

TRANSPORT ACCESS FOR ALL **(2008 Edition)**

**The Sectoral Plan for Accessible Transport
under the Disability Act 2005**

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
An Roinn Iompair

smartertravel >>>

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Foreword by the Minister for Transport, Mr Noel Dempsey, T.D.



Welcome to the 2008 edition of *Transport Access for All*, my Department's Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005. Real progress has been made in improving access to public transport for people with disabilities since the first Plan was published in 2006. Since then, we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of accessible vehicles, improved access to much of the public transport infrastructure and changes in the ways service is delivered as well as in the research and consultation necessary to provide the groundwork for further accessibility measures to be planned and progressed in the coming years. Many targets have already been achieved and significant progress has been made towards the realisation of several others. Even so, much remains to be done and it is the objective of this 2008 document to strengthen the implementation of the Plan through, among other things, the incorporation where possible of intermediate targets as well as consolidating integrated approaches to the resolution of accessibility issues both within and in the vicinity of public transport systems.

The revised Sectoral Plan continues to take an inclusive approach to the delivery of accessible public transport services and the concept of 'Transport for All' remains the cornerstone of the Plan. This concept incorporates the lifecycle approach, as set out in *Towards 2016* and agreed by the Social Partners, in that the delivery of mainstream accessible public transport is to benefit all age groups and at all stages of their lives. Also, the development of an accessible public transport system based on this concept will be one of the important mechanisms for delivery of Ireland's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability and work in that regard is

on-going. The Plan has a crucial contribution to make to social and economic inclusion in Ireland.

Like many other countries, Ireland now finds itself facing changed economic circumstances. As a result, the financial resources available to Government are more limited than in recent years. Nevertheless, this Plan embodies a clear commitment to continue the delivery of accessible and integrated public transport services as extensively as possible and funding will continue to be provided to facilitate progress in that regard. This task will be assisted by the work of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design established in January 2007 under the Disability Act 2005. Ireland is the first country in the world to place Universal Design on a statutory footing, emphasising the Government's commitment to improving the daily lives of people with a disability.

On-going input from the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, disability user groups together with strong interaction between relevant Government Departments and agencies will be essential to the successful delivery of commitments in this Plan. My Department and I look forward to that joint input in progressing the full implementation of *Transport Access for All*.

Noel Dempsey T.D.
Minister for Transport
December 2008

Executive Summary

Transport Access for All, the Department of Transport's Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005 was published in July 2006 and contained a commitment that it would be reviewed every two years. The reviews are intended to assess progress made and to take account of technical advances and other developments that might impact on the delivery of accessible public transport in Ireland. This edition is the result of the first review which was undertaken in 2008 in line with that commitment. It follows an extensive consultation process involving a wide range of stakeholders including the public, representative disability organisations and transport providers.

This revised Sectoral Plan reflects the changes that have taken place in accessible transport provision over the past two years, in terms of tangible improvements to public transport accessibility. Set within the policy and objectives originally outlined in the 2006 Sectoral Plan, the 2008 Plan seeks to reinforce the concept of 'Transport for All' through a focus on accessibility measures as well as on enhancing performance in achieving the Plan's targets for the delivery of comprehensive accessible public transport services by 2015.

To align review periods with those of other Sectoral Plans, *Transport Access for All* will next be reviewed in 2011 and every three years thereafter.

Policy Context and Progress

The Department of Transport's high level policy goal for accessibility is embodied in the concept 'Transport Access for All'. This policy is based on the requirements of the Disability Act 2005 and related public policy and strategies. The Department will continue to promote the development of accessible public transport services for the greatest number of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in the shortest possible time, having regard to resource, technical and other constraints. In this regard, future policy will be informed by the National Disability Survey 2006 when material related to access to services and public transport becomes available.

Since the first plan was published in 2006, there has been significant progress towards an accessible public transport system in Ireland. For instance, in 2006 there were almost

1,100 buses in the Bus Átha Cliath fleet just over half of which were low-floor wheelchair accessible buses. The company now has a fleet of 1182 buses, 74% of which are low-floor wheelchair accessible. Bus Éireann has reached its target of 100% low-floor wheelchair accessible buses for its city fleets in Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. In addition, the Company has purchased a number of the new generation wheelchair accessible coaches and preparations are well advanced for in-service trials. Iarnród Éireann is continuing to replace its remaining inaccessible InterCity rolling stock with accessible rolling stock so that all scheduled inter-urban passenger rail services will be accessible by end 2009.

The Commission for Taxi Regulation has introduced new standards for the accessibility of taxis and hackneys and, in consultation with the Department, is developing proposals to address the economic and practical challenges of increasing the proportion of wheelchair accessible taxis nationally.

The phased expansion of the Rural Transport Programme is continuing with a view to a presence in every county by the end of this year.

The 2006 EU Regulation relating to the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air is now in force and the Commission for Aviation Regulation has been designated as the enforcement body in Ireland. The Department of Transport is engaging with the EU Commission and other Member States to ensure the introduction of similar requirements for maritime passenger transport. Already progress can be reported on the work of improving the accessibility of maritime passenger transport in Ireland.

Smartcard based integrated tickets are now being rolled out and preparatory work is underway for the introduction of modern passenger information systems, with accessibility features that should greatly enhance public transport travel experiences for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

Detailed reports on progress against the Plan's targets are prepared periodically for consideration by the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group (NDSSMG) and these are freely available to interested parties. From 2009 onwards, the Department of Transport will publish its reports on the Department's website www.transport.ie once they have been considered by the NDSSMG.

The Review Process

The review of the 2006 Sectoral Plan commenced with an extensive public consultation process in the first half of the year. It also involved consultation with transport providers and with key stakeholders in the disability sector directly and through the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. In addition, a survey of the views of people with disabilities who use public transport was carried out to obtain their views on the present degree of accessibility of public transport and to assess the impact of the implementation of the Sectoral Plan on their quality of life. The results will also provide a benchmark for future measuring of the performance and impacts of the Plan.

This revised Sectoral Plan represents an agreed framework for the continuing implementation of *Transport Access for All*.

Scope of the Sectoral Plan

This Plan sets out a series of time bound and measurable targets and a number of policy objectives for making all modes of transport more accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. In general, the timescales for the various elements of the Plan provide for completion by 2015 in line with the Transport 21 investment programme. The Plan promotes the principle of mainstreaming by requiring accessibility to be an integral element of the public transport services.

In 2008, responsibility for allocating State grants for regional and local roads, to supplement local authority expenditure from their own resources, was transferred from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to the Department of Transport. This change is reflected in the inclusion of accessibility measures relating to regional and local roads in this revised Plan.

The Department will continue to reflect the requirements of the Disability Act in its strategy statements and business plans. Objectives will be defined in such a way as to allow subsequent assessment as to whether or not they are achieved.

Strengthening the Implementation of the Sectoral Plan

This Plan does not replace the targets and other commitments in the 2006 Plan. Rather it sets out the existing targets and objectives so that both targets and timescales to meet

them are made more explicit. Monitoring and review of progress moving forward is key to the successful implementation of the Plan and will involve the co-operation and participation of all the stakeholders. To facilitate this, *Transport Access for All* now includes appropriate interim targets for each action which will provide a timeline and framework for delivery and implementation of the remaining and emerging actions over the lifetime of the Plan. They will also assist in monitoring progress made in the coming years which will be reviewed every 6 months through progress reports to the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group as well as through future bi-annual reviews of *Transport Access for All*. Details of the interim and final targets and the timelines for achievement are set out in Section 6 of this Plan.

Co-operation on Cross-Cutting Issues

This 2008 edition of the Plan emphasises working together to deal with cross cutting issues affecting various Government Departments and other agencies who have roles in improving accessibility to public transport. In particular, *Transport Access for All* now provides for greater joint working between the Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government in relation to the built environment and connecting spaces with transport infrastructure.

Introduction

Purpose of Sectoral Plan Reviews

Transport Access for All contains a commitment to Review the Plan every two years. The purpose of such reviews is to take account of progress to date with the Plan, changes in needs for accessible transport, technology, economic and financial circumstances and to revise the Plan accordingly.

The 2008 Review

The Department seeks to work closely with the Public Transport Access Committee¹ (PTAC) to improve the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities.

Recognising the important role of the Committee in carrying out the review, the Department discussed and agreed with it in early 2008 the process for the review. The meeting was facilitated by an external expert in public transport accessibility with a view to ensuring a sufficiently comprehensive review.

The focus of the 2008 Review was to reassess the 2006 edition, to evaluate progress to date, to revisit the targets and actions in the Plan with a view to setting appropriate interim targets and timelines and to consider what new elements might be incorporated in a revised edition. Introducing more meaningful performance management and progress monitoring/reporting and strengthening working arrangements in cases of cross-boundary responsibility for particular accessibility improvements were also seen as significant elements of the review.

The common themes and issues emerging from the public consultation process were incorporated into the revised Plan and a further internal consultation was provided for within the Department of Transport, with transport providers, as well as with PTAC, to establish an agreed framework for future implementation of the targets and actions contained in the revised Plan.

¹ The remit of PTAC includes a monitoring role in relation to progress made by the various transport agencies in implementing the Plan and in evaluating the impact of the Plan on people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. A list of the representative organisations on PTAC is contained at **Appendix 1**.

Section 1: Policy Context and Scope of *Transport Access for All*

High Level Policy Objective and Strategy

The Department of Transport reaffirmed its commitment to the objective of fully accessible public transport in its Statement of Strategy 2008-2010. This objective involves the development of accessible public transport services to the highest possible standards for the greatest number of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in the shortest possible time, having regard to resource, technical and other constraints. The obligations arising from this objective will apply to all operators of public transport services, both public and private. This approach reflects the requirements of the Disability Act 2005 and is determined by public policy in respect of the public transport needs of people with disabilities in line with the National Disability Strategy, the National Development Plan, towards 2016 and the Transport 21 investment programme.

In line with these policy objectives and its own statement of strategy and business planning processes, the objective will be achieved through the continued involvement of this Department in the implementation of the Sectoral Plan.

Accordingly, the Department of Transport will -

- Be proactive in efforts to identify and remove barriers that prevent people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and older people accessing the public transport system and to ensure that no future barriers are created;
- Work in partnership with public, private and community-based transport providers to improve the accessibility of public transport services;
- Implement established best practice when developing policies and implementing plans;
- Continue to consult with the representatives of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and older people;

- Pursue Value for Money, through targeting available resources at initiatives that are affordable and sustainable and that maximise benefits to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and others whose quality of life can be enhanced by accessible public transport.

The “Transport for All” Concept

The concept of ‘Transport for All’ will remain the touchstone of the Transport Sectoral Plan. Within this concept the target beneficiary group of an accessible public transport system consists of:

People with physical, sensory, learning or cognitive difficulties (whether permanent or temporary) and others whose access to traditionally constructed transport vehicles, services and infrastructures is limited, to a greater or lesser extent, on account of age, because of accompanying children or because they are carrying luggage or shopping or are otherwise impaired in their use of the transport system.

This definition has been developed in consultation with the members of the Public Transport Accessibility Committee and accords with the ‘Transport for All’ concept that is now generally used within the EU and the International Transport Forum (formerly the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)) as the public policy objective when addressing transport accessibility issues.

The concept of ‘Transport for All’ broadens the focus from “special” provision for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments to all transport users, even to the most able-bodied, because most people, at some point in their lives, are likely to acquire a physical or other impairment or be impeded in some manner, that will make travelling difficult, if not impossible, on what one might call ‘traditional’ type transport vehicles. This is particularly the case as people get older. The ‘Transport for All’ concept, therefore, incorporates the lifecycle approach as set out in ‘Towards 2016’ and agreed by the Social Partners, that the delivery of mainstream accessible public transport is to benefit all age-groups and at all stages of their lives.

Mainstreaming of Accessible Transport

The mainstreaming of accessibility in transport remains a core driver within the Sectoral Plan. In the context of the development of an accessible transport system, this means the

incorporation and integration of accessibility into mainstream policy-making, transport planning and the provision of transport services for all. This will be done as extensively and intensely as possible with regard to meeting the transport needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. However, it is inevitable that some people, because of the severity or nature of their disabilities, will not be able to travel on public transport services (or may not be able to do so at all times). In these cases, specialised transport services are the most appropriate complementary form of transport and which are generally provided by specialist agencies.

Through the consultation process for the 2008 Review, the need for more specialist transport and door-to-door services, particularly in urban areas, as well as a need for a more integrated accessible transport network generally, were highlighted as significant issues. While the statutory, administrative and financial considerations involved are simply too wide-ranging for a sectoral plan approach, these can be considered within the Department's wider policy commitments for public and private transport including the Department's commitments under the UN Charter for the Rights of Disabled Persons and within the context of the proposed Public Transport Bill (see pages 74 and 75).

The concept of mainstreaming of accessibility extends not just to transport vehicles and infrastructure. It also includes 'softer' transport delivery elements such as staff training in understanding and meeting passenger needs and information (both before and during journeys) in forms and formats that can be widely understood. Furthermore, where transport policy interfaces with other related sectors' policies, programme collaboration and partnership are encouraged with a view to mainstreaming accessibility across sectors. For example, collaboration between those with responsibility for public transport and those responsible for the pedestrian environment and for traffic management is a key element of transport that is accessible for all.

Features of accessible mainstreamed public transport will include the following: -

- Full unassisted access for wheelchair users (and for prams and buggies) including, where appropriate, accessible toilets and lifts.
- Features to aid people with difficulties in walking, gripping, reaching or balancing, including slip resistant surfaces, handrails and handholds.

- Facilities to aid people with vision impairments, deafness or hearing loss, and other impairments. These include the consistent use of colour contrasts, clear signing and lighting, non-reflective surfaces, audio and visual announcements, tactile and audible guidance surfaces, warning systems and induction loops.
- Facilities to aid people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. These include clear oral and written information and consistent staff training in recognising and understanding the needs of people.

The Department of Transport will work closely with the National Disability Authority to ensure that the principles of excellence in universal design fully inform policy and plans for making the public transport system as accessible as possible for people with disabilities.

Scope of the Sectoral Plan

The scope of the Sectoral Plan will continue to cover the following public transport services and related issues:

- Bus and rail services provided by or on behalf of Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus and Iarnród Éireann,
- Licensed scheduled public transport services provided by private bus operators,
- Light rail services,
- Proposed plans for a Metro for Dublin,
- Taxi and Hackney services,
- Rural Transport Services provided under the Rural Transport Programme,
- Air transport services,
- Maritime passenger transport services,
- Parking facilities and Driver Training.

The Plan provides for greater coordination of implementation of the sectoral plans of the Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government with respect to the interface between the public realm and public transport infrastructure and vehicles

The Department will continue to work towards meeting its internal corporate responsibility under Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 concerning access to public buildings and services and Part 5 on public service employment. While the necessary measures in this regard do not form part of this sectoral plan, the Department will continue to report on this aspect to the National Disability Stakeholders Monitoring Group.

Transport 21

The funding provided for accessible transport continues to fall under the mainstream Transport commitments of *Transport 21* (2006-2015), the Government's 10 year transport investment framework.

Transport 21 envisages making the public transport system accessible for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in two principal ways. Accessibility will continue to be built into new transport infrastructural projects together with the acquisition of accessible rolling stock and buses. In addition, to the mainstreaming of accessibility into new projects, funding will continue to be provided to enable the phased adaptation or retrofit of existing transport infrastructure and facilities. To date, most of the projects funded under this programme have involved the retrofitting of bus and rail stations to provide access for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments and the adaptation of vehicles. Such projects have been developed in consultation with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC) and progress reports are received from the operating companies.

Capital investment for the mainstreaming of accessibility in other aspects of our transport system not covered by *Transport 21*, e.g. regional and local roads, airports, harbours and sea ports will continue to be funded under their existing funding streams.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability was formally adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006. Ireland was in the first group of countries to sign, subject to ratification of the UN Convention when it became open for signature on 31 March 2007.

A high-level cross Departmental working group was established in 2007 under the auspices of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to advise on any changes

to the Government's National Disability Strategy that may be required to enable the State to ratify the Convention. The Department of Transport is participating in the work of the group as Articles 9 and 20 of the Convention relate to requirements for accessible public transport – the relevant text is reproduced in Appendix 4. The consequential implementation responsibilities falling onto the Department of Transport are being advanced in the context of *Transport Access for All*. However, some responsibilities under Articles 9 and 20 of the Convention will require measures that extend beyond the scope of the Sectoral Plan. With regard to Article 9, the Department is currently considering what measures would be most appropriate for ensuring that public transport provided by private operators is fully accessible. Such measures may include new legislation. A proposal for a Bill is under development within the Department in the context of possible updating of the 1932 Road Transport Act and any necessary provisions covering the accessibility of privately-provided public transport services can be handled in that framework.

Article 20 deals with personal mobility, a concept that extends well beyond the reach of public transport. The Department will consider how appropriate it would be for it to have primary responsibility for specialised transport services such as school transport, transport for health care reasons and door-to-door type-services for people with special needs as part of its work in developing proposals for the review of the 1932 Road Transport Act. However, in doing so it will have to take account of the position of the Public Transport Partnership Forum that transport concerned with health care must be an integral part of the provision of health care. The Department of Transport has also asked the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform to consider further the question of responsibility for other aspects of personal mobility that do not have a connection with public transport.

Section 2: The Review Process and Progress

Preparation and Overview of the Review Process

In preparation for the Review of *Transport Access for All* a meeting of the Public Transport Advisory Committee was convened in early 2008 to discuss possible approaches. Discussion concerning the Review was facilitated by an external consultant in public transport accessibility. An agreed approach for the Review of the Plan was adopted. Recognising the considerable consultation and deliberation that was involved in the development of the 2006 Sectoral Plan, it was agreed that the priorities should continue to be aligned with those identified in the 2006 edition of the Plan and that the review should pay particular attention to ways of ensuring that those targets and timelines are achieved. Accordingly the review of the plan has taken place within the overall scope, framework and agreed targets and actions as set out in that Plan. The review has taken account of changes to the economic context, technology developments and changes to transport policy. It has also placed the emphasis on better measurement of the agreed targets and actions within the Plan as well as on how *Transport Access for All* can make a difference to people's lives and experience of public transport.

It was agreed that the review was to include a public consultation as well as a consultation with people with disabilities, transport providers and other interested parties. The results of consultations were considered and outcomes reflected in a revised Plan. This stage of the review process involved the Departmental Divisions and transport providers as well as the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. The external consultant in Accessible Public Transport provided an independent overview of the revised Plan proposals.

Public Consultation

The development of a framework for the public consultation on the Sectoral Plan was centred on some key questions:

- Is *Transport Access for All* making a difference to people's lives and how do we know?
- How can progress under the Plan be measured?
- Are there gaps in the Plan? If so, how might these be addressed?

- Does the Plan cover the full range of disabilities in so far as it would be possible for public transport to address the needs arising?
- Are the compliance and redress procedures in the Plan robust enough?

