



National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005



Ireland



FOREWORD



This second National Action Plan (NAPs/incl) represents not just a Governmental, but a societal response, to the challenge of combating poverty and social exclusion. It is the product of wide and intensive

consultation with the social partners, the community and voluntary sector and many other interested parties. I wish to pay tribute to so many who gave their time, expertise and commitment to shaping the analysis and policies that make up this plan.

Its key objective is

“to build a fair and inclusive society and ensure that people have the resources and opportunities to live a life with dignity and have access to the quality public services that underpin life chances and experiences”.

This plan, together with those of the other EU Member States, is part of an EU wide drive to meet the EU objective set by the European Council at Lisbon in 2000

“to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010”.

I look forward to the exchanges of knowledge, experience, expertise and good practices in the National Plans of the other Member States and the 10 Accession States, which will be joining the process, in further developing our policies and programmes.

The high levels of economic growth achieved in Ireland in recent years has enabled us to achieve much in tackling poverty and social exclusion, in terms of increasing employment and reducing unemployment, especially long term unemployment, and in having much greater resources to invest in income support and the other services, such as health, education and housing.

It is necessary, however, to maintain the economic competitiveness required to ensure growth, while also ensuring that the fruits of that growth are used to best effect in building a fair and inclusive society. This National Action Plan is designed to achieve that balance.

A report on the consultation that preceded the drawing up of the plan is being published as a companion volume to this plan. This report will be of great assistance in informing the ongoing process.

We are engaged in a great national and EU effort to build, in a very real and practical way, a more just and cohesive society, where the interests of the most vulnerable are given the priority they deserve.

This National Action Plan, which I am privileged to introduce, represents the next important stage of the process, to which I am wholeheartedly committed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Coughlan".

Mary Coughlan T.D.
Minister for Social and Family Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

The European Councils in Lisbon and Feira in 2000 set the strategic goal of making the European Union by 2010, *“the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”*. A key objective in achieving this goal, also agreed at Lisbon, is to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.

Arising from this, the National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPs/incl) have been drawn up setting out the strategies, specific measures and institutional arrangements at national level in making progress towards achieving these objectives.

The objectives and the common outline for the first NAPs/incl (submitted in June, 2001) were endorsed by the European Council at Nice in 2000. This was reaffirmed and strengthened at Copenhagen in 2002 for the purposes of the second round of NAPs/incl (to be submitted by 31st July, 2003).

Apart from ensuring, through the National Action Plans, that combating poverty and social exclusion is a key part of national efforts to promote economic and social development, the NAPs/incl process enables us to learn from the varied approaches of other Member States in meeting common objectives. It provides us with a better understanding of exclusion in all its manifestations, facilitates exchanges of good practice on how to combat it, and on targets and indicators, and also on how to reconcile progress in this area with maintaining economic competitiveness.

Combating social exclusion, however, is first and foremost the responsibility of Member States and their national, regional and local authorities, in cooperation with the social partners, including NGOs and other interested parties. Ireland's

National Action Plan has been drawn up following wide and detailed consultation over much of the past two years, especially in relation to the revised National Anti-Poverty Strategy, *Building an Inclusive Society*, and the recent social partnership agreement, *Sustaining Progress*.

The approach adopted in this plan reflects national circumstances, including economic circumstances, demographic and social developments, the nature of our social protection system and social policies more generally.

The high levels of economic growth experienced by Ireland in recent years has contributed greatly to combating poverty and social exclusion, especially through a major increase in employment participation, greatly reduced unemployment and much greater social investment in income support and other services. The significant increases in resources invested in the social security system has resulted in major reductions in consistent poverty and in the numbers below the 40% and 50% median income thresholds.

This Action Plan is coordinated with the Action Plan on Employment and both plans should be read together to get a fuller picture on the measures being taken to combat social exclusion.

This Action Plan represents another stage on the road to making a decisive impact on combating poverty and social exclusion by 2010. It will provide a sound basis for continuing the dialogue with the social partners, NGOs and other interested parties at national level on further developing the policies and programmes to meet that objective. It will also provide a basis for exchanges with the Commission and the other Member States at EU level, drawing on their wide knowledge, experiences, and good practices in devising the best ways of meeting the objective.

CHAPTER 1

MAJOR TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

1.1 Introduction

A societal response to poverty and social exclusion has been developed in Ireland through Social Partnership¹ and a wider consultative process. The first National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS)² drawn up following this process was endorsed in a social partnership agreement, *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, in which it was agreed to extend its scope and revise key aspects. Following a further extensive consultation process³, the revised NAPS - *Building an Inclusive Society* - was launched in February, 2002. The recent social partnership agreement *Sustaining Progress* (February 2003) recognises that the challenge now is to achieve the targets set out in the revised National Anti-Poverty Strategy in the light of changed circumstances and to ensure real and significant progress in relation to implementation.

This National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion is a product of the policies agreed and being developed under social partnership and also takes account of the wider consultative process⁴. It is now envisaged that the strategic planning process in relation to combating poverty and social exclusion at national level will be fully aligned with the NAPs/incl process.

1.2 European Integration

The deepening of European integration has been a major factor in Ireland's economic and social transformation, including in particular:

- the programme to complete the Single Market;
- the doubling and reform of the Structural Funds; and
- the transition to monetary union.

The open method of co-ordination, in accordance with which this National Action Plan has been produced, is proving to be of great assistance in planning to achieve the Lisbon objectives of more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and of making a significant impact on poverty by 2010.

1.3 Recent Economic Trends

It is estimated that annual Gross National Product (GNP) grew by an average of 7.0% during 2000 and 2001. On an annual basis, employment expanded by almost 77,000 in 2000, 49,000 in 2001 and 23,700 in 2002. The unemployment rate fell from 5.6% in 1999 to an average 4.4% in 2002. Living standards, assisted by Budget measures, have continued to improve for both those in employment and those dependent on income support.

The pace of economic growth has slowed over the past two years, largely because of the global economic slowdown. This has been reflected in a disimprovement in the Government finances. The rate of inflation rose over the past four years and was 3.8% in June 2003 (as measured by the EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices [HICP]) – compared to an estimated 2% for the euro area as a whole.

The central macroeconomic objective in *Sustaining Progress* is to consolidate the progress of recent years and achieve a medium term growth rate which is capable of sustaining high levels of employment as well as facilitating the evolution of a more equal society. Ireland, as part of a monetary union where the overriding policy objective is a low-inflation environment of 2% or less a year, has one of the most open economies in the world and is facing much more intense international competition for investment and jobs.

1 See Annex 1.1

2 National Anti-Poverty Strategy – Sharing in Progress, 1997

3 See Chapter 5, section 5.2

4 See Chapter 5, section 5.2

It must get its price and cost increases down to EU levels as soon as possible in order to maintain competitiveness and protect employment and economic growth. It is essential, therefore, to keep public spending consistent with the growth in available resources.

1.4 Poverty Trends

1.4.1 The definition of poverty underpinning this Plan is 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 other resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society.”*⁵

Poverty trends are directly related to the level and quality of employment and to the systems of income support for those who cannot work or who are retired.

Ireland has been using a consistent poverty indicator to measure and identify, among those at risk of poverty, those experiencing basic deprivation (see Table 1.1 in Annex 1⁶). This deprivation arises usually from long term poverty which accelerates the erosion of resources and leads to greater deprivation and marginalisation. Consistent poverty is, therefore, an important indicator for assisting in prioritising measures to combat poverty. Analysis shows that it has fallen steadily from 15.1% in 1994, to 8.2% in 1998, to 5.2% in 2001 reflecting the positive impact of increasing employment, reductions in unemployment, especially long term unemployment, and enhanced income supports.

The priority with the flat-rate social welfare system is to reduce the numbers in consistent poverty and below the low income thresholds (40% and 50% of median income). The system has been effective in achieving these objectives - see Table 1.3. Nonetheless, the over representation among those experiencing consistent poverty of lone parent families, families with four or more children, people who are ill or disabled, people who are working in the home, and the unemployed, continues to show their particular vulnerability to poverty. The proportion that are unemployed decreased from one-in-three in 1998 to one-in-seven in 2001. The fact that nearly one-in-five of the consistently poor are in employment may be indicative of the prevalence of part-time work and/or low levels of pay. A lack of adequate sectoral data does not permit the level of consistent poverty being experienced by other vulnerable groups such as migrants, minority ethnic groups and Travellers to be measured.

1.4.2 At risk of poverty rates

In 2001, some 21.9% of Ireland's population had incomes which fell below 60% of median income, which put them in the category *at risk of poverty*. This proportion has risen steadily since 1994 when it was at 15.6% - see Table 1.2 and 1.11 in Annex 1.⁷

The at risk of poverty trends illustrated in Table 1.2 show that the biggest increase in the numbers at risk of poverty were for the elderly. While pension rates (which are flat-rate) have increased substantially in recent years they have nonetheless lagged behind the very rapid rate of increase in average household income (a product of reduced unemployment, wage increases, improved labour force participation, particularly of women, and

5 Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2002. *Building an Inclusive Society – review of the National Anti Poverty Strategy under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. p. 6.

6 See also Tables 1.5 – 1.10 in Annex 1 for detailed analysis of trends in consistent poverty

7 See also Tables 1.11 – 1.17 in Annex 1 for detailed analysis of trends in relative income poverty

income tax changes)⁸ The risk of falling below the income threshold is also high for some families with children i.e. those with four or more children or lone parents. Households where the reference person is ill/disabled, unemployed or in home duties are at the highest risk of poverty, with two-thirds of the first group falling below the threshold and just less than half of the others. The risk is lowest where the reference person is employed, but between 1998 and 2001 it grew from 2.6% to 8.1%.

It is recognised that a wide range of factors influence the proportion of people at risk of poverty at any time. These include earnings levels, patterns of household formation, the direction of tax and welfare policies, employment and unemployment levels and the level of recourse to welfare supports generally. The success of employment policies in Ireland, focusing on the development of high-wage and high-skilled work opportunities through the 1990s, has resulted in a large increase in earnings dispersion in a context in which the dispersion of earnings was already high by international standards⁹. According to EU figures, Ireland's income distribution is wider than the EU average - in 1999 it was 4.9 compared with the EU average of 4.6. Recent research, however, suggests that earnings dispersion may have contracted, as labour demand bid up wages, even in lower-skill jobs.¹⁰ Ireland's at risk of poverty rates were higher than the EU average in 1999 (the most recent figures available). Social transfers however significantly reduce the population below 60% of median income. In 1998, for example, the reduction achieved was from 33% to 17%¹¹ among the biggest such percentage reductions in the EU 15.

Ireland's overall economic strategy is designed to promote productivity, competitiveness, economic growth and generate the resources to improve social provision. Paradoxically, a reduction in the at risk of poverty rate, for example, to the rate of 15.6% applying in 1994, before the period of rapid economic growth, could also occur by virtue of an economic downturn whereby a significant increase in the unemployment rate would lead to a fall in the level of average disposable income. Such a reduction, however, would be achieved without there being any positive change in the position of the poorest sectors of society¹². It remains the case, however, that people below 60% of median income are at risk of falling into poverty and social exclusion especially if the low income persists for a long period.

Policy task: continue to promote and develop policies and programmes that provide more and better jobs, increase social welfare rates in real terms and improve access to services.

1.5 Employment Trends

The most marked development in Ireland over the past decade has been the increase in employment. As can be seen in Table 1.3 (see Annex 1) Ireland's performance has exceeded the EU average with regard to the EU employment indicators. In the period 1993 to 2000 employment grew by an average of 4.7% per year, with female employment¹³ growing on average by 7% compared to 4% for men. Overall, there was an increase of 43% in employment in the course of that period. The most striking feature has been the increase in the participation of married

8 Relative income measures are assessed however on the basis of disposable income so that the value of non-cash benefits provided by the State (e.g. Allowances for Electricity, Fuel, TV License, Telephone rental and Free Travel on public transport), an important part of the support provided to most older people, is not included in overall household income. Similarly, the value of accumulated assets such as housing are not reflected in a measure of disposable income – this is significant given the very high level of home ownership amongst the elderly (over 80% in 1997).

9 NESF. 2003. *An Investment in Quality: Services, Inclusion and Enterprise*. Dublin: NESF. P. 64.

10 See Curtis, John A. *Irish Income Distribution Over Time: An Analysis of the Moments*. Paper delivered at ESRI seminar 24th October 2002.

11 European Commission 2002. *Social Situation in the European Union 2002*. Brussels: EU Commission

12 Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2001. *Review of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy*. Dublin: Goodbody Economic Consultants.

13 See Table 1.4 in Annex 1

women from 30.6% in 1990 to 46.1% in 2000. In 2002, the labour force participation rate for women was 50.3% and for men 72.7%.

For those over age 55, the overall participation rate increased from 46.2% in 2000 to 48.6% in 2002, but among women aged 60 to 64 the participation rate was just 19.7%. In 2002 also 30.6% of women were in part-time employment, as compared to 6% for men.

The major increase in employment has led to a corresponding reduction in unemployment from 15.9% in 1993 to an average 4.4% in 2002, and in long-term unemployment from 8.9% to 1.3% over the same period. The economic slowdown led to a slight increase in unemployment by the end of 2002 and it is projected that it could rise to 5-6% by end 2003.

Policy tasks: maintain unemployment at its current low levels and, if possible, reduce it further by the creation of more and better jobs; to remove obstacles to part-time and full time employment especially in the case of women and to improve employability.

1.6 Educational Attainment

The increase in the educational levels of the workforce in the 1990s contributed significantly to economic growth and social development. Over the period 1980 -1999, early school leaving was down from 40% to 18%, with retention to Leaving Certificate increasing from 60% to 82%. The estimated proportion of 17/18 year-olds participating in third-level education rose from 20% in 1980 to 44% in 1998. In 2001, 54% of higher education admissions were women.

Despite the recent substantial improvements, disparities in educational attainment persist.

This results in inequalities in the labour market, since educational attainment has a major effect on access to employment and on pay levels. Better female educational performance has still not translated into better labour market performance, which may be attributable to gender differentiation in the type of education received and continuing occupational and industrial segregation in the labour market.

Policy tasks: continue to improve educational retention rates and attainment levels, especially for those who are less well off; to continue to address the issue of early school leaving and to further expand opportunities for lifelong learning.

1.7 Income Support

The highest proportion of people at risk of poverty are those who cannot work or who are retired. The majority are mainly dependent on the State social welfare system for income support.

State income support in Ireland is provided mainly through the social welfare system. Payments are, in general, flat rate¹⁴ but may be supported by allowances for children and other dependents and for certain household costs. The system has three broad branches - social insurance (non-means tested and financed by contributions), social assistance (means tested and financed from taxation) and child benefit (non-means tested and financed from taxation). Due to the progressive extension of social insurance cover to all low income earners, a majority of new claimants for pensions now qualify for payments under this scheme. Women currently receive 50% of pensions under social insurance for those aged 65+, but this proportion still remains significantly less than the proportion of women in the 65+ age cohort, reflecting the lower employment participation rates of women in the past.

14 With the exceptions of Maternity Benefit and Adoptive Benefit which are pay-related

An extensive programme of employment supports forms an integral part of the social welfare system. In 2001, for instance, over 56,000 people were in receipt of employment support payments. The significance of this programme is reflected by comparing the number of beneficiaries with the numbers of recipients of insurance based unemployment benefit (c. 60,000) and means-tested unemployment assistance (c. 66,000) in the same year.

Over 25% of weekly social welfare recipients receive the lowest social assistance payments which in the period 1994 to 2002 increased by 24.4% in real terms. This lowest rate represented almost 24% of Gross Average Industrial Earnings (GAIE) in 2002 – up 1% from 1994, thus keeping pace with the very high level of increases in earnings over the same period. The higher rates of payment, mainly pensions under social insurance, increased by 32.3% in real terms over the same period.

The weekly social welfare payments may be supplemented by allowances for children and other dependants, and for certain household costs.

Policy tasks: to increase social welfare payments in real terms, ensure that they are properly structured to reflect household needs and that they contribute to making work pay and to reconciling work and family life.

1.7.1 *EU Comparisons*

Data on the EU Common Indicators and an analysis of how Ireland compares with other EU countries in relation to the level and composition of social protection expenditure and how it is financed are given in Annex 1 (A 1.3).

1.8 Services

1.8.1 *Housing*

Over the period 1996 to 2002 there was a 14.7% increase in the number of households. The biggest increase is in households comprising childless couples (38.7%), compared, for example, to an increase of 11.1% in households comprising couples with children. This has led to a big increase in demand for housing. In the period 1971 to 1999/2000, the housing stock in Ireland grew by 68% while the proportion of owner-occupied stock increased from 69% to 82% in the same period. Over this period the social rented sector declined from 13.3% to 8%. This largely reflects the very substantial growth in private housing supply and the tenant purchase of existing local authority housing.

Despite the steep rise in house prices, the share of household expenditure absorbed by a mortgage in 1999-2000 was 9.6% on average. This is mainly due to rising incomes and low interest rates, although the share for new house-buyers could be substantially higher.

Rent on social housing represented on average just 7.4% of household expenditure. The assessment of local authority housing needs carried out in March 2002 indicated an increase of 23.5% in the numbers requiring local authority housing over the 1999 figure. Some 32% of total needs in 2002 consisted of single person households, while about 60% of the households assessed as in need of local authority housing were on the waiting list for less than two years.

The biggest proportionate increase in household expenditure was among those in the private rented sector. By 1999-2000 private rents were 2.8 times greater than they had been in 1987 and absorbed, on average, 21% of household income. However, there is significant market evidence of moderation in private rent levels in 2002 and 2003, with rent reductions evident in some cases.

Over 54,200 people were in receipt of a rent supplement¹⁵ at the end of 2002 of whom over 70% were under age 40 and over 53% were unemployed, on active labour market programmes, or lone parents. The overall cost of rent supplements increased by 41% from 2001 to 2002.

Policy task: given the rapidly growing number of households in Ireland, to ensure the supply of the necessary new housing, including a significant proportion of social housing.

1.8.2 Health

Life expectancy at birth in Ireland is lower than the EU average as are mortality rates for ischaemic heart disease and cancer, although the position on these is steadily improving. A clear social class gradient exists for the major causes of mortality, with those at the lowest socio-economic level having the worst outcomes; this also applies to key life style factors which determine an individual's health status.

Residents on low incomes in Ireland are entitled to receive the full range of health services free of charge. Just under 30% of the population are currently in this category. The remainder of the population has access to public hospital services subject to modest statutory charges. Approximately 47% of the population have private health insurance.

There are still waiting times for a range of services in the public health system, e.g. in acute hospitals. However, the number of adults waiting longest (i.e. more than 12 months) for in-patient treatment in the target specialities under the Waiting List Initiative fell by 30% in the period June to December 2002. The number of children waiting longer than 6 months fell by 31% in the same period. In 2002, the number of inpatient discharges from public hospitals had increased by 23% on the 1997 figure. While there has been significantly increased investment in health services in recent years, moving Ireland from 5th from bottom to just above the EU average in terms of *per capita* spend between 1997-2001, this increase has been built on a low historical base. There is consequently considerable "catching up" to do in terms of health infrastructure.

Policy tasks: continue to improve access to services for the less well off and develop greater emphasis on, and support for, healthier lifestyles as well as ensuring that the health of the population is placed at the centre of public policy in line with the objectives of the *National Health Strategy: Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You*.

1.8.3 Care

The increase in female participation in the workforce, in particular, has given rise to significant problems in the provision of care. This affects both the carers and those receiving the care. The availability of high quality and affordable childcare greatly influences employment participation rates especially of lone parents and may also influence birth rates. The ageing of the population, including increasing longevity, also leads to greater demands for care for older people.

15 Rent supplement is payable under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme.

Policy task: develop an infrastructure of care services that seeks to achieve a proper balance between the respective roles of families, the State, the private sector and voluntary organisations.

1.8.4 Transport

Lack of adequate public transport is mainly a problem in rural areas, with the main problem in urban areas being traffic congestion, due to a large increase in car ownership. A major investment in transport infrastructure is currently underway, of which 68% will be spent on roads and 32% on public transport, including 23% in the Greater Dublin Area. A series of pilot initiatives to improve rural transport are being brought forward and improvements in accessibility for the mobility impaired are being introduced.

Policy task: ensure that accessible transport is provided in both urban and rural areas.

1.8.5 Legal Assistance

The Legal Aid Board was established in 1979 to deliver a range of civil legal services at low cost to people unable to fund such services from their own resources. The Board's main service is called Civil Legal Aid. This provides advice and representation on many areas of civil law to those requiring such information and assistance. The Board has thirty local offices or law centres with its own solicitors but private solicitors and barristers are also engaged to help provide an efficient service. The Board deals with a vast range of legislation. The numbers who qualified for such assistance in recent years is given in Annex 1, Table 1.21. A separate Criminal Legal Aid scheme provides free legal aid for the defence of persons with insufficient means. There were over 27,300 cases in which this aid was given in the lower courts alone in 2002. In addition, a small claims procedure has been put in place to handle

consumer claims cheaply and without involving solicitors for claims not exceeding €1269.74.

Policy task: monitor and improve the effectiveness of services, especially for the most vulnerable.

1.8.6 Equality

The Government and the social partners are agreed that equality is a key goal which must underpin activity in all policy areas in order to ensure a fair and inclusive society. A comprehensive framework of equality legislation is in place together with the institutions and mechanisms to give effect to this legislation.

Policy task: ensure that the framework is kept up to date and relevant in order to ensure a fair and inclusive society with equal opportunity.

1.9 To Prevent the Risks of Exclusion

1.9.1 E-inclusion

Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) present new opportunities to address traditional problems of disadvantage and exclusion in society. The primary policy objective is to raise the level of access to, and participation in, the Information Society by increasing the numbers using ICTs. While the estimated percentages of Irish households (47.9%) and business (83.2%) with Internet access in 2002 were above the EU average, up to 55% of adults did not have internet access or used it infrequently.¹⁶

Policy task: development of a more inclusive Information Society in Ireland targeting in particular the groups most at risk of exclusion; women on home duties, retired people, tradesmen/skilled workers, workers in agriculture, forestry or fishing, and the unemployed.

16 ITECH research. *E-inclusion – Expanding the Information Society in Ireland*.

1.9.2 Homelessness

According to the assessment of homelessness undertaken by local authorities in March 2002, the number of homeless households at 3,773 showed a slight increase over the 1999 figure of 3,743. A total of 2,560 homeless households were identified in the Dublin area, of which 1,440, or 56%, were single male households.

Policy task: better develop and co-ordinate existing policies and programmes for the homeless to meet their special needs and to improve data collection on homelessness.

1.9.3 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can seriously affect the victim's health, self-esteem, employability and capacity to become self-sufficient and can contribute to homelessness. The majority of victims are women. Many victims also have children. The consequences for their development are far reaching even where they have only witnessed the violence.

Policy task: co-ordinate the various services in co-operation with the relevant support groups to more effectively combat domestic violence.

1.9.4 Indebtedness

Families on low incomes experience difficulties in managing their money and can fall into debt that is difficult to escape. This often begins when large non-routine expenditures have to be met. Such families also have limited access to credit.

Policy task: continue to develop the countrywide Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and determine if any further initiatives are required, such as special schemes for saving, for those on low incomes.

1.9.5 Alcohol and Drug Misuse

In 2001, Ireland ranked second highest among the EU Member States in terms of *per capita* alcohol consumption. Alcohol is a factor in marital breakdown, crisis pregnancies, mental illnesses, work related problems, road accidents and suicides.

Drug misuse can have severe social consequences particularly when this is concentrated in areas of economic disadvantage. Problem drug use in those areas tends to reinforce existing economic and social problems. Although the level of heroin use in Ireland is about the European average, the incidence is mainly concentrated within disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the eastern region of the country.

Policy task: develop a consensus on the implementation of strategies already identified to deal with alcohol misuse and provide for rigorous implementation. In relation to drug misuse, the **policy task** is to implement the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008.

1.9.6 Preserving Family Solidarity

Social, demographic and economic changes already outlined are having a profound effect on family life. New and continuing challenges include the environment for rearing children, the care of children, the elderly and family members with disabilities, marital breakdown, the pressures of lone parenthood and time pressure especially from long commuting times. Families with four or more children and lone parent families have a high risk of poverty.

Policy task: provide where necessary supports for family life through employment, income support, child and elder care services, parenting and other family support services.

1.9.7 Social Participation – including arts, culture and recreation

The rate of social participation measures the extent to which people organise themselves and participate in voluntary work. This work fulfils an important function in achieving social cohesion and building social capital through community development in disadvantaged areas. It can also help to prevent vulnerable groups, such as the unemployed, becoming socially isolated and be an important means of beginning a return to work and achieving greater social inclusion more generally.

