

# Table of Actions Annual Reports for 2011 & 2012

<b>Children</b>	
<b>NAP Inclusion Action</b>	<b>Progress Report 2011 /2012</b>
<p>The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme provides for an annual programme of early learning for children in the year before primary school and cost €153.5m in 2010.</p> <p>The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme provides funding to community childcare services to enable them to charge reduced childcare fees to disadvantaged and low-income working parents.</p> <p>The Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) programme provides free childcare places to qualifying parents attending FÁS and VEC courses.</p>	<p>The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme provides funding to community childcare services to enable them to charge reduced childcare fees to disadvantaged and low-income working parents. The Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) programme provides free childcare places to qualifying parents attending FÁS and VEC courses. In excess of €60 million was provided in both 2011 and 2012 to support the CCS and CETS programmes. Also in the Budget announcement of 2012 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the Department of Social Protection (DSP) announced a new joint After School Childcare Initiative which will be targeted at DSP clients, to enable them to avail of employment opportunities, and will provide over 6,000 quality after school places for children attending Primary School.</p>
<p>Workforce Development Plan for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) identifies the type of workforce needed to support the development of high quality ECCE service and the main challenges associated with achieving these goals. (This plan was published by Dept Education and Skills)</p>	<p>The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme provides for an annual programme of early learning for children in the year before primary school and cost €163 million in 2011 with €176 million being made available for the school year commencing in September 2012.</p>
<p>The DCYA will support the work of the Dáil na nÓg Council, which is comprised of 34 young people elected from each Comhairle na nÓg in the country.</p>	<p>The Dáil na nÓg Body Image Survey Report was launched in 2012. The top recommendations from Dáil na nÓg 2011 were the need for young people under the age of 18 to have more influence in decision-making that affects their age-group at Oireachtas (Dáil and Seanad) level and in the work of local authorities. In December 2012 the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive have presented to the Joint Committee on Health and Children and the Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection. Their presentations outlined the work being undertaken by Comhairle na nÓg throughout the country, with a particular focus on mental health and sexual health, which are the chosen topics of many of the Comhairle na nÓg. In early 2013 the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive will present to members of both Houses of the Oireachtas on the work of Comhairle na nÓg and the potential for improved links between the houses and Comhairle na nÓg both nationally and locally.</p>
<p>The DCYA will develop guidance on involving seldom heard children and young people in participation structures and in the national policy on children and young people's participation in decision-making (2012-2017).</p>	<p>Following on from receipt of the research on participation of seldom heard young people, in 2013 the DCYA will develop guidance on involving seldom heard children and young people in participation structures. This will form part of the broader development of a national policy on children and young people's participation in decision-making. A Thematic Group on the development of a national policy on children and young people's participation in decision-making was established in February 2011, comprising representatives of government departments, state agencies, the research community and other key stakeholders. Its work will feed into the National Children and Young People's Policy Framework (2013-2017).</p>



<p>The DCYA will support the development of actions to be considered in improving the practice of listening to children in care.</p>	<p>Group formed in 2011. At the launch of Listen to Our Voices: A Report of Consultations with Children Living in the Care of the State (2011), the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs met with 50 children and young people who had taken part in the consultations and were attending the launch. She invited them to sit on a Voice of Children in Care Implementation Group. The Group was established in early 2012 to make recommendations on improving the practice of listening to children in care. The DCYA and the HSE are now working with the young people to undertake a number of important actions based on the recommendations made in the consultation report.</p>
<p>The Office of the Minister for Children will report to Government in 2012 on the overall assessment of models of best practice which promote integrated, locally-led, strategic planning for children's services. This will be informed by: i) the DCYA initiative testing models for integrated services and interventions for children at local level; ii) the development of multi-agency Children's Services Committees within each of the City/County Development Boards; iii) the ongoing research and data development initiatives undertaken or supported by the DCYA.</p>	<p>The end of 2012, the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) was reaching the end of its funding period, and a number of the project evaluations had started to emerge, a process that would continue in 2013 and onwards. A majority of these evaluations demonstrated positive outcomes associated with the projects being implemented. Budget 2013 saw the announcement of a new "Area Based Approach to Child Poverty" initiative for which €2.5 million has been provided for in the 2013 Estimates. This initiative will build on and continue the work of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP). The new initiative reflects the Programme for Government commitment to adopt an area based approach to child poverty in co-operation with philanthropic partners, drawing upon best international practice and existing services, to break the cycle of child poverty where it is most deeply entrenched. In line with this commitment, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, in conjunction with the Office of the Tánaiste and the Department of Social Protection, Communities and Education will work in 2013 to expand the number of project sites from 3 to 6. By 2015, the Exchequer funding for the initiative is expected to be in the region of €4.75 million. The new initiative will seek to implement programmes which have already been evaluated and proven to work in improving outcomes for children and families at risk of disadvantage. Following the announcement of the initiative in December 2012, the DCYA has commenced preparations for the initiative, and it is expected that a Project Team will be in place in early 2013, and additional sites will be selected by Summer 2013. By the end of 2012, Children's Services Committees (CSCs) have been rolled out in 16 counties, with these at different stages of development. The future development of these will be set out in detail in the Children and Young People's Policy Framework, due to be launched in 2013. By the end of 2012, a decision had been made in principle to enhance the central resources available to these committees to further their inter-agency work at a local level.</p>
<p>The Young People's Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF) will continue to assist in the development of youth facilities (including sport and recreational facilities) and services in disadvantaged areas where a significant drug problem exists or has the potential to develop. The geographic coverage of the Fund may be expanded to other disadvantaged urban areas. The YPFSF will continue to target 10 to 21 year olds who are 'at risk'. It will continue to build on and complement youth measures under the Children's Programme in the areas where it is operational.</p>	<p>Funding of €22.75m in 2011 and €21.33m in 2012 continued to support services and facilities in the dedicated areas including allocations to Rugby, GAA, Sporting and Boxing development. Between 1998 and 2012 (inclusive), capital funding in the region of €70m has been allocated for capital projects under the YPFSF scheme. The Fund was extended to 4 new towns in 2008 - Arklow, Athlone, Dundalk and Wexford.</p>

<p>Growing Up in Ireland: the national longitudinal study on children in Ireland: This major study, initially contracted for the period April 2006 to end 2012, will track the outcomes for children of Government supports and policies, community and family support, and will aim to identify what policy changes and further developments are required to achieve improved outcomes. Final reports from waves one and two of the Infant and Child Cohorts will be launched in 2013 and 2014. In April 2012, sanction was received to proceed with a third wave of data collection for the infant cohort (at age 5 years). Fieldwork will be completed, reports will be published and data will be lodged for this third wave by the end of 2014.</p>	<p>The second waves of quantitative fieldwork for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ the infant cohort (at age 3) commenced in October 2010 and was completed in September 2011; and</li> <li>□ the child cohort (at age 13) commenced in July 2011 and was completed in March 2012.</li> </ul> <p>In April 2012, sanction was received to proceed with a third wave of data collection for the infant cohort (at age 5). Preparation for this third wave commenced in 2012 and it is envisaged that fieldwork will commence in April 2013 and will be completed in 2014.</p> <p>The first substantive quantitative report 'The Lives of Nine Year Olds' was launched in December 2009 at the first Growing Up in Ireland Research Conference. In addition the following three reports with more detailed findings from wave one of the Child Cohort were launched November 2011, January 2012 and March 2012 respectively;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 'Growing Up in Ireland - Overweight and Obesity Among 9-Year-Olds'</li> <li>□ 'Growing Up in Ireland - Influences on 9-Year-Olds' Learning: Home, School and Community'</li> <li>□ 'Growing Up in Ireland - How Families Matter for Social and Emotional Outcomes of 9-Year-Old Children'</li> </ul> <p>The second quantitative substantive report 'The Infants and their Families' was launched in November 2010 at the second Growing Up in Ireland Research Conference. The quantitative Anonymised Microdata Files (AMF) from wave one of the infant and child cohorts have been lodged in the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA) for use by bone fide researchers and it is expected that the AMFs for wave two of the infant and child Cohorts will be lodged in the ISSDA by the end of 2014. The first waves of qualitative fieldwork have been completed for the infant (at age 9 months) and child (at age 3) cohorts and the achieved sample size for the infant and child cohorts is 120 each. The first substantive qualitative report 'The Findings of the Qualitative Study with the 9-Year-Olds and their Parents' was launched in October 2011. The second substantive qualitative report "Findings report from the qualitative study for the infant cohort" is expected to be launched in 2013.</p> <p>A series of conceptual, technical and key findings documents have also been published.</p> <p>The qualitative Anonymised Microdata File (AMF) from wave one of the child cohort has been lodged in the Irish Qualitative Data Archive (IQDA) for use by bone fide researchers and the AMF from wave one of the infant cohort will be lodged in the IQDA in 2013.</p>
<p>National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives. Annual updates on the implementation of the action plan of the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives 2011-2016 will be published on the DCYA website at <a href="http://www.dcy.gov.ie">www.dcy.gov.ie</a></p>	<p>In 2011, the DCYA published the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives 2011-2016. This Strategy sets out a clear direction for children's research and data in Ireland and articulates a range of specific information needs in relation to children's health, education, safety, economic security and social participation. The Strategy places a strong focus on making better use of existing data holdings and other resources, and in particular emphasises the role of data from the Growing Up in Ireland longitudinal study in providing insights for policy and service provision. The implementation of the Strategy will be carried out through its Action Plan. The actions included in this Plan address many of the information deficits identified, through a cross-Government initiative which mobilises the resources of 24 organisations including Government Departments and statutory bodies such as An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Central Statistics Office. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is responsible for specific actions in the strategy and also has an oversight role in relation to reporting the overall implementation of the Actions. The first update report is due to be published online in 2013</p>

<p>Other Research and Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 4th State of the Nation's Children Report will be published in 2013</li> <li>• Up to three Scholarships will be awarded under the DCYA Scholarship Programme 2013.</li> <li>• Briefing notes will be published for each completed study co-funded by DCYA/IRC/DECLG under Research Development Initiative</li> </ul>	<p>Since 2010 the Research Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published the third State of the Nations Children report in December 2010. This Report is published in fulfilment of a commitment given in the National Children's Strategy and reflects an international effort to measure and monitor child well-being. The Report, which is based on the National Set of Child Well-Being Indicators, describes the lives of children in Ireland, tracks changes over time and benchmarks progress in Ireland relative to other countries. Themes covered in the report include children's health outcomes, educational outcomes, school attendance and child poverty.</li> <li>• Jointly funded, with the Irish Research Council (IRC) and the Department of Environment and Local Government, (DECLG) three capacity building Summer Schools in 2011 and seven additional research studies in 2012, under the Research Development Initiative which was established in 2010</li> <li>• Funded 6 new postgraduate research studies under the National Children's Research Scholarship Programme. 41 postgraduate research studies have been funded under this Programme since it was established in 2001.</li> <li>• Launched the DCYA Briefing Note Series. To date 17 Scholarship Programme briefing notes and 22 Funded Research Programme briefing notes have been published under this Series</li> <li>• Established a Working Group to develop good practice guidelines in the ethical review of children's research on behalf of the DCYA. These Guidelines were published and disseminated in April 2012</li> <li>• Launched, in August 2012, an online inventory of data sources covering multiple dimensions of children's lives as a series of searchable meta-data summaries, presented in tabular form on <a href="http://www.dcy.gov.ie">www.dcy.gov.ie</a></li> </ul>
<p>The delivery, under the framework of the <i>Vision for Change Strategy</i>, of child and adolescent Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) in the order of 1 CMHT per 100,000 of the population by 2008 and 2 CMHTs per 100,000 of the population by 2013.</p>	<p>The core unit of mental health service delivery is the Community Mental Health Team, of which there are 63 Child and Adolescent Teams in place nationally. These provide care to individuals living at home, or in supported accommodation within their own community. An additional €35m was provided in Budget 2012, in part to ensure that at a minimum at least one of each mental health professional discipline is represented on Community Mental Health Teams. A total of 414 posts were approved to implement the €35 million package, of which 150 posts were allocated to Child and Adolescent MH Teams. Appointments are proceeding, and most start dates are expected to commence by end March 2013. In terms of child and adolescent in-patient services, there are currently 44 child and adolescent psychiatric in-patient beds nationally (12 in Dublin, 12 in Cork and 20 in Galway). The increase in bed capacity reflects an almost 50% decrease in admissions of children to adult units since 2008. An additional 22 beds are scheduled to come on stream in 2013 (8 in Cork and 14 in Dublin - giving a projected Child and Adolescent capacity of 66 beds by the end of 2013). Planning permission has been granted to construct a 24 bed in-patient facility at Cherry Orchard, Dublin. This is expected to be completed by the end 2013 / early 2014 - with an expected opening date of 2015 - and which would incorporate some existing beds to increase capacity to 76 beds.</p>
<p>The prevalence trends of smoking and substance use will be monitored through the National Health and Lifestyle Surveys and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD). ESPAD results will be available in late 2007 or early 2008.</p>	<p>The ESPAD 2011 dataset was submitted to the Department of Health during 2012. There was no formal launch. However, a report has been completed on its results and this has also been submitted to the Department recently.</p>
<p>The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey 2010 (HBSC) results will be available Q4 2011</p>	<p>HBSC 2010 was launched in April 2012 and work continues on the next phase until October 2013.</p>

