

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION 2007-2016 ANNUAL REPORT 2008



Social Inclusion Division
An Rannán um Chuimsiú Sóisialta
Department of Social and Family Affairs
An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh

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Minister's Foreword

This Annual Social Inclusion Report for 2008 outlines the progress made over that period in implementing the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2007-2016.

Significant progress was made across a wide range of areas in 2008. Children, people of working age, older people and people with disabilities all benefited from enhanced services. Significant steps forward were also made in support for communities and in the integration of migrants into Irish society.

In the social welfare area, income supports were increased further in 2008, on top of the major improvements that had been made in earlier years. One example of these improvements is the increases in the State Pension (Contributory) which rose by €14 to €223.30 per week in Budget 2008. This represented an increase of 50% on the 2002 rate. Continual pension increases have had a marked impact on the living standards of older people enabling them to face the future with a greater sense of security. Comparable increases were also provided for other social welfare payments in Budget 2008. Budget 2009, announced in October 2008, built on these improvements by providing further increases in the basic rates of social welfare payments.

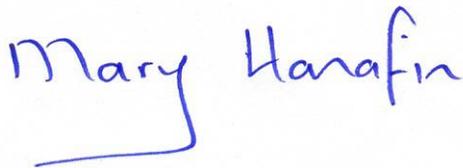
The principal target of the Action Plan is to reduce the proportion of people in consistent poverty, i.e. those with incomes below the "at risk of poverty" level who are excluded or marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society. The Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) for 2007, which was published in 2008, showed the progress that had been made at that stage in this area. The percentage of people in consistent poverty had reduced to 5.1% in 2007 and was well on track to meeting the target of between 4% and 2% by 2012, and the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016.

Since 2007/08, there has been a major economic downturn, resulting in rapidly increasing unemployment and a significant shortfall in tax revenue to finance public expenditure. The economic and employment assumptions on which the National Action Plan was originally based are, therefore, to a significant degree no longer valid.

A growing, competitive economy providing high levels of employment and the resources required for high-quality public services is essential for combating poverty and social exclusion. Working to restore economic growth must, therefore, be the overriding priority for achieving the High Level Goals and targets of the National Action Plan in the years ahead.

This presents a major challenge not just for Government but for society as a whole. We will be consulting and engaging with all interests as we frame the policies and programmes required to meet the objectives of protecting the most vulnerable, while making the adjustments needed to restore balance to the public finances. I am confident that working together we can return to the path of economic and social progress.

Mary Hanafin TD
Minister for Social and Family Affairs

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Hanafin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Part 1 Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2007 to 2016, was launched in February 2007. It sets out a wide-ranging and comprehensive programme of action to assist those who continue to be socially excluded from the improving living standards and opportunities that the majority enjoy. The plan contains a series of high level goals and targets aimed at making a decisive impact on poverty. They focus on:

- Ensuring children reach their full potential;
- Supporting working age people and people with disabilities, through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation;
- Providing the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high-quality standard of living;
- Building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital.

The Plan recognises, in particular, the continuing challenges faced by those in work but on low incomes, as well as the vulnerability of those in households without any employment. In view of this there is a renewed emphasis in the Action Plan on services, activation and supporting good quality employment.

This Report outlines the progress made in implementing the National Action Plan in 2008. The progress made in meeting the High Level Goals of the Action Plan in relation to the life cycles is described in Part 1 of the Report. The Action Plan sets down a series of more specific targets, also on a lifecycle basis, and the extent to which these are being achieved is detailed in Part 2 of the report.

Chapter 2

Children

Vision

The vision as set out in *Towards 2016* for children in Ireland is a society where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential. Ireland has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is committed to its implementation in our laws and policies.

To achieve this vision, the Government and social partners have pledged to work together over the next ten years towards the following long-term goals for children in Ireland:

- Every child should grow up in a family with access to sufficient resources, supports and services to nurture and care for the child and foster the child's development and full and equal participation in society;
- Every family should be able to access childcare services which are appropriate to the circumstances and needs of their children;
- Every child should leave primary school literate and numerate;
- Every student should complete a senior cycle or equivalent programme, (including ICT) appropriate to their capacity and interests;
- Every child should have access to world-class health, personal social services and suitable accommodation;
- Every child should have access to quality play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood, and;
- Every child and young person will have access to appropriate participation in local and national decision-making.

Progress on High Level Goals

Four of the twelve high level goals in the NAPinclusion relate to children, emphasising education and income support as priority areas. In addition, the plan contains forty-two targets for children, covering issues such as early childhood development and care, nutrition, homelessness, youth justice and children's participation in decision making.

Goal 1: Education

Ensure that targeted pre-school education is provided to children from urban primary school communities covered by the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan.

The Department of Education & Science reported that:

- The State's investment in a pre-school infrastructure takes place through the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 with its role to improve the quality of educational provision within the sector. Capital funding allocated under the programme is intended to create more than 25,000 additional childcare places. With the economic downturn, the capital programme closed to new applicants during 2009.
- The quality improvement measures include Síolta, the national quality framework for early childhood education and the development of a Framework for Early Learning. Síolta co-ordinators worked with 2 of the Prevention and Early Intervention programmes co-funded by the OMCYA and Atlantic Philanthropies to improve the quality of provision within disadvantaged areas.

- The Early Start programme also operated in areas of disadvantage.
- To improve the quality of provision within Early Years settings, particularly in areas of disadvantage, the Early Years Education Policy Unit worked with the Voluntary Childcare Agencies funded under the National Childcare Investment Programme on an implementation programme for Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

Goal 2: Education

Reduce the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties in primary schools serving disadvantaged communities. The target is to halve the proportion from the current 27%-30% to less than 15% by 2016.

The Department of Education & Science reported progress on a number of DEIS Initiatives including:

- 45 additional DEIS schools were included in the Reading Recovery programme in 2008 bringing the total number of schools implementing this programme at the end of 2008 to 212.

- In 2008, 32 DEIS schools implemented First Steps Reading bringing the total number of DEIS schools implementing this aspect of First Steps to 281. A further 42 DEIS schools implemented First Steps Writing bringing the total number of DEIS schools implementing this element of the programme to 57. A total of 283 DEIS schools were included in the First Steps programme.
- In 2008, 164 DEIS schools joined the Maths Recovery programme bringing the total number of DEIS schools in the Maths Recovery programme to 247 schools.
- Training on the use of Ready Set Go Maths programme was provided to all Urban Band 1 and 2 DEIS primary schools and this programme was implemented by all of these schools.
- Tailored planning templates were developed and implemented in all primary schools participating in DEIS. They were introduced into second level schools during the 08/09 school year.

second-level education or equivalent will exceed 90% by 2013.

The Department of Education and Science adopted a broad-based approach to tackling early school leaving.

- The School Completion Programme (SCP) under DEIS is a key component of the Department's strategy to discriminate positively in favour of children and young people at risk of early school leaving and to develop local strategies to ensure maximum participation levels in the education process. In 2008 there were 124 SCP projects in total, targeting approx. 36,000 young people and spanning 26 counties. €31.353m has been allocated to the SCP for 2009.
- The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) has responsibility for school attendance. The functions of the Board are to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education. In keeping with Departmental policy on closer integration of support services the NEWB, Home School Community Liaison and SCP work together to improve the delivery of service to address school attendance. In December

Goal 3: Education

Work to ensure that the proportion of the population aged 20-24 completing upper

2008 the third yearly report on non-attendance in primary and post-primary schools was published based on data from the NEWB Annual Attendance Report. The report analysed data from the 2003/4 to the 2005/6 school years. The report's findings showed non-attendance in Irish schools running at over 6% in primary schools and at about 8% in post-primary schools.

- The Board also has responsibility to conduct research into underlying causes for poor attendance and disseminating results of such research to assist schools in developing codes of behaviour and attendance strategies. The Board's network of Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) are the key means by which the Board delivers on its statutory remit to ensure that each child attends and benefits from education. On an annual basis EWOs deal with approximately 10,000 cases involving children with reported school attendance difficulties.

and review child income supports aimed at assisting children in families on low income.

The Department of Social & Family Affairs reported that;

- In Budget 2008, the lower rate of Child Benefit was increased by €6 per month bringing the rate to €166 and the higher rate was increased by €8 per month rate bringing the rate to €203.
- The rate of Qualified Child Increase increased by €2 per week to €24 per week.
- All Back to School Clothing & Footwear Allowance rates were increased by €20 per child. The 2008 rates were €200 (children aged 2 to 11) and €305 (children aged 12 and over).
- Child Income Support, comprising the 3 payments was equivalent to 33.4% of the lowest adult social welfare rate.

Goal 4: Income Support

Maintain the combined value of child income support measures at 33%-35% of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate over the course of this Plan

Chapter 3

People of Working Age

Vision

The vision as set out in *Towards 2016* for people of working age is of an Ireland where all people of working age have sufficient income and opportunity to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life and where all individuals and their families are supported by a range of quality public services to enhance their quality of life and well-being.

To achieve this vision, the Government and social partners have pledged to work together over the next ten years towards the following long-term goals for people of working age:

- Every person of working age should be encouraged and supported to participate fully in social, civic and economic life;
- Every person of working age would have access to lifelong learning, a sense of personal security in a changing work environment and an opportunity to balance work and family commitments consistent with business needs;
- Every person of working age would have an income level to sustain an acceptable standard of living and to enable them to provide for an adequate income in retirement;
- Every person of working age on welfare will have access to supports towards progression and inclusion, access to quality work and learning opportunities, encouraging a greater degree of self-reliance and self-sufficiency;
- Every person, irrespective of background or gender, would enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination;
- Every family would have access to health and social care, affordable accommodation appropriate to their needs and a well functioning public transport system;
- Every person with caring responsibilities would have access to appropriate supports to enable them to meet these responsibilities alongside employment and other commitments.

Progress on High Level Goals

Two of the twelve high level goals in the NAPinclusion relate to people of working age. These emphasise employment, participation and income support as priority issues. In addition the Plan contains twenty-eight further targets and actions, covering issues such as literacy, second chance education and equality.

Goal 5: Employment and Participation

Introduce an active case management approach that will support those on long-term social welfare into education, training and employment. The target is to support 50,000 such people, including lone parents and the long-term unemployed, with an overall aim of reducing by 20% the number of those whose total income is derived from long-term social welfare payments by 2016. This target will be reviewed in the light of experience.

This Goal was progressed on a cross departmental basis with progress reported as follows:

- The National Development Plan (NDP) 2008-2013 provides for the Social and Economic Participation Programme involving an investment of some €50m over the lifetime of the plan. The objective of the

programme is to meet the key objective of promoting participation and social inclusion through activation measures aimed at all people of working age. There are three Sub-Programmes, the Activation Sub-Programme, the Back to Work Sub-Programme and the Back to Education Sub-Programme.

- In September 2008 the Department of Social & Family Affairs commenced the Activation Programme. The programme aimed at all people of working age including those on unemployment, illness and one parent family payments. The main element of the Activation Sub-Programme expanded the Department's Facilitator service with each Facilitator having a defined work programme. The Facilitator programme was designed to be a targeted approach, involving active case management and the development of individualised progression plans. 20 additional facilitators were appointed, bringing the total to 60 with a further 10 locations were identified for appointment.

