

# National Council for Special Education

## Annual Report 2013



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# NCSE Chairperson's Letter to the Minister

June, 2014

Mr Ruairi Quinn TD  
Minister for Education and Skills  
Department of Education and Skills  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

Dear Minister

I am writing to provide you with a copy of the NCSE's annual report for 2013 as required by Section 34 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004.

I also wish to report to you as required under paragraph 13.1 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies as follows:

- ▶ The NCSE is not a commercial State body. We have no subsidiaries, joint ventures or shareholdings. No commercially significant developments affected the NCSE in 2013 and we do not anticipate any such developments.
- ▶ The financial position of the NCSE is as disclosed in our 2013 annual accounts which are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General. These accounts are submitted separately to you under Section 29 of the EPSSEN Act and include, as required, my report and confirmations to you regarding the NCSE System of Internal Financial Controls (SIFC).
- ▶ The NCSE has adopted, and is in compliance with, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.
- ▶ In this context, I confirm that:
  - ▼ All appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, procurement and assets' disposals are being carried out.
  - ▼ NCSE members comply with the NCSE Code of Business Conduct for Members.
  - ▼ NCSE employees comply with the Code of Behaviour for Civil Servants.
  - ▼ Salaries payable to the Chief Executive and all employees comply with Government policy.
  - ▼ No Directors' fees are payable to NCSE Council members.
  - ▼ The NCSE complies with the guidelines for the appraisal and management of capital expenditure proposals.
  - ▼ The NCSE complies with Government travel policy requirements.
  - ▼ The NCSE expects no significant post-balance sheet events.

Our annual report highlights a number of key points and achievements during 2013 including:

- ▶ The appointment by you of members to the NCSE Council for a three-year term.
- ▶ Publication of our policy advice to you on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools.
- ▶ Publication of four new research projects on special educational issues which help to inform both policy and practice in Ireland.
- ▶ Providing schools with resource teachers to support over 42,000 students with special educational needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools.
- ▶ Providing schools with special needs assistants to support over 23,000 students with significant care needs.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to open our fifth annual NCSE research conference last November. Your attendance and your staying to listen to a number of presentations were deeply appreciated by conference delegates and presenters.

If you, or your officials, require further clarification in any governance or other matter, the NCSE will be happy to provide any additional information or advice required.

Yours sincerely

**Eamon Stack**  
*Chairperson*  
*National Council for Special Education*

## Glossary of Main Acronyms Used

ASD	Autism spectrum disorder
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
EBD	Emotional disturbance/behavioural disorder
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004
EU	European Union
GLD	General learning disability
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and communications technology
IQ	Intelligence quotient
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
OPW	Office of Public Works
SENO	Special educational needs organiser
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SIFC	System of Internal Financial Controls
SNA	Special needs assistant





# NCSE Organisation and Strategy

## NCSE Strategic Approach

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has now operated for over 10 years.

Our mission is to promote a continuum of educational provision which is inclusive and responsive, and which provides an appropriate education for children and adults with special educational needs. We do this by providing supports to schools; advice to educators, parents and guardians; by undertaking and disseminating research into special education; and by providing policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills on special education issues.

Our functions, set out in Section 20 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004, include:

- ▶ Planning for and co-ordinating the provision of education for children with special educational needs and ensuring that a continuum of provision is available.
- ▶ Conducting and commissioning research.
- ▶ Advising the Minister for Education and Skills on policy for special education.
- ▶ Disseminating information, including best practice, on special education to parents, schools and other interested persons.
- ▶ Consulting voluntary bodies to ensure their knowledge and expertise informs the development of policy by the NCSE.
- ▶ Reviewing generally the provision made for adults with disabilities to avail of further, higher and/or continuing education and advising educational institutions concerning best practice in the education of adults with a disability.

The Council has set down five strategic objectives for delivery of our statutory functions. We outline the progress made under each of these in this report.

- ▶ **Strategic Objective 1:** Plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs.
- ▶ **Strategic Objective 2:** Provide evidence-informed policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills concerning the education of children with special educational needs.
- ▶ **Strategic Objective 3:** Conduct and deliver a research programme to underpin the dissemination of information relating to best practice in special education to schools, parents and the education sector.
- ▶ **Strategic Objective 4:** Review further and higher educational provision for adults with special educational needs and develop best practice guidelines.
- ▶ **Strategic Objective 5:** Ensure that the NCSE continues to develop as an effective organisation which is compliant with all statutory, regulatory and corporate governance requirements as well as having effective information dissemination, communication and media strategies in place.

## Main Achievements in 2013

### Providing Support for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In 2013, the NCSE:

- ▶ Enabled over 42,000 students with special educational needs to receive additional teaching in mainstream schools.
- ▶ Enabled over 23,000 students with special educational needs who also have significant care needs to access special needs assistant (SNA) support.
- ▶ Processed over 13,900 new applications from schools for students with special educational needs for additional teaching hours in primary and post-primary schools in the 2012-13 school year.
- ▶ Processed over 7,700 new applications from schools for students with special educational needs for access to SNA support in the 2012-13 school year.
- ▶ Processed over 2,500 new applications for school transport for students with special educational needs in the 2012-13 school year.
- ▶ Processed over 2,700 new applications for assistive technology/special equipment for students with special educational needs in the 2012-13 school year.
- ▶ Sanctioned 118 new special classes in mainstream schools for the 2013-14 school year.
- ▶ Published a new information booklet for parents on choosing a school.

### Policy Advice

In 2013, the NCSE:

- ▶ Developed and published policy advice for the Minister on supporting students with special educational needs in schools.
- ▶ Set up a working group to develop a proposal for a better way to allocate additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools.
- ▶ Began preliminary work for policy advice on educational provision for students with autism spectrum disorders.
- ▶ Participated in international work with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

## Research

In 2013, the NCSE:

- ▶ Published four new research reports on:
  - ▼ Transition for pupils with special educational needs from primary to post-primary school.
  - ▼ What works in the provision of higher, further and continuing education, training and rehabilitation for adults with disabilities.
  - ▼ The experiences of students with special educational needs moving to further and higher education.
  - ▼ Continuum of education provision for children with special educational needs – a review of international policies and practices.
- ▶ Initiated four new research projects on:
  - ▼ The educational experiences and outcomes for children with special educational needs.
  - ▼ Assistive technology supporting the education of children with special educational needs.
  - ▼ An international literature review on educating persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
  - ▼ An evaluation of educational provision in Ireland for students with ASD.
- ▶ Disseminated key research findings at our fifth annual research conference.

