

## What does the State do about poverty?

Having a job with good pay is one of the best routes out of poverty. The primary aim of the State is to ensure that more and better jobs are provided. It also supports people in getting these jobs through providing education and training and making lifelong learning possible. For those who do not have a job or who cannot work, the State normally provides a weekly Social Welfare payment, with extra benefits and allowances for children. It also aims to ensure that all residents have access to essential services such as education, health, care, housing, transport, culture and sports. The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPinclusion) sets out a comprehensive strategy to tackle poverty and promote social inclusion across a wide range of policy areas.

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## Why are strategies needed?

The strategic approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion over the past 10 years has included identifying the groups and areas which are vulnerable to poverty. The multi-policy response is becoming progressively more coordinated and integrated at national and local levels, and between these levels. This approach is achieving better outcomes not only for those experiencing poverty but also, better value for money for taxpayers who fund the Government's policies and actions.

Social inclusion is firmly on the public policy agenda. This is being further strengthened by an integrated framework that aims to ensure that social and economic development go hand in hand. This will be achieved by streamlining the goals and implementation of the key social inclusion processes. This will create more coherent and integrated structures and facilitate improved reporting and monitoring.

The Government's commitments to building a fully inclusive society are set out in the following strategies:

- The national partnership agreement *Towards 2016*
- The National Development Plan 2007 – 2013: *Transforming Ireland. A Better Quality of Life for All*
- The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 – 2016: *Building an Inclusive Society*

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## What is the NAPinclusion?

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 – 2016 (NAPinclusion) represents a wide-ranging and comprehensive programme of action to address social exclusion. It sets out a coherent and comprehensive approach for the next ten years coinciding with the timescale of *Towards 2016*. It is also closely linked to the new National Development Plan.

The NAPinclusion has a strong focus on actions and targets, clearly defined and measurable, which are essential if its objectives are to be achieved and progress in achieving them effectively monitored. By adopting the lifecycle approach, the NAPinclusion also supports the development of a more joined-up and multi-disciplinary approach to policy making, with co-ordinated inputs from a wide range of actors.

## What is the lifecycle approach?

The NAPinclusion uses a lifecycle approach, as set out by National Economic and Social Council (NESC) in its report, *The Developmental Welfare State* - [www.nesc.ie/publications.asp](http://www.nesc.ie/publications.asp). This approach was adopted by the national partnership agreement *Towards 2016* as a means to tackling the problems people face at different stages of their lives and is also reflected in the social inclusion elements of the new National Development Plan.

The lifecycle approach places the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery and offers a framework for implementing a streamlined, cross-cutting and visible approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion. The lifecycle stages are:

- children;
- people of working age;
- older people; and
- people with disabilities.

In addition, the NAPinclusion contains a chapter on communities in which targets and actions which cut across various stages of the lifecycle are included.

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## What is the overall goal of the NAPinclusion?

The overall poverty reduction goal in the NAPinclusion is to reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim

of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016, under the revised definition. For further information on poverty measures and targets click here (link to what is poverty page).

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### **What are the priorities of the NAPinclusion?**

The NAPinclusion identifies 12 high level strategic goals in certain key areas across the lifecycle in order to mobilise resources to address long-standing and serious social deficits to achieve the overall objective of reducing consistent poverty.

The high level goals focus on:

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

The high level strategic goals are set out here (link to PDF of high level goals)

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### **How will the NAPinclusion be implemented?**

Effective implementation is essential. A main priority in the NAPinclusion is to avoid any 'implementation gap'. The NAPinclusion sets out improved institutional structures and arrangements which will be put in place to underpin the implementation, monitoring and ongoing development of the Government's social inclusion agenda, both at national and local level.

As part of a more streamlined and efficient monitoring and reporting process, the Office for Social Inclusion will prepare an annual Social Inclusion Report which will provide a detailed assessment of progress towards set targets; identify new issues arising or issues that might benefit from a more co-ordinated approach; and report on stakeholders' views emerging from various fora. The report will also cover the social inclusion elements of *Towards 2016* and the National Development Plan.

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