

Response to



Outline Sectoral Plan

of

The Department of Health and Children

Submitted by

**The Irish Association of
Supported Employment**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
The Organisation	4
Definition of Supported Employment	5
The National Executive	6
Recommendations	7
Issues & Solutions	9
Consultation	15

Appendix

IASE Five Year Strategic Development Plan 2005 - 2010

Executive Summary

The Irish Association of Supported Employment welcomes the opportunity to respond to the outline Sectoral Plan published by the Department Health and Children and welcomes the work undertaken by the NDA (National Disability Authority) towards ensuring relevant groups participate in the consultation process to this plan.

The National Disability Strategy, of which the Sectoral Plans form part, constitutes an historic opportunity to move government policy on disability to a new plane, to significantly increase resources to address the concerns and needs of people with disabilities and to ensure full inclusion for disabilities is truly integrated into policy, planning and service delivery at all levels.

The Department of the Taoiseach should provide high-level leadership to drive the process of finalising the Sectoral Plans and co-ordinate the consistent implementation of the National Disability Strategy across departments.

The IASE calls for a consistent approach across the six Government Departments in finalising their Sectoral Plans, with each Sectoral Plan containing certain key components, as well as addressing the sector-specific issues. Otherwise, the risk is that the final Sectoral Plans may be too limited in scope; very disparate in terms of content and depth; and that issues calling for cross – Departmental co-ordination and action will fail to be adequately addressed.

The Organisation

IASE is a national voluntary organisation which was established in February 1994 with the aim of promoting and developing supported employment at a national level. In 2006 IASE is the representative voice of almost 500 members in Ireland, who in turn are working with over 5,000 people with disabilities.

IASE is currently funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under the white paper for voluntary services. IASE's mission is to promote best practice in Supported Employment for people with disabilities in Ireland.

Aims of the IASE.

- To promote the concept of Supported Employment.

- To facilitate the exchange of information between interested parties.

- To respond to the training needs of affiliated members.

- To actively participate in the European Union of Supported Employment.

- To assist members with networking and promoting the model of Supported Employment.

The National Executive

IASE was established in 1994, it is a company limited by guarantee and currently has 11 Directors.

Name/Position	Organisation	Representative
Dermot Cunningham Chairperson	Employment Response North West	North West Region
Stephen MacWhite Vice Chairperson	SMTDC, Dublin	East Region
Eithne Jarrett Company Secretary	Roscommon Supported Employment Service	West Region
Teresa Mallon Treasurer	Menei Services, St John of God, Dublin	East Region
Greg Barry Public Relations Officer	Work Web West, Co Mayo	West Region
Helen Grant Company Director	Louth Supported Employment Services	North East Region
Teresa Haughey Company Director	Worklink North West, Co Donegal	North West Region
Catherine Murphy Company Director	Connect Employment, Co Wicklow	East Region
Alice O'Carroll Company Director	Clare Supported Employment Service	West Region
Tony Reilly Company Director	Midland Employment Support Agency	Midlands Region
David Ryan Company Director	Work Access, Limerick	Southern Region

Definition of Supported Employment

Supported Employment enables people with disabilities to find, secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market.

On the job training and individualised long-term supports are key elements of Supported Employment.

The Beneficiaries of Supported Employment

People with disabilities

People with disabilities who wish to work are successful in gaining employment in the open labour market

Employers

Employers receive backup support of a professional service, they gain a valuable employee and they can introduce an equal opportunities policy within the organisation.

The Wider Community

The community benefits through the individuals personal and monetary input into the local economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IASE recommend the following key elements should feature in the Sectoral Plan of the Department Health and Children:-

- How the Department of Health and Children propose the independent needs assessment will interface with employment services.
- How the Department of Health and Children will improve the medical card issue for people with disabilities interested in employment thus addressing the existing benefits trap.
- How the mainstream service of the Department of Health and Children and the agencies under its aegis, plan to provide for disabled people as part of their normal remit ("mainstreaming") s.26 of the Disability Act sets out the new statutory requirements.
- How the Sectoral Plan on disability will be embedded in the statement of strategy and the business plan of the Department of Health and Children.
- How the Department of Health and Children will address cross-cutting issues and co-ordinate linked measures across departments.

- How the Department of Health and Children will involve people with disabilities in preparing and implementing plans in their monitoring and review.
- How the Department of Health and Children intend to set targets on quality and standards and how these targets will be evaluated.
- How Department of Health and Children plan to meet their statutory obligations under the following sections of the Disability Act 2005 on accessibility of public offices (s.25) accessibility of services supplied to the public body (s.29) and accessible information (s.28)
- How the Department of Health and Children plan to address recruitment, promotion and retention of staff with disabilities, and meet their statutory obligations under Part 5 of the Disability Act.