Aware of the need to invite the widest possible range of views concerning the review of the Sectoral Plan, it was agreed in consultation with the Public Transport Advisory Committee that a written public consultation process would be initiated through a public advertisement in the national and regional newspapers in Ireland and on the Department of Transport website. A guidance note for the public consultation was developed in conjunction with the external consultant on accessible public transport to explain the focus of the review process and to assist respondents in making written submission under the public consultation process. The public consultation process commenced on 12 May 2008 and concluded on 27 June 2008. In tandem with the public consultation, a written consultation was also initiated within the Department to access the views of the Departmental Divisions, Agencies and transport providers, and with the disability organisations via the Public Transport Advisory Committee.

A total of 26 responses were received. The common themes and comments arising from these consultation submissions helped to focus the review of the plan. Strengthening the implementation and monitoring processes and the development of a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to accessible transport policy and delivery were key suggestions for the development of the Plan.

Survey of People with Disabilities that use Public Transport

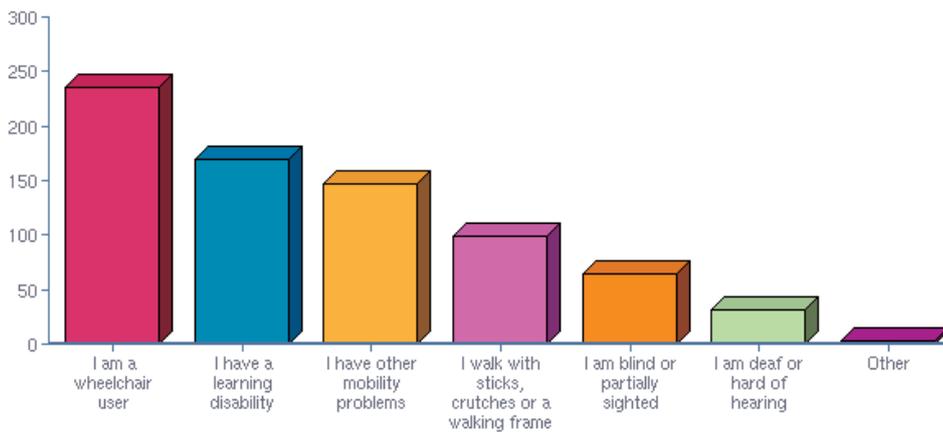
In order to assess the impact of the measures being implemented under *Transport Access for All* on the everyday lives of people with disabilities and their experiences of public transport, it was decided to incorporate a research element into the review process. The aim of this was to establish whether the plans for making public transport accessible are working and if not, to identify where the gaps and problems lie.

The method of research selected for this purpose was a survey questionnaire developed in conjunction with the external consultant in accessible public transport and in consultation with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. The survey form was available from the Department of Transport website and submission could be made in hard copy or electronic

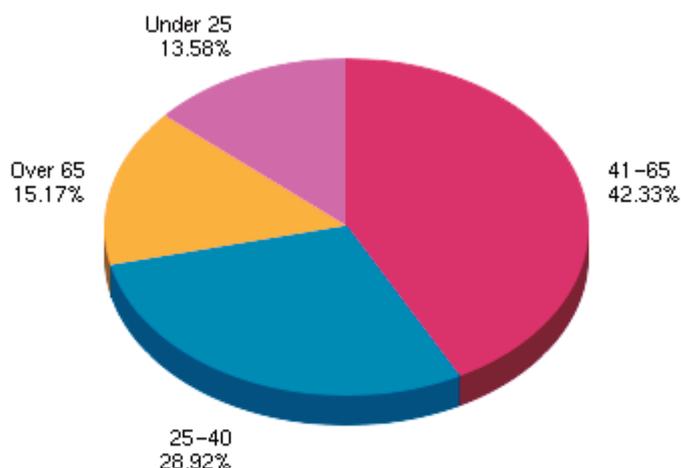
format. It consisted of a range of questions relating to satisfaction levels, obstacles and potential for improvement of the different transport modes including bus, train, taxi, air and sea transport. While many of the questions provided a multiple choice for responses, other questions allowed respondents to comment in greater detail concerning their own experiences and opinions of public transport. The questionnaire survey ran in tandem with the public consultation and 567 responses were received.

The respondent profile information sought at the start of the questionnaire, concerning, gender, age group, what county the respondent is from, whether they are living in a urban/rural area and their category of disability, provided an overview of the respondent levels under these categories. This is illustrated in the following two charts.

The disability profile of the 567 survey respondents is illustrated in the following bar chart, which shows that mobility impairments are dominant, followed by learning, visual, hearing and other impairments:



The age profile of 567 survey respondents is illustrated in the following pie chart, of which the largest group is the 41-65 age group, followed the 25-40 age group, over 65's and under 25's:



The analysis of the data from the survey provided for percentages and counts of the responses under each question. This indicated some initial trends in satisfaction levels of people with disabilities that use public transport. As this is the first survey of its kind undertaken by the Department of Transport on accessible transport, the learning from this exercise will be built upon in future similar surveys under the Sectoral Plan Review Process. However, the indications of trends arising from this baseline data when taken together with the response to the public consultation provided some contextual information for discussion and deliberation concerning different elements of the revised Plan.

In the sections dealing with the various transport modes, the part of the survey dealing with the difficulties experienced by respondents is reported on for illustrative purposes. In general, some of the more significant difficulties relate to issues outside the remit of this Plan and will be addressed separately.

In particular, the responses to questions concerning the most common difficulties experienced by disabled transport users across the transport modes, i.e. bus, train, air and sea were, firstly, getting on and off the vehicle or vessel, and; secondly, getting to and from the transport node, i.e. station, bus stop, airport or port. On the other hand responses concerning the most common difficulties experienced by disabled transport users of taxis were cost and availability.

Deliberation and Development of a Revised Sectoral Plan

Following directly after the public consultation on *Transport Access for All*, the Department engaged in a deliberative process towards the development of a Revised Transport Sectoral Plan. This process involved transport stakeholders, departmental divisions and transport providers together with disability stakeholders via the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. An independent overview of the Review Document proposals was provided by an external consultant in Public Transport accessibility.

The key focus of this deliberative process was to incorporate the common themes arising from the public consultation process within planning for the implementation of the Plan going forward, with a specific focus on setting agreed interim milestones for progress on implementation having due regard to available resources.

The results of the associated survey provide baseline data against which future progress on public transport accessibility can be measured. The public consultation dimension of future reviews will accordingly repeat the survey.

Reflections on Progress Made: 2006-2008

Since the finalisation of the Sectoral Plan in 2006, progress has been monitored regularly and periodic reports have been made to the Public Transport Accessibility Committee and the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group.

Significant progress has been made by the public transport agencies and companies on the targets for their areas relating to accessible public transport vehicles and infrastructure. 74% of the Dublin Bus Fleet is low-floor, wheelchair accessible and 105 routes are now served by such buses. Bus Éireann has met its target of one-hundred percent accessibility of its city bus services (Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford) and has purchased a number of new generation wheelchair accessible coaches. The newer DART and diesel railcars are accessible with features including equipment to facilitate automated audible station announcements. These accessibility features have now been extended to the early generations of DART carriages, as part of Iarnród Éireann's current refurbishment programme. The refurbished DART cars are gradually being returned to service. It is envisaged that this process will be completed by February 2009 at which point automatic announcements will be available on practically all of the DART rolling stock. Iarnród Éireann is continuing to replace its inter-city fleet with accessible rolling stock. The rolling

stock on Luas is accessible and Luas stations embody the most up-to-date accessibility standards as will all proposed Luas and Metro Stations. The retrofit of Irish Rail Stations is underway based on an agreed programme of works. Retrofit works at all bus stations is progressing at a steady pace and is due to be completed by the end of this year. 39% of Dublin Bus Stops have been upgraded to accessibility standards and a number of newly designed accessible coach stops are under construction to facilitate in-service trials with Bus Éireann's new wheelchair accessible coaches. In addition, considerable volumes of disability awareness training have been delivered to the staff and employees of transport providers.

Disability user groups established within various public transport sectors are also proving to be significant in the ongoing involvement of people with disabilities with the implementation of actions under the *Transport Access for All*. Such groups for the most part are working very well and have adopted operating guidelines prepared by the National Disability Authority in conjunction with the Department of Transport and approved by the Public Transport Accessibility Committee.

Considerable progress has been made on the Sectoral Plan targets and actions to date and implementation is generally on target. However, there is still work to be done. The development of interim targets as set out in Section 6 of this Plan, presents in a clear picture of the work that is still to be done and should also support more meaningful monitoring results.

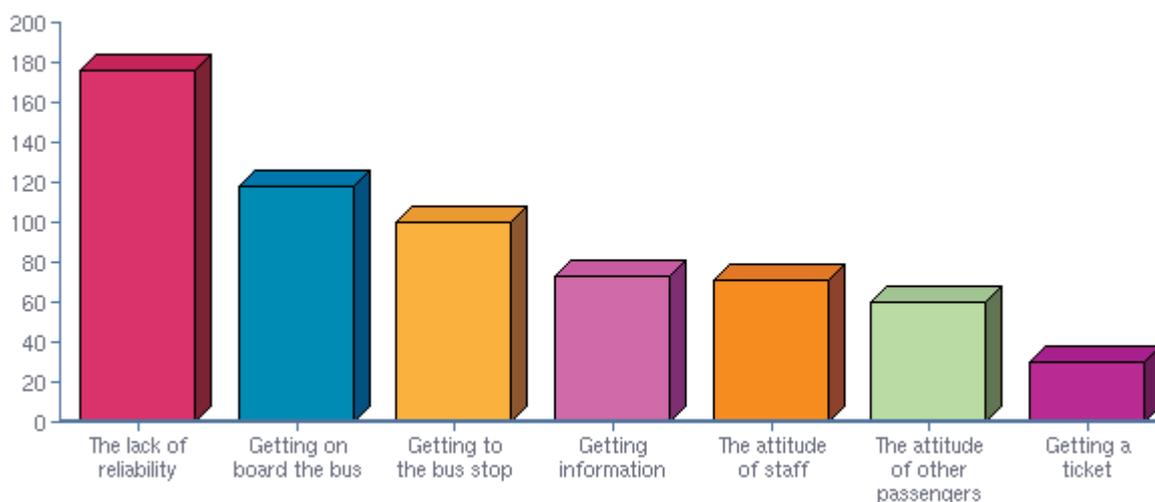
Section 3: Accessibility Measures in the Transport Sectors

3.1 Bus and Coach Services:

The pie chart below indicates that 52.38% of the 567 respondents were regular bus users:



The difficulties experienced by 299 of these survey respondents are illustrated in the following bar chart. The highest response concerned reliability, followed by accessibility issues, attitudinal problems and the provision of information:



Scheduled Urban Bus Services

Scheduled urban bus services in Ireland, in the main, are currently provided by Bus Átha Cliath (BAC) in Dublin and by Bus Éireann (BE) in the provincial cities of Cork, Galway,

Limerick and Waterford as well as in a number of other urban areas. A number of private licensed operators also provide urban bus services.

Since the year 2000, BAC and BE have purchased only low-floor, wheelchair accessible vehicles for urban services. In accordance with the 2006 Sectoral Plan, that purchasing approach is now part of the permanent policy of both companies as buses fall to be replaced over time. In addition to having a low floor, the buses can be pneumatically lowered further and a ramp extended to facilitate entry by people with mobility impairments. Each bus has a dedicated wheelchair space that can also be used to facilitate boarding of a child in a buggy when not required by a wheelchair user. Furthermore, low-floor buses are equipped with a range of features to aid the transport of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments, such as colour contrasted interior poles, improved interior lighting, improved grip bars and palm-activated bell pushes. The wheelchair accessible buses purchased by Bus Éireann and Bus Átha Cliath for urban bus services conform to the specifications of COST 322 (**Appendix 3**).

Bus Éireann has achieved 100% fleet conversion to low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses, both single-deck and double-deck, on its urban services in the cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. In other urban areas currently served with smaller buses that are not wheelchair accessible, Bus Éireann's policy is to replace those vehicles with wheelchair accessible buses. It is envisaged that this process in these urban areas will be completed by 2012, in line with the original target in the 2006 sectoral plan.

Bus Átha Cliath has a fleet of 1182 buses. At present, 74% of this fleet is comprised of low-floor wheelchair accessible buses that also incorporate accessibility features to aid people with sensory impairments. The company continues to introduce new accessible buses on a route-by-route basis to maximise the effectiveness of these vehicles. Bus Átha Cliath operates 200 routes throughout the city and 105 of these are designated low floor accessible routes. A large number of other routes have low floor buses on them and as more low floor buses come on to the fleet these routes will become designated low floor routes. In addition, Nitelink services together with South Coast and North Coast tours are also operated with low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses. BAC envisages that its entire fleet will be composed of such buses by 2012, in line with the target in the 2006 sectoral plan.

The pilot Travel Assistance Scheme run by Bus Átha Cliath aims to give people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments the information and confidence they need to use accessible public transport independently. The Travel Assistant(s) employed on this project offer advice on journey planning and accompany passengers the first few times they use public transport. The assistant makes the passenger aware of the accessibility features on buses and other forms of public transport used in the course of the journey and how to use such features. This scheme has helped a number of people to use public transport for the first time and to make the transfer from door to door to mainstream services. Indeed, the numbers of people using it this year have doubled compared with 2007. Bus Átha Cliath hope to carry out a postal survey towards the end of 2008 to assess if participants have been encouraged to change their travel choices following their participation in the scheme and their levels of customer satisfaction with the delivery of the scheme.

The Department of Transport's Guidelines for the Consideration of Passenger Road Licence Applications under the Road Transport Act, 1932, encourage all licence holders to use accessible vehicles. In addition, section 48 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 sets out how transport services are to be procured under the Act and the main provisions that are to be included in related contracts. These include a requirement to provide for accessibility standards for the services in question.

The Programme for Government includes a commitment to improving bus services under *Transport 21* by reforming the bus licensing provisions of the Road Transport Act 1932. This will facilitate the optimum provision of services by providing a level playing field for all market participants, both public and private. In that regard, it is the intention of the Minister for Transport that proposals for a new bus licensing regime will be contained in a Public Transport Regulation Bill. A mechanism to facilitate the attachment of conditions, including accessibility conditions, to the grant of bus licences will be proposed in the context of the proposed Bill.

Bus and Coach Services Outside Urban Areas

There are a number of separate and distinct bus and coach markets for scheduled transport services operating outside urban areas. In the main, these can be broadly grouped as Inter-City and other Long Distance Services and Other Stage Carriage and Rural Services.

Inter-City and other Long Distance Services

In general, inter-city and other long distance services involve the use of coaches rather than buses. From an accessibility perspective, what differentiates a bus from a coach is that seating on the latter is very high off the ground to allow for under-floor luggage space and entry to the coach is by way of a number of high steps set in a narrow doorway. This, of course, creates obstacles for passengers in wheelchairs and others with mobility problems to access the vehicle. With the exception of low-floor double-deck coaches, ramped access is not practical because of the high floor in most modern coaches. Access for wheelchair users has to be by lift, which has implications for vehicle design, passenger and luggage capacity, safety and costs. Progress on providing suitable accessible coaches for long distance services has up to recently proven more problematic for transport operators than any other type of bus service, primarily because of the engineering challenges it presents.

The COST 349 Report (see **Appendix 3**), a major four-year European research project that examined ways to improve access for disabled people to coaches, was published in October 2005. The report examined the case for accessible coach and long distance buses, discussed supporting infrastructure, information provision, and staff training requirements, covered the economic considerations and made a range of recommendations. The recommendations include the provision of at least one wheelchair accessible entrance and a wide range of other accessibility features that reflect a comprehensive approach to disabilities but these are not prescriptive in engineering terms. Since the report was published, a number of accessible coaches have gone through prototype development and are now in production. The Department of Transport has agreed with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee that the recommendations and approach set out in the COST 349 Report, together with the expected developments from coach manufacturers, makes for a practicable strategy to arrive at the required accessibility outcomes within the most cost effective time frame.

Bus Éireann has purchased 69 single-deck and 32 double-deck new generation wheelchair accessible coaches which will be trialled initially on two pilot routes – Navan/Dublin Airport/Dublin City University and Waterford/Cork. Bus Éireann will produce a coach accessibility programme in light of the trial experience and its obligations under this Sectoral Plan.

The accessibility features of long-distance coaches are under continuous development by manufacturers in light of the experience of service providers using recent accessible coaches. As in the case of accessible urban buses, it is expected that once manufacturers begin to produce accessible coaches on reasonable commercial terms, the availability of new non-accessible vehicles will diminish in line with the take up of the accessible vehicles. Furthermore, it is expected that any price advantage for non-accessible vehicles will also be eroded as increased availability and demand for accessible vehicles reduces their marginal production cost. The Department of Transport will continue to keep the development of accessible coach-based services under review.

The Department of Transport is reviewing the speed limit restrictions for coaches with a view to facilitating, in particular, the scheduled operation of double-deck coaches in Ireland.

Other Stage Carriage and Rural Services

Buses and coaches are used for the provision of stage carriage and rural services. Bus Éireann and some private operators have introduced low-floor buses on a number of routes that were previously served by inaccessible coaches. All operators have been asked to explore the scope for expanding the use of low floor buses on their services, pending reform of the bus route licensing regime.

Bus Éireann, in co-operation with local rural community development groups, has also, over a number of years, introduced some 40 rural services on an experimental basis. These initiatives are funded by Bus Éireann from its own resources and are based on the provision of a service one day each week linking a number of villages and town lands with a market town. Free Travel Passes issued by the Department of Social and Family Affairs are accepted on these services. By 2015 all vehicles used for these stage carriage and rural services will be wheelchair accessible and incorporate facilities to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

The Rural Transport Programme (RTP)

General

The Rural Transport Programme (RTP), established in February 2007, is particularly aimed at people in rural areas who are at risk of social exclusion because of unmet public

transport needs. The provision of transport services for older people and people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments is a core feature of the RTP and many RTP groups include representation from these sectors in their management structures and user fora. Many of the services are provided on a door-to-door basis and are also responsive to other customer needs. Services are designed to link essential public services with existing scheduled services, where possible.

Progress in relation to the Plan

Following consultation with all RTP groups in relation to the Sectoral Plan, a strategy outlining a range of targets and actions was proposed for delivery over the course of the Plan.

A number of those actions are in the process of being implemented and these include:

Ongoing consultation and participative involvement

- At project level, people with disabilities are involved in the decision-making structures and are represented on many of the voluntary boards of management.
- At programme level, linkages are being established with organisations such as the National Disability Authority and the Irish Wheelchair Association, to share experiences and develop good practice in relation to accessible services.

Identifying needs

- A local needs analysis is in the process of being conducted nationally and locally by RTP groups in conjunction with the preparation of their Strategic Plans 2008 – 2010. This process is nearing completion and will assist in determining current and emerging transport needs, including people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. This process includes one-to-one interviews, questionnaires, discussion fora and public consultation meetings.

Training

- Mandatory training standards have been introduced for drivers and passenger assistants that include a focus on working with people with disabilities.
- Group representatives have been involved in Disability Awareness Training and have participated in programmes such as Say No to Ageism.

Passenger assistance

- One third of the RTP groups have trained passenger assistants available to support and enable people to use the services.

