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Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

Employment and Disability - a joined up approach in policy and practice design and implementation

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National Disability Authority

- Independent statutory organisation established 2000
- Role – to provide evidence informed advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the everyday lives of persons with disabilities.
- Functions research, guidance and monitoring
- Monitors employment target - persons with disabilities in public sector
- Operates Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

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Developments Underway in Ireland

- Ireland has signed but not yet ratified UNCRPD
- New legislation on Assisted Decision Making passed (Art 12)
- Further legislative amendments before Parliament
- National Disability Strategy and Action Plan – addresses provisions of the UNCRPD
- Major programme of transformation – deinstitutionalisation, personalised budgets
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities
- Structures to monitor progress and guide implementation

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Data Ireland and EU

- Population of Ireland in 2011 was 4.7m

- Ireland Census 2011: 13% had a disability

- Eurostat 2011: % of Irish population with long standing health condition an disability = 12.8% compared to 26.8% for EU28

- Employment gap between those who are disabled and those without a disability is wider in Ireland than many European countries

- 33% of those of working age with disabilities in work compared to 66% without disabilities (2011)

- 31% of those of working age with disabilities in work compared to 71% without disabilities (2015)

- Challenges of direct comparisons of Irish data with data from other European countries can be difficult

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Employment and Disability

- Jobless Households - 15.8% of Irish population aged 18 – 59 years compared to EU average 11.1%

- Ireland: Some impairment groups lower employment levels – ID 17% and physical impairments 18%

- 2011: 66% of those aged 18 -34 years interested in work

- Over 50% of those with a disability are either in work or interested in work

- Ireland: approx. 50% of those with a disability have health or stamina difficulties

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Barriers to Employment

- Low education and low expectations
- Inadequate supports to transition to work
- Financial disincentives
- Employer fears, attitudes
- Ad hoc services and need for effective national programme
- Lack of joined up working between relevant bodies

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Research – 5 Pillars

- Remove disincentives and benefit traps and support transitions to employment

- Enhance education, training and employment systems – equip people with disabilities to compete and benefit

- Ensure public and private sectors implement policies on recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities

- Devise and implement preventative strategy – reduce early school leaving and improve job retention on onset of disability

- Systematic process of engagement to realise employment aspirations

Diversity – range of disabilities and the degree of impairment

Integrated policy and co-ordinated delivery

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Employment Target Considerations

- Likely economic growth pattern and international factors

- Supply of jobs in future and share that will go to persons with disabilities

- Competitive nature of employment market, coming out of a recession

- Considerable movement of job hires and job leavers v new jobs

- International evidence – entry to work from long-term disability status is about 1 – 2%

- What needed to increase employment levels and how long before such actions impact?

- Employers and Skills Areas for the future

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Comprehensive Employment Strategy

- Build Skills, capacity and independence – focus on education and training – 3 Government Departments and x Agencies

- Provide bridges and supports into work (includes transport) – x Government Departments and x Agencies

- Make Work Pay –

- Promote job retention and re-entry to work – x Government Departments and x Agencies

- Provide co-ordinated and seamless support

- Engage Employers

Launched by Government October 2015

Make Work Pay group and report to address financial disincentives

Employer Bodies Consortium funded – support to all employers

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Phase 1 – Foundation

- No one-size-fits all approach
- Reviewing
- Exploring and scoping out policies and supports
- Scaling up into national policies
- Implementation

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Priority 1 – Building Skills, Capacity and Independence

- Information to individuals and families – raising expectations
- Focus on support needs instead of diagnosis
- Building independence, work experience
- Transition planning – transfer information to next stage
- Vocational Guidance counselling

3 x Government Departments – Education, Health and Social Protection

Agencies – Special Education, Health Services, Training and Education bodies, Schools

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Priority 2 – Provide bridges and Supports into Work

- Transition out of sheltered employment to alternative model
- Build capacity in mainstream work activation services,
- Work sampling, internships and case management
- Social Care – focus on employment in personal plans
- Accessible Transport Solutions