## Adult Education

In 2013, the NCSE:

- ▶ Conducted a mapping of the relevant educational/training supports and services for people with disabilities at national level.
- ▶ Further developed co-operative working relationships with relevant providers and stakeholders at national and local levels.
- ▶ Commenced developing information material.

## Corporate Functions

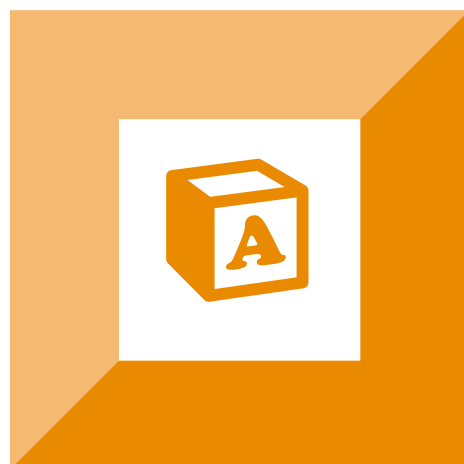
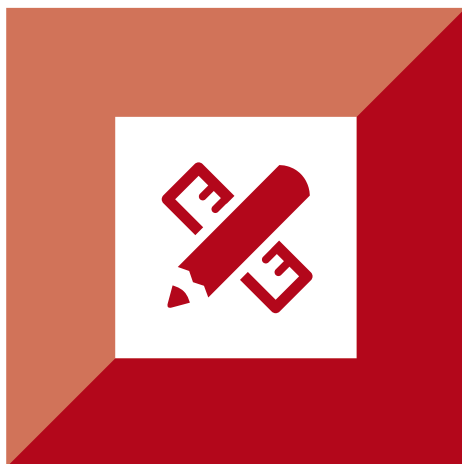
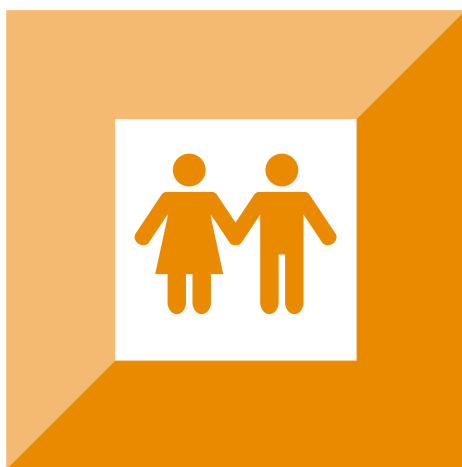
In 2013, the NCSE:

- ▶ Reviewed and updated its corporate governance guidelines.
- ▶ Provided induction support and briefing for Council members appointed for a three-year term with effect from January 1, 2013.
- ▶ Reviewed and reconstituted the Council Committee structure.
- ▶ Appointed a new Consultative Forum from July 2013.
- ▶ Continued to reorganise staffing structures to ensure continuing delivery of our essential services and functions.
- ▶ Operated within our reduced budgetary and staffing limits.



# Strategic Priority 1

Plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs







# Strategic Priority 1

Plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs

## Introduction

The NCSE plans, co-ordinates and reviews provision of additional education supports for schools that enrol students with special educational needs in line with Department of Education and Skills (DES) policy. Every school is supported by special educational needs organisers (SENOs) based in 33 local NCSE offices. They plan and co-ordinate provision of education and support services in their local areas. Schools apply to their SENO for resource teaching support, SNA support, assistive technology, specialist equipment and/or special school transport arrangements. SENOs also work with schools to establish new special classes or to expand special schools in line with growing enrolment.

**Over 42,000 students received extra teaching support in 2013**

**Over 23,000 students accessed SNA support**

Most students with special educational needs are educated in mainstream classes in their nearest primary or post-primary schools and are taught primarily by the class or subject teacher. All primary and post-primary schools can apply to the NCSE for additional resource teaching support for students with certain special educational needs (see Appendix 3). Some students have significant care needs and schools can apply to the NCSE for special needs assistant posts to meet these needs. For the 2013-14 school year, 480 additional resource teacher posts and 170 additional SNA posts were provided for allocation by the NCSE.

**More resource teacher and SNA posts made available for the 2013-14 school year**

Special classes in mainstream schools offer a supportive learning environment for students with more complex needs where mainstream classes would not, or could not, meet their needs. One-hundred-and-eighteen special schools are available for students with more severe and/or complex needs in cases where a full-time mainstream placement would not be in the student's best interest. Special classes and classes in special schools generally

have between 6 and 11 students in each – depending on the particular special educational need. The NCSE provides the required teacher and SNA posts for special classes and special schools – 118 new special

classes were established in mainstream schools and 20 extra teachers were allocated to special schools during 2013.

All mainstream schools can apply to the NCSE to open a special class where there are a number of students who require such a setting.

SENOs provide information for parents and young people with special educational needs including on how to choose a school and decide on educational options. SENOs also offer information to schools on the NCSE's Inclusive Framework which can assist them in planning and evaluating special education provision.

The conditions for all of these NCSE implemented schemes are set by the Department of Education and Skills.

**118 new special classes were established in 2013**

**5,265 resource teacher and 10,503 SNA posts allocated to schools in the 2012-13 school year**

### Resourcing Schools 2012-13

The number of students eligible to receive resource teaching support and/or SNA support continues to grow each year.

In 2012, the NCSE allocated resource teaching hours for over 39,000 students. The equivalent number for 2013 is over 42,000 – an increase of about 8%.

In 2012, the NCSE allocated SNA posts to support over 22,000 students. This year, the equivalent number is over 23,000 – an increase of about 4.5%.

