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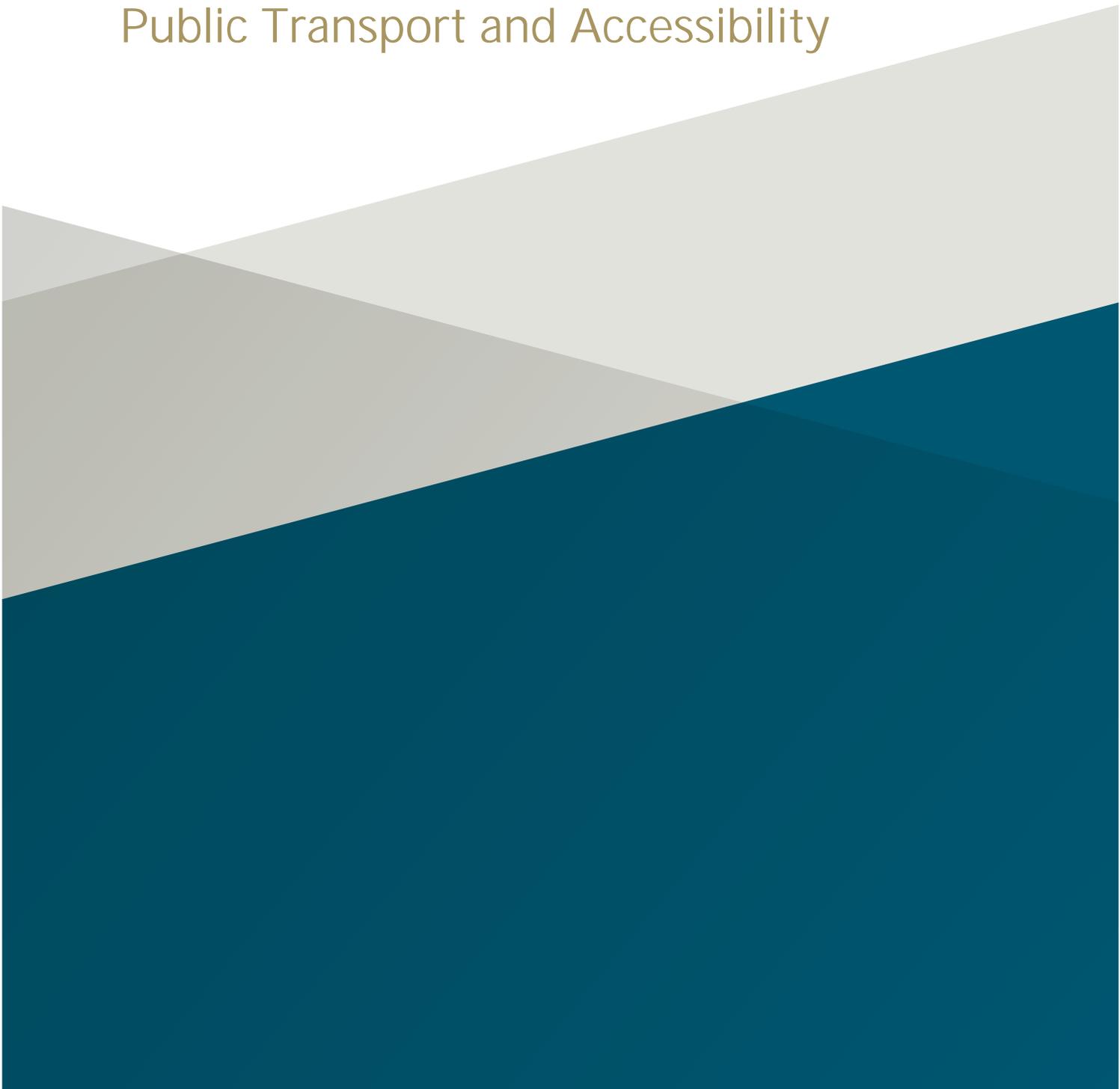Turasóireachta agus Spóirt**
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Sustainable Mobility Policy Review

Background Paper 1
Public Transport and Accessibility

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Context and questions for consideration

This background paper is one of a number of papers that have been prepared by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to inform a public consultation on Ireland's sustainable mobility policy. The review work arises from a commitment in the *Programme for a Partnership Government*[1] to review public transport policy "to ensure services are sustainable into the future and are meeting the needs of a modern economy". The public consultation is designed to give stakeholders, interested parties and the general public the opportunity to reflect on the information and analysis in the papers, to share their views, and to contribute to the development of a Sustainable Mobility Policy Statement.

Sustainable Mobility can be described as linking people and places in a sustainable way by supporting:

- comfortable and affordable journeys to and from work, home, school, college, shops and leisure;
- travel by cleaner and greener transport; and
- a shift away from the private car to greater use of active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport (e.g. bus, rail, tram).

All elements of sustainable mobility (public transport, cycling, walking) are being considered in the policy review. Each background paper includes a number of questions to generate ideas about the extent to which the present approach to sustainable mobility is working well, the areas which are not, and future priorities.

This background paper sets out the current status around the provision of accessible public transport for people with disabilities, and what actions are underway and planned to progressively make public transport more accessible. The questions below are included as a guide. Participants in the public consultation are not confined to answering the suggested questions and are invited to offer any other contribution they wish to make. It is recommended that submissions are confined to circa 2,500 words or less.

1.1   What are the priorities to improve public transport accessibility for people with disabilities or with mobility difficulties?

1.2   With Ireland forecast to undergo significant population changes in the medium term, moving from a relatively young demographic profile to one with a higher proportion of older people, what public transport challenges and opportunities does this bring?

1.3   Are there international best practice examples in relation to public transport accessibility for people with disabilities or mobility difficulties that could be applied to an Irish context?

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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the paper

Section 2:   **Institutional arrangements** describes the key stakeholders in the area of disability policy and accessible public transport. These include Government Departments, the National Disability Authority, State transport agencies, local authorities and public transport operators.

Section 3:   **Disability legislation, policies and strategies** provides an overview of national, European Union and international legislation, policies and strategies in place aimed at improving access for people with disabilities, including to our public transport system.

Section 4:   **Public transport accessibility policy** focusses on the Minister and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTAS) accessibility policy, *Transport Access for All*, which is based on the principle of universal access to public transport. It also describes the DTTAS Accessibility Work Programme and the role of its Accessibility Consultative Committee.

Section 5:   **Accessible public transport** outlines the key accessibility improvements made to public transport infrastructure and services in recent years. It also sets out planned accessibility improvement measures under the Accessibility Retro-Fit Programme.

Section 6:   **Technology and integration measures** describes measures which are in place or are being developed and which offer the potential to assist with making public transport accessible. This includes Real Time Passenger Information, the Travel Assistance Scheme, the Just A Minute (JAM) Card and a National Transport Training Centre.

1.2 Purpose of background paper

The purpose of this background paper is to outline the current status around the provision of accessible public transport for people with disabilities and the actions that are underway and planned to progressively make public transport more accessible, as provided for under Article 4.2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). These actions are set out in the DTTAS Accessibility Work Programme, updates of which are published on a quarterly basis[2]. The actions arise primarily from commitments in a range of Government strategies and plans in the area of accessibility for people with disabilities. See Appendix 1 for more detail.

1.3   Disability in Ireland

In Census 2016, the overall number of people with disabilities increased, comprising 13.5% of the total population compared to 13% in 2011. Within this, 11.8% of the total population of working age people (20-64) have a disability.

The *Disability Act 2005*[3] sets out the following definition of disability:

> ""*Disability*", *in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.*"

Under the Equality Acts (Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts), which outlaw discrimination on grounds of disability:

"*Disability means:*

> a. *the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body;*
> b. *the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness;*
> c. *the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;*
> d. *a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction; or*
> e. *a condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.*"

2 Institutional arrangements

2.1 Introduction

This Section sets out the key stakeholders in the area of disability policy and accessible public transport in particular. These include:

- Minister and Department of Justice and Equality
- National Disability Authority
- Minister and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- National Transport Authority
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Public transport companies
- Local Link offices
- Private transport operators
- Small Public Service Vehicle operators
- Local authorities

2.2 Minister and Department of Justice and Equality

The Minister and Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) have overarching responsibility for development of Government policy on disability. DJE's main functions in this regard include:

- Implementing the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021* (NDIS);
- Coordinating the implementation of the *Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) for People with Disabilities (2015-2024)*;
- Engaging with the European Commission and Council of Europe on the development of disability policy and sharing of good practices;
- Providing grant aid and corporate governance to the National Disability Authority (NDA);
- Acting as a central point of information for queries relating to disability policy;
- Overarching role in relation to the implementation in Ireland of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

2.3 National Disability Authority

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is an independent statutory body which provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. It also has a role to assist the Minister for Justice and Equality in the co-ordination of disability policy.

