Educational Disadvantage Committee, provided for in Section 32 of the Education Act, 1998, will advise the Minister on policies and strategies to be adopted to identify and correct educational disadvantage. The Forum, which will have a much broader representation than the Committee, will meet twice a year, and will have a vital role in advising on broader issues relating to educational disadvantage and exclusion from the full benefits of education.

**Annex M contains some additional material in relation to Objective 3 (b).**

[Objective 3\(c\) Developing comprehensive actions in favour of areas marked by exclusion](#)

#### 3.66 Introduction

3.66.1 This NAPIncl recognises that disadvantage and unemployment affect virtually every area in Ireland and that the poor or the unemployed are not singularly clustered in the major urban centres. However, particular communities do suffer from cumulative disadvantage and for such people, it is likely that the cumulative effect is to intensify their experience of disadvantage. In some cases, these communities are geographically concentrated. Three types of areas have been identified as particularly at risk of cumulative disadvantage: decaying inner city areas, large public housing estates on city and town peripheries and isolated and underdeveloped rural areas. The consequences of high levels and concentrations of poverty can lead to a threat to the social fabric of the country and can incur high

economic costs. A number of consequences have been identified: the concentration of poverty in certain communities; the effects on physical health and an increase in psychological stress; an increase in crime; an increasing drug culture and the alienation of young people. This NAPIncl places particular emphasis on meeting the needs of deprived urban and rural areas and initiatives in this regard are listed below. The key initiatives, in relation to spatial deprivation, are the Local Development / Social Inclusion Programme, National Drugs Strategy and the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) programme. Measures outlined in earlier parts of this NAPIncl are also relevant here. In addition, rural poverty and urban disadvantage Working Groups have been established as part of the NAPS review (see Section 2).

#### 3.67 The Local Development/Social Inclusion Programme:

Area Based Partnerships were established in areas designated by the Government as disadvantaged. Partnerships are Private Companies, which focus on combating disadvantage and social exclusion. The Board of each Partnership consists of representatives from the community and voluntary organisations active in economic and social development in their areas, state agencies, the social partners at local level and elected public representatives. These Partnerships and a further 33 Community Groups which operate in areas which are not designated as disadvantaged are supported under the Local Development Measure of the Social Inclusion Programme of the Regional Operational Programmes. The funding amounts to €279.3million (IRE220million) over the life of the NDP. It was allocated by ADM to these Area Based Partnership Companies and Community Groups that adopted a partnership approach to tackling local issues on the basis of comprehensive integrated local action plans designed to counter social exclusion. Services for the Unemployed, Community Development and Community based Youth Initiatives form the three key action areas in each integrated action plan. Actions are targeted at the areas, within the catchment of the Partnership, which are most in need and at the people who are most excluded. This includes those who are long-term unemployed, young people at risk, lone parents, Travellers, asylum seekers etc. During 2000, plans were prepared by each local group and appraised by ADM. Funding was committed for the period from 2000-2003 inclusive.

**3.68 New National Drugs Strategy:** The new National Drugs Strategy (NDS) 2001-2008 was launched on 10 May, 2001. The previous NDS was reviewed in order to identify any gaps and deficiencies, develop revised strategies and, if necessary, new structures through which to deliver them. The new Strategy contains a number of objectives with appropriate performance indicators around the four pillars of supply reduction; education/prevention/awareness; treatment and

rehabilitation (including risk reduction) and research and information. The resource implications will be the subject of discussions with the Department of Finance in the coming months. The new Strategy recommends that six monthly progress reports be made to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion on progress on implementing the Strategy and that the overall Strategy be independently evaluated by 2004.

#### 3.69 Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) Programme:

The RAPID Programme fulfils a commitment in the PPF to identify the 25 most disadvantaged areas in the country, to develop a focus across the social inclusion measures in the NDP and to target that investment at the 25 identified areas. This initiative will benefit 165,000 people across the 25 areas. The RAPID Programme will make sure that priority attention is given to the 25 identified areas by Government Departments, Local Authorities and State Agencies dealing with disadvantage and local development under the NDP. A significant share of the NDP expenditure in the 25 designated areas will be front-loaded over the next three years. The twenty-five most disadvantaged areas in the State were identified using objective criteria. Factors such as unemployment, income levels, family and social structure, educational disadvantage and high levels of rented Local Authority housing were used to identify the priority areas. The Programme is being extended to apply both to rural areas and provincial towns. The process of identification of the areas in these categories is currently being developed.