Scheme	No of Applications Processed by NCSE in 2013
Resource teacher	Over 13,900
SNA	Over 7,700
School transport	Over 2,500
Assistive technology/specialist equipment	Over 2,700

### Number of Resource Teacher and SNA Posts in Schools

	End 2012-13 school year	End December 2013
Resource teacher posts	5,265	5,645
SNA posts	10,503	10,588

## New Appeals Process

In 2013, the NCSE processed almost 22,000 applications from schools for resource teaching and SNA support. SENOs clarified the basis of their decisions as queries arose during the year. However, the NCSE recognised that, occasionally, parents and schools wished to appeal a decision. The NCSE appeals process was re-introduced for the 2013-14 school year.

New appeals process in place for 2013-14

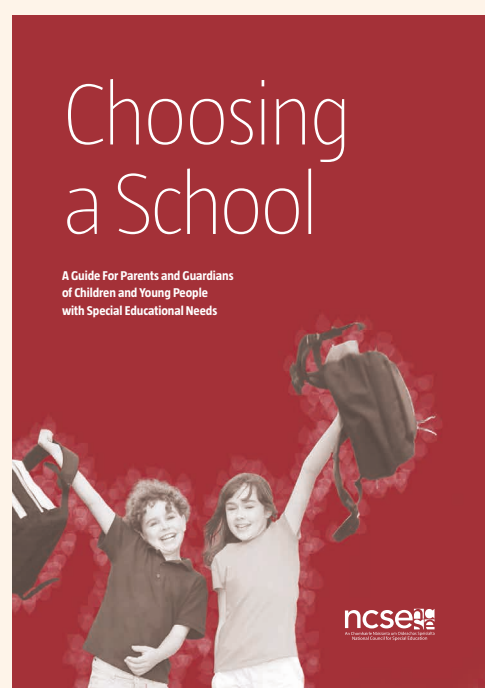
### Analysis of appeals – received by December 2013

Total number of appeals received	155
Appeals received from parents	29
Appeals received from schools	126
Appeals received on SNA allocations	99
Appeals received on resource teaching hours	56
Appeals withdrawn	18
Appeals upheld	4
Appeals not upheld	133

## A New Information Booklet for Parents

In September 2013, the NCSE published a booklet to support and inform parents when deciding on the school in which to enrol their child with special educational needs. Parents of these children have a range of issues to consider. For example, their child may have a developmental delay or a physical disability and they need to know that the school can meet their child's special educational needs. They also might wonder whether their child would make better progress in a special class or special school rather than their local school with supports.

Information booklet for parents on choosing a school published



The booklet gives information on the supports available in schools and identifies key issues to guide and assist parents in their decision-making. It also advises on the importance of advance planning for children with special educational needs to ensure the necessary supports are in place on school entry. The booklet can be viewed and downloaded from the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

### Developing a Programme of Information Sessions for Parents

#### NCSE information sessions for parents

Parents are key NCSE stakeholders and we are aware that finding the right information on their child's education can be a challenge for them. Our local SENOs engage regularly with parents in the course of their work and are a significant source of information. In 2012 we worked with SENOs to develop a programme of structured information sessions for parents. Their aim is to provide parents with information on how students with special educational needs are supported through the education system to guide parents in their decision-making about their child's education.

During 2013 these sessions, piloted with 150 parents in Dublin, Carlow, Kilkenny, Offaly and Mayo, were delivered by SENOs involved in developing the materials and who worked with local HSE early intervention teams to identify groups of parents and organise session provision. The events were positively received by parents and the materials were finalised following the pilot. The structured sessions will be rolled out across the country in 2014 and will initially target parents of young children who may have recently been diagnosed with special educational needs.

## Strategic Priority 2

Provide evidence-informed policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills concerning the education of children with special educational needs





# Strategic Priority 2

Provide evidence-informed policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills concerning the education of children with special educational needs

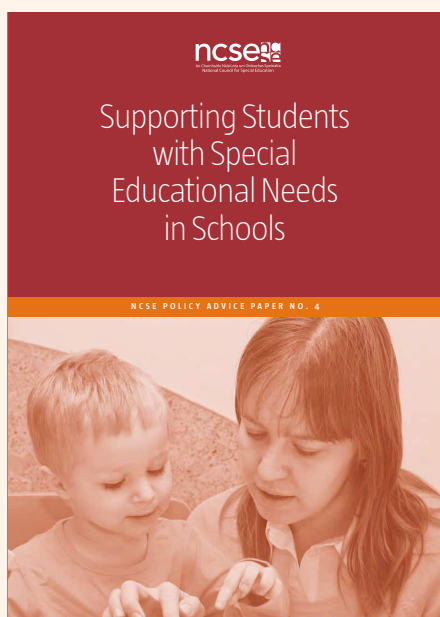
## NCSE Role

The NCSE provides the Minister for Education and Skills with expert, independent, evidence-informed policy advice on special education for children and young adults.

In 2013, NCSE:

- ▶ Developed and published policy advice to the Minister on supporting students with special educational needs in schools.
- ▶ Set up a working group to develop a proposal for a better way to allocate additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs.
- ▶ Began preliminary work for policy advice on educational provision for students with autism spectrum disorders.
- ▶ Participated in international work with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE).

## Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools



In May 2013, at the request of the Minister and following a comprehensive, strategic review of special education, the NCSE prepared and published a major piece of policy advice on supporting students with special educational needs in schools.

The NCSE consulted students, parents, schools, teachers, principals, HSE professionals, advocacy groups, special needs assistants and others to inform its 28 recommendations on how best to support these students in schools in the future. The paper was also informed by the findings of national and international research studies.

NCSE published policy advice on supporting students with special educational needs in schools in May 2013

The NCSE review found students with special educational needs were being well supported in schools and were making good progress. It advised, however, that further changes to educational policy could deliver better outcomes for this cohort.