The NDA's functions include:

- Developing and collaborating on the development of relevant statistics;
- Assisting in the development of standards;
- Developing codes of practice; and
- Monitoring the implementation of standards, codes and employment of persons with disabilities in the public service.

Through its Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, the NDA works to promote the universal design of the built environment, products, services and information and communication technologies, so that they can be easily accessed and used by everyone, including persons with disabilities.

2.4   Minister and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

In the public transport area the Minister and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport have responsibility in relation to three overarching themes:

- Policy and statutory frameworks;
- Aggregate funding; and
- Corporate governance in the State transport bodies and a shareholder role.

The DTTAS high level policy goal for accessible public transport is embodied in the concept of *'Transport Access for All'*. This policy is based on the provisions of the *Disability Act 2005* and related Government strategies. More detailed information on this policy is set out in Section 4.2. It 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.

DTTAS is committed to the continued development of accessible public transport in recognition of the importance of such services to the lives of people with disabilities, including supporting access to education, training, employment, health services and social activities.

2.5   National Transport Authority

The National Transport Authority (NTA) was established as a non-commercial State body under the *Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008*[4] (as amended). Under the legislation, the NTA acts as an independent regulatory, funding and strategy body and it has a considerable role in relation to the public transport sector in Ireland. Among its statutory functions, the NTA is responsible for: regulating and contracting Public Service Obligation (PSO) bus and rail services; allocating PSO funding to the operators; licensing and regulating commercial bus services; regulating taxi services; and developing integrated ticketing. The law requires that, in exercising its functions, the NTA shall seek to achieve improved access to the transport system and, in particular, to public passenger transport services by persons with disabilities.

Exchequer funding for public transport flows mainly to the NTA, for infrastructure and public transport service support. This includes management of the Accessibility Retro-fit Programme on behalf of DTTAS in the form of grant aid.

2.6   Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is a non-commercial State body and was established through a merger of the National Roads Authority and the Railway Procurement Agency under the *Roads Act 2015*[5]. TII's primary function is to provide an integrated approach to the future development and operation of the national roads network and light rail infrastructure throughout Ireland. TII

(along with the NTA) is the contracting authority to the Luas operating contract with the private sector operator Transdev Ireland.

2.7   Local authorities

Local authorities have a number of roles that contribute to the public transport sector in Ireland. The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is a core statutory responsibility of each local authority. The road and street network is an important element of the public transport and active travel sector for the provision of effective bus and taxi services and cycling and walking infrastructure. Road and street infrastructure, including bus stops, are critical from an accessible public transport perspective.

Local authorities are also the planning authorities for their areas of responsibility and are responsible for determining the majority of local planning applications and for enforcement.   The local authorities prepare development plans, local area plans and planning schemes which guide development in their areas including transport-related development. The NTA works closely with the local authorities in the preparation or review of these plans.

2.8   Public transport operators

The actual delivery of public transport services is provided by a range of organisations including:

- Iarnród Éireann - rail services, including DART services in Dublin;
- Dublin Bus/Bus Átha Cliath and Go-Ahead - urban bus services in the Dublin area;
- Bus Éireann – regional, city and town and Expressway bus services;
- Local Link offices, under the Rural Transport Programme (RTP) – rural bus services;
- Commercial/private bus operators – rural, regional, intercity, urban bus services;
- Transdev – Luas light rail system in Dublin Area;
- Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSV) – Taxi, Hackney, Limousines and Local Area Hackney.

2.8.1   Funding of Public Service Obligation (PSO) services

PSO bus and rail services are socially necessary but financially unviable services which are subsidised by the State. The main purpose of the subvention payment is to meet the gap which exists between income from fares and the cost of operating services. Taxpayers' contribution towards funding PSO services is substantial and in 2019 amounts to just over €300 million in subvention for PSO and Rural Transport Local Link services. Almost 269 million passenger journeys were provided on PSO services in 2018, an increase of over 16 million, or 6% compared to 2017.

3 Disability legislation, policies and strategies

3.1 Introduction

This Section provides an overview of national, European Union (EU) and international legislation, policies and strategies in place aimed at improving access for people with disabilities, including to our public transport system.

3.2 Disability Act 2005

The *Disability Act 2005* is part of a framework of Government legislative measures which support social inclusion, including:

- *Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2012*[6] which outlaw discrimination in the provision of goods and services, selling, renting or leasing property and certain aspects of education, including on grounds of disability;
- *Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011*[7] which outlaw discrimination at work, including recruitment and promotion, working conditions, training, dismissal and harassment, including on grounds of disability;
- *Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004*[8] which makes provision for the education of people with special educational needs in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.

The *Disability Act* is designed to advance and underpin the participation of people with disabilities in society. It gives statutory underpinning to the policy of mainstreaming accessibility within public service delivery. The *Act* establishes a basis for:

- An independent assessment of individual needs;
- Independent redress and enforcement for persons with disabilities;
- Access to public buildings, services and information;
- Sectoral Plans for six key Departments, including DTTAS, to ensure that access for people with disabilities is an integral part of service planning and provision;
- An obligation on public bodies to be pro-active in employing people with disabilities;
- Restricting the use of information from genetic testing for employment, mortgage and insurance purposes; and
- A Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.

Specifically, Part 3 of the Act places an obligation on public bodies to make their buildings and services accessible and requires the preparation of Sectoral Plans to support continued improvements in six key areas of public service provision. There are complaints procedures with a right of appeal to the Ombudsman.

3.3 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) is leading on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)*.[9] Dáil Éireann ratified the *UNCRPD* in March 2018.

The implementation responsibilities relating to public transport under the Convention are being advanced in the context of the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021*, the DTTAS Sectoral Plan and other relevant Government strategies and plans. Two of the key Articles of the Convention relating to transport are Article 9 and Article 4.2.

Article 9 in relation to facilities and services, including transportation, states, *"To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas......."*

Article 4.2 states, *"With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, each State Party undertakes to take measures to the maximum of its available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of these rights, without prejudice to those obligations contained in the present Convention that are immediately applicable according to international law."*

3.4   National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021

At the whole of Government level, the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021*[10] sets the overall framework for the equal participation of people with disabilities in society. The preparation of the *NDIS* involved a three phase consultation process during 2015 and 2016 which identified measurable actions and timescales across eight agreed themes, including transport.

The *NDIS* was launched by the Minister of State for Disability in July 2017 and is aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities and contains precise, measurable actions and timescales for delivery. The Department of Justice and Equality has overarching responsibility for implementation of the *NDIS*.

In total the *NDIS* contains 114 actions across a wide range of sectors. The *Strategy* contains six public transport related actions for which DTTAS, the NTA and/or transport operators have lead responsibility. (The *NDIS* also contains 3 sport related actions for which DTTAS and/or Sport Ireland have responsibility for implementing.) Work is underway to progress these actions. The actions are listed in Appendix 1.

Monitoring of the implementation of the *Strategy* is being overseen by the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group (NDISSG) which comprises key Government Departments, the NDA and the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG) – see Section 3.4.1 below for further information on the DSG. DTTAS is represented on the NDISSG and works with relevant State agencies and public transport operators to progress the implementation of the specific transport actions, (as well as the sport actions), under the *Strategy*. DTTAS and its agencies also work closely with the other Departments and agencies to deliver on cross-sectoral or cross-departmental actions under the *Strategy*.

DTTAS and the NTA presented to a NDISSG meeting in 2018, which focused on accessible public transport. Both presentations are available online[11].

There is currently a mid-term review of the NDIS underway lead by the DJE which DTTAS and the Disability Stakeholders Group are engaging with.

3.4.1 Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG)

The purpose of the Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG) is to provide a forum within which disability stakeholders can work collectively, to present one voice to Government in respect of the monitoring of the *NDIS* through the NDISSG. It comprises 19 members including both disability service providers and disability service users, who bring their lived experience to bear on the work of the DSG.

Appointments to the DSG are for a three-year term and are made following an open selection process of inviting expressions of interest. There is an independent chair of the group and the secretariat support is provided by the NDA.

The DSG meets approximately six to eight times a year. Members also attend the quarterly meetings of the NDISSG, and additional meetings, as representatives, on Departments' Accessibility Consultative Committees (ACCs).

The terms of reference of the DSG are to:

- Work in partnership with Government Departments to monitor the implementation of the *NDIS*;
- Work collaboratively to bring solutions to the NDISSG, including actions which support the effective implementation of the *Strategy*;
- Assist in developing a coordinated input, drawing on the lived experience of people with disabilities;
- Assist in monitoring delivery against agreed targets and bring constructive suggestions for improving implementation;
- Work together to provide coordinated advice;
- Respect the independence of the Chairperson of the DSG as facilitating the input of the group to the wider NDISSG.