Accessible vehicles

- One RTP group is piloting a number of purpose built, fully accessible low floor vehicles in the rural environment.
- The system for tendering and procurement of services has been reviewed to ensure that incentives and weightings are applied to encourage compliance with accessibility goals. The revised system has been promoted to RTP groups through training and procedural management.
- Community owned vehicles are being adapted to ensure that they meet accessibility requirements.

Transport models

- All RTP services are planned and delivered around the needs of local communities.
- 76% of services are provided on a door-to-door basis, which increases the physical and geographic accessibility of services.
- A range of transport models are being used, all of which are semi-flexible or provide demand responsive transport.
- Integrated services providing for the needs of different target groups are being developed.
- An increasing number of RTP groups now provide community car schemes, using cars as the basic model of transport as they can be more accessible and acceptable to people with reduced mobility wishing to travel.

Passenger service and safety

- A new Health and Safety Management System has been developed by Pobal in conjunction with RTP Groups to meet the requirements of the programme and this will improve the safety, comfort and quality of services for travelling passengers. This system is in the process of being implemented and contains policies and procedures relevant to people with disabilities.
- A Manual Handling Training for Trainers Course has been successfully completed by a number of RTP Project Staff and Board members. Delivery of training to RTP project

drivers and passenger assistants will enhance the approach to the delivery of accessible service provision.

Use of technology

- A mapping system, which is in the early stages of development by Pobal, will highlight geographic areas where there are gaps in transport services and project coverage. The mapping system will also give an overview of the location of essential services and facilities and will enable a better analysis of to be carried out on travel patterns and user requirements. The system will also highlight greater co-ordination potential in integrating local transport services and a range of user service needs.

Monitoring performance

- A number of indicators have been included in the performance monitoring system to record the usage of services by people with disabilities.
- Groups will receive training in monitoring the performance of operational fleet management.

To assist the development of the RTP, the Department established a Working Group to examine the question of accessibility specifications for small buses designed to carry 9 to 22 passengers. The group developed a draft guidance document based on the UK **Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)** specifications for accessible minibuses. In the light of prevailing technical, health & safety and other regulatory circumstances, the Department is considering whether it would be appropriate to issue the draft document in the form of guidelines for RTP groups. It will be necessary to consult with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority before such a step could be taken. In any event, the Department proposes to request the Road Safety Authority to consider whether the guidelines should be put on a statutory basis, subject to any necessary amendments.

Bus Stations, Bus Stops and other Public Transport-related Infrastructure

Bus Átha Cliath

All existing Bus Átha Cliath customer facilities have been made accessible for staff and customers and any residual issues will be dealt with as they arise. New infrastructure

funded under *Transport 21* will be conditional on accessibility for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments as well as older people being incorporated therein from design to implementation,

Bus Éireann

Bus Éireann's existing bus stations generally had been made accessible by end-2007. Planning issues gave rise to some delays at Rosslare but it is now hoped to complete an accessibility upgrade of this bus station in 2009. Limerick and Galway Bus Stations form part of combined bus/rail station development proposals for which there is currently no proposed completion date.

Bus Stops

"Traffic Management Guidelines" prepared jointly by the Departments of Transport, the then Department of the Environment and Local Government and the Dublin Transportation Office, contains a chapter dealing specifically with facilities for people with disabilities as well as incorporating guidance on ways of meeting the needs of people with disabilities in its various specific general traffic management chapters.

The provision and improvement of accessibility features in the vicinity of public transport infrastructure such as bus stops, train stations, bus depots, etc., is primarily a function of local authorities. The access audits and implementation plans of local authorities, as provided for in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Sectoral Plan, identify improvement works required on public roads. The Department of Transport is engaging with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government so that local authorities will, in consultation with the relevant transport authorities, prioritise the upgrading of bus stops on roads where wheelchair accessible buses are in service or are being phased in, having regard to available funding.

In the Greater Dublin Area, bus stops are being upgraded by local authorities through the installation of hard stands, bus shelters and Kassell Kerbing. To date, some 1,900 bus stops have been upgraded. While this work has been proceeding at a rate of some 250 bus stops per annum, there has been a significant increase in 2008. Pending the establishment of the Dublin Transport Authority, the Department of Transport will continue to engage directly with service providers and with the local authorities concerned with a view to expediting the provision of accessible bus stops. Bus stops are also being

upgraded systematically on routes that form part of the Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) programme. This will continue under the Transport 21 investment programme, which among other things, envisages a doubling of the length of the QBC network by end 2009. There are about 5,000 bus stops in the Greater Dublin Area including those on QBC Green Routes. It is envisaged that the remainder will be made accessible on a phased basis by the end of 2012.

In the provincial cities, bus stops are being upgraded in conjunction with the construction of QBCs/Green Routes and the Local Authorities have a direct responsibility in this regard. The Department of Transport will engage with local authorities and transport providers about their plans for programmes of work to make accessible bus stops that are not on QBC/Green Routes.

The Department will fund the construction of accessible coach stops on the designated pilot routes (Navan/Dublin Airport/Dublin City University and Waterford/Cork) to facilitate in-service trials by Bus Éireann's new wheelchair accessible coaches. The trials are due to commence by the end of 2008.

The Department is engaging with private sector bus operators in respect of access for their public transport wheelchair accessible services to accessible bus stops funded by the Exchequer.

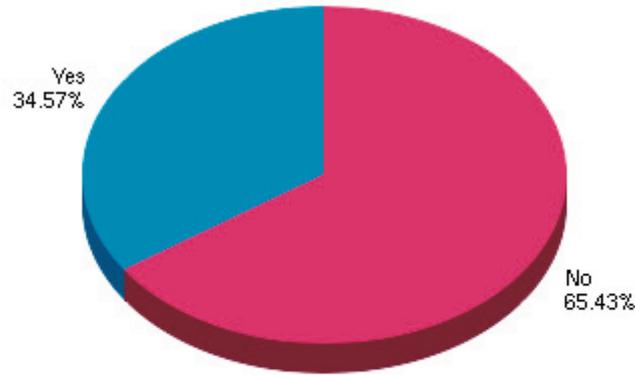
The Department will continue to seek to develop and oversee an effective co-operative approach by the various agencies, particularly service providers and local authorities, concerned with making the interface between public transport services and the environment in which they are provided seamlessly accessible. Please refer to Section 5 for more details on this commitment.

Illegal Parking at Bus Stops

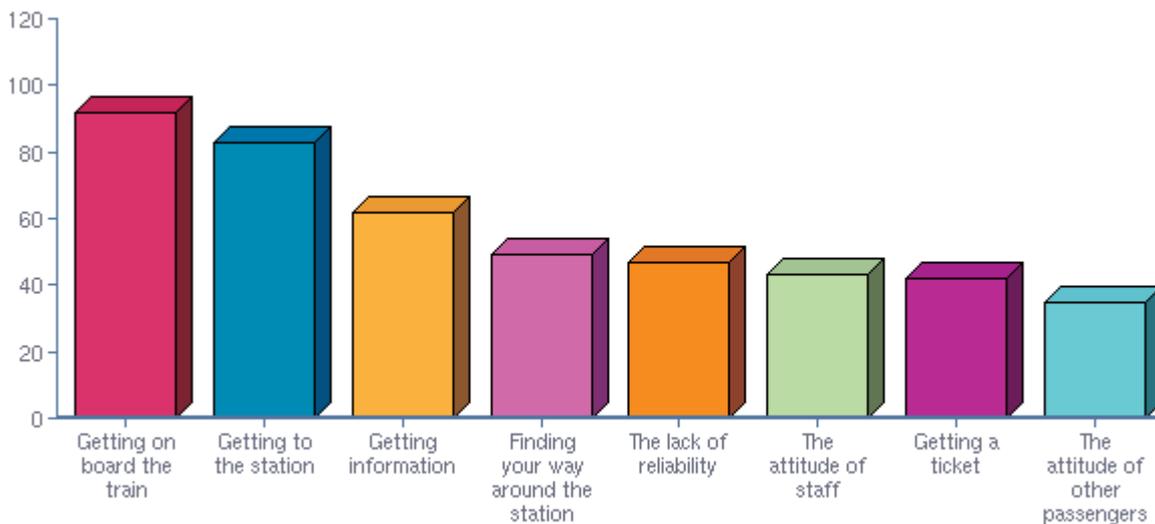
Enforcement measures to counter illegal parking and its impact on the accessibility of bus stops rests with a number of different bodies, including local authorities and An Garda Síochána. The Department of Transport will continue to work with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, An Garda Síochána and local authorities with a view to strengthening actions to address this issue.

3.2 Rail Services

The pie chart below indicates that 34.57% of survey respondents were regular train users:



The difficulties experienced by 154 of these survey respondents is illustrated in the following bar chart. The difficulties refer to accessibility, information provision, attitudinal problems and reliability:



Heavy Rail

In addition to access from public space to rail services, there are three distinct areas of rail operations that have a critical bearing on the accessibility of rail services. These are rail infrastructure², carriage fleet and the interface between the train and the platform.

Rail Infrastructure

Accessibility improvements to date

It is now the established policy of Iarnród Éireann that, in the design and construction of new railway stations and in the refurbishment of existing stations, provision is made for the needs of passengers with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. Accordingly, accessibility is now a standard feature in the design of all new and refurbished rail stations covering such issues as access, condition of platforms, passenger facilities, and access across platforms.

Planned railway accessibility improvements

In order to plan a comprehensive programme of remedial station accessibility works on a strategic basis, Iarnród Éireann, supported by the Department of Transport, commissioned a comprehensive accessibility audit of all stations on the rail network in 2003. The audit details the works that are necessary to bring each station up to an acceptable accessibility standard. In planning the implementation of the findings of the audit, and in line with one of its recommendations, Iarnród Éireann has decided to carry out this work on a line-by-line basis and to prioritise the lines with the highest passenger numbers. In adopting this policy, the company is confident that it is addressing the priority needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

Under this policy, the stations on the Dublin – Cork, Dublin – Galway and Dublin – Dundalk lines will be the first to be completed. Design work has already been completed in respect of these stations and construction work is well underway. This work complements the introduction of new accessible rolling stock which is being brought into service on all these routes. In this way, the accessibility benefits for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments will be maximised.

² Such as access to railway stations, condition of platforms, passenger facilities, and access across platforms.

The accessibility upgrade works at each station will concentrate on the following facilities:

- Station access, including car parking for passengers with disabilities, set down facilities for passengers and pedestrian access to the station.
- Facilities to aid step free passenger movement throughout the station and its environs, including the installation of ramps, automatic doors, facilities for crossing the railway to other platforms, tactile surfaces, improved lighting and improved colour contrasting schemes.
- Ticket Offices with split-level counters, non-reflective glass, significant colour contrasting, induction loops, improved lighting and security.
- Customer Information and public address systems, help points (with associated CCTV, improved lighting and induction loops) and improved signage.
- Customer Facilities including accessible toilets and improved waiting areas.

All the works are being designed to be in conformity with current regulations and guidelines on international good practice. In addition to conforming with the Building Regulations and the provisions of COST 335, the works will take cognisance of the following: the National Disability Authority's Building for Everyone, Iarnród Éireann Station Design Guide, British Standard BS 8300: 2001 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, the UK Strategic Rail Authority's Code of Practice and the UK Department for Transport recommendations on Inclusive Mobility.

It is anticipated that the railway station accessibility programme will be completed on a phased basis, line-by-line, by 2015.

Lightly Used Stations

Following an examination of the passenger figures at some small, lightly used stations, Iarnród Éireann has decided that it would not represent value for money to invest heavily to bring these stations up to full accessibility standards. It is important to note that this does not conflict with the company's policy on accessibility. Passengers with mobility and sensory impairments within the catchment area of these stations, who need an accessible station to help them to get on or off a train, will be facilitated by Iarnród Éireann through the provision at its expense of a taxi or hackney to the nearest accessible station.

Descriptions of the facilities provided within each station are available in the Iarnród Éireann Guide for Rail Passengers with Disabilities and on its website at

http://www.irishrail.ie/your_journey/your_station.asp

Carriage Fleet

The carriage fleet is the second area of critical importance to rail accessibility. The useful life of railway carriages can extend up to forty years and this is a significant factor when addressing the accessibility of railway services. In recent years, all carriages of the 1960s and 1970s have been removed from scheduled service, with only a limited number of carriages from the 1980s still in service. All carriages purchased since 1995 are wheelchair accessible and all carriages ordered in recent years have been designed to comply with the UK Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR).

Carriages on commuter rail services

The newer DART and diesel railcars are accessible with features including equipment to facilitate automated audible station announcements while the original fleet of 76 DART carriages has recently completed a refurbishment programme which included the installation of an automatic announcement facility. This rolling stock is now gradually being put back into service. It is expected that the process will be completed by February 2009 at which point automatic announcements will be available on practically all of the DART rolling stock. The wheelchair accessible standby trainset (comprised of some 10 carriages) remains to have an automatic announcement facility fitted. While Iarnród Éireann has indicated that this trainset will not be in everyday use, the Company intends to have an automatic announcement facility fitted to these carriages in 2009.

Carriages on inter-urban rail services

Iarnród Éireann is in the process of replacing its remaining inaccessible inter-city carriages. All the new carriages are specified to the UK Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR). Among other things these specifications provide for the following features:

- Up to three wheelchair spaces per train (proportionate to the number of carriages)
- 10% of seating designated as priority seats for disabled people
- Use of contrasting colours for visually impaired people
- Audio and visual passenger information systems
- Handrails and handholds designed for use by mobility and sensory impaired people
- Accessible toilets.

Since their introduction in the late 1990s, the carriages on the Dublin-Belfast Enterprise service have been accessible.

In recent years, Iarnród Éireann have introduced sixty seven new Intercity carriages on the Dublin – Cork route while a further one hundred and eighty three diesel railcars are being progressively introduced on all other inter urban routes.

Practically all inter-urban passenger rail services will be provided with accessible carriages by 2009.

In-train audiovisual systems

All new carriages have in-train audio and visual communication systems for passenger information.

Inter-action between platform and train

A further area of potential difficulty on the railway that a mobility or sensory impaired passenger encounters is accessing the train from the platform and vice versa. The problems here are caused by vertical and/or horizontal gaps between the platform and the train. These problems are exacerbated at platforms which are built on curves.

These problems are being addressed by Iarnród Éireann as part of its extensive platform lengthening and renewal programme, which has been initiated on all intercity routes. Platforms are being lengthened to accommodate longer trains and accessibility improvements are being incorporated in these works. With regard to the physical access from platform to train, Iarnród Éireann has investigated a number of possible solutions to the problems and has concluded that the safest one is provided by the use of mobile ramps. Every staffed station now has a mobile ramp in place for the needs of people with mobility impairments. Station staff will assist passengers in using such ramps.

The company has put in place special procedures (provision of alternative transport or staff assistance, if feasible) to cater for the needs of passengers with mobility and sensory impairments at unstaffed stations provided sufficient notice is given. Iarnród Éireann has agreed to publish on its website information concerning its special procedures.

It should be noted that the EU Trans European Conventional Rail Systems technical Specification for interoperability, which is due to be finalised in 2008, is likely to include requirements for accessibility, both of rolling stock and infrastructure on certain routes. Its application in Ireland is unclear at this stage but will be pursued as necessary on its adoption.

Light Rail

From its commencement in June 2004, Luas has provided highly accessible services on the two lines currently in operation: the Green line from Sandyford to St. Stephen's Green and the Red Line from Tallaght to Connolly. All new Luas light rail network planned under Transport 21 and the Luas trams will be designed from the outset to provide a very accessible public transport service. The Department has also funded a range of Luas accessibility projects to improve accessibility of the Luas for passengers. While the existing service is already accessible, developments in technology and best international practice are being monitored with a view to enhancing the Luas system.

The Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) and Veolia Transport have implemented a number of accessibility initiatives related to Luas services including disability awareness training for all staff members, systems guides in accessible formats and a customer charter. Furthermore, the RPA has a policy of continuous improvement informed, among other things, by the Luas User Group.

Metro

Transport 21 proposes the development of two new Metro services – *Metro North* from St. Stephen's Green to Swords and an orbital line, *Metro West*, linking the Tallaght Luas line with Metro North. From the outset, the Metro service will incorporate the most up to date accessibility provisions for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in line with those already provided on the Luas network as the output specification for Metro vehicles incorporates requirements for accessibility. These draw substantially on feedback from the disability groups represented in the Luas User Group as well as current legislation and recommendations from authorities both in Ireland and abroad.

Railway Safety

The Railway Safety Act 2005 puts in place a modern regulatory framework for railway safety. It contains a number of provisions concerned with ensuring the safety of rail travel for people with physical, learning or cognitive difficulties (whether permanent or temporary). The following are of particular relevance in this regard.

Under **Section 39**, the Railway Safety Commission(RSC) is empowered to publish guidelines on appropriate technical principles and specifications and railway undertakings must have regard to such guidelines. The guideline documents dealing with requirements for the design of railway infrastructure and rolling stock are on the RSC web site at www.rsc.ie. The documents of particular interest are RSC-G-003 (stations), RSC-G-007 (trains) and RSC-G-008 (tramways). More detailed guidance on train requirements is also contained in the recently published guidance document RSC-G-015-B.

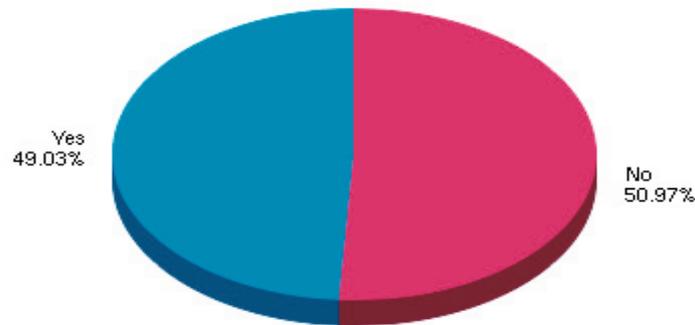
The RSC has also published guidance on its website for train passengers, RSC-G-013-A. There is particular guidance for those with physical, sensory, learning or cognitive difficulties (whether permanent or temporary) in this document.

Under **Section 69**, the Railway Safety Commission, with the consent of the Minister for Transport, may make regulations in relation to standards, specifications and procedures to be used by railway undertakings to safely facilitate the special requirements of passengers with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. However, to date, the Railway Safety Commission has not found it necessary to make such regulations.