<p>Access to treatment will be provided to 100% of problematic drugs users aged under-18 within one month after assessment.</p>	<p>Access to treatment is provided within 2 weeks of assessment and there is no waiting list for this cohort. Additional annual funding in the region of €2m has been provided for under 18's services since 2010. This has allowed for the development of additional frontline addiction services including additional psychology services, counselling and outreach services and family therapy in each Regional Drugs Task Force area in partnership with the voluntary sector. Under 18's who present for addiction treatment are offered a range of interventions, including a combination of interventions, delivered on the Four Tier Model of treatment intervention and services are designed to respond to the individual's specific identified needs. Interagency working between the HSE, Youth Services, Drug Task Forces and other community, voluntary and statutory agencies form the basis for this service delivery, provided, where possible, in a community setting.</p>
<p>To help further address absenteeism, early school leaving, behavioural problems and special needs, an additional 100 posts will be provided for the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) by 2009.</p>	<p>With affect from 11th May 2011 certain functions of the Minister for Education and Skills, under the Education (Welfare) Act including responsibility for the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), transferred to the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs. During 2011/12 NEPS psychologist numbers fell by 10 individuals to 167, in advance of the Public service retirement deadline at end-February. However ongoing recruitment has raised this to a current 172 and it is envisaged that by mid 2013 the figure will reach 180 individual psychologists employed by the service.</p>
<p>Support for the effective integration of migrant children at both primary and second-level will be enhanced through the provision of an extra 550 teachers for language supports by 2009 and the removal of the current limit of two additional teachers per school. Some €637 million will be available by 2013 for teachers for language supports to assist children from non-English speaking backgrounds.</p>	<p>The overall level of language support provided to schools has reduced in line with budgetary decisions. It is now allocated as part of a single allocation to cater for both the learning support and language support requirements in schools. Enhanced support is also provided to those schools that have high concentrations of pupils that require language support.</p>
<p>Young people enrolled in Youthreach centres throughout the country need additional supports to develop skills which will ensure they can reach their full potential socially, personally, educationally and economically. Some €2 million is to be allocated in 2007 to 20 existing Youthreach Centres to address the special educational needs of students aged 15-20 years. Consideration will be given to extending the arrangement to all Youthreach Centres following an evaluation. A further 1,000 Youthreach places will be provided by 2009, on top of the existing 3,292 places provided by Vocational Education Committees.</p>	<p>Despite the difficult budgetary position the number of Youthreach places has been maintained and the funding for Special Education Needs Initiative (SENI) has also been maintained.</p>

<p>The majority of the recommendations of the <b>Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy</b>, mindful of the <b>Survey of Traveller Education Provision</b> will be implemented between 2007 and 2011.</p>	<p>While the majority of recommendations relating to mainstreaming of provision have now been implemented, the Traveller Education Advisory &amp; Consultative Forum, taking a thematic approach, will examine and review all outstanding recommendations, including the identification of issues and obstacles to their implementation. The Forum will examine ways of monitoring the impact of mainstreaming Traveller education provision in terms of attendance at school following the mainstreaming of Traveller transport and withdrawal of the Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers, participation of Traveller children in universal pre-school scheme and Traveller attainment following the withdrawal of resource teachers for Travellers and the mainstreaming of learning support provision under the Revised General Allocation Model similar to all other children. The Forum will continue to report to the Department's Implementation Group.</p>
<p>Segregated provision at primary and post-primary level will be phased out to ensure that Travellers are integrated into mainstream schools by 2009.</p>	<p>Consultation with the Patrons of these schools is continuing and a sub-committee has been established within the Department to help progress the best approach for the phased closure of the segregated schools.</p>
<p>Pre-schools for Travellers will be integrated over a longer period with current and new pre-school provision, so that young Travellers may experience an inclusive integrated education from an early age.</p>	<p>The introduction of a universal free pre-school year in January 2010 provided an opportunity to accelerate the phasing out of segregated Traveller pre-schools. The last remaining pre-school funded by the Department of Education and Skills closed in 2012. To support pre-schools with the integration of all children whether from minority or majority groups, the Department secured funding in 2010 for staff working in community and private pre-schools to undertake accredited equality and diversity training. This training took place in 2011/2012.</p>
<p>Substance use policies will be put in place in 100% of schools by 2008.</p>	<p>Under Action 43 of the National Drugs Strategy 2001 - 2008, guidelines for developing a substance abuse policy were drawn up by the D/E&amp;S in consultation with the Department of Health and Children and the former Health Boards. These guidelines were issued to all schools in October 2002 to assist them in the development of appropriate substance abuse policies. The policy is intended to address both education concerning alcohol, tobacco, drugs and other dangerous substances and the procedures for managing incidents relating to them. The implementation of the guidelines is the responsibility of the relevant school authorities.</p> <p>A Lifeskills Survey of all schools was undertaken by D/E&amp;S in 2009. Completed responses showed that 84% of primary-level schools and 96% of schools at post primary level had a substance abuse policy. The D/E&amp;S is carrying out a new Lifeskills Survey of Schools. It is proposed to analyse the data early in 2013, and have the findings available in the second quarter of 2013.</p>



<p>The introduction of legislation to provide for Child Benefit to be divided equally between parents in cases where they are not living together and where joint equal custody arrangements apply. The implications of and issues involved in transferring payment from the child's primary carer to an alternative qualified person in circumstances where it is established that the Child Benefit is not being utilised for the benefit of the child.</p>	<p>An examination of the issues of splitting child benefit between parents in joint custody cases and of transferring payment from the child's primary carer to an alternative qualified person in circumstances where it is established that the child benefit is not being utilised for the benefit of the child was carried out in light of the Law Reform Commission's report on legal aspects of family relationships, which was published in December 2010. The policy and administrative implications of these two issues are under consideration in the Department.</p>
<p>The 475 schools in the DEIS action plan not benefiting from the school meals programme will be targeted to increase participation and the current number of participating schools will be increased by 215, by the end of 2007. Additional funding of €3 million has been provided for this programme in 2007.</p>	<p>Funding for the School Meals Programme (Urban School Meals Scheme and School Meals Local Projects Scheme) was maintained at €35million for 2011 and 2012. This has ensured that funding provided to individual projects and schools had not been cut. 54 new DEIS schools have joined the School Meals Local Projects Scheme since 2008/2009 as funding became available through schools/organisations opting out of the scheme, with 6 DEIS schools joining in 2011 and 20 in 2012. All DEIS schools who requested to participate in the scheme for the 2012/2013 school year were included. Budget 2013 provided an additional €2m for the School Meals Programme for 2013. With this additional funding now available it is planned to review funding provided to the DEIS schools with a view to seeking applications from DEIS schools not currently participating in the School Meals Programme and also to review existing payments in the context of increased pupil numbers and expanded food clubs.</p>
<p>The Irish Youth Justice Service will ensure that services needed to facilitate commencement of all community alternatives to detention, delivered by the Probation Service, are provided as early as possible during the period 2007-2013.</p>	<p>No progress update supplied.</p>
<p>The scheduled date for the commencement of the legislative provisions to implement community sanctions is 1 March 2007. The measures will subsequently be rolled out on a phased basis across the country. This roll-out will be completed by 2013.</p>	<p>No progress update supplied.</p>
<p>The total number of Youth Diversion Projects (YDP) will increase to approximately 130, catering for in the region of 4,500 young people by 2013. A comprehensive evaluation of the Youth Diversion Projects will be conducted in 2007-2008 to inform the evolution of the projects.</p>	<p>In 2011, the 100 Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDP) engaged 5,673 young people. Over the past number of years, the primary focus has been to improve the quality and effectiveness of the services provided. Recommendations from the Baseline Report, published in 2009, have been implemented including development of a best practice approach in projects through a trial site approach, an online learning community being developed for practitioners to share information and good practice and a focus on capacity building for the youth justice workers. Significant work has also been undertaken by IYJS in partnership with An Garda Síochána to improve the governance of the projects towards improving their effectiveness. This includes annual business planning through a logic model approach.</p>

Working Age	
NAP Inclusion Action	Progress Report 2011 /2012
Positive actions set out in the National Women's Strategy 2007-2015 to further increase the number of women in the labour market, to foster the advancement of women in the workplace and to address the gender pay gap.	No progress update supplied.
The <b>National Women's Strategy 2007-2015</b> , to be published early in 2007, aims to put in place a range of measures to equalise socio-economic opportunity, ensure well-being and encourage greater engagement of women in decision-making and civil society. It includes measures to encourage women to advance within the labour market, thereby increasing their earning capacity. It also addresses the gender pay gap, another phenomenon which impacts on women's economic standing.	No progress update supplied.
The Probation Service will continue to advance initiatives designed to address patterns of criminal behaviour associated with social exclusion, with an emphasis on restorative justice initiatives. In particular, there will be support to extend the Linkage Programme to increase the number of offenders successfully placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes. Referrals by the Probation Service to the Linkage Programme are expected to result in a rise from 614 placements in 2005 to 900 placements a year by 2016.	In 2011, 1,596 offenders were referred by the Probation Service to 14 Training and Employment Officers of the Linkage Programme and 807 individuals were placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes. In 2012, 1,799 offenders were referred by the Probation Service to 15 Training and Employment Officers of the Linkage Programme and 1,170 individuals were placed in employment, education or Community Employment schemes. The Linkage Programme is continuing to meet targets as outlined to date and the Probation Service is confident that the Linkage Programme is on course to achieve the planned programme targets. Restorative Justice - Building on the Restorative pilot outcomes and recommendations, a Restorative Justice Strategy is in development. The Probation Service through the DJE funds/part funds three Restorative Justice initiatives based in Dublin, Tipperary and Limerick operated through community based organisations. Extending the range of Restorative Justice Schemes is a strategic priority for the Probation Service. This involved the expansion within existing budgets of two restorative projects - the Restorative Justice Service based in Tallaght has now been extended to the Criminal Courts of Justice and to the Courts in South County Dublin, while the Nenagh Community Reparation Project has extended to the Courts in North Tipperary. Young Persons Probation, in partnership with Le Cheile mentoring continues to manage the Limerick Restorative Justice Initiative. Funding continues to be provided by the IYJS and Limerick Regeneration Project.

<p>Ensuring that people who are not able to meet the cost of GP services for themselves and their families are supported appropriately, either by means of a medical card or a GP visit card, depending on their means. Since the beginning of 2005 some 122,296 additional people have qualified for access to GP services free of charge. This includes a net additional 74,746 medical cards and 47,550 GP visit cards.</p>	<p>At end 2012 there are in the region of 1,861,000 medical cards (over 40% of the national population) and 135,000 GP visit cards (3% of the population); Over the previous 12 months these reflect increases of over 167,000 medical cards and 9,600 GP visit cards; Overall, nearly 43% of the national population has free access to GP services under the General Medical Services (GMS) Scheme, which is an increase of 10% on end 2011 figure; The programme for Government commits to reforming the current public health system by introducing Universal Health Insurance with equal access to care for all. As part of this, the Government is committed to introducing, on a phased basis, GP care without fees within its first term of office. Primary legislation is required to give effect to the Government commitment to introduce a universal GP service without fees; Legislation to allow the Minister for Health to make regulations to extend access to GP services without fees to persons with prescribed illnesses is currently being drafted by the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Health and it will be published shortly. Implementation dates and application details will be announced on foot of the legislation.</p>
<p>There is a strong body of evidence linking poverty and poor mental health and poverty is associated with greater use of mental health services. By 2013 there will be two General Adult Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) per 100,000 of the population.</p>	<p>Implementation of 'A Vision for Change' (the 2005 Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy) remains a priority for Government. There are 123 General Adult Community Mental Health Teams in place nationally, although many do not have the full multidisciplinary complement recommended in 'A Vision for Change'. In that regard, funding from a €35 million special allocation provided as part of Budget 2012, primarily to strengthen Community Mental Health in both Adult and Children's mental health services, will ensure at a minimum that at least one of each mental health professional discipline is represented on every Team. The majority of these posts will be filled by end March 2013. Funding from this allocation will also be used to improve access to psychological therapies in primary care settings, and implement suicide prevention strategies. The announcement in Budget 2013 of a further €35 million reinforces the Government commitment to develop mental health services. The HSE Service Plan 2013 will enhance suicide prevention initiatives, forensics and community mental health teams for adults, children, older persons and mental health intellectual disability. It also envisages over 470 additional staff, to implement these measures (the recruitment of which has commenced).</p>
<p>Working in partnership, the Department of Health will develop specific community and sectoral initiatives to encourage healthy eating and access to healthy food and physical activity among adults, with a particular focus on adults living in areas of disadvantage.</p>	<p>During the review period the D/Health has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issued Physical Activity Guidelines;</li> <li>• Revised and published the Healthy Eating Guidelines;</li> <li>• Worked with the Department of Agriculture to implement the Free Fruit in Schools Scheme via Food dudes;</li> <li>• Established a Special Action Group on Obesity to address environmental actions related to overweight and obesity - these include highlighting calories on menus in fast food restaurants, looking at putting a tax on sugar sweetened drinks, putting clear labelling on foods.</li> </ul>
<p>Ireland is participating in PIAAC (Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies). The field survey is being conducted at present by the CSO (Central Statistics Office) and results are expected in October 2013.</p>	<p>Investment in the adult literacy service has been maintained at €30m in 2011 and 2012 with the annual number of participants increasing to 56,000 in 2011. Ireland is participating in the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The field study was completed by the CSO in March 2012 and results are expected to be published by the OECD in October 2013.</p>
<p>A family literacy project is also being put in place under the DEIS action plan.</p>	<p>Funding for family literacy is being maintained. 16 projects received funding of €229,000 in 2011 and 24 projects received funding of €271,900 in 2012</p>