3.5 Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) 2015-2024

The *Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) for People with Disabilities 2015-2024*[12] is a whole of Government Strategy and was launched by the Taoiseach in 2015. It sets out a ten year approach to ensuring that people with disabilities, who are able to, and want to work are supported and enabled to do so. It recognises that having a job brings economic independence, social inclusion, and personal fulfilment. The *Strategy* covers a range of employment enablers including transport, and contains 13 public transport specific actions, for which the NTA has the

lead implementation role. Work is also being progressed on these actions. The actions are listed in Appendix 1.

The Department of Justice and Equality has overarching responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the *CES*. Implementation of the *Strategy* is being overseen by the CES Implementation Group (CESIG), on which DTTAS and the NTA are represented. The Chair of the CESIG noted in its 2017 Report[13] that there were 176,445 persons with a disability in the labour force, indicating a participation rate of 30.2% compared with 61.4% for the population overall. Census 2016 figures showed that the employment rate for people with disabilities of working age is 37% compared to a rate of 73% for people of working age without a disability.

Specifically, in relation to public transport, the Report stated that "*in the area of public transport a lot of change for the better has taken place. But people with a disability routinely report that the single greatest barrier between them and the world of work is the lack of adequately accessible public transport.*" The 2018 CESIG Report[14] stated *"investment in more accessible public transport is paying visible dividends."*

3.6   Action Plan for Rural Development

The Government launched *Realising our Rural Potential: The Action Plan for Rural Development*[15] in 2017. The objective of the *Action Plan* is to unlock the potential of rural Ireland through a framework of supports at national and local level, which will ensure that people who live in rural areas have increased opportunities for employment locally, and access to public services and social networks that support a high quality of life.

The *Action Plan* acts as an overarching structure for the co-ordination and implementation of initiatives right across Government which will benefit rural Ireland. It is the first plan of its kind to take a cohesive and coordinated approach across the whole of Government to the implementation of both economic and social policies that impact on rural communities. The *Action Plan* was prepared following a consultation process which included engagement with all Government Departments, meetings with key rural representative bodies and a series of regional workshops.

The Plan contains over 270 actions across five key pillars, all of which aim to improve both the economic and social fabric of rural Ireland. The five pillars are:

- Supporting Sustainable Communities;
- Supporting Enterprise and Employment;
- Maximising Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential;
- Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities;
- Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity.

Pillar 5 - Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity - contains an action in relation to the accessibility of buses used in the delivery of Local Link services under the Rural Transport Programme (RTP). Further details are set out in Section 5.7.

3.7 EU passenger rights regulation

EU passenger rights legislation for air, rail, bus and coach and maritime includes guaranteeing the rights of passengers with disabilities when travelling by these modes. These rights include non-discriminatory access to transport at no additional cost. The NTA is the National Enforcement Body for passenger rights (bus, coach, rail and maritime) in Ireland.

The EU published a proposal[16] in 2017 to replace the existing regulation 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations. The proposed recast regulation seeks to strengthen the rights of rail passengers, including the rights of persons with disabilities, and to place further obligations on rail operators, stations masters, ticket vendors and tour operators. It is currently being progressed by the Finnish Presidency of the European Council.

3.8 EU Accessibility Act

In December 2015, the European Commission published a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services. The proposed Directive is known as the *EU Accessibility Act*[17]. The European Parliament and the Council came to a provisional agreement on the Commission's proposal for a European Accessibility Act in November 2018. Final adoption by the European Parliament is expected during 2019. The proposal plans to harmonise accessibility requirements at EU level for those products and services, including certain elements of passenger transport services including websites, mobile applications, real time passenger information, ticketing machines and interactive terminals.

The Department of Justice and Equality is leading Ireland's negotiations on the proposed EU Accessibility Act. Ireland has been a strong supporter of the proposed legislation which is designed to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities to a range of products and services. DTTAS and relevant public transport companies are represented on an advisory committee chaired by DJE, which has advised on detailed issues throughout the course of the negotiations.

3.9 Accessibility Report of the Oireachtas Committee

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport produced a report entitled *Accessibility of Public Transport for People with Disabilities*[18] in November 2018. As part of its work, the Committee held a series of hearings with individual users of public transport with lived experience of disability, organisations representing people with disabilities, public transport operators, the NDA, the NTA and the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Transcripts of the Committee's hearings can be accessed online[19].

4 Public transport accessibility policy

4.1 Introduction

This Section focusses on the Minister and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTAS) accessibility policy, *Transport Access for All,* which is based on the principle of universal access to public transport. It also describes the DTTAS Accessibility Work Programme and the role of its Accessibility Consultative Committee.

4.2 Transport Access for All

Under Section 31 of the *Disability Act 2005*, six Government Ministers were required to prepare and publish Sectoral Plans which would lead to accessibility improvements in the areas and services within their remit. The six Sectoral Plans were required to be prepared by the following Departments (as they were structured at that time):

1.   Department of Health and Children;
2.   Department of Social and Family Affairs;
3.   Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources;
4.   Department of Transport;
5.   Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and
6.   Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Section 34 of the *Disability Act 2005* sets out the matters to be covered in the Sectoral Plan of the Minister for Transport. The DTTAS Sectoral Plan – *Transport Access for All*[20] – was first published in July 2006 and was reviewed in 2008. Following an extensive consultation process during 2011/2012, a new edition of the Plan was developed and published in 2013 following approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas. The Plan sets out a series of policy objectives and actions for accessible transport across all modes.

The concept of *Transport Access for All* is based on the principle of universal access to public transport. This policy does not distinguish between people with disabilities and other passengers, on the basis that many passengers will, at one point or another, face similar public transport requirements as people with disabilities – be that older people, parents with young children or those with a temporary mobility restriction such as a broken leg.

The benefits of improved transport accessibility extend to all transport users, even to the most able-bodied, and issues relating to transport accessibility go far beyond the needs of people with disabilities. The concept of *Transport for All* will remain the cornerstone of the DTTAS Sectoral Plan. Within this concept the target beneficiary groups of an accessible public transport system consists of: people with physical, sensory, learning or cognitive difficulties (whether permanent or temporary) and others whose access to traditionally constructed transport vehicles, services and infrastructures is limited on account of age, because of accompanying children or because they are carrying luggage or shopping or are otherwise impaired in their use of the transport system.

Transport Access for All, articulates the concept of mainstreaming accessible transport. It states that accessibility must be an integral part of all policy-making and transport planning and of the provision of transport services so that, wherever possible, the needs of people with disabilities are met within mainstream services and facilities.

Furthermore, *Transport Access for All* notes that the concept of mainstreaming of accessibility extends not just to transport vehicles and infrastructure. It also includes "softer" transport delivery elements such as staff training in understanding and meeting passenger needs and information provision (both before and during journeys) in forms that can be clearly understood.

4.3   Accessibility Consultative Committee (ACC)

As required under the *NDIS*, DTTAS has in place an Accessibility Consultative Committee (ACC). The Committee's role is to monitor and review progress in relation to the implementation of actions under the *NDIS* where DTTAS and/or its agencies have the lead role. Its remit also involves highlighting areas of difficulty in implementation of cross-sectoral issues, for consideration by the NDIS Steering Group (NDISSG).

Membership of the ACC is drawn from organisations representing people with disabilities, members of the DSG, key agencies under the aegis of DTTAS, as well as other relevant State agencies. Meetings of the ACC are scheduled to take place at least two weeks in advance of NDISSG meetings.

DTTAS has had a consultative committee in place since 2000 when the Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC) was established under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*[21]. With the publication of the DTTAS first Sectoral Plan in 2006, its responsibilities were expanded to give stakeholders a monitoring role in relation to implementation of the Plan.

The PTAC was reconstituted and its name changed to the Accessibility Consultative Committee in 2013, when it was given the role of monitoring progress of the DTTAS actions in the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015. The ACC is chaired by DTTAS which also provides the secretariat for the Committee. New terms of reference have been adopted by the DTTAS ACC which reflect its new remit. The ACC's Terms of Reference and the minutes of its meetings are available online[22].

4.4   Accessibility Work Programme

There is significant complementarity between the public transport actions in the DTTAS Sectoral Plan and those in the *NDIS* and *CES*. There are also some accessible public transport actions contained in a number of other Government strategies and plans, including the *Programme for a Partnership Government*, the *National Positive Ageing Strategy*[23], *Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities*[24] and the *Action Plan for Rural Development*.

DTTAS has consolidated into one document the remaining actions in the Sectoral Plan, the public transport and sport-related actions in the *NDIS*, as well as the public transport-related actions in the other Government strategies and plans referred to above, particularly the *CES*, into the Accessibility Work Programme. The Accessibility Work Programme acts as a road map for overseeing and monitoring progress, by the ACC, in the delivery of the public transport accessibility agenda.