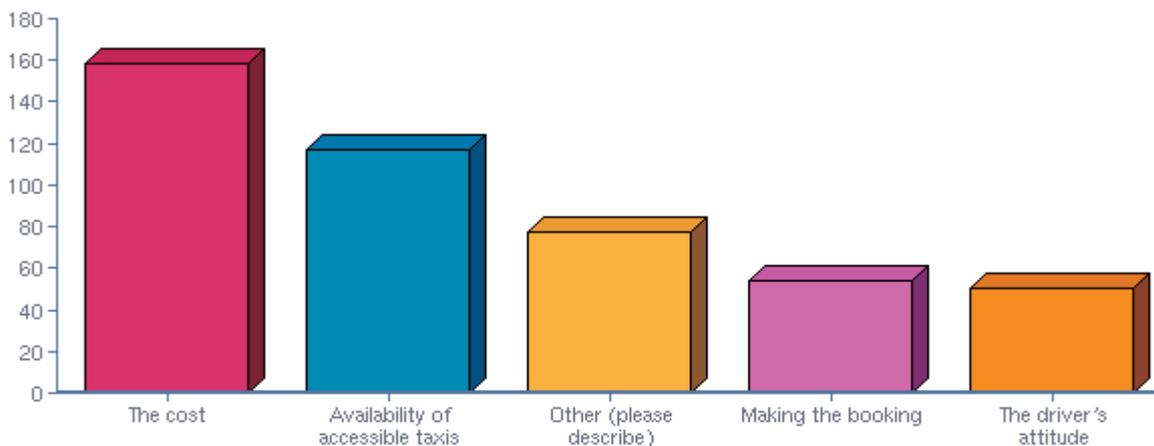
Under **Section 82**, a Railway Safety Advisory Council was established in May 2007 as a forum for consultation on issues relevant to railway safety and to make recommendations to the Railway Safety Commission or the Minister for Transport as appropriate. A representative of the National Disability Agency was appointed to the Council to represent the interests of persons with disabilities.

3.3 Taxi and Hackney Services

The pie chart below indicates that 49.03% of the survey respondents use taxis often:



The difficulties experienced by 228 of these survey respondents is illustrated in the following bar chart with the greatest difficulties relating to cost and availability:



Taxis and hackneys can play a key role in the provision of a door-to-door service for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments that connect with other public transport services. For many people the service that taxis and hackneys provide can be the only means by which they can participate in economic, social or cultural activity. The Commission for Taxi Regulation, established as an independent public body in September 2004 under the Taxi Regulation Act 2003, has as its principal function to develop and maintain a regulatory framework for the control and operation of small public

service vehicles (taxis, hackneys and limousines) and their drivers. Improving access to services provided by small public service vehicles (SPSVs) for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments is a key objective of the Commission.

The Commission's 'National Review of Services and Vehicle Standards in Taxis, Hackneys and Limousines in Ireland' 2005, indicates that people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments do not currently enjoy access to a service that is on a par with services provided to other consumers. The main concerns raised by people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments related to:

- Accessibility,
- Availability, and
- Affordability.

The findings of the questionnaire survey for the 2008 review of the Sectoral Plan support the Commission's findings that availability and affordability of accessible taxis and hackneys remain among the most common transport difficulties experienced by people with disabilities. The Commission has recently commissioned a repeat of its original 2005 survey and expects to have results back by year end.

The Commission has endeavoured to put in place a range of measures to improve the quality and accessibility of SPSV services for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments over the last two years of the Sectoral Plan. Progress has been made in terms of the accessibility of the overall services provided under the auspices of the Commission, including the provision of accessible information for customers, a requirement for taxi drivers to carry assistance/guide dogs and mobility aids (without extra charges) and new SPSV specifications which include accessibility requirements. Progress has also been made on additional accessibility issues including the development of driver training. The Commission also actively engages with a number of national, regional and local disability bodies and representative groups to ensure that on-going policy formulation takes into account the views of service users with particular requirements.

The Commission is currently planning an appropriate licensing system to allow certification of dispatch operators meeting minimum standards such as accessible booking services etc. This project will continue throughout 2009. Part of the requirements for licensing will be to accept bookings in accessible formats such as fax, SMS and email. In addition, the Commission is in the process of completing a Register of Wheelchair Accessible Taxi

Operators. While it is envisaged that this work will be completed by January 2009, details of operators on the register can now be made available to intending passengers by phoning the Commission's Consumer Information Line **1890 60 60 90**. The Commission intends to make the full register available to the Irish Wheelchair Association and other groups to allow them to distribute same to their members. The Commission also has available a consumer guide, a customer charter of rights and responsibilities and fare information in a range of accessible formats including Braille, large print and audiotape. In addition, It has in place a user friendly and accessible complaints system that is accessible by phone, fax and email. A complaints form is also available from the Commission's website www.taxiregulator.ie.

An initial audit of existing taxi ranks was completed in early 2008 following which the Commission commenced the development of best practice guidelines for local authorities to assist in the provision of accessible ranks. The provision and location of taxi ranks will remain the responsibility of the relevant local authority. The Commission intends awarding a contract by end 2008 for the development of guidelines for local authorities on the location and design of taxi ranks. Completed guidelines will be made available to local authorities during 2010. These will include a particular emphasis on the accessibility of taxi ranks, but also their integration with adjacent public transport services where appropriate.

The Commission has also issued a new vehicle specification for wheelchair accessible vehicles in the National Vehicle Standards document published in November 2007. These standards will apply for new entrants from 2009, and for all existing operators from 2012.

While good progress has been made, there is still work to be done on achieving the accessibility actions and targets for this transport sector. The Commission will continue to work in consultation with the Department of Transport towards increasing the numbers of accessible taxis and hackneys and to address affordability issues.

3.4 Air Travel

The pie chart below show that 57.67% of the 567 survey respondents have travelled by air:



The difficulties experienced by 232 of these survey respondents are illustrated in the following bar chart. Accessibility, information provision, staff attitudes and problems with bookings are the predominant problems:



The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the international regulatory body for civil aviation, obliges Member States to take the necessary steps to ensure that airport facilities and services are adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities and that all necessary steps are taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have adequate access to air services.

Regulation 1107/2006 of the European Council and the European Parliament sets out the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when they travel by air. The regulation was formally adopted on 5 July 2006. The Regulation sets out the rights of disabled passengers, obligations on airlines and airport managing bodies with regard to accessibility and provides the timeframe for implementation of the measures under the Regulation. The Regulation applies from 26 July, 2008, except Articles 3 and 4 which already applied from 26 July 2007. Article 3 provides that an air carrier or its agent shall not refuse to accept a reservation or embark a passenger on grounds of disability or reduced mobility and Article 4 provides for certain derogations and special conditions in relation to those provisions in Article 3.

Following adoption of the Regulation, the Department of Transport notified airlines, airports and other relevant parties of their obligations under the Regulation, including the development of accessibility awareness training for employees as a priority measure, and advised that an enforcement body would be designated to enforce the Regulation in the State. A Statutory Instrument (SI No. 299 of 2008) was signed into law on 25 July 2008 to designate the Commission for Aviation Regulation as the enforcement body in Ireland and to provide for sanctions for infringements of Regulation 1107/2006.

The Commission for Aviation Regulation in Ireland now has responsibility for the implementation of the Regulation across the air transport sector in Ireland, including the accessibility of air transport services and infrastructure at the State Airports at Dublin, Cork and Shannon and the Regional Airports. As part of the revised Sectoral Plan the Department will engage with the Commission concerning its plans to ensure that its obligations under the Regulation with regard to accessibility are met.

The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) has drawn up good practice guidelines and service level agreements to enable airlines and airports to provide a consistent level of service to passengers with disabilities across Europe and this work will also inform policy in this area.

The building standards at all the State Airports conform to the accessibility provisions of the Building Regulations 2000 and in building and refurbishment works, the NDA guidance document 'Buildings for Everyone - 2002' is used. Management at all three airports liaise with local disability organisations in their area with regard to the provision of accessible

services. Dublin Airport has a disability users group, embracing representative bodies from various organisations. Shannon and Cork Airports have established formal structures for consulting with disability user groups.

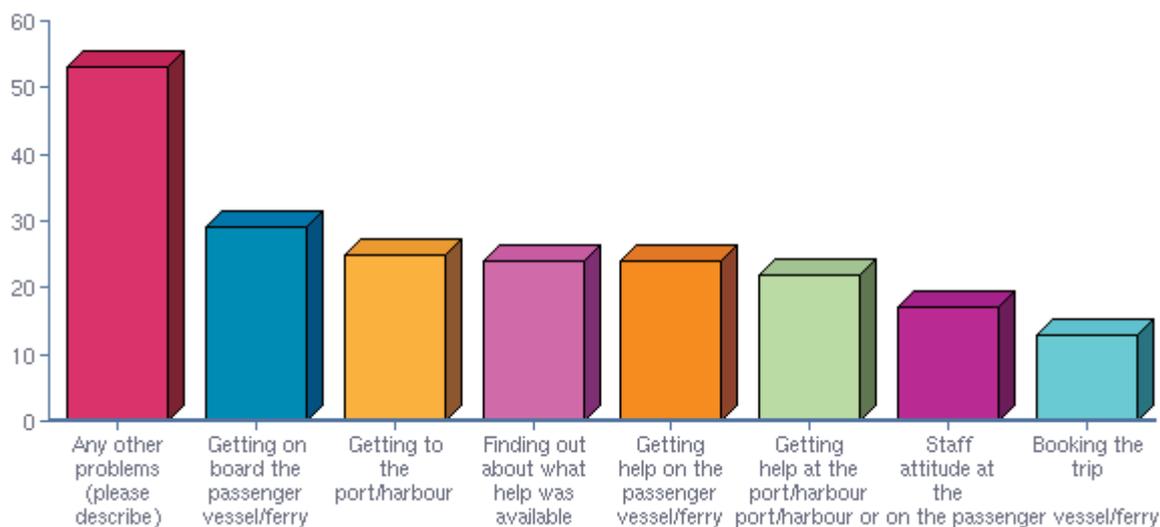
With consideration to the development of new airport facilities, it is Departmental policy that the design and provision of facilities at the State Airports are accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. Facilities to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments will be incorporated into the design of all future airport projects and the Dublin Airport Authority will continue to consult with people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in relation to reviews of existing facilities as well as the introduction of new facilities.

3.5 Maritime Passenger Transport

The pie chart below shows that 31.92% of survey respondents have travelled by passenger vessel/ferry:



The difficulties experienced by 94 of these survey respondents is illustrated in the following bar chart. Most of the problems are related to accessibility and information provision:



The Marine Passenger Transport element of this Plan deals with passenger ships on voyages within the State or to and from the State, and international ferry ports which serve these passenger ships and, where applicable, regional ports and harbours. *Transport Access for All* promotes an integrated approach to the implementation of the accessibility measures under these two areas of marine passenger transport so that transport users will

experience a comparable standard of accessibility at ports, on vessels and the interface between them.

There are widely differing types of passenger ships, which range from modern large international passenger ferries serving ports in Britain and France, to medium sized passenger ships serving our offshore islands as well as small vessels plying short voyages on inshore waters and lakes. Vessels are almost all in private ownership and none of the international ferries now operate under the Irish Flag. The extent of facilities for passengers varies considerably between the largest and the smallest ships and reflects the length and nature of the trips which the various vessels undertake. This is also reflected in the different categories of harbours from large commercial ports serving international ferries to smaller regional and local ports from which passenger services operate.

Passenger Ships

There are a number of existing legislative and non-legislative measures relating to the accessibility of passenger ships, as follows:

Passenger Ships engaged on international voyages

- Both Irish flagged and foreign flagged vessels engaged in international voyages are governed by international agreements. Arising from these agreements, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has produced Circular MSC/735 of 24/06/1996 "*Recommendations on the design and operation of passenger ships to respond to elderly and disabled persons' needs.*" The IMO Circular includes specific guidelines on special car parking spaces for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.
- Following the establishment of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum in 2006 (see below), two of the larger international ferry operators, invited members of the Forum on customer experience trips on their vessels operating between Ireland and the United Kingdom. In general, accessibility and facilities on-board the vessels were found to be very good and the staff very helpful. The vessels, on which the trips were conducted and the berths from which they operate already substantially comply with best international practice. It was noted that other operators and port facilities would not yet meet this standard.

Domestic Passenger Ships

- Safety rules and standards for domestic passenger ships are governed by EU Directive 98/18/EC as amended by Directive 2003/24/EC. This Directive has been transposed into Irish law by Statutory Instrument No. 716 of 2004. The Directive, which is aimed at certain categories of domestic passenger ships not engaged on international voyages, establishes standards of a general nature to assist passengers with reduced mobility. To date, a total of only eight domestic Irish passenger ships fall within the terms of the Directive and only three have been built (or are currently under construction) since the entry into force of the legislation. Notwithstanding the limited number of vessels covered by the Directive, the Marine Survey Office of the Department, as a matter of policy, seeks compliance with the Directive on a voluntary basis during the construction of those categories of domestic passenger ships not covered by the Directive.

Services to Offshore Islands

- A number of ferry services to offshore islands are operated under contract with and subsidised by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRGA). The Department includes a requirement in all new contracts that operators must provide disability awareness training for all staff employed on their vessels.

Passenger Ports

There are four international ferry ports in the country: Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare. The passenger facilities in these ports are operated by state owned companies. These port companies recognise the importance of delivering a high quality service to all passengers including to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. There are also thirteen regional harbour authorities that operate under the Harbours Act 1946. Local passenger services are provided from a number of harbours in this category, often to offshore islands or on sightseeing/activity trips. Facilities in these harbours for people with disabilities will be addressed by the relevant harbour authorities.

There are five fishery harbours centres owned and operated by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. A number of these harbours have domestic passenger services operating from them to offshore islands. The Sectoral Plan of that Department includes a section dealing with its proposals in relation to these harbours. There are also a large number of harbours, landing places and slips owned and operated

by local authorities. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is addressing these facilities in the Local Authority Plans chapter of its Sectoral Plan.

In line with *Transport Access for All*, each of the four international ferry ports has undertaken an independent accessibility audit of their passenger facilities and has developed an action plan for remedial works to improve the accessibility of their passenger facilities. Implementation of the action plans commenced in 2008 at Cork (for completion 2010) and Dublin (for completion 2009). Accessibility improvement works are also being undertaken at Rosslare Harbour. In addition, other ports and harbours falling under the aegis of the Department will be encouraged to conduct self-audits on their facilities and to consider any remedial work that needs to be conducted.

Developments at EU Level

Arising from an examination of the rights of international maritime passengers, including passengers with reduced mobility, the European Commission has acknowledged the limitations in the existing directive (EU Directive 2003/24/EC) which establishes standards of a general nature to assist passengers with reduced mobility. It is now examining a range of issues, including accessibility to ports, to strengthen the rights of maritime passengers. It is expected that the European Commission will publish proposals on strengthening passenger rights in the area of maritime transport, which will include the rights of persons with reduced mobility, by the end of 2008. When the proposals are published the Department of Transport will engage with the Commission and other Member States to ensure that effective EU standards for access to maritime passenger transport are adopted and implemented.

The Maritime Transport Forum

The work of the Maritime Transport Forum, established in 2006, has formed a key part of the progress made to date in this transport sector under *Transport Access for All*. The Forum was established to oversee the implementation of the maritime passenger transport section of the Sectoral Plan, and presented an opportunity to build on first steps provided by prior research initiatives to assess accessibility of marine transport, including the annual "Questionnaire on Disability Access on Passenger Ships" and the "snap shot" disabled-user survey of three international ports - Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare together with Rossaveel Harbour (which is the State's busiest domestic passenger port) and the ferries operating from them.

The Forum comprises representatives of Government Departments, port authorities, passenger ship operators, the National Disability Authority and organisations representing people with disabilities. The Forum in its terms of reference was tasked with establishing the standards already in place to ensure that passengers with disabilities can safely and efficiently access maritime passenger transport facilities without undue inconvenience or hardship, to identify any area where accessibility standards need to be improved and to produce a report on this basis by mid 2008 to coincide with this two-year review of the Sectoral Plan. The Forum has since finalised its report.

Already there has been significant progress made through the work of the Forum. Disability awareness training is being provided for passenger ship operators and their crew in various locations around the country (to date 50 operators and crew have had initial training). A consultant was engaged by the Department in March 2008 to conduct access audits on a representative selection of domestic passenger ships and the harbours/landing places from which they operate. The consultant's report was received at the end of June 2008 and an action plan is being developed.

To ensure that the momentum established and progress made through the work of the Forum is not lost, the Department will keep the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum in place but with terms of reference adapted for its changing role. These are likely to include monitoring progress and contributing to developing and advising on proposals for access improvements in the maritime passenger transport sector.

Action Plan/Timeframes

Drawing on the work of the Forum and the consultant's report the Department has prepared an action plan to improve accessibility for people with disabilities comprising the following:

- draft general guidelines by end of 2009, in conjunction with the NDA, to assist and support marine passenger transport service operators in making their services more accessible to passengers with disabilities;
- draft comprehensive guidelines or Codes of Practice on standards of accessibility on passenger ships, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, by end 2012;
- provision of funding in 2009, 2010 and 2011 for suitable projects which will provide simple but effective improvements on existing vessels;

- continuation of funding and provision of disability awareness training courses;
- introduction of primary legislation by 2010, to give enhanced enabling powers to the Minister to make regulations and develop codes of practice to improve accessibility on passenger ships;
- establishment in 2009 of a system for linking its website to other websites providing up to date information on service improvements in the industry.
- monitoring under Commission Regulation 336/2006 on Safety Management of sea-going domestic passenger vessels the provision of facilities and establishment of practices and procedures to assist people with disabilities.
- encouragement of passenger ship operators and port and harbour authorities to conduct self-audits of their vessels commencing in 2009.

3.6 Cross-Cutting and Cross-Sectoral Issues

Responsibility for certain accessibility issues under *Transport Access for All*, fall across the remit of a number of Government Departments, service providers and local authorities.

This part of the Plan identifies the broad areas where some degree of cooperative implementation will improve the plan's effectiveness. Section 5 sets out the measures to improve such cooperation.

Disability Awareness Training

Disability awareness training is essential for the proper delivery of transport services. Such training for all operators, while essential for front-line staff, such as drivers and ticketing staff, should also be a feature of on-the-job training of supervisors and managers. The National Disability Authority (NDA) has provided guidance on disability awareness training for transport providers (Operational Guidelines for improving access to bus, rail and light rail services for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in Ireland) together with Guidelines for Purchasers of Disability Equality Training. Both documents are available on the NDA website at www.nda.ie

Disability awareness training is available to Department of Transport staff and the Department is also providing funding for the provision of disability awareness training for private bus/coach operators of public transport services as well as operators/crew of domestic passenger ships. Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann, Bus Átha Cliath and Veolia Transport now have disability awareness training programmes in place. Disability awareness training for Railway Procurement Agency staff has also taken place. Furthermore, the Commission for Taxi Regulation is preparing to put in place a mandatory Skills Development Programme that will have disability awareness training and good customer service generally as a core element. The Programme, which is aimed at increasing overall standards of customer service in the small public service vehicles (SPSVs) industry, will be rolled out early in 2009. It will be mandatory for all new drivers of SPSVs from 2009 and for all existing drivers of SPSVs from 2012. The training pack will consist of a comprehensive manual and DVD which not only act as an educational tool but will be a key operational guide for SPSV drivers and dispatch operators.

It is envisaged that as disability awareness training is developed by the different transport providers within their sectors, it will become an integral part of induction and ongoing training for all employees in the organisations concerned.

However, it appears that there are differences in the types and levels of disability awareness training being provided both across and within the various transport modes. In this regard, the Department will give consideration to the development of common guidelines, in conjunction with the National Disability Authority and the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, for the delivery and implementation of such training. This accessibility awareness training has been developed across the public transport modes and will continue to be rolled out as part of mainstream training and development of transport staff and employees of the transport providers.