<p>A total of €1 billion will be invested in the post-leaving certificate sector over the period 2007-2013 to provide participants with specific vocational skills to enhance their prospects of securing employment and support progression to other studies.</p>	<p>The annual expenditure on the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme for 2011 and 2012 was in the region of €320m. An additional 1,000 PLC places were allocated in 2011 bringing the total number of PLC places available nationwide to 32,688.</p>
<p>In consultation with the Department of Education and Skills, the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education will set goals and targets and develop baseline data for the participation of students with a disability, mature students and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including Travellers and other minorities over the period 2007-2013. Grant support to students will be provided through the Fund for Students with a Disability, the Student Assistance Fund, the Millennium Partnership Fund, and the financial resources of higher education institutions.</p>	<p>The term of the current national access plan comes to an end in December 2013. The plan includes thirteen targets to increase access and participation by a range of under-represented groups in higher education. At the mid-point of the five-year plan (in 2010) a review of progress showed that four of the targets set for achievement by the mid-point had been achieved and seven of the targets had not been reached. It was not possible to measure progress on a further two targets as Census 2011 data were required and were not yet available. An update on progress at the end of 2012 using the data available indicates that, to-date, four of the thirteen targets for next year have already been achieved and one has almost been attained. A further two targets will be measured shortly. Six targets have, so far, not been reached. In September 2011, a strategy to recover the ground lost on some of the national targets was put in place. The strategy included twelve actions. This strategy was agreed by the board of the HEA following a mid-term review (in 2010) of implementation of the national access plan.</p> <p>(i) <b>Progressing strategic dialogue with higher education institutions.</b> In 2011, each HEA institution submitted a progress report to the HEA on their plans and targets for access and lifelong learning. Detailed, constructive feedback was provided to each institution on these plans as well as an analysis of their student numbers. In 2011-12, as part of the implementation of the national strategy, there has been an on-going dialogue with individual institutions on their strategic plans and statistical profiles. Further strategic dialogue is planned for 2012 and 2013 as part of implementation of the national strategy for higher education. This will include agreement on targets between the HEA and each institution, which will form the basis for progress on national targets for 2013 and beyond.</p> <p>(ii) <b>Developing core funding and other financial resources for access.</b> In January 2012, following a period of development and phased introduction, the access element of the recurrent grant was fully implemented for the universities and institutions of technology. €29million in core funding for access was allocated to twenty-seven institutions in 2012. The basis for this allocation is the Equal Access and other data returned each year by each institution to the HEA student record system. The funding supports implementation of institutional access and lifelong learning plans and targets.</p>

(iii) **Further development of the HEA student record system** The quality and coverage of data gathered by the HEA student record system are being systematically improved each year. In 2011 and 2012 additional data on students on part-time and flexible/distance learning programmes are being gathered, including those on Springboard courses. Systems have also developed in 2012 to monitor academic and other outcomes for students in receipt of the Fund for Students with Disabilities. Other important innovations include a new analysis of the profiles of students and staff in each HEA-funded institution which is supporting implementation of the National Strategy and the new strategic dialogue process in 2013. Work has progressed on a national student survey and this will include information on the experience of part-time and mature students.

(iv) **Allocation of additional places through Springboard in 2011 and 2012** 5,875 part-time/mature student places were allocated through the employment activation initiative Springboard in 2011 and a further 6,021 places in 2012. The Springboard programme targets funding of free part time higher education courses for unemployed people in areas where there are identified labour market skills shortages, such as ICT, Medical Devices and Pharmachem. An evaluation framework has been developed to monitor the impact of Springboard, with a first-stage evaluation published in February 2012, and a second stage report due shortly. In 2011 and 2012, the HEA also engaged in a process of research and consultation on policy and practice for part-time higher education. A policy document with nine recommendations for the future of part-time/flexible higher education has now been finalised and implementation of the recommendations has begun.

(v) **Further promotion of higher education opportunities to mature students** Promotion of higher education opportunities to mature students has been progressed through the advertising and information campaigns for Springboard in 2011 and 2012. A free-phone helpline and road shows have been provided. Aontas, education institutions and local employment and guidance services also provide information to many potential learners each year. Evaluations of Springboard as well as the policy paper on part-time higher education have identified the need for further improvements in the systems of guidance and information on opportunities for individuals seeking to return to education. This will require a range of agencies and services working together to develop an agreed strategy, including Solas, the Department of Social Protection, QQI and the HEA.

<p>Almost €4.9 billion is being allocated by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment over the period 2007-2013 to provide targeted training and supports to groups outside the labour market such as the unemployed, people with disabilities, lone parents, Travellers and prisoners. This funding will also support the increased participation of women, older workers, part-time workers and migrants.</p>	<p>In March 2010, the Government decided that the training aspects of FÁS 'operations which were under the remit of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment should now come under the Department of Education and Skills. By the end of the year the necessary legislation had been passed, budgetary and policy responsibility had been re-allocated and work was advanced on preparing for the transfer of relevant staff and other resources. The timely and efficient implementation of re-structuring continued to be a focus of attention for FÁS in 2011. In 2011, over 163,000 learners benefited from training provision and employment support schemes during the year. Within this provision, the specific needs of marginalised or disadvantaged groups were addressed through a variety of specially designed programmes. A total of 1,442 learners with a disability completed Specialist Trainer Provider vocational training and 1,635 early school-leavers completed training courses in Community Training Centres. An additional 3,033 learners completed their vocational training under the Local Training Initiatives programme. FÁS also facilitated enhanced access to training through the provision of evening and online courses. In 2011, over 29,000 people (both employed and unemployed) benefited from evening courses, while approximately 12,000 learners opted for online courses.</p> <p><b>Lone Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the twelve month period January to December 2011, 8,884 people in receipt of One Parent Family Payment completed training and employment programmes.</li> <li>• In the same twelve month period 9,865 people in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment started on training and employment programmes – 74% of these on employment programmes (Community Employment/Job Initiative).</li> <li>• Of those starting on training and employment programmes over 80% were between the ages of 25 and 44 and 18% were aged 45 years or older.</li> </ul> <p><b>People with a disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2011, 6,598 people who had been in receipt of a disability payment completed FÁS programmes.</li> <li>• 6,416 individuals started FÁS programmes in 2011.</li> </ul> <p><b>Early School Leavers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of early school leavers completing training and employment programmes in 2011 was 2,163.</li> <li>• The majority of early school leavers completing programmes in 2011 were under 20 years of age (82%) and over two-thirds of these were male.</li> <li>• 2,594 early school leavers started on training and employment programmes in 2011.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Travellers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration of people who self-declare as members of the Traveller Community was 297 in 2011.</li> <li>• One-third of registrants were in the Dublin Region. Outside of Dublin, the Midlands Region had the highest number of Travellers registered.</li> </ul> <p><b>Special Initiative for Travellers</b></p> <p>The Special Initiative for Travellers (SIT) is used to provide labour market supports, which have been identified within the City and County Development Board's Inter-Agency Strategies for Members of the Travelling Community. Employment supports include the funding of traveller support workers (Job Coaches) and ancillary costs, to provide job-ready Travellers with a range of supports to secure and maintain employment in the open labour market. During 2011, the National Monitoring Committee on Travellers agreed to initiate the process of mainstreaming the Programme in line with the FÁS Traveller Strategy 2007-2010. Engagement with Enterprise Boards, Supported Employment and Job Club organisations commenced with a view to them employing a traveller-specific Job Coach to work as part of a team of experienced personnel with an established network of employers at their disposal. During the year, 570 travellers engaged in the programme.</p> <p><b>Training and Education places 2012</b></p> <p>In 2012, at a time of reducing resources the D/E&amp;S provided for the funding of over 450,000 education and training places across the range of provision in the higher education, further education and training sectors. Places were prioritised including in the further education and training sector, specifically for those on the Live Register for 12 months or more, and improve data collection and impact evaluation to ensure delivery of this goal.</p>
<p>The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will invest some €2.9 billion between 2007-2013 to improve training for people in employment, to help upskill those who may be affected by industrial restructuring, to improve and enlarge the apprenticeship system and to provide progression opportunities for school leavers. In March 2010, the Government decided that the training aspects of FAS operations which were under the remit of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment should now come under the Department of Education and Skills.</p>	<p>In line with Government policy, FÁS continued during the year to focus on training for unemployed people and to reduce its involvement in the provision of training for people in employment.</p> <p><b>Safepass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout 2011, FÁS continued the management of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), the Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS) and the Safe Pass Scheme. During the year, 72,521 people received Safe Pass training, 6,979 persons undertook CSCS training and 274 individuals were trained in QSCS.</li> </ul> <p><b>Apprentice Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme was introduced to February 2011. By the end of the year 2,359 redundant apprentices had availed of the scheme.</li> <li>• A Competency Determination Mechanism for redundant apprentices was introduced by FAS in 2011. It was extended for other trades in 2012.</li> <li>• Thirty-six redundant apprentices attended a Certificate in Transferable Skills in the Institute of Technology to enable them to progress onto a Third-Level Programme.</li> <li>• Fourteen redundant Aircraft Mechanics completed Phase 5 and Phase 7 training with the Irish Air Corps in 2011.</li> <li>• Under the EU Leonardo Da Vinci III Life Long Learning Programme, Léargas in collaboration with FÁS, had supported 11 redundant apprentices to complete on-the-job training overseas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Skills for Work Programme provides basic education skills to people in Employment. The programme is funded from the National Training Fund and in 2011, over 2,000 workers availed of tuition through the programme. In 2011 and 2012 funding of €2.8 million and €2.2 million respectively was provided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Momentum - The new Labour Market Education and Training Fund (LMETF)</b></p>

	<p>Launched in 2012 as part of the Government's "Action Plan for Jobs" initiative, FÁS are administering Momentum, the new Labour Market Education &amp; Training Fund (LMETF), under which €20 million has been committed by the Department of Education &amp; Skills through the National Training Fund for up to 6,500 trainees. The fund will be co-financed by the European Social Fund.</p> <p>The concept of the LMETF is that funding will be utilised to provide training and education solutions to the needs of both unemployed individuals and employers within the context of four themes. One of these themes is specifically targeted at the long-term unemployed aged under 25 and the other 3 themes - targeted at specific occupational clusters - are open to long term unemployed of all ages.</p> <p>Skillnets In 2012 Skillnets which is an enterprise-led body funded through the National Training Fund (NTF) to provide companies with new opportunities to develop relevant, effective answers to their training and development needs has been set ambitious targets to train 40,000 persons, of which up to 8,000 will be unemployed. In 2012 .Skillnets will receive €14.5m in funding in 2012 from the Department of Education and Skills.</p> <p>In addition Skillnets have been appointed to set up a specific management training initiative under the Government's Action Plan for Jobs 2012. The new initiative, which is being branded as Management Works, was set up earlier this year. With a budget of up to €1.2m., the Management Works project is now at implementation stage, commencing the roll-out of a range of training and development programmes available to help private sector Small and Medium Enterprises to improve their performance through seeking to build their managerial capability which will allow them to improve trading both nationally and internationally.</p> <p>SOLAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announced in 2011, the creation of a new further education and training authority, SOLAS, will facilitate a coherent integrated strategic national response across the further education and training sectors and will ensure a greater focus on the evolving requirements of the unemployed and of industry. Under SOLAS, training and further education courses will be constantly reviewed to ensure that they are fully aligned to meet the skills needs of enterprise.</li> <li>• The establishment of SOLAS is part of a complex range of related reforms including the transformation of the 33 VECs into 16 Education and Training Boards.</li> </ul>
<p>A National Skills Strategy will be implemented to increase the skills levels of those at work, based on the <b>Forfás Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Study</b>.</p>	<p>CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QHNS) data indicates that while Ireland has not yet reached the educational attainment targets for the labour force for 2020, it has continued to make progress towards these targets. In quarter four 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· almost 42% of the labour force had third level qualifications (level 6/7 – 10), against a target of 48% for 2020</li> <li>· 40% had attained higher secondary or Further Education and Training (FET) level [National Framework of Qualification (NFQ)4-5/6], compared to a target of 45% for 2020</li> <li>· and the remaining 18% had achieved at most lower secondary qualifications (NFQ 1-3) while the target for this group by 2020 is 7%.</li> </ul>
<p>Reform of the jobseeker's and One-Parent Family Payment schemes is being considered with regard to interaction between the schemes and arrangements for those who avail of a mix of welfare and work income. This work will involve consideration of issues relating to full and part-time availability for work.</p>	<p>A working group, focusing primarily on the jobseeker's schemes, was established in 2012.</p>