**Other material relevant to Objective 3 (c) is set out in Annex N.**

## OBJECTIVE 4 - TO MOBILISE ALL RELEVANT BODIES

#### 3.70 Introduction

3.70.1 This section of the NAPIncl deals with the following:

- (a) promoting, according to national practice, the participation and self-expression of people suffering exclusion in particular in regard to their situation and the policies and measures affecting them;
- (b) mainstreaming the fight against exclusion into overall policy, in particular;

- I. by mobilising the public authorities at national, regional and local level, according to their respective areas of competence;
- II. by developing appropriate co-ordination procedures and structures;
- III. by adapting administrative and social services to the needs of people suffering exclusion and ensuring that front-line staff are sensitive to these needs.

3.70.2 As set out in Sections 1 and 2, Ireland's partnership process recognises the importance of the participation and self expression of people suffering exclusion, in particular, with regard to their situation and the policies and measure affecting them. In the Government's vision of society, the ability of the Community and Voluntary Sector to provide channels for the active involvement and participation of citizens is fundamental. An active Community and Voluntary Sector contributes to a democratic, pluralist society, provides opportunities for the development of decentralised and participative structures and fosters a climate in which the quality of life can be enhanced for all. The Government's vision of society is one which encourages people and communities to look after their own needs –very often in partnership with State Agencies –but without depending on the State to meet all needs. A good example of the value of community involvement is the DSCFA's schemes and programmes of support for community development which focus on investment in capacity building, so that socially excluded groups and local communities can be active participants in identifying and meeting their own development needs, working alongside the other Social Partners.

#### 3.71 Social Partnership and the NAPS

3.71.1 A distinctive feature of the Irish political landscape since 1987 is the existence of national social partnership agreements, whereby a shared understanding of the challenges to be faced is built and a broad consensus is adopted. The ten-year NAPS was developed following wide-ranging consultation with the Social Partners and launched by the Government in 1997. The NAPS principles include ensuring equal access and encouraging participation for all, the development of the partnership approach building on national and local partnership processes and actively involving the Community and Voluntary Sector. The Community and Voluntary Sector and other Social Partners have an ongoing role in relation to the monitoring of the NAPS in the context of the arrangements for monitoring the PPF.

3.71.2 The PPF provides for a review of the NAPS to be undertaken over the first 18 months of the Programme, in consultation with the Social Partners. Mechanisms for strengthening the involvement of the Social Partners will also be considered. As agreed with the Social Partners, issues to be examined as part of the review are being considered initially by Working Groups, including Social Partner representation, established under the aegis of relevant Departments. In addition, an advertisement was placed in national newspapers inviting submissions on the NAPS review for consideration by the relevant Working Groups. Each of the Working Groups will be expected to hold at least one national consultative seminar. Following from the conclusion of the NAPS Working Groups, a Steering Committee, with Social Partner representation, will advise on issues and directions for the new NAPS.





**3.72 NAPincl Development:** A seminar with officials from the relevant services of the EU Commission was held on 28th March, with relevant stakeholders from Ireland, about the process of co-ordination on social inclusion and the preparation of the NAPincl. On request from the Community and Voluntary Sector, a Round Table on the integration of equality and poverty perspectives in to the NAPincl took place on 2nd May, under the aegis of the DSCFA. A draft of the NAPincl was circulated to Government Departments and Agencies and the Social Partners for consideration before being submitted to Government for approval. The NAPincl process will facilitate reviews, every two years, of national anti-poverty policies and stakeholders will continue to play an active part in this process.

**3.73 Community development** is about promoting positive changes in society in favour of those who benefit least. It is not just about improving the quality of people's lives. It is about involving people, most especially the disadvantaged, in making changes which they identify to be important and which use and develop their own skills, knowledge and experience. The number of projects in the Community Development Programme has grown from 9 in 1990 to 90 in 2000. A projected figure for 2001 is 130. The budget allocation for 2001 is €15.24million (IR£12million). Programmes providing long term core-funding to groups are now administered as part of the Social Inclusion programmes of the NDP.

**3.74 Facilitating Participation at Local Level:** The Local Government Bill 2000 emphasises the need for the Local Authority to engage actively with its local community. Recognition is given to the role of the County and City Development Boards recently established. Their key remit in relation to the preparation of county/city strategies, will give a key role to the Local Authorities and the elected members in the setting of strategic development objectives across the full range of public services. In addition, recognition is given to the strategic policy committees and municipal policy committees in County and Urban Government. The inclusion of these measures in the Bill underpins the continuing emphasis on partnerships and the inclusion of all relevant players (State, Local Government, Social Partners, local development) in drawing up strategies for the economic, social and cultural development of their area.

**3.75 Integration of Service Delivery - Integrated Services Process (ISP):** The integration of service delivery is important in ensuring that excluded people attain maximum benefits from service deliverers. External Evaluators, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, presented their final report in March 2001 and this formed the basis of the final Progress Report by the National Steering Committee to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion. The Committee endorsed the Report and the ISP style framework and mechanisms will be used, as a model of best practice, to establish the new RAPID Programme (see details above) and will underpin the manner in which it operates.