- The “Disability Activation Project” received funding under the new ESF “Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013” and commenced in January 2008. The initial phase was implemented in Co Westmeath and will be extended to other areas in the BMW region during 2009.
- The Government discussion paper, “Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents,” put forward proposals to tackle obstacles to employment for lone parents and other low income families. These included proposals for the extension of the National Employment Action Plan to focus on lone parents, focused provision of childcare and the introduction of a new social assistance payment for low income families with young children.
- The Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion worked on an implementation plan to progress the non-income recommendations. Issues including access to childcare support, education, training and activation measures were discussed with the relevant Departments and Agencies in tandem with the development of a new payment scheme.
- To further inform the process, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, with the co-operation of FÁS, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Education and Science, tested the proposals in both an urban and rural setting: Coolock, Dublin and Kilkenny. The process involved both lone parents and qualified adults. These studies were carried out between November 2007 and February 2008 to facilitate the development of the policy and operational details of the new scheme.
- While this new mechanism of support was being developed, engagement with Facilitators of the Department commenced, in September 2008, with a small number of One-Parent Family Payment recipients who had children reaching the ages of 17 and 18 with a view to supporting them into education, training and employment. This process will continue in 2009. However, the increasing live register may have an impact on this process.

Goal 6: Income Support

Maintain the relative value of the lowest social welfare rate at least at €185.80, in 2007 terms, over the course of this Plan, subject to available resources.

The Department of Social & Family Affairs reported that:

- In Budget 2008, there was a €12 increase in the personal rate of all working age payments with proportionate increases for all persons in receipt of reduced rates. The lowest rate of social welfare payment following Budget 2008 was €197.80.

Chapter 4

Older People

Vision

The vision as set out in *Towards 2016* for older people is of an Ireland where supports are provided, where necessary, to enable older people to maintain their health and well-being, as well as to live active and full lives, in an independent way in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

To achieve this vision, the Government and social partners in *Towards 2016* have undertaken to work together over the next ten years towards the following long-term goals in the context of increased longevity and greater possibilities and expectations for quality of life of older people:

- Every older person would be encouraged and supported to participate to the greatest extent possible in social and civic life;
- Every older person would have access to an income which is sufficient to sustain an acceptable standard of living;
- Every older person would have adequate support to enable them to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible. This will involve access to good quality services in the community, including:

health, education, transport, housing and security, and;

- Every older person would, in conformity with their needs and conscious of the high level of disability and disabling conditions amongst this group, have access to a spectrum of care services stretching from support for self-care through support for family and informal carers to formal care in the home, the community or in residential settings. Such care services should ensure the person has opportunities for civic and social engagement at community level.

Progress on High Level Goals

Two of the twelve high level goals in the NAPinclusion relate to older people. These emphasise income support and community care as priority issues for older people. In addition the Plan contains eighteen targets covering issues such as housing, long-term care and participation.

Goal 7: Community Care

Continue to increase investment in community care services for older people, including home care packages and enhanced day care services, to support them to live independently in the community for as long as possible.

The Department of Health and Children reported that:

- During 2008 almost 12 million home help hours were provided. During the same period over 11,900 clients in total benefited from a home care package and at 31st December 2008, 8,900 people were in receipt of the package.
- An evaluation of Home Care Packages commenced examining all issues relating to its funding and delivery. The evaluation is expected to be completed in mid 2009.
- An extra €3.6 million was allocated for day/respite care, giving a total of 21,300 places.

Goal 8: Income Support

Maintain a minimum payment rate of €200 per week, in 2007 terms, for all social welfare pensions over the course of this Plan and, if possible, having regard to available resources and the Government's commitment in Towards 2016, to enhance this provision. The overall pension structures and system to provide income supports for pensioners will be reviewed in the light of the forthcoming Green Paper on Pensions, to be finalised at end March 2007. This will review all the pillars of pension provision.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs reported that:

- From January 2008, the State Pension (Non-Contributory) personal rate of payment increased by €12 per week, bringing the maximum weekly rate to €212;
- The State Pension (Contributory) personal rate of payment increased by €14 per week, bringing the maximum weekly rate to €223.30. In addition the maximum qualified adult rate for people aged 66 and over increased by €27 per week bringing the weekly rate to €200 or 94.3% of the maximum rate of State Pension (Non-Contributory).
- These pension increases exceeded increases in prices in the period since they were awarded, resulting in significant improvements in real terms in pension rates.
- The Green Paper on Pensions was published in October 2007. A long-term pensions framework is currently being developed and will be published in 2009

Chapter 5

People with Disabilities

Vision

The vision as set out in *Towards 2016* for people with disabilities is of an Ireland where people with disabilities have, to the greatest extent possible, the opportunity to live a full life with their families and as part of their local community, free from discrimination.

To achieve this vision, the Government and the social partners have committed to work together over the next ten years towards the following long-term goals with a view to continued improvements in the quality of life of people with disabilities:

- Every person with a disability would have access to an income which is sufficient to sustain an acceptable standard of living;
- Every person with a disability would, in conformity with their needs and abilities, have access to appropriate care, health, education, employment and training and social services;
- Every person with a disability would have access to public spaces, buildings, transport, information, advocacy and other public services and appropriate housing;
- Every person with a disability would be supported to enable them, as far as possible, to lead full and independent lives, to participate in work and in society and to maximise their potential, and;
- Carers would be acknowledged and supported in their caring role.

Progress on High Level Goals

The NAPinclusion high level goal, in line with the National Disability Strategy, emphasises participation in education, training and employment. In addition the Plan contains eight targets covering housing, income support, education and access to buildings, infrastructure and public transport.

Goal 9: Employment and Participation

Increase the employment of people with disabilities who do not have a difficulty in retaining a job. The immediate objective is to have an additional 7,000 of that cohort in employment by 2010. The longer term target is to raise the employment rate of people with disabilities from 37% to 45% by 2016, as measured by the Quarterly National Household Survey. The overall participation rate in

education, training and employment will be increased to 50% by 2016. These targets will be reviewed in the light of experience and the availability of better data.

This goal is being pursued on a cross Departmental basis and the progress reported as follows:

- An annual national target is set in all FÁS regions in the first quarter of the year for a number of target groups, including people with disabilities. For 2008 FÁS had a target of a minimum increase of 2% over the 2006 levels for all such defined groups availing of FÁS services.
- Following a review the FÁS Wage Subsidy Scheme was placed on a permanent footing from 1st October 2008, subject to a number of reforms being made to effect improvements in the operation of the scheme. These reforms were implemented by FÁS.
- The FÁS Supported Employment Programme was reviewed by FÁS and recommendations made for enhancing the operation and effectiveness of the programme. An Action Plan to give effect to these recommendations was approved by the FÁS Executive Board.
- A new Midlands Pilot led by Department of Social and Family Affairs to engage with people in receipt of a disability related payment commenced. A Local Implementation Group including representatives of FÁS, Department of Education and Science is responsible for overseeing the operation of the project. The initiative was implemented initially as a pilot in the Border, Midland and Western region with a view to developing a model which could be mainstreamed at national level.
- A research project was undertaken on behalf of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment into the incidence of disability acquired by people during their working life. This focussed on disabilities that lead to long term absence from work, and perceived barriers to retention in employment following the disability. The project was completed and an outline of the main findings was presented to the Consultative Forum Employment Strategy for People with a Disability in December 2008.

Chapter 6

Communities

Vision

The vision as set out in the NAPinclusion for community life in Ireland is centred on building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital. Tackling disadvantage in urban and rural areas is a key priority. Urban poverty can take a number of forms – poor households living in urban areas, urban communities where there are high levels of unemployment and high concentrations of poverty and areas suffering from a decline in the environmental and social infrastructure. Similarly rural disadvantage can manifest itself in a number of ways. Declining or slow-growing populations, migration of younger people from rural to urban areas, lack of services, lack of employment opportunities, low income farming households, higher dependency levels and isolation are examples. Whether in the urban or rural context, social exclusion is frequently the result of multiple disadvantage.

Progress on the High Level Goals

Three of the twelve high level goals in the NAPinclusion relate to housing, health and the integration of migrants. In addition the Plan contains 57 targets covering issues such as transport, fuel poverty, the arts and cultural initiatives.

Goal 10: Housing

Deliver high quality housing for those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs and to underpin the building of sustainable communities. An important element will be the enhanced housing output reflected in Towards 2016, which will result in the accommodation needs of some 60,000 new households being addressed over the period 2007 to 2009. This will embrace meeting special housing needs (the homeless, Travellers, older people and people with disabilities).

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government reported that:

- The emphasis was on the implementation of the reform agenda set out in the housing policy statement Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities. The Housing (Miscellaneous Provision) Bill 2008, published in July 2008 and progressed through the Oireachtas, was a significant development in that regard.
- New housing needs assessment were developed in consultation with City and County Managers Association and the framework was included in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008. Regulations will

be developed to give further effect to the needs assessment framework provided for in the 2008 Bill.

- The Department published a new design guideline for housing – Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, part of a suite of best practice guidance on planning and housing matters which the Department developed to promote delivery of better quality housing and neighbourhoods.
- Strong levels of activity was achieved on social and affordable housing programmes in the period 2007/08 with the housing needs of almost 38,500 households being met through these measures in this period.
- Initiatives such as the use of long term leasing arrangements for the delivery of social housing, announced in 2008, will be crucial in the efforts to meet significant housing needs in the years ahead, notwithstanding the more constrained resource environment.
- Work continued on the development of the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability under the aegis of the National Advisory Group. The strategy is expected

to be developed by end 2009.

- *The Way Home: A Strategy to address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008 -2013* was published in August 2008.

Goal 11: Health

Develop 500 primary care teams by 2011 which will improve access to services in the community, with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of holders of medical cards.

The Department of Health and Children reported that:

- There were 107 fully functioning Primary Care teams (PCTs) in operation. Membership of these teams and networks were drawn from existing professionals and other staff working in primary, continuing and community care services as well as from new frontline staff. To date, over 850 Health Services Executive allied health professionals, including almost 300 new frontline professionals were assigned to PCTs. Reorganisation of existing structures and working arrangements is underway.

- Pending the roll-out of the full complement of PCTs, the Department of Health and Children instructed the Health Services Executive that in the short to medium term priority must be given to the provision of primary care team services to those with greatest need with the emphasis on ensuring that holders of medical cards were the principal beneficiaries of the development of the teams. It is intended that holders of GP visit cards would be the next category in terms of priority for receipt of such services with teams ultimately providing services on a whole population basis as they develop the capacity to do so.

Goal 12: Integration of Migrants

Develop a strategy aimed at achieving the integration of newcomers in our society. As an initial action, resources for the provision of 550 teachers for language supports in the education sector will be provided by 2009 and access to other public services through translation of information and supports will be improved.

Minister of State for Integration

The Government have established the Office of the

Minister for Integration overseen by a Minister of State with responsibility for the development of Integration policy, under the remits of the Departments of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Education and Science.

- In May 2008, the Minister for Integration published a Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management called "Migration Nation". This Statement recognised that a key challenge facing Government and Irish society is the imperative to integrate people of different cultures, ethnicity, language and religion so that they become the new Irish citizens of the 21st century. The Statement set out the following key principles which will inform and underpin State policy with regard to integration:
 - A partnership approach between the Government and non-Governmental organisations, as well as civil society bodies, to deepen and enhance the opportunities for integration.
 - A strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives.

- A clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos, i.e. a mainstream approach to service delivery to migrants.
- A commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities.
- An Action Strategy to support Integrated Workplaces was a social partnership initiative organised by representatives of the Office of the Minister for Integration, ICTU, IBEC, the Small Firms Association, the Construction Industry Federation, Chambers Ireland and the Equality Authority.
- The Action Strategy includes a range of initiatives to assist employers and trade unions to respond effectively to the potential and challenges of a culturally diverse workforce and to create integrated workplaces. The Strategy was launched by the Minister of State for Integration on 12th November 2008. Funding for the Strategy was provided in part by the Office of the Minister for Integration.

