

Launch of National Disability Inclusion Strategy

On Friday 14 July, the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 was launched by the Department of Justice and Equality. In launching the Strategy, Finian McGrath, Minister for Disabilities, said that: “This is an all of Government Strategy which is aimed at significantly improving the lives of people with disabilities in a practical sense, and also in creating the best possible opportunities for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.”

Key points from the Strategy which may have particular relevance to people with MS include:

- Full commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act by the end of 2017 and establishment of the Decision Support Service by early 2018
- Full implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities
- Development of proposals to address access to and affordability of necessary aids, appliances and assistive technologies that can support people with disabilities to retain employment or return to work – by Q3 2018
- The Make Work Pay Working Group will report on measures to be taken to ensure that it is financially worthwhile for a person with a disability to take up employment, by the end of 2017 (read more about Make Work Pay here: <http://ms-society.ie/blog-articles/2166-launch-of-make-work-pay-report>)
- Development of a Ready Reckoner of net income in employment taking into account the interaction of benefits
- Production of policy advice (by early 2018) for the development and implementation of a national programme for vocational rehabilitation, based on international research, which will have due regard for the National Neurorehabilitation Strategy and other medical rehabilitation programmes
- Development of an implementation framework for the Neurorehabilitation Strategy making links to National Clinical Programmes for Medical Rehabilitation, and a major capital investment in the National Neurorehabilitation Hospital – implementation plan to be finalised by Q3 2017
- Adoption and implementation of a single needs assessment tool for disability services, by Q2 2017
- Extension of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability to 2020 – the Strategy was originally intended to be completed in 2016
- A review of the various housing adaptation grant schemes, to see how the application process can be streamlined – by the end of 2017
- A general commitment to improving the accessibility of public transport, especially inter-city buses and rural transport and accessibility of train and bus stations
- Introduction of a pilot scheme on the DART for mobility-impaired customers requiring assistance that will significantly reduce the advised notice time for travelling – by Q3 2017
- A review of transport supports encompassing all Government funded transport and mobility schemes for people with disabilities, to enhance the options for transport to work and



develop proposals for a co-ordinated plan for such provision, “making the most efficient use of available transport resources”

MS Ireland and other organisations representing people with disabilities will be closely monitoring progress on the implementation of these and the other points in the Strategy and will seek to hold the relevant Government departments to account for ensuring that the Strategy is fully implemented, resourced and delivered.

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