**3.76 Participation at Public and Private Levels - Introduction:** Various initiatives have been undertaken in the last year to promote dialogue and partnership between all relevant bodies, public and private, in relation to social inclusion.

**3.76.1 Volunteering:** In December 2000, the Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs launched a National Committee on Volunteering to mark 2001 as the United Nations International Year of Volunteers. Membership of the National Committee on Volunteering is drawn from relevant Government Departments and relevant stakeholders. A budget of €1.27million (IR£1million) has been allocated by the Government to the workings of the Committee. The National Committee on Volunteering will run until the end of 2002 and will report to the Government at that time. See Annex O for further details on the National Committee on Volunteering.

**3.76.2 Corporate Social Responsibility:** The Foundation for Investing in Communities was established in November 1998 as a joint venture between Government and employers to provide a focus and increased recognition of businesses who are making Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) a part of their business practice. A unique feature of this Foundation is the building of an Endowment Fund to help disadvantaged groups/communities with a particular focus on children's needs. The Foundation aims to encourage businesses to make CSR and community involvement part of their mainstream business practice. This work is carried out by Business in the Community. The Foundation also encourages philanthropy and is building an independent civic endowment fund to serve the Irish community. The permanent civic endowment fund is being raised through the Community Foundation for Ireland and The National Children's Trust. During 2000, twenty founder members joined the Foundation and grants were made available to approximately thirty groups, organisations and societies.

**3.77 Quality Customer Service (QCS) Principles:** Another important development in terms of social inclusion has been the recognition of the need to adapt administrative and social services to the needs of people suffering social exclusion and ensuring that front-line staff are sensitive to these needs. In July 2000 the Government approved revised Quality Customer Service (QCS) Principles and asked Departments to draw up new three-year Customer Action Plans based on these Principles. Among the Principles is one on Equality/Diversity, which requires Departments to ensure quality service delivery to groups covered by equality legislation. The Principles enable Departments, in their dealings with customers, to identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services. The Government also decided that these Principles should be extended to non-commercial bodies under the aegis of Departments. Work is currently being done by the QCS Working Group's sub-group on Equality/Diversity on a support pack on the equality/diversity aspects of QCS for the civil service, and on research in this area.

**Other material relevant to Objective 4 is contained in Annex O.**



## SECTION 4: Indicators

### 4.1 TARGET SETTING

4.1.1 With the launch of the NAPS in 1997, Ireland became the first EU Member State to adopt a global poverty reduction target. Target setting is very important at political level, since, by setting such targets, the Government acknowledges responsibility for reducing the overall extent of poverty. This is arguably the single most important element of the NAPS, as, in aiming to meet these targets, the Government ensures that the policy framework and specific policies are adapted accordingly.

4.1.2 In considering how existing targets might be improved and the role new ones might play, the following will be borne in mind:

- it must be possible to monitor success in attaining the target, either with existing data or with information gathered through new systems set up for that purpose;
- targets should relate to outcomes that can be influenced by policy;
- targets should generally refer to desired outcomes and objectives, rather than policy interventions designed to attain those objectives;
- the objective of a target should make a substantial contribution to attaining the overall anti-poverty target;
- there has to be a significant 'value added' in each sub-target, over and above what is already covered by the global poverty reduction target and other sub-targets. This means that the objective encapsulated in a sub-target should either manifestly make a substantial contribution to attaining the overall anti-poverty target or cover an important area which is in some sense not adequately encompassed within that overall target;
- above all, it is important that any targets set must represent an appropriate balance between the need for ambition and realism.<sup>6</sup>

4.1.3 It will be important also to consider the timeframe for targets. Given the rapidity of developments in the relatively short time since the NAPS was launched, the appropriateness of targets with a very long, 10 year timeframe will need to be questioned. Shorter term, rolling targets in line with the 2 year duration of the NAPIncl may be more appropriate in the future for certain targets, whereas other targets, for example in the area of health, may require a longer timeframe.

### 4.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR INDICATORS

4.2.1 In addition to the setting of new targets, the NAPS review is seen as an opportunity to broaden the focus of measurement of progress against poverty and social exclusion. In developing suitable indicators across the thematic areas of the review, a number of guiding principles will, where possible, be adhered to. Based on

a paper provided by Guy Palmer, New Policy Institute<sup>7</sup>, in the context of the NAPS review, it is proposed that indicators should, for example:

- have an emphasis on outcomes rather than inputs;
- clearly relate to poverty;
- be clearly defined and quantified;
- be understandable;
- rely on data that is relevant, reliable and repeatable;
- be important in their own right or indicative of wider issues;
- be limited in number;
- be clearly measurable;
- where appropriate adhere to the timeframes laid down by the NAPIncl process.