4.5   Disability User Groups

Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead, Iarnród Éireann and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) each have an Access Officer. Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann and TII have in place Disability User Groups, and Go-Ahead is planning to establish one. The User Groups provide a forum for operators to consult and update disability organisations on accessibility proposals and developments, and for disability organisations to raise operational and other accessibility issues. For example, the Iarnród Éireann Disability User Group was established in 1997 and includes representatives from the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), Chime, Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Central Remedial Clinic (CRC), the National Council for the Blind Ireland (NCBI), Independent People with Disabilities and Blind Legal Alliance. The group was expanded recently to include Headway Ireland, AsIAm (Autism/Aspergers) and Alzheimer's Society of Ireland. The Dublin Bus User Group includes representatives from the IWA, NCBI, Chime, Guide Dog Association, Senior Citizen Parliament, St. Michael's House and Headways.

The ACC also provides a forum for the User Groups in each of the public transport companies to refer issues which have not or cannot be addressed at User Group level. The Access Officers from Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus and TII (as well as Sport Ireland) have presented at the ACC over the past two years. Each presentation was followed by a discussion with ACC members regarding accessibility issues relevant to each company.

4.6   Appointments to the Boards of public transport companies

During an appearance before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport in February 2018, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport indicated his intention to ensure that each public transport board includes at least one director with direct personal experience of disability.

Following a public advertisement for applications and shortlisting of candidates by the Public Appointments Service and a further assessment process within DTTAS, the Minister appointed new Directors with lived experience of disability, to the boards of Bus Éireann, CIÉ, National Transport Authority (NTA), Iarnród Éireann, and Dublin Bus.

The NDA has said that the appointment of people with disabilities to the boards of each of the transport agencies can be seen as a means of driving continuous quality improvement in the public transport sector[25].

5   Accessible public transport

5.1   Introduction

This Section outlines the key accessibility improvements made to public transport infrastructure and services in recent years. It also sets out planned accessibility improvement measures under the Accessibility Retro-Fit Programme.

5.2   Accessibility Overview - current status and examples of actions underway

Current status	Examples of actions underway
Luas is fully accessible. **Heavy rail** ▪ All rail fleet is fully accessible internally. ▪ 118 of the 144 rail stations on the network have all platforms accessible and in the remaining 26 stations one platform is accessible. A ramp is required between the platform and the train to enable wheelchair access from one to the other. ▪ The reduction in advance notice (from 24 to 4 hours) when customers require assistance on the DART network has been extended to the Northern and Maynooth commuter lines. ▪ Audio and visual announcements are available on all intercity and commuter rail services, with limited announcements on DART. **Urban Bus** ▪ All Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann and Go-Ahead urban fleets are wheelchair accessible. ▪ 50% of the Dublin Bus fleet has a space for both a wheelchair user and a buggy. This figure will rise to 100% as the fleet is replaced.	**Funding** ▪ Trebling of funding to €28 million for the Accessibility Retro-fit Programme for the period 2018-2021. ▪ A number of key new major public transport programmes are planned for delivery under the *National Development Plan 2018-2027* (NDP) over the next decade. These programmes will be fully accessible as part of the normal design. **Heavy Rail** ▪ The new DART fleet will be specified to meet the platform stepping height and distance requirements dictated by the PRM TSI (persons of reduced mobility technical specification for interoperability). It is intended that the tender scoring will award higher scores to carriage builders who provide the best platform train interface solution. ▪ Customer Service Officers (CSO) are being deployed on Intercity routes so that services with a CSO on board will be able to ensure ramp assistance is available, eliminating the advance notice requirement. ▪ Iarnród Éireann is developing a dedicated app for mobility and sensory impaired customers, allowing assistance to be arranged via the app.

Current status	Examples of actions underway
- On-board audio and visual 'next stop' announcements are available on all Dublin Bus and Go-Ahead fleet. - All bus stops in regional cities and towns are wheelchair accessible. **Regional and Rural bus** - Approximately 86% of Bus Éireann's coach fleet is wheelchair accessible, and this will increase as vehicles are replaced. - The upgrade of regional/rural bus/coach stops to make them wheelchair accessible is being rolled out. - Bus Éireann fleet since 2015 have been fitted with multimedia screens which show route progress and stop information, and the company is continuing to roll out audible 'next stop' announcements on its fleet. **Local Link** - 80% of service trips are defined as either fully or partially accessible with a target to achieve at least 95% fully accessible trips by 2020. - All new evening and night Local Link services are being serviced by wheelchair accessible buses. - **Taxis** - The wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) Grant Scheme for taxis has been in operation since 2014 and has helped to increase the number of WAVs in the fleet from 3% to over 12%. - New **NTA Transport Accessibility Manager** appointed in June 2019.	**Regional and Rural Bus** - The NTA is introducing low floor coaches on commuter bus routes up to 50km that will allow wheelchair users to board with normal ramp access. - The NTA is undertaking a public consultation process on proposals for improving accessibility standards on commercial licensed bus services. - It is expected that the "Next stop" project to rename all regional and rural bus stops in the Bus Éireann network, in both Irish and English languages, will be completed in 2019. - The NTA intends to provide funding for 86 accessible bus stops in 43 towns - one stop in each direction - each with a population of 5,000 people, by 2021. - The NTA and Bus Éireann are improving accessibility at bus stations, including Cavan, Monaghan and Drogheda in 2019. - Further roll out by Bus Éireann of its audible 'next stop' announcements in 2019. - **Local Link** - The NTA's re-tendering of the existing routes, which is almost completed, includes a condition that the buses used are to be wheelchair accessible within 2 years. - **JAM Card** - The NTA is leading a cross-operator working group to oversee the roll-out of the JAM Card concept across the public transport system in Ireland. - **Taxis** - The NTA opened a further Taxi Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Grant Scheme in February 2019.

5.3   New Infrastructure

Accessibility features, such as wheelchair access and audio/visual aids, are built into all new public transport infrastructure projects and vehicles from the design stage where appropriate. Newer systems such as Luas are fully accessible.

The *National Development Plan 2018-2027* sets out the national vision and ambition for the delivery of key critical infrastructure over the next 10 years, including in relation to public transport infrastructure.   Investment in public transport will be accelerated under the *NDP* to support the development of an integrated and sustainable national public transport system.   A number of key new major public transport programmes are proposed for delivery under the *NDP* over the period to 2027.   As with all new and recently developed public transport projects, these programmes will be fully accessible as part of the normal design.   There will also be a continued investment programme under the *NDP* to fund retro-fitting of older existing public transport facilities to enhance accessibility.

5.3.1   *Luas light rail system (Case Study)*

Luas is a state-of-the-art Light Rail Transit System that provides an accessible mode of public transport in Dublin. It has been accessible from its design stage in the late 1990s.

Luas Accessibility Policy[26]
When passengers with disabilities make a journey, they have the same expectations as other members of the public.   In providing a public transport service, Luas takes into account the accessibility needs of all present and future passengers. There is no definitive list of conditions that constitute a disability.

Mobility needs range from the most obvious needs including those on crutches, wheelchair users, those with guide dogs, or those with buggies to those with physical impairments (for example passengers with arthritis, back, or limb pain). Mobility needs also extend to passengers travelling with children, shopping, or luggage that may require assistance.

Luas Accessibility Features	
On-board Luas Accessibility Features	**Off-board Accessibility Features**
100% low floor vehicles for level boarding - Minimal gap between platform and tram threshold - High contrast grab handles for persons with partial visibility - Flexible grab handles at high level and spider rails - On-board 'next station' audio announcements - Red LED displays for next stop information - Decals supplemented with Braille at appropriate height - Designated seating - On-board spaces for wheelchairs, buggies, guide dogs - On-board hearing induction loops.	- Judicious use of tactile surfacing identifying platform edge, foot of ramps, pedestrian crossings - Platform ramps a minimum 1:20. Handrails provided for occasional steeper ramps - Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) on platform using clear LED display - Accessible Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) including audio support, anti-glare screens - Emergency Help Points linked to Central Control Room - Accessible off-street stops with lift access at Connolly, Charlemont, Ranelagh, Dundrum, Balally, Kilmacud, Phibsboro - Clear and coherent directional signage and local area mapping - Accessible communications – websites and apps incorporating read-aloud and 'skip links' technology, automatic subscriber feeds, real-time web information etc.

5.4   Retro-fitting of older public transport infrastructure

Work remains to be done in terms of the retro-fitting of older infrastructure to make it accessible for people with a disability. In particular, gaps remain in relation to railway infrastructure and facilities as most of the rail network was originally developed during the Victorian era.

To address infrastructural legacy issues, DTTAS funds a programme of accessibility improvement grants to upgrade existing and older infrastructure and facilities, such as:

- Installation of accessible bus stops;
- Upgrading train stations to make them accessible to wheelchair users;
- Providing grant support for the introduction of more wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) into the taxi fleet.

Under this retro-fit programme, which is managed by the NTA, almost €28 million has been allocated between 2018 and 2021, as part of the 4-year capital envelope announced in Budget 2018. This is a trebling of the previous allocation.