The rate of volunteering in Ireland declined from 39% of the population in 1992 to 33% in 1997/98. Most of this decline was among men (9%), with only a 1% reduction among women. The majority of volunteers are in the 40+ age groups, with young people generally being under represented. Those with lower educational qualifications were the least likely to volunteer and, with the unskilled and unemployed, showed the highest rate of decline in participation over the 1990s.

Improving access to facilities for arts, culture and recreation is an important means of increasing participation in voluntary activities and has a positive impact on socially disadvantaged individuals, groups and areas.

Policy task: continue to strengthen supports to volunteering and to encourage the self-expression and participation of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the formulation and implementation of policies and measures affecting them; continue to improve access to arts, cultural and recreation facilities.

1.10 Vulnerable Groups

There are a number of groups requiring special attention because of vulnerabilities associated with their situation.

1.10.1 Women

Women are frequently in situations of vulnerability because they take on the main responsibility for caring for children and other family members. As a result their earnings are still, on average, significantly lower than those of men as are their employment participation rates. They form the majority of those in part-time employment and of other vulnerable groups such as lone parents and carers in the home of elderly and disabled relatives. Their longevity and relatively poor pension entitlements, based as they are on employment records, mean that many women are also at risk of poverty and social exclusion in old age. Part-time workers, however, are now fully insured for social welfare purposes and arrangements have been in place since 1994 to protect the pension rights of people who leave the workforce to care for children, elderly or disabled relatives

Policy task: achieve equality for women through a combination of mainstreaming and targeted measures.

1.10.2 Children and young people

The position of children is normally dependent on the circumstances of their parents. Families with children are more vulnerable to poverty given the costs of providing for them and the opportunity costs, especially for the mothers, in relation to availability for employment. The child's future earning capacity is also greatly affected by the standard and quality of education received.

Policy task: develop a more integrated policy and the institutional structures to ensure adequate supports for children, their development and for those caring for them

1.10.3 Older People

A relatively high proportion of older people, a majority of whom are women, are also at risk of poverty and social exclusion and this risk is exacerbated when they are living alone. Income support and accessibility of services is critical to their quality of life.

Policy task: increase income support in real terms and ensure that the range of State services is fully accessible with special reference to those living alone.

1.10.4 People with Disabilities

The risk of falling below the 60% median income line for households headed by a person who is ill or disabled is 66.5%, compared to the risk of 21.9% for all households¹⁷. The Quarterly National Household Survey for the second quarter of 2002 shows that just over 40% of people who are ill or with a disability are in employment compared with an overall rate of 65% of the total population in the same age category. These findings demonstrate that people with disabilities are at a high risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Policy tasks: the removal of barriers to employment, the provision of supports to obtain employment for those who are capable of work, the provision of adequate income support for those who cannot work, further development and better integration of the services being provided, reasonable accommodation in mainstream services and support generally in achieving greater inclusion and well-being.

1.10.5 Travellers

Close to 24,000 Irish Travellers, representing 0.6% of the total population were enumerated in the 2002 census. The majority (58.6%) lived in permanent accommodation, (including permanent accommodation in Traveller encampments) while 33.9% lived in caravans or mobile homes.¹⁸ There is much the same gender breakdown among travellers as among the settled population, but the age structure is very different. Those under age 14 accounted for 42.2% of the Traveller population, compared to 21.1% of the settled population, and those aged 65 and over accounted for just 3.3% of the Traveller population compared to 11.1% of the settled population, mainly reflecting their much lower life expectancy.

Policy task: further develop policies with the necessary supports to enable Travellers achieve greater integration while respecting their distinctive way of life.

1.10.6 Prisoners and ex-prisoners

The majority of prisoners in Ireland come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are at risk of leaving prison lacking the skills and resources needed to find a job and accommodation. Consequently, many find it very difficult to settle back in mainstream society, with the result that Ireland has one of the highest recidivism rates (approx. 70%) in Europe.¹⁹

Policy task: make more effective provision for the re-integration of prisoners back into society thus reducing the risks of poverty and social exclusion and the rate of repeat offending.

¹⁷ ESRI *op cit*.

¹⁸ The remainder did not answer the question.

¹⁹ National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), 2001. *Re-integration of prisoners*. Dublin: NESF, p. vii.

1.10.7 Urban poverty and rural disadvantage

There are at least three forms of urban disadvantage – poor households who live in urban areas, urban communities with high concentrations of poverty, and areas experiencing environmental and economic decline due to the collapse of traditional industry or the poor quality of physical infrastructure.²⁰ Many of these areas face a range of inter-related problems, such as long-term unemployment, separated families, feelings of lack of security and a low quality environment.

The relative rural decline is continuing with the rate of increase in the population, as recorded in the 2002 census, at 4.3% being over 6% less than the increase in the urban population, which is now 60% of the total population. This can affect the level of services and isolation for those – especially older people - already experiencing social exclusion due to other reasons. Elements of deprivation and poverty associated with rural areas include higher than average dependency levels, a high proportion of farm households on low incomes (24% in 2000)²¹, a lack of employment opportunities, relatively poor transport, and a high incidence of isolation and loneliness particularly among those living alone.²²

The needs of disadvantaged communities are accentuated in the Border regions due to the effects of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Policy tasks: reduce poverty and improve services; improve and develop infrastructure and increase access to employment; reduce drug misuse and crime and address their harmful effects (mainly urban areas); apply special additional innovative measures required for the disadvantaged Border regions.

1.11 Areas of special attention

The common outline for the 2003/2005 NAPs/incl requires a particular focus on gender mainstreaming and on groups experiencing particular integration problems, such as those affecting migrants.

1.11.1 Gender

This Plan adopts a gender mainstreaming approach throughout by drawing out significant gender equality issues for both women and men across the main policy areas. In addition, the Plan highlights targeted actions which are designed to address gender inequality.

Policy task: carry out gender impact assessment of the policy areas included in the Plan and to develop policies what will support equally beneficial, although at times different, outcomes for both women and men.

1.11.2 Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

Emigration has been a major reality for Ireland since the middle of the 19th century and continues to be so. It is estimated that more than one in four Irish born people live outside the country which is amongst the biggest proportions for EU countries.²³ Although Irish people only represent 1% of the population of the EU 15, Irish people represent 15% of the 6 million EU nationals living in another EU country (approximately 0.9 m of Irish living in other EU states live in the UK).

Migration patterns have fluctuated since the 1970s, when net inward migration occurred for the first time since the foundation of the State. This was followed in the 1980s by high net outward migration, but since the mid 1990s,

20 CPA, 2001. *Submission to NAPS Urban Disadvantage Working Group*. Dublin: CPA p. 2.

21 Frawley, J, Commins, P, Scott, S. and Fergal T. 2000. *Low Income Farm Households: Incidence, Characteristics and Policies*. Dublin: Oaktree Press in association with the Combat Poverty Agency.

22 Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 2001. *Report of the NAPS Working Group on Rural Poverty*. Dublin. p. 2.

23 Walter B et al. 2002. *Irish Emigrants and Irish Communities Abroad*. Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs

net inward migration has resumed and is now higher than in the 1970s. The 15 to 24 age group is most affected by migration and, despite the development of greater net inward migration, this age group continues to record net losses due to emigration. The 25-34 and 35-44 age groups are recording net inward migration of non-Irish national and returning Irish-born emigrants, together with their children.

Non-Irish nationals made up just 5.8% of the population in 2002, of whom 2.7% were UK nationals, followed by other EU nationals, nationals of other European countries, Asian, African and US nationals in that order of magnitude. The number of non-EEA nationals quadrupled from 22,546 in 1998 to 90,446 in 2001, with applicants for asylum more than doubling from 4,626 to 10,325 in the same period.

Both outward and inward migration are likely to continue to be a reality of Irish life for the foreseeable future. Migrants and ethnic minorities are vulnerable to social exclusion and research shows that this applies to emigrants from Ireland as much as to immigrants to this country. Women within these groups are especially vulnerable.

Policy task: improve the effectiveness of the regulation of migration and develop and implement a comprehensive policy for the integration of migrants with a view to combating their social exclusion and accommodating cultural diversity.

2.1 Introduction

The NAPs/incl 2001-03 was prepared and submitted during the first half of 2001 when a wider, more comprehensive review of Ireland's National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) was still underway. The NAPs/incl did not, therefore, contain many specific targets as these were, at that time, being developed in the context of an extensive consultation process involving the social partners. As a result, the NAPs/incl focused primarily on the strategic approach being employed to deal with the four common policy objectives and the range of relevant measures to give effect to them. The revised NAPS *Building an Inclusive Society* contains some 36 poverty reduction targets across a range of policy areas and in respect of groups vulnerable to poverty and exclusion.

A summary table showing some of the key NAPS targets and the present position in relation to progress in their implementation is attached as Table 2.1 in Annex 2. It should be noted that in some cases data does not yet exist to monitor progress on achieving the targets.

2.2 Analysis of progress – summary

In the 2001-03 period of the first NAPs/incl the main areas of progress were as follows:

Employment: High levels of participation were maintained with Ireland having one of the lowest unemployment rates in the EU – 4.6% in February 2003- of which the long-term unemployed represented 1.4%. There has been considerable investment in education and training to improve employability and in child care provision to facilitate greater female employment.

Services: Significant increases in real terms were provided in relation to both the lowest social welfare payments (short term and social assistance) and pensions, together with a major investment in child benefit. There was significant investment also in the main services including health, education (including Information and Communications Technologies [ICTs]), housing, transport and the provision of care for the elderly and those with disabilities.

Vulnerable Groups: A full “equality infrastructure,” with legislation and institutions to implement it is now in place to promote equality and equal opportunities for all. There is also a growing recognition of the need for special supports for certain groups in society, including those living in disadvantaged areas, if they are to achieve social inclusion.

Situations of Vulnerability: New measures and extra resources have been devoted to preventing and dealing with alcohol and drugs misuse, providing accommodation for the homeless and countering racism.

Institutional structures to coordinate and advance the social inclusion agenda have been strengthened, which include the establishment of the Office for Social Inclusion, the Social Inclusion Consultative Group (including the social partners) and an annual Social Inclusion Forum for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and those who represent them.

2.3 Economic situation

The economic and fiscal policies of recent years have been a major factor in achieving strong and sustained economic and social performance. Notwithstanding the undoubted successes that

have been achieved, further progress is clearly required, particularly against the background of relatively poor social and economic development in the past. The Government is committed to protecting Ireland's economic and fiscal situation as the key prerequisite to maintaining high levels of employment and generating the resources required to address this legacy by continuing with the existing high levels of social and public services investment.

2.4 To facilitate participation in employment

The strategic approach in the first NAPs/incl drew heavily on the Employment Action Plan (EAP) 2001, with a clear focus on the mobilisation and incentivisation of labour supply and on the development of a preventative strategy of systematic early intervention with the newly unemployed to avoid a drift towards long term unemployment. The first NAPs/incl also focussed on the gender dimension in relation to the unemployment gap, equal pay, and participation rates.

There is a renewed focus on mobilisation of labour supply, enhanced employability and the gender dimension in the EAP 2002, a key objective of which is 'to promote the economic and social inclusion of excluded persons, eliminate long-term unemployment and prevent future drift into long-term unemployment'. These priorities are reflected in the programme of FÁS, the National Training

Authority. Progress towards the achievement of the EU employment rate targets is outlined in the table²⁴ below, which show steady progress in improving employment participation levels.

Annex 2.2 contains more information on employment policies and actions during the period.

2.4.1 Work/Life Balance

There was a commitment in the first NAPs/incl to a range of measures to assist in reconciling work and family life, mainly in the areas of child income support, support for carers, and the provision of childcare. In terms of child income support, the focus remained on substantially enhancing the value of Child Benefit payments, a universal payment with no employment disincentive impacts. Additional resources of some €936.13 million in total were allocated to the scheme over Budgets 2001, 2002 and 2003.

On the legislative front, the duration of maternity leave and adoptive leave was increased, with effect from 8 March, 2001 and a review of the Parental Leave Act 1998 was undertaken. The Carer's Leave Act 2001 allows employees to leave their employment temporarily to provide full-time care for a period of up to 65 weeks. This complements the social insurance based Carer's Benefit scheme. The conditions governing entitlement to the means-tested Carer's Allowance were also further eased in the period under review

Employment Rate	EU Actual 2001	Ireland Actual 2003	EU Target 2005	EU Target 2010
Overall	63.9%	65.0%	67%	70%
Female	54.9%	55.0%	57%	60%
Older	38.5%	46.7%	N/A	50%

and in 2001 there were almost 18,800 recipients of whom 80% are women. The Part-time Work Act was introduced at the end of 2001 giving part-time workers the same rights as full time workers.

A total of €206m has been committed under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000 - 2006 and it is estimated that 23,961 new childcare places will be created and a further 22,340 existing places supported. (Further details in Annex 4.4).

2.5 To facilitate access by all to resources, rights, goods and services

2.5.1 Income Support

The 2002 and 2003 National Budgets made provision for increases in the main personal rates of weekly payments ranging from 7.4% to 12.7% (2002) and from 5.1% to 7.6% (2003). The position of pensioners was improved through granting them higher increases overall of 10.5% (2002) and 7.5% (2003). The standard of living of all social welfare recipients was thus improved in real terms over the period.

The Pensions Act, 2002, provided for the introduction of Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs) in 2003 with the key aim of increasing supplementary pensions cover from its current level of 50% (44% of women) to 70%.

2.5.2 Housing

The NAPs/incl outlined the planned investment under the National Development Programme on housing and on accommodation for the Traveller Community. A new multi-annual local authority housing programme commenced in 2000 providing for the delivery of 25,000 local authority housing starts over the period 2000 – 2003. By end 2002, there had been 16,300 starts, 65% of the target.

A record level of output, 1,360 housing units, was achieved by the Voluntary/Co-operative housing sector in 2002 with Government support and expenditure of €165m up from €98.65m in 2000. About half of these units were provided for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities and homeless persons.

National Development Plan (NDP) funding is also being provided to local authorities for the improvement and upgrading of their housing stock. This includes comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment of a number of social housing complexes as part of area based regeneration initiatives, designed to tackle serious problems of multiple deprivation, particularly in inner-city areas. Funding of €150m was provided in 2002 and €175m in 2003. Over €1.8m was spent on improved housing management projects under the Housing Management Initiative in 2001/2002.

Five-year local authority Traveller accommodation programmes cover the period 2000 to 2004. Between 2000 and the end of 2002 a total of 760 new units of accommodation were built of which 437 units were standard local authority dwellings and 323 were Traveller specific. In the same period, a further 239 units of Traveller accommodation were refurbished.

The vast majority of the recommendations of the Commission on the Private Rented Residential Sector were accepted by Government and are in the process of being implemented. (See Annex 2.3.13)

2.5.3 Health

The NAPs/incl set out the priorities for expenditure in the health services – including a strategic emphasis on the development of accessible services for, amongst others, the elderly, children and people with intellectual disabilities.

Major increases in public expenditure on health amounted to 47% in 2002 on the comparable figure in 2000. Estimated expenditure in 2003 will show an increase of 77.4% on the 2000 figure.

A National Health Strategy: *'Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You'* was published in November 2001. This Strategy incorporates the health related targets and implementation strategy set out in the revised NAPS. A number of other key health related policies and measures were introduced during the 2001-03 period, which are described in Annex 2.3.1-4.

2.5.4 Education

Planned developments in the area of educational disadvantage were set out in the first NAPs/incl – notably in relation to the primary school sector and to adult literacy. A number of key initiatives undertaken in this regard are described in Chapter 4.

Programmes to increase the participation of vulnerable groups in third-level education have been greatly expanded and include the Special Fund for Students with Disabilities, the Student Assistance Fund, Higher Education Authority Targeted Initiatives, special rates of Maintenance Grants and the Millennium Partnership for Disadvantage. In November 2002, approval was granted for the establishment of a National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education.

2.5.5 Transport

The Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) was launched in July 2001 to provide funding on a pilot basis for community organisations and community partnerships to address the particular transport needs of their rural area by actively engaging in the provision of transport services. At present some 1800 new transport services are being provided on

some 300 routes under the RTI. In the main, these are one day a week services, many of which are door-to-door and are designed to fit in with existing scheduled services. In excess of 13,000 people are using the RTI transport services every month and these numbers are rising as new transport services are rolled out and existing services are developed to their full capacity. The Free Travel Scheme has been formally extended to the RTI. Expenditure on the RTI last year was €3.0 m and a further €3.0m is likely to be spent on it this year.

2.5.6 Quality Public Services

Revised Quality Customer Service (QCS) Principles have been adopted. These are designed to ensure that administrative and social services are adapted to the needs of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, are capable of promoting equality and accommodating diversity, and that front-line staff are sensitive to these needs.

A series of performance indicators has been developed in the Health Sector. These are now in use in association with the annual Service Plan, which is a legislative requirement for all regional health boards. Performance indicators for services for a wide range of vulnerable groups are included e.g. for Travellers, the homeless, people with disabilities, asylum seekers, drug users, children and the elderly. Refinement and improvement of these indicators will continue in 2003–2005.

2.6 To prevent the risks of exclusion

The first NAPs/incl focussed on ensuring that improved capacity was in place to support families and to tackle indebtedness, homelessness, and drug addiction. Measures were also to be put in place to exploit the potential of ICTs to meet the twin aims of avoiding a 'digital divide' and enhancing the quality of access to services.

2.6.1 Preserving Family Solidarity

The Family Support Agency was established on a statutory basis on 6 May 2003 – its main task being to support families, promote continuity and stability in family life, prevent marital breakdown and foster a supportive community environment for families at a local level. The Family Support Agency has been allocated a budget of €17.2m for 2003.

There are now 21 *Springboard* projects in operation which provide intensive support for at-risk children and their families. The report of the three year evaluation of the pilot projects, published in December 2001, was very positive and showed that as a model of service delivery, intensive targeted family support is meeting a recognised need to support vulnerable families. Based on this evaluation most of the projects have been mainstreamed.

2.6.2 Indebtedness

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) continued to provide services associated with tackling indebtedness and money lending. A recent evaluation found that over 90% of stakeholders were positively disposed towards the MABS. This service is described in some detail in Chapter 6.

2.6.3 Homelessness

The Government's Homeless Strategy, *Homelessness – an Integrated Strategy*, was launched in May 2000. Work is now well underway on the implementation of the local three-year action plans drawn up by local homeless fora at city and county level. A wide range of accommodation and related services for homeless people has come on stream since the launch of the Homeless Strategy, including additional emergency and transitional accommodation as well as outreach

and settlement services. In particular, efforts have been concentrated on providing emergency accommodation services for homeless people and particular attention has been paid to rough sleepers. Since 2000 almost 1,000 homeless families have been housed by the four Dublin local authorities. Outreach services have been established in Dublin, Cork and Limerick to make contact with rough sleepers and wet hostels for street drinkers have opened in Dublin and Limerick. Dublin City Council has initiated a night bus service that brings homeless people to available accommodation.

In February 2002, the Government launched the *Homeless Preventative Strategy*, which was developed by a number of key Government Departments. It contains measures to prevent homelessness among adult offenders, young offenders, those leaving mental health facilities and acute hospitals, and young people leaving care. The main theme throughout the strategy is the need to ensure that no one is released from any type of state care without measures in place to ensure that they have a suitable place to live with appropriate supports if needed.

A *Youth Homelessness Strategy* was launched in late 2001 providing a strategic framework for youth homelessness to be tackled on a national basis. The goal of the Strategy is "to reduce and if possible eliminate youth homelessness through preventative strategies and, where a child becomes homeless, to ensure that he/she benefits from a comprehensive range of services aimed at reintegrating him/her into his/her community as quickly as possible." There are 12 key objectives in the Strategy, divided into three broad categories: preventative measures, responsive services and planning/administrative supports. Since its publication, some 96 new staff have been

appointed across the 10 Health Board regions; 7 new units have opened nationwide; and new/extended services have been developed in 20 locations around the country.

2.6.4 Drug Misuse

The overall objective of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 is to significantly reduce the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research. Some key measures implemented in the period under review include:

- Substance misuse prevention programmes in all schools in the Local Drug Task Force (LDTF) areas during the academic year 2001/02 and plans to deliver the Social Personal and Health Programme in all primary and post-primary schools by September 2003.
- Issue of guidelines to assist schools in the development of a drugs policy (October 2002)
- Increase in the number of methadone treatment places from 5,032 (December 2000) to 6,449 (December 2002)
- 1,120 places available in 54 drugs related projects on Community Employment Scheme (CE) for recovering drug users; a drugs awareness training programme for CE supervisors being piloted
- Over €65m allocated for 500 projects (approximately) of the Local Drug Task Forces since 1997; with some €14.5m allocated for current projects. In addition, over €11.5m has been allocated to meet the accommodation needs of community based drugs projects.
- The Young People's Facilities and Services Fund which aims to attract "at risk"

young people in disadvantaged areas into recreational facilities and activities and divert them away from the dangers of substance abuse has been allocated approximately €59m under the first round of funding.

2.6.5 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

In 2001- 2003, funds were allocated to the Information Society Fund to fast track initiatives, including e-inclusion initiatives, to progress the Information Society in Ireland. Examples of key initiatives, which are detailed in Annex 2.4, include: - the Community Application of Information Technology Project, the development of National Disability Authority, IT Accessibility Guidelines, the Equalskills Project, and the Library Internet Access Initiative.

2.6.6 Arts/Culture/Recreation

The Arts and Culture Capital Enhancement Support Scheme (ACCESS 2001 – 2004) provides funding for Arts and Culture projects throughout the country. In August 2001, 44 projects were selected for funding amounting to €45.71m. As general access to arts and culture facilities improves and participation in arts and culture activities increases, there will be a positive impact on socially disadvantaged individuals and groups.

The Sport Capital Programme operated by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism is the vehicle through which funding is provided on an annual basis to voluntary and community organisations to assist with the provision of sporting facilities aimed at increasing levels of participation and improving standards of performance. In the period 1999 – 2002 some €213m has been allocated to almost 3,000 projects throughout the country.

2.7 To help the most vulnerable

2.7.1 Equality

An extensive equality infrastructure has been established – both in terms of primary legislation and in the establishment of a statutory Equality Authority. The “nine grounds” protected under the legislation relate to gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling community.

2.7.2 Children and Young People

The National Children’s Strategy, published at the end of 2000, is a 10 year plan of action for children, covering all aspects of their lives, and includes specific actions in relation to child poverty. The National Children’s Office has been established to lead and oversee implementation of the Strategy.

2.7.3 People with Disabilities

The Government sponsored Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (1996) (60% of the membership of which had disabilities and/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.

2.7.4 Other vulnerable groups

The reduction in the levels of consistent poverty faced by vulnerable groups has been described in Chapter 1. Allied to the increases in income support provided through the social welfare system, a wide range of other measures have been targeted at groups vulnerable to poverty. These are detailed in Annex 2.5.

2.7.5 Urban Poverty

The RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) Programme identified the most disadvantaged urban areas in the country and targeted a proportion of the social inclusion funding provided in the National Development Plan 2000-2006 towards these areas. The RAPID Programme also seeks to promote among Government Departments and State Agencies better co-ordination and closer integration in the delivery of services. In each of the areas, an Area Implementation Team (AIT) was established to prepare a plan. Proposals from the plans have been forwarded to the relevant Government Department for appropriate action.

2.7.6 Rural Disadvantage

The CLÁR programme (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) or ‘Programme for Disadvantaged Rural Areas’, launched in October 2001, is a targeted investment programme for disadvantaged rural areas. The regions in the 18 counties selected for inclusion in the CLÁR programme are those that suffered the greatest population decline from 1926 to 2002. The average population loss in these regions is 50% and the total population that benefits from the Programme is 362,000. In 2002, €14.1m was spent on CLÁR measures, with related public and private expenditure of €10.5m.

2.8 To mobilise all relevant bodies

2.8.1 The procedures and structures developed to date are broadly described in Chapter 5. Some of the significant developments in this regard during 2002/2003 include:

- The Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) which aims to counter disadvantage and promote equality and social and economic inclusion through the provision

of funding and support to local Partnerships, Community Groups and Employment Pacts. Funding was allocated on the basis of strategic plans, which seek to encourage local development that is sustainable, socially inclusive and targeted at the most disadvantaged in the community. To this end Partnerships, Community Groups and Employment Pacts have developed actions that are aimed at the most marginalised and that address the consequences of cumulative disadvantage as faced by such groups. By the end of 2002, considerable progress had been made in the delivery of actions outlined in the strategic plans.²⁵

- The Community Development Programme aims to develop a network of community development resource centres or community development resource projects in communities affected by high unemployment, poverty and disadvantage. The emphasis has been broadened to include groups which act as a resource for community development work with particular vulnerable groups e.g. Travellers, disadvantaged young people, lone parents, the homeless, the unemployed, people with disabilities, elderly people who live in isolated circumstances. The number of projects in the Community Development Programme has grown from 9 in 1990 to 138 in 2002 and 152 in 2003.
- A Programme of Core Funding for Community and Family Support Groups provides support for smaller scale self-help work among specific target groups that experience disadvantage – disadvantaged women and men, lone parents, Travellers etc. to articulate their point of view and participate in a process of personal and community development. At present, some

50 groups are participating in the Programme or are in the process of being set up.