Key recommendations include that:

- ▶ The Education for Person with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 be fully implemented as soon as resources permit. Our advice recognised that in the current economic climate, resources are not available to permit this.
- ▶ A new model should be developed for the allocation of additional teaching resources to mainstream schools which is based on the profiled need of each school, without the need for a diagnosis of disability.
- ▶ A framework of teacher education is developed to improve teachers' knowledge and expertise in supporting and educating students with special educational needs.
- ▶ The DES should introduce a robust regulatory enrolment framework for schools to ensure that every child with special educational needs is protected from school enrolment practices or policies that block his/her access to enrolment.
- ▶ The DES should provide for the establishment of a new type of special school with rules and organisational structures appropriate to the profile and age of students with complex special educational needs enrolled.

The full review and policy advice is available for download at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

### Development of a New Model for Allocating Teaching Resources for Students with Special Educational Needs

In May 2013, following presentation and publication of our policy advice on supporting students with special educational needs in schools, the Minister requested the NCSE to set up a working group to develop a proposal for a better way to allocate additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs.

**NCSE working group established to develop a proposal for a better way to allocate additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs**

The Minister appointed Eamon Stack, Chairperson, NCSE, as chairperson of the working group. An advisory sub-group, composed entirely of members of the working group, was established to prepare draft documents and to advise the working group.



The term of reference set out by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for the working group is to:

*'...Develop a proposal for a model for allocating teaching resources to mainstream primary and post-primary schools that is reflective of recommendations in NCSE policy advice and takes account of factors that identify the educational profiles of schools and the recording of outcomes for students with special educational needs.'*

The first meeting of the working group was held on July 19, 2013. Thereafter, the working group engaged in a widespread consultation process with the education stakeholders, including parents, teacher representatives, unions, management bodies, advocacy groups, health and educational professionals. The report of the working group was given to the Minister in March 2014.

## Educational Provision for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

In June 2013, the Minister for Education and Skills asked the NCSE to prepare policy advice on educational provision for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

In October 2013, the DES set out the following terms of reference for the policy advice:

- ▶ To review current national and international research literature on evidence-based practices and interventions for the education of children with autism/ASD, with a particular focus on other EU countries.
- ▶ To review, and provide an overview of, current State-funded educational provision for children with autism/ASD, to include early intervention and the extended school year scheme, identifying the roles of the various agencies and the State as well as the strengths and gaps in the educational and wider framework of supports that significantly impact on the education of children with autism/ASD.
- ▶ To review, with particular reference to educational and social outcomes, the effectiveness of the range of evidence-based practices and interventions for the education of children with autism/ASD.
- ▶ To identify the nature and extent of educational intervention/s, teaching practices and other supports which should be provided to enable children with autism/ASD achieve educational outcomes appropriate to their needs and abilities.
- ▶ To make recommendations on future arrangements that should be in place, where necessary, to improve the nature, extent, planning and delivery of education to children with autism/ASD, with specific reference to the roles of agencies and the nature and extent of supports that should be in place, taking into account the need for flexibility given constrained resources.

Minister asks for policy advice on educational provision for children with autism spectrum disorder

The NCSE undertook preliminary work on this review during 2013:

- ▶ Two research studies were commissioned to inform the policy advice.
- ▶ Preliminary discussions were held with some of the national autism organisations to inform them that the NCSE would be preparing policy advice in this area.
- ▶ Various speakers involved in the provision of education or autism services to students with autism, were invited to present at Council meetings. They included policy specialists, teachers, principals and other education experts and the parents of students with autism who attend both mainstream and special schools.
- ▶ NCSE staff attended national and international conferences during 2013 and also took part in a study visit to Sweden to examine how students with autism are supported there.

### European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE)

The NCSE participates in European development work in the area of special education

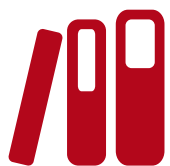
EASNIE is an independent international organisation that enables collaboration in the field of special needs and inclusive education by its member countries. It aims to improve educational policy and practice for learners with special educational needs.

The NCSE participates in the work of the EASNIE and assists in the dissemination of its publications to key stakeholders in Ireland.

EASNIE held two meetings during 2013: one in Dublin in May 2013; the other in Brussels in November 2013.

## Strategic Priority 3

Conduct and deliver a research programme to underpin the dissemination of information relating to best practice in special education to schools, parents and the education sector





# Strategic Priority 3

Conduct and deliver a research programme to underpin the dissemination of information relating to best practice in special education to schools, parents and the education sector

## Introduction

The NCSE commissions research on a variety of special education themes. It examines and analyses national practice and provision and also looks to the international scene to ensure we are up to date on the latest research evidence available.

In 2013, our research programme continued to progress actively, with the publication of four research studies, the commencement of four new projects as well as the continuation of three other ongoing pieces of research work. In addition, we hosted our fifth annual research conference to help raise awareness and interest in our research work.

Our research informs parents, educational and other professionals, disability and advocacy groups, policymakers and academia about the latest themes and trends emerging in special education. It also provides a sound evidence base to inform our policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills. Our research programme will continue to focus on developing knowledge and information and to provide a basis for evidence-informed policymaking.

## NCSE Research Reports Published in 2013

The NCSE published four new research reports in 2013 and these are all now available on our website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

- ▶ **A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Pupils with Special Educational Needs**
- ▶ **What Works in the Provision of Higher, Further and Continuing Education, Training and Rehabilitation for Adults with Disabilities? A Review of the Literature**
- ▶ **Moving to Further and Higher Education: An Exploration of the Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs**
- ▶ **Continuum of Education Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs: A Review of International Policies and Practices**

### A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

*Authors: Yvonne Barnes-Holmes, Geraldine Scanlon, Deirdre Desmond, Michael Shevlin and Nigel Vahey*

Few studies have explored transitions for pupils with special educational needs in Ireland. This study explored in-depth the experiences of 32 pupils with special educational needs and their parents making the transition in Ireland to both special and mainstream schools, using focus groups and qualitative thematic analysis.

