

Table of Actions Annual Reports for 2013 & 2014



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NAPinclusion Action	Progress Report 2013 /2014
<p>High Level Goal 1 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.</p>	<p>There is a commitment within Better Outcomes Brighter Futures to 'Build on existing good practice around clustering of schools to enable better access to educational supports, particularly for children with special educational needs, and explore the potential for further development of cluster arrangements, to encourage greater connections between schools and community and State services, including sharing infrastructure.</p>
<p>High Level Goal 2 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.</p>	<p>Two evaluation reports on DEIS were published in 2013, both by the Educational Research Centre (ERC). The ERC report "Changes in Pupil achievement in Urban Primary Schools Between 2007 and 2013" found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test scores at all grade levels where testing took place (2nd, 3rd, 5th & 6th) increased significantly between the collection of baseline data in 2007 and follow-up testing in 2010. • Outcomes from the most recent round of testing in spring of 2013 indicated that, not only were the initial gains maintained, they were built on between 2010 and 2013. • Gains are particularly evident in the junior grades and in schools that have high levels of disadvantage. • While there has been a striking reduction in low-scorers (i.e. at or below the 10th percentile) in both reading and mathematics, the percentage of high achievers in both subject areas has been maintained or increased. • Levels of pupil absence has also fallen from 10.8% in 2007 to 7.1% in 2013 The ERC in its report "Characteristics and Achievements of pupils attending DEIS Rural Primary Schools", explores the difference between rural and urban DEIS schools. <p>The achievement rates of rural pupils in DEIS schools are higher than those of their urban counterparts. Rural pupils improved their reading and maths scores between 2007 and 2010. Evaluation of data from pupils' parents shows few differences between the home experiences of urban and rural pupils from families with medical cards. However, rural pupils had access to a greater number of educational resources in their homes, their parents had reached higher educational levels, they were read to more as pre-school children; their parents read books more regularly than their urban counterparts and there was a lower incidence of absent fathers among rural households.</p> <p>A report by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills called "An evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2012", provides a report of a 2010 study on the quality of school-based action planning processes in 18 primary urban Band 1 and 18 post primary schools participating in DEIS. To ascertain the extent to which schools were engaging in the planning process and devising actions plans, to assess the quality of the action plans, and to evaluate the impact of the planning. Findings include evidence that DEIS planning is better in primary schools than post-primary; good or very good improvements in literacy levels in more than half of schools as measured against schools' own targets; significant improvements in the numeracy levels of pupils in 8 out of 18 schools. A report on the Learning from DEIS is also being prepared by the Economic and Social Research Institute which will draw together the main findings of evaluations to date and provide advice to inform future policy to combat educational disadvantage.</p>

	<p>Appropriate support for DEIS schools continues to be prioritised by Professional Development Services for Teachers (PDST); ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) support is provided in DEIS Band 1 and Band 2 schools in accordance with the priority needs identified by schools taking into account CPD provision already provided.</p> <p>The number of DEIS schools implementing the various literacy and numeracy programmes at the end of 2013/14 are as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary – Reading Recovery: 296 First Steps: 334 Maths Recovery: 327 Ready Set Go Maths: 261 2. Post-Primary - Junior Certificate Schools Programme: 178 DEIS schools Demonstration Library Project: 29 DEIS schools
<p>High Level Goal 3 Work to ensure that the proportion of the population aged 20-24 completing upper second level education or equivalent will exceed 90% by 2013.</p>	<p>The Department of Education and Skills continues to adopt a broad-based approach to tackling early school leaving. Enhancing attendance, progression, retention and attainment are central elements of DEIS. Some €600m was provided in 2014 for a variety of inclusion measures to tackle educational disadvantage. In addition, there are interventions in support of youth and in providing "second chance education" for young people and adults. A number of measures have been put in place to attempt to reduce the percentage of early school leavers, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implementation of the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, "Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools" (DEIS). As of 1st September 2014, the number of schools participating in DEIS are as follows: Primary Urban Band 1 Schools: 195, Primary Urban Band 2 Schools: 141 Rural Primary Schools: 321, Post Primary Schools: 192 In parallel with the Educational research Centre's (ERC's) research on pupil attainment in DEIS schools, the Department's Inspectorate has conducted evaluations of planning in DEIS schools. A number of reports from this evaluation work covering the period 2010 to 2014 are currently being finalised for publication at end 2014. b. Integration of educational welfare services under Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. c. National Strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people. Children who do not learn to read, write and communicate effectively are more likely to leave school early and, hence, the strategy will support achievement of the national early school leaving target. The latest Report on Retention Rates is based on an analysis of those students who entered secondary school in 2008, the majority of whom completed their Leaving Certificate in 2013 or 2014. The analysis examined the progress of 56,075 students through second-level. The main findings of the report are: The number of students completing the Leaving Certificate continued to increase with 90.6% of the 2008 entry completing the Leaving Certificate The rate of completion for the previous year's cohort was 90.1%. The rate of completion a decade ago (1998 cohort) was 83.6% The retention rate for males continues to improve and the gender gap for those students entering secondary school was 2.67%. This compares to a difference of 3.59% for the previous year's students. For the 2008 cohort 91.93% of females completed the Leaving Certificate while 89.26% of males completed the Leaving Certificate. The average retention rate for DEIS schools continues to increase with 82.1% of those entering secondary school in 2008 completing the Leaving Certificate. By comparison the completion rate in 2001 was 68.2%

<p>High Level Goal 4 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 and review child income supports aimed at assisting children in families on low income.</p>	<p>In Budget 2013, the monthly rate for Child Benefit was reduced by €10, from €140 to €130 per child. The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BSCFA) was reduced by €50, from €150 to €100 for children aged 4 to 11, and from €250 to €200 for children aged 12 to 17 or aged 18 to 22 in full time education.</p> <p>In Budget 2014, the BSCFA was withdrawn for children over the age of 18 years, other than those attending secondary school. Budget 2015, announced in October 2014, increased the monthly rate for Child Benefit by €5, from €130 to €135. Budget 2013 standardised Child Benefit rates at €130 per child per month from January 2014. Parents of multiple birth children continue to receive an additional monthly premia paid at one and a half times the monthly child benefit payment rate for each twin and double the monthly payment rate for each child in other multiple births. These additional payments recognise the higher costs that exist for parents of multiple births compared to other households with the same number of children but of different ages.</p> <p>The Government, and more recently the European Commission in the Country Specific Recommendation on the National Reform Programme 2014, has identified child poverty as meriting specific policy attention. In April 2014, a child-specific social target was set out in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020 (NPFCYP). The target aims to lift over 70,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020, a reduction of two-thirds on the 2011 level.</p> <p>The NPFCYP adopts a multi-dimensional approach to tackling child poverty, with the Department sponsoring the interdepartmental policy responses needed in relation to Outcome 4, on economic security and opportunities. The Department of Social Protection (DSP) is the lead department on five of the 14 key policy priorities for this outcome. One of these was to convene a national seminar on the topic of ‘Implementing a Multi-Dimensional Approach to Child Poverty’. The Department, in November 2014, co-hosted this seminar with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Education and Skills, and the European Commission.</p> <p>In the context of the NPFCYP the Department has identified the need to tackle Child Poverty as a priority. The DSP provided income support for families with children through Child Benefit, Qualified Child Increases for welfare recipients, Family Income Supplement and the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, amounting to €3 billion in 2014. In Budget 2015, the Government committed a further €96 million for children, including an increase of €5 per month in child benefit.</p> <p>The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion income support target for children, that the combined value of child income support measures be maintained at 33% to 35% of the minimum adult social welfare rate, was achieved in 2013 and 2014.</p>
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<p>Training and Employment Childcare (TEC) Programmes support parents on eligible training courses and eligible categories of parents returning to work, by providing subsidised childcare places. 1) Childcare Education and Training Support programme (CETS) 2) After-School Child Care programme (ASCC) 3) Community Employment Childcare programme (CEC)</p>	<p>The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme provides funding to community childcare services to enable them to charge reduced childcare fees to disadvantaged and low-income working parents. The programme costs in the region of €45 million per year and about 25,000 children benefit from the programme annually.</p> <p>The Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) programme provides subsidised childcare places to qualifying parents attending certain courses run by the Education and Training Boards. The programme costs in the region of €17 million per year and provides 2,500 full time equivalent places annually.</p> <p>The After-School Childcare (ASCC) programme, introduced in October 2013, is designed to support low-income and unemployed people to take up a job, increase their days of employment or take up a place on a Department of Social Protection Employment programme. The programme has a budget of 1.64 million in 2015 and will provide in the region of 400 places.</p> <p>The Community Employment Childcare (CEC) programme, introduced in January 2014, is targeted specifically at participants in the Community Employment schemes operated by Department of Social Protection. The programme has a budget of €6.72 million in 2015 and will provide in the region of 2,000 childcare places.</p>
<p>The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme provides for an annual programme of early learning for children in the year before primary school</p>	<p>The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme provides for an annual programme of early learning for children in the year before primary school. Approximately 68,000 children benefit from the programme each year. The programme cost almost €175m in 2014.</p>
<p>The Department of Childcare & youth Affairs (DCYA) will support the work of the Dáil na nÓg Council, which is comprised of 34 young people elected from each Comhairle na nÓg in the country.</p>	<p>The first National Strategy for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making, a constituent strategy of the national policy framework for children and young people, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, will be published in early 2015. The Participation Strategy contains a number of commitments from Government Departments and State Agencies to support promote and facilitate the participation of children and young people, including those who are seldom heard. A toolkit to support individuals and organisations by providing best practice in participation in decision-making by seldom heard children and young people has been developed and will be available through the Children and Young Peoples Participation Hub, which will be established to support the implementation of the Strategy.</p>

<p>The Young People's Facilities and Services Fund (YPF SF) 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 YPF SF 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 of €19.11m in 2013 and €18.4m in 2014 continued to support services and facilities in the dedicated areas including allocations to Rugby, GAA, Sporting, and Boxing development. Between 1998 and 2012 (inclusive), capital funding in the region of €70m has been allocated for capital projects under the YPF SF scheme.</p> <p>Round one of the YPF SF led to 90 mainstreamed projects and round two led to 142 mainstreamed projects. All projects funded report on an on-going basis to the DCYA and are also in liaison with the Education and Training Boards in the context of overall youth funding at local level.</p> <p>Over the past few years there has been no additional funding (either capital or current) allocated for the YPF SF. In line with the savings required under the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure 2012-2014, funding for the YPF SF, together with for other youth funding programmes, has been reduced.</p> <p>Value for Money and Policy Review of youth programmes:</p> <p>In October 2012, the DCYA selected certain 'youth programmes' to be subject of a Value for Money and Policy Review in line with the criteria set out in the Public Spending Code. These are the Special Projects for Youth scheme, Young People's Facilities and Services Fund (1 and 2) and the Local Drugs Task Force projects scheme. In 2012, the expenditure on these schemes amounted to €39.7m and equated to almost 70% of overall expenditure on the youth programmes by the DCYA. The Value for Money and Policy Review process was overseen by an independent Steering Committee and supported by members of the Research and Evaluation Unit within the DCYA.</p> <p>The Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Funding Programmes was completed and submitted to the Minister and Secretary General of the DCYA on 26th June 2014. The Government Decision (15th July, 214) noted the main findings and recommendations.</p> <p>In December 2014 The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs published the review, laid it before the Houses of the Oireachtas and provided it to the Dáil Select Committee on Children and Youth Affairs in line with the Public Spending Code. The review makes recommendations for the future operation of the youth schemes and their development in the years ahead to ensure effective, value for money services that are evidence based and designed to secure the best outcomes for young people.</p> <p>Consultation on the Value for Money and Policy Review findings and recommendations:</p> <p>The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is keen to ensure that all stakeholders will have the opportunity to discuss the review findings and recommendations. The consultation for the National Youth Strategy will also include discussion on key aspects of the Value for Money and Policy Review of the Youth Programmes, including how the Review recommendations might be actioned in the National Youth Strategy. This consultation has commenced and will continue throughout February 2015. Feedback from the consultations will inform a detailed Implementation Plan.</p>
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<p>Growing Up in Ireland: the national longitudinal study on children in Ireland: This study is following the progress of almost 20,000 children across Ireland to collect a host of information to help improve our understanding of all aspects of children and their development.</p>	<p>Over the period 2013-2014 and as part of Growing Up in Ireland: A third wave of data collection with the infant cohort (at age 5 years) was completed.</p> <p>The following Growing Up in Ireland reports were publically launched:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Williams, J., Murray, A., McCrory, C. and McNally (2013) Development from Birth to Three Years. • McGinnity, F., Murray, A. and McNally, S. (2013) Mothers Return to Work and Childcare Choices for Infants in Ireland. • Nixon, E., Swords, L. and Murray, A. (2013) Parenting and Infant Development. <p>A series of key findings, conceptual and technical documents were completed (see www.growingup.ie) The Anonymised Micro data Files (AMF) from waves of data collection with the infant (at age 3 years) and the child (at age 13 years) cohorts were lodged in the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA) for use by bone fide researchers. The AMF from the third wave of data collection with the infant cohort (at age 5 years) will be lodged in the ISSDA in early 2015.</p>
<p>National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives 2011-2016. This Strategy sets out a clear direction for children's research and data in Ireland and articulates a range of specific information needs in relation to children's health, education, safety, economic security and social participation.</p>	<p>The first Implementation Report of the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives, 2011-2016, presenting the progress made on the implementation of the agreed actions in the strategy, was published in 2013. The second implementation Report is due to be published in early 2015. The implementation report (s) and accompanying appendices will be published on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) website.</p>