<p>The standard means test for Rent Supplement (and other secondary benefit payments) under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme (SWA) will continue to be reviewed with a view to providing enhanced financial incentives to take up part-time employment, training, education or other progression options, and minimising where possible, the impact of the withdrawal of social welfare supports. The overall emphasis will be on the provision of appropriate long-term housing solution.</p>	<p>From 1st January 2012, minimum contribution increased from €24 per week to €30 per week and a higher rate of minimum contribution of €35 per week for couples was introduced. These measures will more closely align the minimum contribution payable by households under the rent supplement scheme with those of local authorities. These changes reduce the disincentives for households to transfer to local authority housing. From 1st January 2012 maximum rent limits reduced by an average of 13%.</p> <p>At the end of November 2012 local authorities had transferred a total of over 42,687 households from Rent Supplement. Of these 25,123 were housed directly under Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and a further 17,564 were accommodated under other social housing options. In 2012, the D/Social Protection provided the D/Environment, Community, and Local Government with details of over 5,000 customers on rent supplement who are at high risk of long-term unemployment for the purposes of prioritising for RAS eligibility.</p> <p>On 27 March 2012 the Government outlined the transfer of responsibility for the provision of rental assistance to persons with a long term housing need from the D/Social Protection, currently provided through rent supplement, to housing authorities using a new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).</p> <p>A multi-agency steering group has been established to develop proposals to give effect to this transfer. The group is chaired by the D/Environment, Community and Local Government and consists of representatives from the D/Social Protection; Public Expenditure and Reform; Office of the Revenue Commissioners; the County and City Managers Association, and the Housing Agency. The D/Social Protection is progressing the necessary policy, legislative and administrative requirements to support the transfer of long term rent supplement customers to housing authorities.</p>
<p>A new <i>Social and Economic Participation Programme</i> will be introduced by the Department of Social Protection. The aim is to move from the current largely passive approach to one where the Department will engage with all people of working age in receipt of social welfare at the initial claim stage in order to deliver more intensive engagement on an individual basis. Some €50 million will be invested in this programme between 2007 and 2013 with an initial €13 million to be spent in the first 3 years. As part of this process, research aimed at developing a <i>National Profiling System</i> will be finalised by the end of 2008.</p>	<p>The integration of the Community Welfare Service from the Health Service Executive, and Employment and other services from FÁS into D/Social Protection was finalised in January 2012. The integration of FÁS Employment and Community Services and the Community Welfare Service into the Department is an important first step in the establishment of the new National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES) which is now called Intreo. The new Intreo service provides services using a 'one stop shop' model of delivery where customers can avail of all employment and benefit support services through any of one of a number of service channels, public office, call centre or internet. To date Intreo has been rolled out to 14 offices nationally and full rollout to the Department's offices will be complete by end 2014.</p>
<p>The Disability Activation Project (DAP) commenced in January 2008 having received funding under the ESF "Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013.</p>	<p>In 2012, the Disability Activation Project [Disability Activation (DACT) programme] engaged Pobal to manage a range of projects (with ESF co-funding) the under the project which will run until April 2015. The projects are aimed at providing practical insight in how best to engage with people with disabilities and to increase employment prospects. Following a call for proposals, 14 projects were selected. These projects cover 4 themes: Improving access to employment; progression for young people with disabilities; progression for people with an acquired disability; innovative engagement with employers. The budgeted expenditure on these contracted programmes is € 4.1 million for 2013 and in excess of €7.0 million in total. Projects were selected on the basis of their capacity to be mainstreamed. The DACT programme will provide significant learning and experience as to how best to ensure the progression of people with disabilities into employment and other opportunities.</p>

<p>The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) allows low-income farmers and fishermen to earn a supplementary income while, at the same time, benefits rural communities by maintaining and improving local amenities and facilities. Expenditure of some €214 million will be provided between 2007 and 2013 to benefit some 2,600 households. It is an aim of the scheme that over the medium-term all participants will be facilitated with their preferences with regard to both location and type of work.</p>	<p>The Rural Social Scheme has been able to maintain employment level of 2,600 participants and 130 supervisors over the period 2011 and 2012 with annual funding sufficient to maintain the scheme at an acceptable state of delivery. All available places (at both participant and supervisor level) have been allocated and quotas have been assigned to each of the Implementing Bodies, who deliver the scheme on behalf of the Department. Average participation rates for the years 2007-2012 are 2,550 participants and 130 supervisors. Expenditure over the period amounts to €315m.</p>
<p>The extension of the <i>Employment Action Plan</i> process to those who are three months unemployed (previous threshold was six months) and those who are aged 55-64 will enable the provision of increased and earlier engagement.</p>	<p>The major elements of the Government's response to the unemployment crisis are set out in the Pathways to Work policy which is aimed at ensuring that as many as possible of the job vacancies that are created are filled by people from the Live Register, with a particular focus on those who are long term unemployed or at risk of long-term unemployment. The Pathways to Work policy was announced in 2011 and the establishment of the new integrated National Employment and Entitlement Service, since renamed Intreo, began in 2012. The new Intreo service will involve transforming and reforming the employment and income support services institutions to deliver better services to the unemployed through an integrated approach. It will result in more regular and on-going engagement with people who are unemployed through active case management and profiling. The D/Social Protection (DSP) is rolling out an approach of profiling clients on receipt of a jobseekers claim and then implementing case management on a one to one basis based on the profile data. This enables DSP to both intervene early in the clients period of unemployment and target resources where they are most needed. This engagement approach is being linked to payment of benefits both to improve customer service and to ensure that all people claiming Jobseekers Benefit / Jobseeker Allowance are offered assistance and that payment of benefit is subject to their co-operation with this assistance.</p> <p>The Pathways to Work policy sets very ambitious targets to be achieved over the next three years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that 75,000 of those long term unemployed will move into employment by 2015.</li> <li>• To reduce the average time spent on the live register from 21 months to less than 12 months.</li> <li>• To ensure that employers have access to and are offered suitable candidate to fill full time vacancies and that the proportion of vacancies filled by the Department's employment services from the Live Register is at least to 40% by 2015.</li> <li>• To ensure that each person in receipt of a jobseeker payment fulfils their personal responsibility to engage fully with the employment and training supports provided by the State as a pre-condition for receipt of their welfare payments.</li> </ul>

<p>The Government discussion paper, "Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents," put forward proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aimed at reforming income supports for lone parents and other low income families and supporting them into education, training and employment.</li> <li>• To tackle obstacles to employment for lone parents and other low income families. Also included were proposals for the extension of the National Employment Action Plan to focus on lone parents, focused provision of childcare and the introduction of a new social assistance payment for low income families with young children.</li> </ul> <p>The proposals will address supports such as access to childcare, flexible training and education programmes, and positive opportunities for customers.</p>	<p>The programme to allow for the local processing of One Parent Family (OFP) claims in social welfare local offices (LOs) throughout the country continued. Approximately 80% of OFP claims are now handled by LOs with the remainder processed in Pension Services Offices. This will support engagement with lone parents at a local level. While it has not been possible to progress the proposals as outlined in the discussion paper, due, in part, to current economic conditions, these proposals have informed deliberations regarding the reform of the OFP scheme. Legislative changes were introduced to the OFP in the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2010, which came into effect on 27 April, 2011 where, for new customers, payment was made until the youngest child reached age 14. These reforms were continued in 2012 with the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2012 introducing changes where the age of the youngest child, where payment is made, is being reduced to age 7 by 2014 for new customers and 2015 for existing customers. Budget 2013 deferred the implementation of these changes from January each year to July. When the youngest child of a lone parent reaches the age of 7, if the parent is still in need of income support, they can apply for the Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) and receive the relevant activation supports attached to that payment. The special provisions for those in receipt of a Domiciliary Care Allowance – payable until the child reaches age 16, and for those who are recently bereaved remain in place. Budget 2013 also saw the announcement of a joint childcare initiative between DSP and DCYA that will provide over 6,000 afterschool childcare places during 2013 with a pilot to commence in early 2013. These afterschool places will be aimed at low-income families where the parents are availing of an employment opportunity. The funding of €14 million will be provided by DSP. This scheme responds to the needs of lone parents as a result of the changes to the OFP payment that were contained in the Social Welfare and Pension Act 2012.</p> <p>CSP - the expansion of funding for the CSP envisaged as part of Towards 2016 did not materialise due to the economic slowdown. Since 2009, the Programme has not conducted an open call for proposals/applications. The priority has been to invest programme resources in existing contract holders and main the focus of service delivery on communities where gaps in services are identified or where service delivery is more appropriate to be implemented by community based organisation. Lone parents continue to be one of target groups from which recruitment is targeted under the programme.</p>
<p>The Activation &amp; Family Support Program (AFSP) is provided by the Department of Social Protection to support personal development, intensive training, counselling and other supports for those who are most marginalised. It is estimated that 420 projects per year will be funded over the lifetime of this Plan.</p>	<p>The objective of the Activation and Family Support Programme (AFSP) is to provide for funding to enable the development of training and education initiatives, mainly in conjunction with other organisations and agencies, to assist people who are in receipt of social welfare payments to enhance their employability through education, training and personal development opportunities and to improve their quality of life. The application of the funding is largely responsive to demand identified by local organisations who apply for funding for a project via the DSP Case Officer/Facilitator. It is designed to fund once off projects. Funding applications come from a wide range of organisations including family resource centres, Partnerships, Community development companies and advocacy groups. Expenditure in 2011 was €2.82m with a total of 288 programmes funded with 9,122 participants supported. In 2011 there were a number of high participant projects supported e.g. Information Days, Job Fairs etc. The provisional spend in 2012 was €2.54m with a total of 238 programmes funded with 5,952 participants supported.</p>

<b>Older People</b>	
<b>NAP Inclusion Action</b>	<b>Progress Report 2011 /2012</b>
<p>The Department of Health is currently considering the future of HSE Provision of Residential Care for Older People. This review will consider the position of all HSE residential facilities for Older People in terms of meeting the National Standards and Regulations. It will also consider local demographic pressures and the extent of existing public and private provision, with a view to developing an overall strategy on how the Executive should continue to provide this service in view of current budgetary and other pressures.</p>	<p>At the request of the Minister, the HSE has reviewed the status of its long stay nursing homes, focusing on areas such as ability to meet Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) standards, environmental issues including age &amp; structure, and location. This review will inform the formulation by the HSE, in collaboration with the Department, of a comprehensive proposal on this issue for the Minister's consideration.</p>
<p>The Health Bill 2006 provides for the establishment of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services within HIQA. The Chief Inspector will have statutory responsibility for inspecting and registering children's residential services, residential centres for people with disabilities, residential centres for older people and private nursing homes. The Chief Inspector will inspect these services against standards set by HIQA and regulations made by the Minister for Health.</p>	<p>Under the Health Act, 2007 statutory responsibility is given to the Chief Inspector of Social Services, part of HIQA for inspecting and registering categories of designated centres, including nursing homes for older people (public and private). This system of registration and inspection commenced on 1st July, 2009 and HIQA successfully completed the first 3 year cycle of registration for all nursing homes on 30th June 2012.</p>
<p>The National Guidelines for Standardised Implementation of Home Care Packages, developed by the HSE in 2010, are being rolled out across all Local Health Offices (LHOs) in 2011. This, together with the Procurement Framework for Home Care services initiated in 2010 by the HSE, governs all aspects of quality care delivery including Needs Assessment, Access, Delivery, Monitoring, etc.</p>	<p>The National Guidelines for Standardised Implementation of Home Care Packages developed by the HSE are being rolled out across all Local Health Offices, beginning in 2011.</p>