ISSUE

People with disabilities who go out to work stand to lose a significant array of benefits. Alongside loss of the weekly welfare payment such as Disability Allowance, going to work will generally put someone over the income limit of a medical card, and entitlement to linked services such as free disability aids is also forfeit. The household benefit package, free travel, mobility allowance and rent allowance could also be lost by someone entering employment.

SOLUTION

If the state were to meet the extra cost of disability without tying that help to subsistence-level incomes, it would be more financially attractive to people with disability to take up employment. Assistance to disabled people to help meet the cost of their disability should be independent of employment income, for example in the cost of disability payment.

The Department of Health and Children should raise the income ceilings for medical cards for people with disabilities as part of a plan to de-couple the medical card from employment status for people with disabilities, and to address the benefits trap.

ISSUE

Supporting an individual with a disability interested in employment often uncovers barriers to employment.

SOLUTION

Department of Health and Children must specify how services for people with disabilities will work with other agencies to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are addressed in the areas of housing, transport, employment and social supports. These related needs all affect health status and the capacity for independence.

ISSUE

Many people with disabilities presenting to supported employment services have had limited opportunity to gain work related skills or structured training.

SOLUTION

To recommend an integrated inter-agency approach to training for people with disabilities with mainstream supported employment promoted as a realistic goal for those who wish to work.

All employment services should come under the remit of DETE as people with disabilities should now be moving away from the health model of disability towards the social model in line with Government policy of mainstreaming services to people with disability. People must no longer be corralled into groups according to their disability type or the levels of support they require to lead an independent life. The National Supported Employment

Programme should therefore be made fully accessible to all those who wish to avail of it regardless of disability type or level of support required.

SOLUTION

Examine the transfer of employment and training for people with disabilities to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

To recommend review of current training delivered through FAS to en-sure training provided will equip people with disabilities with the necessary skills they need to gain employment.

ISSUE

At present there is a lack of cross Departmental co-ordination which leaves services in isolation and leads to schemes and services not meeting the needs of the end user.

SOLUTION

To ensure a consistent approach is taken across the Government Departments in finalising their sectoral plans, for example there is scope to develop structured links between HSE, DETE and DSFA with a view to offering positive support and guidance in relation to employment for people receiving payments. Such links might be particularly beneficial in promoting job retention after the onset of disability or ensuring there is no loss of income when transferring from one payment to another.

ISSUE

Multi disciplinary support services do not address the employment needs of people with disabilities.

SOLUTION

To ensure that when employment is identified during the independent needs assessment for an individual with disability, an employment practitioner will be invited to the team that provide the integrated service to the person with disability.

ISSUE

Community mental health services have made substantial progress in recent years in providing care in the most appropriate setting for the client, the number of clients now receiving care in the community has increase substantially and many require the opportunity to further integration in terms of social and employment opportunities.

SOLUTION

Work is a central part of most adult lives. Paid employment provides people with an income, with financial independence, with the opportunity to meet and socialise with colleagues and participate in the wider society, and the chance to make a worthwhile contribution. Mental health practitioners should be required to liaise with supported employment practitioners in their community.

ISSUE

Early intervention programmes do not exist to bring children and young adults with disabilities from education to employment – research shows that one of the major influences on employment levels and earning capacity is the level of education achieved. Education can open more doors for disabled people into the world of work. Unfortunately, this research also shows there are fewer education chances for people with disabilities, which compounds their disadvantage in the employment arena.

(Source: Disability Research Series 1 - Disability and Work, The picture we learn for the official statistics, NDA)

SOLUTION

Introduction of early intervention programmes in conjunction with the Department of Education, to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to employment and education.

ISSUE

While the quota system is in place in the public sector, the numbers of people with disabilities employed through Supported Employment remains low in the public sector.

SOLUTION

Department of Health and Children should examine the following:-

- **How DOHC monitor and enforce the quota system**
- **What qualifies as “disability”**

- **Are DOHC human resource personnel aware of supported employment services**
- **Are DOHC human resource personnel aware of assistance available to support them employing people with disabilities**

ISSUE

Difficulties exist for people with disabilities accessing mainstream health services (for example GP clinics, dental services, health screening)

SOLUTION

Extend the scope of the plan to include mainstream services and develop the capacity of mainstream health services to meet the needs of people with disabilities through appropriate training, adaptations to premises, equipment etc..

Consultation

Irish Association of Supported Employment would like to draw attention to the importance of consultation - in 2005 IASE compiled a five year strategic plan which involved an intensive consultative process, this process enabled members to assist form the strategy that would under pin the future work of IASE.

In developing this strategy, IASE consulted with people with disabilities, core members, regional networks and other stakeholders. Individual interviews, meetings and written submissions all contributed to the process.

This submission prepared by IASE in response to the outline Sectoral Plan of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment includes the weaknesses and opportunities identified during the IASE consultation process for the five year strategic plan 2005 – 2010.