<p>Other Research and Activities</p>	<p>In 2013/2014, the Research and Evaluation Unit of the DCYA has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published the fourth State of the Nation’s Children report in March 2013. This Report is published in fulfilment of a commitment given in the National Children’s Strategy and reflects an international effort to measure and monitor child well-being. The Report, which is based on the National Set of Child Well-Being Indicators, describes the lives of children in Ireland, tracks changes over time and benchmarks progress in Ireland relative to other countries. Themes covered in the report include children’s health outcomes, educational outcomes, school attendance and child poverty. • Funded 3 new postgraduate research studies under the DCYA Scholarship Programme and announced funding for a DCYA Growing Up in Ireland Scholarship as part of the Irish Research Councils Postgraduate Scholarship scheme under their strategic partnership themes • Published one briefing in the Research Programme series ‘Young People’s Homeless and Housing Pathways’: Key findings from a 6-year qualitative longitudinal study (number 23) and six research scholarship briefing notes (numbers 18-23) . To date 23 Funded Research Programme briefing notes and 24 Scholarship Programme briefing notes have been published under this Series. A Research colloquium was held in November 2013 where 7 scholars presented their study findings. • Produced and published online a STATISTICAL ANNEX to Ireland’s Consolidated Third and Fourth Reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2006-2011 JUNE 2013 • Reported on the first Implementation update Report for the Data Strategy This report was made available online in 2013. • Commenced (2013) and completed (2014) a Value for Money and Policy Review of DCYA funded programmes for targeted youth. The report analyses the efficiency and effectiveness of these programme to date and provides specific recommendations for improving the performance of these programmes into the future. • Commenced a feasibility study to assess whether an evidence based programme (Multi-Systemic Therapy) could, using a social Impact Initiative financial model, be developed into a Bail Supervision Programme to reduce the need for detention and achieve better outcomes for vulnerable young people.
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<p>The DCYA will develop guidance on involving seldom heard children and young people in participation structures and in the national policy on children and young people's participation in decision-making (2012-2017).</p>	<p>The first National Strategy for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making, a constituent strategy of the national policy framework for children and young people, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, will be published in early 2015. The Participation Strategy contains a number of commitments from Government Departments and State Agencies to support promote and facilitate the participation of children and young people, including those who are seldom heard.</p> <p>A toolkit to support individuals and organisations by providing best practice in participation in decision-making by seldom heard children and young people has been developed and will be available through the Children and Young Peoples Participation Hub, which will be established to support the implementation of the Strategy.</p>
<p>The DCYA will support the development of actions to be considered in improving the practice of listening to children in care.</p>	<p>In June 2013, the members of the Voice of Children in Care Implementation Group re-named the Group TACTIC - Teenagers and Children Talking in Care. The group developed a suite of materials for children and young people when they are first going into care, aimed at providing reassurance and at highlighting how they can have their voices heard in their own care situations and in their care plans. These sources were published in December 2014 by Tulsa: the Child and Family Agency and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. They will be given by Tulsa to every child and young person going into care.</p>
<p>Support and progress the implementation of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014-2020) launched by the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on 16 April 2014. This represents the first overarching national policy framework comprehending the age ranges spanning children and young people (0 – 24 years). It adopts a whole of government approach and will accommodate a number of constituent strategies.</p> <p>The Framework:- sets out and centralises common outcomes- captures 163 policy commitments- prioritises key transformational goals necessitating action- ensures an innovative and effective way of working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Implementation Team within DCYA has been established to lead, coordinate and monitor implementation. Work on developing the Implementation Plan is on-going. This will outline a 3-year schedule of actions associated with respective commitments for the period 2014-2016 and to determine the outcomes expected in 2017 (for mid-point review). Lead Departments and Agencies have detailed their actions for each commitment. This has been reviewed by Partners, with Partner actions included where appropriate. This is presently being proof-read, and will be circulated to the Consortium for approval in early 2015. • Cross departmental Sponsors Group established to drive implementation and provide a forum for problem solving. Each Sponsor has lead responsibility for a National Outcome area. The first meeting of the Sponsors Group was held on 26th June 2014. The Sponsors Group meets as required throughout the year. • High level Children and Young People's Policy Consortium established to have oversight and drive cross-Government implementation. Meetings of the Consortium were held in April, July and November 2014. Subsequent meetings will be held at least twice a year. The next meeting of the Consortium will be held on 6th March 2015

<p>Progress the roll-out of the Area-Based Childhood Programme (ABC) Programme, an innovative prevention and early intervention initiative consisting of committed funding for an area-based approach to helping to improve outcomes for children by reducing child poverty.</p> <p>The programme builds on and continues the work of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) 2007 - 2013 which was co-funded by the DCYA and Atlantic Philanthropies.</p> <p>The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It aims to break “the cycle of child poverty within areas where it is most deeply entrenched and where children are most disadvantaged, through integrated and effective services and interventions” in the areas of child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage.</p> <p>The ABC Programme is jointly funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The total amount of committed funding from both in the period 2013-2016 will be €29.7m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-level evaluation framework for the ABC Programme is in development and being overseen by an International Expert Advisory Group and has been informed by the ABC Interdepartmental Project Team. The detailed methodology will also be informed by an Evaluation Group including representation from each of the 13 sites to optimise implementation at local level. • In 2013, 13 sites were approved for inclusion in the ABC programme; with the exception of two sites all were in contract or offered contracts by end 2014. The remaining two sites are being supported towards finalisation of contracts in early 2015. Intensive support and guidance has been provided to all 13 ABC Programme Areas by the programme managers, Centre for Effective Services (CES) and Pobal with regard to finalisation of the service design, delivery and governance arrangements • In addition to the above, the DCYA submitted a proposal to the Dormant Accounts Fund seeking further funding for a tranche involving Consortia who had applied under the ABC programme and while unsuccessful, demonstrated sufficient levels of promising practice to be considered within a ‘Mentoring Programme’. €7m has been allocated to the DCYA from 2015 to support this work with the additional Consortia. Preliminary work is underway in devising this scheme and operationalising same for 2015 and 2016.
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<p>Reform and roll-out Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs) (formerly Children's Services Committees) across the country. These are county level committees that bring together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers to plan and coordinate services in local authority areas for children and young people aged between 0 – 24 years. Their role is to enhance interagency cooperation and to realise the National Outcomes for children and young people, as set out in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At present there are 21 CYPSCs established in Ireland across 22 counties and 25 local authority areas, each at different stages of development: Carlow/Kilkenny; Cavan/Monaghan; Cork; Donegal; Dublin City North; Dublin City South; Fingal; Galway; Kerry; Kildare; Limerick; Longford/Westmeath; Louth; Meath; Roscommon; Sligo/Leitrim; South Dublin; South Tipperary; Waterford; Wexford; Wicklow. 4 CYPSCs are yet to be established in Clare, Mayo, Laois/Offaly and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. • DCYA is working on a Resourcing Framework with Tusla to establish a sustainable funding arrangement for CYPSCs in accordance with DCYA's commitment (G48) in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: 'put in place an agreed resourcing framework for CSCs drawing on existing financial support from Tusla, Local Government and DCYA. This Resourcing Framework will also aim to standardise the diverse employment arrangements among CYPSC coordinators. • DCYA and DECLG are working on a guidance document for CYPSCs and Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs). The key priorities of each local CYPSC's Children and Young People's Plan will be agreed between the CYPSC and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) for inclusion as a component of the community element of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) of the local authority. • DCYA convened a Task Group in September 2014 to consider key issues to be addressed in the strategic and operational development of CYPSCs, including adapting CYPSC structures to align with Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures. The Task Group concluded its work in early November 2014 and membership included the Chair of the CYPSC National Steering Group, the National Coordinator for CYPSCs, a CYPSC Coordinator representative, representatives from Tusla and the Community and Voluntary sector and CES. The DCYA is working on a blue-print for the development of CYPSCs over the next five years which incorporates the work of the Task Group and will be launched in Q1 2015.
<p>The delivery, under the framework of the Vision for Change Strategy, 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>The Government has provided €125 million new ring-fenced funding for mental health services since 2012 to develop and modernise services in line with A Vision for Change. A key focus has been additional posts to strengthen Community Mental Health Teams for both adults and children. The new funding is also being used to enhance specialist community mental health services for older people with a mental illness, those with an intellectual disability and mental illness, the forensic mental health services, and suicide prevention initiatives. Over 1,150 new posts have been approved since 2012. They facilitate the policy of moving away from traditional institutional based care to a patient-centred, flexible and community based mental health service where hospital admissions are greatly reduced, while still providing in-patient care when appropriate.</p> <p>At the start of 2015, there were 55 operational CAMHS beds in the HSE, i.e. beds to take a child / adolescent as an in-patient if the need arose. This is an improvement on the position in November 2014 when 48 beds were operational. There are actually 66 registered beds in the system, but of these approx. 8 in the Eist Linn Centre (Cork) are not operational, due to inability to recruit a consultant despite repeated attempts by HSE South. A new purpose built 22 bed CAMHS in-patient unit located on the grounds of Cherry Orchard Hospital is due to be completed mid-2015. The existing 14 beds in the current temporary facility will transfer across, thereby giving a net increase of 8 beds, or a total of 71 beds overall in the system.</p>

<p>Data from the Healthy Ireland Survey, the Drug Prevalence Survey, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) will be analysed and published to provide robust profile of the prevalence of smoking and substance use and will inform policy development in these areas.</p>	<p>In 2013/2014 the Health and Wellbeing Programme commissioned a new Healthy Ireland Survey which will be carried out annually between 2014 and 2016. The National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol has commissioned a Drug Prevalence Survey which is being carried out in 2014/2015. Both of these surveys will include those 15 years and older. In addition, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey commenced in 2014 in line with its international cycle and the ESPAD survey is being commissioned for 2015 in line with its international cycle.</p>
<p>The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study is a cross-national research project conducted in 44 countries and conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organisation. Ireland has been a member of the study network since 1994 and surveys are conducted every 4 years.</p>	<p>The 2014 HBSC Survey commenced in March 2014. The collection of data was completed in July 2014 and dataset submitted for quality checks in October 2014. It is expected to publish the 2014 report late 2015. Work continues on this project until 2016.</p>
<p>Access to treatment will be provided to 100% of problematic drugs users aged under-18 within one month after assessment.</p>	<p>Access to treatment is provided within one week of assessment to 100% of individuals under the age of 18 years and there is no waiting list for this cohort. Individuals under the age of 18 who present for addiction treatment are offered a range of interventions namely Initial Assessment, Comprehensive Assessment, Minnesota Programme, Brief Intervention, Individual Counselling, self-help, peer-support etc. or a combination of these. The delivery of these services is based on the Four Tier Model of treatment intervention and services are designed to respond to the individual's specific identified needs.</p> <p>Interagency working between the HSE, the Youth Services, Drugs Task Forces and multiple other community, statutory and voluntary agencies form the basis of this delivery as the target is to provide services where possible in a community environment. Counselling and rehabilitation services provide care to those presenting with an addiction through one to one counselling and onward referral to other statutory and voluntary groups where appropriate. The HSE also provide funding to a number of voluntary service providers who treat drug and alcohol addictions.</p>
<p>National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS): NEPS psychologists work with both primary and post-primary schools and are concerned with learning, behaviour, social and emotional development. Each psychologist is assigned to a group of schools. They work in partnership with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs.</p>	<p>During 2013/14 NEPS psychologist numbers rose by 11 individuals to 178 (169 Whole Time Equivalent w.t.e.). Ongoing recruitment into the current academic year (2014/15) will raise this to 182 (173 w.t.e). From Sept 2013 a NEPS psychologist was assigned to all National and post-primary schools. In January 2014 the Department of Education & Skills launched the "Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention" which are being actively promoted by NEPS psychologists at school level and designed to support students with the broad range of behavioural, emotional and social issues. Similar guidelines have been developed by NEPS for primary schools in the current year.</p>

<p>A Lifeskills Survey of Schools was carried out in 2012. Data to be analysed and findings released in 2013.</p>	<p>The results of the 2012 'Lifeskills survey' of primary and post primary schools were published by the Department of Education and Skills in January 2014. The relevant findings from respondent schools in relation to substance use are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88% of primary and 93% of post primary schools had a substance abuse policy • 94% of primary schools reported using the 'Walk Tall' programme • 83% of post primary schools reported using the 'On My Own Two Feet' resource • 90% of primary and 100% of post primary schools reported providing information to their pupils on promoting awareness of and how to combat drug abuse • 99% of both primary and post primary schools reported that they provide information to their pupils to enable them to resist inappropriate peer pressure. <p>The 2015 Lifeskills survey will issue to schools shortly. The results of this survey will allow for measurement of progress against the results of the 2012 (and 2009) surveys.</p>
<p>Young people enrolled in Youthreach centres throughout the country need additional supports to develop skills which will ensure they can reach their full potential socially, personally, educationally and economically. Some €2 million is to be allocated in 2007 to 20 existing Youthreach Centres to address the special educational needs of students aged 15-20 years. Consideration will be given to extending the arrangement to all Youthreach Centres following an evaluation. A further 1,000 Youthreach places will be provided by 2009, on top of the existing 3,292 places provided by Vocational Education Committees.</p>	<p>SOLAS, the new Further Education and Training Authority was established on 27th October 2013, with its main objective being to develop, fund and oversee an integrated further education and training sector. SOLAS published its Further Education and Training strategy on the 12th May 2014. The Strategy is organised around five key goals to provide skills for the economy including strong employer engagement, to support the active inclusion of citizens, to improve how Further Education and Training (FET) is planned and funded with a strong emphasis on targeting and evaluation of outcomes, to raise the quality of FET and to improve the standing of FET as a strong option in the overall education and training sector. Youthreach funding and places were maintained in 2013 and 2014. Funding for Special Educational Needs Initiative (SENI) has also been maintained.</p>
<p>The Traveller Education Advisory & Consultative Forum will examine and review all outstanding recommendations of the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy. The Forum will examine ways of monitoring the impact of mainstreaming Traveller education provision.</p>	<p>The Traveller Education Advisory & Consultative Forum is continuing to review all outstanding recommendations and some progress has been made regarding data collection. The Department of Education & Skills is currently revising the collection and collation of data on Traveller pupils through the Primary Census form for primary pupils and through the Post-Primary Pupil Database for post-primary pupils which will facilitate improved monitoring of progression and attainment of Travellers across the primary and post-primary school sectors. It is important to note that as data collected throughout the education system is based on self-identification, the actual number of Travellers in education may be higher than the figures quoted.</p>