2.8.2 The Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursements Board was established in June 2002 under the provisions of the Dormant Accounts Act 2001. While the main purpose of the Act is to reunite account holders with their dormant funds in banks, building societies and post offices, it also provides for a scheme to disburse unclaimed moneys for projects and programmes designed to alleviate poverty and social deprivation. The scheme will also be applied to programmes to assist people with disabilities and towards benefiting communities and society. This is a new initiative, which does not have a parallel in other European countries. Substantial funding is expected to become available in the early years which may make a significant impact in the area of social inclusion.

2.8.3 An independent Public Health Alliance has been established to bring together all those working for public health to advocate the reduction of health inequalities.

2.8.4 The first goal of the National Children's Strategy is that children will have a voice in matters which affect them. The National Children's Office has lead responsibility in relation to this goal, and has commenced its implementation with the holding of Dáil na nÓg (Youth Parliament) in 2001 and 2002 and supporting the establishment of a Comhairle na nÓg (Children and Young People's County Council) in each City and County Development Board area. The Office is developing a comprehensive children's participation programme to include the development and publication of guidelines on consulting with children and is taking a proactive role in promoting the establishment of school councils in second level schools.

3.1 Context and key elements

3.1.1 Core Objective

The core objective of the strategy, as set out in *Sustaining Progress*, is “to build a fair and inclusive society and ensure that people have the resources and opportunities to live life with dignity and have access to the quality public services that underpin life chances and experiences.”

The key related objectives are to:

- sustain economic growth and employment.
- provide levels of income support to those relying on social welfare sufficient to sustain dignity and avoid poverty, while facilitating participation in employment, and to achieve economic independence, if possible;
- address the specific needs of groups at high risk of poverty including tackling the causes of inter-generational transmission of poverty
- support disadvantaged communities, and
- provide high quality public services to all.

A range of integrated Government policy strategies which are relevant to and underpin the approaches, objectives and targets set out in this Action Plan are outlined in Annex 3.

3.1.2 Equality

Equality is a key goal which must underpin activity in all policy areas to ensure a fair and inclusive society with equal opportunity. Anti-poverty strategies need, therefore, to be able to accommodate the diversity of people living in poverty in terms of identity, situations and experience across the nine grounds of the equality legislation.²⁶ Policy responses will aim to address the poverty/inequality link by

emphasising non-discrimination, equality and the accommodation of diversity.

3.1.3 Sustaining Progress special initiatives

Sustaining Progress identified the priorities for attention in the 2003/05 period in a number of special initiatives which will be the subject of a sustained focus of effort by the Government and Social Partners.

The Special Initiatives of key importance to this National Action Plan are:

- Ending Child Poverty
- Tackling Educational Disadvantage – Literacy, Numeracy and Early School leavers
- Long-term Unemployed, Vulnerable Workers and those who have been made redundant
- Care – Children, People with Disabilities and Older People
- Migration and Interculturalism
- Housing and Accommodation
- Alcohol/Drug Misuse
- Including Everyone in the Information Society

3.1.4 Sustaining Economic Growth

The economic priority is to consolidate the progress of recent years and achieve a medium term growth rate capable of sustaining high levels of employment and facilitating the evolution of a more equal society. Securing low inflation, sustainable public finances and social, economic and environmental sustainability are central elements of this overall economic policy.

²⁶ The grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief and membership of the Travelling Community.

Policy on public expenditure in this context is informed by a number of key points which include:

- improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure by a greater focus on priorities, service standards, transparency and results secured;
- the continued targeting of resources and prioritisation of commitments at those most in need, sustaining social protection and inclusion expenditure at a level that addresses the key social deficits by continuing to protect and enhance the living standards of the disadvantaged and improving the delivery of social cohesion objectives; and
- developing a stronger and more transparent monitoring and evaluation culture, and a sharper focus on evidence-based policy making.

The scale of social inclusion related expenditure, on both services and infrastructure, over the period of the NAPs/incl is demonstrated by the level for 2003, which will be of the order of €17.4 billion (details in Annex 3, Table 3.1). The National Development Plan (NDP) is contributing approximately €20.7 billion over the period 2000-06, specifically to promote social inclusion across the country through a range of capital and other programmes. Areas for investment include improving employability through training and education, fostering entrepreneurship and adaptability, promoting equality, providing childcare, social and affordable housing and recreational facilities, community development and family services and various health initiatives as well as targeted measures against rural and

urban deprivation. Details of various NDP programmes are given in Annex 2 and 4.

3.1.5 Poverty

A key **target** is to:

- reduce the numbers of those who are 'consistently poor' below 2% and, if possible, eliminate consistent poverty, under the current definition of consistent poverty. Specific attention will be paid to particular vulnerable groups in the pursuit of this objective.

Progress in relation to the proportion of the population falling below relative income lines, particularly for a sustained period, will be monitored over the lifetime of the Action Plan. Research has been commissioned on the persistence of high relative income poverty levels in Ireland and its findings will inform policy development.

3.2 Facilitating participation in employment

3.2.1 Employment policy

For people who are able to work, paid employment offers the best means of combating poverty and social exclusion. Ireland's Employment Action Plan 2002 provides the strategic objectives for the year ahead and into the future, the **key objectives** being

- To reduce the rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment;
- To increase the labour market participation levels and job progression rates among women and marginalised and excluded groups.

The **strategic approach** towards achieving these objectives includes:

- Having in place a proactive policy of engagement with people of working age on social welfare, to ensure that, where possible, they have the opportunity to avail of employment, education and training options;
- Creating new opportunities for unemployed people and for marginalised groups to access employment and training;
- Eliminating any remaining gaps or disincentives to employment/training in the application of the secondary benefit systems so that, at a minimum, nobody is materially worse off as a result of taking up employment, training or educational opportunities;
- Ensuring that those on low pay have the opportunity to progress to better paid and more highly skilled employment.

Action under the strategy will be focussed on:

- making work pay (see section under “Income Support” below);
- targeting low-skilled workers and the low-paid for training and further education to support their progression to better-quality and better-paid jobs;
- meeting the needs of workers who lose their jobs because of restructuring in the economy;
- fostering family-friendly employment practices and supporting women returnees;
- further developing child care arrangements including the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP);

- working to achieve the highest possible levels of employment; and
- combating discrimination, accommodating diversity and promoting equal opportunities.

The **targets** in relation to employment are:

- To eliminate long-term unemployment as soon as circumstances permit but in any event not later than 2007
- To reduce the level of unemployment experienced by vulnerable groups towards the national average by 2007
- To increase employment participation of women to an average of more than 60% in 2010, as envisaged in the National Employment Action Plan, 2001.
- To achieve the objectives set out in the National Employment Action Plan to increase employment rates.

3.3 Facilitating access to resources, rights, goods and services for all

3.3.1 Access to Services

Citizenship rights encompass not only the core civil and political rights and obligations, but also social, economic and cultural rights, obligations that underpin equality of opportunity. The accommodation of diversity and policies on access to education, employment, health, housing and social services. Key determinants of social inclusion are the further development of public services which are quality, performance and results driven and take full account of the increasingly diverse nature of our society.

The strategy on access to services being pursued over the period to 2007 includes:

- The development of more formal expressions of entitlements across the range of public services and the setting of standards and guidelines regarding the standard of service delivery that can be expected by the customer, taking into account the Council of Europe recommendations on access to social rights;
- Monitoring, by means of indicators, access to services of a given standard and working to improve performance over time;
- Continuing to pursue a much greater focus on effective outcomes and on indicators to monitor outcomes, particularly in relation to the drive for integrated approaches to the problems of disadvantage at local level; and
- Driving forward, in a comprehensive way, the range of proofing mechanisms (poverty, equality and others) necessary to ensure that policies and programmes are developed in such a way as to achieve the maximum impact in reducing and eliminating poverty and social exclusion

3.3.2 *Income adequacy and security*

A majority of those at risk of social exclusion cannot work, including the chronically ill and the retired, or are not in the labour force – e.g. children. Income support is provided mainly by the social welfare system. The Government is committed to increasing social welfare payments as resources permit, so that people will have an income level to sustain an acceptable standard of living.

Key **targets** in relation to weekly social welfare benefits and pensions are:

- To achieve a rate of €150 per week in 2002 terms for the lowest rates of social welfare payments by 2007. During the period of the Plan (2003-2005) increases in the rates will be made in order to achieve this target.
- Social welfare pensions to be improved to reach a target level of €200 by 2007.
- Progress to be made towards implementation of improvements in Widow(er)'s pensions and increasing the level of the qualified adult allowance for pensioner spouses to the level of the old age (non-contributory) pension

Supplementary pension cover is designed to assist in providing a retirement income that bears a reasonable relationship with pre-retirement income. Just over half the workforce had supplementary pension cover in 2002. This relatively low level of cover is reflected in the high proportion of older people with incomes below 60% of median income. The ultimate target for supplementary pension coverage is 70% of those aged over 30. This is to be mainly achieved through the system of individual Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs), combined with existing occupational and personal pension schemes. Participation is voluntary for employees, but employers who do not already operate a pension scheme are required to put in place arrangements for their employees to access PRSAs if they wish. The overall effectiveness of this approach will be assessed within three years.

3.3.3 *Income Support for those in employment*

It is also an essential component of the strategy that the necessary policies are in place to “make jobs pay”. Important elements in achieving this objective are the National Minimum Wage and taxation policy. Child income support is designed, as far as possible, to be neutral as between families where one or both parents are in employment, or receiving a weekly payment under the social welfare system. This is achieved mainly through providing the bulk of child income support *via* the child benefit scheme. The Family Income Supplement provides additional income support for those on low incomes from work and corresponds to additional allowances for child dependants payable with weekly social welfare payments. Lone parents receiving the One Parent Family Payment, which is subject to a means test, are eligible for a substantial earnings disregard facilitating them taking up jobs and becoming integrated into employment.

Targets in relation to income for employees and child income support are as follows:

- The National Minimum Wage is to be adjusted to €7 per hour with effect from 1 February 2004.
- To the extent that there is any scope for personal tax reductions, progress will continue to be targeted towards removing those on the minimum wage from the tax net and moving towards the target where 80% of all earners pay tax at not more than the standard rate.
- Child Benefit and Child Dependent Allowances to be set at 33%-35% of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate by 2007. The final phase of the planned

multi-annual increases in Child Benefit rates to be completed in 2004 and 2005.

- The Department of Social and Family Affairs is to review the contribution being made by the Department's income support system to people reconciling work and family life, the review to be completed not later than 2005.

3.3.4 *Housing and Accommodation*

The overall NAPS objective is to enable households experiencing poverty and disadvantage to have available to them housing or accommodation which is affordable, accessible, of good quality, suitable to their needs, culturally acceptable, located in a sustainable community and, as far as possible, in a secure tenure of their choice.

The Government's strategic approach to housing is multi-dimensional reflecting the broad spectrum of housing needs, from those who require some assistance to purchase their own home (affordable housing schemes) to social housing and housing for those with special needs. There are, therefore, a range of measures in place to achieve the broader housing and NAPS objectives:

Key **targets** in relation to housing include:

- To ensure that housing supply is brought more into line with demand and that the housing requirements set out in the National Development Plan (500,000 new units between 2000-2010) are achieved in a planned and coherent way.
- To deliver 41,500 local authority housing unit starts (including acquisitions) between 2000 and 2006.
- To deliver an appropriate mix of social and affordable housing measures which meets the needs of different types of households

The information in the recently published Assessment of Housing Needs will be analysed with a view to ensuring that Government makes the best use of resources available to meet the needs identified. For example, it is anticipated that the resources available in 2003 will allow for the needs of close to 13,000 households to be met through the various social and affordable measures.

As part of *Sustaining Progress*, the Government and social partners have committed to reviewing the effectiveness of programmes designed to assist low income groups, including those with social housing needs and special housing needs, to ensure that the most effective use is made of the resources available.

The Affordable Housing Initiative and other arrangements under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, will increase on an ambitious scale the supply of affordable housing for those unable to purchase a house from their own resources in the current housing market. There will also be a priority focus on the implementation of the Local Authority Travellers accommodation programmes.

3.3.5 Health

The National Health Strategy: *Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You* is the framework within which developments in the health services will take place over the next seven to ten years. The key principles underpinning the strategy are equity, quality, accountability and people centredness.

Key **objectives** under the Health Strategy include

- placing the health of the population at the centre of public policy, and
- reducing health inequalities.

Achieving these objectives involves ensuring that health is given priority across all sectors with a role to play in improving health status and that health becomes embedded as a core value at the strategic planning stage for all relevant Departments.

The central role of primary care is recognised in the Strategy and the fact that the health needs of the majority of people should be capable of being met by Primary Care Services. *Primary Care: A New Direction* is the strategy being implemented to give effect to these objectives.

The overriding aim generally is to ensure that the very substantial resources now being invested in the health services are used effectively to achieve measurable health and social gain through measures such as the effective exploitation of ICTs, structural reform and improved systems of monitoring and evaluating implementation of the strategy.

Also, in the context of the increasing diversity of Irish society the health sector will work with the Equality Authority to integrate an equality dimension into the health service across the nine grounds of the Equal Status Act, 2000, with a particular emphasis on equality proofing. This will involve a focus on men and women.

The key **targets** to reduce health inequalities are as follows:

- Reduce the gap in premature mortality between the lowest and highest socio-economic groups by at least 10% for circulatory diseases, cancers and injuries and poisoning by 2007.
- Reduce the gap in low birth weight rates between children from the lowest and highest socio-economic groups by 10% from the 2001 level, by 2007.

3.3.6 Provision of Care

In line with the Special Initiative under *Sustaining Progress*, the policy response in relation to the provision of care for children, people with disabilities and older people include:

- identifying the various care requirements;
- exploring the potential of differentiated models of care (including care providers, improved regulation and standards, etc);
- identifying and addressing manpower and physical infrastructure issues; and identifying options for medium to long term funding of care provision.

3.3.7 Education

A central objective of the strategy is to ensure that all young people leave the education system with a high quality education and related qualifications to support their full participation in society and the economy. A related objective is to ensure that all those who have already left school have an opportunity to address any lack of educational and related qualifications that militate against their ability to participate fully in society, the economy and employment. Investment in educational provision will be prioritised in favour of disadvantaged groups.

The special initiative under *Sustaining Progress on Tackling Educational Disadvantage – Literacy, Numeracy and Early School Leavers* is a major priority. Critical attention is being paid to literacy and numeracy skills, both in school and for adults of all ages, with arrangements being put in place for systematic monitoring of literacy attainment levels. Assessment and remediation strategies in primary schools are to be implemented, supported

by targeted initiatives to address the specific needs of disadvantaged schools. Pilot initiatives will be implemented in sectors where there are vulnerable workers, in partnership with trade unions.

Lifelong Learning is being promoted, within available resources, through the implementation of the Task Force Report on Lifelong Learning and the White Paper on Adult Education. The National Adult Learning Council provides a mechanism for social partner participation in this policy area.

Education provision seeks to reflect a commitment to equality, non-discrimination and the accommodation of diversity. Access, transfer and progression is being addressed, particularly for those learners who in the past had limited access to education and training awards, in the context of national policy in relation to equality, with particular regard to the relevant provisions of the Equal Status Act, 2000 and the Employment Equality Act, 1998. This commitment is further reflected in the work of the Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Education and Science.

Key **targets** in relation to education:

- Halve the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties by 2006.
- Reduce the proportion of adults aged 16-64 with restricted literacy levels to 10-20% by 2007.
- Reduce the number of young people who leave the school system early, so that the percentage of those who complete upper second level or equivalent will reach 85% by 2003 and 90% by 2006.

3.3.8 Transport

The Government's high level goals with regard to transport include the 'integration of transport policies with other Government policies, particularly balanced regional development and social inclusion.'

Substantial investment under the National Development Plan in the railway network has the effect of making the railways a more attractive alternative to road and substantially increasing both capacity and frequency. Investment in the provision and upgrading of bus services is also being made. The development of the national road infrastructure during the period 2000 to 2006 under the NDP will contribute to economic growth. The provision of an improved road network under the Plan will also promote social inclusion and enhance access to services including health and education.

Low population densities and very dispersed settlements make it difficult to provide commercial public transport services in many rural areas. Those most marginalised by this include women, the elderly, the mobility impaired, the unemployed and young people. A pilot Rural Transport Initiative has been developed to address this problem (see also Chapter 4).

A transport action plan is also being prepared to provide for the further development and implementation of accessible transport services for people with disabilities.

3.3.9 Arts/Culture/Recreation

The general objective of the Arts and Culture Capital Enhancement Support Scheme (ACCESS 2001 – 2004) is to support the provision and enhancement of facilities for the promotion

of the arts, which would not otherwise be made available on a broad basis.

Under the Sport Capital Programme, priority is awarded to applications from organisations located in areas of social disadvantage - applicants from these areas are required to provide a lower level of local contribution (20%) as against other areas (30%).

The accelerated provision of play environments for children in local communities and rural areas, especially those which are disadvantaged is also an objective. A National Play Policy will be published by the Government in Autumn 2003 to develop wider play opportunities for all children.

3.4 To prevent the risks of exclusion (Objective 2)

The strategy here involves focussing on policies which address specific situations of vulnerability that put people in them at a high risk of social exclusion.

3.4.1 E-inclusion- Exploiting the potential of the knowledge based society

The primary policy objective, as articulated in the Government's Action Plan *New Connections* is to raise the level of access to and participation in the Information Society by increasing the numbers using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This is to be achieved through awareness initiatives, provision of Internet access, capacity building of organisations and citizens and the development of IT accessibility guidelines. The implementation of this policy objective will be reviewed as part of the *Sustaining Progress* special initiative focusing, in particular, on those on low income and on late adaptors.

3.4.2 Homelessness

Among other commitments in the new Partnership Agreement, there will be a priority focus on the implementation of the *Integrated Strategy on Homelessness*, the *Youth Homelessness Strategy*, the *Homelessness Preventative Strategy* and the associated local authority Homelessness Action Plans.

Key **targets** in relation to homelessness:

By end 2004, sufficient and appropriate emergency accommodation to be available to rough sleepers, in each local authority and health board area in conjunction with appropriate outreach services to enable them to access it. Review of progress at end 2003 on meeting target objective and, if necessary, revised mechanisms put in place to achieve it.

3.4.3 Domestic Violence

The main focus at present is on measures to prevent violence against women and to support victims of such violence which will continue within the framework of the National Steering Group on Violence against Women and within the equality framework.

3.4.4 Indebtedness

Continued priority will be given to the operation of the country-wide Money Advice and Budgeting Service. The focus will be on the prevention of over indebtedness, informing people before they reach crisis point, as well as continuing to meet the needs of those who find themselves in immediate financial difficulties.

3.4.5 Drugs and Alcohol misuse

A special initiative on alcohol and drug misuse is being taken under *Sustaining Progress*. Under it,

the Government will work with the Social Partners with a view to developing a consensus on the most effective strategies to deal with alcohol and drug misuse.

Drugs misuse is being addressed through the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008. The Strategy aims to tackle the drug problem by the implementation of 100 individual actions, under the four pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research, to be implemented by a range of Departments and agencies.

3.4.6 Preserving Family Solidarity

In addition to the other relevant policies under the Action Plan, a range of family supports on mediation, counselling and social supports through Family Resource Centres are to be further developed by the recently established Family Support Agency.

A strategic family policy is to be drawn up following on from the research and other activities for the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. (See chapter 4, section 4.4, vii)

3.5 To help the most vulnerable

The **overall objective** is to eliminate consistent poverty for those in vulnerable groups and to improve access for them to appropriate health care, education and employment, thus reducing their vulnerability to poverty.

3.5.1 Women

The overall objective is to eliminate consistent poverty for women and to improve access for women to appropriate health care, education and employment, thus reducing the risk of poverty for such women and their families. A major objective

is the achievement of a more equal society for men and women through the mainstreaming of equal opportunities across all aspects of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-06, including, *inter alia*, education and labour market programmes under the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme and specific Social Inclusion sub-Programmes in both Regional Operational Programmes.

Objectives other than those mentioned under previous headings include addressing the gender pay gap, adapting the social insurance system to remove any further obstacles to reconciling work and family life and determining the right mix of policies and supports required to effectively combat poverty and social exclusion for them.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is implementing an Equality for Women measure which will provide targeted opportunities for women in training and decision making. It is intended to transfer the lessons from the measure to the mainstream.

A five-year National Women's Strategy is to be developed, the scoping for which will be done in 2003.

3.5.2 Children and young people

Child friendly policies require, as a priority, addressing disadvantaged conditions in childhood, which are known to increase the likelihood of early school leaving and poor school performance and to lead to a significant reduction in the productivity of the people affected over their working lives. The policy approaches to be developed in the context of the *Sustaining Progress* Special Initiative will include:

- *Pre-school age*: Priority to early education and childcare facilities for disadvantaged families in the context of a joint approach between the Departments of Education and Science and Justice, Equality and Law Reform;
- *Primary school*: Ensuring every child obtains a threshold of numeracy and literacy;
- *Parenting*: Wider availability of parenting support services for families at risk;
- *Income*: Reviewing child income support arrangements (see section on income support above);
- *Health*: Better medical and health services within the community for young children and their parents;
- *Neighbourhood amenities*: Accelerated provision of play environments for local communities.

The National Children's Office will continue to bring a better focus and greater impact to Government activity in relation to children by continuously monitoring implementation of the National Children's Strategy and by working on specific projects related to children as selected by the Cabinet Committee on Children.

3.5.3 Older people

There is a special focus on the needs of the elderly under the various relevant policies in the Action Plan. A priority for policy research will be the special needs of growing numbers of older people living alone. Special priority is being given to policy development on the provision of care for the elderly.

Key **targets** in relation to care of older people are as follows:

- By 2003, national guidelines will be put in place for the provision of respite care services to carers of older people
- Access to orthopaedic services will be improved so that no one is waiting longer than 12 months for a hip replacement. This is an initial short-term action to improve quality of life for older people and it will be reviewed in 2003.
- By end 2007, adequate heating systems will be available in all local authority rented dwellings providing for older people.

3.5.4 *People with disabilities*

The overall objective is to increase the participation of people with disabilities in work and society generally, and to support people with a disability and their families, to lead full and independent lives. The Department of Health and Children is to ensure that, within each Health Board, there is sufficient rehabilitative training provision, both numerically and qualitatively, to meet the demand for training which focuses on the development of an individual's core personal capacities (i.e. life skills, social skills etc.) to each individual's level of capacity. A rehabilitative training policy document will be produced and circulated as part of the Department's 2003 Business Plan.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will continue to develop policy for vocational training in a specific employable skill and for employment of people with disabilities on a three-dimensional basis involving:

- developing the skills of people with disabilities to enable them to access employment

- stimulating awareness amongst employers of the contribution which people with disabilities can make to their businesses and encouraging companies to more actively consider recruiting people with disabilities; and
- providing specific employment supports for people with disabilities and employers.

A review of the income support schemes for people with disabilities is being carried out by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Specific **targets** for people with disabilities

- Aim to increase participation by students with disabilities at third level to 1.35% by 2003 and 1.8% by 2006.
- Aim to improve access to planned respite care for carers of disabled people by 2003.

3.5.5 *Travellers*

The overall objective in relation to Travellers is to improve the life experience of Travellers through the provision of appropriate education, health and housing services and to remove any remaining barriers to the full participation of members of the Traveller Community in the work and social life of the country.

Key **targets** in relation to Travellers

- The gap in life expectancy between the Traveller Community and the whole population will be reduced by at least 10% by 2007.
- Age appropriate placement of all Travellers in primary school will be achieved by 2003.
- The transfer rate of Travellers to post-primary schools will be increased to 95% by 2004.

- Each third-level institution will double the participation by mature disadvantaged students, including Travellers and Refugees by 2006 (within the 15% quota).
- All Travellers' families identified in the local authority five-year Traveller accommodation programme process as being in need of accommodation will be appropriately accommodated by end 2004.

3.5.6 Prisoners and ex-prisoners

A Positive Sentence Management Strategy has been adopted by the Irish Prisons Service involving the co-ordination of all services and programmes to meet the diverse needs of offenders.

