



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

Strategic disability reform in Ireland

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Policy background



- Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities – from segregation to inclusion
- National Disability Strategy
- Disability Act 2005 legislated for
 - Public bodies to include people with disabilities in mainstream services
 - Cross-departmental joint actions, linking actions across disability services, housing, employment, and income support
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services – put the person with a disability at the centre

‘Transforming Lives’ disability services reform



- Person-centred services, choice and control
- Supports to live ordinary lives in ordinary places
- Underpinned by strategic studies on
 - Required service capacity
 - How to include people with disabilities in decision making
 - Quality and standards
 - Management and information requirements
 - Governance and accountability
- Disability organisations at the table in working groups and Steering Group

Service reforms

Focus on person-centred supports



Living in the community – Time to Move On report

- Closure of residential institutions and congregated campuses
- Focus on living in the community, choice of where and with whom to live
- More than half-way there, but more to do

Day services and supports – New Directions report

- Supports to take part in everyday activities of your choice within your community

Children's services – Progressing Disability Services report

- Area-based specialist multidisciplinary teams serving all children in their catchments
- Recruitment challenge

Personal Budgets – Report of Task Force on Personal Budgets

- Pilot programme underway

Issues and challenges 1

Maintaining focus with competing priorities



- Building and maintaining a whole-of-government approach
 - Building disability understanding and expertise
 - Keeping disability on the agenda of other Departments
 - Surviving changes in key personnel
- Crisis in public finances after 2008 led to service cutbacks, while needs continued to grow with population change
- Pandemic interruption – but also lessons learned
- Today - energy and cost-of-living crises, and chronic housing shortage

Issues and challenges 2

A major change management programme for services



- Importance of consultation and voice of service users in the process
- Findings show governance and leadership are key to quality services
- Staff engagement and training around new models – Service Reform Fund assists in process of change
- New approach brings better quality of life – but often more expensive than traditional ways of doing things
- Financial challenge of balancing efforts on quality, person-centred services v addressing gaps in level of provision
- Real progress being made, but more to do...

Next steps...



Thank you

Colm Ó Conaill will focus on the challenges and opportunities ahead