<p>The main focus of Community Intervention Teams (CITs) is the prevention of avoidable hospital admission and the facilitation of early discharge from hospitals through the provision of care in the community. CITs services will be additional to existing mainstream community services and will address issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity to provide fast-tracked non-medical care or supports for an interim period while mainstream services are being arranged for the patient on a 7 day per week basis. This is achieved by providing dedicated services to ensure an immediate response for patients who are identified by the GP as requiring new or enhanced home supports;</li> <li>- The link between community services and patients being discharged from Accident and Emergency Departments, who require community supports;</li> <li>- The HSE plans to enhance primary care services by developing CITs nationally within primary care settings by the end of 2014.</li> </ul>	<p>CITs work in partnership with PCTs, General Practice, Community Response Beds, community nursing, home support services, acute hospitals and other professional, voluntary and external providers to deliver enhanced services and patient centered care in the most appropriate setting. The CIT provides a rapid and integrated response to an appropriate patient with an acute episode of illness who requires CIT services for a defined/short period of time (ideally &lt;72 hours) in the community/home. There are 7 functioning CITs, some of which were funded via 2010 funding and some developed locally by local funding arrangements. As at 31st December 2012, there were almost 14,000 people referred to CIT services. As part of the 2012/2013 €20m funding approved for Primary Care, funding in the amount of €1.475m has been approved to support the development of new CITs.</p>
<p>Older people will be encouraged and supported to access further and higher education and appropriate targets will be set in the context of proposals on life-long learning.</p>	<p>Apart from Youthreach for early school-leavers and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) for people of working age, there is no upper age limit for access to Adult and Further Education programmes. In 2011, approximately 23% of adult literacy and 18% of Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) participants were over 55 years of age. Older people also participate in classes funded under the Community Education programme. This programme funds classes in computer (mainly introductory), language and various hobby type courses mainly through the provision of tutor hours.</p>
<p>Progress reports will be prepared on the implementation of the Disability Sectoral Plans after 3 years (2009) and the Disability Act will be reviewed after 5 years (2010).</p>	<p>The D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government continues to implement its Sectoral Plan. Progress on implementation is reported bi-annually through the D/EC&amp;LG Disability Consultative Committee. The Department has recently submitted a list of priority actions for the Government's new National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan being developed by the Department of Justice.</p>
<p>Provision has been made in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009 for the making of Housing Services Plans which will put local authority Housing Action Plans on a statutory basis. This provision will be commenced in due course.</p>	<p>Local authorities continue to implement their Housing Action Plans in accordance with agreed housing programmes, including through meeting the needs of specific vulnerable groups. Progress on implementation is reported annually through Housing Action Plan meetings between D/EC&amp;LG and local authorities.</p>

<p>The Department of Environment, Community &amp; Local Government will continue to prioritise available resources to the suite of Grants for Older People and People with a Disability to enable them continue independent living and remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.</p>	<p>In 2011, total funding of €76.7 million was provided under the suite of Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes with some 11,787 grants paid. A detailed breakdown is not yet available for 2012, however, a total capital provision of approximately €67 million was made available and it is expected that the number of grants paid in 2012 was in the region of 9,000.</p>
<p>Services to provide enhanced home security, energy conservation and other measures for vulnerable older people will continue to be a priority activity within the Community Supports for Older People Scheme. It is intended to fund applications for some 5,000 people per year. Seniors Alert Scheme was introduced in 2010. The Seniors Alert Scheme continues to aim to encourage community support for vulnerable older people.</p>	<p>Funding allocated to the Seniors Alert scheme in 2011 was €2.47 million, funding 422 groups who helped 7,910 beneficiaries in that year. A further €2.52 million was spent in 2012 funding 498 groups who assisted 9,142 beneficiaries with appliances.</p>
<p>The level of the Qualified Adult Allowance for pensioner spouses will be increased to the level of the State Pension (non-contributory) by 2009.</p>	<p>Rates were maintained.</p>
<p>The continued participation of older people in the labour market will be encouraged and facilitated to meet the challenge of an ageing society. Training and advisory services, will assist older people who wish to return to or remain in the workplace. These services are being provided within D/SP overall services, particularly through the preventative process and through training and upskilling.</p>	<p>Policy for older unemployed is the same as for all other unemployed, in line with the Pathways To Work Policy (i.e. focus is on helping the long-term unemployed or those at risk of long-term unemployment who are currently on the Live Register).</p>

<b>People with Disabilities</b>	
<b>NAP Inclusion Action</b>	<b>Progress Report 2011 /2012</b>
<p>Issues around the cost of disability will be progressed in the context of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development of the needs assessment process to be established under Part 2 of the Disability Act, 2005, (due to commence by mid-2007);</li> <li>• the opportunities for the rationalisation and development of payments following the transfer of disability-related income maintenance schemes from the HSE to the Department of Social Protection. Provision for the transfer of these schemes is to be made in the Social Welfare Bill 2008;</li> <li>• the Disability Survey, which will be published in 2007;</li> <li>• the Inter-departmental Group on the Costs of Disability will oversee these developments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>D/Education &amp; Skills Response:</b> Having considered the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) report, and consulted with the education partners, the Department of Health and the HSE, the D/Education &amp; Skills identified a range of options for the implementation of Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN). The Department's opinion is that the level of investment required would be greater than that envisaged in the NCSE report. In the light of the current financial circumstances, it is not possible to proceed with full implementation as originally envisaged.</p> <p>The NCSE has been asked to provide comprehensive policy advice on how the education system can best support children with special educational needs. This advice will guide the preparation of a plan on how aspects of EPSEN can be implemented, such as prioritising of access to children with special needs to an individual education plan for example.</p> <p>An integrated approach is being adopted by the education and health sectors to target resources to the areas of greatest need. Progress in both sectors is kept under review by a Cross-Sectoral Team which comprises of representatives of: the Departments of Education and Skills, Health, Children and Youth Affairs the National Council for Special Education and the Health Service Executive. In 2006, a Cross Sectoral Team was established to provide for a joint approach by the D/Health and the D/Education and Skills to the implementation of the Disability Act 2005 and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 was commenced on 1st June 2007 in respect of children under the age of five. It had been intended to have both the Disability Act 2005 and the EPSEN Act 2004 fully implemented during 2010 in respect of children and young people aged between 5 and 18. However, in 2008, the then Government decided in light of financial circumstances, to defer further the implementation of both Acts. Notwithstanding this, the Cross Sectoral Team continues to meet to address issues of mutual concern for children with disabilities. The D/Social Protection is not in a position to progress the transfer of Supplementary Blind Welfare Allowance given other priorities and resource constraints. Policy and operational issues relating to the Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant are under review in the D/Health.</p>
<p>Progress reports will be prepared on the implementation of the Disability Sectoral Plans after 3 years (2009) and the Disability Act will be reviewed after 5 years (2010).</p>	<p><b>D/CENR Response:</b> D/CENR has reviewed progress in relation to the delivery of commitments in our Sectoral Plan on a regular basis. The second progress report by the Monitoring Committee of the D/Communications Energy &amp; Natural Resource's Disability Sectoral Plan was presented to the Minister in November 2009 and the committee have since participated in the formulation of the new Disability Implementation Plan.</p> <p><b>D/EC&amp;LG Response:</b> The Department continues to implement its Sectoral Plan. Progress on implementation is reported bi-annually through the Disability Act Sectoral Plan Advisory Committee. The Department has recently submitted a list of priority actions for the Government's new National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan being developed by the Department of Justice.</p>

	<p><b>D/SP Response</b> - In November 2011, the Minister for Disability , Equality , Mental Health and Older People appointed 2 new groups to assist her in the implementation of the National Disability Strategy, the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (comprising of 10 Government Departments) and the National Disability Stakeholders Group. This process is separate but complementary to the Sectoral Plans. The D/Social Protection has now submitted its actions for inclusion in the the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan which is scheduled to be signed off by all parties in April 2013. The Plan will include formal monitoring procedures for same. D/Social Protection's Sectoral Plan (2010 - 2012)actions have been subsumed into the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan. When the latter is signed-off by the the participating Government Departments and the National Disability Stakeholders Group and the Implementation Plan published , the D/Social Protection will revise its Sectoral Plan.</p>
<p>The Disability Act will be commenced for those children aged 5-18 years in tandem with the implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has outlined the steps to be taken to facilitate implementation on a phased basis up to 2010.</p>	<p>Having considered the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) report, and consulted with the education partners, the Departments of Health, Children &amp; Youth Affairs and the HSE, the Department of Education &amp; Skills identified a range of options for the implementation of Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN). The Department's opinion is that the level of investment required would be greater than that envisaged in the NCSE report. In the light of the current financial circumstances, it is not possible to proceed with full implementation as originally envisaged.</p> <p>The NCSE has been asked to provide comprehensive policy advice on how the education system can best support children with special educational needs. This advice will guide the preparation of a plan on how aspects of EPSEN can be implemented, such as prioritising of access to children with special needs to an individual education plan for example.</p> <p>An integrated approach is being adopted by the education and health sectors to target resources to the areas of greatest need. Progress in both sectors is kept under review by a Cross-Sectoral Team which comprises of representatives of: the Departments of Education and Skills, Health, Children and Youth Affairs the National Council for Special Education and the Health Service Executive.</p>
<p>By 2010, a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities will be developed by the D/Social Protection (DSP).</p>	<p>The Cross Sectoral Group on Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities became defunct on the transfer of responsibilities to the Dept of Education &amp; Skills and the Dept of Social Protection from FÁS as part of the Transformation Process. The role and function of the Cross Sectoral Group has been subsumed in November 2011 into the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group being led by the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People which is developing a 3 year implementation plan. This is scheduled for publication in early to mid 2013.</p>



<p>The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013 identifies six goals and associated actions in the following key areas; communicating the rationale for Access; supporting the development of national framework of policies and initiatives to achieve access; the creation of further routes of access and progression to higher education; teaching and learning practices; financial support and resources and making the case for a more robust data collection and evaluation framework to advise the development targets and indicators of progress.</p>	<p><b>(i) Information and financial support for students with disabilities</b>  Over the course of the National Access Plan there has been continued growth in the number of students with disabilities entering higher education (from 4.2% of entrants in 2007 to 6% in 2011). The number of students supported through the Fund for Students with Disabilities has risen by 80% since 2007 and in 2011 €11.7 million was allocated to support the participation of 6,800 students in further and higher education. A review of the Fund in 2012 (pending) may propose further changes to policy and practice supporting students with disabilities. Studentfinance.ie continues to be a source of information on financial support for students, including those with disabilities.</p> <p><b>(ii) Students with disabilities: progression from second level to further and higher education</b>  The inclusion of the Disability Access Route (DARE) as part of the main CAO process aims to promote opportunities for progression to students in second level. Work on this route is co-ordinated by a network of disability officers (DAWN) from Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) institutions. The objectives, impact and operational approach of DARE is being formally evaluated in 2012-2013. In 2011 and 2012 disability officers also co-ordinated a 'higher options' fair for students with disabilities in second level seeking to access to higher education. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) also facilitates students with special educational needs in second level and further education to progress to higher education.</p> <p>In 2011 and 2012 work by the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) continues to be supported by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and higher education institutions. AHEAD plays an important role in the provision of independent information and advice for students with disabilities in second and third level, as well as the provision of training for staff in higher education. AHEAD has produced a number of publications providing guidance on good practices in policies and supports for students with disabilities. In 2011-12 this has included work on the development of guidelines to support the entry of students with disabilities to higher education and training for nurses and teachers.</p>
<p>The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 sets out a framework for the proposed delivery of housing for people with disabilities through mainstream housing policy. The strategy aims to support people with disabilities to live as independently as possible and also supports Government policy on the deinstitutionalisation of people with disabilities to more appropriate community based living arrangements.</p>	<p>The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability was published in October 2011 and the supporting Implementation Framework was published in July 2012.</p> <p>The D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government, in conjunction with the Housing Agency, has commenced work on the priority actions contained within the Implementation Framework. A robust monitoring and reporting framework has been established with progress being monitored by an Implementation Monitoring Group.</p>