The provision of training and education is a key element of the strategy so as to enable prisoners to acquire practical skills which will help them secure employment and facilitate re-integration on release. Priority is also given to helping prisoners deal with drug addiction.

3.5.7 Areas marked by Exclusion - Urban Poverty and Rural Disadvantage

The overall objective is to tackle social exclusion in urban areas in a comprehensive and sustained manner by building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged urban areas, building social capital and community ownership of strategies and through other relevant policies under this Action Plan. There will be a particular focus on

- reducing the harm caused through drug misuse and the incidence of crime;
- encouraging and facilitating communities to pursue social and economic progress in their area;

- improving family support services;
- increasing youth participation in education and training; and
- ensuring that State services are delivered in an integrated way.

The Government will work at national and local level following consultation with the social partners, to align more closely the schemes and processes across the rural and urban community and local development programmes, including initiatives to deal with the misuse of drugs in disadvantaged areas, in order to maximise the impact, coherence and effectiveness of these programmes, and support community development.

Key **targets** in relation to urban areas:

- foster public safety and prevent crime through better detection, use of approved youth diversion programmes and restorative schemes, optimum use of community-based sanctions and reducing the level of offending
- ensure that the basic needs of all families, especially young parents, lone parents, older people, and ethnic minorities are met through enhanced and better co-ordinated State support services.

The risk of poverty and exclusion for those living in rural areas is associated with lack of access to services and feelings of isolation. Social exclusion will be tackled in rural areas in a comprehensive and sustained manner by ensuring the provision of an adequate income, through employment and income support, access to adequate services and infrastructure on a timely basis, and co-ordination of responses and empowerment of local people and communities.

Key **targets** in relation to rural areas:

- improve transport services to rural dwellers through a combination of State support and community-based provision
- improve access to employment, health, education and housing services for rural dwellers.

3.6 Areas for special attention

3.6.1 Gender mainstreaming

It is recognised that, from a gender mainstreaming perspective, there is a need to have increased awareness of the importance of the different experiences of each gender particularly in the following areas:

- educational attainment including the early school leaving issue among boys and subject choice among girls;
- the over representation of women in lower paid jobs;
- the need for greater sharing of caring duties between men and women;
- public transport provision at the planning, design and implementation stages;
- a health policy which has a focus on both women and men's health issues;
- an income support system which allows for caring family responsibilities;
- affordable childcare provision to enable parents to balance work and family responsibilities.

3.6.2 Migrants and Minority Ethnic Groups

A comprehensive framework policy on migration covering the regulation of inflows into the state, as well as integration issues, racism and interculturalism, will be developed in respect of immigrants, emigrants and returning emigrants. The Irish EU Presidency will host an International Conference in April 2004 designed to assist Member States to develop more effective and integrated policies in these areas.

The National Action Plan Against Racism will be published by end 2003 and measures agreed by Government implemented.

An anti-racism intercultural programme at every level of the education system will be implemented building on existing initiatives and focusing on curriculum, training and support issues. Literacy and language training for adult minority linguistic groups will be expanded. Further initiatives to prevent racism in the workplace will be developed in co-operation with the social partners.

4.1 Introduction

Arising from the strategic approach outlined in Chapter 3, a broad range of policy measures and actions are being implemented which will have a positive impact on poverty and exclusion. In particular, a number of the special initiatives agreed under the terms of *Sustaining Progress* will play a critical role in delivering significant progress.

4.2 To facilitate participation in employment.

Long-Term Unemployed, Vulnerable Workers and those who have been made redundant is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

4.2.1 Labour Market Programmes

The key labour market programmes designed to facilitate participation in employment include:

- Early Intervention Process
- Social Economy Programme
- High Supports Process
- Community Employment Schemes
- Workforce Gateway for Women Initiative
- EQUAL programme²⁷
- Competency Development Programme

Details on each of these programmes are included in Annex 4.1. The Social Economy Programme and the High Supports Process represent a shift from the Community Employment approach towards an increase in training and other supports for the more disadvantaged.

An appraisal of all active Labour Market Programmes is currently being undertaken and is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2003. Policy in respect of the Employment Support Schemes will be monitored and kept under review in the 2003-2005 period.

4.2.2 Training and development

The €14.2 billion Employment and Human Resources Operational Programme²⁸ sets out the Government's planned investment in employment and training programmes over the period 2000-2006. The Programme provides for higher levels of investment in vulnerable areas such as in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) Region. The National Training Fund is a dedicated fund to support the training of those in employment and those who wish to take up employment.²⁹

FÁS, the National Training Authority, provides training under the new strategy for low-skilled workers through a number of programmes such as skills training, community training, bridging foundation and traineeships, with the emphasis on upskilling those in the workforce and early intervention with the unemployed and disadvantaged.

4.2.3 Childcare

Care - Children, People with Disabilities and Older People is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000 – 2006³⁰ will continue in 2003-05. This will maintain and increase the number of childcare facilities and places, improve the quality of childcare services and introduce a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of childcare services.

27 See also Annex 4.2

28 See also Annex 4.3

29 The NTF is resourced by a levy on employers of 0.7% of reckonable earnings of employees in Class A and H employments. Any changes in employment or salaries over the period will impact directly on receipts to the NTF Fund.

30 See also Annex 4.4

4.2.4 Gender pay gap

A Consultative Group on male/female wage differentials is finalising proposals to address gender pay gap issues. The report is due to be submitted to Government by mid-2003.

4.2.5 Work-life balance

Proposals for the strengthening of the Parental Leave Scheme will be submitted to Government during the course of the NAPs/incl in line with the agreed recommendations of the social partners arising from the Working Group on Parental Leave. The Maternity Protection (Amendment) Bill (published in May 2003) will provide for optional unpaid maternity leave of 8 weeks (in addition to paid leave of 18 weeks) and for more flexible arrangements in the event of illness etc. Consequential amendments to the Adoptive Leave Act will be enacted shortly thereafter.

The reconstituted National Framework Committee for Work/Life Balance Policies supports and facilitates the development of family friendly policies at the level of enterprise and examines how best to improve access to family friendly working arrangements.

4.3 Facilitating access to resources, rights, goods and services for all

4.3.1 Access to Quality Services

The process of adapting administrative and social services to the needs of people experiencing social exclusion and of ensuring that front-line staff are sensitive to these needs will continue over the period of the Plan.

All Government Departments and Offices are preparing Charters of Service Standards to be in place by end 2004. The process involves consultation with customers, commitment to service standards, evaluation of performance and reporting on results. Departments and Offices are required to carry out inclusive consultation, to include customers from within the grounds covered by equality legislation, customers from different geographical areas and social backgrounds etc. This initiative is designed to build on the achievements of the Quality Customer Service initiative to date.

Phase 1 of the Public Services Broker model, which will be launched in 2004, will allow Government Departments and Agencies to offer their services online in a secure reliable manner. Later phases will extend the range of channels and services offered through the Broker. A pilot project is also being developed for the provision of integrated public services organised around the needs of the customer rather than the requirements of the delivery organisations. It aims to deliver a seamless quality public service to customers and communities through a choice of access channels: walk in (contact centres), phone and online. The cross-agency services planned for delivery from the contact centres are car tax and vehicle registration, child benefit, unemployment and employment services, medical cards etc. The outcome of this Project will help inform the delivery of public services in an inclusive manner.

4.3.2 Equality infrastructure³¹ and research

A variety of policy and legislative initiatives are being taken and include:

- the final report of the Working Group on Equality Proofing due in October, 2003.
- the National Action Plan against Racism
- the second progress report of the Committee to monitor and co-ordinate the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community
- the Equality Authority, the Combat Poverty Agency and the Office for Social Inclusion are developing a programme of work on the poverty/inequality interface.
- amendments to the equality legislation in order to transpose EU directives in relation to race, employment and Gender Equal Treatment.

4.3.3 Income Adequacy

The Government is committed to increasing social welfare levels in real terms in the period by 2007. During the period of this NAPs/incl increases will be made in the rates in order to achieve the targets of €150 per week, in 2002 terms, by 2007, for the lowest rates of social welfare payments, with the appropriate child equivalence levels and €200 per week for pensions. The final phase of planned increases in Child Benefit will be made in 2004 and 2005. A review will be carried out of the effect of income support schemes on reconciling work and family life.

4.3.4 Housing and Accommodation

Housing and Accommodation is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

A number of social and affordable housing programmes and schemes are in operation, which assist households who are currently unable to meet their housing needs through the private market. A significant increase in capital funding in recent years has seen the number of households accommodated under such measures at the highest level for over 15 years. The social and affordable housing needs of close to 13,000 households will be met in this way in 2003 compared to over 12,700 households in 2002.

Full details of each of the social and affordable housing measures are provided in Annex 4.8.

4.3.5 Health

Special policy initiatives are being undertaken which will assist in reducing inequalities in health status and premature mortality amongst the lower socio-economic groups with particular reference to circulatory diseases, cancer, and injuries and poisoning. These include³²:

Health Impact Assessment (HIA): The National Health Strategy asserts that health must be put at the centre of public policy to achieve better health for everyone and reduce health inequalities. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be developed to ensure that relevant policies, strategies and legislation undergo a comprehensive process of health proofing so that their impact on the physical, mental and social well being of the population is positive.

31 See also Annex 4.7

32 See Annex 4.9 and 4.10 for further details

The Primary Care Strategy provides for an inter-disciplinary team-based approach to primary care provision including General Practitioners, nurses/midwives, health care assistants, home helps, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and administrative personnel. An implementation project is already being established in each of ten locations, to involve local community and voluntary groups in planning and delivery of services, which will be operational by end 2003. The programme of extending the network of 24 hour General Practice (GP) co-operatives will continue.

Access to Primary Medical Care: Issues such as barriers to uptake, information deficits and transparency in relation to income guidelines, are being addressed in relation to eligibility for health and personal social services as well as a review of all existing eligibility legislation. Proposals will be drafted to clarify legislation on eligibility and entitlements in line with the goals and objectives of the National Health Strategy.

Health Promotion and Community Participation: Health promotion and education activities will be further developed, in partnership with the community, targeting specific areas such as smoking, healthy eating, substance abuse, sexual health and other lifestyle changes. Workplace health promotion, mental health promotion and the area of men's health have also been identified for further development.

Community Participation Guidelines have been published recently. A *Building Healthy Communities* programme launched in May 2003 aims to strengthen community development approaches to reducing health inequalities.

Key targets – circulatory diseases, cancer, injuries and poisoning, and low birth weights: The Cardiovascular Health Work Programme aims to ensure equity of access for poor and socially excluded groups, in particular in relation to health promotion, secondary prevention programmes in general practice and access to hospital and rehabilitation services.

A new National Cancer Strategy is being developed in the light of service and clinical developments since 1996. Deadline for completion is early 2004 and it will set key priorities for the coming years. The national breast screening programme *BreastCheck* (currently operating in three health board areas) is being extended nationwide and approximately 150,000 women in the target population 50 to 64 years of age will be eligible for screening. Development of an Injury Prevention Strategy has also commenced.

To reduce the difference in low birth weight between highest and lowest socio-economic groups action will be co-coordinated in relation to a) health promotion on nutrition, smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy, b) reducing teenage pregnancy and c) encouraging early attendance for ante-natal care.

Greater surveillance and monitoring of the public/private mix is being undertaken to protect access by public patients to acute hospitals. The National Health Strategy set a target for the reduction, by the end of 2004, of waiting times to three months for treatment following referral from out-patient appointments. In 2003, the National Treatment Purchase Fund has set a target to treat 600 patients per month in Ireland or the UK.

4.3.6.1 Education - Literacy³³

A special Initiative under *Sustaining Progress on Tackling Educational Disadvantage – Literacy, Numeracy and Early School Leavers* will be undertaken during the period of the plan.

The Early Literacy Measure, with NDP funding, involves the implementation of a pro-active approach to preventing literacy difficulties, an improvement in the effectiveness of the learning support service, better home/school co-operation on literacy and the development of support materials as well as the systematic monitoring of progress.

The first fully representative Survey of Reading Literacy in Disadvantaged Schools is being conducted in 2003 to establish baseline data on current reading standards in such schools. This survey will be followed in 2004 by a national assessment of reading in first and fifth classes.

Continuing support is being given to disadvantaged primary schools in implementing the Learning Support Guidelines, including adoption of a whole school approach to supporting children with literacy difficulties and development and implementation of a literacy plan by each school.

An intensive remediation programme will be implemented in severely disadvantaged primary schools with the aim of increasing reading standards and identifying upper limits of achievement, thereby assisting standard setting for the future.

Investment in adult education has increased significantly to finance literacy programmes including workplace literacy programmes targeted at vulnerable groups.

The Report of the Workplace Literacy Strategy Group was published in 2002 and consideration is being given to its recommendation for the establishment of a workplace literacy fund with the social partners.

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has trained a number of tutors to provide literacy programmes in the workplace and will continue to promote the availability of the service among employer organisations. Following a successful pilot in a number of local authorities, it has been agreed to expand the programme for local authority outdoor staff nationwide.

4.3.6.2 Early School Leaving

The School Completion Programme directly targets those in danger of dropping out of the education system and is a key initiative for discriminating positively in favour of children and young people who are at risk of early school leaving.

The National Educational Welfare Board, responsible for school attendance, is developing a nationwide service that is accessible to schools, parents, guardians and others concerned with the welfare of young people. To this end, Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) are to be appointed and deployed throughout the country to support regular school attendance and discharge the Board's functions locally.

4.3.6.3 Alleviating educational disadvantage

The main initiatives designed to alleviate educational disadvantage (detailed in Annex 4.12) include:

- Early Start Programme
- Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education

- Giving Children an Even Break
- Guidance Service in 2nd Level Schools (age 12-18)
- National Educational Welfare Board
- School Completion Programme
- Home School Community Liaison Programme
- Education Equality Initiative
- Educational Disadvantage Committee

4.3.6.4 There are also a range of initiatives which are designed to facilitate a return to education in particular by vulnerable groups. These initiatives, details of which are provided in Annex 4.13, include:

- Back to Education Initiative
- Community Education Facilitators
- Further Education Development Unit
- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
- Post-Leaving Certificate Courses
- National Adult Learning Council
- Childcare Facilities Related to Education Schemes

4.3.6.5 *Access to 3rd level education.*

Programmes to increase the participation of vulnerable groups in third-level education have been greatly expanded and include the Special Fund for Students with Disabilities, the Student Assistance Fund, Higher Education Authority Targeted Initiatives, Special Rates of Maintenance Grants and the Millennium Partnership for Disadvantage. The National Office for Access to

Higher Education will be operational as of the 2003/04 academic year.

4.3.7 *Transport*

The following is planned to increase accessibility to transport in the period to 2005, especially for mobility-impaired passengers:

- Expansion of accessible bus services in urban areas for the mobility impaired through the continued replacement of inaccessible buses with low floor buses;
- Continued improvement of facilities and access for disabled passengers to bus and train stations e.g. provision of ramps, lifts, tactile flooring and induction loops at ticket offices;
- Expansion of audio/visual facilities on trains;
- Full commissioning of the Light Rail System in Dublin in 2004 – vehicles to be fully accessible to the mobility impaired.

Arising from the progress to date of the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI), proposals of the Inter-Departmental Committee, which reported on the development of a rural transport policy, are under consideration by the Minister for Transport.

4.4 **To prevent the risks of exclusion**³⁴

4.4.1 *Exploiting the potential of the knowledge based society*

The action plan to realise the potential of the Information Society in Ireland, *New Connections*, is being implemented with the support of the Information Society Fund and monitored and supported by the Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Taoiseach, and by the eStrategy Group of Secretaries General of Government Departments.

34 See also Chapters 2 & 3 in relation to ongoing programmes relating to access to arts/sports/recreation.

Including Everyone in the Information Society is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

The special initiative involves the Government and the Social Partners working together to develop coherent strategies to promote participation in the Information Society among those on low income and late adopters. This will include a review of the national e-inclusion strategy with the following key outputs:

- Review of the Implementation Strategy: evaluation of initiatives at local, regional and national level to date, progress achieved, existing and potential gaps
- Examination of the research findings on how the digital divide issue is being tackled nationally compared to other countries and the need for further policy initiatives.
- Identification of the key components of a revised implementation strategy, including funding, particularly focussing on those on low incomes and late adopters.
- Mainstreaming of Information Society issues into all relevant Government policies and decision-making.

A revised strategy is expected by early 2004.

4.4.2 Homelessness

Action to tackle homelessness through the implementation of the *Integrated Strategy on Homelessness*, the *Youth Homelessness Strategy* and the *Homelessness Preventative Strategy* and the associated local authority homeless Action Plans will be maintained. An evaluation of the Integrated and Preventative Strategies will be initiated in 2003.

The National Children's Office has responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Youth Homelessness Strategy. Direct implementation is undertaken primarily by the Health Boards with family support and other preventive services being developed on a multi-agency basis for children at risk of becoming homeless. In particular, this will incorporate a generic out-of-hours crisis intervention service and where necessary multi-disciplinary teams to target at-risk young people. Emergency responses will be provided promptly, with specialised 24-hour Reception Services in cities where appropriate.

4.4.3 Drugs and Alcohol Misuse

Alcohol/Drug Misuse is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

Implementation of the National Drugs Strategy will continue as will support for the Local Drugs Task Forces (see Annex 4.14).

4.4.4 Preserving family solidarity

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs is engaged in a nationwide consultative process on family policy, an outcome of which will be the publication of a thematic analysis of the views received to be published to mark the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004. The Irish Presidency in co-operation with the EU Commission will host an International Conference on *Families, Change and Social Policy in Europe*, in May 2004. A strategic family policy is to be drawn up in light of these developments for publication in 2005.

The recently established Family Support Agency will publish its Strategic Plan for the discharge of its statutory functions later in 2003 and commence

implementation in accordance with the strategy, with particular reference to mediation and counselling services, family resource centres and research.

A review of Family Support Services has commenced recently led by the Department of Health and Children.

4.5 To help the most vulnerable

Many of the initiatives and measures outlined above will have positive impacts on the needs of people vulnerable to poverty and exclusion. The following section of this Chapter sets out some additional measures which are specifically targeted at those groups.

4.5.1 Women

- Following on from the publication of *Promoting Women's Health, the Review of the Women's Health Plan*, the Women's Health Council has recently established a forum to plan for future action in the field of women's health.
- Measures to prevent violence against women and to support victims of such violence will continue within the framework of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women
- The Equality for Women Measure is a positive action programme funded under the Regional Operational Programmes of the National Development Plan and part funded by the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme. Among the interventions being delivered

which will provide opportunities for disadvantaged women are:

- Outreaching to very marginalised women, including refugee women, older women, women with disabilities and Traveller women.
- Promoting the empowerment and participation of women at community level.
- Developing new linkages between women's organisations and service providers
- Developing progression routes to employment for very disadvantaged women
- Developing new interfaces between public services and specific categories of women.
- Training women to become involved in influencing policy at all levels.
- Developing linkages to structures of local decision making

4.5.2 Children and young people³⁵

Ending Child Poverty is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

- The Department of Health and Children is committed to putting in place a range of community-based services required to address the needs of children with significant needs.

Based on the very positive evaluation report on the Teen Parent Support Pilot Initiative (details in Chapter 6), the pilots will be mainstreamed to the relevant health boards

4.5.3 Older People³⁶

- Implementation has commenced on the range of actions outlined in the National Health Strategy in relation to older people and work will continue on them over the period 2003 to 2005.
- Consideration is being given to the findings of a study to examine the future financing of long-term care in Ireland, which has recently been published.

4.5.4 People with disabilities³⁷

- Legislation to advance the participation of people with disabilities in society, including making all public services accessible to people with disabilities, is being prepared by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The legislation, to be enacted in 2003, will be broad-ranging in scope and will target areas of social exclusion of people with disabilities
- The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill has been published and is designed to put in place a statutory framework, which will facilitate the identification and provision of the education and support services required for children with special educational needs. The bill also provides for the establishment of the National Council for Special Education. The Council will have a key role in the development and delivery of education and support services for persons with special needs. It will also have a research and advisory role on the educational needs of children with disabilities and the provision of related services.

- The Department of Health and Children will carry out a strategic review of existing service provision, with a view to enhancing health and personal social services to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- A review of the waiting lists for residential care for people with disabilities will be carried out.
- An Action Plan will be developed in 2003 for the implementation of the Code of Practice on Sheltered Occupational Services for people with disabilities following a transition period of one year.

4.5.5 Travellers³⁸

- Implementation of *Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002 – 2005* launched in February 2002 will continue.
- A Study Group has been established to progress an All-Ireland Traveller Needs Assessment and Health Status Study that it is expected will commence in early 2004. It will involve both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Two key elements include measurement of the health status of Travellers and an evaluation of health needs, as identified by Travellers and service providers.
- An enhanced strategy will be implemented on Traveller education, with a particular focus on measures to redress early school leaving by Traveller children. The objective is to increase the number of Traveller children benefiting from education and to integrate Traveller children into mainstream education to the maximum extent possible. An Advisory Committee on Traveller Education advises the Minister for Education and Science on the educational needs of Travellers.

36 See also Annex 4.15

37 See also Annex 4.16

38 See also Annex 4.17

- There will be continued support for a range of additional measures for Traveller education across the education system.
- Specific attention will be paid to ensuring greater progress in implementing the Traveller Accommodation programme. There will be a priority focus on identifying and addressing the barriers encountered to date so as to push forward the implementation of the programme within the lifetime of *Sustaining Progress*.

4.5.6 Prisoners and ex-prisoners³⁹

The Irish Prison Service Strategy Statement contains the following key tasks in relation to which work is ongoing:

- Maintain the prisoner participation rate in education at 50% against the background of increases in the prisoner population;
- Review the education curriculum to ensure its continuing relevance to prisoner needs.
- Provide personal and skill development opportunities to prisoners through the Connect Programme of the NDP in order to increase their chances of securing employment on release.

4.5.7 Areas marked by exclusion-urban and rural disadvantage⁴⁰

- The operation of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme funded under the National Development Plan will continue. Services for the unemployed, community development and community based youth initiatives form three key components of an integrated action plan which is designed to respond to the multi-dimensional nature of the exclusion faced by the target groups of the Programme. These include the long-term

unemployed, disabled people, Travellers, ex-prisoners, refugees and asylum seekers and communities in rural and urban areas that experience severe marginalisation. The Programme, in line with all measures under the NDP is being evaluated as part of the mid term review and any necessary adjustments will be made accordingly.

- The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, together with the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (who has responsibility for County Childcare Committees) and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (who has responsibility for County/City Development Boards) have introduced a joint initiative to bring greater cohesion to community and local development programmes. To this end, a comprehensive consultation process will take place in 2003 with the providers of schemes and programmes and the social partners on improving local delivery structures.
- Special measures targeting Border areas are provided for in the EU funded PEACE Programme and Border, Midlands and Western Region Operational Programme.

4.5.8 Migrants & Ethnic Minorities⁴¹

Migration and Interculturalism is a special initiative under *Sustaining Progress*.

- A three year Health Research Board Fellowship has been awarded to explore the health and social care needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland and to gather information about the perceptions and needs of primary health care providers to deliver care to this community in a culturally sensitive manner.

39 See also Annex 4.18

40 See also Annex 4.20

41 See also Annex 4.21

- An Equal Opportunities/Accommodating Diversity Strategy and Action Plan is currently being prepared by the Health Service Employers Agency and the Office for Health Management in line with the Action Plan for People Management launched in 2002. Issues related to inter-culturalism are already incorporated in nurses training.
- An Education Working Group will promote the development of anti-racism and inter-culturalism across all levels of the education system
- Arising from the conclusions and recommendations in the Task Force on Emigrants Abroad, a coherent set of objectives will be developed, in consultation with the relevant interests.

CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Introduction

Institutional arrangements have been developed at national, regional and local levels to facilitate the participation of all the key stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of this National Action Plan as well as the revised NAPS, *Building an Inclusive Society*, and the social partnership agreement, *Sustaining Progress*. This process is designed to promote a societal response to the challenge of combating poverty and social exclusion, to involve those at risk of poverty and those who work with them in the process, to promote dialogue and partnership between all relevant stakeholders, and to mainstream inclusion in overall policy.

5.2 Process for developing the 2003-05 NAPs/incl

The revision of the NAPS was undertaken in consultation with the social partners pursuant to a commitment in the Social Partnership agreement, *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. Working groups composed of officials of relevant Departments and representatives of the social partners, including the community and voluntary sector examined six thematic areas. These were educational disadvantage, health, housing and accommodation, employment and unemployment, rural poverty and urban disadvantage. The Working Groups were asked to identify a range of possible future targets and to suggest policy approaches in order to achieve these targets. Two further working groups examined issues relating to the indexation of social welfare payments and income adequacy. A series of public seminars were also organised on the themes. The process was overseen by a Steering

Group comprising representatives of Government Departments and the social partners.