<p>Segregated provision at primary and post-primary level will be phased out to ensure that Travellers are integrated into mainstream schools by 2009.</p>	<p>A key objective of the Traveller Education Strategy is the phasing out of segregated Traveller provision and the inclusion of Traveller children and young people in mainstream education. Since 2006 a range of segregated provision including Senior and Junior Traveller Education Centres; and Traveller-only Special Schools and School Transport and Early Years Education has been phased out, with student places being incorporated in mainstream provision. Two remaining Traveller only Special Schools are in the process of being phased out by their patron, the Dublin Archdiocese and the Department of Education & Skills is available to assist with this process.</p>
<p>The introduction of legislation to provide for Child Benefit to be divided equally between parents in cases where they are not living together and where joint equal custody arrangements apply. The implications of and issues involved in transferring payment from the child's primary carer to an alternative qualified person in circumstances where it is established that the Child Benefit is not being utilised for the benefit of the child.</p>	<p>An examination of these issues was carried out in light of the Law Reform Commission's report on legal aspects of family relationships, which was published in December 2010. The policy and administrative implications of these two issues are under consideration in the Department of Social Protection.</p>
<p>It is planned to review funding under the Urban School Meals Scheme and School Meals Local Projects Scheme provided to the DEIS schools with a view to seeking applications from DEIS schools not currently participating in the School Meals Programme and also to review existing payments in the context of increased pupil numbers and expanded food clubs.</p>	<p>Budget 2013 provided an additional €2m for the School Meals Programme for 2013. Budget 2015 provided for a further €2m in additional funding for the School Meals programme (increasing the total provision from €37m to €39m). The additional funding provided in Budget 2013 allowed for the take on of 100 additional DEIS/special schools benefitting some 9,800 children. Budget 2015 provided a further €2m for the School Meals programme and consideration is being given as to how this can be allocated. This additional funding will be used to increase payments to existing DEIS schools participating in the school meals scheme and who have not been funded for increased pupil numbers in recent years. There will be a particular focus on the provision of breakfast clubs which provide very positive outcomes for vulnerable children in terms of their school attendance, punctuality and energy levels.</p>
<p>The Irish Youth Justice Service will ensure that 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 Young Persons Probation Division of the Probation Service was extended in 2008 to provide a national service from bases in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Drogheda and Sligo. This has allowed for community sanctions to be made available nationwide.</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>The full range of community sanctions under the Children Act 2001, as amended, was brought into operation in March 2007.</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>In December 2014, an additional €2.8 million was approved under the Dormant Accounts Scheme to allow the Irish Youth Justice Service Community Programmes to support a number of proposals including the establishment of 10 new Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDP) at additional locations around the country.</p> <p>The increased funding will also support the employment of additional youth justice workers in 16 existing Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDP) requiring resources and the development of enhanced interventions to support young people coming to the attention of An Garda Síochána. During 2014 progress continued to be made on measures to align resource allocation models to address local youth crime needs.</p> <p>A pilot, undertaken in the Kerry Garda Division, facilitated a service delivery across the full division/ county as opposed to the traditional GYDP catchment areas. The pilot proved to be successful and stakeholders are now working on consolidating the progress achieved.</p> <p>The Irish Youth Justice Service opened discussions with Garda Management and community based organisations delivering GYDPs in Cork City to commence a similar process of realigning service delivery to reach areas which are not currently served by the existing projects in the city. Four new measures were also trialed in 15 selected GYDP sites across the country under the capacity-building & change management programme of the GYDP to enable them to better focus on local youth crime problems.</p>

Working Age	
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<p>High Level Goal 5: 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 75,000 such people, including lone parents and the long-term unemployed, to move into employment by 2015 and reduce the average time spent on the Live Register to less than 12 months by end of 2015.</p>	<p>The Pathways to Work Strategy sets out a comprehensive reform of the State’s approach to helping unemployed jobseekers return to work. It was initiated in 2012 and is designed to complement the Action Plan for Jobs as part of a twin-pronged approach to tackling the jobs crisis that emerged in the final years of the last decade. The Action Plan for Jobs is focused on stimulating employment growth; Pathways to Work on making sure that as many as possible of these new jobs, and other vacancies that arise in the economy, are filled by people who are unemployed jobseekers.</p> <p>Since its inception in 2012, employment and entitlement services have been brought together in ‘one-stop shop’ Intreo centres; new schemes and employment supports have been introduced, while some existing schemes have been expanded; and there has been a transformation of jobseeker services through Intreo. A ‘social contract’ of rights and responsibilities between jobseekers and the State has been implemented. The Further Education and Training (FET) sector has been significantly re-organised and a new five year FET strategy adopted. A Labour Market Council has been established, comprised of industry leaders and labour market specialists to monitor and advise on the implementation of the Pathways to Work Strategy. Profiling is now in place for all jobseekers. Pathways reforms adopted earlier continued to have an enhanced impact in 2014.</p> <p>This included increasing initial one-to-one guidance interviews with jobseekers (with the number of interviews, at 169,000, up 8% on 2013) and making 57,000 FET places available to the long-term unemployed. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP), under the Pathways to Work, was also launched in January 2014, and YGIP measures were progressively introduced throughout 2014.</p>
<p>High Level Goal 6: 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.</p>	<p>In Budgets 2013 and 2014, there were no changes to the rates of primary weekly social welfare payments, including increases for qualified adults or qualified children.</p>

<p>The Government is committed to introducing, on a phased basis, GP care without fees within its first term of office. Primary legislation is required to give effect to the Government commitment to introduce a universal GP service without fees; Legislation to allow the Minister for Health to make regulations to extend access to GP services without fees to persons with prescribed illnesses is currently being drafted by the Office of the Attorney General and the Department and it will be published shortly. Implementation dates and application details will be announced on foot of the legislation.</p>	<p>The Health (General Practitioner Service) Act 2014, which provides an entitlement for all children aged under 6 to a GP service without fees, was enacted on 25th July 2014. Under a Framework Agreement, the Department of Health, the HSE and the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) are engaged intensively on the introduction of GP services without fees for children aged under 6.</p> <p>The aim is to have the under-6's phase implemented by Quarter 2, 2015, subject to the conclusion of those discussions. In July 2014, the Government approved the drafting of a Bill to amend the Health Act 1970 to provide a GP service without fees for all persons aged 70 years and over. Drafting of this legislation is near completion and, subject to Government approval, the Minister for Health intends to bring the Bill into the Oireachtas in Q1 2015. The Government's objective is to implement the over-70s phase in Q2 2015.</p>
<p>There is a strong body of evidence linking poverty and poor mental health and poverty is associated with greater use of mental health services. By 2013 there will be two General Adult Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) per 100,000 of the population.</p>	<p>The Government has provided €125 million new ring-fenced funding for mental health services since 2012 to develop and modernise services in line with A Vision for Change, which sets out the policy framework for mental health services in Ireland.</p> <p>A key focus has been additional posts to strengthen Community Mental Health Teams for both adults and children. The new funding is also being used to enhance specialist community mental health services for older people with a mental illness, those with an intellectual disability and mental illness, the forensic mental health services, and to enhance access to counselling and psychotherapy in primary care and investment suicide prevention initiatives. Over 1,150 new posts have been approved since 2012.</p> <p>They facilitate the policy of moving away from traditional institutional based care to a patient-centred, flexible and community based mental health service where hospital admissions are greatly reduced, while still providing in-patient care when appropriate. At end December 2014, approximately 86% of combined posts combined over 2012-13 have taken up duty. The additional funding provided since 2012 is enabling the HSE to recruit staff that are more suited to the development of a community-focussed mental health service and has provided for a required change in the mix of staff, in particular Allied Health Professionals, across Community Mental Health Teams, in line with A Vision for Change.</p>
<p>Working in partnership, the Department of Health will continue intersectional work to encourage healthy eating and access to healthy food and physical activity among adults, with a particular focus on overweight and obese adults and children living in areas of disadvantage.</p>	<p>Reviewed Healthy Eating Guidelines; implemented Calories on Menus initiative in fast food restaurants; Developed an action report on Top Shelf Foods and held bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders including other Government Departments; continued support for Food Dude Scheme and Healthy Food For All.</p> <p>In partnership with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, work commenced on developing a National Physical Activity Plan to encourage greater participation in and greater recognition of the importance of, physical activity by all.</p>

<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). Ireland is participating in the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The field survey is being conducted at present by the Central Statistics Office and results are expected in October 2013.</p>	<p>Investment in the adult literacy service has been maintained at €30m in 2013 and 2014 with an annual number of 54,682 participants in 2013. A further 3,000 employees received basic education tuition through the Skills for Work programme. A Review of the Adult Literacy programme was published in 2013.</p> <p>This Review made a number of recommendations which were taken into account in revising the adult literacy operational guidelines and also by SOLAS in devising the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019. Ireland participated in the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The field study was completed by the Central Statistics Offices (CSO) in March 2012 and the results published by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in October 2013.</p> <p>Ireland's performance in the survey was mixed. Irish participants' mean score was slightly below the survey average in literacy where we ranked 17 out of 24 overall and 15 out of 24 at level 1 or below. Irish participants scored below the survey average in numeracy 19 out of 24 countries overall and 18 out of 24 for those at level one or below, while in problem solving, Ireland performed at the survey average in terms of its proportion of participants scoring at the lower levels but was below the survey average at the higher levels.</p> <p>Progress is being made with adult literacy with a four percentage point drop in the proportion of Irish adults scoring at or below level one when compared to the 1995 international Adult Literacy (IAL) survey.</p>
<p>A family literacy project is also being put in place under the DEIS action plan.</p>	<p>Funding for family literacy is being maintained. The 16 local Education and Training Boards received funding of €272,000 for family literacy projects in 2013/14. Funding of €280,000 was made available for family literacy projects in 2014/15.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The annual expenditure on the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme for 2013 and 2014 was in the region of €320m. The total number of PLC places available nationwide has been maintained at 32,688.</p>

<p>In consultation with the Department of Education & Skills, 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.</p>	<p>(i) Work on a new plan The current national access plan has concluded. A full review of targets in the last plan is available in a consultation document published last August by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (www.heai.ie). In summary, of the 13 targets in that plan, eight were not achieved. A consultation process on a new plan has recently concluded and this is in the process of being finalised. The next plan will include objectives and targets to re-focus efforts on increasing participation by those groups who did not attain the levels projected by 2013. In particular mature students and those from target socio-economic groups. Strategies to expand part-time education, pathways from further education and links with disadvantaged communities will all be key to the achievement of these objectives.</p> <p>(ii) Higher Education System Performance - Access In 2013-14, as part of the implementation of the national strategy for higher education, there has been an ongoing dialogue by the HEA with each higher education institution on their strategic plans and statistical profiles. In 2014 each institution agreed a compact with the HEA, which included objectives and targets for access. In 2014 the first report on the overall performance of the higher education system was published by the HEA.</p> <p>(iii) Developing core funding and other financial resources for access. €29million in core funding for access was allocated to 26 institutions in 2013 as part of their overall recurrent grant. This funding is performance based in that it is calculated based on numbers of mature student entrants, those from target socio-economic groups and students with disabilities who access each funded institution. The student's numbers are drawn from equal access and other data returned each year by each institution to the HEA student record system. The objective of this funding is to recognise the additional cost to each institution of implementing access strategies that support target groups in overcoming barriers to entry and participation. These strategies include providing access programmes for schools and communities; entry schemes such as higher Education Assess Route (HEAR) and Disability Assess Route to Education (DARE) and the infrastructure of staff and services needed to support students once they have entered higher education. For example personnel skilled in assessing the needs of students with disabilities and providing the necessary supports. Also additional academic and pastoral supports that may be needed by any student, but particularly those who have overcome earlier educational disadvantage.</p> <p>(iv) Further development of the HEA student record system The quality and coverage of data gathered by the HEA student record system continues to be improved each year. In addition to areas of development described in the previous report, systems are also being developed to cross-reference data gathered by Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) on students in receipt of the higher education grant and HEA data. The aim of this work is to strengthen the evidence base on students from lower income families who require the support of a grant to participate in higher education, particularly those on the special rate of grant. The analysis of the profiles of students and staff in each HEA-funded institution is also being continually refined to support the implementation of the National Strategy and the new strategic dialogue process.</p>
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<p>Almost €4.9 billion is being allocated by the Department of Jobs Enterprise & Innovation over the period 2007-2013 to provide targeted training and supports to groups outside the labour market such as the unemployed, people with disabilities, lone parents, Travellers and prisoners.</p> <p>This funding will also support the increased participation of women, older workers, part-time workers and migrants. In March 2010, the Government decided that the training aspects of FÁS' operations which were under the remit of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment should now come under the Department of Education and Skills.</p>	<p>The Department of Education and Skills reported that resources are not currently available in SOLAS to produce the outstanding statistics requested for the NAPinclusion Report input as the data sought is not readily available and requires manual search, retrieval and preparation. SOLAS, as part of its work programme for 2015, will consult further with Education and Training Boards (ETBs) regarding the collation of statistics countrywide later this year.</p>
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<p>The Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation will invest some €2.9 billion between 2007-2013 to improve training for people in employment, to help upskill those who may be affected by industrial restructuring, to improve and enlarge the apprenticeship system and to provide progression opportunities for school leavers.</p>	<p>Safepass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout 2013 and 2014, FÁS/SOLAS continued the management of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), the Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS) and the Safe Pass Scheme. In 2013, 66,666 people received Safe Pass training, 8,928 persons undertook CSCS training and 254 individuals were trained in QSCS. In 2014, 92,598 people received Safe Pass training, 7,871 persons undertook CSCS training and 208 individuals were trained in QSCS. <p>Apprentice Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1126 Redundant apprentices participated on Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme in 2013. This scheme ended in 2013 • 281 apprentices undertook the Competency Determination Mechanism for redundant apprentices in 2013. Approximately 100 apprentices undertook CDM in 2014. • Under the EU Leonardo Da Vinci III Life Long Learning Programme, Léargas in collaboration with FÁS had supported 10 redundant apprentices to complete on-the-job training overseas in 2013. This programme ended in 2013 • The number of people entering apprenticeship in 2013 was 1929. In 2014 we have seen the apprentice registrations grow to 2698 which was a 40% increase on the previous year. <p>Apprenticeship Review:</p> <p>Under the Action Plan for Jobs the Department of Education and Skills is committed to carrying out a Review of the Irish Apprenticeship System. An Apprenticeship Implementation Plan was published in 2014. A new Apprenticeship Council was established in 2014 and the first job of work of the Council was to issue a call for proposals from industry for new Apprenticeships. This call was issued in January 2015. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in collaboration with SOLAS has formally extended its suite of professional award-type descriptors to National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 5 and 6 and adopted standards for 5 reviewed craft awards.</p> <p>SOLAS:</p> <p>The further education and training sector in Ireland has recently undergone significant change. SOLAS, the new further education and training authority, was established on 27 October 2013 and became responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes provided by Education and Training Boards to ensure the provision of 21st century high-quality further education and training programmes to jobseekers and other learners. SOLAS will ensure that funding has regard to outcomes and bring greater coherence, co-ordination and oversight to the further education and training sector.</p>
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The 33 former Vocational Education Committees (VECs), which were the main providers of further education in Ireland, were amalgamated into 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) on the 1st July 2013. The former FÁS training centres, their associated community-based programmes and related staff transferred on a phased basis to the appropriate Education and Training Board (ETB). On the 1st January 2014, seven training centres transferred over to ETB's with the remaining training centres transferring to their respective ETB's on the 1st July 2014. Further education and training provision is now the responsibility of the local ETBs, which deliver further education and training programmes directly and also through contracted services.