The Department of Education and Science consulted extensively on the development of an intercultural education strategy which aims to assist with the integration of newcomer students into education and through this into wider society.

- In late 2008, the Department of Education and Science Unit hosted 7 consultation meetings on the development of the strategy which over 200 key stakeholders attended. In addition over 50 written responses were received to the consultation. The strategy is currently being drafted with a view to completion in autumn 2009.
- The numbers of language support teachers at primary and post primary levels has risen steadily since 2005 which has led to an increase in excess of the 550 teachers noted in the target. The total increase over the period was 1,175.

	Primary	Post – primary	Total
05/06	563	263	826
06/07	1,068	388	1,456
07/08	1,522	479	2,001

In light of the cuts announced in the Budget in October 2008, there will be a reduction in the numbers of language support teachers in schools from September 2009.

- In relation to translated material, the Department of Education and Science website homepage (<http://www.education.ie>) provided links to key documents in German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Spanish. The National Education Welfare Board made material for parents available in 18 languages. (<http://www.newb.ie/publications/parentdocumentation.asp>). A DVD for parents was made available from the NCCA in English, Irish, French, Polish and Lithuanian and on broadband video (<http://www.ncca.biz/dvd/index.html>).

The Department of Health & Children reported that:

- The HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 - 2012 provides a framework within which the health and care needs of people from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds are to be addressed, while staff are supported in delivering responsive, culturally competent services. Implementation of the recommendations of the strategy continued

to take place on a phased basis over a 5 year time frame. Priorities included the translation of information, developing standardised models of interpretation and staff learning and support. Information about using health services in Ireland, entitlements to services etc. was translated into the major languages spoken in the country and accessible via the HSE website.

- The rollout of the Ethnic Identifier in order to facilitate evidence based planning around the needs of service users was another example of efforts being progressed towards identifying and addressing health needs of this group. A number of health service providers were supported in implementing the ethnic identifier field in their data systems.

Chapter 7

Implementation & Monitoring

Introduction

The commitments set out in the strategies for social inclusion are ambitious and challenging. A range of institutional structures was established 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. They include:

Cabinet Committee and Senior Officials Group

The Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, Children and Integration chaired by the Taoiseach and supported by the Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion. The Senior Officials Group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, guides the ongoing development of the strategic process, versus its implementation and advises the Government on the development of the strategies across Departments and on the outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation, particularly in the context of the social partnership process through for example the Annual Social Inclusion Report.

Towards 2016 Steering Group

This steering group includes social partners and representatives of relevant government departments and agencies. It has overall responsibility for managing the

implementation of *Towards 2016*, as it applies to the wider non-pay issues. It monitors and evaluates progress and advises on future development in light of views of organisations and interests they represent,

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The TAG which includes representatives of Government Departments, statutory agencies and the social partners advises on issues related to a data strategy on social inclusion. The *Towards 2016 Review and Transitional Agreement* provides that “The Office for Social Inclusion will develop proposals by July 2009, in conjunction with relevant Departments and Social Partners, for performance indicators in relation to the long term goals for each stage of the lifecycle”.

A project team was established to meet this commitment and to report on the provision of indicators referred to. The project team, led by the Social Inclusion Division which replaced the Office for Social Inclusion, will be composed of a sub committee of the Technical Advisory Group, and depending on the policies, vulnerable groups and disadvantaged areas being considered, will include representatives of Government Departments, Local Authorities and the social partners.

Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) has a broad remit to engage with departments and agencies to achieve better outcomes for children. The OMCYA, in seeking to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis for children, will draw strongly on the findings of research on the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme for Children, the practical lessons learnt in the implementation of the CSCs and learning from other relevant fora.

At national level, the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group, chaired by the OMCYA, continues to foster innovation and drive the implementation of new and improved mechanisms designed to ensure that the best interests of children are served in the delivery of relevant services. This approach is underpinned by the workings of the Centre for Effective Services, which will connect the design and implementation of children's services with scientific and technical knowledge of what works. It is envisaged that these activities, nurtured by the OMCYA, will result in the delivery of positive and measurable outcomes for children.

High Level Group on Facilitating and Promoting Activation of People into Employment

A High Level Group, comprising representatives of the Departments of Social and Family Affairs, Enterprise Trade and Employment, FAS and the Department of the Taoiseach has been set up to ensure better integration of activation, income and other supports and to progress the activation of people into employment.

National Disability Strategy

The implementation of the National Disability Strategy is monitored by the Senior Officials Group on Disability, comprising senior officials from key Government Departments, which reports to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, Children and Integration. The establishment of the National Disability Strategy Stakeholder Monitoring Group under *Towards 2016* builds on the monitoring and review procedures already in place and ensures a continued constructive relationship with stakeholders.

The Minister of State with specific responsibility for Disability issues and mental health is based in the Department of Health and Children. The remit of the Minister of State relates to issues concerning people with disabilities under the remit of the departments of Education and Science and Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Integration of Migrants

The Government has established the Office of the Minister for Integration overseen by a Minister of State with responsibility for the development of integration policy. Responsibility for the promotion and coordination of integration measures for all legally-resident immigrants rests with the Irish Nationalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) through the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA).

Further Government assignments to facilitate policy responses

In addition to Ministers of State for Children, Integration and Disability Issues and Mental Health, a number of other Ministers of State have been appointed whose remits span a range of government departments to improve integrated responses to poverty and social exclusion. These include Ministers of State for:

- Older people;
- Drugs Strategy and Community Affairs.

Traveller Interagency Groups

County Development Boards (CDBs) have established Traveller Interagency Groups to coordinate delivery of services and support for Travellers. *Towards 2016* contains a commitment from all social partners to give "concentrated

attention" to achieving greater progress for Travellers, based on the local integrated approach. A National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee was established in March 2007 as a national forum for dialogue between stakeholders.

National to Local

The task of the Local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group is to promote and support the embedding of social inclusion in local government and to support, promote and disseminate good practice. The LGSISG continues to meet on a quarterly basis and supports the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network.

Part 2

Progress in relation to targets in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016

Lifecycle Stage: Children

Children First Guidelines

Target	Progress
The findings of the review of <i>Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children</i> will be published in early 2007.	Plans were underway to issue revised Children First Guidelines which will be promulgated throughout the public service. The Report of the Commission to inquire into Child Abuse recommends that "the OMCYA will publish a revised edition of Children First".

Childcare

Target	Progress
The review of the NCIP, 2006-2010, will be undertaken during 2010 in consultation with the social partners. This will assess progress made to date to address childcare needs with a view to ensuring that new policy responses and any subsequent programme(s) are appropriate to emerging needs in childcare.	The Community Childcare Subvention Scheme 2008-2010 (CCSS) is funded under the revenue strand of the NCIP. Approximately 1,000 community childcare services are supported by the CCSS benefiting some 30,000 qualifying parents and providing childcare places for some 30,000 children. Funding for the CCSSs is expected to be in the region of €57m in 2009.
A <i>National Childcare Training Strategy</i> will be developed to provide 17,000 childcare training places over the period 2006-2010, and include the quality and training provisions of the NCIP.	The Childcare Training Strategy is now called the Workforce Development Plan for the ECCE sector. Background papers and a consultative document on Workforce Development in the ECCE sector were launched in June and are available electronically on www.omc.gov.ie . These documents draw together, for the first time, data from multiple sources relating to the ECCE sector. The consultative process ends on 30th September following which the Workforce Development Plan itself will be published.
Standardised inspection procedures and reports will be commenced under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 in 2007.	The standardisation programme was implemented by the HSE and is being further supported by the OMCYA through the development of national quality standards for pre-school services.

Youth

Target	Progress
<p>The Young People's Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF) will continue to assist in the development of youth facilities (including sport and recreational facilities) and services in disadvantaged areas where a significant drug problem exists or has the potential to develop. The geographic coverage of the Fund may be expanded to other disadvantaged urban areas. The YPFSF will continue to target 10 to 21 year olds who are 'at risk'. It will continue to build on and complement youth measures under the Children's Programme in the areas where it is operational.</p>	<p>Funding in 2007 and 2008 continued to support services and facilities in the dedicated areas. Annual funding increased to €18m in 2008. Of this, over €3.5m was allocated to 23 new projects, including allocations to Rugby/ GAA, Sports & Boxing Development. Capital expenditure of over €7m and €5m in 2007 and 2008 respectively funded 63 facilities.</p> <p>In May 2008, it was announced that the Fund was to be extended to 4 new towns - Arklow, Athlone, Dundalk and Wexford. In addition during 2008 arrangements to effect the transfer of responsibility for the Fund to the Office of the Minister for Children commenced.</p>

Youth Justice

Target	Progress
<p>The Irish Youth Justice Service will ensure that the services needed to facilitate commencement of all community alternatives to detention, delivered by the Probation Service, are provided as early as possible during the period 2007-2013.</p> <p>The scheduled date for the commencement of the legislative provisions to implement community sanctions is 1 March 2007. The measures will subsequently be rolled out on a phased basis across the country. This roll-out will be completed by 2013.</p>	<p>All outstanding provisions of the Children Act, 2001 have been commenced. The Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS), in co-operation with the Young Persons' Probation (YPP) Division of the Probation Service, continued in 2008 the roll-out of the new community sanctions provided for under the Act, which give the Courts alternatives to custody for young people who offend. Of the 10 community sanctions, 5 are available nationwide and a further 4 are available in certain areas. The remaining sanction, the suitable person order, will require legislative change before being fully available. In addition to community sanctions, two further options are now available nationwide to the courts - the probation family conference and parental supervision order.</p>
<p>The total number of Youth Diversion Projects will increase to approximately 130, catering for in the region of 4,500 young people by 2013. A comprehensive evaluation of the Youth Diversion projects will be conducted in 2007-2008 to inform the evolution of the projects.</p>	<p>The National Youth Justice Strategy 2008-2010 is central to the development of youth justice and to the services provided by the IYJS. It was developed in consultation with the key stakeholders working in the area and focuses on children who have already had some contact with the criminal justice system.</p>

	<p>The strategy includes a number of goals and targets for stakeholders to help measure progress and to determine where available resources should be targeted. One of these is a commitment to review diversionary measures with the intention of improving their overall effectiveness.</p> <p>An example of this in 2008 was the undertaking of a baseline analysis of the Garda Youth Division Projects (GYDPs). These projects are multi-agency, community-based, crime prevention initiatives which seek to divert young offenders and those at risk of offending from criminal and/or anti-social behaviour by providing suitable activities to facilitate personal development, promote civic responsibility and improve long term employability prospects. While there was an increase in the number of projects in 2007 from 71 to 100, it was not possible to further increase their number in 2008 because of the economic downturn. Instead, to further increase their effectiveness, the IYJS reviewed the activities of the existing projects in the context of local youth crime patterns, the profile of young people who offend and the available evidence regarding best practice and improvements sought by the projects. The report on this baseline analysis neared completion at the end of 2008 and will be published in 2009, following which its recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the projects will be implemented.</p> <p>The services provided by the GYDPs were also enhanced in 2008 by the part ESF-funded Human Capital Investment Programme, which provides for an additional employee for each of the 100 GYDPs with a specific purpose to increase the capacity of participants to find employment. The additional worker provided support for participants in accessing further education and training by working with young people, relevant agencies and employers. Approximately half of the projects benefited from this initiative in 2008 and it is expected it will be rolled out to the remaining projects in 2009.</p>
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Youth Homelessness