An extensive process of consultation also preceded the preparation of this National Action Plan. Four regional seminars on general issues were held and three national seminars on specific themes. Participants at these seminars included officials of Government Departments and State Agencies, both officials and elected members of local authorities, members of local community and voluntary groups, as well as the main national NGOs and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. In response to advertisements in the main national newspapers, some 67 written submissions were received. Independent consultants were retained to record and assess the proceedings of the public consultation process and the written submissions. The reports are being published with this NAPs/incl. Consultation also took place *via* the inaugural meeting of the Social Inclusion Forum⁴² and the Social Inclusion Consultative Group (see below).

The Office for Social Inclusion co-ordinated the drafting process. An innovative equality proofing exercise was carried out on the draft plan in partnership with the Equality Authority and with the participation of groups from across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation. This explored the accommodation of diversity in the mainstream elements of the Plan, the capacity of institutional arrangements to address the poverty and inequality link, and the rationale for targeting. It is intended to continue and further develop this process over the life of this plan.

42 Conference Report published: *Inaugural Meeting on 30th January 2003 of the NAPS Social Inclusion Forum*. NESF 2003.

5.3 To promote the participation and self expression of people suffering exclusion

The main national avenue for involving people suffering social exclusion and individual members of voluntary and community groups is the Social Inclusion Forum (SIF), which is convened once a year by the National Economic and Social Forum. The SIF has been established to give participants the opportunity to input their views on key policies and implementation issues and to monitor progress on the NAPs/NAPs/incl. The inaugural meeting of the Forum took place in January 2003 and a report on the proceedings was subsequently published.

At local level, members of Community and Voluntary Fora, which are representative of local communities including the disadvantaged, have an input into the operations and policies of the City/County Development Boards (CDBs). In particular, the Fora provide input on matters relating to social inclusion and policies and programmes for the disadvantaged as well as cultural, sporting, recreational, residential and general local development issues.

A range of community development initiatives are described in Chapter 2 (section 2.8). Community development has proved an effective way of empowering disadvantaged people by involving them in decisions which affect them and in using and developing their own skills, knowledge and experience.

An Implementation and Advisory Group (IAG) has been established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State

and the Community and Voluntary Sector (3 September 2000). The IAG is examining issues identified in the White Paper including accreditation; 'best practice' principles for both sectors; establishment of voluntary activity units in relevant Government Departments; funding arrangements for the sector; and the promotion of volunteering. A formal review of the group is to take place after three years in July, 2004.

Policy task: To develop ways of further increasing and improving the participation in the process of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion at local, regional and national level.

5.4 To mainstream the fight against exclusion

5.4.1 At National Level

A range of institutional structures have been established already in the context of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy to harness resources across all Government Departments and to ensure that a coherent crosscutting and co-ordinated approach is adopted to tackling the multi-dimensional and complex nature of poverty. These structures will also support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs/incl. They include:

- *Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, Drugs and Rural Development* - chaired by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), the Committee brings a strategic focus to tackling the problems of social exclusion, disadvantage and alienation. Its work, therefore, ranges across the responsibilities of a number of Ministers. The Committee has a specific remit in relation to the National Anti Poverty Strategy, the NAPs/incl and the National Drugs Strategy. The Committee will receive

regular monthly updates on progress made in the implementation of the NAPs/incl. The remit of the Cabinet Committees on Children, on Health and the Information Society also have a social inclusion dimension.

- *Parliamentary Committees*: The Minister for Social and Family Affairs may be called to present regular progress reports on the implementation of the Plan to the Joint Oireachtas (Parliamentary) Committees on Social and Family Affairs, and on European Affairs
- *Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion* – chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, the Group includes senior officials from relevant Government Departments, including the Office for Social Inclusion, and supports the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion.
- *Social Inclusion Consultative Group* – co-chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Group comprises representatives of the relevant Government Departments, the social partners, and certain statutory agencies e.g. the Combat Poverty Agency, the Equality Authority and the Economic and Social Research Institute. The Group will meet twice a year to offer its advice and observations on the NAPS and the NAPs/incl process as they unfold.
- *Office for Social Inclusion (OSI)* – established in December 2002 and based in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the OSI has overall responsibility for coordinating the preparation and implementation of the NAPS and NAPs/incl and for the monitoring and

evaluation of progress on meeting the objectives. The OSI is also responsible for poverty proofing, data, research and communications strategies and ensuring that detailed standards of service are developed by public service providers. The OSI is required to publish an annual report to Government on progress in relation to the NAPS and NAPs/incl.

- *The Management Group of Assistant Secretaries*: comprises senior officials from the relevant Government Departments and oversees the work of the Office for Social Inclusion.
- *Social Inclusion Units* – established in key Government Departments to co-ordinate their Departments' contribution to the NAPS and National Action Plan and their implementation.
- *The Combat Poverty Agency* - a statutory public body working for the prevention and elimination of poverty and social exclusion through advice to Government, developing innovative anti-poverty measures, examining the nature, causes and extent of poverty in Ireland and promoting a greater public understanding of poverty and social exclusion. The Agency works closely with the Office for Social Inclusion and, with that Office, took a lead role in the public consultation process for the current NAPs/incl.

Other statutory agencies whose remit includes a social inclusion dimension are the National Children's Office, which was established in 2001 to monitor and evaluate implementation of the National Children's Strategy, and the Equality Authority.

5.4.2 Poverty Proofing

Poverty proofing of policies has been the principal instrument for mainstreaming social inclusion at central Government level since late-1998. Policies and programmes are assessed at design and review stage to identify their impact on people experiencing poverty so that this can be given proper consideration and any necessary ameliorative measures taken. In February 2000, the National Economic and Social Council reviewed the poverty proofing process and found that, while it has had an important impact in terms of sensitising policy makers to poverty issues, a number of deficiencies need to be addressed to improve its effectiveness. These include the need for relevant statistical data to underpin the proofing exercise and greater information, training and expert support for officials. Accordingly, the Office for Social Inclusion has been mandated to develop a more effective poverty proofing process, and to ensure that it is appropriately operationalised in all relevant Government Departments. Increased co-ordination will also be developed with other proofing mechanisms. In this regard, a template to support an integrated proofing approach encompassing poverty, gender and the wider equality agenda will be developed and piloted by the Office of Social Inclusion in partnership with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Equality Authority. This work will be carried out during the lifetime of this National Action Plan. It is also the intention that poverty proofing be extended to local authorities and other State Agencies.

5.4.3 Data Strategy

The revision of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy underlined the need for timely, accurate and relevant statistical data to support policy

development and to measure progress in meeting the targets of the strategy. In particular, it was obvious that further data was needed in relation to particular groups of people vulnerable to poverty and for those, like the homeless, who were not captured by household-based surveys. Considerable work also needs to be done to implement the commonly agreed EU social indicators in Ireland and to develop tertiary indicators to assist effective monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs/incl. Work has already commenced on the development of a specific data and research strategy to underpin the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and the NAPs/incl. A Technical Advisory Group, drawn from relevant Departments and data experts, has been established to support the work of the Office for Social Inclusion in this task, which will be completed during the period of the Action Plan.

The National Health Information Strategy is being submitted to Government with a view to its publication shortly. Implementation of the Strategy should improve the availability of disaggregated data in relation to vulnerable groups.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO), following Government endorsement of a Report on Social and Equality Statistics, will develop a Framework for Social and Equality Statistics, under the guidance of the National Statistics Board, to assist in evidence-based policy making. The focus initially will be on maximising the potential of administrative data. In addition, all Departments are to produce formal data strategies. Statistical confidentiality procedures are to be agreed with the Data Protection Commissioner, and the National Economic and Social Council is to produce periodic Social Reports.

5.4.4 Equality Infrastructure

Ireland has a comprehensive framework of equality legislation. The Employment Equality Act 1998 outlaws discrimination in relation to employment on nine grounds - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, 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 (ODEI) were established to ensure the effective implementation of this legislation.

The Equality Authority, an independent statutory body, has a mandate to combat discrimination and to promote equality in relation to the areas covered by the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The ODEI provides the main locus for redress of first instance.

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 to implement gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes funded by the NDP. The Unit is co-financed from the European Social Fund. Since it was set up in 2000, the work of the NDP Gender Equality Unit has included training, development of gender disaggregated statistics and indicators, and research into gender equality issues. Part of the Unit's new work programme includes work with community and voluntary groups to support them in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The Unit also advises on the impact of the NDP on disadvantaged women, where relevant, and liaises with the Office for Social Inclusion and the Combat Poverty Agency in this regard.

5.4.5 National Development Plan

Monitoring committees for each of the operational programmes, and the NDP as a whole, meet twice a year to consider progress in relation to targets and also to proof the plan in terms of gender, social inclusion, rural issues and the environment. There is also a separate co-ordinating committee for monitoring the development of these horizontal issues. These committees include representatives of the social partners, implementing bodies and the managing authorities, including Departments and the two Regional Assemblies.

5.4.6 At local and regional level

Thirty-four County and City Development Boards (CDBs) were established in 2000 as part of the Government's programme to reform local government and to integrate local government and local development systems. Key functions of the CDBs include the preparation and implementation of ten-year strategies for the social, cultural and economic development of their counties/cities and the co-ordinated delivery of social inclusion activities and of public and development services at local level. The CDBs are led by the local authorities and include the social partners, State Agencies, local development organisations and community and voluntary representatives. Better co-ordination of social inclusion activities at local level is being pursued through the Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Co-ordinating Groups established by the Boards.

It is envisaged that, over time, local authorities will develop appropriate local social inclusion strategies to underpin and strengthen the national actions being taken. Towards this end, the Combat Poverty Agency, in association with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and

Local Government and Department of Social and Family Affairs has developed a Local Government Work Programme and Learning Network, which are described in greater detail in Chapter 6. In addition, pilot Social Inclusion Units have been established in 9 local authorities to foster a strategic and crosscutting approach to social inclusion. Funding of around €1m *per annum* over a three year period to 2004, has been provided to support the operation of these Units and the pilot project will be evaluated in 2004.

Building on the success of the Local Government Work Programme and Learning Network, it has been decided to establish a similar approach in the health services as a joint initiative of the Department of Health and Children, the Institute for Public Health and the Health Boards Executive Agency with the assistance of the Combat Poverty Agency. A project planning team will be established in 2003 to develop a framework for a Health Services Learning Network with a view to having the network established in 2004.

5.5 To promote dialogue and partnership between all relevant bodies, public and private

5.5.1 Social Partnership

The social partnership process has been in operation since 1987 (see Annex 1.1) and is now a well developed and integrated part of economic and social policy development. In addition to being directly involved in the mechanisms arising from the social partnership agreements the social partners are members of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) and the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF). The function of the NESC is to analyse and report to the Taoiseach on strategic issues relating to the efficient development of the economy and the

achievement of social justice. The NESF mandate is to monitor and analyse the implementation of specific measures and programmes identified in the context of social partnership agreements especially those concerned with equality and social inclusion. Its mandate has recently been broadened to facilitate public consultation on policy matters referred to it from time to time by Government. Membership of the NESF is wider than the social partners and also includes members of the Oireachtas (Parliament).

A range of separate partnership and local bodies exist to progress various social inclusion initiatives. Some of these bodies are detailed in Annex 5.

5.5.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility is advanced by the Foundation for Investing in Communities, which was established in 1998. The board of the Foundation consists of volunteers drawn from business, the community and voluntary sector, Government Departments, semi-state bodies and the universities. It aims to encourage philanthropy and build an independent civic endowment fund to serve the Irish community. It also seeks to encourage businesses to make corporate community involvement and social responsibility part of their mainstream business practice. This work is carried out by the organisation called *Business In The Community*.

CHAPTER 6

GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a detailed presentation of four examples of good practice drawn from key policy measures or institutional arrangements implemented during the period of the first NAPs/incl.

6.2 Teen Parents Support Initiative

The Department of Health and Children implemented a pilot initiative on Teen Parents Support as part of the National Child Care Investment Strategy announced in December 1998. Following a positive evaluation of the pilot projects in 2002, the existing projects are now being supported as a mainstream service by the relevant health boards. The Health Board Executive will take on the role of steering the Initiative, including overseeing its further development and future expansion.

Three Teen Projects were established in Dublin, Galway and Limerick in 1999 and 2000 in areas that encompassed both urban and rural mix in order to identify the needs of young parents in different environments. Through the establishment of the Initiative, it was envisaged that the knowledge base and service delivery systems of the key stakeholders would be enhanced, leading to a more efficient and effective take-up of services.

The projects support young parents, both mothers and fathers, with a range of socio-economic characteristics. Some are direct participants with the projects (with their partner having limited or no contact with the project), others participate as part of a couple, while others have informal contact, with their partner having the bulk of the contact with the initiative. The majority of participants are Irish although each project engaged with a small number of non-national teen mothers.

The key activities with young parents supported by the project model include;

- One-to-one support with mothers, fathers and grandparents
- Home visiting programmes
- Peer support groups
- Assistance with childcare and education related expenses.
- Development of Protocol for Schools on drawing up Guidelines on Supporting Pregnant or Parenting Schoolgoers
- Information, support and advocacy on social welfare, housing, education and health services
- Referrals to education/training organizations
- Work with groups in schools

As part of the Initiative, Treoir (Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children) produced a Resource Pack for services containing information on regional parenting support programmes and guidelines on specific issues for young parents. The pack lists the services available so that organisations can network and learn from each other's experience. The Final Evaluation Report of the Initiative, with discussion papers on income supports and education for teenage parents, were published in October 2002.

The key findings arising from the evaluation were:

- 76% of participants interviewed believed their life was better or much better;
- All believed that there was a need for such supports;

- Parents identified the following supports offered by the initiative as particularly helpful: support with parenting; provision of information on a range of issues including income supports, health services, education and training; having someone 'to talk to' and access to group supports, as well as, individual, one to one supports;
- There were no social admissions to hospital amongst the children of participating young parents, nor were any of these children taken into care, during the period of the pilot.

Key strengths of the Initiative identified by participants and professionals include:

- It was non-stigmatising, strengths focused, flexible and creative in its responses to young parents' needs;
- Participants and professionals identified the personal qualities and characteristics of project staff as a key strength of the Initiative;
- Its commitment to supporting young parents regardless of the type of need expressed. It achieved this in part, by not always acting as the direct provider of services or supports, but by linking young parents to, and encouraging take-up of, local services;
- Its commitment to the development of multi-agency working arrangements to ensure an integrated and effective response to young parents support needs.

6.3 Preventative Strategy for Unemployment

The Employment Action Plan (EAP) Preventative Strategy aims to reduce unemployment, and prevent the drift into long-term unemployment, by actively engaging with unemployed people

and assisting them to return to employment. The participants are interviewed to assess their current skills with a view to providing them with an individual plan which may lead directly to employment, retraining or education. The Preventative Strategy commenced in September 1998 with all those under 25 years of age who were six months on the Live Register and referred for interview. Over time the process has been progressively expanded to include additional groups crossing specified thresholds of unemployment duration.

Every unemployed young person is offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment, in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure. Unemployed adults are also offered a fresh start before reaching nine months of unemployment by one of the means used with young people, or, more generally, by accompanying individual vocational guidance.

An initial impact evaluation, of the Preventative Strategy, by the Economic and Social Research Institute, performed as part of the evaluation of the European Employment Strategy in Ireland, found that;

- the most innovative element of Irish policy in recent years has been the process of engaging systematically with persons at an early stage of unemployment;
- the process of referral, interview, guidance and counselling appears to have been successful in achieving a substantial movement off the Live Register. For example, 63% of those who were referred for interview in the process between January and October 2001 had left the live register by the end of November that year: 22% were known to be in employment, 14% in education or training and it is very likely that many of the remaining 27% were also in employment.

A special pilot involving full engagement with those not covered by an existing Preventative Strategy category and six months or more unemployed in Galway City and Clondalkin in Dublin, commenced in October 2000. This programme is now reaching completion. At the final stages of this special engagement;

- 75% of Galway referrals and 87% of Clondalkin referrals have left the live register;
- the number of those leaving the live register for positive reasons (i.e. progression to a recorded employment/FÁS programme/education) is consistent with mainstream EAP cohorts;
- approximately 88% of non-attendees in Galway and 90% in Clondalkin have signed off the Live Register.

Despite having a low rate of long-term unemployment (1.4%), the current Partnership agreement, *Sustaining Progress*, recognises the importance of equipping people with the skills and training necessary to give them access to good quality and secure employment. Consequently the Preventative Strategy will be extended to all persons on the Live Register for longer than six months on a phased basis in the Dublin region.

6.4 Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network

The Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) is a State agency with a statutory remit to fight poverty and social exclusion through providing advice to Government, conducting research and developing innovative approaches to tackling poverty. The CPA devised the Local Government Work Programme, in consultation with the Departments of the Environment, Heritage and Local

Government and Social and Family Affairs to assist in the development of anti-poverty strategies at local authority level.

Set up in late 2000, the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network is one of the main components of the Work Programme and its purpose is to encourage and facilitate practical changes within local authorities so as to enhance their capacity to promote social inclusion and anti-poverty measures. Its objectives are to:

- promote and support the development of a strong anti-poverty focus within local government;
- provide a forum in which local authorities can consider and develop policy to tackle poverty and social exclusion;
- enable local authorities to share information about developing new and innovative projects and initiatives; and
- exchange different local experiences and best practice.

Services provided to Network members include;

- access to commissioned research on poverty and social exclusion;
- regular newsletters for local authority staff and members highlighting good practice and new initiatives;
- monthly electronic briefs (e-bulletins) exchanging ideas and information;
- regular quarterly meetings for exchanging information and enhancing skills;
- training on how to target and tackle poverty effectively;

- evaluation support for new projects;
- guidance on the facilitation, participation and consultation of communities;
- support and resources on community development; and
- grants to develop joint initiatives between communities and local authorities.

The majority of local authorities (30) are now members of the Network. Each local authority proposes three members who include a representative from the County Development Board, an elected public representative and a staff member. Since commencing in 2001, just over 400 local authority staff have participated in training on community development, consultation and participation either through workshops or through financial support to local authorities. Since the inception of the Local Government Anti-Poverty Initiatives Grant Scheme in 2001, thirty-eight local projects have been funded, with an average project size of €10,000.

An initial independent consultants' review of the Network found amongst other things that;

- There is significant interest in and commitment to the work of the Learning Network although it was acknowledged that embedding anti-poverty practice across local authorities is a slow task and will take time to achieve given current organisational culture in local authorities.
- Generally it is acknowledged that there is an increased emphasis on social exclusion at local level and some of this change could be attributed to the Learning Network as well as to a number of parallel processes.

- Social inclusion related activities were previously seen as only applying to certain sections within the council but this is changing and staff in all areas are becoming more aware of their responsibilities in terms of proofing policies and practices.

- Key objectives for local authorities becoming involved in the Network include receiving training on poverty and social inclusion, sharing information and models of good practice within local government, sharing information among and within local authorities, and accessing resources and expertise on anti-poverty action.

- Overall views on the activities of the Network are positive with a high proportion of the activities (e.g. grants, training, and publications) rated as good or very good.

- The main strengths of the Learning Network were seen as the provision of practical examples of how to promote an anti-poverty and social inclusion focus in local government, providing members with an opportunity to network, and as a source of good training on relevant topics.

- Some potential areas identified to make local changes were estate management in housing estates and the consultation process in planning as well as arts, culture and libraries.

6.5 Money Advice And Budgeting Service

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a countrywide service funded by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The service is managed by 52 locally based companies with board members drawn from the statutory and

voluntary sectors. It is staffed by 120 full-time money advisers and support staff. More than 11,000 new clients approach the MABS annually and the service deals with a similar number on an ongoing basis. The budget for 2003 is €9.867 million.

The MABS provides an independent, free and confidential service primarily to low-income families who are in debt or at risk of getting into debt. It has an emphasis on practical, budget-based measures that will succeed in removing people permanently from dependence on moneylenders and open up alternative sources of low cost credit through their local Credit Unions. Credit Unions are member owned and member run financial co-operatives. Members of a credit union have a common bond generally based on where they live (community) or where they work (occupational). The MABS has a special relationship with the credit unions which operate a “special accounts” system to enable the MABS client repay debts and save small amounts. A Loan Guarantee Fund also operates to provide “crisis” loans as an alternative to the moneylender.

The aim of the service is to help people to regain control of their finances and to budget for the future. It helps them to prepare a budget plan and to contact their creditors with a view to rescheduling repayments. The Money Adviser also helps the client to maximise their income, prioritise their debts, and where necessary, contact and refer to other support agencies. The MABS frequently intervenes to prevent repossession of the family home and also to prevent disconnection of gas and electricity supply.

A Pilot Debt Settlement Programme was recently agreed by the MABS and the Irish Bankers’ Federation and supported by the other main creditors. This Pilot Scheme provides a non-judicial alternative for resolving cases of multiple consumer debt that are likely to prove intractable and otherwise end up in court. The scheme introduces a range of innovative features that are new to this jurisdiction such as a finite period for an agreed debt repayment programme, the freezing/reduction of interest and the write-off of residual debt on successful completion of the programme. The debtor’s principal private residence is secured against enforced sale or repossession.

A recent evaluation found that;

- over 90% were positively disposed towards the Service. This included clients, community and voluntary bodies, the finance industry and statutory creditors;
- two thirds of the caseload were female clients. Just over half were aged between 25 and 44 and one third were aged over 45. A small proportion were aged under 25;
- approximately 70% were receiving some form of Social Welfare payment - 19% were unemployed, 31% were lone parents and 21% were receiving some other form of Social Welfare payment. A further 22% were employed and 3% were self-employed.

The overall conclusion was that the MABS has been proven to provide a worthwhile service with a clear rationale for its continuation.

ANNEX 1: CHAPTER 1

MAJOR TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

A1.1 Social Partnership

The partnership approach between Government and the social partners, based on National Agreements negotiated on average every three years since 1987, has had a major impact on Ireland's economic transformation and on its social development. These agreements on pay, taxation, social protection and social provision generally, have shaped distribution and ensured a low level of industrial relations conflict. In 1997, a National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) – *Sharing in Progress* - was introduced. It was designed to place the needs of the poor and socially excluded at the top

of the National agenda in terms of Government policy and action. It identified 5 areas for strategic action – educational disadvantage, unemployment, income adequacy, disadvantaged urban areas and rural poverty. The strategy was endorsed in a subsequent partnership agreement, the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, in which it was agreed to extend its scope and to revise key aspects. Following an extensive consultation process, the revised NAPS – *Building an Inclusive Society* – was launched in February 2002. The latest partnership agreement, *Sustaining Progress*, covers the same period as this NAPS/incl.