Disability User Groups

User groups formed from regular public transport users with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments are invaluable in the planning, design and operation of successful public transport services. Guidelines for Disability User Groups have been prepared by the NDA and the Department of Transport in consultation with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee to provide guidance *inter alia* on terms of reference, meeting process and review mechanisms.

Disability user groups have already been established by Bus Éireann, Bus Átha Cliath, Iarnród Éireann, Railway Procurement Agency / Veolia Transport and by the Dublin Airport Authority. In addition, the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum also includes representation from a number of organisations representing people with disabilities. In 2008, the Commission for Taxi Regulation is in the process of establishing a regular communications process with key national and regional disability groups. This will not only allow mutual exchange of information, but also support the involvement of people with disabilities in various pilots, and regulatory review processes. The Department will continue to keep the effectiveness of the various user groups under review.

Accessibility Audits

Carrying out an accessibility audit can be an invaluable tool for a transport operator in measuring the extent to which their transport services are accessible. Accessibility Audits

should be carried out in advance of all public transport infrastructure renewal projects to identify the remedial measures to be implemented as part of the renewal. In addition, passenger surveys should be carried out after a programme of works to assess if the accessibility needs have been adequately met. People with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments will have a key role in such audits. Accessibility Audits have become a central feature of the assessment process for planning and works being carried out by all the transport providers engaged in the implementation of measures under *Transport Access for All*.

Roads Policy

(a) National Roads

The National Roads Authority (NRA) has a responsibility in relation to national roads in ensuring that in delivering a modern, safe road network, the needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments are considered.

(b) Regional and Local Roads

The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads, together with the selection and prioritisation of projects to be funded, is a function of local authorities. State road grants are paid to local authorities to supplement expenditure from their own resources on regional and local roads. Since 2008, these grants are allocated by the Department of Transport. In developing their road programmes, local authorities must ensure that, as far as is practicable, the needs of persons with disabilities are catered for in the design and construction of new roads, streets and footpaths; with existing facilities examined as part of accessibility audits. While the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government remains the Department with general responsibility for, and oversight of, the local government system, the role of the Department of Transport in allocating State road grants for regional and local roads presents the opportunity for the Department to work more effectively with local authorities in implementing measures that can improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

Accessible Parking

The number, provision and specification of accessible parking bays, the provision and operation of disabled parking permits and the enforcement of sanctions against illegal

parking at disabled parking bays are all inter-related matters that bear on how well people with disabilities can avail of car parking, particularly in urban areas.

The Minister for Transport regulates traffic, parking and road traffic signs under the Road Traffic Acts 1961 to 2005. The Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) Regulations 1997 enable local authorities to provide parking bays on public roads that are reserved for use by people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. The design specifications for disabled parking are laid down for a designated parking bay in the Road Traffic (Signs) Regulations 1997. The responsibilities of Local Authorities with regard to the provision of accessible parking bays in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulations creates the cross-cutting characteristics of policy in this area and the need for continued joint working between the Departments of Transport and of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) Regulations 1997 also provide for the operation of disabled persons' parking permits in Ireland for the use of disabled parking bays. These permits may be issued by local authorities, the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Disabled Drivers Association. The permits have national application. Permits are granted to eligible disabled persons and may be issued to a disabled person who is a driver or to a disabled person who is a passenger. The form of the permit (commonly referred to as the Blue Parking Card or Blue Badge) complies with EU Recommendation 98/376/EC which allows for its recognition in other EU member states. A review of aspects of the granting and use of the disabled parking card is ongoing which may give rise to changes being made to the present scheme. It is intended to complete the review in 2009.

The Road Traffic Act 2002 empowers the Minister for Transport to apply a fixed charge system to breaches of road traffic law and from 3 April 2006 the offence of illegally parking in a disabled person's parking bay was brought within the remit of this enforcement regime. Where illegal parking in a disabled person's bay is detected a member of An Garda Síochána or a traffic warden employed by a local authority he/she can issue a Fixed Charge Notice. The Road Traffic Act 2004 introduced an express power of inspection of permits, including disabled persons' permits, by members of An Garda Síochána and traffic wardens to assist in the detection of misuse or abuse of parking permits. The 2004 Act also provides that the Minister may prescribe a fee for the issue of permits.

A number of legislative amendments were made to section 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1994 through the enactment of the Roads Act 2007 to further strengthen the provisions for enforcement of disabled persons' parking permits:-

Effectively from 11 July 2007, a Garda or a traffic warden has power to inspect a permit. They also have power to detain a permit where he or she is of the opinion that

- the permit is no longer in force
- the permit does not apply to the circumstances or vehicle in which it is being used
- the person using the permit is not entitled to use it, or
- the permit is altered or forged.

Where a permit is detained and is subsequently shown to be valid, it may be returned to the holder or suspended or revoked as the local authority or person issuing it sees fit according to the circumstances of the matter.

It is an offence to use a permit other than in accordance with its terms or conditions. Failure to allow inspection of a permit, by its holder refusing to do so or obstructing such an inspection, is similarly an offence.

Different stakeholders have their own concerns about aspects of the present parking scheme. The Department will consult with PTAC with a view to setting up a sub-group of the Committee to review the various issues and to develop proposals to address them.

Driver Training

The development of driver training for disabled people falls within the remit of the Road Safety Authority and related issues such as assessment standards, standards for adaptation of vehicles and for securing wheelchair passengers and use of lifts and ramps in vehicles by passengers. The Department of Transport, in consultation with the sub-group referred to in the previous paragraph, will engage with the Road Safety Authority concerning these issues as well as the development of an advice service for disabled drivers such as those provided in the UK which provide advice and assessment of driving ability for disabled and elderly motorists.

Public Transport Interchange

Public transport interchange is the process whereby passengers transfer from one transport service to another in making a journey. A complete public transport journey will frequently consist of a number of smaller journeys involving one or more interchanges. Any gaps in this process will cause inconvenience for passengers and can be a major deterrent to promoting increased use of public transport. Such gaps create particular difficulties for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. The most common interchange problem experienced by these groups of passengers is where there are different spatial levels in the interchange infrastructure and where signage and information provision are poor.

Advice notes for local authorities and transport service providers published by the Dublin Transportation Office on public transport interchanges and mobility management address the special needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in this regard and particularly with regard to the planning and design of interchange facilities. The Department recognises that the difficulties are not confined to infrastructural issues but also encompass operational matters such as ensuring, for instance, that buses which serve train stations/ports are timetabled to take account of train/ship arrival and departure times.

Transport 21 places a special emphasis on the integration of the various elements of the public transport system particularly in the Greater Dublin Area and this investment will facilitate passenger interchange between those elements. The Department will ensure that the accessibility needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments will be sufficiently addressed as an integral part of interchange facilities. The Department's measures will complement measures in relation to the design and construction of new public transport infrastructure associated with individual modes of transport.

Integrated Ticketing

Integrated ticketing is the means by which a passenger can undertake journeys with the use of a ticket on one or more public transport services. In particular, integrated ticketing based on a contactless smartcard bring particular benefit to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments because it reduces the inconvenience and discomfort associated with queuing and buying tickets. In addition, bus boarding and passage through ticket control points at railway stations can be simpler without the constant need to handle

money and to interact with bus drivers and ticket issuing staff. Smartcard reading equipment usually have visual and audio indicators that are activated when smartcards are held close to such devices.

A smart card is available for all Luas services and on all Dublin Bus services in respect of a number of ticket products such as annual and monthly bus tickets, annual and monthly integrated bus & rail tickets and integrated bus & Luas tickets as well as 5-day rambler tickets.

From late next year, the range of ticket products will be extended and the smart card will have an electronic purse capability.

This system will then be extended to Irish Rail - DART and commuter rail services within a further 12 months. The new gating systems at Irish Rail stations in the GDA have been designed to handle the new smart card. Over the same timeframe, Bus Éireann will commence the system on a pilot basis on a number of its commuter routes. It is envisaged that private bus operators will also join the scheme over this period.

In line with an agreement reached with the Department of Social & Family Affairs, that Department's Public Services Card will accept the integrated ticketing application and therefore allow Free Travel recipients to avail of integrated ticketing in the Greater Dublin Area.

Passenger Information

Information, from basic printed timetables to real time on-board information systems, is fundamentally important in giving people the confidence to travel. The Department is committed to the development of an integrated information system for public transport and is considering how best to progress its implementation. Links to the services of various transport providers in the Greater Dublin Area are already available through the Dublin Transport Office website www.dto.ie

From its consultations with the disability sector, the Department is conscious of the need to improve substantially the current public transport travel information systems. Because they can provide timely, accurate and reliable information on a range of travel choices in a range of media (such as on the internet, mobile phones, at bus stops, rail stations and on

board vehicles), Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) systems can bring great benefits to passengers with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

The integration of passenger information across transport networks should be consistent and enable passengers with disabilities to complete a journey with integrated ticketing options allowing the completion of a journey using different modes of transport. The provision of information, in the preferred format of the passenger for journey planning, to assist him or her to identify accessible transport – particularly where more than one mode of transport is involved is essential and should form part of future policy. The need for information on the accessibility or otherwise of routes, stops and interchanges, and how modes and services connect, also needs to be made available and published in alternative formats to enable people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments to plan and undertake journeys.

Luas

Luas uses RTPI displays at all stops to inform passengers of the expected arrival time of the next three trams and their destination. On board displays also show the current and next stops and these are supplemented by audible announcements. The audio announcements on the tram are a combination of pre-recorded and/or driver activated messages and those on the platforms are initiated centrally. Both systems are used to provide other information and can be programmed by the operator to display custom messages. New “standard” messages are regularly updated. Information provided also includes details of interchange locations with bus and rail services.

DART

The DART has an RTPI system installed at all stations in visual format only. It also has a RTPI service in text format available from mobile phones. RTPI services are also available on the IE website. On board displays also show the current and next stops and these are supplemented by audible announcements. The audio announcements on the carriage are a combination of pre-recorded and/or driver activated messages. The systems on the carriages and in the stations are used to provide other information and can be programmed by the operator to display custom messages. New “standard” messages are regularly updated. Information provided also includes details of interchange locations with bus and Luas services.

Dublin Bus

Dublin Bus is preparing to install an Automatic Vehicle Location and Control (AVLC) system on all of its buses. The AVLC system will

- facilitate the provision of real time passenger information via the internet, mobile phones and on-bus (audio and visual);
- incorporate a means of providing priority for buses at signal-controlled junctions thereby reducing journey times;
- provide the platform on which real time passenger information can be displayed at bus stops.

Testing of the AVLC system on a trial route will take place in late 2009. As part of this process it is proposed that an audio/visual system to announce the next stop will be installed and trialled on a pilot basis on a number of buses. The results of the trial will allow a decision to be made on whether the system will be rolled-out across the fleet through the retrofitting of existing buses and/or being incorporated into new bus builds. Such a decision will be subject to project and financial approval.

Dublin Bus already has a mobile phone text service that gives information on the next 3 scheduled bus departure times in each direction for each route queried. Beginning in 2010, real time information will be available to customers through a number of channels such as Internet browser and mobile phone via SMS.

Bus Éireann

Bus Éireann is in the process of rolling-out satellite navigation technology across its national fleet and this will facilitate the introduction of audio/visual systems. Based on this system, information in real time will be available at bus stations, on-board vehicles, on-line, and via mobile phones. Indeed, Bus Éireann is now trialing real time passenger information for services via text messages on mobile phones and via their website. Information is also displayed on electronic boards at a number of key bus stations.

Private Bus Operators

A number of private bus operators provide passenger information on their websites and some also use automatic vehicle location technology and displays that allow customers to see the location of their buses.

The Department will continue to press all the different transport operating companies to ensure accessibility of all information and announcement systems and that, once they are in place, they are at all times operational and accurate.

Websites

Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and Bus Átha Cliath, have upgraded their Internet websites in recent years. Each website now includes

- Timetable information (with Real Time Passenger Information for DART as well as certain Dublin suburban services on the Iarnród Éireann website);
- Information on fares & promotional offers as well as the purchase & delivery of some tickets;
- A seat reservation service in the case of Iarnród Éireann;
- Information relating to the companies' accessible services;
- Special features to assist visually impaired people; and
- Links to the websites of the other companies.

In addition, the Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann websites contain journey-planning services. All three web sites are accessible through the CIE website at www.cie.ie or at www.buseireann.ie, www.irishrail.ie or www.dublinbus.ie.

The Luas website (operated and maintained by Veolia Transport) can be accessed at www.Luas.ie, while the website of the Dublin Transportation Office, which contains timetable information for a number of public and private transport operators, can be accessed at www.dto.ie.

The Commission for Taxi Regulation has also developed a fully accessible website at www.taxiregulator.ie. This is regularly updated and is a great source of information on all of the Commission's activities and operations. You can apply on the website for any information in accessible formats. Details of how to request information from the Wheelchair Accessible Register will also be put in place by the end of 2009. Details of the Commission's licensing procedures and how to make a compliment or complaint about an SPSV service are also available.

A number of licensed private bus operators have dedicated websites that provide passenger information & fare information on scheduled services and, in some cases, facilitate the purchase of tickets.

While the work undertaken to date on all these sites represents significant progress, further improvements are required to facilitate journey planning particularly for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. As recommended by the National Disability Authority, the Department will encourage all passenger transport providers to achieve conformity with the Web Accessibility Initiatives (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for its HTML-based information and services, including public websites, HTML based e-mail and newsletters. The WCAG can be accessed at www.w3.org/WAI

The Department of Transport website was designed originally to be fully WAI compliant. However, the Department is conscious that in the intervening 6 years of use the basic website technology has become quite dated and some accessibility issues are arising. It is the Department's intention to replace the site in 2010 with much more modern and compliant technology. Meanwhile, consideration is being given to what can be reasonably done to improve the accessibility of the existing site given its relatively short remaining lifespan.

The Department will continue to consult with relevant bodies including transport operators and the Public Transport Accessibility Committee with a view to progressing improvements in website design and use.

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) was established in January 2007 under the Disability Act 2005 and is an integral part of the National Disability Strategy. The Centre is part of the National Disability Authority (NDA) which is the lead state agency on disability issues, providing independent expert advice to Government on policy and practice. Ireland is the first country in the world to place Universal Design on a statutory footing, emphasising the Government's commitment to improving the daily lives of people with a disability.

The Centre's work is focusing on:

- The built and external environment (streets, spaces, etc.);
- Products and services provided in those places;
- Systems including information and communications technology (ICT).

The CEUD has produced IT Accessibility Guidelines - design guidelines that cover key components of the public transport information infrastructure including:

- Information displays
- Kiosks (for ticketing and information)
 - Locating and accessing the terminal (terminal environment)
 - Using the terminal (Terminal software and hardware)
- Written instructions and advertisements (posters and leaflets)
- Information published on the web
- Smart Card systems – design considerations for the wide variety of aspects to a service that uses Smart Cards, eg
 - how to apply for a card,
 - technology used in the card,
 - enabling customisation of interfaces used on terminals that interact with the card,
 - Contact and contactless smart cards
 - Potential of Near Field Communications (NFC) to improve service usability - contactless transactions.

The Department will continue to encourage transport companies and local authorities to consult with CEUD in meeting their accessibility requirements under the Disability Act 2005.

Complaints and Redress Structures

To ensure a degree of consistency across the transport sector in relation to the complaints and redress procedures, all transport providers and relevant bodies were required to submit to the Minister, by 31 December 2006, adequate procedures and structures to deal with complaints of alleged non-compliance with the provisions of this Sectoral Plan. In the case of private transport companies and other persons providing passenger transport services, similar procedures and structures were to be established, either under the auspices of organisations representing private transport operators, or regulatory bodies

with responsibility for individual passenger transport sectors or other bodies or organisations approved by the Minister.

These procedures and systems are to have due regard to the guidance provided by the Ombudsman's Office including *The Ombudsman's Guide to Internal Complaints Systems* (see Appendix 5) and *The Ombudsman's Guide to the Provision of Redress* (see Appendix 6). A person dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint in relation to the accessibility of public transport services provided by these companies, to which a complaint should be directed in the first instance, would be entitled to appeal the outcome to the Office of the Ombudsman. Section 40 of the Disability Act 2005 relates to the application of the Ombudsman Act 1980. In this regard, it should be noted that the Ombudsman's role covers complaints about all bodies, organisations and other persons to which this Plan applies, including private passenger transport services providers.

In addition, all organisations required to have complaints and redress procedures in place are also required to ensure as far as practicable that information on these procedures is available in alternative formats to enable people with disabilities to access them. It is the responsibility of the Senior Official for accessibility matters in each of the transport bodies, in the first instance, to ensure compliance in this regard.

Cross-Border Co-operation

The Department of Transport continues to participate in the British-Irish Council Working Group on Accessible Transport, which is chaired by the Department of Regional Development in Northern Ireland. This group is trying to identify areas of possible co-operation between the various jurisdictions with an ultimate aim of facilitating seamless travel by people with disabilities throughout Britain and Ireland. Consideration is currently being given to the development of a common webpage to facilitate the provision of travel information.

A pilot exercise has commenced to examine the potential for rural cross-border community based transport initiatives to address social exclusion arising from unmet public transport needs and to identify the costs associated in providing them. Agreement has been reached on the Fermanagh/Cavan border area as the location for the pilot exercise and on the selected rural community transport groups that will participate - Fermanagh & South

Tyrone Transport (FAST) in the North and Rural Lift Ltd. in the South. Pobal is administering the pilot exercise on behalf of the Department of Transport and the Department for Regional Development NI. It is envisaged that transport operations will commence in the coming weeks following the completion of the necessary preparatory work.

Section 4: Strengthening the Implementation of *Transport Access for All*

Monitoring and Evaluation

The high level reporting process for the National Disability Strategy and Towards 2016 is being integrated and streamlined so that the outputs from it and impacts of it can be evaluated against benchmarks set out within the social partnership agreement. Progress reporting under the sectoral plans is constantly being reviewed to improve its fit with the overall reporting framework. Progress reports on the implementation of *Transport Access for All* to the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group (NDSSMG) will continue on a six-monthly basis and serve as a means of monitoring ongoing progress concerning the different actions and measures set out in the Plan.

A review of *Transport Access for All* provides an opportunity to reflect on progress made and establish whether there is merit in the inclusion of more specific actions and targets against which progress can be measured in the future.

Responses from the public consultation relating to the 2008 review of the *Transport Access for All*, highlighted two significant suggestions to strengthen the implementation of the Plan. One suggestion deals with setting interim time-bound targets against which the achievement of progress can be measured. It was already a key aim of this review of *Transport Access for All* to strengthen the monitoring of the progress on implementation by setting appropriate interim targets against which progress at intervals during the life of the Plan can be measured. These interim targets allow for the difference in implementation timescales of different types of action. For example, whereas it may be useful to measure progress made on increasing the number of accessible bus stops against annual targets, the measurement of progress made in retrofitting railway stations may require interim targets with a longer timeframe. Accordingly, where appropriate interim targets could be specified in the Plan this has been done and these are set out in Section 6 of the Plan.