Pupils at sixth class talked of their concerns and excitement before moving on. Concerns were mainly about making friends, fitting in, finding their way around, being able to follow new rules and not getting into trouble. The pupils were enthusiastic about new subjects, particularly practical ones like metal work or home economics. After transition, pupils highlighted the importance of formal peer mentoring from older students at the new school which provided: information; practical and emotional support; friendship; advice; and advocacy, and was seen as important early in the settling-in period before relationships with teachers have been formed.

Parents consulted before the transition had concerns about their children's social integration and happiness at secondary school and fears about losing the familiarity, comfort, support and security they had experienced in primary school communities.

Parents who seemed most satisfied with their children's transition had received secure tangible supports for them before, or very early on in post-primary school, and had experienced extensive transition planning. In contrast, parents who seemed most dissatisfied were those for whom the special education supports were not in place early on. Some parents reported unhappiness with the level of pre-entry contact and in most cases, the lack of communication concerned their children's special educational needs provision including: failure to distribute special education needs information to teachers; lack of ready access to teachers; lack of timely resources; and lack of information from schools to parents.

### What Works in the Provision of Higher, Further and Continuing Education, Training and Rehabilitation for Adults with Disabilities? A Review of the Literature

*Authors: Carmel Duggan and Michael Byrne*

This literature review examines the evidence on ways to help adults with disabilities to access, participate in and progress from different types of education and training. It also includes case studies of good practices in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

The review identifies practices that help students at different stages of their educational journey. Examples of what helps students access education and training are:

- ▶ Well-resourced transition programmes at post-primary school.
- ▶ Training students to be independent and make their own choices.
- ▶ Using the web to provide information and make the application process for programmes easier.

The literature also identified ways to help students participate in education and training such as:

- ▶ Individually focused measures which include personal choice and good information.
- ▶ Universal Design (that is the design of buildings or programmes so that they do not exclude anybody) in learning and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- ▶ Providing training to students to enable them to say what they need.
- ▶ Identifying and removing barriers such as negative attitudes of tutors or fellow students; eligibility criteria based on age or welfare payment.

In terms of supporting students in the move from education/training to work or more education and training, the following practices were identified:

- ▶ The course provider developing direct links with the world of work; this could include work experience.
- ▶ Supporting students to learn how to manage and plan their own careers.
- ▶ Developing supports to help people move into jobs while they are still on the training programme.
- ▶ Disability employment services working specifically for people with disabilities to help them to get and keep jobs once they leave education and training.

### Moving to Further and Higher Education: An Exploration of the Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs

*Authors: Conor Mc Guckin, Michael Shevlin, Sheena Bell and Cristina Devecchi*

This research explored the experiences of students with special educational needs making the transition from school to further and higher education. Using a qualitative method, 42 students with special educational needs were interviewed before making the transition and were contacted again following the move. Professionals at the schools (n=28) and the further and higher education institutions (n=42) the students attended were also interviewed such as principals, guidance counsellors, lecturers, disability support officers and so on.

The research identified several effective practices for students with special educational needs during the transition, such as support from guidance counsellors, contact with further and higher education personnel and visiting the institutions. Research showed, however, that for students with special educational needs other areas needed to be

addressed to support them during the transition phase. This includes clear information on course options and supports available; more professional development for guidance counsellors in schools to support the process; more co-ordinated planning between schools and further and higher education providers, particularly for planning the required supports; and greater targeted funding to support partnerships between schools and education providers.

The report's recommendations to support the transition to further and higher education for students with special educational needs include:

- ▶ Development of a national policy on transition as well as the commencement of transition planning in the junior cycle with parents as active participants in this process.
- ▶ The need for further continuous professional development for guidance counsellors in schools to enhance their knowledge and skills to guide transition planning.
- ▶ The establishment of one central point of information on the pathways, options and supports available to students.
- ▶ Targeted funding to be available to support partnerships between schools and further and higher education institutions.

### Continuum of Education Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs: Review of International Policies and Practices

*Authors: Jonathan Rix, Kieron Sheehy, Felicity Fletcher-Campbell, Martin Crisp and Amanda Harper*

This work looked at international policies and practices on education provision for children with special educational needs. First, it explored how models of provision, or the continuum of provision, for children with special educational needs are defined in the literature, what they look like and how they operate internationally. It then provides an extensive bank of information on policy and provision from the international field.

A high level review of special education legislation and policy in 55 administrations across 50 countries is provided first. This is followed by a survey of provision in ten of these countries looking at issues such as funding models and models of allocation; specialist and generic educational provision, professional qualifications and standards; resources and supports. The countries included in this part of the review are Australia (Victoria), Cambodia, Canada (Nova Scotia), Cyprus, Kenya, Lithuania, Scotland, Italy, Norway and Japan. For each of these, a suite of vignettes, or short stories on provision for hypothetical students with particular types of special educational needs are provided to illustrate typical provision in practice.

Lastly, in-depth case studies are presented in three of the ten countries: Italy, Norway and Japan. These involved country visits, interviews with a wide variety of people including students with special educational needs and their parents, education providers, other health and education stakeholders and policy makers. The case studies aimed to provide more detailed information on provision and how this provision operates in practice.



## New NCSE Research Commissioned in 2013

The NCSE commissioned four new research studies in 2013:

- ▶ **A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Growing Up in Ireland Study on Educational Experiences and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs**
- ▶ **Assistive Technology Supporting the Education of Children with Special Educational Needs – What Works Best?**
- ▶ **Educating Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders – A Systematic Literature and Country Review**
- ▶ **An Evaluation of Educational Provision for Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the Republic of Ireland**

### A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Growing Up in Ireland Study on Educational Experiences and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs

This study is being led by Dr Jude Cosgrove at the Educational Research Centre along with the Special Education Department in St Patrick's College. It involves a close examination and analysis of data from the Growing Up in Ireland study to ascertain how students with special educational needs are faring in school. The analysis is looking at academic achievement in reading and maths, but also at other less formal outcomes relating to student's engagement with school and their sense of well-being. The findings will provide an important insight into the experiences of students with special educational needs generally, as well as the experiences of students in particular needs groups at school. It will also allow us to see how these students are doing in comparison to their peers without such needs. The work is well advanced and it is anticipated that a report from the study will be published in 2014.