Target	Progress
<p>The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) will undertake a review of progress on the implementation of the Youth Homelessness Strategy and develop a new programme of action in 2007.</p>	<p><i>Report of the National HSE Children and Family Services Working Group on Youth Homelessness.</i> This working group was established in 2006 to examine recommendations of recent reports relating to youth homelessness and to provide direction for the HSE on the delivery of this service.</p> <p>A report has now been finalised and is with the National Steering Group for Children & Families in the HSE for approval and sign off.</p> <p>This report, when approved, together with the previous HSE review of the implementation of the youth homelessness strategy and recent research into the area of youth homelessness will assist the OMCYA in determining future policy direction in this area.</p>

Mental Health

Target	Progress
<p>The delivery, under the framework of the <i>Vision for Change Strategy</i>, of child and adolescent Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) in the order of 1 CMHT per 100,000 of the population by 2008 and 2 CMHTs per 100,000 of the population by 2013.</p>	<p>There are currently 50 child and adolescent mental health teams in place with a further eight teams to be in place by end of the first quarter 2009. The total inpatient bed capacity for children and adolescents will increase from twelve to thirty by end March 2009 – four beds opened in St Anne’s Galway in April 2008, six interim beds in St. Vincent’s, Fairview, Dublin and eight beds in St Stephen’s, Cork will be opened early in 2009.</p> <p>Construction has commenced on the provision of a twenty-bed unit in Cork and a twenty-bed unit in Galway. The completion of these purpose built units together with the increase in the additional capacity will see a significant increase in the bed capacity for children by the end of 2010.</p>

Preventing and Curing Substance Abuse

Target	Progress
The prevalence trends of smoking and substance use will be monitored through the National Health and Lifestyle Surveys and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD). ESPAD results will be available in late 2007 or early 2008.	The results of the National Health and Lifestyle Survey (SLAN 07) were published on 29th April, 2008. The study provides baseline data on a range of lifestyle related health behaviours in the Irish population including smoking and substance use broken down by age and social class.
Access to treatment will be provided to 100% of problematic drugs users aged under-18 within one month after assessment.	No under-18's are waiting for access to a HSE methadone programme

Children's Play Facilities

Target	Progress
The RAPID Programme will provide €3 million under its Playground Grants Scheme in 2007/08.	Applications in the amount of €2.34m (of the available €3m available) were received from 35 RAPID areas. To date, claims in the amount of €0.773m have been paid on completion of playgrounds in 12 RAPID areas. A full draw down of allocated funding under the Scheme is anticipated.
15 playground projects will be completed in 2007 through funding of some €700,000 under the 2005 Local Authority Playground Grants Scheme. In addition, over €4 million is being allocated to each City and County Council under the 2006 Local Authority Playground Grants scheme to provide up to 90 additional playground projects over the next two years.	At 31 December 2008, 149 playgrounds under the playground grant 2004-06 had been completed and funding of €6.6m drawn down. Work is continuing on outstanding projects and it is anticipated that they will be completed by end 2009.
21 projects to develop skateboard facilities will be completed through overall funding of €2 million by the end of 2007.	At 31 December 2008, 19 skateboard parks were completed and funding of €1,660,371 drawn down. It is anticipated that the two outstanding projects will be completed in 2009.

Early School Leavers/Absenteeism

Target	Progress
All Community Training Centres (CTCs), which are funded by FÁS, will have quality assurance procedures for early school leavers in place by December 2007.	Corporate Services, FÁS have incorporated Quality Assurance requirements in 2008 contracts for Community Training Centres and Local Training Initiatives.
An Individual Learning Plan will be developed and implemented for every learner and regularly reviewed during their period in training. This process will be in place from 2008.	Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) implemented in all Community Training Centres.
A progression strategy for each learner leaving the CTCs including a minimum of 6 months support will be developed and available from 2008.	A structured work experience element is a key component of the ILP with each Early School Leaver.
To help further address absenteeism, early school leaving, behavioural problems and special needs, an additional 100 posts will be provided for the National Educational Welfare Board and the National Educational Psychological Service by 2009.	In relation to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist numbers have grown from 127 in 2007/8 to 158 currently. In addition in Budget 2009 an increase in the funding, in the order of €4.75m, available to the NEPS with which it is envisaged that up to 50 further psychologists can be appointed.

Integration of Migrant Children

Target	Progress
Support for the effective integration of migrant children at both primary and second-level will be enhanced through the provision of an extra 550 teachers for language supports by 2009 and the removal of the current limit of two additional teachers per school. Some €637 million will be available by 2013 for teachers for language supports to assist children from non-English speaking backgrounds.	In autumn 2008 the Department began providing continuing professional development training for English language support teachers at primary level to improve provision for children in schools. An “assessment kit” was sent to all primary schools. There has also been training of trainers at post-primary level so that local training can be provided at whole school level. Also, the “Toolkit for Diversity in the primary school” was launched in December 2007. This is an all-Ireland North/South project to provide data to schools to assist with the integration of students on a whole school basis. Expenditure in 2007/2008 amounted to €121million with a total of some €252 million expended since 2005.

Integration of Traveller Children

Target	Progress
Segregated provision at primary and post-primary level will be phased out to ensure that Travellers are integrated into mainstream schools by 2009.	Work commenced to end segregated provision in the one remaining Traveller primary school and in the one remaining special school for Travellers.

School Meals

Target	Progress
The 475 schools in the DEIS action plan not benefiting from the school meals programme will be targeted to increase participation and the current number of participating schools will be increased by 215, by the end of 2007. Additional funding of €3 million has been provided for this programme in 2007.	<p>Additional funding of €2 million was provided to extend the School Meals Scheme to more schools in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools Initiative (DEIS).</p> <p>By the end of 2008, pupils from a total of 730 DEIS schools (83% out of the total number of 875) were benefiting under the school meals scheme.</p>

Comhairle na nÓg

Target	Progress
New standards, guidelines and supports will be put in place for the operation of Comhairle Na nÓg by September 2007.	<p><i>Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund</i></p> <p>In response to the recommendations of the Comhairle na nÓg Implementation Group, the OMCYA established a funding programme for projects that improve the operation of Comhairle na nÓg and provide additional involvement of young people in decision-making. The programme has been hugely popular and in 2007, 30 of the 34 Comhairle na nÓg received funding under the scheme.</p>

Dáil na nÓg

Target	Progress
<p>The duration and frequency of Dáil na nÓg will be reviewed by 2008.</p>	<p>Dáil na nÓg 200 teenage delegates attend annually and discuss two themes which have been selected through the Comhairle na nOg in advance. The impact of the annual event is supported by the Dáil na nÓg Council, which follows up on the recommendations from Dáil na nÓg with policy makers, supported by the OMCYA and tries to make changes for young people in those areas.</p> <p>Work of Dáil na nÓg Council 2008 The Dáil na nÓg Council met monthly throughout 2008. The Council divided into two working groups on <i>mental health and education reform</i>. They conducted research into the areas on which they were mandated by Dáil na nÓg 2008, with a view to seeking improvements in those areas.</p> <p>The <i>mental health</i> group focussed primarily on the development of an awareness/advertising campaign aimed at teenagers. The <i>education reform</i> group focussed on the need for a comprehensive guidance counselling service in schools, which provides support for personal issues as well as career issues.</p> <p>The Council engaged with a number of key policy-makers who are in a position to provide advice or support change.</p>

Inclusion Programme

Target	Progress
<p>Measures to ensure that hard-to-reach children and young people are included in the above participation structures will be established by 2008.</p>	<p><i>OMCYA Inclusion Programme</i> The OMCYA is committed to ensuring that hard to reach children and young people are given the opportunity to take part in structures and projects which give young people a voice in decision-making.</p> <p>The OMCYA Inclusion Programme provides meaningful participative experiences for young people and identifies good practice in enabling seldom-heard young people to take part in decision-making structures and processes. The programme recognises the difficulties sometimes faced by seldom-heard young people in effectively taking part in Comhairle na nÓg or other decision-making forums for young people. The OMCYA is funding seven organisations under this programme.</p> <p>The OMCYA undertook an evaluation of Year one of the Programme and this was published on www.omcya.ie. The evaluation captured the learning from this programme to ensure that an increasing number of seldom-heard young people can take part in decision-making structures and processes. The findings of the evaluation also informed the development of the programme and this was reflected in the allocations of the funding in Year 2. The OMCYA also offered a programme of capacity building for organisations to build the long-term sustainability of the programme impact.</p>
<p>The OMCYA will report to Government in 2012 on the overall assessment of models of best practice which promote integrated, locally-led, strategic planning for children's services. This will be informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the OMCYA initiative testing models for integrated services and interventions for children at local level; ii) the development of multi-agency Children's Services Committees within each of the City/County Development Boards; 	<p><i>The Prevention and Early Intervention Programme for Children (PEIPC)</i> was established as a co-funded programme between the Government and The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP). The programme will run for 5 year period and has a fund amounting to €36 million, €18million each provided by Government and the Atlantic Philanthropies.</p> <p>The purpose of the Programme is to examine innovative measures for improving outcomes for children in an integrated way, based on evidence of need in the community and an evidence based approach to what works. The development and commissioning of an</p>

<p>iii) the ongoing research and data development initiatives undertaken or supported by the OMCYA.</p>	<p>appropriate evaluation framework was completed in two of the project sites and nearing completion, with input from an International Panel of Experts, OMC and Atlantic Philanthropies, in the third.</p> <p>All three sites commenced work and the recruitment of core staff completed. The position as at end 2008 was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for Life: service design completed, piloting stage for delivery of service completed, service initiated, evaluation framework developed and evaluation contract signed, base line data results were being compiled, roll-out of SIOLTA commenced. • Tallaght West CDI: service design completed, evaluation framework and options finalised. All interventions underway. • Young Ballymun: service design nearly completed, capacity building and required training commenced. Communication plan developed, evaluation framework and options defined – request for tender was due to issue. <p>Children’s Services Committees (CSCs) were set up in four sites with the aim of testing models of best practice that promote integrated, locally led, strategic planning for children's services in order to secure better outcomes for children and families. These sites all produced work plans and commenced implementation. The CSC model was being further rolled out in an additional 6 sites.</p> <p>In 2008, the OMCYA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Published the second biennial <i>State of the Nations Children Report</i>, b) Continued work on the development of a National Data Strategy on Children, c) Funded four postgraduate research studies (in total 31 postgraduate research studies have been funded since 2001) and d) Continued to oversee research commissioned under the OMCYA Funded Research Programme (in total 25 research studies have been funded since the inception this Programme).
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Research: Growing up in Ireland

Target	Progress
<p>Growing Up in Ireland: the national longitudinal study on children in Ireland: This major study, initially contracted for the period April 2006 to end 2012, will track the outcomes for children of Government supports and policies, community and family support, and will aim to identify what policy changes and further developments are required to achieve improved outcomes. It is expected that a report comprising the initial data from the study will be published by the end of 2008.</p>	<p>The first wave of fieldwork for the infant cohort (11,500 children age nine-months old) and child cohort (8,500 children age nine-years old) was completed.</p>

Lifecycle Stage: Working Age

Training & Up-Skilling

Target	Progress
The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will invest some €2.9 billion between 2007-2013 to improve training for people in employment, to help up skill those who may be affected by industrial restructuring, to improve and enlarge the apprenticeship system and to provide progression opportunities for school leavers.	FÁS completed a Review of Standards Based Apprenticeship with 20 trades and a revised curriculum was implemented.
The Workplace Basic Education Fund will register 2,000 learners during the period 2007-2010.	Between 2007-2008 alone it was conservatively estimated that the WBEF registered well in excess of 2,000 learners. The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment with FAS was reviewing ways to maximise further the effectiveness of the Fund in 2009.