A1.2 Consistent Poverty and At Risk of Poverty Rates

TABLE 1.1

CONSISTENT POVERTY RATES		1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2001 (%)
Percentage of persons experiencing consistent poverty by age, household type or by labour force status	Overall	8.2	6.2	5.2
	Men	6.9	3.6	3.5
	Women	7.0	4.9	4.7
	Children	11.7	7.7	6.5
	Elderly	6.6	5.9	3.9
	Adults 18-64	7.0	4.0	4.1
	Employee	1.8	2.2	1.7
	Unemployed	32.7	24.1	17.8
	Single adults	12.8	10.7	7.2
	2 adults with 4 children	20.2	14.2	10.1
	Lone parents	30.9	23.0	23.7

Source: ESRI – Monitoring Poverty Trends in Ireland

TABLE 1.2

AT RISK OF POVERTY RATES		1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2001 (%)
Percentage of persons below 60% of median income by age, household type or by labour force status	Overall	19.8	20.9	21.9
	Men	15.9	17.3	19.4
	Women	21.2	22.3	23.2
	Children	22.6	23.7	23.4
	Elderly	32.9	38.4	44.1
	Adults 18-64	15.9	16.4	17.1
	Employee	2.6	6.5	8.1
	Unemployed	58.8	57.1	44.7
	Single adult	50.1	47.7	46.8
	2 adults with 4+ children	29.8	39.2	40.7
	Lone parents	44.9	46.5	42.9

Source: ESRI – Monitoring Poverty Trends in Ireland

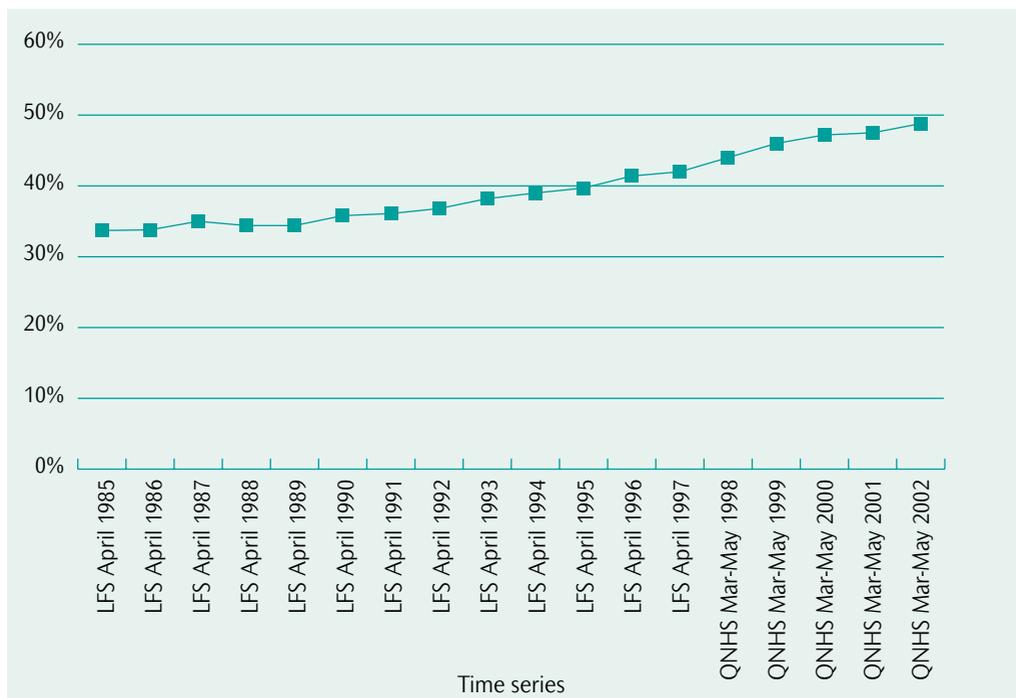
A1.3 EU Common Indicators

Table 1.3: EU Common Indicators for Poverty and Social Exclusion

Indicators	Year	Ireland	EU average
Income indicators	1999		
At-risk-of-poverty rate			
- After social transfers (60% threshold)		18	15
- Before social transfers (income including pensions)		30	24
- Before social transfers (income excluding pensions)		37	40
- 40% threshold		4	5
- 50% threshold		11	9
- 70% threshold		28	23
At-risk-of poverty threshold			
One adult household	1999	6,721	7,263
2 adults – 2 children household		14,114	15,252
Relative median at risk of poverty gap (%)	1999	21	22
Persistent risk of poverty rate% (60% threshold)	1999	12	9
Persistent risk of poverty rate% (50% threshold)	1999	5	4
At risk of poverty rate anchored at 1996 (%)	1999	10	14
Income distribution (income quintile share ratio)	1999	4.9	4.6
Gini coefficient (%)	1999	32	29
Non-monetary indicators	2001	Ireland	EU average
Persons living in Jobless Households aged 0-65		10	12.2
Persons living in Jobless Households aged 0-60	2001	8.6	8.9
Long-term unemployment rate –Total	2001	1.3	3.1
Long-term unemployment rate –Male		1.6	2.7
Long-term unemployment rate - Female		0.8	3.7
Long-term unemployment share – Total	2001	33.1	41.4
Long-term unemployment share – Male		40.8	41.3
Long-term unemployment share – Female		21.3	41.4
Very long-term unemployment rate – Total	2001	0.8	2.0
Very long-term unemployment rate – Male		1.0	1.7
Very long-term unemployment rate – Female		0.4	2.4
Life expectancy at birth – Total	2001	75.8	78.6
Life expectancy at birth – Total male		73.0	75.5
Life expectancy at birth – Total female		78.5	81.6

A1.4 Female labour participation rates

Table 1.4: Female labour force participation rate



A1.5 Detailed analysis of consistent poverty¹

Table 1.5: Percentage of Persons Below 60% of Mean Income and Experiencing Basic Deprivation by Household Type, LII 2000

	1998	2000	2001
1 adult	12.8	10.7	7.2
2 adults	3.9	3.0	4.1
3 or more adults	5.6	1.7	1.0
2 adults, 1 child	3.6	3.6	3.3
2 adults, 2 children	1.8	2.6	1.4
2 adults, 3 children	12.8	4.9	3.2
2 adults, 4 or more children	20.2	14.2	10.1
1 adult with children	30.9	23.0	23.7
3 or more adults with children	7.7	4.0	5.3
All	8.3	5.2	4.7

¹ ESRI – Monitoring Poverty Trends in Ireland – Results from the 2001 Living in Ireland Survey (forthcoming)

Table 1.6: Breakdown of Persons Below 60% of Mean Income and Experiencing Basic Deprivation by Household Type, LII 2000

	1998	2000	2001
1 adult	11.1	15.0	11.1
2 adults	6.6	8.6	13.5
3 or more adults	11.4	5.6	3.7
2 adults, 1 child	3.4	5.1	5.0
2 adults, 2 children	2.7	6.5	3.6
2 adults, 3 children	16.4	8.0	6.3
2 adults, 4 or more children	15.3	18.7	14.6
1 adult with children	14.1	17.0	19.8
3 or more adults with children	18.9	15.4	22.2
All	100	100	100

Table 1.7: Percentage of Persons Below 60% of Mean Income and Experiencing Basic Deprivation by Labour Force Status of Reference Person, LII 2000

	1998	2000	2001
Employee	1.8	2.2	1.7
S/Emp	3.6	1.7	0
Farmer	3.4	1.2	1.1
Unemployed	32.7	24.1	17.8
Ill/Disab	17.7	10.8	22.5
Retired	5.1	3.6	5.3
Home Duties	21.3	14.2	12.3

Table 1.8: Breakdown of Persons Below 60% of Mean Income and Experiencing Basic Deprivation by Labour Force Status of Reference Person, LII 2000

	1998	2000	2001
Employee	10.2	21.2	18.9
S/Emp	4.5	3.2	-
Farmer	3.6	1.7	1.7
Unemployed	31.5	20.9	13.7
Ill/Disab	7.4	8.7	18.3
Retired	8.2	7.8	12.5
Home Duties	34.5	36.5	34.6
All	100	100	100

Table 1.9: Percentage of Persons Below 60 Per Cent of Mean Income Poverty Line and Experiencing Basic Deprivation by Age, LII 2000

	1998	2000	2001
Adults	6.9	4.3	4.1
Aged 18-64	7.0	4.0	4.1
Aged 65 or more	6.6	5.9	3.9
Children (aged under 18)	11.7	7.7	6.5

Table 1.10: Percentage Below 60 Per Cent of Mean Income and Experiencing Basic Deprivation by Gender and Age, Adults, LII 2000

	1998		2000		2001	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All Adults	6.9	7.0	3.6	4.9	3.5	4.7
Aged 18-64	7.3	6.7	3.5	4.4	3.5	4.8
Aged 65 or more	4.4	8.3	4.0	7.4	3.1	4.4

A1.6 Detailed analysis of ‘at risk of poverty’ rates²

Table 1.11: Percentage of Persons Below 60% of Median Income by Household Composition Type

	1994	1997	1998	2000	2001
1 adult	7.3	35.7	50.1	47.7	46.8
2 adults	6.8	9.4	16.2	23.1	28.8
3 or more adults	2.6	7.9	5.3	8.8	10.4
2 adults, 1 child	12.5	16.8	14.6	13.9	19.0
2 adults, 2 children	12.6	11.5	12.2	16.1	13.9
2 adults, 3 children	21.8	20.4	20.6	20.7	20.8
2 adults, 4 or more children	44.0	38.9	29.8	39.2	40.7
1 adult with children	36.3	45.3	44.9	46.5	42.9
3 or more adults with children	13.6	19.3	21.9	14.6	13.0
All	15.6	18.2	19.8	20.9	21.9

Table 1.12: Breakdown of Persons Below 60% of Median Income by Household Composition Type

	1994	1997	1998	2000	2001
1 adult	3.3	14.6	18.4	17.0	15.8
2 adults	5.5	7.4	11.8	16.4	20.4
3 or more adults	2.1	6.5	4.5	7.3	8.1
2 adults, 1 child	4.6	7.0	5.7	4.9	6.3
2 adults, 2 children	9.4	8.7	7.9	10.2	8.1
2 adults, 3 children	16.4	12.2	11.0	8.4	8.8
2 adults, 4 or more children	26.8	12.1	9.5	13.0	12.6
1 adult with children	10.2	8.4	8.6	8.6	8.0
3 or more adults with children	21.8	23.1	22.7	14.2	11.9
All	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1.13: Percentage of Persons Below 60% of Median Income by Labour Force Status of Household Reference Person,

	1994	1997	1998	2000	2001
Employee	3.2	4.7	2.6	6.5	8.1
Self-employed	16.0	14.4	16.4	17.9	14.3
Farmer	18.6	16.7	23.9	24.1	23.0
Unemployed	51.4	57.7	58.8	57.1	44.7
Ill/disabled	29.5	52.5	54.5	52.2	66.5
Retired	8.2	13.5	18.4	30.3	36.9
Home duties	20.9	32.6	46.8	44.3	46.9
All	15.6	18.0	19.8	20.9	21.9

Table 1.14: Breakdown of Persons Below 60% of Median Income by Labour Force Status of Reference Person, Living in Ireland Surveys 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2001

	1994	1997	1998	2000	2001
Employee	8.3	11.5	6.0	15.4	18.8
Self-employed	10.1	7.8	8.3	8.2	6.6
Farmer	10.6	8.0	10.4	8.9	7.6
Unemployed	41.1	29.6	22.9	12.2	7.3
Ill/disabled	6.2	10.4	9.1	10.7	11.9
Retired	6.0	9.1	12.0	16.3	18.8
Home duties	17.8	23.6	31.4	28.4	29.0
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1.15: Percentage of Persons Falling Below 60% of Median Income by Presence of Children and Age of Household Reference Person, Living in Ireland Surveys 1994,1997, 1998, 2000 and 2001

	1994	1997	1998	2000	2001
Aged < 65 No Children	5.1	10.2	11.0	14.5	16.2
Aged <65 with Children	20.6	20.9	19.8	20.6	20.3
Aged 65+	6.5	20.3	25.3	31.9	36.6
All	15.6	18.2	19.8	20.9	21.9

Table 1.16: Percentage of Persons Below 60% Median Income Poverty Line by Age, Living in Ireland Surveys 1994,1997, 2000 and 2001

	1994	1997	1998	2000	2001
	%	%	%	%	%
Adults	11.1	16.1	18.6	19.9	21.3
Aged 18-64	12.1	14.7	15.9	16.4	17.1
Aged 65 or more	5.9	24.2	32.9	38.4	44.1
Children (aged under 18)	24.5	23.5	22.6	23.7	23.4

Table 1.17: Percentage Below 60% of Median Income by Gender and Age, Adults, Living in Ireland Surveys 1994,1997, 1998, 2000 and 2001

	1994		1997		1998		2000		2001	
	Men	Women								
All Adults	10.6	11.6	12.9	19.2	15.9	21.2	17.3	22.3	19.4	23.2
Aged 18-64	11.3	12.9	12.9	16.5	15.0	16.8	15.4	17.5	16.7	17.4
Aged 65 or more	6.4	5.5	13.0	33.1	21.1	41.9	29.2	45.4	36.1	50.2

A1.7 EU Comparisons – Social Protection Expenditure

Social protection expenditure covers old age/survivors, sickness/health care, disability, family/children, unemployment, housing and social exclusion. Table 1.18 below shows the breakdown of expenditure for the EU 15, including the EU 12 (Euro countries). The most significant difference for Ireland

relates to the proportion of expenditure on old age/survivors at 25.4% which is the lowest in the EU and well below the EU 15 average of 46.4%. This is mainly due to the fact that the proportion of the population at age 65+ at 11.1% is almost a third lower than the EU average at 16.1%. The fact that Ireland only provides flat rate pensions under the State social security schemes is another significant factor, as most other Member States provide supplementary pensions under the State system.

Supplementary pensions are provided exclusively under occupational and personal pension schemes in Ireland. The relatively recent extension of social insurance to all categories of the work force also means that a high proportion of current pensioners and other long term beneficiaries receive pensions/benefits under social assistance which are means tested and financed from general government contributions.

The proportion of expenditure is the highest for sickness and health care at 41.2% (EU 15, 27.3%)

and among the highest for family/children at 13.0% (EU15, 8.2%), for housing/social exclusion, 5.5% (EU15, 3.7%) and for unemployment, 9.7% (EU15, 6.3%), even though the rate of unemployment in Ireland is among the lowest. Expenditure on disability (invalidity in Ireland) at 5.3% is lower than the EU15 average of 8.1%, but this is also mainly attributable to the younger population and the fact that there are no supplementary pensions under the State social security scheme.

Table 1.18: Social Benefits by group of functions 2000 (as % of total social benefits)*

	Old Age & Survivors	Sickness/ Health care	Disability	Family/ children	Unemploy ment	Housing & Social Exclusion n.e.c.
EU-15	46.4	27.3	8.1	8.2	6.3	3.7
EUR-12	46.6	27.9	7.5	8.2	7	2.8
B	43.8	25.1	8.7	9.1	11.9	1.4
DK	38.1	20.2	12	13.1	10.5	6.1
D	42.2	28.3	7.8	10.6	8.4	2.6
EL	49.4	28.6	5.1	7.4	6.2	5.4
E	46.3	29.6	7.6	2.7	12.2	1.6
F	44.1	29.1	5.8	9.6	6.9	4.5
IRL	25.4	41.2	5.3	13	9.7	5.5
I	63.4	25	6	3.8	1.7	0.2
L	40	25.2	13.7	16.6	3.3	1.2
NL	42.4	29.3	11.8	4.6	5.1	6.8
A	48.3	26	8.2	10.6	4.7	2.1
P	45.6	20.6	13	5.5	3.8	1.5
FIN	35.8	23.8	13.9	12.5	10.4	3.5
S	39.1	27.1	12	10.8	6.5	4.5
UK	47.7	25.9	9.5	7.1	3.2	6.8

Source: Eurostat – Statistics in Focus – ‘Social Protection in Europe’ 2003

* The euro area (EUR-12) comprises Belgium (B), Germany (D), Greece (EL), Spain (E), France (F), Ireland (IRL), Italy (I), Luxembourg (L), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (A), Portugal (P) and Finland (FIN). The European Union (EU-15) comprises the euro area countries plus Denmark (DK), Sweden (S) and the United Kingdom (UK).

As Table 1.19 below shows, social protection expenditure as a percentage of GDP has declined in Ireland over the recent period of high economic growth. This can be mainly explained by the strong growth in GDP in the years leading up to 2000. As explained above, the relatively small share of older people compared to other Member States reduces the need for expenditure on pensions and health and elder care. Another factor is the large share of GDP, or income, which

is in the form of profits earned by foreign-owned companies and which are not wholly available to finance social protection spending. In relation to GNP (gross national product), which excludes such income and transfers abroad and which was over 13% less than GDP in 1999 (currently 15% less)-by far the biggest difference between the two in the Union - expenditure on social protection amounted to 17% in 1999 as against a figure of 14% in relation to GDP.

Table 1.19: Expenditure on social protection (as % of GDP)

	1991	1993	1996	1998	1999	2000
EU-15	26.4	28.8	28.4	27.6	27.5	27.3
EUR-12	26.2	28.3	28.2	27.4	27.4	27.1
B	27.1	29.3	28.6	27.6	27.4	26.7
DK	29.7	31.9	31.4	30.2	29.8	28.8
D	26.1	28.4	29.9	29.3	29.6	29.5
EL	21.6	22.1	22.9	24.2	25.5	26.4
E	21.2	24	21.9	20.6	20.2	20.1
F	28.4	30.7	31	30.5	30.2	29.7
IRL	19.6	20.2	17.8	15.5	14.8	14.1
I	25.2	26.4	24.8	25	25.3	25.2
L	22.5	23.7	24	21.7	21.8	21
NL	32.6	33.6	30.1	28.4	28	27.4
A	27	28.9	29.5	28.4	28.8	28.7
P	17.2	21	21.2	22.1	22.6	22.7
FIN	29.8	34.6	31.6	27.3	26.7	25.2
S	34.3	39	34.7	33.4	32.9	32.3
UK	25.7	29	28.1	26.9	26.5	26.8

Source: Eurostat – Statistics in Focus – 'Social Protection in Europe' 2003

The increased expenditure per capita on social protection at constant prices during the same period is reflected in Table 1.20 below. Over the period 1995 to 2000 the index for Ireland rose

from 100 in 1995 to 121.4 in 2000 the third highest in the EU, compared to an increase to an average of 108.7 for the EU15.

Table 1.20: Expenditure on social protection per capita at constant prices (Index 1995 = 100)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
EU-15	101.7	102.6	104.4	106.9	108.7
EUR-12	102.4	103.3	105.1	107.6	108.8
B	102.3	102.8	104.6	106.8	106.7
DK	99.9	99.3	100.4	101.7	101.8
D	104.1	102.9	104.9	107.6	107.9
EL	104.5	111.4	120.3	131.6	142.6
E	101.5	102.5	104.3	106.8	109.7
F	101.2	102.1	104.4	106.4	107
IRL	101	106.5	110.2	116.6	121.4
I	102.4	107.5	107.9	110.6	112.9
L	104.2	107.1	109.2	115.7	117.9
NL	99.6	100.7	101	102.1	104.6
A	101.2	101.7	104	108.9	110.8
P	99.1	105.5	115	122.6	127.1
FIN	101.7	100.6	100	100.3	99.9
S	99.3	98.6	100.7	103.9	105.2
UK	102.6	104.6	106.3	107.9	113.8

Source: Eurostat – Statistics in Focus – ‘Social Protection in Europe’ 2003

With regard to sources of finance for this expenditure, in Ireland the high proportion of pensioners and other long term beneficiaries receiving benefits under social assistance, together with the fact that most health expenditure is financed from taxation, means that 58.3% of social protection expenditure in 2000 was financed from general government contributions compared to an average of 35.8% for the EU 15 (mainly taxation).

A1.8 Legal aid services

Table 1.21: Numbers receiving free legal services

Numbers given legal services		Number given legal advice only		Numbers given advice and representation	
2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002
14,214	14,382	9,151	9,411	5,063	4,971

A2.1 REVIEW OF PROGRESS DURING THE 2001/03 NAPs/incl

Table 2.1 Current position in relation to key NAPS Targets

NAPS Target	Current Position
To reduce the numbers of those who are consistently poor to below 2%, and if possible eliminate consistent poverty	5.2% of the population are living in consistent poverty (2001)
To achieve a rate of €150 per week, in 2002 terms, for the lowest rates of social welfare by 2007	Current (2003) lowest rate of social welfare is €124.80.
To halve the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties by 2006	11% of pupils (15 year olds) had serious reading difficulties in 2000
To reduce the proportion of the population aged 16-64 with restricted literacy to below 10%-20% by 2007	About 25% of the population aged 16-64 had restricted literacy in 1995
To reduce the number of young people who leave the school system early, so that the percentage of those who complete upper second level or equivalent will reach 85% by 2003 and 90% by 2006	Completion rate was 82% in 1999
To reduce the gap in premature mortality between the lowest and highest socio-economic group by at least 10% for circulatory diseases, for cancers and for injuries and poisoning by 2007	For the period 1989-1998 the average annual directly standardised mortality rates for the lowest compared with the highest occupational class were as follows: Over 120% higher for circulatory diseases Over 100% higher for cancer Over 150% higher for injuries and poisoning
The Strategy will aim at reducing the gap in low birth weight rates between children from the lowest and highest socio-economic group by 10% from the current level, by 2007	In the 1990s, women in the unemployed socio-economic group were over twice as likely to give birth to low weight babies as women in the higher professional group
To deliver 41,500 local authority housing unit starts (including acquisitions) between 2000 and 2006	Local authority housing acquired and commenced 2000-2: 16,564 or 40% of target

NAPS Target	Current Position
Over the period to 2007, the Strategy will aim at reducing the numbers of children who are consistently poor to below 2%, and if possible, eliminate consistent poverty	6.5% of children are living in consistent poverty (2001)
Over the period to 2007, the Strategy will aim at reducing the numbers of women who are consistently poor to below 2%, and if possible, eliminate consistent poverty	4.9% of women are living in consistent poverty (2001)
The Strategy will aim at increasing the employment participation rate of women to an average of more than 60% in 2010	The female participation rate was 48.6% in 2002.
Over the period to 2007, the Strategy will aim at reducing the numbers of older people who are consistently poor to below 2%, and if possible, eliminate consistent poverty	3.9% of older people are living in consistent poverty (2001)
The gap in life expectancy between the Traveller Community and the whole population will be reduced by at least 10% by 2007	Life expectancy at birth for Traveller men is 9.9 years less than for settled men and 11.9 years less for Traveller women than for settled women
The transfer rate of Travellers to post-primary schools will be increased to 95% by 2004	Current transfer rate is approximately 85%
The Strategy will aim at increasing participation by students with disabilities at third level to 1.35% by 2003 and 1.8% by 2006	Participation rate was 0.9% in 1998
Over the period to 2007, the Strategy will aim at reducing the number of farm households who are consistently poor below 2%, and if possible, eliminate consistent poverty	1.3% of farm households are living in consistent poverty (2001)

A2.2 Facilitating access to employment:

1. A wide range and scale of active labour market programmes continued throughout the period of the first NAPs/incl – e.g. participation on programmes in 2001 amounted to 88,772 or 52.8% of combined unemployment and programme places
2. Investment in the Social Economy Programme, which provides start-up capital to social economy enterprises that create permanent sustainable employment for long-term unemployed people over the age of 35 and other disadvantaged groups, increased from €6.62m in 2001 to over €30m in 2003. Some 300 social economy enterprises have commenced operations, employing 2,085 persons.
3. The High Supports Process (HSP) - a flexible process designed to assist the Employment Service in implementing flexible responses for clients who are experiencing barriers in progressing from unemployment to the world of work – was introduced in January 2003
4. Against the backdrop of a tightening labour market, the 2002 year-end participation rate on Community Employment was 24,991 with a target figure for 2003 of 20,000. Mainstreaming continues in the case of schools services supported by the CE scheme - some 4,500 places will have transferred to the Education sector on completion of this process in 2003.
5. A process of intervening with people before they cross certain thresholds of unemployment has been instituted. In 2001, 24,119 persons were referred to FÁS and 63.7% signed off the Live Register. An analysis of the progression of those who had been referred indicated that 84% of interviewees who had left the Live Register were still off the Live Register at the end of the twelfth month after referral. This process continued during 2002 and is being extended in scope in 2003.
6. The social partners have put in place a framework and a range of actions to promote family friendly practices at the level of the firm.
7. FÁS took a range of actions to promote and facilitate the participation of women on its programmes, including the introduction of a new support system for childcare costs, providing an allowance per week per child for persons on FÁS training courses.
8. A Taskforce established to examine the adequacy and coverage of lifelong learning opportunities published its report in November 2002. It represents a comprehensive and coherent framework for providing education and training on a lifelong basis, covering such areas as the national qualifications framework, literacy and other basic skills, information and guidance, delivery access and funding and workplace training.

A2.3 Facilitating Access to Services

Health

1. *Primary Care A New Direction* was published in 2001 and sets out a model based on multidisciplinary team-work, with 24 hour cover, key workers to link islands of service for groups such as people with disability and the elderly and with mechanisms for the involvement of the community. Implementation of the Strategy is now underway and the Government is committed, within resource constraints, to advancing its implementation.
2. The total number of adults waiting for more than 12 months for orthopaedic in-patient treatment has fallen by 10% between June and September 2002 moving towards the delivery of the NAPS health target for older people
3. Management of the public/private mix in acute hospitals is important to ensure that those who depend on the public system are not disadvantaged. Closer monitoring of the mix of elective activity at hospital level is the key to ensuring equity for public patients. Current bed designations show that the ratio between public and private beds stands at 80/20. In general the ratio between public and private patients is operating reasonably well in the case of emergency admissions. The position regarding elective or planned admissions is less satisfactory. In 2001, 30% of the elective admissions to public hospitals were private while 70% were public patients.
4. A Women's Health Council has been established at national level as well as a Women's Health Policy Unit within the Department of Health and Children. At the regional level, Women's Health Advisory Committees were established within each health board and Women's Health Development Officers were appointed in many health boards. The national breast screening programme BreastCheck commenced in February 2000 with phase one covering three health board areas. Screening is being offered free of charge to all women in those areas in the target age group 50-64 years. Up to end December 2002, 110,636 women had been invited for screening and 83,035 women had been screened, representing an uptake of 75%.