### Assistive Technology Supporting the Education of Children with Special Educational Needs – What Works Best?

This study is being led by Dr Richard Wynne at the Work Research Centre and aims to review what assistive technology/equipment is most effective in supporting children with special educational needs to access the curriculum and engage in learning. The findings will help the NCSE to build up an evidence base to support professionals and students and inform any future policy advice in this area. The research will engage with students, teachers and other professionals across a representative sample of primary and post-primary schools during 2014. It will provide a literature and policy review in order to contextualise the findings from the fieldwork.

### Educating Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders – A Systematic Literature and Country Review

This research will provide a systematic review of the most up-to-date evidence available relating to best practice in the provision of education for persons with ASD. It has been commissioned to build on the evidence available in the Parsons et al report published by the NCSE in 2009. The latter report, entitled *An International Review of the Literature of Evidence of Best Practice Provision in the Education of Persons with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)*, contains evidence that is now over four years old and the current review will ensure the NCSE has the most relevant and up-to-date evidence available.

This research will also include descriptive information on policy and provision from a selected number of other countries/jurisdictions to provide an additional important contribution to the evidence base.

### An Evaluation of Educational Provision for Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the Republic of Ireland

This evaluation of educational provision for students with ASD will cover the range of provision currently in place in State-funded recognised schools and includes placement in mainstream classes with support, placement in special classes (including early intervention classes) and placement in special schools. The evaluation will also include State-funded early intervention in the home (home tuition scheme) and the extended school year (the July education programme) at home and in school for students with ASD.

The key focus of the evaluation will be on the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on student outcomes. The evaluation will review current provision against a framework of principles and indicators of good practice. The framework was developed by the Middletown Centre for Autism along with the NCSE and will ensure that the evaluation is conducted in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

### Other Research Work in 2013

Three other research projects continued or were under review in 2013. These were:

- ▶ Inclusive Research in Irish Schools (Project IRIS).<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Review of NCSE Resource Allocation Process and Evaluation of the Deployment of Resources in School.
- ▶ The Special Class Model in Ireland: How is it Working for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools?

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<sup>1</sup> This is a longitudinal study examining the provision of special education within Irish schools, the experiences of pupils/students with special educational needs receiving this education and their associated outcomes.

## NCSE Research Conference 2013

### Did you know?

We began to update our Inventory of Research and Policy Publications in Special Education in Ireland in 2013. People have been busy researching special education topics – we expect the number of references to double since the last publication of the first inventory in 2011!

The fifth annual NCSE research conference took place on November 20, 2013 at the Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin. Among the over 180 key stakeholders in attendance were those involved in teacher education and support, principals and teachers, researchers, parents, educational psychologists, disability advocacy groups, departmental officials, access officers and teacher union representatives, among others.

Ruairi Quinn, Minister for Education and Skills, opened the event which focused on educational outcomes and transitions. Featured presentations included two guest speakers from the UK and the US, as well as presentations on key research studies commissioned by the NCSE and a panel discussion in response to the conference papers on transition issues. Feedback from conference participants was extremely positive. All conference presentations from 2013, and from all of the previous NCSE research conferences, are available for download from [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

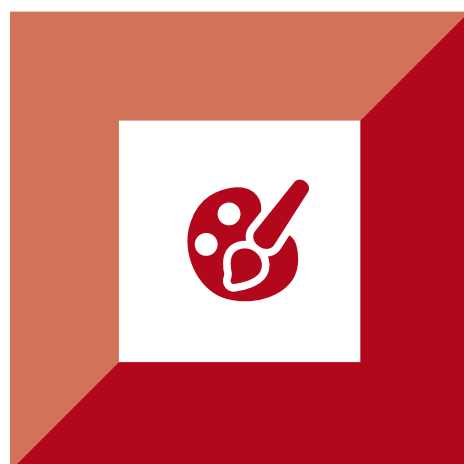
Finding it difficult to keep up with what's new in research in special education?

Don't worry! Highlights from our Research Conference last year are available to download from our website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)



# Strategic Priority 4

Review further and higher educational provision for adults with special educational needs and develop best practice guidelines





# Strategic Priority 4

Review further and higher educational provision for adults with special educational needs and develop best practice guidelines

## General

During 2013, we conducted a mapping of relevant supports and services at national level, further developed co-operative working relationships with relevant providers and stakeholders nationally and locally, began developing information material and completed and published reports of NCSE research.

## Mapping of Supports and Services

During 2013, we worked with the main service providers in preparing a general national level mapping of the current supports and services in adult education and training for people with disabilities.

In this work with the providers and stakeholders we have developed an improved knowledge and understanding of the provision and the roles of the providers.

Key points which emerged in the mapping and consultation process include:

- ▶ There is a diverse and wide variety of services and supports in adult education and training for adults and young people with disabilities after they leave school.
- ▶ There are also many schemes and service delivery points around the country and these may be delivered directly by or under the auspices of a range of State agencies (ranging from higher education institutions, to further education colleges, to HSE provision).
- ▶ Individual service providers, including not-for-profit providers, may be engaged by the responsible agencies to provide services (for example the National Learning Network is one of several service providers engaged by SOLAS to provide certain training services for people with disabilities).
- ▶ These education and training services are provided in distinct sectors which may be broadly categorised as:
  - ▼ further education
  - ▼ vocational training
  - ▼ higher education
  - ▼ rehabilitative training and adult day services.

- ▶ There may be regional and sectoral variations in availability and delivery arrangements in these services.
- ▶ There is significant re-organisation and reform under way or recently in place in some of these sectors (for instance FÁS has been subsumed into SOLAS and the ETBs).
- ▶ There is much information about the range of programme options available from individual providers and from guidance/information services.
- ▶ All providers are required to make reasonable accommodation on mainstream courses in accordance with equality legislation.
- ▶ Additional supports may be provided for people with disabilities on mainstream courses and some providers may make special course provision for people with disabilities.
- ▶ There are a range of advice and guidance sources available.
- ▶ Sometimes people with disabilities can have difficulty in getting clear information about suitable options.
- ▶ This difficulty may arise whether the person is making a transition directly from school or is returning later, as an adult, to education or training.