4.2.2 A range of Agencies are undertaking work on data issues and indicators of progress in a number of areas relevant to the NAPS. At a national level, these include Comhar, the National Competitiveness Council and the NES. At the international level they include the UN, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and, of course, the EU. The NAPS review Working Groups will draw on the work of such organisations in their deliberations on indicators and targets.

4.2.3 The following are some examples of suggested indicators which may be considered as part of the NAPS review<sup>8</sup>:

#### Employment

- differences in access to training for various social groups;
- levels of security of tenure in employment;
- children in workless households;
- children in low income households;
- number of young adults unemployed;
- number of young adults inactive i.e. not in education, training or employment;
- number of young adults without a basic qualification;
- number of adults, aged 25-64, unemployed;
- number of adults, aged 25-64, long-term unemployed;
- number of adults, aged 25-64, inactive/discouraged;
- number of adults, aged 25-64, in paid employment living in relative income poverty;
- number of workless households without basic qualification;
- regional disparities in unemployment levels.

#### Health

- concentrations of premature mortality;
- concentrations of death by cancer;
- healthcare access levels for various social groups;
- low birthweight babies;
- mental health levels.

In the context of the work of the Health NAPS Review group, the following are examples of the types of indicators emerging:

- variations in life expectancy among social groups;
- variations in mortality from cardiovascular disease;
- variations in infant mortality.

#### Education

- numbers lacking basic qualifications;
- literacy and numeracy levels;
- school completion / early school leaving;
- numbers of young children failing to achieve basic standards;
- training qualifications received.

#### Housing

- level of homelessness;
- availability of affordable housing to buy or rent;
- housing standards.

#### Rural Poverty

- access to services;
- availability of public transport;
- participation levels in community organisations.

#### Urban Disadvantage

- crime levels;
- access to services;
- levels of integration of public services.

#### Income

- households and persons experiencing relative income poverty;
- the proportion of disposable income accruing to the top and bottom decile of households.

#### Children, Older People and Women

- indicators under previous headings disaggregated for these groups.

4.2.4 There are a number of methodologies in use which assess the effectiveness of policy outcomes. 'Results and Performance Accountability' (for details see Section 5) and the various proofing mechanisms e.g. gender, poverty, equality, rural, eco-proofing. In order to build on the experience in relation to these methodologies, consideration will be given to the establishment of a Working Group to facilitate mutual learning and to consider how various Government Departments and other Agencies can build on this experience and produce easily understood information/guidelines for public servants, at all levels, who are either planning or implementing policies and programmes.

### 4.3 EU CONTEXT

4.3.1 Among the structural indicators underlying the synthesis report presented by the EU to the Stockholm European Council, the following set of seven indicators relating to social cohesion will be used:

- **distribution of income (income quintile ratio):** The income quintile ratio is one measure of the degree of income inequality in a country. It compares the share of a country's income received by the highest-earning 20% of a country's population with that share earned by the lowest-earning 20% (S80/S20). Wide

disparities in income share between these groups can reflect poor levels of social cohesion and the heightened risk of social exclusion for those at the lower end of the income distribution;

- **poverty rate before and after social transfers:** The poverty rate measures the share of the population below a defined poverty line, thus measuring the extent of poverty, the risks of social exclusion, and the impact of social transfers (excluding pensions);
- **persistence of poverty:** The indicator for the persistence of poverty measures the share of the population consistently living below the poverty line over the longer term. It gives an indication of the depth of the poverty problem and of its dynamics; the longer people remain in poverty the greater the likelihood of their permanent social exclusion;
- **jobless households:** This indicator measures the extent to which whole households might be at risk of poverty and social exclusion due to the lack of employment. Jobless households are working age households that have no person in employment. Here, working age households are defined as households in which at least one person is aged 25-55. In the interpretation of such an indicator, its sensitivity to the business cycle should be taken into account;
- **regional cohesion (variation in GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standard across regions):** Reducing disparities between regions has long been an aim of the Community's policies. Moreover, wide regional disparities in economic activity can be one of the factors contributing to the exclusion of certain parts of society within a country;
- **early school-leavers not in further education or training:** This indicator, which measures the share of people aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education and not in education or training, reflects the importance attached to investment in people in the strategy proposed by the Lisbon European Council. It highlights the need for a good level of basic education to enhance the employability of school-leavers, and to ensure their social inclusion. The European Council has also set a target of halving, by 2010, the number of 18-24 year olds with only lower secondary education that are not in further education or training;
- **long-term unemployment rate:** The long-term unemployment rate has been included here because it is a good reflection of structural problems on the labour market. Moreover, the long-term unemployed are susceptible to the erosion of their job skills, thus reducing their employability, and are likely to face a high risk of social exclusion.