A five-year national strategy for further education and training was launched by SOLAS in May 2014 following a consultation process with key stakeholders. The Further Education and Training Strategy identifies five high level strategic goals;

1. Skills for the Economy: to address the current and future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees and to contribute to national economic development
2. Active Inclusion: to support the active inclusion of people of all abilities in society with special reference to literacy and numeracy
3. Quality Provision: to provide high quality education and training programmes and to meet the appropriate national and international quality standards
4. Integrated Planning and Funding: FET provision will be planned and funded on the basis of objective analysis of needs and evidence of social and economic impact
5. Standing of FET: to ensure a valued learning path leading to agreed employment, career, developmental, personal and social options.

The implementation phase of the FET Strategy has commenced. A strategy implementation advisory committee chaired by the Department of Education and Skills has been established. SOLAS has prepared a detailed implementation plan for the Strategy in conjunction with stakeholders. The Implementation Plan includes actions required, timelines for delivery, performance indicators and identifies the lead organisation(s) responsible for each action.

- The implementation plan includes specific actions around, for example, the development and roll out of a co-ordinated data structure for the FET sector. A Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS), which has three elements, namely: A FET course database; a learner database; and, a course calendar. The development has commenced and this process will be ongoing throughout 2015 and beyond.
- SOLAS also published in 2014 its Training Services Plan and will on an annual basis continue to agree Training Services Plans with the ETBs setting out targets and outputs along with expenditure levels based on local, regional skills needs of learners and employers.
- The implementation of the "Youth Guarantee" has been a priority consideration in the development of the 2014 Further Education and Training Services plan. Approximately one third of the 6,500 places on the new 2014 Momentum training programme, for example, are reserved for under 25's – an important contribution to the Youth Guarantee initiative.

<p>A National Skills Strategy (NSS) will be implemented to increase the skills levels of those at work, based on the Forfás Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Study.</p>	<p>The Department of Education and Skills reported that CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QHNS) data indicates that while Ireland has not yet reached the educational attainment targets for the labour force for 2020, it has continued to make progress towards these targets.</p> <p>In quarter 4 2013, the share of third level graduates (NFQ 6 -10) was 45.3%, which is two percentage points higher than in quarter 4 2012 and close to the NSS target of 48% for 2020. The share of persons with at most lower secondary qualifications (i.e. at most NFQ 3) was 15.6%, which is 1.2 percentage points lower than one year previously, but which remains higher than the NSS target of 7%.</p> <p>The share of the labour force with higher secondary/FET qualifications (NFQF 4-5) was 39.1% and this compares to 39.9% in quarter 4 2012 and to the NSS target of 45% for 2020. These shifts in the educational distribution indicate further improvements in the educational attainment of the labour force.</p> <p>Under the Action Plan for Jobs 2015 Department of Education and Skills is committed to developing a new National Skills Strategy.</p>
<p>Reform of the jobseeker's and One-Parent Family Payment schemes is being considered with regard to interaction between the schemes and arrangements for those who avail of a mix of welfare and work income.</p>	<p>The Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare established by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) has examined the issue of the interaction of the tax and social welfare systems to determine how the social welfare system can best achieve its goals of supporting persons through periods of involuntary unemployment, while incentivising work and dis-incentivising welfare dependency. The final report of the Group is currently with the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection for her consideration.</p>
<p>The standard means test for Rent Supplement (and other secondary benefit payments) under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme (SWA) will continue to be reviewed with a view to providing enhanced financial incentives to take up part-time employment, training, education or other progression options, and minimising where possible, the impact of the withdrawal of social welfare supports. The overall emphasis will be on the provision of appropriate long-term housing solution.</p>	<p>Significant work has been done in 2013/2014 to achieve the DSP's strategic policy objective of returning rent supplement to its original objective of being a short-term income support payment through the development of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). DSP has been working closely with colleagues in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in order to progress the legislative, technical and operational elements of the scheme. The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 was enacted on 28th July 2014 and HAP is being introduced on a phased basis. HAP Wave 1 commencements took effect from 15th September in Limerick City and County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Cork County Council, and from 1st October in Louth County Council, Kilkenny County Council, South Dublin County Council and Monaghan County Council.</p> <p>At the end of 2014 there were almost 500 cases transferred to HAP. There is a target to achieve some 8,400 HAP cases in 2015 as set out in the "Social Housing Strategy 2020: Support, Supply and Reform". A HAP homelessness pilot was also commenced on the 18th December 2014. Dublin City Council will administer the pilot on behalf of the other Dublin local authorities and will specifically target homeless households.</p>

<p>The Disability Activation Project (DAP) commenced in January 2008 having received funding under the European Social Fund (ESF) "Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013.</p>	<p>The Disability Activation Project is funded under the ESF Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013 (HCIOP) at a cost of more than €7 million. The high-level objective of the project is to develop and test a comprehensive employment strategy based on individual case management of people on disability/illness welfare payments that will have the capacity to increase their rate of employment. 14 projects are being funded under this programme in the Border, Midlands & West region. The project is due to end in April 2015. By the end of 2014 1,838 people had participated in the project or 67% of the overall target number (2,751). Of these 974 people have moved into employment or education.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The Revised Estimates for 2013, 2014 and 2015 provided €45 million for the Rural Social Scheme for each of these years.</p>

<p>Implement actions set out in the Pathways to Work Strategy and the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan where they relate to active inclusion.</p>	<p>The Pathways to Work Strategy sets out a comprehensive reform of the State’s approach to helping unemployed jobseekers return to work. It was initiated in 2012 and is designed to complement the Action Plan for Jobs as part of a twin-pronged approach to tackling the jobs crisis that emerged in the final years of the last decade. The Action Plan for Jobs is focused on stimulating employment growth; Pathways to Work on making sure that as many as possible of these new jobs, and other vacancies that arise in the economy, are filled by people who are unemployed jobseekers.</p> <p>Since its inception in 2012, employment and entitlement services have been brought together in ‘one-stop shop’ Intreo centres; new schemes and employment supports have been introduced, while some existing schemes have been expanded; and there has been a transformation of jobseeker services through Intreo. A ‘social contract’ of rights and responsibilities between jobseekers and the State has been implemented. The Further Education and Training (FET) sector has been significantly re-organised and a new five year FET strategy adopted. A Labour Market Council has been established, comprised of industry leaders and labour market specialists to monitor and advise on the implementation of the Pathways to Work Strategy. Profiling is now in place for all jobseekers. Pathways reforms adopted earlier continued to have an enhanced impact in 2014.</p> <p>This included increasing initial one-to-one guidance interviews with jobseekers (with the number of interviews, at 169,000, up 8% on 2013) and making 57,000 FET places available to the long-term unemployed. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP), under the Pathways to Work, was also launched in January 2014, and YGIP measures were progressively introduced throughout 2014.</p> <p>Further policy measures adopted since mid-2014, and announced in the updated document Pathways to Work 2015, will enhance reforms already underway especially for the long-term unemployed and youth unemployed. Continuing large-scale reform of FET remains a major plank of the Pathways to Work agenda, affecting all categories of jobseeker.</p> <p>Profiling is now rolled out, with the data which makes up the profiling characteristics captured from a combination of information provided by the client to the Department (on UP1 – claim application form) and from a profiling questionnaire. Utilising this range of characteristics, a score or value known as a PEX (Probability of Exit) is calculated using total information from both data sources. Using the model allows the Department to engage with unemployed customers in a more focused way, targeting those who need most employment supports as early as possible.</p>
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<p>The Government discussion paper, "Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents," put forward proposals:</p> <p>(i) Aimed at reforming income supports for lone parents and other low income families and supporting them into education, training and employment.</p> <p>(ii) To tackle obstacles to employment for lone parents and other low income families. Also included were 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 proposals will address supports such as access to childcare, flexible training and education programmes, and positive opportunities for customers.</p>	<p>The Department of Social Protection outlines the significant developments for 2013 and 2014 as follows:</p> <p>(i) The introduction of the Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) transitional arrangement to take account of the specific caring responsibilities of lone parents with young children. This caters for one-Parent Family Payment (OFP) recipients who lose their entitlement to the OFP payment, who have a youngest child aged less than 14 years, and who are entitled to the JA payment. These customers are exempt from the JA conditionality's that require them to be available for, and genuinely seeking, full-time work, and also, from having to prove unemployment. This allows these parents to balance their caring responsibilities with part-time work, while still receiving income support. These customers also have access to the Department's range of work activation supports via a one to one meeting with a case officer where a personal development plan will be produced to assist the customer to move into employment. Once the youngest child reaches 14 years, if the customer still needs income support, s/he will move to the full JA conditionality.</p> <p>In addition the Department has issued a research call, via the Irish Research Council, to carry out a study of international best practice in the area of activation for lone parents including a survey of government and non-government organisations that work with lone parents to report on the activation measures that will assist this cohort. This research is due to be completed in May of 2015.</p> <p>(ii) The Afterschool Childcare scheme (ASCC) that was announced in Budget 2013 was implemented with funding of €14m in 2013 which was allocated from savings in the Department of Social Protection. In 2014 this funding was re-allocated with €2m allocated to ASCC, €7.5m allocated to the CE Childcare Programme and €4.5m allocated to quality improvement initiatives within the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). The ASCC scheme was continuously reviewed and revised by the Department since its introduction in 2013, based on feedback from all stakeholders with the last release on 14th July 2014. This release included expanding the scheme to additional customers, reducing the parental contribution to €15 in line with the CE Childcare Programme and introducing a pick-up option at no additional cost to the parent. The funding allocation for the ASCC scheme has, on the instruction of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), been reduced by the DCYA from €2.2 million to €1.3 million in 2015, resulting in a reduction in places available under the scheme from a maximum of 800 places to a maximum of 500 places.</p> <p>The DCYA is responsible for the provision of childcare services. The Department of Social Protection has been advised that the DCYA is proposing the establishment of a small group at senior level to carry out an economic and cost benefit analysis of policies and future options for increasing the supply, accessibility and affordability of quality child care. The Group will be led by the DCYA and it is intended that it will finalise its work in Spring 2015. The Department of Social Protection supports the proposal to establish this group and welcomes the opportunity to participate as a member of the group.</p>
<p>The Activation & Family Support Program (AFSP) is provided by the Department of Social Protection 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 2014 Revised Estimates provided €2.3m for the Activation and Family Support Programme (AFSP), down from €3.4m in 2013.</p>

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>In 2013, 2,086 offenders were referred by the Probation Service to 15 Training and Employment Officers of the Linkage Programme and 1,097 individuals were placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes. In 2014, 2,101 offenders were referred by the Probation Service to 15 Training and Employment Officers of the Linkage Programme and 1,228 individuals were placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Two Restorative Justice Community Based Organisations funded by the Probation Service, Restorative Justice in the Community and Restorative Justice Services, have continued to expand their services in the Courts of Criminal Justice and Tipperary/ Offaly and into Cork District Courts.</p>
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Older People	
NAPinclusion Action	Progress Report 2013 /2014
<p>High Level Goal 7: 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.</p>	<p>The HSE is continuing to progress a range of measures to improve home care provision overall, to standardise services nationally and to promote quality and safety. In 2014 the HSE began a full review of home care services with a view to improving services generally.</p> <p>Key Data 2013 & 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €185m to provide 10.3m Home Help Hours to 50,000 • €130m to provide Home Care Packages (HCP) to 10,870 people at any one • Additional €10m to support 190 clients with high dependency levels with Intensive HCPs (introduced 2014).
<p>High level Goal 8: 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.</p>	<p>In Budgets 2013 and 2014, there were no changes to the rates of primary weekly social welfare payments, including increases for qualified adults or qualified children. Budget 2015, announced in October 2014, increased the Living Alone Allowance (paid to pensioners and people with disabilities living alone) from €7.70 a week to €9 a week.</p>
<p>The Department of Health is currently considering the future of HSE Provision of Residential Care for Older People. This review will consider the position of all HSE residential facilities for Older People in terms of meeting the National Standards and Regulations. It will also consider local demographic pressures and the extent of existing public and private provision, with a view to developing an overall strategy on how the Executive should continue to provide this service in view of current budgetary and other pressures.</p>	<p>Following completion of viability review of public long-stay units, in 2013 the HSE produced an action plan to outline the operation of its services in the short term and give an overview of requirements for the next 10 years. The Department of Health and the HSE continued to work on policy development in relation to public residential provision, taking account of the age and structure of many of the public units, together with existing and future demographic pressures.</p>

<p>The Department of Health will develop, with the HSE, an overall strategy for the continued public provision of long stay residential care, taking account of budgetary pressures and changing demographics.</p>	<p>The regime of registration and inspection of designated centres for older people, introduced under the Health Act 2007 commenced in 2009. All designated centres for older people are currently registered up to 2015. The Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations were reviewed and revised Regulations came into operation on 1 July 2014. The corresponding Registration of Designated Centres for Older People Regulations was reviewed in 2014 and will be submitted for Ministerial approval in 2015. HIQA's National Quality Standards for Residential Care settings for Older People were revised in 2014 and have been submitted for Ministerial approval.</p>
<p>The Department of Health will develop and implement national standards for home support services which will be subject to Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) inspection.</p>	<p>Both funding and service provision were maintained at planned target levels in 2013 & 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €185m provided 10.3m Home Help hours to in excess of 50,000 • €130m provided Home Care Packages (HCP) to 10,870 people at any one • An additional €10m to support 190 clients with high dependency levels (at any one time) with Intensive HCPs were introduced IN 2014. It is expected that up to 250 people could benefit from this initiative in a full year.
<p>The main focus of Community Intervention Teams (CITs) is the prevention of avoidable hospital admission and the facilitation of early discharge from hospitals through the provision of care in the community.</p> <p>CITs services will be additional to existing mainstream community services and will address issues such as Capacity to provide fast-tracked non-medical care or supports for an interim period while mainstream services are being arranged for the patient on a 7 day per week basis. This is achieved by providing dedicated services to ensure an immediate response for patients who are identified by the GP as requiring new or enhanced home supports; The link between community services and patients being discharged from Accident and Emergency Departments, who require community supports;</p> <p>The HSE plans to enhance primary care services by developing CITs nationally within primary care settings by the end of 2014.</p>	<p>CITs work in partnership with Primary Care Teams (PCTs), General Practice, Community Response Beds, community nursing, home support services, acute hospitals and other professional, voluntary and external providers to deliver enhanced services and patient centred care in the most appropriate setting. The CIT provides a rapid and integrated response to an appropriate patient with an acute episode of illness who requires CIT services for a defined/short period of time (ideally <72 hours) in the community/home. There are 8 functioning CITs, During 2014; over 14,000 people were referred to CIT services.</p>