A second suggestion emerging from the public consultation is that people with disabilities and their representative groups should have greater involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of progress made. At a high-level, the evaluation of progress under the various Sectoral Plans, including *Transport Access for All*, already involves six-monthly reports to

the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group which incorporates representation from all of the main disability representative organisations. This process will be strengthened through advance reviews of such reports by the Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC) and through remedial actions where required by the NDSSMG.

Oversight and Enforcement

The legal obligation for fulfilment of accessibility measures under the Transport Sectoral Plan is provided for in Section 34 of the Disability Act 2005. Oversight and enforcement of the implementation of measures under the Sectoral Plan is achieved by way of appropriate governance structures, reporting requirements and financial controls.

The Department of Transport has appointed a senior official with responsibility for oversight of the implementation of *Transport Access for All*. This oversight role is supported by the appointment by each agency/body under the aegis of the Department, of a senior official with specific responsibility for delivering on the commitments contained in this Sectoral Plan in respect of the company concerned and for reporting to, and liaising with, the Department in relation to all transport accessibility matters. In fulfilling their statutory obligations under sections 26,27 and 28 of the Disability Act, public bodies must have regard to the NDA Code of Practice on accessibility of public services and information provided by public bodies (S.I. No. 163 of 2006 refers).

The reporting requirements on each company, representative organisation, regulatory body or other body or organisation that is required by statute to prepare and/or publish an annual report, are required to provide a yearly progress report on the implementation of this Sectoral Plan in their annual reports. In addition, six-monthly progress reports on the implementation of the measures under the Plan are submitted to the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group. Furthermore, each company, representative organisation, regulatory body or other body or organisation that carries out a complaints investigation function under this Plan is required to report to the Minister annually in relation to complaints concerning alleged non-compliance with the provisions of this Plan, and the changes brought forward, or proposed, to ensure improved access to the services covered by this Plan. No formal complaints have been received to date.

Financial oversight and control mechanisms are in place for both current and capital expenditure made under the Plan. Compliance of the CIE companies with accessibility standards is included within the agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Transport and each of the CIÉ companies. These MoUs link performance standards and quality of services with subvention payments made by the Department to the companies.

The terms for allocation and drawdown of capital funding for accessibility projects comply with best practice and the ECMT Charter on Access to Transport Services and Infrastructure. Such projects must be vetted for accessibility by competent authorities and experts in disability from the design and planning stages to the monitoring and evaluation stages. Capital Expenditure on accessibility projects funded under T21 is also subject to financial and accessibility audit. Funding for projects is provided in accordance with Department of Finance guidelines on public expenditure and EU obligations as regards such matters as public procurement and State Aid Rules etc.

In general, explicit enforcement measures for sectoral plans are not provided. However, the oversight and monitoring structures outlined in this review appear to be resulting in the implementation of the plan in line with the agreed timelines. [Nevertheless, consideration of a legislative basis for enforcement might be required to be considered in the context of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with A Disability.]

Accessibility proofing of Transport Policy and Systems

It is the responsibility of the Senior Official for accessibility matters within the Department of Transport to ensure that Transport Policy and Systems include provision for accessibility.

All new legal and regulatory proposals are developed mindful of the needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. This was the case with the preparation of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (No. 15 of 2008). Furthermore, regulatory impact analysis for all proposed primary legislation, statutory instruments, EU directives and regulations are accessibility proofed. The Department will incorporate disability proofing into any regulatory impact analysis and when developing new policies, practices and services and in its reviews of existing policies, practices and services. All new overarching strategic and policy development by the Department of Transport will take into account

accessibility considerations, for example Transport 21 and the 2020 Vision for Sustainable Travel and Transport. This will extend to Policy Development by agencies and bodies under the aegis of the Department, for example, 2030 Vision – The Long Term Plan for Transport in the Greater Dublin Area, which will replace the 'Platform for Change'.

In line with the Public Service Management Act, 1997, which provides for the drafting of the Department Strategy Statements, due regard is given to cross-Departmental Government commitments to the Disability Act 2005 in respect of this Department's commitments under Section 34 and in respect of accessibility responsibilities of public bodies generally. Explicit recognition is given to the objective of making transport more accessible within the Department's Statement of Strategy. The Accessibility objective is defined in such a way as to allow subsequent assessment as to whether or not it is achieved, and it is supplemented by the setting of specific, quantifiable targets or key performance indicators. The Department's Statement of Strategy is required to involve of all relevant external and internal stakeholders in the development of Transport Strategy and Policy. This includes ensuring there is participation by staff with disabilities throughout the Department in the policy development process. The commitments, relevant to the Department in *Transport Access for All*, are included in the Department's Statement of Strategy, related Business Plans and in the Department's Annual Reports. Progress reports on the implementation of the Plan are considered by the Department's Management Board on a six monthly basis.

The obligations on public bodies in fulfilling their statutory obligations under section 26,27 and 28 of the Disability Act extend to all bodies under the auspices of the Department of Transport, including the Dublin Transport Office, the National Roads Authority, the Road Safety Authority and the Railway Safety Commission. It will also apply in due course to the new Dublin Transport Authority. In establishing any new bodies with responsibility for transport matters, the Department will continue to ensure that each body will have a specific remit with regard to transport accessibility.

The contribution of people with disabilities to the development of accessible transport policy and to monitoring progress with the implementation of the sectoral plan for public transport is facilitated by way of their participation in the work of the Public Transport Accessibility Committee. Membership of PTAC is reviewed on an ongoing basis in the light of changes to the Department's responsibilities.

Data and Research Strategy

The Department of Transport recognises the need for a comprehensive system of data and research across the Transport Sector. Data and research on accessible transport should be an integral element of the development of any future data and research strategy within the Department and among the transport agencies and providers. Developments on integrated ticketing could contribute greatly to the data capacity and capabilities of the Department, which could feed into future policy planning, development and the monitoring and evaluation of transport service delivery. Other research developments such as spatial mapping, which is currently being developed for the Rural Transport Programme, could lead to the provision of useful information for policy transport development concerning the geographic spread of services in relation to transport needs generally, in particular accessible public transport needs.

The questionnaire survey of transport users, which accompanied the public consultation for the 2008 review of *Transport Access for All* represents a first step in gathering baseline information concerning the impact of the accessible transport measures being implemented under the Plan. This approach has been welcomed by the National Disability Authority as being a model of best practice. It is envisaged that subsequent reviews of the Transport Sectoral Plan will incorporate a similar research exercise so as to build on this baseline research. This will help to provide an indication of progress going forward in terms of actual improvements to the experiences of people with disabilities in using public transport.

Section 5: Implementation across other Organisations.

Central to the high-level objective of integration provided for in the Department of Transport's Statement of Strategy 2008-2010, is joint working across relevant sectors, Government Departments and other organisations to develop a coherent policy framework to address all modes and underpin the development of an integrated accessible transport system. The Sectoral Plan provides for such a co-ordinated approach in laying down a firm policy foundation for the longer term to deal with cross-cutting accessibility issues. A range of issues require co-ordinated action, particularly the connecting space between the built environment and transport nodes, insurance coverage for transport providers, driving standards and formal assessment for disabled drivers, accessible parking and accessibility awareness within quality customer service provision.

Given the degree to which measures in *Transport Access for All* depend on the implementation of measures in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) Sectoral Plan, that Department and the Department of Transport (DoT) have now agreed to participate on a permanent basis in the work of each other's monitoring committees (PTAC in DoT's case) and will implement that agreement with immediate effect.

In addition, the DoT will participate as a permanent member in the work of the Disability Steering Committee of the Local Government Management Services Board. This will facilitate communications, joint working and problem resolution between the Department and the local authority sector. In addition, where it may be necessary to do so in respect of public transport accessibility matters, the Department will engage with the City and County Managers Association with whom it now has regular meetings on matters of mutual concern.

From time to time there will also need to be joint working on accessibility with other Sectors. This might involve the integration of transport policy with other policies in the area of social inclusion, e.g. the free travel scheme; school transport, rural social policy and grant aid schemes operated by the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Health Services Executive. The

Department will continue to engage with these and other Sectors on accessibility matters as they arise.

Co-ordinated action is also required vertically between Government, the Public and Stakeholders and other interest groups. Reviews of *Transport Access for All* will continue to provide for public input into the direction and focus of the Plan going forward. Structures in place via the Disability User Groups established under each transport sector and via the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, already provide for on-going joint working and co-ordinated action involving people with disabilities via their representative organisations. The role of the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders Monitoring Group ensures an oversight and monitoring role for disability stakeholders and interest groups at the highest level of policy decision-making and development.

The Department will continue to work with the relevant transport accessibility authorities in Northern Ireland on matters of mutual interest relating to transport accessibility. It will also continue to work with other EU States together with national and international bodies to advance the public transport accessibility agenda.

An Integrated Accessible Transport Network

One of the most commonly cited difficulties experienced by transport users responding to the questionnaire survey for this review was the difficulty getting to and from the transport nodes including bus and rail stations, bus stops, airports and sea ports. Many responses to the public consultation proposed the inclusion in the Sectoral Plan of measures for door-to-door and specialist accessible transport particularly in urban areas, greater integration of rural transport with scheduled public transport services by the state companies and licensed private operators as well as with locally provided specialist healthcare and school transport services. A role was identified here also for integrated transport systems and technologies for passenger information before and during journeys. A related concern is the interface between private car and the public transport network requiring accessible parking provision.

Integration of public transport services is a key objective for the Department of transport. In line with the inclusive approach reflected in this Plan, integration is being pursued in a way that will not differentiate between people with disabilities and other passengers. The provision of improved interfacing of infrastructure, services, information and payment

systems are key to effective integration. The main strategies to deliver improved integration include the commissioning of the Dublin Transport authority, the introduction of phase 1 of the integrated ticketing system by end-2009, the introduction of real time passenger information systems by the Dublin transport Authority, better inter-modal links to seaports and airports and the exploitation of intelligent transport systems.

Some of these integration issues are already being dealt with within the context of *Transport Access for All* such as improved passenger information systems and the introduction of new technologies.

Other integration measures being taken include the increased geographic coverage of the Rural Transport Programme, which caters for the unmet public transport needs of people with disabilities and older people. However, the Rural Transport Programme is being increasingly looked to meet a broad range of transport needs which are beyond its reach at present. The statutory, administrative and financial considerations involved in addressing the full range of issues involved in providing a fully integrated accessible transport system are outside the scope of a Sectoral Plan for public transport under the Disability Act 2005. They require a much broader review of public policy in the overall context of health care, social inclusion and other policy areas that have a transport dimension. Preparations are underway in the Department for a Public Transport Bill and in the development of the Bill consideration will be given to the question of how public transport has a role in the delivery of such services. In addition special attention is being given to this question in the development of the proposed Sustainable Travel and Transport Action Plan.

However, to move the thinking along, the Department has agreed to support the Louth Age-Friendly County Initiative sponsored by Louth County Council. The support will consist of funding for a study to map the provision of passenger transport in the County, to assess age-related transport needs and to look at delivery models for a pilot scheme to provide a more comprehensive local transport service to complement nationally organised public transport. Pobal has been asked to include the cost in its 2009 allocation and to work with the County Council with a view to the Rural Transport Programme work in Co. Louth and work under the initiative complementing each other for maximum value for money.

Funding

The economic environment in Ireland in 2005, when the first transport sectoral plan was being developed was very different to the situation in 2008. While the strategic and policy commitment to accessible public transport has not changed and has in fact been strengthened, the growing budgetary pressures on Exchequer funding must be taken into account in exploring the potential for progress to be made in certain areas.

Section 6: Revised Targets and Actions - Interim

Targets

Summary of Sectoral Plan Targets

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
Bus			
Urban Bus Services			
<p>Make all urban public transport buses accessible for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.</p>	<p>Continue to replace existing vehicles and add additional vehicles to bus fleets using only low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses that have on-board features to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.</p> <p>Continue to provide additional accessible services on a route by route basis.</p>	<p>Bus Átha Cliath, Bus Éireann and Private Operators</p>	<p>74% of the Bus Átha Cliath fleet is composed of low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses and 105 out of 200 routes are now served by such buses. All routes will be fully served by accessible vehicles by end-2102 in accordance with the following milestones - 2009 – 80% : 2010 – 90% : 2011 – 95% : 2012 – 100%.</p> <p>100% of the Bus Éireann fleet in Cork, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford now consists of low-floor wheelchair accessible vehicles and the Company will continue to purchase only accessible buses for its provincial city fleets.</p> <p>In other areas where Bus Éireann provides urban bus services, the Company will continue to replace buses with vehicles that are accessible. By end-2012, all such urban services will be provided using only accessible vehicles.</p>
	<p>Section 48 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (No. 15 of 2008) requires that a public services contract under the Act shall, among other things, provide for</p>	<p>Dublin Transport Authority once established</p>	

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	accessibility standards.		
	In the context of the proposed Public Transport Regulation Bill, consideration will be given to the provision of a mechanism to facilitate the attachment of conditions, including accessibility conditions, to the grant of bus licences.	Department of Transport	The Public Transport Regulation Bill is included in the Government Legislative Programme, in the list of Bills that have yet to be approved by Government. It is the intention of the Minister for Transport to seek Government approval to publication of the Bill in 2009.
Bus Stops			
All bus stops made compatible with accessible buses.	Install wheelchair accessible Hard Stands together with Kassell Kerbing as well as Shelters with seating and good lighting. Ensure that the bus shelter and bus stop pole incorporate appropriate colour contrasts and are orientated to facilitate deployment of ramps and movement of wheelchairs.	Local Authorities, An Garda Siochána, Bus Operators, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the National Roads Authority and the Department of Transport.	<p>The Department of Transport has been fully funding the cost of making bus stops accessible in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and by end-2008 some 1,400 out of approximately 5,000 stops will be accessible. Bus stops are also being upgraded systematically on routes that form part of the Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) Programme. In 2009, the Department of Transport, in liaison with the local authorities and service providers in the GDA, will explore how to accelerate this programme with a view to aligning the end-date with that for accessible buses (2012)</p> <p>In addition, the Department is funding the upgrading of bus stops in the provincial cities in conjunction with the construction of QBCs/Green Routes.</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	<p>With the assignment of responsibility for policy and funding measures for local and regional roads to the Department of Transport, the Department will engage more directly local authorities about improving accessibility in the vicinity of public transport elements such as bus stops, bus stations, etc.</p>	<p>The Department of Transport has already commenced a process of direct engagement with the Local Government Services Board and the County and City Managers Association, about advancing the Sectoral plan for transport and will continue to develop these relationships with a view to expediting delivery of those aspects of the Plan that involve local authority inputs.</p>	<p>In 2009, the Department of Transport, in liaison with the local authorities and service providers in the provincial cities and other towns where scheduled bus services are provided, will explore how to accelerate this programme with a view to aligning the end-date with that for accessible buses (2012)</p>
Inter-City Coach Services			
<p>Provide scheduled coach-based services that are accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.</p>	<p>Continue to replace existing coaches and add additional coaches to fleets using only accessible coaches.</p> <p>Continue to provide additional accessible services on a route by route basis.</p>	<p>Bus Éireann and Private Operators</p>	<p>All coach-based public transport will be accessible by end-2015.</p> <p>Bus Éireann has already purchased a number of the new generation wheelchair accessible coaches and will shortly commence in service trials on two routes - Navan\Dublin Airport\Dublin City University and Waterford\Cork.</p> <p>In parallel with the provision of accessible coaches, work will be continuing on the provision of bus stops that will</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			<p>complement the accessibility of the vehicles. In this regard a technical working group drawn together by the Department and consisting of the Quality Bus Network Project Office, the GDA local authorities and BE has developed design templates for stops appropriate for the provision of accessible coach services. These templates are intended to have country-wide application. Based on the templates, the Department will discuss the provision of accessible coach stops with BE, the County and City Managers Association and the Local Government Management Services Board with a view to establishing, by end-2009, an overall programme to ensure that the provision of accessible coach stops is aligned with the availability of accessible coaches.</p>
	<p>In the context of the proposed Public Transport Regulation Bill, consideration will be given to the provision of a mechanism to facilitate the attachment of conditions, including accessibility conditions, to the grant of bus licences.</p>	<p>Department of Transport</p>	<p>The Public Transport Regulation Bill is included in the Government Legislative Programme, in the list of Bills that have yet to be approved by Government. It is the intention of the Minister for Transport to seek Government approval to publish the Bill in 2009.</p>
Bus Stations			
Make all bus	Retro-fit existing	Bus Éireann	Accessibility works will be