4.3.2 With this set of indicators as a starting point, a subgroup of the EU Social Protection Committee was established in 2001 charged with improving indicators in the field of poverty and social exclusion, developing indicators capable of illustrating the role of social protection and supporting the process of modernising systems on which Member States are engaged. Within a

<sup>6</sup> Drawn from Nolan, B. (May 2000) *Targeting Poverty in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy*. Paper for Combat Poverty Agency Conference, 'Planning for a more Inclusive Society, Dublin

<sup>7</sup> Palmer, G., New Policy Institute (April 2000) *Possible Indicators of Poverty by Working Group*, Paper for Combat Poverty Agency

<sup>8</sup> Palmer, G., New Policy Institute (April 2000) *Possible Indicators of Poverty by Working Group*, Paper for Combat Poverty Agency and submissions under consultation process for production of NAPIncl.

framework provided by the list of objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion agreed at Nice, the task of the sub-group is to develop commonly agreed indicators in order to underpin the policy co-ordination process in view of these common objectives. While difficulties in agreeing a common analytical and statistical framework are acknowledged, the work of the sub-group will provide a basis for progress in developing common measurement approaches in the field of social protection, a process which will be enhanced by the ongoing development of a new household survey, the Survey of Income and Living Conditions. A number of indicators have already been agreed, or are proposed, by the Employment Indicators Sub-Group, established in 2000. The work of this Group will inform the discussions of the Social Protection Indicators Sub-Group.

#### 4.4 DATA ISSUES

4.4.1 As mentioned above, one of the ongoing challenges in relation to target and indicator setting is the need for timely data. While data is crucial in terms of the setting of targets or the development of performance indicators, the lack of timely data means that it is difficult to ascertain, at the time policy is being developed, whether policy responses in this regard are absolutely pertinent to current social problems. In an EU context, this may also present similar problems. In addition, comparability of data, while not as relevant at national level, becomes an issue that will need to be addressed at EU level. Comparability, apart from the problem of ensuring that data collection capabilities are similar across Member States, also presents a challenge of producing consensual definitions. While, in the Irish case, the general meaning attributed to the term 'poverty' has not provided any major obstacles, this may not be the situation across Member States. In order to develop a comparable poverty measurement in an EU context, it is necessary to develop a consensual definition of what is meant by poverty. For example, is a median or mean the most appropriate measure of household incomes? Issues arising here include the fact that a mean measure is easily understood but is very sensitive to a small number of very high incomes in the sample. Also, for example, the deprivation indicators used in Ireland to identify consistent poverty are essentially determined by people's own experience. These will vary over time and are likely to vary between countries.

4.4.2 Data issues have also been highlighted in the PPF as being critical in terms of policy development and analysis. In particular, the PPF includes commitments to:

- provide relevant data and data collection systems for monitoring and evaluation of poverty, including systems of measuring poverty among groups not currently included in the Living in Ireland Survey (e.g. Travellers and the homeless);
- adapt data systems to enable disaggregation of health access and outcomes across NAPS target groups;

- develop a system for the collection and dissemination of disaggregated data for women and, in relation to health, education and training, for Travellers.

4.4.3 So while it is intended to develop and improve data collection at national level, it is clear that there are data gaps which will affect future target and/or indicator setting at EU level.

4.4.4 In relation to data and indicators currently available in Ireland to monitor social exclusion, the Living in Ireland Survey is the most relevant in terms of measuring income and living conditions. The Quarterly National Household Survey, conducted by the Central Statistics Office, is another valuable source of data across a range of themes, including unemployment and employment. In addition to this, a considerable amount of research in this area is conducted by Government Departments, State Agencies, and non-Government organisations. Data collection is being addressed as part of the current review of the NAPS. In the health area, the implementation of the National Health Information Strategy currently being developed and the implementation of the National Health Research Strategy will considerably improve the data base available in relation to needs, access and outcomes for groups at risk of social exclusion. Under this NAPincl, more systematic methods of data collection across the 9 grounds will be developed and this will facilitate better understanding of the causes of poverty and exclusion and particularly the relationship of equality to exclusion.

4.4.5 In addition to data collection, the progress of the NAPS is the subject of independent evaluation. The first such report, *Planning For a More Inclusive Society: An Initial Assessment of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy – CPA*, was published in May 2000. It noted a number of key strengths of the NAPS to date, including the strengthening of political and societal consensus that there is a need to reduce levels of poverty in Ireland, the establishment of institutional structures to underpin the NAPS process, the adoption of specific poverty reduction targets, the introduction of poverty proofing, increased awareness of poverty and improved cohesion and co-ordination and consultation around poverty issues. However, the report also recognised that the NAPS had some weaknesses, such as a difficulty in translating objectives into operational measures, which can work towards the achievement of NAPS targets. The report stated the need to strengthen the involvement of the Community and Voluntary Sector in the implementation of the NAPS.