<p>Older people will be encouraged and supported to access further and higher education and appropriate targets will be set in the context of proposals on life-long learning.</p>	<p>Apart from Youthreach for early school-leavers and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) for people of working age, there is no upper age limit for access to Adult and Further Education programmes. In 2013, approximately 23% of adult literacy and 16% of Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) participants were over 55 years of age. Older people also participate in classes funded under the Community Education programme. This programme funds classes in computer (mainly introductory), language and various hobby type courses mainly through the provision of tutor hours.</p>
<p>The level of the Qualified Adult Allowance for pensioner spouses will be increased to the level of the State Pension (non-contributory) by 2009.</p>	<p>There were no changes to the rates of weekly payments for pensioners in 2013 to 2015 (including payments made to qualified adults). Rates maintained.</p>
<p>Local authorities implement their Housing Action Plans in accordance with agreed housing programmes, including through meeting the needs of specific vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Local authorities continue to implement their Housing Action Plans in accordance with agreed housing programmes, including through meeting the needs of specific vulnerable groups. Progress on implementation is reported annually through Housing Action Plan meetings between the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and local authorities.</p>
<p>The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government will continue to prioritise available resources to the suite of Grants for Older People and People with a Disability to enable them continue independent living and remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.</p>	<p>In 2013, total funding of €47 million was provided under the suite of Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes and some 7,011 grants paid. In 2014, total funding of €48 million was provided and 7,547 grants were paid.</p>
<p>The Senior Alert Scheme encourages community support for vulnerable older people by providing grant assistance toward the purchase and installation of personal monitored alarms to enable older persons of limited means, to continue to live securely in their homes.</p> <p>The Scheme is administered by local community and voluntary groups with the support of the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government.</p>	<p>The Seniors Alert Scheme transferred from Tubbercurry to Dublin in October 2013 following a decision of the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government to consolidate as far as possible business units in a single geographical location. The Department undertook to consider new approaches to the Scheme in 2014 and arising from this, it was decided that the scheme be managed by Pobal. The Scheme will transfer to Pobal mid-2015.</p> <p>Funding allocated in 2013 was €2.35 million, provided to 575 groups and benefitting 10,597 beneficiaries. This level of funding was maintained in 2014 funding 538 groups and benefitting 7,120 beneficiaries.</p>

People with Disabilities																
NAPinclusion Action	Progress Report 2013 /2014															
<p>High Level Goal 9: 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 (QNHS). 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.</p>	<p>Analysis from the QNHS equality module (2010) indicated that people with a disability had a labour market participation rate of 36 per cent. This compared to a rate of 77 per cent for those without a disability.</p> <p>The 2011 census showed 33% of people with disabilities of working age in work, compared to 66% of non-disabled people. In total, there were 112,000 people with disabilities in employment.</p> <p>Since 2013 the National Disability Authority has led on the development of a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities. The Strategy is a cross-government approach that brings together actions by different Departments and state agencies in a concerted effort to address the barriers and challenges that impact on the employment of people with disabilities. Substantial work on developing the Strategy was undertaken in 2014 with a strategy document drafted and discussed by stakeholders. A commitment to publish the Comprehensive Employment Strategy was an action under the Action Plan for Jobs 2014.</p> <p>The Department of Social Protection (DSP) provides a wide range of income supports and labour market services for people with disabilities, which facilitates their increased participation in the labour force. These include the Wage Subsidy Scheme, a supported employment programme (EmployAbility) and the Reasonable Accommodation Fund. The Department also manages the Disability Activation Project, co-funded with the European Social Fund (ESF), the aim of which is to increase the capacity and potential of people on disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market, based on a case management approach. The project commenced in late 2012 and is due to end in April 2015. People on a range of disability and illness income support payments can also participate in Community Employment, which provides participants with an opportunity to engage in useful part-time work within their communities on a temporary, fixed-term basis.</p> <p>Number of People with disabilities on the DSP Employment Support Schemes / Programmes at year end</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="891 1098 2024 1198"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Wage Subsidy Scheme</th> <th>Supported Employment</th> <th>DACT</th> <th>Community Employment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>1,548</td> <td>2,936</td> <td>797</td> <td>2,352</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>1,159</td> <td>2,872</td> <td>1,178</td> <td>1,817</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Wage Subsidy Scheme	Supported Employment	DACT	Community Employment	2014	1,548	2,936	797	2,352	2013	1,159	2,872	1,178	1,817
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<p>The National Disability Strategy is a whole of Government approach to advancing the social inclusion of people with disabilities. The Implementation Plan 2013-2015 sets out practical measures that will be taken to advance the National Disability Strategy over this period.</p>	<p>The Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) reported that all structures established by the DCYA to consult with children and young people continue to be open to all children, including children with disabilities. Guidance has been developed to help ensure the participation of seldom heard young people in Comhairle na nÓg (CNN) events, which includes developing partnerships with organisations that work with and for seldom heard young people, ensuring these organisations are represented on local CNN Steering Groups, and conducting capacity–building programmes. Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014 – 2020) commits to children and young people having a voice in decisions that affect their lives and recognised that children with disabilities are among those seldom-heard children who are harder to reach and hear. DCYA is currently finalising a toolkit to assist organisations in consultations with hard to reach children, which will be published in late 2014. In addition, the forthcoming National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision Making makes specific commitments to consulting with children with disabilities in relation to the evaluation of the health and well-being services provided to them.</p> <p>The revised Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, which was published in 2011, provides clarity and guidance for individuals and organisations in identifying and responding appropriately to child abuse and neglect. It also sets out what organisations that care for, or work with, children should do to ensure they are safe whilst in the care of the organisation. Chapter 8 focuses on Especially Vulnerable Children and provides additional guidance on children who may be especially vulnerable and who may have been abused or neglected or who are at risk of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>These include children in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential settings • Children in the care of the State under the Child Care Act 1991 (foster care; relative care; residential care) • Children who are homeless • Children with disabilities • Separated children seeking asylum • Children being trafficked. <p>It clarifies the roles of Tusla, the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) when dealing with such children. The publication of the Guidance was accompanied by the publication, by the HSE, of a Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook. This also includes specific guidance on children with disabilities.</p> <p>The Children First Bill, 2014, which will put elements of the Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011) on a statutory footing, was published in April. It has completed second stage in the Dáil, and Committee stage will be scheduled in the near future. Certain persons, who are mandated persons under the Bill, will be required by the legislation to report child welfare and protection concerns to the Child and Family Agency. Mandated persons will also be required to report to the Agency any disclosures of harm made to the mandated person by a child. The reporting of harm to children by persons, who by virtue of their training, qualifications and professional experience are well equipped to recognise harm, is likely to have a positive effect on the process of assessment of risk by the Agency. The Bill also provides that organisations providing services to children will have to consider the potential for risk to children availing of their services and demonstrate awareness and good practice in a Child Safeguarding Statement which will be available to parents and the public</p>
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generally.

In parallel to the legislative process, the Department has commenced an exercise to revise and update the existing Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). This is to ensure that the Guidance, which will continue as the basis for all citizens to report concerns, reflects the new legislative obligations and provides, in one place, a complete reference resource for individuals and organisations. This will provide clarity and ensure consistency between the proposed legislation and the existing non-statutory obligations which will continue to operate administratively for all sectors of society. The Children First legislation, once enacted and commenced, will represent an important and necessary addition to the child welfare and protection system.

The **Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation** is currently developing a new website which will include, as committed under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, (a) In conjunction with the Department of Social Protection (DSP), provision of links to allow employers to disseminate information on retention of employees who acquire a disability (b) Subject to the provision of appropriate links from relevant Departments and Agencies, and in conjunction with DSP and the Department of Health, highlight, through our website the supports that are available to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities in the open labour market.

The **Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport** reported that accessibility improvements to public transport services are being advanced in the context of Transport Access for All, the Transport Sectorial Plan under the Disability Act 2005. The Plan is available on the Department's website www.dttas.ie and is premised on the principle that through accessibility improvements to the public transport system for people with disabilities access for all people will be improved. Transport Access for All was first published in 2006 and reviewed in 2008. A further review was completed in 2012 and published in 2013 following approval of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The **Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources** reported that the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015 (NDSIP) was prepared and agreed by the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG) as part of a commitment in the Programme for Government, to progress the National Disability Strategy. The NDSIG monitors the implementation of the Plan. The DCENR Implementation Plan consists of actions contained in its Sectorial Plan. Monitoring the NDSIP is such as to allow flexibility to include additional actions that may come to the fore in relation to existing issues already covered by the published Plan. The NDSIP is also monitored in terms of outcomes through a suite of indicators developed by the NDA. The NDA conducted a mid-term review of the Plan in 2014.

During 2013 the **Department of Health** completed the health aspects of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan (NDSIP) in conjunction with Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG) on the National Disability Strategy. The plan was prepared and agreed by the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG) and submitted to Government on 23rd July 2013 under the lead of the Department of Justice and Equality. In 2013 and 2014 the Department of Health participated in both cross Departmental meetings on employment, housing and deafness/sign language and plenary meetings of the NDSIG. During 2014 the Department of Health reconstituted and met with its Disability Advisory Group on the implementation of the NDSIP.

Progress on the NDSIP is monitored and during 2014 a report on progress on the actions under the NDSIP was sent to the Dept. of Justice and Equality.

The Department of Justice & Equality reported that the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan was published in July 2013. The High Level Goals of the Plan are that people with disabilities are free from discrimination; are supported to live the life they choose; live ordinary lives in ordinary places, participating in the life of the community; and are enabled to reach their full potential. Each Goal has specific objectives and actions through which it will be achieved. The Plan, as approved, contains strong oversight mechanisms to ensure delivery of these actions. Progress on the Plan is reviewed by the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group through thematic meetings which deal with specific issues. Such meetings are attended by all relevant bodies to ensure cross-sectorial input and review. All actions in the Plan relevant to the chosen issue are discussed and the progress made is mapped against commitments in the Plan. Three such thematic meetings have been held to date and focused on the themes of Irish Sign Language, Housing and Employment. Consultations are underway on the follow up to the current NDS Implementation Plan, which expires at end-2015, and on reviewing our approaches to consultation with people with disabilities to ensure that there is real participation by them in monitoring the existing strategy and in development of themes, objectives and actions for the successor measure. A Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities, with realistic and achievable targets is also in the process of being developed.

The **Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht** has been active in relation to activities which will promote greater social inclusion for people with disabilities. In particular, visitor facilities, trails and all new signage in National Parks will, where possible, contain appropriate enhancements for those with disabilities and the Department is working with the Office of Public Works to facilitate similar initiatives at national monuments in State care. This is mirrored by initiatives to improve signage and information panels in our cultural institutions. The art and cultural sector is also working to increase opportunities for artists and audiences with disabilities and is seeking to promote improved access at all venues.

The **Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government** continues to implement the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan. It supports the Access officer Network through funding to the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) It takes a central role in the implementation of the Disability Strategy and provides a range of advice and support to local authorities in that regard.

The **Department of Education and Skills** reported that that an integrated approach is being adopted by the education and health sectors to target resources to the areas of greatest need. Progress in both sectors is kept under review by a Cross-Sectorial Team which comprises of representatives of: the Departments of Education and Skills, Health, Children and Youth Affairs the National Council for Special Education and the Health Service Executive. The Cross Sectorial Team last met on 21st November 2014 and is due to meet again on 11th February 2015.

<p>The Disability Act will be commenced for those children aged 5-18 years in tandem with the implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has outlined the steps to be taken to facilitate implementation on a phased basis up to 2010.</p> <p>Issues around the cost of disability will be progressed in the context of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the needs assessment process to be established under Part 2 of the Disability Act, 2005, (due to commence by mid-2007); • The opportunities for the rationalisation and development of payments following the transfer of disability-related income maintenance schemes from the HSE to the Department of Social Protection. Provision for the transfer of these schemes is to be made in the Social Welfare Bill 2008; • The Disability Survey, which will be published in 2007; • The Inter-departmental Group on the Costs of Disability will oversee these developments. 	<p>The D/Education & Skills reported that in light of the very difficult economic situation and the significant costs involved, the full implementation of Education for Persons with Special Needs (EPSEN) Act was deferred. It is intended to bring into effect many of the good ideas contained in the EPSEN Act, on a non-statutory basis initially, through policy developments across a range of areas, in conjunction with National Council for Special Education (NCSE) policy advice. While the NCSE's Report on Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Schools, published in May 2013, recommends that the EPSEN Act be fully implemented as soon as possible, the report also states that the NCSE recognises that the current economic climate makes it unlikely that the Government will be able to implement this recommendation in the short to medium term. While awaiting the full implementation of the EPSEN Act, the NCSE has made a number of recommendations aimed at developing a better or more effective alternative to the current resource allocation model.</p> <p>The NCSE published its Report on a Proposed New Model for Allocating Teachers for Students with Special Educational Needs on 18th June 2014. The report recommends that all children should be allocated additional resources in line with their level of need, rather than by disability category and a new allocation model should be developed, based on a schools educational profile, while also providing a baseline allocation to every mainstream school in order to support inclusion. The collection of data required to support the new allocation model, including data in relation to social context of schools and standardised test data and a consultation process with education partners, stakeholders, and parent representative groups has been completed in relation to the development of a new model.</p> <p>Taking into account the data which has been collected from schools to date, the Department of Education and Skills and the NCSE are now analysing how the recommended model would make allocations to schools, and consider, whether the proposed new resource teaching allocation model for schools can be implemented, and if so from what date. This evaluation will also consider the impact of a new allocation model on schools and on children. The Cross Sectorial Team continues to meet to address issues of mutual concern for children with disabilities.</p>
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<p>The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013 identifies six goals and associated actions in the following key areas; communicating the rationale for Access; supporting the development of national framework of policies and initiatives to achieve access; the creation of further routes of access and progression to higher education; teaching and learning practices; financial support and resources and making the case for a more robust data collection and evaluation framework to advise the development targets and indicators of progress.</p>	<p>The Department of Education and Skills reported on</p> <p>(i) Information and financial support for students with disabilities: The National Access Plan for 2008-13 has concluded. A consultation process on a new plan has recently concluded, a process led by a Higher Education Authority (HEA) consultation paper published in August 2014. This paper included a review of targets set by the 2008-13 plans, including those in respect of students with disabilities. Over the period of that plan a target was set to increase participation by students with sensory, physical and multiple disabilities (as these are the most under-represented groups). The target of 932 students by 2013 was met and exceeded, with the final outcome being 1,302 students - an increase of almost 180% from levels of participation in 2007. In parallel with this, the overall number of students supported through the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) more than doubled over the course of the last national access plan. In 2013-14, €10.3million was allocated through the FSD to support the participation of 8,800 students in further and higher education. www.Studentfinance.ie continues to be a source of information on financial support for students, including those with disabilities.</p> <p>(ii) Students with disabilities: progression from second level to further and higher education: The Disability Access Route (DARE) continues as part of the main Central Applications Office (CAO) process. This route aims to promote opportunities for progression to higher education by students in second level. An evaluation of the objectives, impact and operational approach of DARE is currently being finalised. Disability officers also continue to co-ordinate a 'higher options' fair for students with disabilities in second level seeking to access to higher education. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) facilitates students with special educational needs in second level and further education to progress to higher education.</p> <p>Work by the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) continues to be supported by the HEA and higher education institutions. AHEAD plays an important role in the provision of independent information and advice for students with disabilities in second and third level, as well as the provision of training for staff in higher education. AHEAD also continues to monitor research and publish guidance on good practices for students with disabilities.</p>
<p>By 2010, a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities will be developed by the Department of Social Protection.</p>	<p>Since 2013 the National Disability Authority has led on the development of a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities. The Strategy is a cross-government approach that brings together actions by different Departments and state agencies in a concerted effort to address the barriers and challenges that impact on the employment of people with disabilities. Substantial work on developing the Strategy was undertaken in 2014 with a strategy document drafted and discussed by stakeholders. A commitment to publish the Comprehensive Employment Strategy was an action included in the Action Plan for Jobs 2014.</p>