Education

5. The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education was established in September 2001 and is charged with developing appropriate quality standards in relation to the wide range of issues affecting early childhood education. One role of the Centre is to develop appropriate forms of early intervention and support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities, building on the experience of existing programmes.
6. Building on earlier pilot projects, the School Completion Programme was introduced in 2002. The new National Educational Welfare Board, established in March 2002, will also play an active role in promoting retention in schools and in tackling early school leaving.

7. The number of special needs assistants, who are recruited specifically to assist children with disabilities in an educational context, has risen from 1,800 in 2001 to approximately 5,100. A key development in this regard has been the decision to establish the National Council for Special Education. The Council will be responsible for, *inter alia*, the development and delivery of services for persons with special needs.
8. The statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee, charged with advising the Minister for Education & Science on issues relating to educational disadvantage, was established in March 2002. Allied to the work of the Committee is the Educational Disadvantage Forum, which met for the first time in November 2002 and was attended by approximately 240 delegates drawn from a wide range of interests. A report of the Forum proceedings was published in March 2003 and will inform the work of the Educational Disadvantage Committee
9. The Back to Education Initiative, introduced in August 2002, provides for an expansion of part-time Youthreach, Post Leaving Certificate and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme options so that adults can combine a return to learning with work and family responsibilities.
10. Overall investment in adult literacy has been increased to €17.9 million in 2003 from €13.6 million in 2001. There are now over 28,000 participants on adult literacy courses and the 2002 television series of *READ WRITE NOW* attracted an average weekly audience of 146,000.

Housing

11. The Housing Unit, in co-operation with Dublin City Council, carried out a comprehensive profiling of the socio-demographic characteristics, geographical distribution and sources and level of income of all households accommodated by the City Council. The outcome of this survey will help to inform policy decisions in the future.
12. The decennial national house condition survey, based on an analysis of 37,500 completed questionnaires at national level was carried out in 2000 and will be published shortly. The survey relates to the size and type of accommodation, types of facilities and amenities (such as water, sewage and heating) household composition and general condition of accommodation.
13. The vast majority of the recommendations of the Commission on the Private Rented Residential Sector which include measures to promote supply of private rented accommodation and legislative reforms in relation to matters such as security of tenure, dispute resolution, rent setting and rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants were accepted by the Government in early 2001. Reforms relating to taxation were implemented in the Finance Acts 2001 and 2002. The Government approved proposals for legislative reform in February 2002 and the Residential Tenancies Bill 2003, which provides for these, was published on 30 May 2003.

A2.4 To prevent the risks of exclusion

E-inclusion

1. Two CAIT (Community Application of Information Technology) programmes were launched to provide those excluded from the benefits that information and communications technologies can bring to our daily lives with opportunities to engage in a meaningful way with the new technologies – whether through accessing public services and essential information over the internet, banking on-line, or keeping in touch with friends and family abroad via e-mail. This initiative harnesses the experiences and knowledge of the community and voluntary sector to encourage all citizens to participate fully in the information society. Funding has been committed to 121 projects since the launch of the first CAIT programme in December 2000.
2. Other measures aimed at tackling the digital divide included the Information Age Schools programme. The National Disability Authority produced national IT accessibility guidelines, for the public and private sectors, for all electronically delivered services. An Equalskills Project piloted the provision of a basic ICT literacy (use a PC, browse the internet, and use e-mail) training programme to the general public.
3. The Public Library Service is a significant contributor in this area. Since 1999 over 1,400 internet access points have been installed in over 280 public libraries throughout the country with grant assistance of €2.5 million from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. A training programme to enable staff to assist members

of the public in the use of the new technologies was funded by the Department in 2001.

A2.5 To help the most vulnerable

Migrants

1. The promotion of the social integration of asylum seekers, refugees and those for whom English is a second language has been advanced through measures such as:
 - the Refugee Language Support Unit;
 - the allocation of additional teaching and financial resources to schools with non-national pupils with English language difficulties;
 - and a new subject in the primary and post-primary school curricula, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE);
2. The consultative phase of the preparation of a National Action Plan against Racism was completed in January 2003. The Plan will be published before the end of 2003.
3. In 2000, the Government approved a National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme for a three-year period 2001 to 2003. The overall aim of the programme is to contribute to creating the conditions for building an inclusive society in Ireland, where racism is effectively addressed and cultural diversity is valued. The Programme's budget is €5.7m over the three years. A report on activities undertaken as part of the three-year National Anti Racism Awareness Programme (2001-2003) is being produced, with a final report is due at the end of the programme.

4. The new EU Initiative to combat discrimination and inequality – the EQUAL programme - in the labour market was launched in 2001. This programme part funds, through the European Social Fund, 21 Development Partnerships to combat discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market. The amount of money to be invested in respect of Round 1 comes to €20.4 million.
5. A widely representative Education Working Group has been established to promote the development of anti-racism and inter-culturalism across all levels of the education system.

Travellers

6. Specific guidelines on the education of Travellers in primary and second-level schools were disseminated to all schools in February 2002. The aim is to facilitate greater access to schools and to ensure that Traveller children will participate in, and benefit fully from, education. This initiative builds on a programme of support for Traveller education, which includes a National Education Officer for Travellers, additional resource teachers, visiting teachers and additional capitation payments for schools enrolling Travellers. This support has seen a significant increase in the enrolment of Traveller children in both primary and post-primary schools.
7. *Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002 – 2005*, launched in February 2002, provides a clear statement of policy focusing on the underlying problems associated with the poor health status of the Traveller community and sets out a realistic and practical plan for specific improvements in that status.

A number of actions are being undertaken to give effect to the Strategy.

People with Disabilities

8. The Working Group on the feasibility of introducing a Cost of Disability payment is currently operating under the aegis of the Department of Health and Children. The Working Group has agreed with the National Disability Authority the research projects that need to be undertaken so that the Group can come to conclusions on the feasibility of introducing such a payment.
9. The Mental Health Act, 2001 improves the safeguards for mentally disordered persons who are involuntarily admitted for psychiatric care and treatment and will bring Irish law in this area into conformity with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Act provides for the establishment of an independent agency - the Mental Health Commission - whose primary function is to promote and foster high standards and good practices in the delivery of mental health services and to ensure that the interests of detained persons are protected. The Commission was established in April 2002.
10. Significant progress has been made on the development of a range of support services for people with physical and sensory disability services in line with the commitments made under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. The aim is to enable them to live as independently as possible within the community either on their own or with their families. These services include long-term residential care and residential respite care, day care services, home support services including personal assistance, therapy services,

aids and appliances, priorities identified by Health Boards and capital expenditure under the National Development Plan. Development of support services will continue in accordance with the available funding.

11. In relation to intellectual disability and autism additional funding in 2002 provided over 100 new residential places, 75 new respite places, between 500 and 600 new day places, health related support services for children with an intellectual disability and those with autism, the continuation of the programme to transfer persons with an intellectual disability from psychiatric hospitals and other inappropriate placements and the further enhancement of specialist and other support services. Enhancement of the health-related support services to children with an intellectual disability or autism is continuing in 2003.
12. Responsibility for employment and vocational training of people with disabilities transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in June 2000. Employment and vocational training policies for people with disabilities are now formulated as part of general labour market policy. Programme policy is currently being reviewed by the Department to ensure the maximum effectiveness and efficiency in programmes to develop a fully mainstreamed approach for the delivery of employment and training services to people with disabilities.
13. Additional resources were provided over the period 2001-2002 for a range of services for older people, including community support services to enable older people to live independently or be cared for in own homes as long as possible, improvements in the home help service and in support for carers, additional beds in community nursing units, additional day care places, improvements in staff ratios to help cope with the growing level of dependency in extended care facilities, improvements in the Nursing Home Subvention Scheme as well as support for the Alzheimer Society and other voluntary organizations and support for innovative approaches to the delivery of services for older people at local level. Implementation was also commenced of the provisions in the new National Health Strategy related to services for older people.
14. Over the period 2001-2002, under the National Development Plan (NDP), 320 new beds were provided in Community Nursing Units/ Hospitals, 616 additional day care places were made available for older people and 166 additional places per week were provided in new social centres for older people. Health boards, in recognising the need to provide respite care, have endeavoured to re-designate a number of beds in long-stay and community/district hospitals as respite beds. There are now 709 respite beds available.

Older People

A3.1 POLICY STRATEGIES

Government policy strategies, which underpin or relate to this Action Plan include:

- Social Partnership Agreement *Sustaining Progress*
- National Anti-Poverty Strategy *Building an Inclusive Society*
- National Development Plan
- National Spatial Strategy
- National Employment Action Plan
- National Children's Strategy
- National Childcare Strategy
- National Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness: a Health System for you*
- Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems
- White Paper on Rural Development
- White Paper on Adult Education
- White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity
- Taskforce Report on Life Long Learning
- Government Information Society Action Plan
New Connections
- National Homelessness Strategy *Homelessness – an Integrated Strategy*
- Youth Homelessness Strategy
- The Homelessness Preventative Strategy

A3.2: Social Inclusion related expenditure – 2003

Department	Measure	REV 2003 €000
Agriculture and Food (Vote 31)	Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS)	190,000
	Early Retirement Scheme for Farmers	85,000
	Compensatory Allowances	228,000
	Teagasc's Rural Viability Advisory Service	14,309
	Installation Aid for Young Farmers	3,550
	The EEC School Milk Scheme	390
Total Expenditure:		521,249
Arts, Sport and Tourism (Vote 35)	Sports Capital Programme	61,000
	Total Expenditure:	61,000
Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (Vote 30)	Energy Conservation	900
	Total Expenditure:	900
Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	Grants for Community and Voluntary Service (mainly Lottery Funded)	30,090
	ADM Area Based Local Development	44,662
	Drugs Initiative	16,159
	Peace & Reconciliation Programme	11,187
	Western Development Commission	1,385
	Western Investment Fund	2,013
	Rural Development	10,956
	LEADER/ INTERREG/PEACE	13,873
	CLÁR Programme (rural strand of RAPID)	9,517
	Information Society - Community Initiative	70
Total Expenditure:		140,542
Education and Science (Votes 26-29)	Early Education	6,895
	Breaking the Cycle	3,586
	Giving Children an Even Break	17,880
	Disadvantage Area Scheme	28,320
	Home/School/Community Liaison	14,250

Department	Measure	REV 2003 €000
Education and Science (Vote 26-29) – continued	Book Grants	11,400
	Support Teachers	1,680
	Traveller Education	21,000
	Reading Recovery	200
	Traveller Teacher Resource	5,400
	School Completion Programme	23,000
	National Educational Welfare Board	5,400
	Further Education	152,000
	Youth Projects	13,000
	Third Level Access	26,000
	Maintenance grants for third level students	132,000
Total Expenditure:		462,011
Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Vote 34)	FÁS Administration	33,000
	Local Employment Service	17,500
	Job Initiative	45,450
	Social Economy Programme	31,900
	Community Employment Scheme	274,300
	Employment Support Programme	2,900
	Pilot Employment Programme	2,080
	Supported Employment Programme	6,650
Specialist Training Providers	40,000	
Total Expenditure:		453,780
Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Vote 25)	Capital Expenditure on LA and Social Housing Programmes	985,237
	Current Expenditure on LA and Social Housing Programmes	80,856
	Non Voted Expenditure on Social Inclusion Programmes - Housing	684,119
	Social Inclusion Non Housing Expenditure	4,837
Total Expenditure:		453,780
Department of Foreign Affairs (Vote 39)	DION – Programme for Service for Irish Emigrants	2,950
Total Expenditure:		1,757,999

Department	Measure	REV 2003 €000
Health & Children (Vote 33)	Community Health:	
	GMS GP and Drugs	982,421
	Dental	126,568
	Optical	23,075
	Aural	6,077
	Home Nursing (75%)	62,113
	Community Welfare:	
	Mobility Allowance	2,729
	Infectious Disease Allowance	201
	Maternity Cash Grants	62
	DCA Children	34,472
	Blind Payments	5,109
	Home help	100,751
	Meals-on-Wheels	9,666
	Grants voluntaries	69,613
	Milk (GMS)	1,510
	Boarding out of children	57,393
	Child care services incl. residential	261,458
	Welfare homes (older people)	75,600
	Psychiatric Programme:	611,957
	Handicapped Programme:	
	Homes - Intellectual Disability	598,149
	Psychiatric Places - Intellectual Disab.	75,012
	Day centres - Intellectual Disability	78,621
	Visually impaired	11,055
	Hearing impaired	7,277
	Other handicapped	251,492
	Rehab service	101,176

Department	Measure	REV 2003 €000
Health and Children (Vote 33) – continued	General Hospital Programme:	
	Health Board Long stay	275,077
	Drugs Initiative funds	8,300
Total Expenditure:		3,836,935
Justice, Equality & Law Reform (Vote 19)	Legal Aid in criminal cases	30,003
	Legal Aid in civil cases (Legal Aid Board)	17,539
	Asylum Seekers Task Force and Asylum Seekers Legal Aid	47,655
	European Refugee Fund	1,040
	Equality Authority/Equality Investigations/ Equality Proofing	8,045
	Gender Mainstreaming	6,632
	Anti-Racism/Inter-culturalism	1,281
	Grant for Nat. Women's Council	557
	Violence Against Women	840
	Childcare	68,260
	Disability	8,117
Total Expenditure:		189,969
Garda Síochána (Vote 20)	Youth Diversion Scheme	5,577
Total Expenditure:		5,577
Prisons (Vote 21)	Work and Training and Probation and Welfare	47,974
Total Expenditure:		47,974
Social and Family Affairs (Vote 40)	Vote Programme Expenditure	5,389,381
	Social Insurance Fund Benefit Expenditure	4,518,550
Total Expenditure:		9,907,931
Transport (Vote 32)	Public Transport Projects	11
	Public Transport Investment Programme	10,000
	Miscellaneous Social Inclusion	1000
Total Expenditure:		11,011
Total Social Inclusion Expenditure:		17,396,878

Note: Some €434m is also provided in respect of Overseas Development Aid.

ANNEX 4: CHAPTER 4

POLICY MEASURES

A4.1 A summary of selected Irish Labour Market Programmes

Programme	Objective	Targets
Early Intervention Process	Intervention with the unemployed before they complete certain periods of unemployment with a view to stemming the flow into long term unemployment	To roll out the process on a phased basis to all persons over six months on the live register from April 2003
Social Economy Programme	Introduced in September 2000 to support the development of social economy enterprises that help the regeneration of local disadvantaged areas and provide employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged persons. The programme is currently under review and the findings that are expected in the third quarter of 2003 will inform future Government policy in relation to the programme.	To create 2,500 employment opportunities by the end 2003. The allocation stands at over €30 million in 2003.
High Supports Process	Launched in January 2003 to target and provide an enhanced level of support to those experiencing particular employability barriers including those currently on Jobs Initiative (JI) and Community Employment (CE). Each pilot location will put in place a multi agency team made up of relevant players already providing services to the proposed client.	To be implemented in ten pilot areas in 2003.
Community Employment Schemes	The three-year limit on participation has been removed in some cases. Projects are prioritised according to the types of services in the locality and the levels of unemployment in the locality.	2003 – 20,000 participation rate
Workforce Gateway for Women Initiative	To support and further develop services for women wishing to return to work. Currently operating in the Dublin area.	Process will be expanded to areas outside Dublin over the next twelve months.
EQUAL programme	Launched in 2001 to combat discrimination and inequality in the labour market.	See A4.2
Competency Development Programme	To be launched in 2003 focused on the prioritised needs of people in employment as identified in the various sectors reports	Budget of €4.5m in 2003

A4.2 The EQUAL Community Initiative Programme

The new EQUAL Community Initiative, which was launched in 2001 part-funds, through the European Social Fund, 21 Development Partnerships to combat discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market. First Round actions address problems related primarily to the (re) integration of disadvantaged groups into employment, the promotion of lifelong learning as a social inclusion/equality issue, awareness of diversity and family-friendly practices.

The amount of money, which will be invested in the Programme in respect of Round 1, is as follows:

Employability	€10 million
Entrepreneurship	€2.3 million
Adaptability	€4.5 million
Equal Opportunities	€2.6 million
Asylum seekers	€1 million

The total amount of money which will be invested in both Rounds 1 and 2 will be €41.5 million. This includes 25% matching funds from public and private sources. Under the Four Pillar structure, the following themes will be explored by the Development Partnerships:

- (re)integrating of disadvantaged groups into the labour market through integrated and innovative labour market and educational interventions;
- effecting structural and attitudinal change within organisations;
- increasing visibility and opportunities for specific target groups through mobilisation of such groups;

- developing and promoting innovative and inclusive business creation skills and opportunities in both urban and rural areas;
- supporting self-employment among specific target groups (women, Travellers, refugees, lone parents);
- the promotion of life-long learning practices and diversity awareness in the workplace including family-friendly practices.

In addition, measures will be explored relating to the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

A4.3 Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme (EHRD OP) 2000-2006 and the European Social Fund

The EHRD OP programme was devised within the context of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006 and is consistent with that Plan, the Community Support Framework for Ireland 2000-2006 and with the European Employment Strategy and the National Employment Plans produced to date. The EHRD OP Programme Complement contains significant labour market measures, which have social inclusion dimensions. As required by the NDP, an explicit poverty criterion was considered in framing the OP proposals.

The OP Programme Complement sheets were all assessed from the poverty proofing perspective. The EHRD OP programme objectives (O.P. 2.7.3) draw on the NDP and the National Employment Action Plans including, specifically, the promotion of social inclusion with particular reference to the re-integration of the socially excluded and the long term unemployed into the labour force.

"Employability" is the largest Priority in the EHRD OP in terms of the number of measures and of the level of financing (€7.677.84m or 54.1% of the entire spend under the OP). Actions under this Priority fall into three broad priority areas reflected in the OP objectives:

- Mobilisation of labour supply
- Preventive approach to unemployment
- Social inclusion

The OP identifies the following employability measures as contributing to the social inclusion objective-

- **Traveller Education** To increase retention of Traveller pupils to completion of post-primary senior cycle and to provide them with further education training options
- **Active Measure for Long Term Unemployed and Socially Excluded**
To assist long term unemployed and socially excluded to contribute to society and improve prospects of regular employment
- **Third Level Access** To promote the access of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, mature second-chance students and students with disabilities to third level education
- **Vocational Training and Pathways to Employment for People with Disabilities**
To assist persons with disabilities to get employment
- **Refugee Language Support Unit** To facilitate the integration of refugees into the education system and labour market

Equality Studies Unit

The Equality Authority is implementing an Equality Studies Unit (ESU), which is a technical assistance sub-measure of the EHRDOP. The brief of the ESU concerns labour market inequalities and their implications for labour market policy in respect of four groups of people: older workers; people with disabilities; minority ethnic groups (particularly refugees); and, members of the Traveller Community. Specifically, the ESU will:

- identify existing data deficits and advise on how they might be addressed so that access to and participation in the labour market can be tracked and analysed;
- improve understanding of the specific labour market needs of groups exposed to social exclusion and discrimination and promoting a capacity to accommodate these differing needs;
- research the labour market experience of these groups and draw on the findings to improve access and participation; and,
- enhance the monitoring of outcomes for these groups through inputs to the responsible committees and other fora.

A4.4 Childcare

In accordance with the recommendations of the Expert Working Group on Childcare, a series of structures have been put in place at both a national and local level to bring the key players together to ensure the effective development of childcare. At a local level, thirty three County and City Childcare Committees have been established

and have developed a co-ordinated strategic plan for the development of childcare provision within their local area over the period 2000 - 2006. The following targets are provided for in the NDP:

National

	Mid Term Target	Final Target
New facilities	450	800
Upgraded facilities	680	1,200
Childcare places	30%	50%
Workers supported	1,550	2,800
Trained staff	450	900
Local networks	33	33
National Voluntary Childcare Organisations	9	9

A4.5 Immigration

Immigration of labour and skills from non-EEA countries has grown substantially in recent years. Work Permits issued increased from 6,000 in 1999 to over 40,000 in 2002. The renewal rate increased from 17% in 2001 to 41% in 2002, suggesting greater stability in the section of the work force covered by work permits. This may be due to changes introduced at the start of 2002, whereby employers must demonstrate that they have made a genuine effort to source labour from within the EEA in the first instance. Legislation to put the employment system on a modern statutory basis is to be published in 2003.

A4.6 Courts Service

The Courts Service has established a protocol for consultation with court users in relation to court buildings and court facilities. All projects will

include a list of accommodation requirements and any other special features which may be needed for particular groups, such as audio-visual facilities, wheelchair access, special facilities for family law cases, information desk, victim support rooms, access for disabled, etc. The views and requirements of court users, including people with disabilities, shall be accommodated as far as possible within the overall capital cost limit for the project.

A4.7 NDP Gender Equality Unit

The work of the NDP Gender Equality Unit is continuing through on-going provision of training, data and information on gender equality issues to policy makers and implementors, and through the Unit's monitoring role. A number of additional areas of work, also being developed, are to be implemented over the 2003-2005 period. These are as follows:

- *Work with Community and Voluntary groups:* A programme of work to support community & voluntary groups in the implementation of gender mainstreaming was drawn up in early 2003, and will be implemented over the next three years. This will focus particularly on supports to promote women in decision making, developing a better interface between the community and statutory sectors, and training and development;
- *Gender budgeting:* A pilot project on gender budgeting will be developed in late 2003;
- *Statistics:* A booklet outlining statistics on Women and Men in Ireland will be published and widely circulated;

- *Gender Impact Assessment:* The Unit aims to improve gender impact assessment of policies and programmes in the NDP as part of the results of the Mid-Term Evaluation, with a view to obtaining stronger commitments and targets to address gender inequalities;
- *Network of equal opportunities officers:* The Unit, in conjunction with *Chwarae Teg* in Wales, is funding the development of a network of those working on gender equality and other equality issues, in relation to the Structural Funds in the UK and Ireland. This will promote and exchange best practice on gender mainstreaming.

A4.8 Housing

The social and affordable housing needs of households are met through the following range of measures:

Social Housing

Local Authority Housing: Local authorities are the main providers of social housing, making available a range of rented housing to meet a variety of accommodation needs. Housing is provided to households on local authority housing waiting lists through the provision by the local authority of new build and, to a lesser extent, the acquisition of second hand dwellings and through vacancies occurring in existing local authority stock.

Voluntary Housing: Under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), accommodation is provided for special needs categories such as the elderly, homeless, elderly returning emigrants and people with disabilities. The Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (LSS) is for the most part used to fund family type social housing, which is broadly similar to accommodation provided under the local authority housing programme.

Improvement Works in lieu and extensions to local authority housing: This scheme enables local authorities to improve or extend privately owned houses occupied or intended to be occupied by an approved applicant for local authority housing (as an alternative to the provision of local authority housing).

Mortgage Allowance Scheme: An allowance is payable to tenants, or tenant purchasers, of local authority housing. The allowance is payable over a 5 year period. This allowance is also available to tenants of houses provided under the voluntary housing Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme to assist them to purchase or have a private house built with a mortgage. Householders residing in local authority or voluntary housing dwellings, who pursue this option to purchase their own homes, make their existing units available for reletting to other social housing tenants.

Affordable Housing Schemes

Shared Ownership: The Shared Ownership Scheme, operated by local authorities, enables people who cannot afford to purchase a house outright (an income eligibility test must be satisfied) to buy a share in a house now and the remainder at later stages within a 25 year period.. The applicant must buy at least 40% of the value of the house initially and rent the remaining share from the local authority. The share of the house being rented can be bought out in part or full at any time.

Local Authority Affordable Housing Scheme: The Affordable Housing Scheme provides for the building of new houses in areas where house prices have created an affordability gap for lower income house purchasers. The houses are offered to eligible first time purchasers at cost price (an income eligibility test must be satisfied) and,

accordingly, at a significant discount from the market value of comparable houses in the area. The scheme allows first time buyers, who might otherwise have applied for local authority housing, to purchase their own homes.

Affordable Housing – Part V: The Planning and Development Act, 2000 defines an eligible person for Part V Affordable Housing as a person "who is in need of accommodation and whose income would not be adequate to meet the payments on a mortgage for the purchase of a house to meet their accommodation needs because the payments calculated over the course of a year would exceed 35% of the person's annual income after income tax and PRSI are deducted." Many local authorities are actively engaged with developers in Part V pre-planning discussions/negotiations, and it is expected that Part V arrangements will make an increasing contribution to affordable housing provision going forward.

Traveller Accommodation

A separate programme relates to the provision of new Traveller specific accommodation and the refurbishment of existing stock. These units include group houses and permanent, temporary, emergency, transient and basic service halting site bays.