4.4.6 The "National Economic Social Forum Opinion on the National Anti-Poverty Strategy", published in August 2000, is the first of a series of annual opinions focusing on Departmental plans under the NAPS, as well as poverty proofing assessments. Recommendations made by the NESF included the need to review and extend the targets, and to increase transparency in relation to poverty proofing. The NESF also made a number of suggestions in relation to the extension of the NAPS to local level.

## SECTION 5: Good Practice

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 This Section contains detailed presentations of examples of good practice drawn from currently implemented policy measures.

### 5.2 EXAMPLE 1 – WATERFORD YOUTH COMMITTEE - TWO PROJECTS - STEPPING STONES AND CELTTS.

5.2.1 **Stepping Stones Project:** This Project, which aims to improve personal and educational skills of young unemployed people in order to enhance their prospects of securing employment, is being co-developed by Waterford Youth Committee and the Prince's Trust, Pembrokeshire, Great Britain. It offers courses in computing, team building, first aid, community and environmental projects, a work experience programme and a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Key Skills. Intensive vocational training embraces team building, leadership training, and Information Technology training, leading to City and Guilds and IT qualifications, significantly enhancing employment prospects. Phase One, which received part-funding from the DSCFA, took place in 1997 and 1998. All trainees who completed the course gained the City and Guilds Profile of Achievement qualification as well as computer skills RSA (Royal Society of Arts) level 1 or 11, with the participants achieving an overall success rate of 86%. Phase Two of the project comprised of four 12-week intensive residential courses over a two year period (1999-2000). Each course catered for seven people from Waterford City and seven from Pembrokeshire in Wales, covering a total of 14 young people from each location each year. Six weeks of the course was spent in Wales and six weeks in Ireland. The cost of this project for year 2000 was €0.12million (IR€0.095million) of which €0.09million (IR€0.072million) was provided through the EU Interreg II Programme. The DSCFA contributed €0.025million (IR€0.02million).

5.2.2 **CELTS (Celtic Eco-Leisure Training & Tourism Scheme) Project (Phase 1 & 2):** This project, which aims to deliver a joint accredited training course for young people working in the outdoor pursuits sector, is being co-developed by the Waterford Youth Committee, the Shielbaggan Outdoor Education Centre in Co. Waterford and the Pembrokeshire Watersports Project in Wales. It aims to deliver a joint accredited training course for people working in the outdoor pursuits sector; a growth area with a potential to deliver sustainable employment opportunities to qualified personnel. The project entails providing, on a cross-border basis between the three partner organisations, continued training provision for outdoor pursuits. This will encompass continued training for existing trainers with some previous qualifications and continued training for trainees who were unemployed prior to the course. The 23 Irish beneficiaries who received

training during Phase 1 continued their training during Phase 2. The cost of this project for year 2000 was £0.09m of which 75% (£68,060) was met from the EU Interreg 11 Programme. The DSCFA contributed £0.015m.

### 5.3 EXAMPLE 2 – COLÁISTE ÍDE - CITY OF DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

5.3.1 Coláiste Íde Open Learning Centre was established in September 1994 with the objective of providing quality flexible education to the unemployed, lone-parents, house-parents and those who need flexibility in their education. The current student enrolment is 274 and the centre had over 2000 students enrolled since 1994. Since the outset, most of the courses on offer in the Centre were computer based. In some cases, the courses deal with computer topics such as word processing and computer application courses. Almost 80%, of those who start, complete at least one course.

5.3.2 One specific target group for whom open/flexible learning offers particular advantages is the disabled. The facilities at the Centre were designed with the needs of the disabled in mind and it attracts disabled students from as far away as Cork and Athlone. In many cases however, the nature of the disability or the transport costs can make it impracticable for students to attend at Coláiste Íde. In order to support the learning needs of those unable to attend at Coláiste Íde, whether as a result of disability or economic circumstances, the centre has developed unique arrangements with some of the examination bodies. Since 1995, it extended its activities to involve various out-centres and groups such as Carmichael House, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland, Irish Wheelchair Association, the Visually Impaired Group 'VICS', the National Council for the Blind and the Capuchin Education/Training Centre. The Centre is linked to the local Adult Reading and Writing Scheme and employs a trained literacy tutor, thus greatly enhancing adult literacy provision and creating a unique progression route to specialised programmes leading to recognised qualifications. The Centre's policy of open access has also enabled it to play an integral role in the provision of IT training for Community Employment participants.