5.5   Urban bus services and infrastructure

- All of the Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann city fleets are wheelchair accessible.
- Since 2000, all new buses purchased for urban centres, are low floor wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- All Dublin Bus stops and Bus Éireann stops in regional cities are fully accessible as they can be served by wheelchair ramp and kneeling suspension on the bus.
- On board audio and visual 'next stop' announcements are available on all of the Dublin Bus fleet.
- Approximately 50% of the Dublin Bus fleet now has a space for both a wheelchair user and a buggy. As the Dublin Bus fleet is replaced this figure will rise to 100%.

However, not all of the challenges which people with disabilities face when using public transport are about infrastructure and facilities. Some are about changing attitudes and improving the understanding of the needs of people with disabilities. For example, the 'Please Don't Buggy in the Wheelchair Zone' campaign in 2017 highlighted the importance of leaving the dedicated wheelchair space on all Dublin buses available for wheelchair users.

5.6 Rural and regional bus services and infrastructure

5.6.1 Bus Éireann Regional and Intercity fleet

Approximately 86% of Bus Éireann's regional/intercity coach fleet is wheelchair accessible and this will increase as the coach fleet is replaced. The wheelchair accessible coaches in the Bus Éireann regional/intercity fleet are fitted with either an external hydraulic lift or a ramp. In order to accommodate a wheelchair, all coach types require the removal of up to four seats. The removal of seats, as well as operational checks on other equipment (ramp/lift, floor tracking, restraint clamping system), must be carried out at a garage prior to departure to ensure the safety of the wheelchair passenger during the journey.

To enable the removal of seats and the operational checks to be carried out and to ensure an accessible coach is allocated to the services required, a reservation system is in place for passengers who wish to travel on Bus Éireann's intercity and regional services. The advance notice to reserve a wheelchair space is 24 hours.

5.6.2   New regional/commuter bus

The vehicle types offered by the market at present do not appear to offer alternatives to high floor coaches for long distance interurban services. However, the NTA undertook a tender process to replace high floor type buses for shorter PSO commuter routes of less than 50 km. The NTA has placed an order for new single-deck buses which will allow wheelchair users to board with normal ramp access and which will have a dedicated wheelchair space. The first of these new buses entered into service in September 2019 and the remaining buses in this order will be introduced on a phased basis to end 2019.

5.6.3   Bus stops

While all bus stops in regional cities are wheelchair accessible, that is not the case in regional and rural areas. In response DTTAS, through its Accessibility Retro-fit Programme, is funding the upgrading of bus stops in regional and rural areas, which is being managed by the NTA. There are some logistical issues that impact the upgrading of bus stops used by high floor coaches which use an external lift. The wheelchair lift requires a large area of adjacent footpath to operate, typically between 3 metres and 3.5 metres in width. In many towns and villages it is extremely challenging to achieve the necessary footpath width for the vehicle lift to function. Solutions such as relocating the bus stop to an alternative location may be necessary, but this can give rise to additional issues such as the alternative stop location not suiting other users. In other cases, land or property acquisition may be required to obtain the necessary space, potentially requiring the exercise of compulsory acquisition powers to acquire the relevant lands.

In 2018, the NTA engaged engineering designers to undertake accessibility audits of towns over 5,000 population which have bus stops serviced by high floor coaches. It identified 43 towns which required accessibility enhancement to accommodate two stops (one in each direction) for

coaches, giving a total of 86 new accessible bus stops. Subject to local authority agreement and input, the NTA plans to have accessible stops in all 43 towns on PSO routes by end 2021.

5.6.4   Bus stations

The NTA is working with Bus Éireann to undertake works to ensure a wheelchair lift accessible bus stop is present in every bus station nationwide. For example, recent NTA investment has resulted in a fully accessible bus bay in Letterkenny Bus Station. Construction works at Cavan, Monaghan and Drogheda stations in relation to this are scheduled for completion during 2019. The works include the provision of Kassel kerbing in at least one bus bay with a wheelchair lifting pad 3.4m deep and 3m wide, provision of an accessible car space as well as Dished Kerbing access for routes around the bus bays and car spaces.

5.6.5   Audio and visual announcements

Since 2015, all of Bus Éireann's new fleet have been fitted with HD multimedia screens that have the capability to show route progress information, next stop information and expected arrival times. At present, the screens are used to show route progress and stop information. However, currently only about 10% of the 6,000 bus stops on the Bus Éireann network have on-board audible next stop announcements and these are mainly deployed on the company's city services.

The NTA, in conjunction with Bus Éireann, are currently working on the "Short Common Name" (SCN) Project, which is necessary before the on-board next stop announcements can be rolled out on the remaining Bus Éireann fleet. The SCN project involves the renaming of every stop within the Bus Éireann nationwide network using a standard naming criterion, in both English and Irish. Separately the NTA are undertaking this task with all other transport operators.

The Waterford City Network was successfully used as a pilot location to roll out the "SCN" in all formats including bus poles, bus pole information and next stop announcements, followed by Sligo and Athlone. The roll out of the SCN project on the remainder of the Bus Éireann network will be completed, on a phased basis, during 2019.

5.7   Local Link bus services

The NTA has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including management of the Rural Transport Programme (RTP) which now operates under the Local Link brand. The Local Link services are provided by private bus operators and managed by 15 Local Link Offices on behalf of the NTA.

Approximately 80% of the fleet in use on Local Link services is wheelchair accessible. The re-tendering process of the existing 1,035 Local Link services, underway since 2016, includes a provision that all services must be fully wheelchair accessible within 2 years of contract award.

In 2018, the NTA produced its first *Local Link RTP Strategic Plan 2018-2022*[27], which sets out key objectives for both the delivery and development of the RTP over a five year period. The key

priorities of Local Link continue to include addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services. Under Priority Area 5 – Access for All – of the *Strategic Plan*, the NTA's objective for vehicles used in the provision of Local Link services, is to achieve at least 95% fully accessible trips by 2020.

5.8   New evening Local Link services

Following an initial pilot phase, 59 performing evening and night time services are continuing to operate, with funding provided to end 2019. The provision of these evening and night services is aimed at addressing unmet transport needs and addressing social isolation in rural areas. All of the new evening services are using accessible vehicles.

5.9   Private bus operators and accessibility standards

Unlike the State companies, private bus companies which are licensed by the NTA on commercial scheduled services/routes are currently not required to have accessible vehicles. According to the NTA, approximately 10% of public transport services are delivered by commercial operators licensed by the NTA. Around 16% of these services have low-floor WAVs while a further 28% have vehicles with lifts suitable for wheelchair access.

Under the *Public Transport Regulation Act 2009*[28], the NTA is the statutory body responsible for regulating the licensed commercial bus services sector and is empowered to attach minimum accessibility standards as a condition of the licence.

The NTA has conducted a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), investigating different options for the implementation of accessibility and the potential impacts associated with these different options on the licensed commercial bus services sector.

The NTA initiated a public consultation[29] in September 2019, seeking feedback from stakeholders, including representatives of people with disabilities and operators, on the proposed approaches to improving accessibility on licensed public bus services.

All PSO bus services operated by private bus companies are already accessible, e.g. Go-Ahead in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

5.10 Heavy rail

Many of the stations on the rail network date back to the 19th century and are not accessible for people with disabilities. Under the Accessibility Retro-fit Programme, these stations are progressively being made accessible. Of the 144 stations on the rail network, all platforms are wheelchair accessible in 118 stations, while a further 26 stations have one platform that is wheelchair accessible. Since 2007, 17 new rail stations have been built to accessibility standards.

All of the Iarnród Éireann fleet is accessible internally. The main issue with accessibility for wheelchair users is that a ramp is required between the train and the platform. There does not

appear to be any heavy rail applications where an automatic wheelchair ramp is fitted and used by a wheelchair user without railway staff in attendance. As these devices present a considerable risk to other passengers on the train and on the platform during operation, an operator is required to deploy and retract them.

5.10.1 New rail fleet

In May 2019, Iarnród Éireann, supported by the NTA, announced that it was seeking expressions of interest from global train manufacturers for up to 600 electric / battery-electric powered carriages over a 10-year timescale. This process is the beginning of the tender for the largest and greenest fleet order in Irish public transport history.

The new DART fleet will be specified to meet the platform stepping height and distance requirements dictated by the PRM TSI (persons of reduced mobility technical specification for interoperability). It is intended that the tender scoring will award higher scores to carriage builders who provide the best platform train interface solution.

The process of having rail fleet built is a lengthy one and it will take between three and four years after the award of the contract before the new fleet will start to be delivered.

5.10.2 Assistance for people with disabilities

Following a 6 month pilot project in 2018, Iarnród Éireann has reduced the period of advance notice from 24 to 4 hours for people with a disability who require assistance to use DART services. Additionally, from late 2018, the company rolled out this reduced notice requirement on the Maynooth and Northern line commuter services.