Education

Target	Progress
A total of €1 billion will be invested in the post-leaving certificate sector over the period 2007-2013 to provide participants with specific vocational skills to enhance their prospects of securing employment and support progression to other studies.	For 2007 and 2008, overall expenditure on PLC provision was just over €317m. This included the cost of tuition, capitation and student support. Provision of some €168m is being made for 2009. There are currently 30,188 places available.
In consultation with the Department of Education and Science, the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education will set goals and targets and develop baseline data for the participation of students with a disability, mature students and those from socio economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including Travellers and other minorities over the period 2007-2013. Grant support to students will be provided through the Fund for Students with a Disability, the Student Assistance Fund, the Millennium Partnership Fund, and the financial resources of higher education institutions.	In July 2008 the HEA published the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013. The plan was drawn up by the National Access Office in close partnership with the Department of Education and Science and in consultation with access practitioners in higher-education institutions and other stakeholders. The Student Assistance Fund is intended to tackle disadvantage by providing financial support to disadvantaged students who require additional financial support to enable them to fully benefit from their third-level studies. A gross allocation of €5 million was approved in 2008-09; a total of 9,267 approx

	<p>students benefited from the Fund in 2006-07.</p> <p>The Fund for Students with Disabilities provides students with supports and services to enable them to participate and to complete their course of study. A gross allocation of €13.53 million was approved in 2007-08, for 3,099 approved students.</p> <p>The Millennium Partnership Fund is a community-based initiative, which provides support for students from disadvantaged areas, who wish to participate in further and higher education. A gross allocation of €2.18 million was approved in 2008-09 when a total of 3,532 students benefited from the Fund.</p>
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Adult Literacy

Target	Progress
<p>The proportion of the population aged 16-64 with restricted literacy will be reduced to between 10%-15% by 2016, from the level of 25% found in 1997 (restricted literacy being defined as Level I on the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) scale, or equivalent).</p>	<p>Since 1997, investment in the adult literacy service increased from €1m to €30m in 2008. In the same period, the annual number of participants increased from 5,000 to 49,000.</p>
<p>A family literacy project is also being put in place under the DEIS action plan.</p>	<p>A family literacy scheme to address poor literacy from an intergenerational family perspective under the DEIS Initiative commenced in 2007. Twelve additional projects were approved for funding in 2008. Funding of €200,000 was approved in 2008 for a total of nineteen projects (7 funded in 2007).</p>

Activation Programme

Target	Progress
<p>A new <i>Social and Economic Participation Programme</i> will be introduced by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The aim is to move from the current largely passive approach to one where the Department will engage with all people of working age in receipt of social welfare at the initial claim stage in order to deliver more intensive engagement on</p>	<p>The National Employment Action Plan (NEAP), operated jointly by the Department of Social and Family Affairs and FÁS, is the main welfare to work measure for jobseekers. The NEAP process is fundamental to addressing the progression needs of those on the Live Register.</p>

<p>an individual basis. Some €50 million will be invested in this programme between 2007 and 2013 with an initial €13 million to be spent in the first 3 years. As part of this process, research aimed at developing a <i>National Profiling System</i> will be finalised by the end of 2008.</p>	<p>In September 2008 the Department commenced the Activation Programme. The programme aimed at all people of working age including those on unemployment, illness and one parent family payments.</p> <p>Over the summer months in 2008 the Department conducted a targeted programme to encourage young people between 18 and 25 years of age who were signing on the live register for more than six months to gain additional skills and qualifications under the Back to Education Scheme. Facilitators arranged meetings with clients under the age of 25 years in an attempt to raise awareness of the education opportunities and supports available.</p> <p>The Disability Activation Project (DAP) commenced in January 2008. A Facilitator was appointed to DAP in Sept 2008 and the project is fully operational. 230 people in receipt of disability/illness payments were contacted and 93 one-to-one interviews held to date. As a result of these interviews further projects in the region targeted specifically at people on illness/disability payments are being planned.</p>
<p>Special projects will be provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs to support personal development, intensive training, counselling and other supports for those who are most marginalised. It is estimated that 420 projects per year will be funded over the lifetime of this Plan.</p>	<p>The Activation and Family Support Programme (AFSP) is an amalgamation of the two funding streams – the Special Projects Fund and the Family Services Project. The amalgamation, in January 2008, to form the AFSP signalled the positioning of the AFSP as a programme to support the Department’s increasing role and involvement in the area of activation.</p> <p>The objective of the AFSP is to provide funding for programmes to assist individuals and families to enhance their employability through training and personal development opportunities and to improve their quality of life. In 2008 over 268 projects were funded at a cost of approx €5.5m.</p>

Family Income Supplement

Target	Progress
The role of the Family Income Supplement scheme as an income support for low-income working families with children has been substantially improved and will be reviewed during 2007.	The Family Income Supplement (FIS) scheme was refocused in 2007 in favour of larger families. Since then, increases in FIS have been provided each year for all families, with larger families continuing to benefit most. Budget 2009 also provided for an increase in the income limits by €10 a week in respect of each child. These new thresholds will give increases ranging from €6 to €48 per week depending on the family size, from January 2009 (in addition to the current average weekly FIS payment of almost €99).

Rural Social Scheme

Target	Progress
The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) allows low-income farmers and fishermen to earn a supplementary income while, at the same time, benefits rural communities by maintaining and improving local amenities and facilities. Expenditure of some €214 million will be provided between 2007 and 2013 to benefit some 2,600 households. It is an aim of the scheme that over the medium-term all participants will be facilitated with their preferences with regard to both location and type of work.	During the period July 07 to December 08 the scheme provided for 2,600 participants and 130 supervisors. All available places (at both participant and supervisor level) were allocated and quotas were assigned to each of the Implementing Bodies, who deliver the scheme on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The number of projects supported by RSS in 2007 was 1,819, with 2,495 supported in 2008.

Linkage Programme

Target	Progress
The Probation Service will continue to advance initiatives designed to address patterns of criminal behaviour associated with social exclusion, with an emphasis on restorative justice initiatives. In particular, there will be support to extend the Linkage Programme to increase the number of offenders successfully placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes. Referrals by the Probation Service to the Linkage Programme are expected to result in a rise from 614 placements in 2005 to 900 placements a year by 2016.	In 2008, 2061 offenders were referred by the Probation Service to the Linkage Programme and 767 individuals were placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes. The Linkage Programme had 23 Training and Employment Officers in 2008. The Linkage Programme is continuing to meet targets as outlined to date and the Probation Service is confident that the Linkage Programme is on course to achieve the planned programme targets.

National Women's Strategy

Target	Progress
<p>The <i>National Women's Strategy 2007-2016</i>, to be published early in 2007, aims to put in place a range of measures to equalise socio-economic opportunity, ensure well-being and encourage greater engagement of women in decision-making and civil society. It includes measures to encourage women to advance within the labour market, thereby increasing their earning capacity. It also addresses the gender pay gap, another phenomenon which impacts on women's economic standing.</p>	<p>The <i>National Women's Strategy 2007-2016</i> (NWS) was published in April 2007 and has as its three key themes; 'Equalising Socio-economic opportunity for women', 'Ensuring the wellbeing of women' and 'Engaging women as equal and active citizens'. Oversight of the implementation of the NWS is being undertaken by the NWS Monitoring Committee which includes representatives from relevant Government Departments as well as the social partners and the National Women's Council of Ireland. Government Departments and Agencies reported considerable progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the NWS at the 2008 NWS Monitoring Committee meetings.</p> <p>A new Equality for Women Measure was launched by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in 2008 with a first Strand to focus on 'Access to Employment'. Three further Strands were envisaged. Funding applications made under the first Strand are under consideration, in light of the current economic situation.</p>

Social Welfare Code Review

Target	Progress
<p>The Department of Social and Family Affairs will commence a major review in 2007 of the social welfare code to examine its compatibility with the Equal Status Act, 2000. The review will identify any instances of direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine grounds identified under the Act, including gender, marital and family status that are not justified by a legitimate social policy objective.</p>	<p>The Department of Social & Family Affairs is currently carrying out a technical review of the entire social welfare code to examine its compatibility with the Equal Status Act 2000 (as amended). The review is examining the schemes and services provided for both in social welfare legislation and the administrative schemes operated by the Department. This work is expected to be completed by end 2009.</p>

Lifecycle: Older People

Residential Services

Target	Progress
In relation to long-term residential care, €88 million has been provided for the cost of 2,300 additional public and private long-stay beds. This comprises €28 million for the full-year implementation of 1,050 beds provided in 2006; €32 million and €22 million in 2007 and 2008 respectively for the provision of an extra 1,250 beds; and €6 million to strengthen nursing home inspections.	By the end of 2008, 273 additional public long-stay beds were made available to patients under the Fast-track Initiative.
The Health Bill 2006 provides for the establishment of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services within HIQA. The Chief Inspector will have statutory responsibility for inspecting and registering children's residential services, residential centres for people with disabilities, residential centres for older people and private nursing homes. The Chief Inspector will inspect these services against standards set by HIQA and regulations made by the Minister for Health and Children.	<p>The Health Act was enacted in April 2007. HIQA was established on a statutory basis in May 2007. The 2007 Act provides for the registration and inspection of all nursing homes - public, private and voluntary. Inspections will be carried out by the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services, part of HIQA.</p> <p>During 2008 work continued on the <i>National Standards for all Residential Care Settings for Older People</i> and is expected to be completed by qtr 1 2009.</p>

Housing

Target	Progress
Future Housing Action Plans will address special needs in a more strategic manner when the current plans come to an end in 2008.	The housing action plans are currently under review and consideration will be given to those groups with special needs.
Services to provide enhanced home and personal security for vulnerable older people will continue to be a priority activity within the Community Supports for Older People. It is intended to fund applications for some 5,000 people per year.	Additional resources were made available during 2008 which allowed some 11,700 older people to be supported with socially monitored alarms and other security devices for their homes.

Pensions

Target	Progress
From 2007 any amount of social welfare pension received by those over 65 years, in excess of the SWA rate, will be disregarded when determining entitlement to rent supplement.	Measures introduced in 2007 ensure that persons aged 65 or over who are in receipt of a rent or mortgage interest supplement, with income equivalent to the value of a State Pension (Contributory), appropriate to their circumstances, now only make the minimum contribution of €18 per week towards their rent or mortgage interest payment.
The earnings disregard for non-contributory social welfare pensions, introduced in 2006 to encourage recipients to take up or continue in employment, will be increased to €200 in 2007.	The employment earnings disregard was increased from €100 per week to €200 per week in Budget 2007.

Elder Abuse

Target	Progress
A total of €2 million has been allocated to the National Implementation Group on Elder Abuse to address the issue of elder abuse over 2006 and 2007. This is also being incorporated into professional training courses including gerontology courses. A review of <i>Protecting Our Future</i> will be carried out in 2007. It is expected that the review will consider issues not included in the original report on elder abuse including self-neglect and institutional abuse.	<p>The independent review of <i>Protecting our Future</i> is underway. The review will inform future policy and actions to combat elder abuse.</p> <p>The HSE has made significant progress in developing the recommendations contained in <i>Protecting our Future</i>. 29 out of 32 Senior Case Workers had been recruited by end November 2008, and common elder abuse reporting arrangements are in place.</p> <p>The HSE has established a National Steering Committee to ensure a nationally consistent approach in the provision of elder abuse services in relation to its detection, reporting and response. In addition, four Regional Steering Committees have been set up to provide an essential link in good inter-agency working practices and the development of practice specific networks.</p> <p>A National Research Centre for the Protection of Older People was established at UCD. The HSE ran a Public Awareness Campaign at the end of 2008 aimed at informing key audiences about the risks and realities of elder abuse.</p>

Adult Literacy

Target	Progress
Older people will be encouraged and supported in actively involving themselves in family literacy projects, as set out in the <i>DEIS Action Plan</i> . A working group has been established to identify and support specific projects that enhance family literacy and the rollout of such projects will commence in 2007.	A family literacy scheme to address poor literacy from an intergenerational family perspective under the DEIS Initiative commenced in 2007. Twelve additional projects were approved for funding in 2008. Funding of €200,000 was approved in 2008 for a total of nineteen projects (7 funded in 2007).