<p>A key objective of transport policy is to ensure the accessibility of the public transport system by providing fully accessible city buses and enhanced access to bus and railway stations in line with the Department of Transport Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005. Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The replacement of inaccessible Bus Éireann and Private Operator coaches with coaches that are accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2015;</li> <li>- Making all urban buses accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2012;</li> <li>- Making practically all inter-urban passenger rail services accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments by 2009.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bus Éireann</b> City services 100% low-floor wheelchair accessible buses as is 52% of InterCity Coach fleet. It is Company policy to only purchase wheelchair accessible buses/coaches for the future. Four wheelchair accessible coach routes also operational and more planned for introduction in 2013.</p> <p><b>Dublin Bus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of its fleet is low-floor wheelchair accessible buses.</li> <li>• Bus pole I.D. signs introduced to aid visually impaired people and assist with the provision of realtime passenger information systems.</li> <li>• 60% of bus stops in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) have been upgraded.</li> </ul> <p><b>Iarnród Éireann</b> 100% of its passenger fleet broadly meets accessibility standards and at least 79 (incl. all of the main ones) out of 143 railway stations have received accessibility upgrades.</p> <p><b>Private Operators</b> A number of private operators also operate low-floor buses.</p>
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<b>Communities</b>	
<b>NAP Inclusion Action</b>	<b>Progress Report 2011 /2012</b>
<p>The Family Support Agency will also continue to strengthen families by supporting voluntary organisations providing marriage, relationship, child and bereavement counselling services. The recommendations of the Review of the Grant Scheme for Voluntary Organisations Providing Marriage, Child and Bereavement Counselling Services will be examined and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p>The Family Support Agency (FSA) provides funding under the Scheme of Grants to voluntary and community organisations providing marriage, child and bereavement counselling services. The objective is to support continuity and stability in family life. The grants support both national and local voluntary organisations in helping people to deal with difficulties they are experiencing in their relationships, to help children whose lives have been affected by parental separation and to support families who have experienced the death of a family member. Some 600 organisations are funded by the Family Support Agency each year, including 28 major organisations that have been identified for multi-annual funding. The Family Support Agency provided total funding of €10.678m in 2011 and €9.413m in 2012 for this initiative. The Scheme of Counselling Grants as a function of the Family Support Agency will transfer into the new Child and Family Support Agency upon its establishment.</p>
<p>The Family Support Agency will work with County and City Development Boards to ensure a more cohesive approach to the delivery of family- focused social inclusion services provided through Family Resource Centres.</p>	<p>The Family Support Agency operates the Family Resource Centre Programme. The aim of the Family Resource Centre Programme is to combat disadvantage and improve the functioning of the family unit. The programme funds 106 family resource centres throughout the country. It emphasises involving local communities in tackling the problems they face, and creating successful partnerships between voluntary and statutory agencies at community level. The Family Support Agency provided funding of €15.897m in 2011 and €15.102m in 2012 for this programme. The Family Resource Centre Programme as a function of the Family Support Agency will transfer into the new Child and Family Support Agency upon its establishment in 2013.</p>
<p>A review of the Family Mediation Service will be undertaken in 2007. In addition, the service will continue to be expanded to meet identified demand. The Family Mediation Service will facilitate the use of mediation in family disputes in order to speed up the legal process, reduce costs and ameliorate the stress of contested court proceedings.</p>	<p>The Family Mediation Service (FMS) transferred from the Family Support Agency to the Legal Aid Board in November 2011. This was in line with the Government's commitment to facilitate the use of mediation in family disputes in order to speed up the legal process, reduce costs and ameliorate the stress of contested court proceedings.</p>

<p>The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) (formerly the Office of the Minister for Integration) continues to support and progress anti-racism measures and actions aimed at the integration of migrants: • Intercultural Education Strategy (2010-2015); • A Diversity Strategy for the Arts Sector; • The Garda Síochána developed a Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009 -2012); • The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, together with the Equality Authority, fund a workplace diversity strategy to support integrated workplaces; • Ministerial Council established in 2010 to advise the Minister on issues faced by migrants in Ireland.</p>	<p>The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) continues to implement the Government commitment in relation to migrant integration on an ongoing basis mainly through financial assistance to projects promoting integration of immigrants and combating racism.</p> <p>In 2012, funding of around €1,295,844 was provided to organisations (mainly local authorities, sporting bodies and NGOs) to promote integration and tolerance. This is on a similar scale to 2011. The Office continued to keep migrants and representative groups aware of new resources of interest developed, changing conditions attached to various schemes and material developed specifically for migrants in a range of languages through its website and mailing lists. Examples of some of the initiatives supported by OPMI include:</p> <p>The <b>EPIC Programme</b> (Employment of People from Immigrant Communities) which is managed on OPMI's behalf by Business in the Community received funding of over €444,000 in 2012 to help vulnerable immigrants access employment or further training. The programme includes training in English for work, interview skills, living and working in Ireland and IT. This expenditure is co-funded at 50% by the European Social Fund.</p> <p><b>Fáilte Isteach</b> is another innovative project supported by OPMI. It is a community project with older volunteers welcoming new migrants through conversational English classes. There are approximately 50 Fáilte Isteach projects throughout the country. Every week over 540 volunteers teach over 1,600 students from over 63 countries, collectively offering over a thousand hours of tuition each week. Fáilte Isteach works at breaking down the barriers that migrants and communities face by extending the hands of friendship and goodwill through the practical, welcoming and inclusive manner in which the programme is delivered. In 2012, funding of €126,420 was granted to this project. Since 2008, a total of €484,830 has been provided to the project.</p> <p>The Office has also provided financial support to local migrant forums. These forums present an opportunity for migrants from different cultures and backgrounds to come together to discuss their integration experiences. Participants can express their opinions and raise issues that affect migrants on a daily basis. Migrant forums aim to ensure the development of coherent local/regional plans and policies that reflect the social, cultural and economic needs of ethnic minority groups in the area. Implementation of Intercultural strategies developed in a number of sectors such as Health, Education, the Gardaí and the workplace are ongoing.</p>
<p>Community Policing will facilitate and support interaction between the Garda Síochána and local authorities and local communities to address local policing issues. Community Policing will not only assist in the State's development of its overall crime prevention response but will also act as a practical means of supporting the capacity of local communities to meaningfully participate in crime prevention.</p>	<p>The National Model of Community Policing continues to provide a structured and cohesive approach to community policing and it informs the approach to policing throughout the country. The number of dedicated Community Policing officers as at 31 January 2013 was 1,029. Gardaí continue to work closely with all communities to enhance community safety through a wide range of local fora including Joint Policing Committees and programmes such as Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch. The ongoing Garda commitment in this area was underlined in January 2013 by the signing of an updated Memorandum of Understanding between An Garda Síochána and Muíntir na Tíre who administer the Community Alert programme. In addition a new Garda Community Crime Prevention Programmes booklet has been published to support the establishment and operation of Community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch and similar local crime prevention initiatives.</p>

<p>The Green Paper on energy policy, published in October 2006, stated the Government's commitment to reducing fuel poverty. This issue will be further addressed as the current energy policy formulation process develops through the Green Paper consultation phase and White Paper publication and implementation.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Affordable Energy Strategy will continue in accordance with the timelines included in the report.</p>
<p>The Broadband Programme will promote the rollout of broadband across the rural economy to ensure its availability across rural Ireland. Total indicative investment over the period 2007-2013 will be €435 million.</p> <p><b>National Broadband Plan:</b> The National Broadband Plan (NBP) commits to providing high speed broadband to all citizens and businesses throughout the country.</p> <p><b>100M/bits to Schools Programme:</b> All post-primary schools will have a 100Mbps broadband connection installed by the end of 2014 in a project jointly funded by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (D/CENR) and the Department of Education and Skills (D/ES). This follows on from the successful pilot project which has been running in 78 selected post-primary schools since 2009. The national roll-out will be completed on an incremental basis with 203 schools being connected by end 2012, an estimated 200 being connected in 2013 and the remaining 250 schools being connected in 2014.</p> <p><b>The Rural Broadband Scheme:</b> The Rural Broadband Scheme was established to enable a basic broadband service to be provided to individual rural premises which were not capable of obtaining a broadband service from existing internet service providers.</p>	<p><b>National Broadband Plan:</b> On 30 August 2012 the Minister for Communications, Energy &amp; Natural Resources launched the National Broadband Plan (NBP). The NBP envisages that industry will be the key driver of investment with State intervention only where there is market failure. In addition to investment the NBP contains actions relating to a number of other areas: demand stimulation; infrastructure barrier removal; spectrum policy; potential contribution of State entities and; policy &amp; regulation. The Department of Communications, Energy &amp; Natural Resources is working closely with the relevant Departments and Agencies to progress these actions.</p> <p><b>100M/bits to Schools Programme:</b> 195 Schools connected end 2012.</p> <p><b>Rural Broadband Scheme:</b> The Rural Broadband Scheme (RBS) was launched in May 2011 and a total of 3700 valid applications were received. Of these, 2011 applicants gave their consent to receive offers from commercial internet service providers participating in the Scheme. Offers of services were made to applicants in the period April - July 2012 and a total of 509 applicants took up offers of service. Full details of the outcome of the Scheme can be found at: <a href="http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications+Development/Rural+Broadband+Scheme/Rural+Broadband+Scheme.htm">http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications+Development/Rural+Broadband+Scheme/Rural+Broadband+Scheme.htm</a> All 27 of Phase I Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and 59 of the 60 Phase II MANs are under the charge of e/net. The remaining MAN (Kinsale) will be completed in 2013.</p>

<p>The Gaeltacht and Islands Programme will invest some €457 million between 2007 and 2013 in infrastructure and enterprise development in the Gaeltacht and our island communities. This investment will provide tangible benefits across a range of projects and activities, for example: better community access and related economic spin-offs from road and pier improvements; higher quality and more sustainable job opportunities arising from investment in building and upgrading office and factory space; improved standards of living by provision of enhanced community facilities and services; preservation of the national language and culture.</p>	<p>The aim of the islands programme is to develop and implement various initiatives and measures directed towards supporting the social, cultural and economic development of the inhabited offshore islands so as to ensure they survive as viable communities. Capital expenditure on the islands during this period was €4.3m. and the redevelopment of Cill Rónáin, Inis Mór harbour, which was funded by the D/Arts, Heritage &amp; Gaeltacht at a cost in excess of €44m, was completed. The D/Arts, Heritage &amp; Gaeltacht also continued its annual subvention for passenger, cargo and air services to the islands. There are now 24 contracts to cater for the various need of 20 offshore islands thus benefiting the island communities. Due to the reduced allocation available for capital works in recent years, no new large-scale projects have been funded. It may, however, be possible to fund some small-scale targeted projects in the coming years.</p>
<p>As set out in <i>Towards 2016</i> participation by children in arts and cultural activities will continue to be encouraged as a means to enrich their quality of life.</p>	<p>All National Cultural Institutions continue to operate education and outreach programmes some of which are specifically aimed at children.</p> <p>In addition, in relation to the <b>Arts Council</b>, the current Strategic Overview 2011-2013 identifies children and young people as an important constituency, with a wide range of programmes and supports in place for both 'in-schools' and 'out of schools' activity. €2.7million was allocated in 2011 to arts organisations wholly and exclusively dedicated to children and young people i.e.. the National Youth Arts Programme. An estimated €4.2million was disbursed indirectly through funding a wide range of venues, festivals, local authority programmes and arts organisations across the country providing arts services for children and young people both in and out of school, as part of a wider remit. A further €280,000 was allocated to supports that include professional development for artists and practitioners working, or wishing to work in the area of children and young people's arts; and collaborative projects between artists, children and young people. A fund of €170,000 was disbursed to projects through the Young Ensemble Scheme.</p>

<p>Primary healthcare services will be further developed, drawing on the Primary Care Strategy, by ongoing investment to ensure integrated, accessible services for people within their own communities. The target is to provide 300 primary care teams by 2008, 400 by 2009 and 500 by 2011. A review of these targets will be undertaken in 2008.</p>	<p><b>Primary Care Teams:</b> The Government is committed to the implementation of the Primary Care Strategy. The key objective of the Strategy is to develop services in the community which will give people direct access to integrated multi-disciplinary teams of general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others. Additional services such as speech and language therapy, dietetic and podiatry services will be provided on a network basis. It has been estimated that up to 95% of people's health and social service needs can be properly met within a primary care setting and Primary Care Teams (PCTs) contribute greatly to enhancing community based health services in these areas. Following a realignment of HSE areas and amalgamation of some teams, the HSE has identified 484 Primary Care Teams to be developed by the end of 2013. At the end of December 2012, 426 Primary Care Teams were operational, i.e. holding clinical team meetings on individual client cases, providing services to almost 4 million of the population. Some 1,692 GPs and over 2,636 HSE allied health professionals were participating in these PCTs.</p> <p><b>Primary Care Centres:</b> Where possible, primary care teams are based in a single facility to provide easy accessibility for patients and to enhance multidisciplinary teamwork. However, teams are working very effectively where they are not co-located. Although they are not in one single building, they still come together to have clinical team meetings. 31 new Primary Care Centres have been procured over the last number of years. This comprises of 7 Capital Developments and 24 Public Private Lease Agreements. In addition, there are 5 Primary Care Centres in place either through existing infrastructure or refurbishment to a pre-existing HSE premises. This gives a total of 36 Primary Care Centres in place. On 17th July 2012, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform announced that under the Government's Infrastructure Stimulus Package, up to €115 million will be available for two bundles of PCCs to be delivered by public private partnership (PPP). This PPP initiative will complement and build on the processes the HSE has already in place in its capital programme. 35 locations for primary care centres have been identified, of which 20 will be commissioned subject to (a) agreement between the local GPs and the HSE on active local GP involvement and (b) site suitability and availability. Furthermore, the Capital Plan 2012-2016 contains provision for the delivery of primary care infrastructure at an additional 8 locations while the leasing initiative is expected to deliver up to an additional 15 facilities which should be substantially completed by end 2013/early 2014.</p>
<p>Out-of-hours GP services will be further developed with a view to having those services available to the whole population over the course of this Plan.</p>	<p><b>GP Out-of-Hours Services</b> The HSE reports that 90% of the population have access to GP out-of-hours services in 14 centres nationally, in all HSE regions, in at least part of every county and that this service dealt with 931,305 calls in 2009 and 924,000 calls in 2010 and 949,703 calls in 2011. Over 2,000 GPs provide services in the co-ops. Approx. 60% of contacts resulted in attendance at a treatment centre and a further 10% resulted in a home visit. Attendance at a treatment centre would usually follow initial telephone triage - the HSE reports that this is a good proxy measure for hospital avoidance via Emergency Department attendance. In 2012, funding of €40 million approximately was provided by the HSE in respect of GP out-of-hours fees (special type consultations and supplementary out-of-hours fees). This figure does not include GP out-of-hours costs in respect of call centres, drivers, nurse triage services, etc. A new GP Co-op out-of-hours services commenced in Tallaght Hospital on 1st November 2011, covering the Tallaght and Clondalkin areas. There are approximately 40 GPs in the co-op. The HSE's National Review of GP Out-of-Hours' Services, which was published in 2010, made 13 recommendations designed to strengthen and standardise the Service across the country including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Service to be extended to cover parts of the country where there is currently no out-of-hours provision, such as Dundalk, Limerick, Sligo, Tullamore and Tallaght.</li> <li>· The introduction of a standard national service level agreement template to be applied to GP co-operatives. The application of the national service level agreement template will ensure that all medical staff have current medical indemnity, current registration with the Medical Council and clearance from the Garda Síochána's Vetting Unit.</li> </ul> <p>The ongoing implementation of the Review's recommendations is included in the HSE's 2013 Operational Plan.</p>