A4.9 Health policies

Health Impact Assessment (HIA): The Department of Health and Children, in partnership with the Institute of Public Health, will develop a programme in relation to HIA which will include:

- policy seminars for senior management;
- training courses for HIA practitioners (project management, hazard identification, risk

management, health gain interventions, HIA appraisal, intersectoral action);

- review of HIA tools

Primary Care Strategy: The Primary Care Strategy provides for an inter-disciplinary team-based approach to primary care provision. Clients may self-refer to any team member, and appropriate procedures will be in place to facilitate referral between team members and, where necessary, joint management by the team also. Teams will, where possible and appropriate, be based in single locations. As the model is developed, extended-hours and out-of-hours cover for defined services will be greatly enhanced. The primary care team will have better access to hospital-based services. Discharge planning, care planning and the identification of key workers for individuals when appropriate will be enhanced. Integration between primary care and specialist services in the community, such as specialist palliative care services and mental health services, will be strengthened. During the period 2003-2005, and the Strategy will be implemented in accordance with the Action Plan that is an integral part of it subject to available resources.

Initially, approval has been given, together with the necessary funding, to the establishment of an implementation project in each of ten locations. This will allow the model to be rolled out in a manner that draws on experience gained and enables all relevant professional and user stakeholders to participate in shaping its more detailed aspects.

Key targets for the implementation of the Primary Care strategy are that:

- The 10 initial implementation projects become operational by the end of 2003;

- Local community and voluntary groups to be involved in the planning and delivery of primary care services, in the context of the initial implementation projects;
- A Primary Care Human Resource Plan to be produced to develop the capacity of primary care;
- A national framework for greater integration between primary and secondary care services will be developed.

Cardiovascular Health: The Cardiovascular Health Work Programme 2001-2004 compiled by the Advisory Forum on Heart Health sets out the priorities in implementing the 211 recommendations in the Cardiovascular Health Strategy Report "Building Healthier Hearts". The Advisory Forum on Cardiovascular Health will work with relevant agencies to ensure service quality, accessibility and responsiveness. The Heart Health Task Force will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the prioritised cardiovascular health action plan drawn up by the Advisory Forum. Regional access for procedures such as angioplasty and coronary artery bypass graft will be improved in line with the basic levels of service recommended in the Report of the Cardiovascular Health Strategy Group. The indicator for measuring progress on this is: Age standardised discharge rates for angioplasty and coronary artery bypass grafts (CABGs) by health board of residence.

A4.10 Mental Health

It is intended that preparation of a national policy framework for the further modernisation of the mental health services, updating the 1984 policy document, *Planning for the Future*, will begin during 2003.

The National Health Strategy includes a commitment that mental health advocacy services will be encouraged and resourced. There are growing moves to provide advocacy services in Ireland.

A major criticism of current mental health services relates to the standard of accommodation provided for users in the old style mental hospitals, some of which are unsuitable for the delivery of a modern mental health service. A significant part of the National Development Plan funding for mental health services will go towards the development of acute psychiatric units linked to general hospitals as a replacement for services previously provided in psychiatric hospitals. Three new units are coming on stream in 2003.

A4.11 Adult Literacy

Department of Education and Science initiatives include the following:

- The Inter-Departmental Group on Literacy for the Unemployed has made an interim report to the Government and its recommendations are being implemented. There were in excess of 28,000 participants on adult literacy courses by the end of 2002.
- Implementation of a quality framework and nationally certified staff development programmes. Research on assessment, and international co-operation are also being pursued.
- Use of television and radio has also been piloted and mainstreamed, with the 2002 series of *READ WRITE NOW* attracting an average weekly audience of 146,000. Family learning programmes, literacy and language for non-nationals, programmes for special needs and for Travellers have also been expanded.

■ A workplace literacy programme has been piloted successfully and is being extended to all local authority areas. A workplace literacy group, involving key social partners and education and training agencies, has recommended the establishment of a Workplace Literacy Fund. The promotion of workplace literacy is a commitment in *Sustaining Progress*.

An adult education guidance and counselling service, aimed at supporting participants enrolled on adult literacy, Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes (VTOS) and adult and community education programmes, is being put in place on a phased basis. Current spending on this policy area is in excess of €3.4m, with over 3,000 beneficiaries in the 26 locations currently being served.

A4.12 Programmes designed to tackle educational disadvantage

Initiative	Details
Early Start Programme	This caters for pupils aged 3 to 4 years who are most at risk in areas of social disadvantage. Each Early Start Pilot Project pre-school class attracts special capitation funding, a qualified primary teacher and a child-care assistant, and a grant to foster parental involvement. Annual expenditure is approximately €4million.
Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education	Established in 2001, the Centre is charged with developing appropriate quality standards that will be capable of being adapted to the various settings in which early learning takes place. The Centre will also develop appropriate forms of early intervention and support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities. A budget of some €3.4 million has been approved for the operation of the Centre over a 3-year period.
Giving Children an Even Break	This primary level school programme involves appointing extra teachers and providing extra funding to schools based on the concentration of pupils from socio-economically-disadvantaged backgrounds. Some 763 urban schools and 1,382 rural schools are in receipt of some level of support and/or funding. Investment in the programme amounts to some €11m annually.
Guidance Service in Second Level Schools (age 12-18)	One of the central objectives of the Guidance Service in Second Level Schools (age 12-18) is to play a major preventative role in helping young people at risk of leaving school early.

Initiative	Details
National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)	A network of Educational Welfare Officers is currently being established and these Officers will be allocated to areas on the basis of local need, with priority being given to disadvantaged communities. The Board is currently recruiting an additional 36 staff and the service delivery staff available to it will be approximately 100 by the end of 2003. A budget of €5m has been allocated to the NEWB in 2003.
School Completion Programme (SCP)	Launched in May 2002, the SCP provides a range of interventions in disadvantaged areas that support the retention of young people in education. Eligible schools are organised into clusters and local funding issues to each cluster on the basis of their retention plan. Average funding per cluster is approximately €180,000. At present, 400 schools have been included in the SCP (112 post primary and 288 primary) and additional clusters are planned.
Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)	The central focus of this scheme is the development of parents as the primary educators of their children by promoting active co-operation between home, school and relevant community agencies. Every designated disadvantaged school (309 primary and 211 second-level) was invited to participate in the HSCL scheme. 176 co-ordinators at primary level and 211 at second-level support this programme. A National Co-ordinator oversees the day-to-day operation of the Scheme.
Education Equality Initiative	The Education Equality Initiative is targeted at early school leavers, lone parents, Travellers, men and women experiencing rural isolation or urban deprivation, adults with special needs literacy difficulties or drug abuse problems, and women experiencing domestic violence. A further phase of the initiative is being planned for 2004.
Educational Disadvantage Committee	The Committee was established in March 2002 to advise on the policies and strategies adopted to identify and correct educational disadvantage and on the wider and further development of these policies as appropriate in the medium and longer term. The Committee is currently involved in a review of the Department's main disadvantaged initiatives in order to ensure optimum synergy and integration. A larger Forum to Address Educational Disadvantage complements the work of the Committee.

A4.13 Back to education and adult education initiatives

Initiative	Details
Back to Education Initiative	This provides for an expansion of part-time Youthreach, Post Leaving Certificate and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme options so that adults can combine a return to learning with work and family responsibilities. The number of places is to be increased on a phased basis with a view to having 20,000 extra places by 2006.
Community Education Facilitators	A network of 34 community education facilitators, based in the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) have been engaged to promote the development of community education groups.
Further Education Development Unit (FEDU)	The FEDU was established in late 2001 to promote part time adult education, community education and quality assurance in further education.
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)	This second-chance education and training programme is aimed at adults aged 21 and over who are at least 6 months unemployed. In excess of 5,000 places are offered annually.
Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs)	PLCs of integrated education, training and work experience outside the third level sector have been very successful. Over 1,000 courses have been made available across 229 centres that provide in excess of 27,000 places. People aged over 21 take up over 40% and some 72% of participants are female.
National Adult Learning Council	This Council was launched in 2002 to promote the development of adult learning, to ensure a co-ordinated strategy across the different agencies and levels of provision, to advise on policy, to support quality assurance in further education programmes, to engage in research and evaluation in the field of Adult Education; and to support and promote cross-border and international co-operation in adult education.
Childcare Facilities	VECs provide childcare facilities to facilitate participation in Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Programmes. Budget for child care measures throughout the VECs is €3.15m in 2003

A4.14 National Drugs Strategy 2001 –2008

The Interdepartmental Group on Drugs (IDG), which is made up of Assistant Secretaries from all relevant departments and is chaired by the Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, meets regularly in conjunction with the National Drugs Strategy Team, to assess progress being made by Departments and agencies in achieving the targets set for them over the seven year period of the Strategy.

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs also has responsibility for the work of the Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTFs), established in 1997 in the areas experiencing the worst levels of drug misuse. Currently, there are 14 LDTFs – twelve in Dublin, one in Cork and one in Bray. All the LDTFs, with the exception of Bray, are currently implementing their second round of action plans and, to date, over €14.5 million has been allocated. In total, the Government has allocated or spent over €65m to implement the approximately 500 projects contained in the plans of the Task Forces since 1997. Over €11.5m has been allocated to projects under the Premises Initiative, which is designed to meet the accommodation needs of community based drugs projects, the majority of which are in LDTF areas.

In addition, over €59 million has been allocated to support approximately 350 facility and services projects in LDTF areas and the four other urban centres under the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund. The main aim of the Fund is to attract "at risk" young people in disadvantaged areas into recreational facilities and activities and divert them away from the dangers of substance abuse.

The National Drug Strategy Team are currently overseeing the setting up of the Regional Drugs Task Forces (RDTFs) in the 10 Health Board Regions throughout the country. Regional Drugs Task Forces have been established in eight of the ten health board regions to date. These Task Forces are made up of representatives of government departments, state agencies and the community and voluntary sectors working in partnership to ensure the development of a co-ordinated and integrated response to tackling the drugs problem in their region.

A4.15 Children and Young people

All four phases of the Child Care Management Information Consultancy projects have been completed. The objective is to improve management information on services including family support services at local level, which would facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of services at regional and national level. The final costed report recommends a single national child care information system and is currently under consideration.

The National Children's Office has been established to bring a better focus and greater impact to Government activity in relation to children. Priorities over the period 2003-2005 include:

- Appointment of an Ombudsman for Children in accordance with the relevant legislation enacted in 2002;
- Commencement of the National Longitudinal Study on Children;
- Continued implementation of the Children Act 2001 and the Youth Homelessness Strategy;

- Publication of National Play and Recreation Policies.

Youthreach: This programme aims to provide education, training and work experience to young people generally aged 15-20 who left school early with no formal education or training qualifications. The programme operates in an out of school setting and a training allowance is paid to participants. Childcare support and a guidance, counselling and psychological support measure are also available. A similar programme operates in a culturally supportive environment for Travellers who have left school early. There is no upper age limit on the programme in Senior Traveller Training Centres in order to encourage Traveller parents to participate in view of the impact this has on their children's schooling. Up to 2003 the programme has been offered primarily on a full-time basis but under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) there is potential for more flexible part-time delivery options.

A4.16 Older People

Implementation has commenced of the range of actions outlined in the National Health Strategy in relation to older people. The following are its actions/targets:

- Development of a co-ordinated action plan to meet the needs of ageing and older people by the Department of Health and Children in conjunction with the Departments of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Social and Family Affairs and Public Enterprise;
- Funding of community groups to facilitate volunteers in providing support services such as shopping, visiting and transport for older people;

- Implementation of an action plan for dementia based on the recommendations of the National Council for Ageing and Older People;
- Simplification /clarification of eligibility arrangements;
- Review of the Nursing Home Subvention Scheme;
- Consideration of the financing of long-term care for older people;
- Introduction of an integrated approach to care planning for individuals;
- Establishment of Regional advisory panels/ co-ordinating committees (including service providers and consumers) in all health board areas for older consumers and their carers, to provide them with a voice;
- Increased number of day care centres;
- Additional assessment and rehabilitation beds;
- Additional day hospital beds;
- Additional nursing-care beds (long-term, convalescent, respite, etc.).

A4.17 People with disabilities

The Education Act, 1998 provides that the admissions policy of schools must specifically cover students with disabilities and special education needs. School plans must ensure that the objective of equality of access to and participation in school by students with disabilities and special education needs are met. Supports for special needs students in the school system include better physical access and facilities,

resource teachers and childcare supports on the basis of assessed needs, the provision of various assistive technologies and on-line training courses, and the expansion of the learning support teacher service to every school.

Through the Special Fund for Students with Disabilities, which is supported by the European Social Fund, the Department of Education and Science continues to provide funding towards the cost of services and the purchase of equipment for students with disabilities attending courses in third level institutions or Post Leaving Certificate courses. The Fund applies to students who have serious sensory, physical and/or communicative disabilities.

Cost of disability payment: The Working Group on the feasibility of introducing a Cost of Disability payment has agreed with the National Disability Authority the research projects that need to be undertaken in order to inform the Group in coming to conclusions on the feasibility of introducing such a payment, including *inter alia*:

- Identifying cost of disability elements of the current Irish statutory system of disability payments;
- Examination of added costs of living expenses incurred by people with disabilities;
- Trans-national experience;
- Independent needs assessment methods.

The Working Group is also undertaking examinations of:

- Existing benefits and allowances with a view to amending them or augmenting them to provide for a cost of disability payment;

- Tax code to see if it could provide for a cost of disability payment;
- The feasibility of introducing a new cost of disability cash payment.

The development of Standards of Service in respect of people with disabilities, which is underway by the National Disability Authority will be completed. Pilot implementation of these standards will be commencing as soon as possible in parallel with a consultative process involving the social partners.

A4.18 Travellers

In line with the commitment made under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, the *Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002 – 2005* was launched in February 2002. The Department, in consultation with the Traveller Health Advisory Committee, has undertaken and/or completed the following actions proposed in the Strategy:

- The Traveller Ethics, Research and Information Working Group has been established and has met regularly to consider applications for ethical approval and the formulation of ethical guidelines for research being conducted into Travellers Health.
- The Department in consultation with the Traveller Health Advisory Committee has completed a review of the operation of Traveller Health Units in all health boards.
- Health boards are currently in the process of developing Regional Action Plans for the implementation of the Strategy in their areas.

Equality/diversity and health policy: In the context of the increasing diversity of Irish society the health sector will work with the Equality Authority to integrate an equality dimension into the health service across the nine grounds of the Equal Status Act, with a particular focus on equality proofing and capacity building. Under the Action Plan for People Management in the health services, launched in late 2002, equality /diversity training will be rolled out over the course of 2003. An indicator from the existing suite of performance indicators for Service Plans will be used to monitor the Action Plan. This indicator is *the percentage of key health board personnel who have completed cultural awareness and sensitivity training programmes, which have been developed in partnership with Travellers and Traveller organisations.*

A4.19 Prisoners, Young Offenders and Youth at Risk

The guiding principles of the Irish Prison Service, which underpin the prisons' work and training service, are to make available work, work-training and other purposeful activities to all those in custody. The aims are to counteract idleness, give useful skills and serve the purpose of promoting rehabilitation. Training activities are chosen to give as much employment as possible and also to give opportunities for those in prison to acquire practical skills, which will help them secure employment on release.

A broad programme of education is offered consisting of the main school subjects, adult basic education, creative activities, social education and physical education. The aims are to help inmates cope with their sentences and prepare for release and, particularly, to offer the opportunity to discover and develop new potential within themselves.

A priority for the Irish Prison Service is ensuring help for those with reading and writing problems. Prisoners with very basic skills who cannot deal with simple texts are encouraged to participate in small group sessions and are also provided with one-to-one tutorials. With specific regard to literacy issues, a national study has been undertaken by the Educational Research Centre, St. Patrick's College, into literacy levels amongst the prisoner population and is expected to be published in 2003. In addition, the Prison Education Service has recently developed updated guidelines for good literacy practice. These guidelines provide a template for best practice and are being disseminated to all the prisons and places of detention.

Post-Release Initiatives: A notable feature of the Prison Education Service has been the putting in place of post-release support in relation to a number of institutions. The following are examples of these developments:

- the Pathways Project, a post-release center, has as its main aim the social and educational re-integration for its client group of ex-prisoners. The project helps, supports and advises ex-prisoners on matters concerning employment, training and educational courses, accommodation and personal development. The centre's clients are also given support in terms of personal development, gaining confidence and heightening self-esteem as well as personal and vocational guidance counselling;
- the Dillons' Cross Project, Cork, is a pre- and post-release course available to prisoners and their families. Prisoners attend courses pre-release in the Education Unit of Cork Prison and their families attend courses in an outside community venue. Courses offered cover a range of areas: home management; job skills, health, personal development and run for 12 to 14 weeks.

Positive Sentence Management: the elaboration of Positive Sentence Management, as a mechanism for effective integration and co-ordination of all services and programmes designed to meet the complex and diverse needs of offenders, is a key task for the Irish Prison Service. Important aspects of this task are the building of alliances and partnerships with the wider community and the development of a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of drug treatment, education, vocational training and multi-disciplinary programmes - including offender behaviour programmes. The appointment in 2002 of a Director of Regimes in the Prison Service has been an important step in this process and will provide an administrative driver for this task. The implementation of most of the Government targets which pertain to prisons will depend on the successful implementation of Positive Sentence Management throughout the Irish Prison Service.

Children at risk/young offenders: The following policy measures are in place:

- Five Youth Encounter projects employing both teaching and non-teaching staff and catering for up to 125 young people who have become involved in minor delinquency or are at risk and have become alienated from the mainstream system;
- Three Line projects that bring together the community, State Agencies and relevant Government Departments, to provide a direct and immediate response for young people from 8-18 years who have dropped out of the system due to disruptive behaviour or habitual non-attendance;

- Five Children Detention Schools providing a physical capacity of 131 long-stay and 31 short-term/remand places. There are currently three pre-release units in the Children Detention Schools area. In addition to these units there are also pre-release programmes in place.

A4.20 Local and Community Development

Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM) on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, administers the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP). In their plans and implementation of the Programme, the funded bodies identify, quantify and prioritise the client groups locally, which would most benefit under the objectives of the Programme. The groups are then targeted under the three sub-measures of the LDSIP, i.e. Services for the Unemployed, Community Development and Community Based Youth Initiatives. Each sub-measure has at its core a commitment to social inclusion and addressing the causes of poverty and inequality at a number of levels.

Sub-measure A - Services For The Unemployed: This sub measure aims to support individuals in accessing suitable and sustainable employment opportunities and does this through actions in the areas of education, training, work experience, job placement, enterprise, self-employment and social economy.

During 2002, the total number of people supported by Services for the Unemployed in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) and Southern and Eastern (S&E) regions including the

Local Employment Services Network (LESN) caseloads was 10,238 and 19,091, excluding the caseloads from partnerships operating the LESN, the total was 9,132 and 12,402 respectively. Of this number, 48% were male and 52% were female in the BMW region compared to 45% male and 55% female in the S&E region.

In addition, Partnerships, Community Groups and Employment Pacts undertake initiatives in conjunction with strategic partners and mainstream providers. These include the operation of outreach initiatives, job clubs, employment and training and social economy initiatives, which help to give local individuals progression pathways.

Sub-measure B - Community Development: This sub-measure aims to address the social exclusion faced by many communities by increasing their level of participation in local development. Supporting community groups and building independent and new forms of local organisation to vitalise and strengthen the local community infrastructure in the areas of greatest need is a major element of the work within this sub-measure.

During 2002 the number of community-based projects focusing on target groups that were supported was 668 in the BMW region and 1,079 in the S&E region. The programme throughout the BMW and S&E regions supported a further 140 and 160 infrastructure projects respectively in 2002. Actions range from resourcing severely disadvantaged communities to access and participate in development opportunities, to promoting and supporting participatory planning.

Sub measure C - Community Based Youth Initiatives: Many of the actions under this sub measure aim to increase the range of community based education and youth development

opportunities available from early years through to early adulthood, in areas of disadvantage. Projects commonly supported included homework clubs, supervised study, supplementary literacy/numeracy and language education.

- 18,444 (52% female) young people were supported under Community Based Youth initiatives in the BMW region compared to 32,437 (51% female) in the S&E region.
- 1,941 (69% female) adults in the BMW region were supported under the Community Based Youth Initiative sub-measure and 5,560 (70% female) adults in the S&E region. These in the main represented parents and guardians and other adults working closely with disadvantaged young people.

Community Development Programme

Under the Community Development Support Programmes, support is provided on a multi-annual renewable contract basis to locally-based groups involved in identifying and addressing poverty and social exclusion in their own communities. Responsibility for the administration of the Community Development Support Programmes was transferred to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs on 25 June 2002. In 2003, €22m was allocated to the CDSP for some 152 projects/areas.

Grants Schemes: Supports provided through the Voluntary and Community Services Section (VCS) range from small, once-off grants to longer-term, renewable, contract funding. The total allocation for 2003 under the VCS Annual Grants scheme was €2.4m, divided on a regional basis in accordance with population profile.

Scheme of Community Support for Older People (CSOP): The Scheme of Community Support for Older People is designed to improve the security and social support of vulnerable older people. Funding for the scheme is provided by way of grant aid to voluntary groups and organisations who have undertaken to identify those elderly people in need of assistance under the scheme

A4.21 Migrants & Ethnic Minorities

Primary and Post Primary schools are entitled to additional resources depending on the numbers of enrolled non-national pupils with significant English language deficits.

Integrate Ireland Language and Training (formerly the Refugee Language Support Unit) has undertaken a number of initiatives including the development of versions of the European Language Portfolio for primary and post-primary learners of English as a second language, training on an ongoing basis for teachers who are employed in schools to provide English language support to non-national pupils, and provision of English language tuition for refugees.

An indicator from the existing suite of performance indicators for Service Plans which will be used to measure progress in relation to access to services for Asylum Seekers/Refugees is: the Number and Percentage of health board front-line staff that have completed Asylum Seekers/Refugee Awareness Training encompassing the following areas:

- (a) General Information on Asylum Seekers/Refugees
- (b) Cultural Diversity
- (c) Anti-racism
- (d) Specific health issues relevant to asylum seekers/refugees.

ANNEX 5: CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A5.1 Area Management Development Ltd.

Area Management Development (ADM) Limited is an intermediary company, operating under Company Law. It was established by the Irish Government in agreement with the European Commission to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality and to counter disadvantage through local social and economic development. ADM Ltd manages the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, Peace and the RAPID Programme on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme on behalf of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Rural Transport Initiative on behalf of the Department of Transport. The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme is delivered by 38 Partnerships, 33 Community Groups and 4 Employment Pacts, which are not-for-profit private companies focusing on combating disadvantage and social exclusion in their areas.

A5.2 Local Drugs Task Forces

The Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTFs) were established in 1997 in the areas experiencing the worst levels of drug misuse, particularly heroin. Currently, there are 14 Local Drugs Task Forces – twelve in Dublin, one in Cork, and one in Bray. Their membership consists of statutory, voluntary and community sector representatives. The role of the LDTFs is to prepare local action plans, which include a range of measures in relation to treatment, rehabilitation, education, prevention and curbing local supply. In addition, the LDTFs provide a mechanism for the co-ordination of services in these areas, while at the same time allowing local communities and voluntary

organisations to participate in the planning, design and delivery of those services. They are designed to complement and add value to the extensive range of interventions being delivered through the State Agencies.

The National Drugs Strategy Team (NDST) is a cross-departmental team that oversees the work of the Task Forces and has representation from a range of relevant Departments and Agencies as well as a representative each from the community and voluntary sectors. The NDST ensures that there is effective co-ordination between Departments and Agencies and oversees the work of the LDTFs, including assessing their action plans and making recommendations to the Interdepartmental Group on Drugs (IDG). Each member of the NDST acts as a liaison person for one or more LDTFs. The NDST also meets on a regular basis with the chairs and coordinators of the LDTFs to review progress and identify issues to be addressed. The National Drugs Strategy proposes that Regional Drugs Task Forces (RDTFs) be set up in all the ten Health Board regions throughout the country. The membership and functions of these Task Forces will be modelled on the LDTFs.

A5.3 Area Implementation Teams

Area Implementation Teams (AIT) were established in each of the 45 RAPID Areas. The AIT brings together local state agency personnel, the local Partnership Company, residents of the local community and Local Drugs Task Forces where they exist. With the support of a local coordinator, a plan outlining the specific needs of each area was prepared. The AITs continue to work towards implementation of the Programme and to ensure improved integration and

coordination of services at local level. A National Monitoring Committee chaired by an independent Chairperson, with representatives from relevant Government Departments, ADM Ltd and the Social Partners monitors the progress of the RAPID Programme at national level.

A.5.4 Housing Forum

The Housing Forum operates under the aegis of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and provides the social partners with an opportunity to contribute to housing policy development. As well as representatives from each of the social partnership pillars, local authorities and relevant Government Departments also participate.



Office for Social Inclusion

An Oifig um Chuimsiú Sóisialta