Based on our engagement with the main service providers and the information from the mapping process, we have commenced preparing relevant summary information material which we will publish in 2014.



## Strategic Priority 5

Ensure that the NCSE continues to develop as an effective organisation which is compliant with all statutory, regulatory and corporate governance requirements as well as having effective information dissemination, communication and media strategies in place





# Strategic Priority 5

Ensure that the NCSE continues to develop as an effective organisation which is compliant with all statutory, regulatory and corporate governance requirements as well as having effective information dissemination, communication and media strategies in place

**New Council appointed for three-year term from January 2013**

## Introduction

In 2013 we continued to maintain and develop our capacity as an effective organisation in compliance with all our statutory, regulatory and other requirements.

## Appointment and Induction of New Chairperson and Council Members

Following completion of the term of appointment of the previous Council members, the Minister for Education and Skills appointed a new Chairperson and members of the Council of the NCSE for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2013. Details of Council members are included in the next section of this report and are published on our website, [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

## Compliance with Corporate Governance Requirements

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies has been adopted by the NCSE. A Corporate Governance Guide for Council Members was reviewed and updated in 2013.

Annual confirmations of compliance by NCSE are required under the Code. These confirmations are included in Appendix 1 and in the Council Chairperson's letter to the Minister which prefaces this report.

## NCSE Consultative Forum

The NCSE must appoint a Forum under Section 22 of EPSEN for Council to consult with regarding discharge of its functions. The term of appointment of the members of the Forum was completed in July 2013. The NCSE engaged in a consultation process as required by the Act, invited nominations for appointment to the Forum and appointed 17 members for a new three-year term starting July 2013.

**New NCSE Consultative Forum appointed for three-year term**

The Minister for Education and Skills also appointed 3 members. Details of the Forum and its membership are set out in the following section. The Forum met once in 2013 and further meetings are scheduled for 2014.

### Staffing and Human Resources

In line with Government policy on public service staffing, the NCSE was required to reduce its staffing under the Employment Control Framework from 103 to 100 during 2013. This has been done and was achieved by the non-filling of vacant posts arising and through retirements, leave of absence and career breaks.

### Annual Accounts

The NCSE annual accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General and following audit they are submitted to the Minister and then published on the NCSE website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

# Governance





# Governance

## The Council of the National Council for Special Education

The governance authority for the NCSE is the Council of the National Council for Special Education. The Council is appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills under Section 21 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004. The current Council was appointed for a term of three years, commencing January 1st 2013 and expiring on December 31st 2015. The Council met on six occasions during 2013. Details of individual members and their attendances are given in the table below. Further details are published on our website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

Membership of the Council of the NCSE during 2013		
Name	Details	Attendance
Eamon Stack, Chairperson	Former Chief Inspector in the Department of Education and Skills (DES)	6
Pat Kinsella, Deputy Chairperson*	Former Principal, Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Co Cork	6
Maureen Costello*	Director, National Educational Psychological Service	6
Mick Coughlan*	Principal Clinical Psychologist of the National Learning Network	1
Sheelagh Drudy <sup>2</sup>	Emeritus Professor of Education at University College Dublin and former head of the UCD School of Education	2
Jenny Ennis	Mother-of-two sons with special educational needs. Former member of the board of management of Holy Child Community School	4
Eithne Fitzgerald	Head of Policy and Research at the National Disability Authority	6
Mary Friel	Principal of the Margaret Aylward Community College, Whitehall, Dublin	6
Helen Guinan	Principal of St Paul's Special School, Montenotte, Cork	6
Mark Morgan <sup>3</sup>	Professor of Education and Psychology at St Patrick's College, Dublin	3
Johnny Murphy	Divisional Inspector, Department of Education and Skills.	6
Philip O'Callaghan	Post-Primary Teacher	6
James O'Grady*	Former Head of Disability Services in the Health Service Executive	5
Joan Russell*	Education Officer with Cork Education and Training Board (CETB)	4

Those members with an \* are serving a second term on Council

<sup>2</sup> Sheelagh Drudy was appointed by the Minister from September 11, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Morgan resigned as a Council member from September 11, 2013.

## Council Committees

The Council created five Committees under Section 33 of the EPSEN Act. These report to Council in accordance with their terms of reference and governance guidelines agreed by the Council. Council members agreed to act on one or more Committees. In the case of the Audit Committee, the Council has appointed an external Chairperson with relevant experience.

Audit (4 meetings)	Attendance
John Fitzgerald, Chairperson <sup>4</sup>	1
Donal Lawlor, Chairperson <sup>5</sup>	3
Eithne Fitzgerald	4
Mark Morgan <sup>6</sup>	2
Philip O'Callaghan <sup>7</sup>	1
James O'Grady	3
Eamon Stack	4

CEO Performance (3 meetings)	Attendance
Eamon Stack, Chairperson	3
Pat Kinsella	3
Joan Russell	2

Finance (5 meetings)	Attendance
Joan Russell, Chairperson	4
Jenny Ennis	3
Mary Friel	5
Philip O'Callaghan	5

<sup>4</sup> John Fitzgerald was appointed as Audit Committee Chairperson on November 14, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Donal Lawlor resigned as Audit Committee Chairperson on October 23, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Morgan resigned as a Council member from September 11, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Philip O'Callaghan was appointed to the Audit Committee from September 11, 2013.



Research (5 meetings)	Attendance
Sheelagh Drudy, Chairperson <sup>8</sup>	1
Mark Morgan, Chairperson <sup>9</sup>	2
Maureen Costello	5
Johnny Murphy	5

Strategy and Policy (6 meetings)	Attendance
James O'Grady, Chairperson	6
Mick Coughlan	1
Eithne Fitzgerald	6
Helen Guinan	6
Pat Kinsella	6

<sup>8</sup> Sheelagh Drudy was appointed Research Committee Chairperson on October 23, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Morgan resigned as a Council member from September 11, 2013.