<p>The National Housing Strategy for People with Disability 2011-2016 sets out a framework for the proposed delivery of housing for people with disabilities through mainstream housing policy.</p> <p>The strategy aims to support people with disabilities to live as independently as possible and also supports Government policy on the deinstitutionalisation of people with disabilities to more appropriate community based living arrangements.</p>	<p>The Housing Agency with oversight from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government are actively managing the implementation of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability. The first report on implementation covers the period from September 2012 to December 2013 and outlines the progress made in achieving the overall vision of the strategy and is available on the department's website. A second progress report is imminent.</p>
<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 Sectorial Plan under the Disability Act 2005.</p> <p>Measures include:</p> <p>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;</p> <p>Making all urban buses accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2012</p> <p>Making practically all inter-urban passenger rail services accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2009.</p>	<p>To date, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of accessible vehicles together with improved access to much of the public transport infrastructure. Many targets have already been achieved and significant progress has been made towards the realisation of several others. Even so, much remains to be done and work in that regard is on-going even allowing for the significant economic challenges facing us. While Transport Access for All does not include tourism and sport accessibility matters, these are addressed in the Government's National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan (NDSIP) together with Transport Sectorial Plan actions. A committee, which includes representatives of people with disabilities, is in place to monitor delivery of the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport's NDSIP actions and to make recommendations in that regard.</p>

Communities	
NAPinclusion Action	Progress Report 2013 /2014
<p>High Level Goal 10 Address the housing support needs of those unable to provide for their accommodation from their own resources, including through delivering more and better outcomes for vulnerable, disadvantaged and special needs households. This approach will involve an increasing important role for revenue funded delivery mechanisms including the Social Housing Leasing Initiative and the Rental Accommodation Scheme.</p> <p>The needs of some 60,000 new households will be addressed over the period 2007 to 2009. Under the National Development Plan (NDP) progress towards this will be reviewed after three years of activity. However resources reflected in the NDP will allow for a broadly similar level of output beyond 2009 resulting in the needs of some 140,000 households overall being provided for in the period 2007-2013.</p>	<p>The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government reported that approx. 23,500 households benefitted in 2013 through the various social housing delivery, improvement and support mechanisms, while approx. 30,000 households benefitted in 2014. These totals include units improved under the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting programme – 13,107 in 2013 and 20,343 in 2014 – some of which were existing housing authority clients and therefore would not represent new households having housing needs met.</p>

<p>High Level Goal 11 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.</p>	<p>It has been estimated that up to 95% of people's health and social service needs can be properly met within a primary care setting and Primary Care Teams (PCTs) contribute greatly to enhancing community based health services in these areas. The key objective of the Primary Care Strategy is to develop services in the community which will give people direct access to integrated multi-disciplinary teams of general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others. The HSE has identified a need for 485 Primary Care Teams to be developed nationally. The development of the Teams is a work in progress with enhancements occurring in terms of team membership and organisational delivery over time. At the end of December 2014, core Team staff amounted to approximately 3,000, comprising nursing, therapy and support staff.</p> <p>The Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) Report launched by the HSE on 8th Oct. 2014, sets out plans for a comprehensive reorganisation of health services outside the acute hospital system. The primary focus is to provide the maximum proportion of care to people in the communities where they live and to achieve joined-up, integrated services. The present 17 Integrated Service Areas will be replaced by nine Community Healthcare Organisations, which will be part of the HSE. Existing resources will be reorganised into 90 Primary Care Networks, each serving about 50,000 of the population. Each network will be headed by an identified, accountable person responsible for care delivery by professionals such as nurses, therapists and social workers so as to meet a wide range of people's needs in a joined-up way. The new structures will have a strong focus on building good linkages with the acute hospital system so that people's care pathways are appropriately planned and their needs met in the right setting.</p> <p>The development of Primary Care Centres (PCC) to accommodate the HSE's Primary Care Teams and GPs in the one location is a key enabler for the delivery of primary care services. To-date, there are 85 PCCs in operation across the country. There are currently 37 locations where PCCs are under construction or at an advanced planning stage. These are expected to be completed by 2017.</p>
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<p>High Level Goal 12 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.</p>	<p>The strategy continues to be implemented within the constraints imposed by the current economic climate. The Department of Education and Skills continues to provide resources to students, including migrants, who have an identified educational need. In early 2014 as part of the Government's social inclusion remit an interdepartmental committee was established to develop a new Immigrant migration strategy. The Department of Education and Skills is on this committee and is actively involved in the development of the new strategy. In Sept 2014 the Working Group on the Protection Process was established. The Department of Education and Skills is also a member of this group and is committed to formulating better outcomes for migrants. A comprehensive 'Guide to the Irish Education system' has been developed and uploaded to the Department's website. This is a valuable resource to all parents. Currently there is work ongoing within the Department of Education and Skills in relation to the collection of relevant data. This data will inform the department when drafting policy and with issues such as resourcing.</p>
<p>The Family Support Agency (FSA) provides funding under the Scheme of Grants to voluntary and community organisations providing marriage, child and bereavement counselling services. The objective is to support continuity and stability in family life.</p>	<p>The establishment of Tusla the Child and Family Agency brings together a range of existing services for children and families to one agency. The Agency is now responsible for the services previously provided by the Family Support Agency (including counselling services), the National Educational Welfare Board and also for the functions of Child and Family services previously provided by the HSE. The coming together under one Agency of services previously delivered across three separate organisations provides a platform for the delivery of a more efficient and effective service to vulnerable children and families. The range of responsibilities under the remit of the Agency will contribute to achievement of the overall vision for the Agency which is seeking to bring about greater integration of services, less duplication of services and a focus on early intervention and community engagement.</p> <p>The Child and Family Agency's Counselling Grants Programme funds a broad range of national, regional and local organisations where there is a genuine need and demand for the services and they can be provided at a low cost to clients,.</p>

<p>The Family Support Agency operates the Family Resource Centre Programme. The aim of the Family Resource Centre Programme is to combat disadvantage and improve the functioning of the family unit. Tusla, The Child & Family Agency was established on the 1st January 2014 and is now the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. It represents the most comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services ever undertaken in Ireland.</p>	<p>The Child and Family Agency's Business Plan for 2014 set out a number of priorities in relation to family support services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting the transition of the former Family Support Agency programmes into the Child and Family Agency, a focus for the Agency in 2014 will be on the integration of these programmes within the new structure. The alignment of this activity will be considered along with the other Community Sector organisations • Building on the significant strengths of the Family Resource Centres in meeting the Agency's mandate for community-based early intervention and family support. In that regard, the development of family support as a preventative and early intervention strategy will feature strongly with particular regard to the roll-out of the Child and Family Agency's National Service Delivery Framework and alignment of the Family Resource Centre Programme within the local community interventions.
<p>Primary healthcare services will be further developed, drawing on the Primary Care Strategy, by ongoing investment to ensure integrated, accessible services for people within their own communities. The target is to provide 484 primary care teams by end 2013.</p>	<p>Primary Care Teams The Government is committed to the implementation of the Primary Care Strategy. The key objective of the Strategy is to develop services in the community which will give people direct access to integrated multi-disciplinary teams of general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others. Additional services such as speech and language therapy, dietetic and podiatry services will be provided on a network basis. It has been estimated that up to 95% of people's health and social service needs can be properly met within a primary care setting and Primary Care Teams (PCTs) contribute greatly to enhancing community based health services in these areas.</p> <p>The development of the Teams is a work in progress with enhancements occurring in terms of team membership and organisational delivery over time. The HSE 2014 Service Plan identified a need for 485 PCTs by end of 2014 as the foundation structure for health service delivery in the Irish Health Care System. By the end of December 2013, some 420 teams were operating, i.e. holding clinical team meetings on individual client cases and involving GPs and HSE staff. Some 45 other Teams were holding multi-disciplinary clinical meetings between HSE Staff without GP involvement. Since then, a number of GPs have withdrawn from PCT meetings as a protest against cuts under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) ACT, 2009, cuts but they continue to engage with HSE staff on individual patient cases. At the end of December, core Team staff amounted to approximately 3,000, comprising nursing, therapy and support staff.</p> <p>Primary Care Team Posts: In 2013, Primary Care funding of €18.525 million, nationally, was made available to support the recruitment of 264.5 prioritised front-line primary care team posts and enhance the capacity of the primary care sector. At the end of December 2014, 247 posts were filled or start dates agreed. The recruitment process is ongoing in relation to the remaining posts.</p> <p>Primary Care Centres: Where possible, primary care teams are based in a single facility to provide easy accessibility for patients and to enhance multidisciplinary teamwork. However, teams are working very effectively where they are not co-located. Although they are not in one single building, they still come together to have clinical team meetings. There were 85 Primary Care Centres in operation at the end of December 2014 (42 of these opened since March 2011). There are currently 37 locations where PCCs are under construction or at an advanced planning stage under three methods of delivery: 16 – Direct/own build (funded through the HSE's multi-annual Capital Plan), 14 – PPP, and 7 – Operational Lease.</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>GP Out-of-Hours Services The HSE reports that 90% of the population have access to GP out-of-hours services in 14 centres nationally, in all HSE regions, in at least part of every county and that this service dealt with approximately 975,000 calls in 2012; 990,000 calls in 2013 and 96,000 calls in 2014. Over 2,000 GPs provide services in the co-ops. Attendance at a treatment centre would usually follow initial telephone triage - the HSE reports that this is a good proxy measure for hospital avoidance via Emergency Department attendance. In 2014, funding of €38 million approximately was provided by the HSE in respect of GP out-of-hours fees (special type consultations and supplementary out-of-hours fees). This figure does not include GP out-of-hours costs in respect of call centres, drivers, nurse triage services, etc.</p> <p>Cross-Border GP Out-of-Hours Service It is estimated that for approximately 65,000 people across the border area the closest GP out-of-hours centre is in the other jurisdiction. A pilot project allowing patients in part of Inishowen, Co. Donegal to attend an out-of-hours GP service in Derry came into operation on 10th January 2007. A second pilot, allowing people resident in South Armagh to obtain a service in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan commenced on 26th November 2007. Since commencement up to 31st December 2014, 732 patients from the Inishowen area of Donegal have received a GP out-of-hours service in Derry and 2,730 patients from South Armagh have received a GP out-of-hours service in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan. Uptake of the service is being monitored on an ongoing basis by the relevant health authorities in both jurisdictions.</p>
<p>The HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 - 2012, which is presently being reviewed, provides a framework within which the health and care needs of people from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds are addressed, while staff are supported in delivering responsive, culturally competent services.</p> <p>Implementation of recommendations of the strategy is taking place on a phased basis over a 5 year time frame.</p>	<p>A strategic HSE action focuses on implementation of ethnic equality monitoring and associated rollout of an ethnic identifier. Such collection and application of disaggregated data is designed to inform evidenced based planning and monitoring to ensure equal access of members of all groups to health services. Progress in this area has been slow, but a number of projects are underway in relation to this, including imminent rollout of an online ethnic equality monitoring training package for HSE staff. Although overall priorities are identified, each Traveller Health Unit (THU) carries out activities based on locally identified needs.</p> <p>A wide range of activities are affected in this way, with reporting becoming increasingly tailored towards measuring outputs rather than descriptive inputs. Various innovative projects have been supported too, with built in reporting criteria aimed at informing on-going adaptation, learning and potential replication across all THUs. It is in this way that such initiatives as the Asthma Education programme, Travelling to Wellbeing (Suicide prevention) and other projects aimed at enhancing mental health service delivery are supported and funded.</p> <p>A range of achievements have been made under the HSE National Intercultural Strategy 2007 - 2012, for example, launch of a clinic for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).</p>