5.3.3 In 1996, the Centre received a grant for the purchase of 9,486 'laptop' computers. These were to be used to enhance the Centre's ability to service the learning needs of the disabled clients who were not in a position to access the college directly or who did not have direct access to computer equipment at home. The computers were used by wheelchair-bound and visually impaired students to learn the latest Microsoft Application Software. However, the developments in current computer hardware and software since then rendered this equipment obsolete and limited their use as effective learning tools. Funding of £0.025m by the DSCFA in 2000, provided the latest computer and software equipment available for training unemployed adults with physical disabilities and those with literary needs.

### 5.4 EXAMPLE 3 – MOYROSS PROBATION PROJECT (CÉIM AR CÉIM)

5.4.1 The Moyross Probation Project, Céim ar Céim (Step by Step) is a project run under the auspices of the Probation and Welfare Service. A management committee comprising of representatives from the Moyross community along with voluntary and Statutory sectors manage the Project. The mission of the Project is:

- to organise training for work for young offenders and youths at risk between the ages of 15-25;
- to provide training in areas such as numeracy, literacy, catering, computers, woodwork, pottery, arts and crafts, sport, life skills, outdoor pursuits etc.;
- to result in their integration back into society and bring structure to their lives;
- to provide choices to enable participants to take responsibility for their futures;
- to offer a safe and challenging environment for participants to explore their potential.

5.4.2 The target group of the Project are young people 15-25 who may be :

- clients of the probation and welfare service and those at risk;
- those who wish to re-engage in an education or training programme;
- early school leavers who are not involved in any other support programme;
- long term unemployed.

5.4.3 At present there are 10 full time participants on the project and one place available, for which there is a waiting list of 38. Community response has been very favourable with 50% of applications coming directly from people in the locality. Places are filled by way of qualifying interview. By December 2000 participants in the project had achieved five Certificates in catering, NCVA accreditation in computers and also in Art and Design. Career days are held on a weekly basis and some participants are getting work experience with various companies. Community Development Groups in other areas are putting together proposals to develop similar services in their areas. These proposals are submitted to the Probation Service for approval. Some of these groups have visited Céim ar Céim to observe their model.

### 5.5 EXAMPLE 4 - FAMILY SERVICES PROJECT - WATERFORD

5.5.1 General information on the Family Services Projects is contained in Section 3. The Family Services Project in Waterford was launched by the DSCFA in 1999 following on the recommendations of the Commission on the Family. The initial objectives of the project were:

- the establishment of a high quality information service regarding both Statutory & voluntary support available to the family with particular emphasis on supports available locally;
- to provide information to families about accessing supports and providing directed referral to non-DSCFA services;
- to select and case manage clients with complex needs; to actively provide a programme to enhance self esteem and potential and to increase their personal capacity to become self reliant and self directed;
- to work in co-operation with other locally based Statutory & Voluntary Agencies to provide appropriate services required.

5.5.2 It became apparent that the inter-Agency work was essential to underpin the other objectives. An advisory Committee consisting of Statutory and Voluntary Agencies was established. One of the initiatives advanced by the Committee was the development of an information website ([www.waterfordinfo.com](http://www.waterfordinfo.com)) to provide information on the full range of Statutory, voluntary and community services available to families in Waterford. The website is available to all citizens but it is aimed primarily at service providers to help them provide a more comprehensive and responsive service to those they serve. Development of the approach to be adopted in Waterford was informed, inter alia, by links with the International Initiative for Children, Youth & Families, Rural Resource Development Ltd and through the work of the City Development Board (CDB) and the Waterford Area Partnership. A Conference titled "Families First" was hosted by the DSCFA:

- to highlight the significance of the family to the individual and to society;
- to promote the benefits of a collaborative approach in family support;
- to publicise 'Results and Performance Accountability' (for details on this, see following) as a framework for all organisations to work together with a common purpose towards agreed outcomes.

#### 5.5.3 Results and Performance Accountability

5.5.3.1 An emerging approach to results accountability is being used in the Waterford Family Services Project. This results driven methodology analyses trends in a locality and mobilises local Statutory and community organisations to take action to 'turn the curve'. There becomes, therefore, a cross-community accountability for results. Waterford City Development Board has adopted the methodology and research on trends has been undertaken into areas such as social deprivation, demographics, labour force levels, educational attainment, housing, childcare, health, crime, marriage breakdown, indebtedness, lone parenthood and minority / ethnic groups.

5.5.3.2 Some key features of the Results Accountability approach are:-

- language discipline;
- how to identify readily understood results to be achieved and create consensus about their importance.

5.5.3.3 Results:

- are matters of common sense;
- express the fundamental desires of communities and the fundamental purpose of Government;
- by definition cross Agency and programme lines;
- if defined carefully will still be relevant in 10 or 20 years time e.g. stable families, safe communities, children are born healthy.