Lifecycle: People with Disabilities

Disability Sectoral Plans

Target	Progress
Progress reports will be prepared on the implementation of the Disability Sectoral Plans after 3 years (2009) and the Disability Act will be reviewed after 5 years (2010).	Departments continued to report at six monthly intervals on progress, both at Departmental level and national level, to the Senior Officials Group on Disability and the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group.

Employment Strategy

Target	Progress
By 2010, a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities will be developed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.	<p>A Consultative Forum on an Employment Strategy for people with disabilities was established by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in early 2007 under the Department's Sectoral Plan and includes representatives from relevant Government Departments, the social partners and relevant interest groups.</p> <p>A draft outline for the implementation of a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities was discussed with the Consultative Forum in September 2008 and received a favourable response. Work continued on finalising an outline for the implementation of a Comprehensive Employment Strategy.</p>

Housing Strategy

Target	Progress
A national housing strategy for people with disabilities will be developed by end 2009, as recommended in the NESC Housing in Ireland report. This will have particular regard to adults with significant disabilities and people who experience mental illness. It will be progressed through the establishment of a national group under the aegis of the Housing Forum, headed by the	<p>Work continued on the development of the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability under the aegis of the National Advisory Group. The strategy is expected to be developed by end 2009.</p> <p>Two subgroups were established to progress key elements of the strategy:</p>

<p>Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and involving the Department of Health and Children, the HSE, Social Partners and other relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>1) A research steering group to overseeing the undertaking of research in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Role of the Private Rented Sector in the Provision of Accommodation for People with Disabilities; • Review of Good Practice Models in the Provision of Housing and Related Supports; and • Mental Health: Accommodation & Support Needs. <p>2) A mental health protocol sub group was established to develop and formalise arrangements for the management of housing and related care supports for people suffering mental ill health.</p> <p>As part of this focus, protocols were being developed to govern liaison arrangements between housing authorities and the HSE in relation to the provision of services for people with a disability.</p>
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Transport

Target	Progress
<p>A key objective of transport policy is to ensure the accessibility of the public transport system by providing fully accessible city buses and enhanced access to bus and railway stations in line with the Department of Transport Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005. Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The replacement of inaccessible Bus Éireann and Private Operator coaches with coaches that are accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2015; • Making all urban buses accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2012; • Making practically all inter-urban passenger rail services accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2009. 	<p>Bus Éireann 100% low-floor wheelchair accessible buses in Galway, Limerick, Waterford, Cork, Sligo, Athlone, Navan and Dundalk. The Company also purchased a number of the new generation wheelchair accessible long distance inter-urban coaches.</p> <p>Dublin Bus 78% of its fleet is low-floor wheelchair accessible buses.</p> <p>Iarnród Éireann 90% of its passenger fleet meets accessibility standards, it is expected to reach 100% in 2009.</p> <p>Private Operators A number of private operators also operate low-floor buses.</p>

Access to Higher Education

Target	Progress
<p>The National Officer for Equity of Access to Higher Education will set goals and targets and develop baseline data for the participation of students with a disability over the period 2007-2013.</p> <p>In addition to the means-tested maintenance grants schemes, there will also be continued provision of the Third Level Access Fund aimed at tackling under-representation. The Fund for Students with a Disability is an essential part of the Third Level Access Fund. It provides grants towards the provision of services and the purchase of equipment for students with disabilities attending courses in third-level institutions or post leaving certificate courses.</p>	<p>In July 2008 the Higher Education Authority (HEA) published the <i>National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013</i>. The plan was drawn up by the National Access Office in close partnership with the Department of Education and Science and in consultation with access practitioners in higher-education institutions and other stakeholders.</p> <p>At the beginning of the 2007-08 academic year the HEA initiated the collection of data on the social, cultural and ethnic background of new entrants to higher education. This process included questions on disability status. The questions were based on the wording used by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in the 2006 national census. In 2007-08 4.2% of new entrants to higher education indicated a disability.</p> <p>The Fund for Students with Disabilities is part of the Third Level Access Sub Priority Programme. The Fund provides students with supports and services to enable them to participate and to complete their course of study. A gross allocation of €13.53 million was approved in 2007-2008, for 3,099 approved students.</p>

Accessibility

Target	Progress
<p>By the end of July 2007, each local authority will have carried out an accessibility audit and developed an accessibility implementation plan for the built environment and infrastructure within its control including all roads, streets, pavements, parks, amenities and open spaces.</p>	<p>Accessibility audits were carried out in each Local Authority and implementation plans based on the audits were completed by each Local Authority and submitted to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.</p>

Advocacy

Target	Progress
<p>The Citizens Information Bill 2006, expected to be enacted in 2007, provides for the assignment of a personal advocate to a person with a disability who is unable or who has difficulty in obtaining a social service without assistance.</p>	<p>The statutory basis for the introduction of a personal advocacy service under the Citizens Information Board (CIB) was provided for in the Citizens Information Act, 2007. However, having regard to the current budgetary circumstances, it was not possible to proceed with this.</p> <p>Since 2005 The Community and Voluntary Sector Advocacy programme which was developed by the Board has funded 46 separate advocacy projects. The overall focus of the programme is on representative advocacy for people with a disability. Funding of €1.8 million was provided in 2008 for service developments which include advocacy services. This brought the total funding for advocacy services to €6.1m for the period 2005 to 2008.</p>

Lifecycle: Communities

Programme Funding for Communities

Target	Progress
<p>The Dormant Accounts Fund uses money from unclaimed accounts in credit institutions and unclaimed life assurance policies in insurance undertakings to support programmes or projects targeting social and economic disadvantage, educational disadvantage and persons with a disability. The current disbursement plan provides that RAPID, CLÁR and Drugs Task Force areas will receive particular priority in relation to disbursements from the Fund.</p>	<p>Since its establishment in May 2003 to the end of December 2008, the net transfers to the Dormant Accounts Fund totalled some €306m. The value of the Fund at end December 2008, net of liabilities, was some €21.7m.</p>
<p>Almost €67 million will be available under the RAPID Programme Leverage Fund between 2007 and 2013 to co-fund investment by departments and agencies in the designated RAPID areas. This funding will help to support new projects and initiatives, such as playgrounds and community-based CCTV, aimed at improving the quality of life and community safety for residents of RAPID areas.</p>	<p>3 Leverage Schemes were launched in 2008. RAPID areas benefited from priority projects identified by RAPID area implementation teams for the provision of CCTV, playgrounds, schools facilities (e.g. libraries, canteens) and enhanced physical environment in housing estates. Claims from existing schemes were processed and the total outturn for all such projects amounted to €8.083 million in 2008.</p>
<p>The CLÁR programme will provide some €141 million over the period 2007-2013 for regeneration of areas suffering from population decline. Investment will support physical, economic and social infrastructure involving a wide range of measures, including water supply, sewage disposal, road access and broadband which reflect the priorities identified by the communities. The population currently benefiting from the programme is 727,000. Targets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the number of mains and group water and sewerage schemes availing of CLÁR funding by at least 100% by 2008; • Providing flashing lights for all national schools in CLÁR areas by 2008. 	<p>The CLÁR programme spent approx. €24m in 2008 which was an increase of just under €3m on the 2007 spend. The 2008 programme included the repair of 242 Class II/III roads and the installation/upgrading of 148 water and sewerage schemes.</p> <p>Funding was provided for improving facilities at 265 sports/community schemes during the year.</p>
<p>Core funding is being provided to 8 Volunteer Bureaux totalling €1.73 million over the period 2005-2007 to enable them to be placed on a sound footing, to employ a full-time development officer</p>	<p>The Task Force on Active Citizenship report recommended that the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs fund a network of volunteer centres across the country. In</p>

<p>and develop databases matching volunteers to local community and voluntary groups. In addition funding of €150,000 has been provided over three years to Volunteer Centres Ireland for the employment of development staff to support the further development of Volunteer Bureaux.</p>	<p>2008 the Department provided annual funding of nearly €2.5m to twenty such centres located across the country. These Volunteer Centres registered over 7,545 volunteers and over 960 organisations contacted the Volunteer Centres seeking volunteers.</p>
<p>Once-off grants will be available to local voluntary and community groups including Equipment and Refurbishment Grants and Education, Training and Research Grants.</p>	<p>In the region of 500 community & voluntary organisations received funding under the programmes of grant support for locally based community & voluntary organisations in 2008. Two new programmes of grant support for locally based community and voluntary organisations were launched in mid 2008.</p>
<p>The Gaeltacht and Islands Programme will invest some €457 million between 2007 and 2013 in infrastructure and enterprise development in the Gaeltacht and our island communities. This investment will provide tangible benefits across a range of projects and activities, for example: better community access and related economic spin-offs from road and pier improvements; higher quality and more sustainable job opportunities arising from investment in building and upgrading office and factory space; improved standards of living by provision of enhanced community facilities and services; preservation of the national language and culture.</p>	<p>A continuing programme of capital investment, (almost €67m in total in the years 2007 and 2008), resulted in vastly improved infrastructure in the Gaeltacht and on the islands.</p> <p>Major projects completed included pier improvements on Inishturk and Clare Island in County Mayo and pier, harbour and coastal protection improvements on Inishbofin and the provision of a new pier on Inis Meáin in County Galway.</p> <p>Other large scale projects in progress included the development of Cill Rónáin harbour on Árainn at a cost of €40m and the construction of new airstrips at Clifden and on Inishbofin.</p> <p>An annual subvention of circa €5.5m is provided for subsidised passenger and cargo ferry services and air services, including connecting transport services on the mainland. 21 separate transport contracts are in place to cater for the needs of the various island communities.</p>
<p>Some €417 million will be provided in the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme over the period 2007-2013 to support locally based social inclusion interventions. The programme will have a particular focus on supporting people and communities suffering disadvantage and exclusion through a wide spectrum of locally promoted actions.</p>	<p>To the end of 2008, €105.49m (25.3%) of the cumulative NDP provision was expended.</p> <p>The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs engaged in a review of the Local Development Social Inclusion and Community Development Programmes, which is expected to lead to a revised programme design before end 2009.</p>
<p>Under the Community Development Programme, Local Resource Centres and</p>	<p>184 Projects/groups and organisations are currently funded under the</p>

<p>Community Development Projects will support a wide range of self-help activities designed to improve quality of life for individuals and groups in disadvantaged communities.</p>	<p>Community Development Programme.</p>
<p>The objective of the Community Services Programme is to support local community activity to address disadvantage, while providing employment opportunities for people from the following priority target groups: people with disabilities; the long-term unemployed; Travellers; lone parents and stabilised drug addicts. Some €48.6m will be available for organisations in 2009 and it is expected that by end 2009 the number of organisations supported and persons employed by the Programme will be 450 and 2,700 respectively.</p>	<p>At the end of 2008, over 400 organisations were approved for participation in the programme, of which 359 organisations were in receipt of funds from the Programme to support the provision of a broad range of services to their local communities.</p> <p>Sixty new projects were approved for funding in 2008 and will begin operating in 2009. Some €44.5 million was disbursed to organisations in 2008. By end 2008, the programme supported around 2,400 people in employment.</p>