<p>The HSE National Traveller Health Advisory Forum (NTHAF) works in partnership with the Traveller Health Advisory Committee to advance efforts around improving Traveller health. This committee comprises representation by HSE staff, Traveller Health Units and Travellers. Two Working groups – Primary Care and Chronic Conditions – have been established under the ambit of the NTHAF, with agreed terms of reference and associated identified actions.</p>	<p>Positive steps have been affected towards improving Traveller health outcomes. The overall structure of the HSE National Traveller Health Advisory Forum – comprising health service staff, Traveller Health Unit (THU) representatives and Traveller representation, continues to provide a strategic and operational framework towards promotion of a consistent approach across Traveller Health Units to addressing Traveller health priorities identified in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study. At the same time, efforts are promoted in respect of aligning primary care health work within the THUs with existing clinical programmes. Work around diabetes is one example of this approach</p> <p>Targeted interventions are planned in those geographical locations where Roma are based i.e. Dublin, Waterford/ Wexford and Limerick. Examples of initiatives progressed during 2013 – 2014 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of Tallaght Roma Integration Project: Increasing demand for this mobile GP clinic has resulted in expansion of the service from one afternoon to two afternoons each week. During the 3rd quarter of 2014, the service was used by 180 individuals and 56 individuals used the service more than once. Approximately 37% of individuals using the service were children under 12 years. • Individuals using the Roma GP bus are in contact with the cultural mediators and support workers when arriving to use the service as well as when they are leaving the service. The role of the workers is to create a welcoming and warm atmosphere and also to help individuals to understand health related issues where there may be differing cultural understandings. The workers can also provide interpreting to Roma and to Romanian service users. • This model of service provision has proved very successful, both in terms of quality service delivery as well as in sign pointing Roma to other services, such as education, birth registration and social welfare offices. Planning is presently underway to move the clinic from a mobile bus to a clinic room close to acute hospital services. • Establishment of other clinics: Low threshold clinics for Roma (and other vulnerable service users) are in place in central Dublin and in Limerick. These clinics offer access to GP services to marginalised service users who are not generally able to use mainstream services. • Support for Roma Outreach work: The HSE has provided funding to a range of projects aimed at supporting Roma to engage with health services, identify general health needs and support access to information and services. Interagency work has also been undertaken. This includes work undertaken with Tusla to prioritise community needs, particularly in respect of Roma children. • Additionally, a new metric has been introduced from 2015: No. of people who received awareness raising and information on type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular health, with a target of 20% of the population in each THU.
<p>The National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 was launched in September 2009 with the overall strategic objective of continuing to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on the five pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research. In line with the strategy, implement the findings of the Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation relating to care plans to cater for the needs of individuals.</p>	<p>The Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation sets out the framework for a multifaceted approach to the delivery of rehabilitation. The National Drug Rehabilitation Implementation Committee (NDRIC) is working to implement a National Rehabilitation Framework and is overseeing the roll out of a national integrated model of care based on an interagency approach to the delivery of rehabilitation and shared care planning to ensure that service users access the range of supports required to assist them in their recovery. This model was piloted in 10 sites across the country. Following an evaluation in 2014, an implementation plan for the roll out of the Framework is being progressed through the HSE's drug & alcohol services and the Drug and Alcohol Task Forces.</p>

<p>Progress report on National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 including expenditure and statistics regarding volume of drug seizures, numbers of opiate misusers, access to treatment, needle exchange and research undertaken since last report.</p>	<p>The National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 is a cross cutting area of public policy and service delivery. It is based on a co-ordinated approach across many Government Departments and Agencies in conjunction with the Community and Voluntary sectors.</p> <p>The Department of Health will shortly be commencing work on the development of a new National Drugs Strategy for the period after 2016. The process will involve a comprehensive consultation with key stakeholders and the public on the current national drugs policy and future priorities. It will also take account of evidence-based research, information and data sources on the extent and nature of problem drug use in Ireland, including drug-related deaths. Details of the expenditure incurred by Departments and agencies on the drugs initiative are collated by the Drugs Policy Unit on an annual basis.</p> <p>Cross-departmental expenditure attributed to drugs programmes amounted to approximately €240m in 2014. In this regard over €1.5 billion has been attributed to drugs programmes since 2009. An annual progress report on the implementation of the 63 actions of the National Drugs Strategy is prepared each year. The 2013 report is available on the Department of Health website and the 2014 report is being compiled at present.</p> <p>A Garda Síochána and Revenue's Customs Service carried out many successful joint operations resulting in a number of significant seizures. There have also been a significant number of seizures arising from cooperation between An Garda Síochána and Revenue Customs and their international law enforcement colleagues. Details of seizures during the reference period are associated in the respective tables containing data provided by An Garda Síochána and Revenue's Customs Service. In recent years, the nature and scale of the drug problem has changed, due to the increasing geographic dispersal of problem drug use, the wider prevalence of polydrug use and the emergence of new psychoactive substances.</p> <p>The response of the HSE has involved the re-orientation of its addiction services towards polydrug issues, using a 4-tiered model approach as a national framework through which to deliver services. Solid progress is being made with a reduction in waiting times for access to services particularly outside the Dublin area and increased availability of places in rehabilitation programmes. This work is being complemented by greater focus on integrated care plans for individuals backed up by more co-ordinated inter-agency working. At the end of December 2014, national figures show that 97% of substance misusers over 18 commenced treatment within one calendar month following assessment. In total over 12,500 people are in receipt of drug treatment. Over 9,764 of them were in receipt of methadone maintenance treatment on 31 December 2014.</p> <p>The National Advisory Council on Drugs and Alcohol has recently commissioned a capture-recapture study to estimate the prevalence of opiate users. An up-to-date estimate relating to the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 is expected towards the end of 2015. In line with the National Drugs Strategy, the HSE has developed a national treatment and rehabilitation service that provides drug free and harm reduction approaches for problem substance users.</p>
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The HSE provides a variety of drug treatment interventions to reduce drug-related harm and which encourage problem substance users to engage with, and avail of such services.

These services include needle exchange provision, together with evidence-based treatment options such as methadone maintenance treatment, counselling and community and residential rehabilitation. In Dublin robust needle exchange services are provided through HSE clinics and voluntary sector providers. Needle exchange services outside Dublin have been expanded through pharmacies and 133 pharmacies are currently providing such services.

The number of unique service users has steadily increased during the reference period. In Q3 of 2014, there were 4,318 unique service users of needle exchange services. The National Drugs Prevalence Survey 2010/2011 was published in November 2011, the key findings included: (i) the level of last year drug use has been stable between 2006/7 and 2010/11; (ii) cannabis was the most commonly used illegal drug, with 25% of the adult population ever having used the drug; (iii) a higher proportion of men than women use illegal drugs with no indication of a narrowing of the gender gap since the last survey. Work has begun on the next National Drugs Prevalence Survey 2014/15. Fieldwork commenced in September 2014 and is progressing well. For the first time the survey will include questions about gambling addiction in addition to Illicit and licit drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

The National Hepatitis C Strategy 2011-2014, which was developed by the Health Service Executive, was published on 4 September 2012. It is estimated by the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) that at least 20,000 – 50,000 people in Ireland are currently chronically infected with the Hepatitis C virus; this represents a population prevalence of 0.5% to 1.2%, which is similar to other countries in Northern Europe. The majority of this group comprises injecting drug users. Very effective treatment is now available for Hepatitis C which eradicates the virus in over 50% of cases. The Strategy provides a framework for a coordinated and integrated response to Hepatitis C in Ireland.

The National Hepatitis C Strategy Implementation Committee was established by the HSE to progress the recommendations of the Strategy. The recommended actions are being implemented on a phased, prioritised basis. National Clinical Treatment Guidelines have been developed and the development of National Hepatitis C Screening Guidelines is ongoing. The guidelines will cover what population groups should be offered testing, in what settings, at what frequency, by what type of test. The development of new and innovative medicines for the treatment of Hepatitis C is an opportunity to alleviate the burden of Hepatitis C. There are a number of new Direct Acting Antiviral (DAA) therapies licensed in Europe for the treatment of Hepatitis C and it is expected that several other therapies will be licensed in the coming months. The HSE has recently put in place an early access programme for patients at the highest clinical need for the new DAA therapies for Hepatitis C.

<p>The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), funded by the Department of Social Protection, provide 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. Responsibility for MABS transferred to the Citizens Information Board (CIB) in July 2009.</p>	<p>The Citizens Information Board, together with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), established an approved intermediary service to assist individuals through the application process for a Debt Relief Notice. In 2013 15 additional temporary staff were assigned to MABS local services for the establishment of this Service for the purpose of processing Debt Relief Notices. At end 2014, 41 local MABS compiles are included in the Insolvency Service of Ireland Register of Approved Intermediaries and over 200 Debt Relief notices have been granted. Approved intermediaries do not charge a fee for their assistance to debtors applying for a Debt Relief Notice.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Although the respite care grant was reduced in Budget 2013 to €1,375 a year, core payments for carers remained protected, despite the fiscal challenges facing the State during this period. It should be noted that carers receive significant income supports with an income disregard and means test, which is the most generous within the social welfare system. In 2014 total payments to carers amounted to almost €806 million.</p>
<p>There will be an annual consultation meeting of carer representative organisations and relevant departments and agencies in order to inform future policy in this area.</p>	<p>Annual consultative meeting was held in 2013. The 2014 meeting was deferred, in consultation with carer organisations, to 24 February 2015.</p>
<p>From 2007 certain social welfare recipients who are providing full-time care and attention will be able to retain their main social welfare payment and also receive a payment equivalent to half-rate Carer's Allowance.</p>	<p>Half rate Carer's Allowance remained in place in Budgets 2013 to 2015.</p>
<p>The scope for the development of training courses for carers will be reviewed by the relevant departments and agencies over 2007 and 2008.</p>	<p>Under the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2014, up to €1 million will be required towards projects which provide training, information and related support services for Home Carers.</p>

<p>Co-ordinate the development of policies which integrate minority ethnic groups in Ireland, and which promote social inclusion, equality, diversity and the participation of immigrants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities.</p>	<p>The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) continues to implement the Government commitment in relation to migrant integration, partly through financial assistance to projects promoting integration of immigrants and combating racism.</p> <p>In 2013-2014, funding of €2,510,308 was provided to organisations (mainly local authorities and NGOs) to promote integration and tolerance. This is on a similar scale to 2011-2012. The Office continued to keep migrants and representative groups aware of new resources of interest developed, changing conditions attached to various schemes and material developed specifically for migrants in a range of languages through its website and mailing lists.</p> <p>Examples of initiatives supported by OPMI include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPIC Programme (Employment of People from Immigrant Communities) managed on OPMI's behalf by Business in the Community received funding of €925,372 in 2013-2014 to help vulnerable immigrants access employment or further training. The programme includes training in English for work, interview skills, living and working in Ireland and IT. This expenditure is co-funded at 50% by the European Social Fund. • Fáilte Isteach is a community project staffed by older volunteers welcoming new migrants through conversational English classes. Every week more than 600 volunteers teach over 2,000 students from 75 countries, collectively offering over a thousand hours of tuition each week. At 60 locations throughout the country Fáilte Isteach works at breaking down the barriers that migrants and communities face by extending the hand of friendship through the practical, welcoming and inclusive manner in which the programme is delivered. In 2013-2014, funding of €226,420 was granted to this project, making a total of €711,250 since 2008 • OPMI gave funding of €191,000 to New Communities Partnership to provide an advice and support service to migrants applying for citizenship • In 2014, OPMI provided funding of €69,000 to Yellow Flag, an Intercultural Programme for Schools. • The Office also provided financial support to local authorities for local migrant forums. These forums present an opportunity for migrants from different cultures and backgrounds to come together to raise issues that affect migrants on a daily basis. Migrant forums aim to ensure the development of coherent local/regional plans and policies that reflect the social, cultural and economic needs of ethnic minority groups in the area. • OPMI continued to administer the European Integration Fund (EIF) and the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and prepared the programme for the newly established Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) will replace the EIF and ERF. • In 2013-2014, OPMI resettled 182 refugees, the majority Afghans, Somali and Syrian, in Ireland and co-ordinated their integration into local communities.
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<p>Community Policing will facilitate and support interaction between the Garda Síochána and local authorities and local communities to address local policing issues. Community Policing will not only assist in the State’s development of its overall crime prevention response but will also act as a practical means of supporting the capacity of local communities to meaningfully participate in crime prevention.</p>	<p>The general structures for Community Policing outlined previously remain in place. In addition, a Garda Text Alert Scheme was launched in September 2013, following an initial pilot phase, and developed in cooperation with Muintir na Tíre, Neighbourhood Watch, the Irish Farmers Association and related stakeholders. It provides a further mechanism for Gardaí to provide crime prevention information to community contacts who in turn forward the information to all members of a community groups.</p> <p>This initiative involves over 500 local groups with in excess of 100,000 subscribers and with an estimated 200,000 text messages sent each month under the scheme. Every Garda Division, rural and urban, now offers the text alert service and An Garda Síochána have published guidelines to assist in the establishment and operation of local groups. Following a wide ranging review and public consultation process, and taking into account the establishment of new local government arrangements, revised guidelines for the operation of Joint Policing Committees (JPCs) were published by the Minister for Justice & Equality in August 2014.</p> <p>The new JPC guidelines emphasise the need for collaborative approaches between all stakeholders to address local issues. They also underline the need for enhanced communication between JPCs, which have a strategic coordinating role, and the full range of local and community based fora which can contribute to the enhancement of community safety and support effective policing responses.</p>
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<p>Access to library services for isolated rural and urban communities and the development of services to meet the needs of a multi-cultural society.</p>	<p>New Libraries opened in 2014 and 2015 This national strategy continues the progress achieved over the past fifteen years, which saw the opening of 145 new state of the art libraries throughout the country and a substantial refurbishment programme for existing libraries. During 2014, seven new or extended libraries opened.</p> <p>In 2015 one library has already opened and an additional six new or extended libraries are planned to open. During 2014, the following strategies/systems were implemented:</p> <p>Single library management system: a contract to implement a single system across all local authorities. This will provide a platform for the provision of free access to core library services, a single library membership card, universal membership and a national digital library. The first six library authorities (35% of the population) will go live in June 2015. It is planned to complete the implementation by the end of 2016. This initiative will result in enhanced user access to all collections in a single search and significant savings in staff time and local authority expenditure.</p> <p>Shared Library Services: In October 2014, The Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government requested local authorities to implement new library structures and other provisions of the report 'Managing the Delivery of Effective Library Services' in line with Government policy. The objective is to establish stronger, more effective and efficient public libraries and deliver better library services to local communities and citizens. A shared management structure in some counties is essential to allow the smaller library services to reach the capacity required to deliver the necessary improvements. The increased capacity resulting from the new structures will increase the scope for developing and enhancing services to the public, providing a broader range of services to the same high standard across the country.</p> <p>Open Libraries: As part of the strategy recommendation to deliver enhanced opening hours, three pilot 'Open Libraries' were established and opened in November 2014. The three pilot 'Open Libraries' (Tubbercurry, Co Sligo, and Tullamore and Banagher Co Offaly) offer seven day opening from eight in the morning until ten at night. Staffing levels and hours remain as previously, while the extended hours are unstaffed. An innovative service, Open Libraries grants members the freedom to use the library at the hours that suit them best. During the extended hours, the services are available to the public on a self-service basis for borrowing and returning items, using the internet via library PCs or via Wi-Fi using their own devices, browsing, printing, photocopying, individual study and community activities and meetings.</p> <p>Right to Read National Campaign: Launched in July 2014, the Right to Read is a national initiative, through the Programme for Government, which will be delivered in all local authorities via a nationally coordinated framework for literacy support and development. Delivery will be through local authorities and other agencies identified by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.</p>
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<p>The Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government will request local authorities to carry out a survey of local authority housing stock which will help inform housing authorities on the physical condition of the stock and provide the basis for future programmes of improvement works. A programme of regeneration will continue in a number of areas ranging from large scale urban areas to smaller estates in a number of regional towns around the country.</p>	<p>In 2014 the Department completed a pilot project in the four Dublin local authorities that utilised Building Energy Rating (BER) data to create a database of information to inform local authorities about the condition of the stock. The IHER BER Database tool supports the reporting and analytical requirements of the local authority Energy Retrofitting Programme. IHER Energy Services Limited (IHER) is a building energy rating consultancy with an acknowledged expertise in BER training, BER database applications and European Research programmes. IHER was appointed to deliver a BER-based suite of retrofit progress reports under an initial Pilot Programme for the four Dublin Local Authorities. The database tool utilises information generated when a BER certificate is created for a dwelling. The pilot programme was completed in November and an initial evaluation has taken place.</p> <p>The pilot was successful and further analysis is ongoing with a view to extending the system to additional local authorities. The information from this database will inform future programmes of improvement works. In terms of regeneration, over €69m was spent in 2013 and a further €46m in 2014 on regeneration projects in Dublin, Ballymun, Cork, Limerick, Tralee, Sligo and Dundalk.</p>
<p>The Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government is committed to supporting the voluntary and co-operative sector in the provision of housing for people with special needs.</p>	<p>In 2012 - 677 units, 2013 - 211 units and in 2014 - 357 units of accommodation were provided under the Capital Assistance Scheme, including a small number delivered through the now terminated Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme. The publication of the Social Housing Strategy 2020 in November 2014 sets out clear, measurable actions and targets to increase the supply of social housing, reform delivery arrangements and meet the housing needs of households on the housing list.</p> <p>Key to the delivery of the Strategy will be the enhanced role envisaged for the approved housing bodies to play in the delivery of additional social housing units to meet the needs of disadvantaged people and those with special needs.</p>
<p>The Government's Homelessness Policy Statement was published in February 2013. The statement emphasises a housing-led approach which is about accessing permanent housing as the primary response to all forms of homelessness. The Statement includes a target to end involuntary long-term homelessness by the end of 2016.</p>	<p>The Government published its Homelessness Policy Statement in February 2013. The Statement emphasises a housing-led approach to homelessness and confirms the Government's objective to end involuntary long-term homelessness (a commitment in the Programme for Government) by the end of 2016.</p> <p>The Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness was finalised in May 2014 outlining the Government's approach to this objective setting out 80 actions to secure a ring-fenced supply of accommodation for the homeless and to mobilise the necessary supports by the end of 2016.</p> <p>Progress in implementing the plan is reported to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform on a quarterly basis. In December 2014 a 20-point Action Plan to Address Homelessness was formalised by Government to tackle immediate and short-term issues of homelessness including an immediate response to rough sleeping in Dublin.</p>