3 x Government Departments – Education, Health and Social Protection

Agencies – Health Services and National Transport Authority

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Priority 3 - Make Work Pay

- Analysis of financial disincentives and plan to address

- Ready Reckoner – to guide decisions

- Financial Supports

- Easy to return to welfare payments

7 Government Departments – Social Protection, Health, Transport, Justice and Equality, Education and Skills, Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, Public Expenditure and Reform,

Agencies – Health Service, Revenue Commissioners, Citizens Information Board and National Disability Authority

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Priority 4 – Promote job retention and re-entry to work

- Guidelines for early intervention
- Pilot recovery model of rehabilitation – mental health
- Unions – train disability champions
- Research and guide a National Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Government Department – Social Protection

Agencies – Health Service, Occupational Safety and Health, Unions

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Vocational Rehabilitation

- 80% of people with a disability acquire it during working age
- How coordinate clinical and vocational rehabilitation?
- Look at models in other jurisdictions
  - The importance of early intervention – putting work on the agenda as early as possible post injury/illness
  - Social welfare services upskilled - vocational rehabilitation pathways
  - emphasis changed to proving that the person has capacity to work 'fit enough' for work rather than aiming to be 'fully fit'
  - Education of employers e.g. accommodations
  - Growing and enhancing the occupational health services in Ireland

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Priority 5 – Provide co-ordinated and seamless support

- Departments and Agencies to work together to develop national supported employment policy and plan.
- Protocols for cross referrals – national and local
- Transport Information
- Door to door transport solutions for rural areas
- Safe guard employment rights and entitlements

4 x Government Departments – Health, Social Protection, Education, Jobs & Enterprise

Agencies – Health, Training and Further Education, Transport and Workplace Commission

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National Supported Employment

- The NDA is facilitating cross-departmental work to develop a seamless pathway to employment, including for those with high support needs

- The pathway to work is not always linear or seamless

- Supports and programmes have developed ad hoc

- Separate funding streams

- Difficulties arise in particular at transition points – between school and further education & training, or between training and employment

- Work to build and raise expectations is ongoing and encompasses parents, educators, employers and people with disabilities themselves

- Starting with a presumption of capacity to work - take time to achieve this culture shift

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Priority 6 – Engage Employers

- Employer Awareness
- Identify Good practice and share learning
- Work Experience and Work Placements
- Financial Supports for Employers
- Employer peer support network
- Public sector target increase 3% to 6%
- Alternative Recruitment routes
- Line Managers Guide on Autism
- Programmes for Entrepreneurs with disabilities

6 Government Departments and 8 agencies

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Employer Support Initiative

- Consortium of Employer representative bodies

- website and help-line, networking and briefing events,

- build capacity and provide tailored guidance and information

- encourage employers to actively hire people with disabilities by sharing and rewarding good practice

- However, some common themes/ learnings emerged:

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Public Sector Recruitment

- Statutory duty for public sector employment target - 3% of employees to be people with disabilities
- The NDA monitors compliance annually and directs measures
- Target to increase to 6% by 2024
- identify alternative recruitment routes

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Entrepreneurship and Self-employment

- Irish economy is a smaller one and recent figures suggest less than half of the private sector businesses employ people:
    - 57% have no employees
    - 29% only employ 1 - 4 persons
    - 7% employ 5 - 9 persons
    - 8% employ 10 or more persons

- Working with Enterprise Ireland to building awareness of entrepreneurship as a route for people with disabilities.

- Aim - programme of entrepreneurship for people with disabilities

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Conclusions

- Right to work recognised – systematic approach to address barriers.

- Must be addressed on a cross-departmental basis – challenged by budget streams

- Protocols to share information and ensure co-operation

- Work focus starts in school – build expectations and options

- Focus open market

- Employers must be part of strategy implementation

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Conclusions

- Learning to translate into national policy implementation
- Structures to measure and monitor progress, also joint problem solving
- Build on strong foundation
- Increased employment level – may be gradual
- Ireland is transforming service models - ordinary lives in ordinary places and valued roles, including access to work

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