This involves a new zonal system for DART, Maynooth and Northern commuter lines that is designed to provide better service and quicker response times to passengers who require assistance. This policy divides the stations into zones, with each zone including between one to four stations. One "Hub station" in each zone will always be manned and will provide support to other stations in that zone. Staff attached to these stations will travel to other stations along the line to assist customers when necessary. Full details are available on the Iarnród Éireann website[30].

Iarnród Éireann has stated that the move towards hubs is aimed at ensuring better assistance for customers with mobility impairment. Iarnród Éireann reports that 90% of customers are using automated means to purchase travel, and that its focus must be to ensure staff are providing assistance and customer service where it is needed.   Under the "Hub station model", Iarnród Éireann recorded over 24,600 assists in the 12 month period to January 2019 with 26 fall downs i.e. failure to provide assistance by the company during this period.

5.10.3 Intercity customer services officers

Iarnród Éireann is currently training Customer Service Officers (CSOs) for deployment, on a phased basis, on all inter-city routes. This programme of training and deployment will continue for the remainder of this year, with CSOs deployed on all intercity services as early as possible in 2020. All services with a CSO on board will be able to ensure ramp assistance is available. It is intended that this will eliminate the requirement for advance notice on all inter-city routes. Furthermore, the on-board CSO system will provide improved service for all customers.

5.10.4 Lift call mobility project

A concern for people with disabilities and others, occurs when facilities, such as lifts at train stations, are out of service, particularly for long periods of time. Iarnród Éireann has put a new system into operation at Howth Junction and Clongriffin stations which closes off the lift and when customers call the lift, the call goes to a monitored CCTV room. This has reduced vandalism issues at both stations. Benefits include: remote fault and alarm status of lifts in service - updated to Iarnród Éireann's website; higher availability of lift services for customers with disabilities; visual monitoring of lifts 24/7 during normal and emergency situations. A further 14 stations have been identified for this project and Iarnród Éireann is developing a proposal for submission to the NTA for funding.

5.10.5 Audio and visual announcements

Whilst all intercity and commuter rail fleet are equipped with Passenger Information Systems (PIS), 47% of the DART fleet requires an upgrade to its PIS. Iarnród Éireann is developing a proposal on the necessary work to upgrade the DART PIS, for submission to the NTA for funding. Following a tender process, the work will take approximately 2 years to complete.

Iarnród Éireann hopes to significantly improve the Customer Information System countrywide, i.e. at stations, on-board train services and across multi-media communication platforms. Funding has been approved for Iarnród Éireann to procure technical assistance for the development of a network wide Customer Information Systems Strategy (CISS) to meet current needs, and which is technologically future proofed for anticipated requirements. The consultant's report is expected to be completed in Q2 2020.

5.11 Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSV)

5.11.1 Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)

A number of measures have and continue to be taken by the NTA, as regulator for the sector, to address the low level of WAVs in the SPSV fleet. In 2014 the level of WAVs was as low as 4%.

- Since June 2010 the regulatory framework for SPSVs requires that new taxi or hackney licences may only be granted where the vehicle complies with the specifications for WAVs.
- New regulations have been introduced which permit smaller WAVS and thereby less expensive vehicles to be introduced into the fleet.
- The introduction of a grant scheme for WAVs.

5.11.2 WAV grant scheme

The grant scheme first introduced in 2014, provides grants for the acquisition or conversion of suitable vehicles to operate as wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys. The NTA has operated a grant scheme every year since then.

The measures taken to date have helped to increase the number of WAVs in the fleet from 4% in 2014 to 12% of the total fleet at end June 2019.   This is the highest level ever of WAVs in the SPSV fleet.   A condition attaching to the grant scheme is that all successful applicants must complete a disability awareness training programme which is provided free of charge to the drivers by the Irish Wheelchair Association and funded by the NTA.

5.11.3 Advisory Committee on SPSVs

The role of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs is to advise the NTA or the Minister in relation to issues relevant to SPSVs and their drivers. Each member may serve a three year term and may be reappointed by the Minister. The committee consists of a Chairperson and 17 ordinary members. Membership includes a representative of an organisation advocating on behalf of persons with disabilities and also a representative for older people.

5.11.4 Minimum percentage of WAVs for State contracts

The *Programme for Government* commits to the introduction of a provision whereby taxi companies who wish to bid for state procurement contracts must ensure that a minimum of 10% of their fleet is wheelchair accessible. In 2018, the Office of Government Procurement included a requirement in a tender for Taxi Services for Public Bodies in the Greater Dublin Area, for bidders to have a minimum fleet size, 10% of which must be wheelchair accessible taxis.

6 Technology and integration measures

6.1 Introduction

This Section describes measures which are in place or are being developed and which offer the potential to assist with making public transport accessible. DTTAS, under a number of key Government strategies, has committed to the implementation of such measures. The *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024* includes specific actions in relation to the Leap Card and the National Journey Planner.

6.2 Real Time Passenger Information

The Transport for Ireland (TFI) website provides Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI). The RTPI section of the website provides up-to-the-minute information on bus, DART, rail and Luas times. RPTI allows passengers to plan their journeys as any route or stop number can be searched.

TFI supports and manages the Real Time Ireland App which supplies RTPI information for Iarnród Éireann, Luas, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead and Bus Éireann services. For those with no internet access or smartphone, TFI also provides a real time text service. The real time passenger information system for bus services indicates whether a bus is accessible or not by presenting the wheelchair symbol on the sign and on the web services.

To date, 750 on-street RTPI signs have been deployed throughout the State.

Table 6.1:   Number of RTPI on-street signs

Location	4 line signs	6 line signs	Total
Dublin	487	109	596
Cork	54	1	55
Limerick	16	0	16
Galway	19	0	19
Waterford	11	1	12
Wicklow	13	0	13
Kildare	16	0	16
Meath	14	0	14
Dublin Airport	4	4	8
Louth	1	0	1
Total	**635**	**115**	**750**

Source: NTA

6.3 Leap Card

The TFI Leap Card is a convenient way to pay for public transport services. It saves public transport users from carrying change and Leap Card fares are cheaper than cash tickets. The Leap

Card simplifies the payment for travel on public transport for all users, including those with a disability. TFI provides a range of supports to Leap Card holders, including a Top-up App.

Over 4 million Leap Cards have been issued since the launch of the scheme in 2011. The Card can be used on subsidised public transport services including Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead, Luas and Iarnród Éireann DART and commuter rail services.   It is also available on some commercial licensed bus services.

6.4   National Journey Planner

The TFI National Journey Planner is a door-to-door journey planner that provides service information, directions, and time estimates for taking a journey on all public transport providers across Ireland. The Journey Planner can be used through the online TFI journey planner or through the TFI Journey Planner App. It provides plans for trains, buses, Luas, ferry and taxi services and combines them into easy to read journey plans. The plans can be for now or any time in the future.

The National Journey Planner features a wheelchair symbol for transport services that are known to be accessible. The NTA is currently working on incorporating step-free journey information on the Journey Planner.
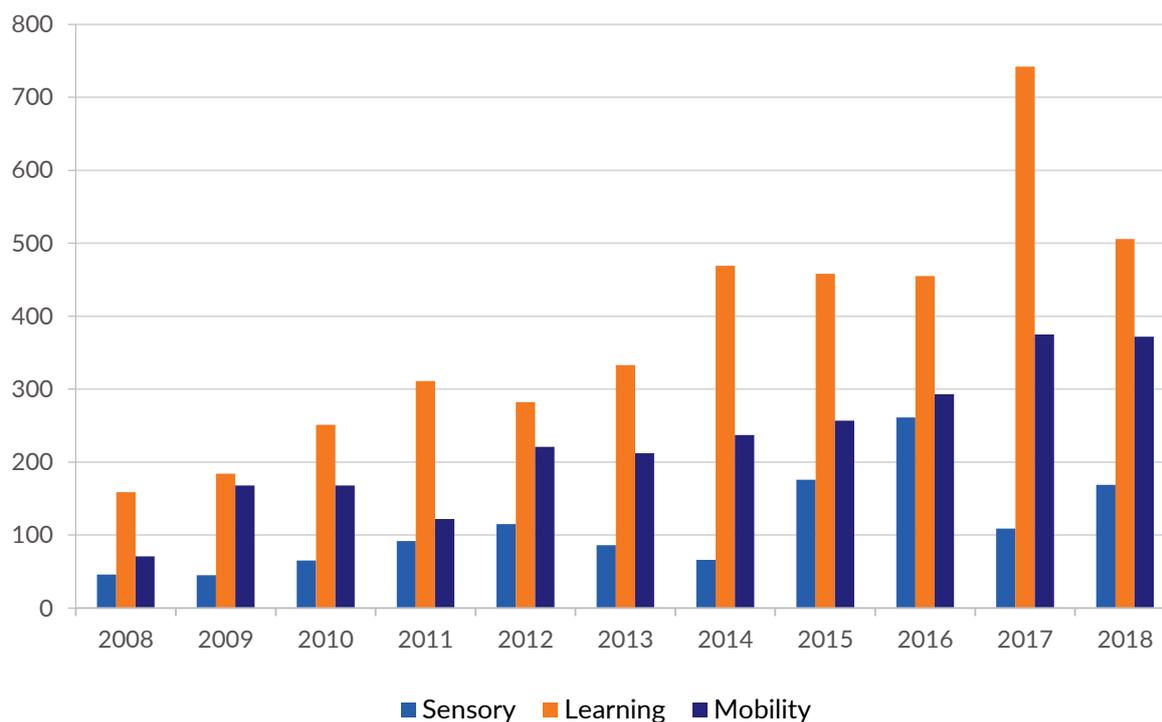
6.5   Travel Assistance Scheme

The Travel Assistance Scheme is funded by the NTA and has operated for over 12 years. Dublin Bus manages the scheme and its Travel Assistants may accompany people with disabilities who need help using public transport and to plan a journey on Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead, DART or Luas within the GDA. The scheme is free and is for people aged 18 or over.