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
<p>stations accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.</p>	<p>bus stations or completely rebuild them. Ensure that accessibility for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments is integral to the design and construction of new bus stations.</p>		<p>substantially complete at all but 3 of BE's bus stations by the time this Plan is published.</p> <p>BE intends to undertake accessibility improvement works at Rosslare Bus Station in 2009.</p> <p>Subject to the necessary planning approvals, BE proposes to provide a new bus station in Limerick. From commencement of work, the project is expected to take two years to construct. It will be fully accessible when completed.</p> <p>A new bus station is being planned for Galway as part of a wider redevelopment project in Galway City - a date for completion is currently not available.</p>
<p>Accessibility in the vicinity of bus stations is central to the overall accessibility of public transport.</p>	<p>The Department of Transport will strengthen its cross-sectoral working arrangements to ensure that the implementation of the sectoral plans of the Department of Transport and of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government together with the accessibility plans of the individual local authorities are implemented in a co-ordinated manner that</p>	<p>Department of Transport in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the CCMA and LGMSB</p>	<p>The Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have agreed to participate in the work of each other's monitoring committees (PTAC in DoT's case). In addition, DoT will participate on an on-going basis in the work of the Disability Steering Committee of the Local Government Management Services Board and where necessary, will also engage with the City and County Managers Association in respect of public transport accessibility matters.</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	ensure comprehensive accessibility in and around bus stations and the other key public elements.		
Heavy Rail			
Suburban Passenger Trains			
Make all suburban trains accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Only purchase wheelchair accessible trains that have on-board features to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Iarnród Éireann	With the reintroduction to service of the newly refurbished older DART (electric) carriages, a process that will be completed by February 2009, all of the DART rolling stock (except for one wheelchair accessible standby trainset) on the Dublin suburban rail network will be accessible and include an automated audible announcements system. Iarnród Éireann intends to have such a system fitted to the standby trainset in 2009. All of the diesel railcars on suburban rail serving Dublin and Cork are also accessible.
Ensure accessibility in the vicinity of suburban railway stations.	The Department of Transport will strengthen its cross-sectoral working arrangements to ensure that the implementation of the sectoral plans of the Department of Transport and of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government together with the accessibility plans	Department of Transport in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the CCMA and LGMSB	The Department of Transport (DoT) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have agreed to participate in the work of each other's monitoring committees (PTAC in DoT's case). In addition, DoT will participate on an on-going basis in the work of the Disability Steering Committee of the Local Government Management Services Board and where necessary, will also engage with the City and County Managers Association in respect of public transport accessibility matters.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	of the individual local authorities are implemented in a co-ordinated manner that ensure comprehensive accessibility in and around bus stations and the other key public elements.		
Inter-City Passenger Trains			
Make all Inter-City passenger trains accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Only purchase wheelchair accessible trains that have on-board features to assist people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	Iarnród Éireann	Iarnród Éireann is in the process of replacing the vast bulk of its Inter-City passenger fleet. All of this new rolling stock is being specified to the UK Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations. All scheduled inter-urban passenger rail services will be provided with this rolling stock by end 2009.
Railway Stations			
Make all railway stations accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	<p>Ensure that all new railway stations are designed and constructed in accordance with accessibility standards/best international practice.</p> <p>Retro-fit existing stations in accordance with accessibility standards/best international practice.</p>	Iarnród Éireann	<p>Since 2000, all new railway stations have been designed and constructed in accordance with accessibility standards/best international practice.</p> <p>In the case of existing rail stations, an accessibility retro-fit programme is underway on a line by line basis. It is anticipated that this programme will be completed by 2015. Timeframes for accessibility improvement works at some stations follow while upgrade works at a number of other stations have yet to be formally</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			<p>programmed.</p> <p><u>Cork Route A: Completed</u> Portlaoise, Thurles and Mallow.</p> <p><u>Cork Route B: Completed</u> Portarlinton, Ballybrophy, Templemore and Limerick.</p> <p><u>Galway Line A: For Completion 2009</u> Tullamore, Ballinasloe, Woodlawn and Attymon.</p> <p><u>Belfast Route:</u> Rush & Lusk for completion 2009.</p> <p><u>Galway Line B: For Completion 2010</u> Clara, Athlone and Athenry.</p> <p><u>Kildare Stations: For Completion 2010</u> Kildare, Sallins and Newbridge.</p> <p><u>Accessibility Works at some other Stations: 2009</u> Bagnalstown, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Gorey, Enniscorthy, Killarney, Tralee, Ballina, Claremorris, Roscommon, Mullingar, Longford, Carrick-on-Shannon, Boyle, Sligo, Westport, Maynooth, Enfield and Kilcock.</p> <p>Due to their nature (design, construction, use etc.) it would not be practicable to make certain stations accessible. Iarnród Éireann will make alternate arrangements to cater for the needs of passengers with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments within the</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			catchment areas of such stations. The arrangements will be agreed with the Public Transport Accessibility Committee by end-2009 and will then be placed on the Iarnród Éireann website.
Ensure accessibility in the vicinity of non-suburban railway stations.	As for suburban railway stations	As for suburban railway stations	As for suburban railway stations
Light Rail			
Dublin's light rail service, LUAS, is an accessible service and has been designed from the outset to be so.		The Railway Procurement Agency and Veolia Transport.	While the existing service is already accessible, developments in technology and best international practice will continue to be monitored with a view to possible future enhancements. Accessibility will be a core design feature of any extensions to the LUAS system.
Ensure accessibility in the vicinity of LUAS stops/stations.	As for suburban railway stations	As for suburban railway stations	As for suburban railway stations
Metro			
Ensure that accessibility for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments is a core design feature of the system.	From the outset, incorporate the most up-to-date accessibility provisions. Continue to liaise with representatives of disability organisations in designing the system.	Railway Procurement Agency, Department of Transport, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government and the Public Transport Accessibility Committee.	It is Department of Transport policy that all METRO services will be fully accessible from the outset. RPA has liaised with individual disability groups in connection with METRO North and METRO West and refinements to the design of the stops have been incorporated wherever possible. The output specification for Metro vehicles incorporates

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			requirements for accessibility. These draw substantially on feedback from the disability groups represented in the Luas User Group (LUG) as well as current legislation and recommendations from authorities both in Ireland and abroad.
Ensure accessibility in the vicinity of METRO stops/stations.	As for suburban railway stations	As for suburban railway stations	As for suburban railway stations
Rural Transport Programme (RTP)			
Rural Transport Programme services need to be accessible to people with disabilities.	Ensure that accessibility is a core criterion in the development of the Rural Transport programme.	Department of Transport, Pobal and the Public Transport Accessibility Committee, individual Rural Transport Programme groups	<p>The Rural Transport Programme does not fund the purchase of vehicles by groups. Consequently increases in the number of accessible vehicles for RTP work is likely to happen in parallel with increase in the numbers of accessible buses operated by the private sector generally. (see proposals in that regard under accessible buses earlier in this Plan).</p> <p>A working group led by the Department of Transport has been drafting guidelines on the accessibility of typical RTP vehicles. This work will be completed by mid-2009 with the issue, subject to legal advice, of advisory guidelines for RTP groups. At the same time the Road Safety Authority will be requested to consider statutory standards for general application in respect of the accessibility of such vehicles.</p>
Taxis and Hackneys			
Improve the	Overall to ensure	Commission for	

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
accessibility of taxis and hackneys for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	that there is adequate provision of taxi and hackney services that are: Accessible, Available, and Affordable. Specifically	Taxi Regulation, Department of Transport, Local Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage & local Government, Department of Finance and the Department of Social & Family Affairs.	
	1. Licence of Dispatch Operators.	1. Commission for Taxi Regulation	1. The licensing of Dispatch Operators by the Commission will commence in 2009. Part of the requirements for licensing will be the acceptance of bookings in accessible formats such as fax, SMS and email.
	2. Development of a database of accessible SPSVs.	2. Commission for Taxi Regulation	2. The requirement to provide contact details of licensed Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) operators to the Commission came into effect on 1 July 2008. The Commission contacted all operators holding a WAT licence to seek contact details to assist in compiling the register. While it is envisaged that work on the register will be completed by January 2009, details of operators on the register can now be made available to intending passengers by phoning the Commission's Consumer Information Line 1890 60 60 90 . The Commission intends to make the full register

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			available to the Irish Wheelchair Association and other groups to allow them to distribute same to their members.
	3. Provision of a Customer Guide a Customer Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and accessible fare information.	3. Commission for Taxi Regulation	3. The Commission has available a Consumer Guide, a customer Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and fare information in a range of accessible formats including Braille, large print and audiotape.
	4. User friendly and accessible complaints system.	4. Commission for Taxi Regulation	4. The Commission has put in place a user friendly and accessible complaints system that is accessible by phone, fax and email.
	5. Audit of taxi ranks.	5. Commission for Taxi Regulation and Local Authorities	5. An initial audit of existing ranks was completed in early 2008. The Commission intends awarding a contract by end 2008 for the development of guidelines for local authorities on the location and design of taxi ranks. Completed guidelines will be made available to local authorities during 2010.
	6. Requirement to carry assistance /guide dogs and mobility aids.	6. Commission for Taxi Regulation	6. Taxi drivers are required to carry assistance/guide dogs and mobility aids when requested. Additional charges for these are not permitted since September, 2006.
	7. Publication of new vehicle specifications for all taxis and hackneys	7. Commission for Taxi Regulation	7. Completed Nov 2007 and Regulations developed to support implementation of it. Some of the standards are as follows:

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			<p>Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles: New Category of wheelchair accessible hackney Vehicles capable of seating one person in their wheelchair and at least three adult passengers Wheelchair accessible vehicles will now meet the requirement to meet new EC directive regarding safety standards for all vehicles. Goods vehicles converted to wheelchair accessible vehicles will no longer be permitted; conversions should be made to passenger vehicles instead.</p> <p>All SPSVs will be required to have Good standard of cleanliness Safety equipment including a fire extinguisher, First Aid kit, advance warning triangle, high visibility vest. Torch, Pen and paper.</p>
	<p>8. Consideration of a subsidy scheme to assist in the provision of wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys.</p>	<p>8. The Commission is currently in discussion with the Department of Transport and the Department of Social and Family Affairs and other stakeholders to investigate putting in place some form of subsidy on a pilot basis.</p>	<p>8. The objective is to have a decision made in early 2009.</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	9. Mandatory Skills Development Programme for all new SPSV drivers.	9. The Commission will put in place a Mandatory Skills Development Programme for all new SPSV drivers from 2009.	9. The Commission is currently finalising development of the skills programme in terms of a training pack but also the introduction of an electronic assessment system, both of which will be rolled out from early 2009 onwards. The training will be a requirement for all existing SPSV drivers from 2012.
	10. Commission to ensure that its office is accessible and that all documents and information provided by it is available in a range of accessible formats.	10. Commission for Taxi Regulation	10. All documents and information are available in accessible formats. The Commission's office is currently undergoing works to ensure it is accessible and this is progressing well.
Air Travel			
Implementation of the Regulation of the European Council and the European Parliament setting out the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when they travel by air.	Ensure that the Regulation is implemented in Ireland.	Department of Transport	1. The Commission for Aviation Regulation is now the designated enforcement body in Ireland for Regulation 1107/2006 of the European Council and the European Parliament which sets out the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when they travel by air.
			2. The Department of Transport intends to engage with the Commission concerning the Commission's plans to ensure that its obligations under the Regulation with

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			regard to accessibility are met.
Maritime Passenger Transport			
Review the current accessibility state of maritime passenger transport services and develop action plans to address any deficiencies identified where practicable	1. Audit existing port facilities.	1. Department of Transport, port authorities, marine passenger service providers, National Disability Authority and representatives of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	<p>1. Each of the four international ferry ports (Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare) have undertaken an independent accessibility audit of their passenger facilities and have developed action plans for remedial works to improve the accessibility of their passenger facilities. Implementation of the action plans commenced in 2008 at Cork (for completion 2010), Dublin (for completion 2009) and Rosslare Ports.</p> <p>1.1 The thirteen regional harbour authorities that operate under the Harbours Act 1946 will address facilities for people with disabilities at those harbours.</p> <p>1.2 Facilities for people with disabilities at the five fishery harbour centres owned and operated by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources will be dealt with in the context of that Department's Sectoral Plan.</p> <p>1.3 Facilities for people with disabilities at the harbours, landing places and slips owned and operated by local authorities will be dealt with in the context of</p>

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
			the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Sectoral Plan.
	2. Drawing from the results of access audits carried out by Consultants in 2008, identify access improvements needed and consider funding for projects to enhance accessibility on existing passenger vessels.	2. Department of Transport and passenger ship operators.	2. Commence Priority 1 projects in 2009. 2.1 Complete Priority 1 projects and commence Priority 2 projects in 2010. 2.2 Complete Priority 2 projects in 2011.
	3. Draft general guidelines, to assist and support marine passenger transport service operators in making their services more accessible to passengers with disabilities.	3. Department of Transport in conjunction with the National Disability Authority.	3. End 2009.
	4. Prepare primary legislation to give enhanced enabling powers to the Minister to regulate and develop codes of practice to improve accessibility on passenger ships.	4. Department of Transport.	4. End 2010.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	5. Draft comprehensive guidelines or Codes of Practice on standards of accessibility on passenger ships, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.	5. Department of Transport and Maritime Passenger Transport Forum.	5. End 2012.
	6. To establish a system for linking the Department's website to other websites providing up to date information on service improvements in the industry.	6. Department of Transport.	6. During 2009.
	7. Passenger Ship Operators and Port and Harbour Authorities to carry out self-audits.	7. Passenger Ship Operators and Port and Harbour Authorities.	7. Starting in 2009.
Parking for People with Disabilities			
Ensure that disabled parking bays are for the use only of people with disabilities.	Substantially increase fixed charge fines for such offences.	The Department of Transport.	Effective from 3 April 2006, the Minister of Transport increased the following fixed charge fines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegally parking a vehicle other than a bus at a bus stop - €40 (was €19). • Illegally parking a vehicle in a disabled person's parking bay - €80 (was €19).
	Better enforcement.	An Garda Síochána and	The Department of Transport will continue to liaise on an

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
		Local Authority Traffic Wardens.	ongoing basis with An Garda Síochána and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and local Government concerning improved enforcement.
	Review of the Disabled Persons Parking Scheme	Department of Transport, An Garda Síochána, local authority representatives and representative disability organisations.	Review to be completed by end-2009.
Disability Awareness Training			
Maintain disability awareness in all agencies concerned with the provision of public transport .	1.Continue to ensure that all providers of public transport services provide appropriate disability awareness training for both staff and management.	1. Department of Transport and the providers of public transport services.	1. Disability awareness training is already provided on a continuous basis by Bus Éireann, Bus Átha Cliath, Iarnród Éireann, Railway Procurement Agency and Veolia Transport.
	2.The Department will continue to make funding available for the provision of disability awareness training for private bus/coach operators of public transport services in conjunction with appropriate representative organisations in 2009.	2. The Department of Transport.	2. Disability awareness training continues to be available for Department of Transport staff.

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
	3.The Department will continue to arrange and fund disability awareness training for passenger ship operators in 2009.	3. The Department of Transport.	3. During 2009.
	4.Consideration will be given as to what might be the most appropriate mechanism for such training thereafter, such as developing guidelines for institutionalising training and for monitoring its delivery and effectiveness.	4. The Department of Transport in consultation with the public transport agencies and PTAC.	4. By mid-2010.
	5.The Commission for Taxi Regulation will put in place a mandatory Skills Development Programme that will have as a core element disability awareness and training relevant to the provision of a service for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.	5. Commission for Taxi Regulation	5. The Commission for Taxi Regulation is preparing to put in place a mandatory Skills Development Programme that will have disability awareness training and good customer service generally as a core element. The training will be mandatory for all new drivers of SPSVs from 2009 and for all existing drivers of SPSVs from 2012.
Disability User Groups			
1. User Groups for each	1. Ensure that all major providers	1.Department of Transport, the	1. The Department, in conjunction with PTAC will

What needs to be done?	How can it be done?	Who is going to do it?	When will it be done?
<p>transport mode should continue to make positive contributions to the accessibility of public transport.</p>	<p>of public transport services maintain their disability user groups as pro-active fora and that they respond constructively to the concerns of users.</p>	<p>Public Transport Accessibility Committee and the major public transport service providers.</p> <p>1(b) Commission for Taxi Regulation.</p>	<p>continue to monitor the work of the various users groups on an on-going basis and will propose appropriate steps where PTAC considers it necessary – ongoing.</p> <p>1(a) The Maritime Passenger Transport Forum to continue with revised terms of reference – ongoing.</p> <p>1(b) The Commission for Taxi Regulation actively engages with a number of national, regional and local disability bodies and representative groups to ensure that on-going policy formulation takes into account the views of service users with particular requirements.</p>
<p>2. Existing task of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum.</p>	<p>2. Complete the work of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum and produce and publish a report.</p>	<p>2. Maritime Passenger Transport Forum members.</p>	<p>2. The Forum report to be published in November 2008.</p>
<p>3. The terms of reference of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum need to be reviewed.</p>	<p>3. Review the terms of reference and make any necessary amendments.</p>	<p>3. The Department of Transport working with the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum.</p>	<p>3. Early 2009.</p>

The Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC)

The Public Transport Accessibility Committee (PTAC) was established under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness in July 2000 and is the primary consultative forum on the issue of public transport accessibility. The Committee's original remit was to advise the Minister for Transport on the accessibility aspects of public transport investment projects and on other public transport accessibility issues. However, in line with a commitment in *Transport Access for All*, PTAC's remit has been expanded so that stakeholders have a monitoring role in relation to progress in implementing the Sectoral Plan and evaluating the impact of the Plan. It is comprised of representatives of the following organisations:

Citizens Information Board	Department of Transport
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Irish Wheelchair Association
National Council for the Blind of Ireland	National Council on Ageing and Older People
National Disability Authority	DeafHear
National Federation of Voluntary Bodies	People with Disabilities in Ireland
Inclusion Ireland	Disability Federation of Ireland
Vantastic	Bus Éireann
Bus Átha Cliath	Iarnród Éireann
The Railway Procurement Agency	Veolia Transport
Commission for Taxi Regulation	Dublin Airport Authority
Main Private Bus Operator Organisations	Maritime Safety Directorate
Not for Profit Business Association	Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government

The Chairman of the Committee is a senior official of the Department of Transport.

International Transport Forum (ITF)

[Formerly the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)]

(1) Background Note on ITF

Recently transformed from the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, the International Transport Forum is an inter-governmental organisation within the OECD family. Its founding member countries include all the OECD members, as well as many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, China, India and Brazil are being invited to participate in the Forum. The involvement of more than 50 Ministers of Transport ensures direct links and strong relevance to policy making at both national and international levels.

The aim of the Forum is to foster a deeper understanding of the essential role played by transport in the economy and society. Transport, logistics and mobility are key factors in economic development and growth, and contribute as well to employment, and social welfare and cohesion.

Ireland hosted the European Council of Ministers from 15-18 May 2006. *“Improving Transport Accessibility for All- Guide to Good Practice”* was included in the ministerial agenda. At the end of this item of the agenda, Transport Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to implementing decisions by the ECMT on improving transport accessibility and they approved the policy signals from the “Guide to Good Practice” and in particular those relating to priority areas for action by Governments in the document.

ECMT Access and Inclusion Objectives

- Achieve greater understanding and recognition of the transport and mobility needs of disabled and older people as an integral part of transport policy and planning across all modes.
- Identify key social, structural, operational and financial issues affecting the mobility of disabled and older people as well as individuals facing temporary mobility difficulties

(e.g. use of public transport, private vehicle use, pedestrian activity) and exchange experience and promote best practice in these areas.

The ECMT produced many reports and recommendations which provide guidance on achieving barrier-free travel, among them a Charter on Access to Transport Services and Infrastructure (**see below**) and a Guide to Good Practice on Improving Transport for People with Mobility Handicaps. Political support for this work has been given through the adoption of several formal resolutions by the Council of Ministers. Many of the recommendations have been incorporated in this Plan.

ECMT reports and recommendations are still available from the International Transport Forum's web site at www.internationaltransportforum.org

(2) Charter on Access to Transport Services and Infrastructure

This Charter was adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers on 19 and 20 May 1999 in Warsaw.

It underlines the political commitment in Europe to ensuring that all new transport infrastructure should be constructed to take into account the needs of people with disabilities.

1. The number of disabled people is growing

Disabled people make up a significant and growing part of Europe's population. With the ageing population, this number will increase substantially over the next 50 years. By 2020, there will be twice as many people over 65 in Europe as there were in 1960.

2. Everyone must have an opportunity for independent living

It is an unequivocal and agreed political objective to create a Europe in which all citizens, regardless of disability or age, have the opportunity for independent living. To achieve this, public buildings, the transport systems and infrastructure must be barrier-free.

3. New infrastructure must take account of the needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.

There are many new transport and infrastructure projects being planned or constructed in Europe. The lifetime of transport equipment and infrastructure can be extremely long and projects being considered now will remain in service for a considerable period. It is therefore essential that these are built to meet the needs of disabled people. In any case, improvements in accessibility add to the system's quality and usually benefit all travellers.

4. Governments must ensure access

All governments have a clear responsibility to ensure that these projects are designed and constructed to the highest standards of accessibility.