Sports Capital Programme

Target	Progress
<p>In 2007 over €87m is being provided for local and regional sports facilities and sporting organisations with priority being given to projects in disadvantaged areas.</p>	<p>In 2008 over €50m was allocated towards 685 separate sports facility and equipment projects under the Sports Capital Programme administered by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism with priority being given to projects in disadvantaged areas.</p> <p>Projects identified as being located in areas designated as disadvantaged were targeted and prioritised in a number of ways during the assessment of applications. In particular, they were permitted to have a lower level of minimum own funding available. Under the 2008 Programme, the level of own funding required by applicants from RAPID and Local Drugs Task Force areas was further reduced to 10% from 20%, in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government.</p>

Irish Sports Council

Target	Progress
<p>The Irish Sports Council budget for 2007 has been increased by 20% to €49 million for programmes and activities including initiatives in disadvantaged areas. The target for 2006-2008 is to increase the numbers of children taking part in sport by 3% and the number of adults participating by 1.5%. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of the complete national roll-out of the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network by early 2008; • the associated roll-out of the Buntús programme for primary schools and pre-schools through the LSP network; • the introduction of the LISPA (Lifelong Involvement in Sport and Physical Activity) child centred model for lifelong participation in Irish sport; • and support for national sports organisations that attract young people, particularly in disadvantaged areas. <p>A new initiative, the National Awards to Volunteers in Irish Sport has been established. The first awards will be made in 2007.</p>	<p>The Irish Sports Council budget for 2008 was €57.2 million for programmes and activities including initiatives in disadvantaged areas.</p> <p>In 2008 over €11m was allocated to increase under-age participation in the three major field sports (GAA, IRFU and the FAI). Other examples include the Local Sports Partnerships (LSP) network and the Buntús programme for primary schools in LSP areas (involving children in sport from a very young age). There are currently 33 Local Sports Partnerships fully operational.</p> <p>Dormant Accounts have funded the Sports Inclusion Development Officer network to work with people with disabilities for 2008/09. This amounts to €2m over the two years to employ 20 SIDOs within the LSP network.</p>

Rural Transport Initiative

Target	Progress
<p>The Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) has been put on a permanent footing following the end of the pilot period in 2006. Funding of €9 million is being provided in 2007 to facilitate the transition of the RTI into the beginning of the mainstreaming process. Funding for rural transport services will be steadily increased thereafter; ultimately to a cash level of some €18 million. Priority will be given to areas of the country which do not currently have access to public transport service.</p>	<p>Thirty-seven rural community transport groups around the country are now being funded under the Rural Transport Programme to address social exclusion in their rural areas arising from unmet public transport needs. €10 million was provided for the RTP in 2008 (up from €9 million in 2007) which led to further increases in the frequency of a number of existing services, extended area coverage, and additional groups of passengers accessing rural transport. In excess of 146,000 RTP transport services were operated in 2008 and 1.2 million passenger trips were recorded on these services.</p>

National Drugs Strategy

Target	Progress
<p>Some €319 million will be available over the period 2007-2013 to support the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008. Specific targets to be achieved by 2008 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume of drugs seized to increase by 50% based on 2000 figures; number of seizures to increase by 20% based on 2004 figures; and number of supply detections to increase by 20% by end of 2008 based on 2004 figures; • The 3 Source Capture-Recapture estimate of opiate misusers for 2006, to show a stabilisation in terms of overall numbers and to show a reduction of 5% of the prevalence rate based on 2001 figures published in 2003; • The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) Drug Prevalence survey 2006/07 to show a reduction of 5% in the prevalence rate of recent and current use of illicit drugs in the overall population based on 2002/03 rate; 100% of problematic drugs users to access treatment within one month after assessment; • Harm reduction facilities available, including needle exchange where necessary, to open during the day and at evenings and weekends, according to need, in every local health office area; and incidence of HIV in drug users to stabilise based on 2004 figures; • To eliminate all identified gaps in drugs research by mid-2008; to publish an annual report on the nature and extent of the drug problem in Ireland, drawing on available data; and to publish a report on progress being made in achieving the objectives and aims set out in the Strategy every two years. 	<p>The <i>National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008</i> will be replaced by the National Drugs Strategy for 2009-2016. It is envisaged that the new strategy will be formally launched in 2009. Cross-departmental expenditure directly attributable to Drugs programmes amounted to approximately €251m in 2007 and €276 in 2008.</p> <p>The volume of drugs seized overall, exceeded 50% based on 2000 figures, in particular for cocaine, heroin and cannabis resin. The overall number of seizures increased on average by 59% over the 2004 figures. The number of detections believed to be for supply increased by 125% over the numbers recorded for 2004</p> <p>The latest 3 source capture-recapture study has not been completed to date. Heroin use continued to be concentrated primarily in areas of urban disadvantage in Dublin and in other urban centres, particularly in Leinster and the south of the country. The prevalence of heroin has ameliorated to an extent in the Dublin area with a significant drop in the rate of new entrants identified. However, this has been offset to a degree by its wider dispersal around the Country. Overall, the rate of new entrants to treatment had dropped significantly by approximately 20% between 2001/02 and 2006/07. Heroin remains a significant problem and a matter of serious concern for many communities, however.</p> <p>The following are among the key findings of the Drug Prevalence Survey 2006/2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall recent (i.e. last year) drug use increased from 5.6% in 2002/03 to 7.2% in 2006/07 among all adults aged 15-64; • Overall current (i.e. last month) drug use remained stable at 2.9%. Within that, the figure for younger adults (15-34) decreased from 5.2% to 4.8%.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the emergence of cocaine as a threat; • illegal drug use continued to be predominantly a younger adult phenomenon, with those under 35 accounting for the bulk of usage; and • Males were twice as likely to use illegal drugs, though the rate of increase among females was significantly higher than that among males. <p>Facilities are available in limited areas, primarily in the Dublin area, the Midlands and the Mid-West, through a mixture of fixed site and outreach services. Progress in implementing these harm reduction measures present ongoing challenges.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in the knowledge of the drug problem in Ireland arising from commissioned research and data improvements. The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) completed its work programme of identified research.</p> <p>An annual report is prepared by the Alcohol and Drug Research Unit of the Health Research Board for the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. This is a substantive report on the drugs situation in Ireland, and our responses to it.</p> <p>The development of the new National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 will include a report on progress being made in achieving the objectives and aims of the last Strategy.</p>
<p>The Rehabilitation Pillar, the need for which was identified in the mid-term review of the National Drug Strategy (2005), is currently being developed within the framework of the Strategy by two committees under the aegis of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Health Service Executive. The National Drugs Strategy was reviewed in 2008/09 within the context of developing the 2009-16 strategy.</p>	<p>A Senior Rehabilitation Co-ordinator was appointed by the HSE in 2008. The National Drug Rehabilitation Implementation Committee, chaired by the Senior Rehabilitation Co-ordinator was also appointed and a number of meetings took place. The implementation of the rehabilitation Pillar will be a key element of the new <i>National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016</i>.</p>

Housing

Target	Progress
<p>Investment over the period 2007-2009 will allow for the commencement or acquisition of 27,000 homes for people in need of social housing through a combination of local authority, voluntary, and co-operative housing and Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) contractual arrangements. Under the NDP, progress towards this target will be reviewed after three years of activity. However, resources reflected in the Plan will allow for a broadly similar level of output beyond 2009 resulting in some 60,000 homes overall being commenced or acquired through these programmes between 2007 and 2013.</p>	<p>Overall some 16,000 social housing units were commenced /acquired in the period covering 2007/2008 through a combination of the local authority housing programme, voluntary and co-operative housing and Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) contractual arrangements.</p>
<p>The RAS will be implemented fully by 2009. Some 32,000 households which have been in receipt of rent supplement for over 18 months and which have a long-term housing need will benefit.</p>	<p>At the end of December 2008 local authorities had transferred a total of 18,011 households from rent supplement to RAS or other social housing options.</p>
<p>It is proposed to undertake a survey of the local authority housing stock by end 2008 which will help inform housing authorities on the physical condition of the stock and provide the basis for future programmes of improvement works;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling out a programme of other remedial works to improve local authority housing between 2007 and 2012; • Rolling out a programme of regeneration for all run-down estates nationwide between 2007 and 2016; • Making adequate central heating systems available in all local authority rented dwellings by end 2008. 	<p>The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government allocated more than €200 million for Improvement Works in 2008, this figure was divided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations of approximately €125 million were made in respect of regeneration projects in Cork, Dublin, Limerick and Waterford Cities and the towns of Tralee, Dundalk and Sligo in 2008. • The Department made €55 million available for Remedial Works Schemes in 34 Housing Authority areas during 2008. <p>2008 saw the completion of works on the installation of central heating in local authority dwellings. At the end of 2008 the Department had co-funded the installation of central heating, and associated energy efficiency measures, in approximately 24,000 houses at a cost of €115.5 million.</p>
<p>Some 17,000 new units will be delivered between 2007 and 2009 through affordable housing measures under the NDP following which, progress will be reviewed. It is expected that a broadly similar level of output will be delivered</p>	<p>Over 8,000 affordable units were delivered in 2007 and 2008 – 3,539 in 2007 and an estimated 4,500 in 2008.</p>

<p>beyond 2009, resulting in the delivery of some 40,000 new units overall between 2007 and 2013.</p>	
<p>Minimum standards regulations for the private rented sector will be updated by mid-2007 and effectively enforced.</p>	<p>Revised Standards Regulations published in Q4 2008 were to come into effect on 1 February 2009 and a comprehensive new sanctions regime that will allow local authorities to deal more effectively with landlords who do not comply with the regulations will be introduced in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008.</p> <p>Funding of €4 million was allocated to local authorities in 2008 for standards inspections purposes, an increase on €3 million in 2007. The number of inspections carried out in 2008 indicated a further year on year increase of approximately 23%, with over 17,200 inspections carried out.</p>
<p>Long-term occupancy of emergency homeless accommodation will be eliminated by 2010. This will involve addressing the needs of up to 500 households.</p>	<p>Over 320 households in emergency homeless accommodation on a long-term basis, moved on to more permanent accommodation in 2008.</p>
<p>The Warmer Homes Scheme provides funding to community-based organisations for the installation of energy efficiency measures for those who need it most. Some €5.6 million was provided for the Warmer Homes Scheme in Sustainable Energy Ireland's (SEI) 2008 budget which enabled 5,343 homes to be covered.</p>	<p>The Warmer Homes Scheme funds the installation of attic insulation, draught-proofing, lagging jackets, energy efficient lighting, cavity wall insulation (where available and appropriate) and energy advice. In 2008 the programme addressed 5,343 low income households with substantial insulation measures.</p> <p>In total there were 18 community based organisations approved for funding to deliver the Warmer Homes Scheme in 2008. By the end of 2008 over 17,000 homes had received measures under the scheme.</p> <p>Total budget spend in 2008 was €5.6 million.</p>