The aim is to help the user increase their confidence in using public transport. The scheme assists a range of users, including people travelling to job interviews, hospital appointments or social events.

Through the Scheme customers can avail of assistance and practical advice on how to travel independently on public transport. With the help of a Travel Assistant, a tailor-made travel plan is drawn up to meet each individual customer's needs. The Travel Assistants will assist users over multiple days and users are assisted with both the outbound and the return journeys as they can differ. The Travel Assistants also try out the journeys themselves, adopting methods to mirror disabilities (for example using black out glasses).

Since its introduction in 2007, the Scheme has proven to be extremely popular, with patronage levels growing at a steady rate. Figure 6.1 shows the number of travel assists provided by Dublin Bus in 2008-2017.

Figure 6.1:   Number of travel assists, 2008-2017

The success of the Scheme has encouraged Dublin Bus to extend the Scheme by giving assistance to older people, to help them keep their independence and confidence while using public transport. The Travel Assistants make contact with older persons groups and offer to attend their coffee mornings or meetings to talk about the safest way to travel by public transport. During 2018 the Travel Assistants attended 36 such meetings.

Dublin Bus also provide a service where it brings a bus to rehabilitation hospitals and centres and gives a talk to the clients and demonstrates that public transport is there for them to use, by showing them how to get on and off the bus. Dublin provided this service 43 times in 2018.

6.6   Iarnród Éireann Accessibility App

Iarnród Éireann is developing an Accessibility App for rail users with disabilities which is aimed at addressing some of the key communication breakdowns that occur with the current phone call process. The technology will allow users to pre-book a journey that confirms they will have assistance by a member of Iarnród Éireann staff at their departure and arrival stations and provide them with support in an emergency. The Accessibility App is being designed to Level AAA which is the highest internationally recognised standard for accessible Web content.

Iarnród Éireann expects that the iPhone app will be ready for live testing in November 2019. The live testing will take place over a two month period which will be followed by review, data analysis and presentation on project learnings.

A critical path will then be developed for roll out of the app taking on board feedback and changes to the app and the development of an Android interface.

6.7   The JAM Card

The Just A Minute (JAM) Card[31] was developed by the NOW Group which is a social enterprise based in Northern Ireland. They provide a range of services that support people with learning difficulties and autism to realise their full potential and change their lives for the better. The JAM Card was developed for those with learning disabilities or anyone with a communication barrier to tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily. The JAM Card is used across a wide range of services in Northern Ireland, including public transport and is available as a plastic card or as a phone app.

The promoters of the JAM Card have met with a range of organisations in Ireland, including the NTA, with a view to its introduction in this jurisdiction, following its success in Northern Ireland. The NTA and the individual transport operators are favourably disposed towards the introduction of such a card or a badge (similar to what Transport for London – TfL uses[32]) or a combination of both.

Figure 6.2:   TfL Card and Badge

The NTA is leading on the introduction of such cards and /or badges across the public transport system in Ireland and has established a cross-operator working group to oversee the roll-out of the concept which will set out the key steps required, the resource implications and the timelines involved. It is anticipated that the JAM concept could be fully adopted by early 2020.

6.8   Public Transport Accessibility Manager

The NTA has created a new position of "Transport Accessibility Manager" in the organisation. Following an open competition, the successful candidate was appointed in June 2019. The duties and responsibilities of the Transport Accessibility Manager include:

- Establish a formal engagement process with key disability representative groups to ensure that the needs of those with a disability are considered in all the major improvements plans proposed by the NTA;

- Monitor the delivery of improvements in the accessibility of public transport services and infrastructure;
- Co-ordinate the accessibility programmes that are underway by transport operators for improving accessibility to public transport;
- Advise on the development of transport operator training programmes;
- Draft and update accessibility policies for public transport customers;
- Ensure a high standard of universal access training is provided to the NTA's employees;
- Establish a contact system and complaints handling system for users of public transport who have a disability;
- Promote the improvements in accessible services to customers and key stakeholders.

6.9 National Transport Training Centre

The NTA is to provide grant aid support for the provision of a National Transport Training Centre (NTTC), which will provide training and familiarisation across the full public transport spectrum.

The NCBI developed the proposals for the construction of a state-of-the-art, indoor accessible NTTC, to empower all people with disabilities when preparing for and during their journey using public transport. The aim of the NTTC is to support not only individual and group training opportunities, but additionally to support user and design testing, increase public awareness, and inform standardisation and consistency across transport accessibility.

The primary goal of the NTTC is to provide short-term comprehensive instruction, designed to teach people with disabilities how to travel safely and independently using public transportation. Full size replicas of bus, train and tram vehicles will be used to familiarise users with how to safely and confidently use these modes on a day-to-day basis. Examples of road junction crossings and on-street pedestrian facilities will also be available. Training will also extend to transport agency staff and other key stakeholders.

The NTTC is still in the development stage and the NCBI has and will be consulting with other organisations representing people with disabilities. It is hoped that the development work on the centre will be completed in 2020.

Appendix 1 - DTTAS Accessibility Work Programme

Consolidated list of actions from the following strategies/plans:

- Action Plan for Rural Development (APRD)
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 (CES)
- DTTAS Sectoral Plan "Access for All"
- DTTAS Statement of Strategy 2016-2019
- Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities (MWP)
- National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 (NDIS)
- National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS)
- Programme for a Partnership Government

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
	Overarching Public Transport Actions		
01	We will improve the **accessibility and availability** of public transport, especially **inter-city buses and rural transport** and accessibility of **train and bus stations**. We will focus on linking up the different forms of transport and make **connections accessible** as well as **transport information**, **including audible announcements**. We will prioritise the **maintenance, management and monitoring** of systems and services which make transport accessible.	NDIS Action 100	DTTAS
02	**Plan for appropriate public spending and investment in** efficient, sustainable, integrated and **accessible** land transport networks and services.	Statement of Strategy 2016-2019	DTTAS
03	We will invest to make public transport **services** more accessible for people with disabilities. Examples of such investment include increased **wheelchair access** to **bus and train stations, bus fleet enhancement and audio announcements on train and bus services**, to aid the **visually impaired**.	Programme for Government 14.1.18	DTTAS
04	Improved **provision and delivery** of **accessible public transport services**.	Sectoral Plan Action 01	NTA

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
Advance Notice			
05	We will introduce a **pilot scheme on the DART** for mobility-impaired customers requiring assistance that will significantly **reduce the advised notice time** for travelling, and ensure a better response when customers requiring assistance cannot give notice.	NDIS Action 101	Iarnród Éireann
06	We will review operational issues in relation to the need for **advance notice** of accessibility requirements for **train travel** with a view to removing barriers for service users with disabilities.	NDIS Action 110	Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann
Audio & Visual Announcements			
07	We will commit to the implementation of consistent and reliable **on-board audio and visual announcements** on **all public transport vehicles** including buses, coaches, DART, trains and trams and to monitoring and maintaining this aspect of accessibility.	NDIS Action 111	NTA, CIÉ, DTTAS, Operators
08	Implement **on-board announcements of next stops** on all public transport to assist those with a visual impairment.	CES Action 2.21	NTA
Passenger Assistance			
09	Develop the **passenger assistance** concept further for assisting people with a disability to plan their public transport journeys.	CES Action 2.12	NTA
Commercial Bus Operators			
10	We will undertake a **market consultation exercise with bus vehicle manufacturers** who engage with us to establish the feasibility and availability of certain wheelchair accessibility options suitable for use in Ireland, and develop proposals in relation to	NDIS Action 102	NTA