	<p><b>Cross-Border GP Out-of-Hours Service</b> It is estimated that for approximately 65,000 people across the border area the closest GP out-of-hours centre is in the other jurisdiction. A pilot project allowing patients in part of Inishowen, Co. Donegal to attend an out-of-hours GP service in Derry came into operation on 10th January 2007. A second pilot, allowing people resident in South Armagh to obtain a service in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan commenced on 26th November 2007. Since commencement up to 31st December 2012, 658 patients from the Inishowen area of Donegal have received a GP out-of-hours service in Derry and 1,994 patients from South Armagh have received a GP out-of-hours service in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan. Uptake of the service is being monitored on an ongoing basis by the relevant health authorities in both jurisdictions.</p>
<p>The HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 - 2012 provides a framework within which the health and care needs of people from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds are addressed, while staff are supported in delivering responsive, culturally competent services. Implementation of recommendations of the strategy is taking place on a phased basis over a 5 year time frame.</p>	<p>The HSE National Intercultural Health Governance group guides and coordinates ongoing implementation of recommendations of the Intercultural Health Strategy. The approach to implementation remains one of developing resources to support staff in delivering responsive services, as well as linking with other partners across the sectors to create synergies in addressing those issues identified in the strategy as well as emerging issues. Migrants appear to have been disproportionately impacted by the economic crisis, with associated impact on areas such as homelessness. This is an example of the necessity of developments of links to devise appropriate measures to address such issues. Key areas of focus/ examples of progress include: Ongoing translation of health related information in identified languages. Development of a resource "Lost in Translation: Good Practice guidelines for HSE staff in planning, managing and assuring quality translation of health related material into other languages"  <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/services/SocialInclusion/lostintranslationreport.html">http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/services/SocialInclusion/lostintranslationreport.html</a></p> <p><b>Ethnic Equality Monitoring:</b> Implementation of an Ethnic Identifier is continuing on an incremental basis, with training offered to providers motivated to participate in this area.</p> <p><b>Refugee Resettlement Programme:</b> A number of families are accepted into the country each year via a Government agreement. This quota includes a small number of persons with significant medical needs. Health related elements of this process continue to be supported under the umbrella of the Intercultural Health Strategy. Similarly, efforts have been progressed under the Intercultural Health Strategy around collaboration with the Reception and Integration Agency towards addressing issues linked to the health needs of asylum seekers in the Direct Provision system. This increased cooperation has resulted in a proactive approach to addressing any emerging issues.</p> <p><b>Female Genital Mutilation:</b> The passing of legislation in relation to prevention of FGM has led to renewed efforts in this area. The HSE National Social Inclusion Office supports Akidwa to work with communities around elements of gender based violence; a pamphlet advising the public of the effects of FGM, relevant legislation, key contacts for assistance etc has been launched, while a further pamphlet is currently being developed to assist service providers such as Social Workers or Teachers around this. The resource for Health Care Professionals is currently being updated and reprinted while a new Maternity form for use in public hospitals now includes FGM as a risk factor.</p> <p><b>Mapping of services for persons from minority ethnic groups:</b> This project is underway and aims to form a comprehensive picture of the scale and nature of services for people from this cohort, together with identification of gaps in services. Findings will inform ongoing planning and monitoring of service needs and health outcomes. Progress around the Intercultural Health Strategy has led to an invitation to the HSE National Social Inclusion Office to participate in Action IS1103 of the COST network (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). Involvement in this body over the last 2 years has resulted in a number of positive outcomes relating to sharing of research findings, application of same and enhancement of evidence based planning.</p>



<p>Following publication of the All-Ireland Health Study in 2010 a working group has been set up by the Traveller Health Advisory Committee to draw up a priority action plan. In addition, the HSE has established a governance group which will drive measures aimed at addressing identified priorities of Traveller health in a coordinated, integrated manner. The Birth Cohort Follow Up Report will be published in September 2011.</p>	<p>The HSE National Traveller Health Advisory Forum works in partnership with the Traveller Health Advisory Committee to advance efforts around improving Traveller health. This committee comprises representation by HSE staff, Traveller Health Units and Travellers. Two Working groups – Primary Care and Chronic Conditions – have been established under the ambit of the NTHAF, with agreed terms of reference and associated identified actions. Enhancing access to primary care is a key objective of the Primary Care Working group while development of a structured education programme for the prevention of Type 2 diabetes among Travellers has been a major focus of the Chronic Conditions group. An urgency around ability to demonstrate outcomes vs investment has resulted in renewed attention to development of actions that will allow for measurable impacts – these actions will be further expanded as a requirement of the 2013 National Service Plan where one agreed action is the “development of a detailed health action plan to progress delivery of recommendations of the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS), with particular reference to those priority areas identified such as mental health, suicide, men’s health, addiction / alcohol, domestic violence, diabetes and cardiovascular health” At the same time, much effort has been expended to explore Traveller health funding, with a baseline understanding of these amounts now agreed.</p> <p>Roma health falls under the auspices of Traveller health. HSE National Social Inclusion was able to support appointment of a Roma Outreach Worker to link with the Roma community and facilitate their access to health services. A mobile service has been established in Tallaght, which provides basic services such as immunisations and GP consultations to members of this community. A series of thematic seminars were held as a partnership between the HSE and Pavee Point to explore priority areas of Roma health and associated issues of concern. A report “Roma Communities in Ireland and Child Protection Considerations” was produced as one outcome of a seminar - this report is attached. The HSE National Director of Children and Family Services has agreed to progress relevant recommendations of this report.</p>
<p>The National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 was launched in September 2009 with the overall strategic objective for the Strategy of continuing to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on the five pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research.</p>	<p>The Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation, published in 2007, sets out the framework for a multifaceted approach to the delivery of rehabilitation. The National Drug Rehabilitation Implementation Committee (NDRIC), chaired by the HSE, is working to implement a National Rehabilitation Framework that was approved at the April 2010 meeting of the Oversight Forum on Drugs and published in July 2010. This is being done on a phased basis at 10 pilot sites across the country. Progress on the pilots is currently being assessed with a view to wider implementation. More broadly, considerable advances are being made in the provision of drug treatment and rehabilitation. Opioid substitution treatment is more widely available and waiting lists are greatly reduced. More detox beds are available, as well as more places in rehabilitation programmes generally, with increasing focus on community detox. This work is being complemented by the refocusing of programmes to foster client progression (facilitated by individual care plans backed up by interagency working) and also greater provision of after-care to further assist clients as they move towards a drug free lifestyle where this is achievable.</p>

<p>Progress report on National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 including expenditure and statistics regarding volume of drug seizures, numbers of opiate misusers, access to treatment, needle exchange and research undertaken since last report.</p>	<p>Details of the expenditure incurred by Departments and agencies are collated by the Drugs Policy Unit on an annual basis, Cross Departmental expenditure attributed to Drugs Programmes amounted to approximately €250m in 2011 and €245m in 2012. An annual progress report on the implementation of the 63 actions of the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 (NDS) is prepared. The 2011 report is available on the Department of Health (DoH) website and the 2012 report is being compiled at present. In total over 12,500 people are in receipt of drug treatment. Over 9,300 of them are in receipt of methadone maintenance treatment. There are approximately 14,500 known opiate users in Ireland. In Dublin robust needle exchange services are provided through HSE clinics and voluntary sector providers. Needle exchange services outside Dublin are being expanded through pharmacies and around 50 pharmacies are currently providing such services. The number of pharmacies involved is expected to increase significantly over the coming year with a focus on areas of particular need. The National Drugs Prevalence Survey 2010/2011 was published in November 2011, the key findings included: (i) the level of last year drug use has been stable between 2006/7 and 2010/11; (ii) cannabis was the most commonly used illegal drug, with 25% of the adult population ever having used the drug; (iii) a higher proportion of men than women use illegal drugs with no indication of a narrowing of the gender gap since the last survey. A National Hepatitis C Strategy was published by the HSE on 4th September 2012. Hepatitis C is now recognised as an important public health problem world wide and WHO estimates that more than 170 million people world wide are chronically infected. It is estimated by the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) that at least 20,000 – 50,000 people in Ireland are currently chronically infected with the Hepatitis C virus; this represents a population prevalence of 0.5% to 1.2%, which is similar to other countries in Northern Europe. The majority of this group comprises injecting drug users. Up to 20% of service users with Hepatitis C are likely to develop cirrhosis over a 20-25 year period, while a significant proportion may also develop liver failure and hepatocellular carcinoma.</p> <p>This holds clear implications for surveillance, treatment and associated costs of care and support. Very effective treatment is now available for Hepatitis C which eradicates the virus in over 50% of cases. The Strategy contains 36 recommendations across pillars of surveillance; prevention; screening; and treatment, and is being co-ordinated by the HSE Social Inclusion Unit, which is also responsible for Addiction Services in Ireland. Following approval of this draft strategy, it is anticipated that a group be established under the auspices of National Addiction Advisory Governance Group (NAAGG) of the HSE to develop an Implementation Plan and progress recommendations in line with this.</p>
<p>Access to library services for isolated rural and urban communities and the development of services to meet the needs of a multi-cultural society.</p>	<p>Public libraries continued to provide a service to rural and urban centres via 30 mobile libraries and a network of 348 branch libraries. Online reference and local studies services were made available countrywide and these services are accessible with any internet access and at any time. In line with the findings of the report on multicultural services, mainstream services were promoted to all sections of the population, with specific language books and newspapers made available where significant numbers were identified in the community profile and these multilingual materials were made available to all library users via <a href="http://www.borrowbooks.ie">www.borrowbooks.ie</a></p>