Fuel Poverty Research

Target	Progress
<p>The Green Paper on energy policy, published in October 2006, stated the Government's commitment to reducing fuel poverty. This issue will be further addressed as the current energy policy formulation process develops through the Green Paper consultation phase and White Paper publication and implementation.</p>	<p>An inter-Departmental/Agency group was formed in July 2008, led by the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources and the Office for Social Inclusion and including the Departments of Finance, Taoiseach, Environment Heritage and Local Government, and Health and Children, the Commission for Energy Regulation, Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), ESB and BGÉ. The Group's remit is to ensure a coordinated and cohesive approach to addressing the energy affordability for vulnerable members of society.</p>
<p>The Department of Social and Family Affairs has provided €2 million to Sustainable Energy Ireland for fuel poverty research in respect of dwellings in Waterford City and County which are regarded as being vulnerable to fuel poverty. The project will be completed and a report produced by May 2008.</p>	<p>The fuel poverty research project was carried out in Waterford in 2007 with follow-up research work carried out in 2008. Preliminary reports indicate that the energy efficiency measures implemented as part of the project have had marked positive effects on the overall health of householders and have also led to decreased CO2 emissions, increased energy ratings and increased thermal efficiency of houses. A final report on the project is expected to be available during the second quarter of 2009.</p>

Broadband Programme

Target	Progress
<p>The Broadband Programme will promote the rollout of broadband across the rural economy to ensure its availability across rural Ireland. Total indicative investment over the period 2007-2013 will be €435 million. To date, 27 Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) have been completed under the NDP 2000-2006 with a further 90 towns under Phase II of the MANs 2005-2007. Under the Group Broadband Scheme, over 120 projects were operational at the end of 2006 and another 10 are expected to become operational during 2007. Under the School Broadband Scheme 96.8% of schools have had broadband installed.</p>	<p>The Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) programme involves the construction of open access, high-speed broadband networks in towns in various locations nationwide. The MANs were constructed in partnership with the local and regional authorities and were co-financed from the ERDF. At the end of 2008, 58 MANs were completed and were operational under Phase II of the MANs Programme.</p> <p>Future broadband investment decisions, including investment in further MANs, will be guided by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The final policy paper on Next Generation Broadband,

	<p>2) The Value for Money and Policy Review of Phase I of the MANs Programme, which was published in July 2008,</p> <p>3) Any other analysis as appropriate and</p> <p>4) The availability of resources.</p> <p>Under the Group Broadband Scheme, 127 projects became operational between 2004 and 2007. The Scheme has since been superseded by the National Broadband Scheme.</p> <p>Under the Schools Broadband Scheme 3901 out of a total of 3936 or 99% of schools had their local broadband connectivity installed.</p>
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Out of Hours GP Services

Target	Progress
Out-of-hours GP services will be further developed with a view to having those services available to the whole population over the course of this Plan.	There are 12 GP out-of-hours co-operatives in the State with some 1,860 participating GPs. Out-of-hours GP services dealt with over 920,000 calls in 2008. This represents an 11% increase compared with 2007. Ninety per cent of the population is now covered by an out-of-hours GP service.

Carers

Target	Progress
The scope for further development of income supports for carers will continue to be reviewed. In particular, the aim will be for the level of the Carer's Allowance disregard to keep pace with gross average industrial earnings so that those on average industrial earnings can continue to qualify for the payment.	From April 2008, the weekly income disregard for Carer's Allowance was increased by €12.50/€25 to €332.50 (single) and €665 (couple), thereby more than achieving the commitment. In addition the Respite Care Grant was increased by €200 bringing the rate to €1,700 per annum.

Money Advice and Budgeting Service

Target	Progress
<p>The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), funded by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, provides an independent, free and confidential service primarily to low-income families who are in debt or at risk of getting into debt. A Loan Guarantee Fund also operates to provide 'crisis' loans as an alternative to the moneylender. The target is to continue to develop the MABS by establishing it on a statutory basis during 2007.</p>	<p>In Budget 2009, the Government decided to assign responsibility for the MABS to the Citizens Information Board. The relevant legislative provisions are contained in the SW (MP) Act 2008 with the transfer on schedule to be finalised by July 2009.</p>

Family Support Agency

Target	Progress								
<p>The Family Support Agency (FSA) will also continue to strengthen families by supporting voluntary organisations providing marriage, relationship, child and bereavement counselling services. The recommendations of the Review of the Grant Scheme for Voluntary Organisations Providing Marriage, Child and Bereavement Counselling Services will be examined and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p>In 2008 the FSA approved 600 grant applications. The breakdown of the overall allocation of the funding to the different services was as follows:-</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Marriage Preparation</td> <td>€0.795m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriage Counselling</td> <td>€6.220m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Child Counselling</td> <td>€1.562m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bereavement</td> <td>€2.369m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Marriage Preparation	€0.795m	Marriage Counselling	€6.220m	Child Counselling	€1.562m	Bereavement	€2.369m
Marriage Preparation	€0.795m								
Marriage Counselling	€6.220m								
Child Counselling	€1.562m								
Bereavement	€2.369m								

Implementation and Monitoring

Local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group

Target	Progress
<p>The Local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group (LGSISG) will be further developed to support the linkages between the national and local level and will report to the Cabinet Committee, as appropriate.</p>	<p>The further development of the LGSISG included the extension of the membership of the Group to include other stakeholders and the adoption of annual work plans by the Group.</p> <p>The LGSISG continued to meet on a quarterly basis and supports the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network.</p>

County/City Development Boards

Target	Progress
<p>In line with the commitment in <i>Towards 2016</i>, the County/City Development Board (CDB) structure will be developed and strengthened to support its role in co-ordinating integrated public service delivery, (including social inclusion activities) at local level. In this context, the extension of Social Inclusion Units to half of all city and county councils, by the end of 2008, will support this approach. CDBs will, in addition, prioritise the work of the Social Inclusion Monitoring (SIM) groups, established to improve co-ordination of social inclusion activities at local level.</p>	<p>A review of the County /City Development Boards was completed by Indecon consultants in early 2008, following which a National CDB Co-ordination Group, chaired by the Minister of State at the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, was established to implement the Report's recommendations to strengthen and develop the Boards.</p> <p>Guidelines regarding the establishment of an Economic Sub-Committee by each CDB and in relation to the outcome of a review of the Boards' Social Inclusion Measures groups issued in November 2008.</p> <p>In July 2007 the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government announced the extension of the social inclusion unit programme to nine more local authorities, in line with a commitment in <i>Towards 2016</i>. This brings the total number of units to seventeen and was accomplished well in advance of the deadline of the end of 2008. Selection followed an objective assessment process overseen by an Inter-Department Steering Group.</p>

Activation Programme

Target	Progress
<p>To ensure better integration of activation, income and other supports to assist people into employment, a new high-level group will be established. This will be composed of the Departments of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Social and Family Affairs, FÁS and other relevant agencies as required. This group will have a clear mandate from Government to drive forward the activation programme and will report to the Cabinet Committee regarding progress in delivering the targets set out in this Plan and other related issues.</p>	<p>An Activation Group comprising representatives from DETE, DSFA, FAS and Department of the Taoiseach was set up to progress the activation of certain client groups including people with disabilities. The Memorandum of Understanding and Framework Co-operation between FÁS and DSFA was updated.</p> <p>Within DSFA, and as part of the ongoing working relationship with FÁS, the employment action plan was kept under ongoing review with a view to enhancing its effectiveness and strengthening the referral process. There continued to be a high level of cooperation and coordination at policy and operational level. Senior officials of the Department held regular joint meetings with FÁS and also with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. There were regular meetings between officials of the Department and FÁS at central, regional and local level.</p>

Appendix 1

Map of Institutional Structures

Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion
Children and Integration

Oireachtas
Committees

Towards 2016
Steering Group

D/Taoiseach

Senior Officials Group

Indicators Sub-
Group

Social Inclusion
Forum

National
Development Plan
- NDP Monitoring
committee

D/Social &
Family Affairs

EU Social
Protection
Comm.

EU PROGRESS
Programme
Management
Comm.

Technical Advisory

Social
Inclusion
Division

Community &
Voluntary Sector

Government
Departments

D/Taoiseach

National Economic and Social Development Office:

- National Economic and Social Council
- National Economic and Social Forum

D/Finance

D/Education and Science

National Education Welfare Board

Higher Education Authority/National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education

Vocational Education Committees

National Council for Special Education

D/Enterprise Trade and Employment

FÁS

D/Health and Children

Health Service Executive

Institute of Public Health

Office of the Minister for Children

National Council on Ageing and Older people

D/Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Equality Authority National

Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

National Disability Authority

Irish Youth Justice Service

Probation Service

Irish Prison Service

D/Social and Family Affairs

Citizens Information Board

Money Advice & Budgeting Service

Family Support Agency

D/Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

National Advisory Committee on Drugs

Pobal

D/Environment, Heritage and Local Government

Local Authorities

County Development Boards

The Housing Forum

Local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group

Appendix 2

Poverty Measurement for Monitoring Progress

Consistent Poverty¹ and At Risk of Poverty Rates

Headline Statistics

Table 1: Consistent Poverty Rates

	2006 (%) (using the 8 item deprivation list as published in Nov 2007)	2006 (%) (using the 11 item deprivation list)	2007 (%) (using the 11 item deprivation list as published in Dec 2008)
Overall	6.9	6.5	5.1
Men	6.9	6.4	5.0
Women	7.0	6.6	5.2
Age 0-17	11.0	10.3	7.4
18-64	6.1	5.6	4.7
65+	2.1	2.2	2.0
At Work	1.6	1.5	1.3
Unemployed	22.8	22.0	17.5
Student	10.2	10.8	7.6
Home Duties	9.2	8.3	6.6
Retired	2.5	3.2	2.1
Ill/Disabled	20.0	17.9	15.8
1 adult aged 65+, no children <18	4.1	3.4	4.1
1 adult aged <65, no children <18	10.9	12.5	12.5
2 adults, at least 1 aged 65+, no children <18	1.1	1.7	1.0
2 adults, both aged <65, no children <18	5.6	4.4	3.4
3 or more adults, no children <18	4.4	4.3	3.5
1 adult with children <18	35.2	33.9	20.1
2 adults with 1-3 children <18	4.4	3.8	2.6
Other households with children <18	6.4	5.9	6.0

Source: CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) in Ireland 2006 and 2007

¹ (See annex 1) The 2006 consistent poverty rates are based on the 8 item index of basic deprivation and 'at-risk-of-poverty', which was the basis of the official government target as set out in the *Building an Inclusive Society, 2002*. The consistent poverty rates for 2007 are based on the 11 item index of basic deprivation and 'at-risk-of-poverty', which is the basis of the revised poverty target in the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*.

Table 2: At Risk of Poverty Rate

At Risk Of Poverty Rates - Percentage of persons below 60% of median income		2006 (%)	2007 (%)
	Overall		17.0
Poverty Gap		17.5	17.4
'At risk of poverty anchored at a point in time' (2005)		16.3	11.9
Men		16.6	16.0
Women		17.4	17.0
Age 0-17		22.3	19.9
18-64		15.4	15.0
65+		13.6	16.6
At Work		6.5	6.7
Unemployed		44.0	38.7
Student		29.5	25.2
Home Duties		23.8	25.3
Retired		14.8	17.6
Ill/Disabled		40.8	37.0
1 adult aged 65+, no children <18		19.3	24.3
1 adult aged <65, no children <18		31.0	29.6
2 adults, at least 1 aged 65+, no children <18		10.8	11.5
2 adults, both aged <65, no children <18		14.8	15.0
3 or more adults, no children <18		10.0	10.2
1 adult with children <18		45.6	37.6
2 adults with 1-3 children <18		12.0	13.7
Other households with children <18		20.8	16.5

Source: CSO Survey on Income and Living conditions (SILC) in Ireland



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