<p>Funding will be made available to local authorities to support the implementation of their fourth Traveller Accommodation Programme, which covers the period 2014-2018. Funding for 2015 has been increased from €3m to €4.3m</p>	<p>The third Traveller Accommodation Programme (2009 – 2013) had, by the end of 2013, provided 1532 units of accommodation to Traveller families across a range of housing types including standard local authority housing, Traveller-specific accommodation and families accommodated through the Rental Accommodation Scheme or in voluntary housing. This includes over 490 units for Traveller-specific accommodation supported by the provision of over €50 million in capital funding.</p> <p>The fourth Traveller Accommodation Programmes were adopted in 2014 and will run from 2014-2018. As a result, 2014 was a transition year between the ending of the current programmes and the roll-out of the new programmes. There was a very strong emphasis on planning during 2014 to ensure that the programmes to be implemented until the end of 2018 meet the needs of Travellers in local authority areas. The increased funding to be provided in 2015 will assist in progressing some of these programmes.</p>
<p>Investment in supporting volunteering activity will be continued over the period 2007-2016. Central to this approach is the constructive role of voluntary activity in improving the quality of life in local communities. Under Towards 2016 an additional €5 million per year is being provided to support volunteering. Policies and schemes in this area will be further informed by the findings of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship.</p>	<p>The primary focus for the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in volunteering is on volunteer centres. In 2013 the Department provided funding of €789,917 to other volunteering initiatives. In 2014 this funding was €659,690.</p>
<p>The Task Force on Active Citizenship report recommended that the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government fund a network of volunteer centres across the country. The Department, with the sectors representative body, Volunteer Ireland, are currently considering the future funding mechanism of the individual volunteer centres.</p>	<p>Funding of €2.02 million was allocated to the 22 volunteer centres in 2013, with a further €2.03 million allocated in 2014. In 2014, two volunteer centres were amalgamated, resulting in greater efficiencies.</p>

<p>A Disbursement Scheme was approved by Government in December 2013 in accordance with the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act 2012 covering the period 2013-2016. The 2012 Act also required the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government to adopt an Action Plan on behalf of all Government Departments to give effect to the scheme.</p> <p>A Dormant Accounts Action Plan was adopted by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government on the 1 July 2014. Following the abolition of the Dormant Accounts Board under DA (Amendment) Act 2012, the functions of the Dormant Accounts Board have been brought into the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.</p>	<p>The Dormant Accounts Action Plan for 2014 will provide diverse supports for disadvantaged communities, including measures to promote youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship, training for carers and support for people with disabilities. In excess of €7m allocations to measures to be funded through the vote of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government were included in the total allocation of €24m approved for disbursement from the fund in 2014.</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 across a wide range of measures, such as water supply, sewage disposal, road access and broadband which reflect the priorities identified by the communities.</p> <p>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 scheme is closed since 2010 but there are 49 projects with a combined value of €353K outstanding under the Sports Capital and Gaeltacht top-up measures under the CLÁR programme. There is a provision of €100k for 2015 to fund any claims which materialise in 2015.</p>

<p>Through the Leader element of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, €370 million will be invested over the period 2009-2015 in promoting the diversification of the rural economy. Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP), the new LEADER programme will primarily address Priority 6 of the European Union priorities for rural development which is promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas. The Programme has been allocated €250 million for the period 2015-2022.</p>	<p>Expenditure under the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 has been on-going since early 2009. In 2012 the European Commission allowed Ireland to avail of an increased co-financing rate of 85% (originally 55%) for 2012 and 2013. This reduced the Programme value to approx. €370 million. Total expenditure under the Programme at the end of 2014 was €332 million. The LEADER elements of the Programme are unique in that the support is provided using a participative community methodology that is, in and of itself, a socially inclusive development method.</p> <p>The quality of life measures of the Programme aim to provide development opportunities for rural communities in order to improve the quality of life in rural areas as well as promote the diversification of the rural economy. In working to achieve these aims the support addresses social inclusion and cohesion both directly and indirectly providing a diverse range of supports from training and capacity building to support for business ideas and the development of a diverse range of enterprise models.</p> <p>The programme also continues to provide support to communities to develop community infrastructure thereby promoting social cohesion and community spirit all over Ireland. Supports provided through the Programme facilitate stronger and more resilient rural communities with the resources necessary to maintain vibrant rural economies that have the capacity to support the participation of all members of the community. In this context the Programme provides rural communities with the means to address the main challenges of social exclusion. The 2014-2020 Programme is expected to commence in late 2015 and it will also focus on social inclusion.</p>
<p>In January 2010 the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP), replaced the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Community Development Programme. This programme provides multi-annual funding to Local Development Companies (LDC's) and a small number of alternative local development bodies for the delivery of the LCDP. The LCDP aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies and people in disadvantaged communities.</p>	<p>In 2013 €48.7 m was allocated for the delivery of the LCDP that represented a reduction of over 9% on the funding available in 2012. Despite the reductions in funding the programme performed well, a target of 44,000 people for engagement for 2013 was set and this was achieved.</p> <p>In 2014 €47.7 m was allocated for the delivery of LCDP. For 2014 a target of 44,700 was set, however an output of 49,000 was achieved. Over 19,000 beneficiaries participated in education; over 21,000 participated in labour market training. 8,008 were supported into employment, including 6,053 into self-employment.</p>
<p>The future of Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) now falls to be considered. RAPID should continue as a focus of relevant Local Authorities. The Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government will consult with the relevant stakeholders, including Local Authorities, Local Development Companies, RAPID Area Implementation Teams (AITs) and others. That consultation will need to have regard to the alignment of Local Government and Local Development and the Local Government reform programme, Putting People First and the overall context of streamlining structures and supports at local and community level.</p>	<p>The RAPID Leverage Schemes have now ceased and the Department is paying down existing contractual commitments only, mostly to the Sports Capital Programme. €263k was provided in 2013, and €170k in 2014.</p>

<p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) was assigned responsibility for the integration of local and rural transport, including the Rural Transport Programme (RTP), with effect from 1st April 2012.</p> <p>The NTA was also given responsibility for implementing the restructuring of the RTP announced in July 2013. The aim of the restructuring is to protect the provision of rural transport services into the future by ensuring a more efficient delivery structure that maximises integration with other State funded transport services and by making the Programme a sustainable part of the public transport system.</p> <p>The new structure will address social exclusion and facilitate the consideration, measurement and monitoring of the social inclusion aspect of the Programme in a holistic manner.</p>	<p>A restructuring of the RTP was announced in July 2013 and implementation progressed during 2013/2014. The restructuring involves the establishment of 17 Transport Co-ordination Units (TCUs) in place of the 35 RTP Groups which have delivered the services until now. Funding for Programme was €9.77m in 2012 and €9.133m in 2013. During 2013 1.74 million passenger journeys were recorded on over 224,000 transport services funded under the Programme, an increase of 0.5% and 3% respectively on 2012.</p>
<p>The overall budget for the Irish Sports Council (ISC) has been reduced to €44.495 million in 2012. The Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network and Sport Inclusion Disability Programme continue to be supported by the Irish Sports Council.</p>	<p>The overall budget for the Irish Sports Council was €42.496 million in 2013 and €43.239 million in 2014. In 2013 & 2014, 16 LSP's were funded for Sports Inclusion Disability Officer posts, who continue to roll out sports ability days, boccia, football for all, wheelchair basketball etc. to promote on-going and active participation .</p> <p>Those LSPs that do not have an officer received funding to deliver training in the area of sports and disability. In 2014 the ISC allocated €49,651 in funding to the Cara Centre.</p> <p>The LSP network is continuing to engage with the School Completion projects across the country. The Council is also continuing to fund the three Major Field Sports.</p>
<p>Warmer Homes – A Strategy for Affordable Energy in Ireland is the first Government strategy aimed at specifically making energy more affordable for low-income households in Ireland.</p>	<p>The review of the Affordable Energy Strategy will include a public consultation that will seek stakeholder input into what actions should be prioritised in the next iteration of the Government's Affordable Energy Strategy. After the conclusion of this public consultation process it is hoped to publish a new Affordable Energy Strategy by end May 2015.</p>

<p>Delivering a Connected Society A National Broadband Plan (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. The plan will deliver on its targets by leveraging investment from both private and public sectors In addition to investment the NBP contains actions relating to a number of other areas: demand stimulation; infrastructure barrier removal; spectrum policy; potential contribution of State entities and policy & regulation.</p>	<p>The National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to ensure that that every citizen and business, regardless of location, has access to a high quality, high speed broadband service. This will be achieved through a combination of commercial investments and a State-led intervention in areas where commercial services will not be provided.</p> <p>In November 2014, the Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources launched a public consultation on the National High Speed Coverage Map 2016. This allows all members of the public, be they business or residential, to see whether or not their premises/home is included in the Government’s proposed intervention. It also provides detailed information on a county by county basis as to which villages and townlands are to be included. This map can be accessed at www.broadband.gov.ie.</p> <p>The next steps in this process will see a further public consultation on a detailed intervention strategy in mid-2015. A detailed procurement process will be undertaken in order to select a potential preferred bidder(s) towards the end of 2015. It is expected that the physical build of this network will commence from 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100M/bits to Schools Programme: All post primary schools (780+ Schools) received a 100M/bits connection by the end of 2014. • The Rural Broadband Scheme: Out of a total of 2011 applicants to whom offers were made, 509 applicants took up a service from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) participating in the Scheme. As participating in the Scheme offered services to applicants without the need for subsidy, it was not necessary to procure a service provider for the Scheme. There has been no disbursement of public money for the provision of services on the Scheme. • The Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs): Kinsale MAN completed in 2013. 88 MANs covering 94 towns were completed under the Metropolitan Area Network Programme. All of the MANs are under the charge of e net; the Managed Service Entity, who manages, maintains and operates the MANs on behalf of the State. It is estimated that there in excess of over 600, 000 end users (largely in rural areas) who are benefitting from the MANs infrastructure.
<p>The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWH) administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), funds energy efficiency improvements in the homes of the elderly and vulnerable, making the homes more comfortable, healthier and more cost effective to run.</p>	<p>In 2014, €20.656m was allocated under the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWH) enabling 9,056 homes to undergo upgrades. This resulted in energy savings of 19.02GWh worth almost €1.17m for low income homeowners.</p> <p>Since the start of the Scheme in 2000, to date, 112,833 low-income homes have been upgraded and over €1.17m disbursed. Estimated accrued energy savings for these measures amounts to 237GWh to the end of 2014. In 2015, capital funding of €13.7m has been allocated to the BEWH Scheme.</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.</p> <p>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>During this period the Department of Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht continued with its various initiatives and measures directed towards supporting the social, cultural and economic development of the inhabited offshore islands so as to ensure they survive as viable communities. Whilst the capital expenditure on the islands during this period reduced to €1.3m. Certain capital works were undertaken focused primarily on safety and access works. The Department held 24 contracts to cater for the various need of 20 offshore islands to include passenger, cargo and air services thus enhancing island access and facilities.</p>
<p>As set out in Towards 2016, participation by children in arts and cultural activities will continue to be encouraged as a means to enrich their quality of life.</p>	<p>The Arts Council is embarking on a process to develop a new strategy for the arts in 2015 starting in January. Following publication of Inspiring Prospects - Arts Council Strategic Review in June 2014, the Arts Council is now embarking on a process to develop a new strategy for the arts in 2015 which includes approaches around purposeful engagement with members of the public.</p> <p>In brief the Strategy states that the Arts Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the development agency for the arts focussed on the public good • Make policies and strategies that are explicit and connected • Change its investment strategies and behaviours • Be well-informed and evidence-based • Strengthen its own capability and that of the arts sector • Engage widely and communicate openly • Under these proposals the Arts Council will be exploring areas of relevance to the Department of Social Protection as well as the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