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
	attaching **conditions** regarding wheelchair accessibility on commercial licensed services.		
11	Examine the introduction of **conditions on licensed commercial operators** of public transport services to **provide wheelchair accessible vehicles**.	CES Action 2.13	NTA
12	Attachment of **conditions**, including **accessibility conditions**, to the grant of bus licences.	Sectoral Plan Action 05	NTA
Infrastructure			
13	Make all **railway stations accessible** to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 18	NTA, Iarnród Éireann
14	Invest in **supporting infrastructure** to increase their level of accessibility i.e. **bus stops, bus and rail stations, bus ramps**.	CES Action 2.19	NTA
15	We will ensure further roll-out of **accessible inter-city coaches** and **accessible regional / rural coach** and **bus stops**.	NDIS Action 109	NTA, Bus Éireann, Local authorities (LA)
16	All **bus stops** made compatible with accessible buses.	Sectoral Plan Action 06 Sectoral Plan Action 07	NTA, LAs, An Garda Siochána, Service Providers, Dept of Housing, Planning & Local Government, TII, DTTAS

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
17	Make all **bus stations** accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 08	NTA Bus Éireann
Accessible Bus & Coach			
18	Invest in **bus fleet** to increase the number of **wheelchair accessible vehicles** in the provision of public transport services.	CES Action 2.18	NTA
19	Make all **urban public transport buses accessible** for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 03	NTA, Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Private Operators
20	Provide **scheduled coach-based services** that are accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 04	NTA, Bus Éireann, Private Operators
Rural Transport Programme/Local Link Services			
21	Develop the concept of **car-sharing** beyond the car sharing website and voluntary car schemes that currently exist and tailor that provision for those with a disability.	CES Action 2.11	NTA
22	Develop the model of **door-to-door community transport** provision that is currently being provided in isolated rural areas.	CES Action 5.4	NTA
23	Ensure that **Rural Transport Programme** vehicles are accessible, having regard to all passenger needs.	APRD Action 245	NTA
24	Maintain and integrate the **Rural Transport Programme** with other local transport services as much as is practicable.	NPAS Action 1.5	DTTAS

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
25	Enhanced availability of **local and rural** transport services for all.	Sectoral Plan Action 15	DTTAS
Heavy Rail Services			
26	Make all **suburban trains** accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 16	NTA, Iarnród Éireann
27	Make all **Inter-City passenger trains** accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 17	NTA, Iarnród Éireann
Fares			
28	Simplify the **fares structure** across the public transport modes to make them easier to understand.	CES Action 2.14	NTA
Light Rail Services			
29	In conjunction with visually impaired people, identify and implement workable solutions to assist them in identifying the correct Luas tram to board when a number of services are operating in close proximity.	Sectoral Plan Action 19	TII, NTA, Transdev
PSO & Direct Award Contracts			
30	Provide a **subsidy** to fund the provision of public transport services throughout the State.	CES Action 2.17	NTA
31	Monitor the implementation of the Plan by transport operators under the Direct Award contracts with the NTA.	Sectoral Plan Action 02	NTA

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
	Taxi		
32	Facilitate the increase in the numbers of **wheelchair and accessible taxis** across the state by allowing smaller vehicles and **incentivising purchase or adaption** of those vehicles.	CES Action 2.16	NTA
33	Improve the **accessibility of taxis and hackneys** for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 09	NTA
34	**Wheelchair Accessible Grant** Scheme	Sectoral Plan Action 14	NTA
	Technology		
35	Develop the functionality and the availability of the **Leap card** so that it simplifies the payment for travel for those with a disability.	CES Action 2.15	NTA
36	Develop the **information tools** that are currently available to ensure that they include the information that a person with a disability needs to know in order to take a public transport journey e.g. the **National Journey Planner** on www.transportforireland.ie is being developed to have an option to plan a **journey with no steps**.	CES Action 2.20	NTA
37	Develop the **Real Time Information System** both on-street and on web and smart phone applications to be more accessible and to include real time information that is of value for a passenger with a disability e.g. wheelchair symbol on real time information.	CES Action 5.3	NTA

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
	Mobility Schemes		
38	We will lead 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 or employment supports for people with disabilities and will develop proposals for development of a coordinated plan for such provision. This plan will have regard to making the most efficient use of available transport resources.	NDIS Action 104	Dept of Justice & Equality leading. DTTAS, NDA, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, Pobal, Revenue
39	Undertake 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 or employment supports for people with disabilities, and to make proposals for development of a coordinated plan for such provision. This plan should have regard to making the most efficient use of all available transport resources.	MWP Action 05 Page 123	Dept of Justice & Equality leading. DTTAS, NDA, Pobal, Dept of Health, HSE, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, Dept of Finance, Dept of Public Expenditure & Reform
	Older People		
40	Promote the **age-friendliness** of public transport services by accommodating the particular needs of **older users** (particularly those with compromised mobility) in their design and delivery.	NPAS Action 1.5	DTTAS

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
41	Enable people as they **age** 'to get out and about' through the provision of **accessible, affordable, and flexible** transport systems in both **rural and urban** areas.	NPAS Action 1.5 Goal 2	DTTAS
Sport			
42	We will ensure that **new buildings and facilities** for arts, sport or leisure are based on **universal design principles**.	NDIS Action 75	DTTAS, Sport Ireland, Dept Rural & Community Development, LAs
43	We will **foster disability awareness** and competence in voluntary, **sporting**, cultural and other organisations. We will ensure that disability inclusion is fully integrated **into funding programmes**, monitored and linked to further funding.	NDIS Action 76	DTTAS, Sport Ireland Dept Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht
44	We will develop **access to outdoor recreation facilities** especially footpaths and trails.	NDIS Action 107	Sport Ireland, LAs
Procurement of Exchequer Funded Transport Services			
45	Promote accessibility as a key element of **Exchequer funded transport procurement**.	Sectoral Plan Action 33	OGP NTA
46	We will also introduce a provision whereby **taxi companies** who wish to bid for **state procurement contracts** must ensure that a minimum of **10% of their fleet** is wheelchair accessible.	Programme for Government 14.1.19 (Page 134)	OGP

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
Disability User Groups			
47	Providers of public transport services should be advised by **Disability User Groups** in the design and provision of their services.	Sectoral Plan Action 38	ACC, NTA, NDA Service Provider
48	Continue the work of the **Maritime Passenger Transport Forum** (MPTF)	Sectoral Plan Action 39	DTTAS working with the MPTF
Disability Awareness Training			
49	Maintain **disability awareness** in all agencies concerned with the provision of public transport	Sectoral Plan Action 34	NTA, Providers, DTTAS
50	The NTA to put in place a mandatory **Skills Development Programme** that will have as a core element disability awareness and training relevant to the provision of a service for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Sectoral Plan Action 35	NTA
51	Improved consistency in the provision of **disability awareness training**.	Sectoral Plan Action 36	ACC, D/Justice and Equality, NDA
Websites			
52	Accessibility upgrades to public transport related **websites**.	Sectoral Plan Action 40	DTTAS, NTA, Service Providers
53	Provision of a '**one-stop shop**' for public transport information.	Sectoral Plan Action 41	NTA
54	**Monitoring** and/or enforcement of **Work Programme actions**.	Sectoral Plan Action 42	DTTAS, ACC, NTA User Groups, NDISSG, CESIG

No	Action	Strategy Action comes from	Who
	Annual Reports		
55	Each state agency, regulatory body, company or representative organisation or other body or organisation that is comprehended by Transport Access for All and required by statute to prepare and/or publish an annual report, must include therein a **yearly progress report on how it is meeting its obligations under this Sectoral Plan.**	Sectoral Plan page 88	All relevant members of ACC
	Roads		
56	Make **pedestrian facilities on roads** more accessible for persons with disabilities.	Sectoral Plan Action 22	Local authorities with TII oversight for National roads DTTAS oversight for other roads

Acronyms

ACC	Accessibility Consultative Committee
APRD	Action Plan for Rural Development
CES	Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024
CESIG	Comprehensive Employment Strategy Implementation Group
CSO	Customer Service Officer
DSG	Disability Stakeholders Group
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
EU	European Union
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
IWA	Irish Wheelchair Association
JAM Card	Just A Minute Card
LA	Local authority
MWP	Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities
NCBI	National Council for the Blind Ireland
NDA	National Disability Authority
NDIS	National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
NDISSG	National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group
NDP	National Development Plan 2018-2027
NPAS	National Positive Ageing Strategy
NTA	National Transport Authority
NTTC	National Transport Training Centre
OGP	Office of Government Procurement
PIS	Passenger Information Systems
PRM TSI	Persons of reduced mobility technical specification for interoperability
PSO	Public Service Obligation
PTAC	Public Transport Accessibility Committee
RTP	Rural Transport Programme
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
SCN	Short Common Name
SPSV	Small Public Service Vehicle
TFI	Transport for Ireland
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WAV	Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle

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