5. Accessibility principles must be followed

Fundamental principles applying to any project must include:

- a) All projects considered for public funding (at national or international level) must, as a condition of this funding, agree to incorporate full accessibility, to approved standards or recognised best practice, into the design and construction.
- b) The design concept, from its earliest stage and throughout the design process, must be vetted and approved by experts in accessibility, including people with disabilities. National governments will propose and approve suitable sources of advice. Where national governments do not have sources of advice, the EU or the ECMT will provide them.
- c) The accessibility requirements must incorporate, as a minimum:
 - full access for wheelchair users (up to and including those using wheelchairs of ISO standard dimensions) including, where appropriate, accessible toilet facilities and lifts;
 - features to aid people with difficulties in walking, gripping, reaching or balancing (including non-slip surfaces, hand rails and handholds);
 - facilities to assist blind and partially sighted people [including consistent use of colour contrast, clear signing and lighting, non reflective-surfaces, audible as well as visual announcements and tactile and audible guidance and warning surfaces and systems (where appropriate)];

- facilities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (including visual as well as audible announcements, induction loops and clear signs).

6. Public funding will be conditional

Projects will be monitored for compliance with accessibility principles. Continued public funding will be made conditional on achieving satisfactory progress with the inclusion of access features.

European Co-operation in the Field of Science and Technical Research (COST).

COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research. It facilitates the co-ordination of nationally funded research on a European level. COST Actions cover basic and pre-competitive research as well as activities of public utility. The goal of COST is to ensure that Europe holds a strong position in the field of scientific and technical research by increasing European co-operation and interaction.

To date there have been three COST actions in the field of accessible transport. These are COST 322 on urban buses, COST 335 on railways and COST 349 on long distance buses and coaches. In each case the reports provide guidance and recommendations with regard to developing accessible transport. Iarnród Éireann participated in the working group on COST 335 and Bus Éireann participated in the working group on COST 349.

The COST web site can be accessed at www.cost.esf.org .

Article 9 and 20 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability

Article 9.

Par 1.

--- SPs shall take appropriate measures to ensure to pwds access, on an equal basis with others, to

- physical environment
- transportation
- information and communications, incl ICT –
- other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas. [This would include shops, banks, pubs, hotels, restaurants, the offices of private businesses open to the public (e.g. accountants, brokers, solicitors), libraries, marts, all public sector buildings and facilities open to the public, churches, etc. BUT SEE ALSO ARTICLE 9, PAR. 2 BELOW.]

These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers³ to accessibility, shall apply to, *inter alia*

- (a) buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces
- (b) information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

³ See “definition” of disability in par. (e) of the Preamble and par. 2 of Article 1.

Par 2.

States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to

- (a) develop and implement minimum standards ---- for the accessibility of facilities and services open to --- the public.
- (b) ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for pwds.
- (c) provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing pwds.
- (d) provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille etc
- (e) provide forms of live assistance – including guides, --- professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate---
- (f) promote other appropriate forms of assistance – to pwds to ensure their access to information.
- (g) promote access for pwds to new information and communications technologies etc.
- (h) promote the design, development --- of accessible ICT --- at an early stage ---- at minimum cost.

Article 20.

SPs shall take – measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for pwds, including by

Par. (a) facilitating the personal mobility of pwds in the manner and at the time of their choice, and at affordable cost.

Par. (b) facilitating the access by pwds to mobility aids --- including by making them available at affordable cost.

Par. (c) providing training in mobility skills

Par. (d) encouraging entities that produce mobility aids to take account of all aspects of mobility for pwds.

The Ombudsman's Guide to Internal Complaints Systems

Settling Complaints

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Foreword

Many of the complaints which come to my Office result from a breakdown in communications between public bodies and their clients. Usually these complaints are quickly resolved when the facts, evidence or circumstances are established. In most cases the outcome is either a reversal of the original decision of the public body or an acceptance on the part of the complainant that the decision in respect of his or her case is correct.

Many complaints could and should be easily and swiftly settled at a very early stage by public bodies themselves. The number of relatively uncomplicated complaints which my Office receives could be reduced if public bodies were to establish efficient and credible internal complaints handling systems. I have statutory authority to examine a complaint only where the complainant has taken reasonable steps to seek redress, and has failed to obtain it. Normally I require a complainant, if he or she has not already done so, to ask the public body in question to review the original decision. In many cases this review is carried out by the same official who made the original decision and the complainant often remains dissatisfied and returns to my Office. However, internal complaints systems have been set

up by some public bodies to deal directly with complaints from the public. Most notable of these are the Social Welfare Appeals Office, the Complaint Appeals Office in the Eastern Health Board and the Headage and Premia Appeals Unit in the Department of Agriculture and Food. In general these complaint systems enable a particular decision to be reviewed by a person other than the original decision maker and provide a readily available and easily accessible means whereby disputes, misunderstandings and mistakes can be resolved. These systems have the added advantage that, if the original decision is upheld, the complainant is informed of his or her right to refer the matter to my Office. This step is not always taken by public bodies generally within my remit although I would encourage them to do so.

Other public bodies are now considering setting up internal complaints systems under the Government sponsored Strategic Management Initiative with its strong emphasis on citizens and their needs as clients or consumers of public services. Government Departments and Offices are committed to the principles of quality customer care and have agreed to establish well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use systems for dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided. They have also agreed to introduce formalised systems of redress for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions.

In my 1996 Annual Report, I published a guide to standards of best practice for public servants in their dealings with the public. I was very pleased by the positive response to the guide from the public service and I am aware that many public bodies have incorporated the standards into their customer service plans. In the guide I suggested that, in order to deal fairly with people, an internal review system was required so that adverse decisions could be looked at again and reviewed by someone not involved in the making of the first decision. Good complaints handling must be accepted as an integral part of customer care. In conjunction with my 1997 report, I am publishing this guide on internal complaints systems. In my report, I illustrate the value and features of such systems by reference to cases which my Office has examined. I hope that this guide will be of assistance to public bodies in their efforts to improve the quality of the service which they provide. The guide is cast in general terms and is intended to be advisory rather than prescriptive. While it contains a number of practical suggestions, each public body should aim to devise a system best suited to its own needs.

1. The benefits of having an internal complaints system

In the past, public bodies may have considered complaints as irritants interfering with their normal work and/or as criticisms of their decisions against which they had to defend themselves. While there is greater emphasis nowadays on improving the quality of service, the standards of service provided for the public are usually set by the public bodies themselves and they also devise the systems and procedures for achieving these standards. The effectiveness of these procedures and the relevance of the standards set can, however, be judged or assessed properly only by reference to the very people - the public - for whom the service is provided. A good internal complaints system will provide essential feedback from the public and will benefit the body by:-

- * providing a means through which the public can tell the body how well it is doing in its efforts to provide an improved quality service;
- * serving as a quick and efficient means of resolving difficulties which may arise;
- * avoiding the extra time and cost involved in further appeals;
- * promoting good relations and communications with the public;
- * encouraging a positive attitude towards the administrative system;
- * indicating where problems exist in the provision of services;
- * highlighting shortcomings in the administrative system and areas which might need improvement and
- * helping the public body to avoid unfavourable publicity.

The public will also benefit because the system will:-

- * provide a quick, easy, and cost-effective means of resolving difficulties with public bodies and obtaining redress where necessary;
- * foster a greater sense of inclusiveness or partnership on their part with the public service;
- * promote a sense of empowerment in the individual by enabling him or her to have a role in contributing to improvements in the public service and
- * give them the assurance that their complaints are being taken seriously and that they are being treated properly, fairly and impartially.

2. Preparations for setting up an internal complaints system

Some public bodies may be inclined to view internal complaints systems as an inconvenience and may merely go through the motions in order to be seen to be doing what is deemed to be a "good thing" for their image. This attitude and approach should be seen for what it is - a lost opportunity. There are real and tangible benefits to be gained

from having an effective internal complaints system but, for maximum benefit, certain essential conditions have to be met. These include:

Commitment by Management

Internal complaints systems will not be effective if they do not have the commitment of the organisation at management level. A commitment to the principle that dealing effectively with complaints from the public is an integral part of the service provided should underpin the body's mission statement. Management should foster a positive and receptive attitude to complaints. The ability to acknowledge that a mistake was made should be seen as a strength rather than a weakness on the part of the body concerned.

Commitment by Staff

Commitment by staff within the organisation is vital. All staff, and particularly those in the front line, should be encouraged to take a positive attitude to complaints. Staff is more likely to do so if they know that there is top level commitment to complaints handling and if they are fully involved in the setting up of the system.

Provision of Resources

The complaints system will soon lose the confidence of the public if it cannot deliver on what it promises. It must be provided with the resources, both material and human, to enable it to achieve results. Management must ensure that accommodation, equipment and finances are appropriate and that the staff are highly motivated.

Training

In addition to being highly motivated, the staff involved should have specialised training in customer care, interpersonal and communications skills. Initial training in basic skills and techniques should be complemented by in-service training to enable staff to keep up to date with new advances in the area of complaint handling.

Clear Objectives

The success of any complaints system usually depends on those involved in its operation being clear as to what it is intended to achieve. It would be useful at the initial stages of setting up a system to define what a complaint is. The term 'complaint' may cover a wide range of items not all of which may be appropriate to the complaints handling system, e.g. requests for information or matters for which there is a statutory right of appeal, for

example, a planning appeal. In this context a working definition might be that a complaint exists where:- ***'a decision or action is taken which relates to the provision of a service or the performance of a function which, it is claimed, is not in accordance with the rules, practice or policy of the organisation or the generally accepted principles of equity and good administrative practice and which adversely affects the person concerned'***

This definition is not intended to be comprehensive but public bodies might consider using it as a starting point in the context of their own structure and the services they provide. It may also be necessary to review the definition as the complaints system develops.

3. Setting up and operating the complaints system

Structure

Much will depend on the size of the public body, its staffing structure and the nature of the services being provided. Some bodies may find it worthwhile to have identifiable, designated complaint co-ordinators who will refer initial complaints from the public to the head of the unit or section responsible for the original decision. If the complaint is not resolved there the co-ordinator will refer it to the internal complaints handling unit. Either the co-ordinator or the complaints unit should be responsible for monitoring progress and keeping the complainants up-to-date on developments.

The internal complaints unit should be headed by a senior officer in the organisation and should not have any direct working involvement in the areas where the decisions which give rise to complaints are made. The officer should have the authority to alter the original decision if the circumstances suggest that this is warranted, to award redress in appropriate cases and to determine the parameters within which other staff might have the authority to provide redress.

Publicity

The maximum amount of publicity should be given to the setting up of the complaints system. This can be done in a number of ways, for example:-

- including a reference to the system in the body's information leaflets and application forms;
- advertising the availability of the system in the body's public offices, in local papers and on radio and

- arranging information sessions with interest groups.

In particular, the public should feel encouraged to complain; they should believe that it is worthwhile complaining and they should be assured that they will not be victimised as a result of any complaint they make.

Consultation

Complaints arise from the interaction of those providing the service and those for whom the service is being provided. A complaints system will not be effective without prior consultation with these two participants in the system. There should be consultation with staff across the public body and their representative associations or trade unions on the one hand and with the public and specific interest groups on the other. It is important to build up public confidence in the system by guaranteeing fair and impartial treatment.

Review

A good complaints system needs to respond to changing circumstances and events. It needs to be continually reviewed by the person with ultimate responsibility for its organisation and management. The system should be sensitive to factors which can affect its smooth running e.g. maintenance of time schedules for dealing with complaints, staff mobility, morale and the emergence of new sources of complaints of which management may not be aware.

4. The essential features of a good internal complaints system

A good system should be:

Accessible

Simple instructions about how to make a complaint should be available to the public. These should clearly identify the designated complaint handlers and explain how they will operate. The various ways in which a complaint may be made should be stated. Suitable accommodation should be provided for receiving and interviewing complainants who wish to make a complaint in person. Complainants who wish to pursue their complaints using the Irish language should be catered for and the needs of those, for example, with disabilities and literacy difficulties should be given careful consideration. Accessibility will be improved if FREEFONE and Lo-call numbers and freepost facilities are also available.

At all times it should be emphasised that complaints are welcome by the public body as a means of improving the quality of service provided.

Simple

The various stages in the complaint handling process should be kept to a minimum with each stage in the process clearly identified. It is essential that internal disputes about the handling of the complaint do not develop. When the receipt of a complaint is being acknowledged, an outline of the various stages the complaint will go through should be sent to the complainant.

Speedy

Targets should be set for acknowledging receipt of complaints and the completion of their examination. Where it is not possible to meet the target for completion, interim letters, updating the complainant on progress, should be issued.

Fair and Independent

Complaints, which have not been resolved by the original decision maker, should be examined objectively by persons not involved with the original decisions or actions. The examination should have regard not only to the rules governing the scheme but also to considerations of equity and good administrative practice. In particular, the principles outlined in the Ombudsman's Guide to Standards of Best Practice for Public Servants (circulated with his 1996 Annual Report) should be taken into account.

Confidential and Impartial

All complaints should be treated in confidence (except where the complainant wishes otherwise). The public should be assured that making a complaint will not adversely affect their future dealings and contacts with the body concerned. Correspondence about the complaint should be filed separately from other information held on the complainant as a client of the body.

Effective

The complaints system should have the authority to address all the issues giving rise to the complaint. Where the examination finds that the fault lies with the public body, the system must have the power to provide appropriate redress. A complainant who remains

dissatisfied should be advised of his or her right to refer the case to the Ombudsman where appropriate.

Flexible

While rules are necessary to ensure consistency, too much rigidity should be avoided and there should be a degree of discretion given to those involved in the system to adjust to the changing needs and demands of complainants and to adapt to new situations.

5. Achieving and assessing the benefits

A public body should expect its internal complaints system to: -

- achieve a satisfactory, speedy and low-cost resolution of complaints from service users;
- provide accurate information for management on the quality of the services provided and whether the correct services are being provided and
- enable changes to be made in procedures and systems to ensure that similar complaints do not continue to arise.

Members of the public will expect that they will receive:-

- a fair hearing and a clear explanation of the outcome even if it is not favourable to them;
- an appropriate remedy where it is found that they were not treated fairly or properly and
- an assurance that other people will be spared the adverse affect which complainants may have suffered.

Remedies

The appropriate remedy should aim, in so far as this is possible, to restore the complainant to the position he or she would have been in had things not gone wrong. In many instances, a letter of apology may be sufficient. In some cases a detailed explanation of the basis for the action or decision may be needed. In other cases a change in procedures which would benefit clients generally may be appropriate. Financial compensation may sometimes be warranted in cases, for example, where specific financial losses have been incurred. If there has been a delay in the receipt of a payment, the payment of interest may arise. Where the complainant has had to spend a considerable amount of time in pursuing

the matter, payment in recognition of "time and trouble" may need to be considered. Compensation for exceptional worry, distress or inconvenience caused to the complainant should also be recognised.

To avoid delay in the provision of remedies, public bodies should delegate to staff at appropriate levels the power to award redress within predetermined parameters. Front line staff, in particular, as the first point of contact with the public in service delivery and receipt of complaints, should have some discretion within specified limits to settle complaints.

Changes in procedures

Where a complaint has been resolved in favour of a complainant, the result should be noted for reference in similar cases. If a particular issue becomes a regular source of complaint, a review of the operation of the relevant scheme might be undertaken. The complaints unit should build up data on the operation of different schemes and the volume of complaints so that accurate feedback can be given. The use of computerised complaints databases should be considered.

Reports

To ensure accountability and to enable the benefits to be assessed, complaint handling units should publish reports on their activities at least on an annual basis. These reports should detail how the system performed during the year by reference to set targets. Such reports have a useful role to play in building up public confidence in the system and should be made widely available within the organisation and circulated to user groups and other interested parties.

The Ombudsman's Guide to the Provision of Redress

(This Guide was published by the Ombudsman with his [Annual Report for 2001](#))

Redress - Getting it wrong and putting it right

The Ombudsman's Guide to the provision of redress when public bodies make mistakes in their dealings with the citizen

Where a person has been wronged by a public body, that body should provide appropriate redress. This leaflet gives some very broad guidelines on the provision of redress to help public servants develop a consistent approach towards remedies.

Redress and public administration

Public bodies deliver a vast range of services and benefits to the citizen. Even where people are not entitled to a particular service or benefit, they are entitled to be told the reasons why they do not qualify and be informed of alternative services, where possible. Where they may be entitled to the service or benefit but a delay in the decision cannot be avoided, they should be told when the decision is likely to be made. In cases of need, other possibilities for short-term relief may have to be examined. Public service providers must always bear in mind that citizens usually do not have the option of taking their business elsewhere. Citizens are entitled to proper, fair, impartial and expeditious treatment by public bodies. Where there is a shortfall in these standards, and the fault lies with the public body, it should remedy the shortfall through the provision of redress. The general rule of thumb should be to put the person back into the position he/she would have been in if the public body had acted properly.

Apologies and explanations

When it turns out that the service or benefit has been wrongly denied or delayed, the public body should always give a detailed explanation and/or apology. Explanations and apologies should include the following:

- the reasons why the public body got it wrong;

- an apology for any hurt, inconvenience or hardship caused;
- an acceptance of responsibility for the fault which has occurred;
- an undertaking to make good any loss which may have resulted;
- an acceptance that, where time limits apply, any undue delay on the part of the public body will be discounted where possible.

When should compensation be paid?

In some cases an action (including an inaction) of a public body wrongly taken may affect a person in a manner which can easily be quantified and payment of compensation may be appropriate. Compensation may be considered for:

- **Financial Loss** - where there is a specific amount of money denied to a person as a result of the action, compensation should make good the specific loss which has occurred.
- **Loss of purchasing power** - where refunds or payments of benefits have been delayed or withheld over an unduly extended period of time as a result of an error, misinterpretation, oversight or other similar action on the part of a public body.
- **Loss of a non-monetary benefit or service** - where costs are incurred by a person in securing alternative services for non-monetary benefits or services normally provided by public bodies, e.g., school transport, housing repairs, refuse and water supply, hospital services, facilities for people with disabilities etc. and where these are initially denied or delayed and subsequently restored or granted.
- **Loss of opportunity** – where the action of a public body has the effect of preventing an eligible person from taking advantage of special arrangements or participating in a particular scheme or has resulted in the loss of an opportunity to exercise a right of appeal.
- **Costs incurred** - where a person complains or appeals he/she may need to seek professional advice, for example, from a solicitor, accountant, architect or engineer in order to vindicate his or her position. If, at the end of this process, the decision of the body is reversed or varied, the question of refunding costs incurred in obtaining professional advice should form part of the public body's redress proposals. The key consideration should be whether the costs arose as a result of an unreasonable attitude by the public body.
- **Time and trouble** – where writing letters, making telephone calls, carrying out interviews, research and getting legal or other professional advice are integral parts of the complaint/appeal process, these and other related activities involve time and

trouble on the part of the complainant. Where it becomes clear that the complainant had to go to unusual lengths or suffered distress in making his/her case, compensation in the form of payments for time and trouble reasonably expended in pursuing the complaint, and associated vouched costs, should form part of the redress proposals.

Keeping it Right

An effective complaints system which offers a range of timely and appropriate remedies will save the public body time and money in the long run. It will enhance the quality of service to its clients, it will have a positive effect on staff morale and improve the body's relations with the citizen. It will also provide useful feedback to the body and enable it to review procedures and systems which may be giving rise to complaints.