5.5.3.4 Key concerns are:-

- how to choose relevant indicators – these should communicate to a broad range of audiences and say something of central importance about the result;
- how to build a data development agenda;
- the importance of performance improvement and how to develop programme performance measures e.g. Is anyone better off?, What quality of change was produced?;
- turning the curve – how to improve programme performance in collaborative efforts.

5.5.3.5 Application of results accountability forges a sense of common purpose amongst all of the stakeholders around universally accepted bottom line conditions of social well being. It provides a framework for all of the various stakeholders to deploy "what works" for the benefit of children, families and communities. It also helps to shift the focus onto proactive positive prevention strategies as well as strengthening existing remediation programmes.

5.5.4 Following the conference, the Family Services Project Committee has discussed the possibility of merging with the Social Inclusion Sub-Committee of the Waterford CDB. Discussions on this matter are continuing. In the meantime it has been agreed by the Committee to produce a community report card which will make information available to all citizens on a range of social indicators. It is proposed to use the report card as a tool to engage with communities at local level so as to jointly identify issues of concern; agree bottom line conditions of well being, and develop appropriate strategies to create those conditions. The concept of the report card and a survey of residents in one particular area is being piloted in the Larchville / Lisduggan area of Waterford City. Through the Family Services Project Committee and the Social Inclusion Sub-Committee of the Waterford CDB it is hoped to carry out a similar exercise in other areas of the city and at city-wide level.

### 5.6 EXAMPLE 5 – AREA BASED PARTNERSHIP COMPANIES AND FUNDED COMMUNITY GROUPS

5.6.1 Partnerships are not for profit private companies, which focus on combating disadvantage and social exclusion. The Board of each Partnership consists of representatives from the Community and Voluntary Sector organisations active in economic and social development in their areas, State Agencies, the Social Partners at local level and elected public representatives. Further background information, on Area Based Partnership Companies and funded community groups, is included under Objective 3 (c) in Section 3 of this Plan. In the period 1994-1999, 34,000 people either set up their own businesses or were placed in employment through the actions of Partnerships and ADM Community Groups. Almost all of the 17,000 who set up their own business were sole traders. They received mentoring support and advice from the Partnership/Community Group and then registered with the DSCFA under the Area Allowance Enterprise Scheme. In addition a further 16,500 were placed in full-time employment. The majority of these were through the Local Employment Service, which was piloted by Partnerships before being mainstreamed through the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment. Some 25,000 of the 34,000 were long-term unemployed. The remainder included categories such as Travellers, lone parents, spouses of people who are long-term unemployed or disabled people. A further 27,000 adults participated in complementary education or employment training. 71,000 young people participated in some form of educational initiative to help prevent early school leaving. In addition, over 3,000 Community Groups received financial or other support from Partnerships.

5.6.2 **Case Study of Cork City:** Cork is a major city on the south coast of Ireland. It has a population of 124,000. There is one Partnership Company which operates through Cork City – Comhar Chathair Chorcai Teo (The Cork City Partnership). The Board consists of 7 directors from the Community and Voluntary Sector, 6 from the Social Partners (3 business and 3 trade union) 4 from State Agencies representing education, training, social welfare and Cork Corporation and 3 elected representatives. Approximately 150 local community and voluntary organisations are affiliated to the Partnership and the community and voluntary directors are elected from this grouping. The Board are responsible for policy which is implemented by a Chief Executive and staff. Over the period 1996-99, a total of 797 people were progressed to self-employment with the support of the Area-Based Allowance/Bank to Work Enterprise Allowance. The majority of people using this service were men. During the same period more than 2,200 people, considering self-employment, availed of a range of services from the Enterprise Creation and Development Department. The Local Employment Service (LES) has 6 outreach offices in addition to bases in the central FÁS office and the Partnership. From 1996 to 1999, 3,652

clients registered with the LES (outreach offices), 1,322 were progressed into employment, and 1,555 progressed into education and training programmes or community employment. 56% of LES clients over this period had been unemployed for 12 months or more. The Partnership was involved in a wide range of education and training programmes for children, young people, adults, parents, teachers etc. Activities ranged from preventative education programmes and supervised study, to community-based education programmes.

- From 1996-99 a total of 234 young people participated in the preventive education programme;
- 285-450 pupils participated in supervised study sessions and supplementary local tuition each year from 1997-9;
- 59 pupils participated in Homework Support and Tuition Groups in 1997, rising to 269 and 326 in 1998/99;
- 300-400 people per annum participated in literacy tuition, and 41-48 women underwent training concerning the rehabilitation of ex-offenders in 1998 and 1999;
- Each year the Partnership allocated approximately 2,500-4,000 teaching hours to support the provision of community-based education programmes.