<p>The D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government will request local authorities to carry out a survey of local authority housing stock which will help inform housing authorities on the physical condition of the stock and provide the basis for future programmes of improvement works. A programme of regeneration will continue in a number of areas ranging from large scale urban areas to smaller estates in a number of regional towns around the country.</p>	<p>In 2011 the D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government carried out an initial survey of the local authority housing stock. This will be followed by Phase 2 of the survey in 2013 and it is intended to issue guidance to local authorities in relation to the management of the stock once Phase 2 is completed. A strategy for the funding of the improvement of the stock will then be agreed. In terms of regeneration the Department spent €117m in 2011 on major regeneration projects in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Waterford, Sligo Borough, Dundalk and Tralee. Information on output in 2012 will be available in due course.</p>
<p>Arrangements will be made through local authorities for additional land and units to be provided to the voluntary and cooperative sector for the purpose of meeting identified housing/accommodation need. Units and sites sufficient to supply some 3,000 dwellings will be identified by 2009.</p>	<p>In 2011 some 745 units of accommodation were provided under the Capital Funding Schemes. Details of final output in 2012 are not yet available. Due to the high level of 'built' units on the market it has proved better value to acquire suitable properties rather than securing land and constructing new units. However, this is not always possible due to the special requirements of the category of tenants being facilitated and it may be necessary to construct suitably designed properties to meet specific needs.</p>
<p>A revised government strategy on homelessness will be published during 2007.</p>	<p>The devolved allocation-based system for the provision of homelessness funding to housing authorities, envisioned under the <b>National Implementation Plan for the Homeless Strategy</b>, was introduced for the Dublin Region from January 2012 with subsequent national implementation to continue on an-going basis. The new 2011 programme for Government committed to reviewing the homeless strategy, <b>The Way Home</b>, and to implementing a housing-led approach to homelessness. Research commissioned as part of the review strongly endorsed the principles of <b>The Way Home</b>. This research also informed the development of a new <b>Homelessness Policy Statement</b>, which was initiated in 2012 and will issue early in 2013.</p>
<p>Funding will be made available to local authorities to support the implementation of their third Traveller Accommodation Programmes covering the period 2009 - 2013.</p>	<p>During the course of the third Traveller Accommodation Programmes 2009 – 2013 an estimated 350 families were provided with accommodation in 2011. During the course of the third Traveller Accommodation Programmes 2009 – 2013, 370 families were provided with accommodation in 2011. In 2012, 264 families were provided with accommodation.</p>
<p>Investment in supporting volunteering activity will be continued over the period 2007-2016. Central to this approach is the constructive role of voluntary activity in improving the quality of life in local communities. Under Towards 2016 an additional €5 million per year is being provided to support volunteering. Policies and schemes in this area will be further informed by the findings of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship.</p>	<p>The primary focus for the D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government in Volunteering is on Volunteer Centres. In 2011 the Department provided funding of €591,750 to other Volunteering Initiatives. In 2012 this funding was €477,040. Funding was provided to Focus Ireland, Boardmatch, First Step, Young Social Innovators and Chambers Ireland.</p>

<p>The Task Force on Active Citizenship report recommended that the Department fund a network of volunteer centres across the country. The Department, with the sectors representative body, Volunteer Ireland, are currently considering the future funding mechanism of the individual Volunteer centres.</p>	<p>Funding of €3.13 million was allocated to the 22 Volunteer centres in 2011, with a further €3.09 million allocated in 2012. During this period, two representative bodies working in this area were amalgamated, resulting in greater efficiencies.</p>
<p>Following the abolition of the Dormant Accounts Board under DA (Amendment) Act 2012, the functions of the Dormant Accounts Board have been brought into the D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government. New procedures will be developed to manage these functions and the area generally. The Department continues to engage with D/Public Expenditure and Reform on more effective and efficient ways to release funding for DA measures from the Fund for all relevant Government Departments, given the reduction in budgets across all Government Departments for DA measures.</p>	<p>Since its establishment in April 2003 to the end of November 2012, the transfers to the Dormant Accounts Fund have totalled some €671.24m, which includes interest earned of some €37.4m. Funds reclaimed in that period by account holders amounted to approximately €246.3m. The net value of the Dormant Accounts Fund (uncommitted funds) was €97.7m. During 2012, €440,000 was approved to the 5 New Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) Towns and drawdown of funding in excess of 90 per cent has been completed, with a number of communities implementing projects in RAPID areas.</p>
<p>The CLÁR programme will provide some €141 million over the period 2007-2013 for regeneration of areas suffering from population decline. Investment will support physical, economic and social infrastructure across a wide range of measures, such as water supply, sewage disposal, road access and broadband which reflect the priorities identified by the communities. The population currently benefiting from the programme is 727,000. Targets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing the number of mains and group water and sewerage schemes availing of CLÁR funding by at least 100% by 2008;</li> <li>• providing flashing lights for all national schools in CLÁR areas by 2008.</li> </ul>	<p>The focus of CLAR in 2011/12 was pursuing remaining commitments which are mostly in the Sports capital top-up measure. The D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government is continuously working with D/Transport, Tourism and Sport to clear these commitments. Funding of €0.348m was allocated in 2011. Provision for €0.3m was provided to the programme in 2012 to meet existing commitments arising during the year. There are currently approximately 60 projects on hand.</p>

<p>Through the Rural Development Programme, €426 million will be invested over the period 2007-2013 in promoting the diversification of the rural economy with measures aimed at: Diversification into non-agricultural activities; Business creation and development; Encouragement of tourism activities; Basic services for the economy and rural population; Village renewal and development; Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage; Training and information for economic actors. Specific targets will be contained in the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 when it is finalised.</p>	<p>Expenditure under the quality of life/LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) has been on-going since early 2009. Currently there is almost €327million of recorded project activity with expenditure reaching €165 million by the end of 2012 and firm project commitments in excess of €40 million pending payment. The LEADER elements of the RDP are unique in that the support is provided using a participative community methodology that is, in and of itself, a socially inclusive development method. The quality of life measures of the RDP aim to provide development opportunities for rural communities in order to improve the quality of life in rural areas as well as promote the diversification of the rural economy. In working to achieve these aims the support addresses social inclusion and cohesion both directly and indirectly providing a diverse range of supports from training and capacity building to support for business ideas and the development of a diverse range of enterprise models. The programme also continues to provide support to communities to develop community infrastructure thereby promoting social cohesion and community spirit all over Ireland. Supports provided through the RDP facilitate stronger and more resilient rural communities with the resources necessary to maintain vibrant rural economies that have the capacity to support the participation of all members of the community. In this context the Programme provides rural communities with the means to address the main challenges of social exclusion.</p>
<p>The D/Environment, Community &amp; Local Government introduced the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) in January 2010. The LCDP is underpinned by four high level goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services;</li> <li>• To increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural development activities and resources;</li> <li>• To increase peoples' work readiness and employment prospects;</li> <li>• To promote engagement with policy, practice and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.</li> </ul> <p>It is delivered at a local level by some 50 Local Development Companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In January 2010 the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP), replaced the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Community Development Programme.</li> <li>• This programme provides multi-annual funding to Local Development Companies and a small number of alternative local development bodies for the delivery of the LCDP.</li> <li>• The LCDP aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies and people in disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>• €67.454m, €62.444m and €53.682m was invested in the programme in 2010, 2011 and 2012. €48.707m has been allocated to the Programme in 2013.</li> <li>• The Programme performed very well despite a reduction in programme funding and the demands of the integration strategy.</li> <li>• Data for 2012 shows 47,792 persons were engaged with through one-to-one LCDP interventions, services also included outreach services and dissemination type actions where persons are signposted to other services and activities.</li> <li>• The 2012 data also shows just over 17,000 beneficiaries participating in education, in excess of 16,500 beneficiaries participating in labour market training and over 7,000 supported into employment (including 5,684 into self-employment).</li> </ul>
<p>Almost €67 million will be available under the RAPID Programme Leverage Fund between 2007 and 2013 to co-fund investment by departments and agencies in the 46 RAPID designated areas. This funding will help to support new projects and initiatives, such as playgrounds and community-based CCTV, aimed at improving the quality of life and community safety for residents of RAPID areas.</p>	<p>The RAPID leverage schemes have been discontinued, the Department is paying down existing contractual commitments only. Total outturn for RAPID Programme amounted to €1.56m in 2011 and €3.1m in 2012.</p>

<p>The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), funded by the Department of Social Protection, provides an independent, free and confidential service primarily to low-income families who are in debt or at risk of getting into debt. A Loan Guarantee Fund also operates to provide 'crisis' loans as an alternative to the moneylender. Responsibility for MABS transferred seamlessly to the Citizens Information Board (CIB) in July 2009.</p>	<p>In 2011 the Interdepartmental Group on Mortgage Arrears published its report. Based on its recommendations, the Mortgage Arrears Steering Group led by the Department of Finance has co-ordinated a whole - of- government response to this issue. Among the measures which have been taken is the establishment of a mortgage arrears information and advice service to help people in mortgage arrears. This service encompasses provision of mortgage arrears information and advice through <a href="http://www.keepingyourhome.ie">www.keepingyourhome.ie</a>, the mortgage arrears information helpline and the availability of independent financial advice for people being offered long term restructuring proposals by the banks. The mortgage arrears information and advice service will become more important as the banks roll out their long term forbearance options and the Personal Insolvency Service becomes operational. An information campaign to promote awareness and build an understanding of the service is underway (end march 2013). The new Personal Insolvency Service provides for a Debt Relief Notice (DRN) for persons with no assets or income with unsecured debts of no more than €20,000. With the assistance of an approved intermediary the Notice will allow for the full write off of qualifying unsecured debt after a 3 year supervision period. The Approved Intermediary Service, will be delivered by trained MABS Money Advisors and will be supported by the MABS Helpline. The Citizens Information Board together with MABS, is working closely with the new Insolvency Service to ensure that the Approved Intermediary Service will be operational in time for the establishment of the Insolvency Service.</p>
<p>The objective of the Community Services Programme is to support local community activity to address disadvantage, while providing employment opportunities for people from the following priority target groups: people with disabilities; the long-term unemployed; Travellers; lone parents and stabilised drug addicts. Some 315 contract holders were subject to review in 2010 and those that continued to meet the programme requirements were offered new three-year contracts to the end of 2013.</p>	<p>Over 2011 &amp; 2012, an average of 425 organisations were in receipt of funds from the CSP. Given the economic downturn, additional resources have not been provided to meet the expansion objectives for the Programme. Current priority is on maintaining and development of the existing contract holders. Average annual expenditure is circa €46 million with roughly 2,800 people supported in employment.</p>
<p>The scope for further development of income supports for carers will continue to be reviewed. In particular, the aim will be for the level of the Carer's Allowance disregard to keep pace with gross average industrial earnings so that those on average industrial earnings can continue to qualify for the payment.</p>	<p>Income disregards and Respite Care Grant have remained at previous level in 2011 and 2012.</p>
<p>There will be an annual consultation meeting of carer representative organisations and relevant departments and agencies in order to inform future policy in this area.</p>	<p>Annual consultative meetings were held in 2011 and 2012.</p>

<p>From 2007 certain social welfare recipients who are providing full-time care and attention will be able to retain their main social welfare payment and also receive a payment equivalent to half-rate Carer's Allowance.</p>	<p>Half rate Carer's Allowance remained in place in Budget 2011 and Budget 2012</p>
<p>The scope for the development of training courses for carers will be reviewed by the relevant departments and agencies over 2007 and 2008.</p>	<p>Training courses under Dormant Accounts funding effectively ended in 2012 with some budgetary matters to be finalised in 2013.</p>
<p>The Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) has been put on a permanent footing following the end of the pilot period in 2006. Funding of €9 million is being provided in 2007 to facilitate the transition of the RTI into the beginning of the mainstreaming process. Funding for rural transport services will be steadily increased thereafter; ultimately to a cash level of some €18 million. Priority will be given to areas of the country which do not currently have access to public transport services.</p>	<p>The Government decision of 26th January 2012 assigned national responsibility for the implementation of the plan to integrate local and rural transport including the Rural Transport Programme (RTP) to the National Transport Authority (NTA). The NTA assumed this new role from 1st April 2012. This new role for the NTA coupled with its existing national remit for securing the provision of public transport services, will enable the development of better links between local and rural transport services and scheduled bus and rail services.</p> <p>Thirty five rural community transport groups were funded under the Rural Transport Programme in 2011 and 2012, to address social exclusion in their rural areas arising from unmet public transport needs. €10.62m was provided in 2011 and €9.77m in 2012. During 2011 in excess of 1.74 million passenger journeys were recorded on over 203,000 transport services funded under the Rural Transport Programme, a 22% and 18% increase respectively over 2010. €9.133m is being provided for the RTP in 2013. The recommendations of the value for money audit are being progressed by the D/Transport, Tourism &amp; Sport and the NTA.</p>
<p>The Irish Sports Council (ISC) budget for 2007 has been increased by 20% to €49 million for programmes and activities including initiatives in disadvantaged areas. The target for 2006-2008 is to increase the numbers of children taking part in sport by 3% and the number of adults participating by 1.5%. This will involve: the implementation of the complete national roll-out of the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network by early 2008; the associated roll-out of the Buntús programme for primary schools and pre-schools through the LSP network; the introduction of the LISPA (Lifelong Involvement in Sport and Physical Activity) child centred model for lifelong participation in Irish sport; and support for national sports organisations that attract young people, particularly in disadvantaged areas. A new initiative, the National Awards to Volunteers in Irish Sport has been established. The first awards will be made in 2007.</p>	<p>The overall budget for the Council has been reduced to €46.837 million in 2011 and €44.495 million in 2012.</p> <p>The LSP network and Sport Inclusion Disability programme continue to be supported by the Council. There are currently 16 Sports Inclusion Development Officers (SIDOs) employed through funding from the Council. All 31 LSP's have disability and disadvantaged communities as elements of their work plans. The LSP network is continuing to engage with the School Completion projects across the country. The Council is also continuing to fund the 3 major field sports. Due to reductions within the overall ISC budget the levels of funding for the various programmes have been reduced in recent years.</p>



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