## NCSE Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum is established by the Council under Section 22 of EPSEN. The Council appoints up to 17 members following a prescribed consultation process. In addition 3 members are appointed by the Minister. Members were appointed to the Forum for a three-year term beginning in July 2013. There was one meeting in 2013. Membership of the body is listed below.

NCSE Consultative Forum (1 meeting)		
Council-appointed members, July 2013		Attendance
Seán Balfe	Primary School Principal	1
Ann Bourke	Disability Specialist, Health Service Executive	1
Seán Burke	Chief Executive Officer, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board	0
Denis Burns	Director of Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education Needs, University College Cork	1
Breda Corr	General Secretary, National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education	1
Patricia Griffin	Education Officer, Down Syndrome Ireland	1
Adam Harris	Works with voluntary bodies supporting people with autism	1
Ann Jackson	Principal of a special school and Officer of Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education	1
Denise Kelly	Education Officer, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	1
Christy Lynch	Chairperson, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. Chief Executive Officer, KARE	1
Teresa McDonnell	Chairperson of a support organisation for parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children	1
Patrick McVicar	Former Post-Primary Principal and member of the Teaching Council	1
Deirbhile Nic Craith	Senior Official, Irish National Teachers' Organisation	1
Julie O'Leary	Works with the COPE Foundation	0
Carmel O'Shea	Works with National Parents Council	1
Donie O'Shea	Senior Policy Advisor, National Disability Authority	1
Miriam Hilliard	Senior Special Educational Needs Organiser	1

NCSE Consultative Forum (continued)		
Members appointed by Minister for Education and Skills, July 2013		Attendance
Alan Sayles	Inspector, Department of Education and Skills	0
Michael Cullinane	Regional Director, National Educational Psychological Service	1
Aisling Curley	Assistant Principal Officer, Special Education Section, Department of Education and Skills	1



# Appendices





## Appendix 1

### Confirmations of Compliance with Requirements of the Code of Governance for State Bodies

#### NCSE System of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

The Council is responsible for the NCSE system of internal control and for reviewing annually the effectiveness of the internal controls, including financial, operational, compliance controls and risk management. In 2013, NCSE internal auditors carried out a review of the SIFC and this was submitted to the NCSE Audit Committee. The latter considered the internal audit review and reported to Council. The audit review concluded that reasonable assurance could be placed on the sufficiency and operation of internal controls to mitigate and/or manage one or more of those key inherent risks to which financial activities are exposed. NCSE Council is satisfied following review that its SIFC continues to be sufficient.

#### Tax and Regulatory Compliance

There have been no communications concerning non-compliance with requirements of regulatory or tax authorities regarding any matter. The NCSE is not aware of any actual or possible non-compliance with laws or regulations that could affect financial statements.

#### NCSE Travel Policy

Government policy on business travel is being complied with in all respects. The NCSE has developed and maintains its travel policy and procedures in accordance with Government requirements. Details of payments to Council in 2013 for business travel claims will be included in the audited NCSE Financial Statement.

#### Procurement Policy

Government policy on public procurement is being applied in the NCSE in compliance with Government policies.

The NCSE avails of shared service arrangements and central drawdown contracts including those procured by the National Procurement Service and ICT Government contracts where available.

#### Disposal of Assets

Disposal of assets by the NCSE fully complies with requirements set down by the Code of Practice.

### Confidential Disclosures

The NCSE has agreed procedures whereby employees and members may, in confidence, raise concern about possible irregularities in financial reporting or other matters and will, where appropriate, ensure meaningful follow-up of any matters raised in this way.

### Child Protection

The NCSE has developed procedures and guidelines for staff in dealing with child protection issues that may arise from time to time. These guidelines are based on the Children First Guidance published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. NCSE guidelines are available on our website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

### Audit

The NCSE has established an internal audit function and has agreed an internal audit charter. Council has appointed an Audit Committee with agreed terms of reference including oversight of the internal audit function and review of the draft annual accounts.



## Appendix 2

### NCSE Staffing

Grade	Staff end 2013
Chief Executive	1
Principal	4
Assistant Principal	3
Senior Special Educational Needs Organiser	9
Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)	71
Higher Executive Officer	5
Executive Officer	3
Staff Officer	1
Clerical Officer	3
<b>Total<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>10</sup> Excludes staff member who was off salary on long-term leave of absence.

## Appendix 3

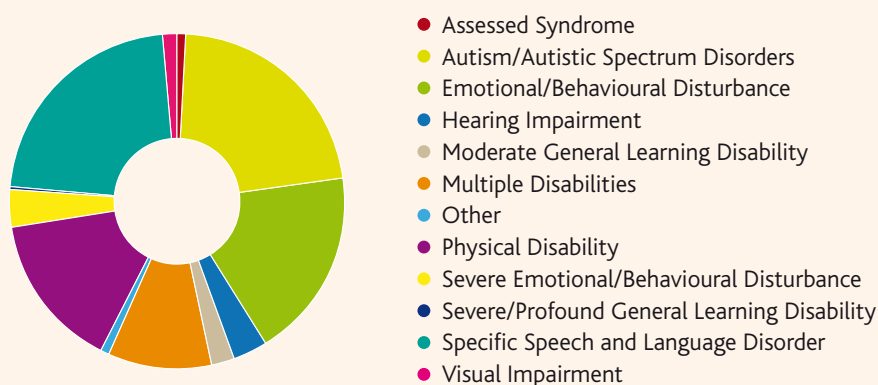
### Statistical information in respect of the students accessing resource teaching by category of disability for the school year 2012-13

Over 42,000 students receive extra teaching from resource teachers in schools. 22,000+ of these are in mainstream primary schools and 20,000+ are post-primary students.

#### Primary School

Disability Category	No of Students
Assessed syndrome	195
Autism/autistic spectrum disorders	4,919
Emotional/behavioural disturbance	4,107
Hearing impairment	707
Moderate general learning disability	540
Multiple disabilities	2,180
Other	206
Physical disability	3,327
Severe emotional/behavioural disturbance	839
Severe/profound general learning disability	24
Specific speech and language disorder	4,934
Visual impairment	293
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,271</b>

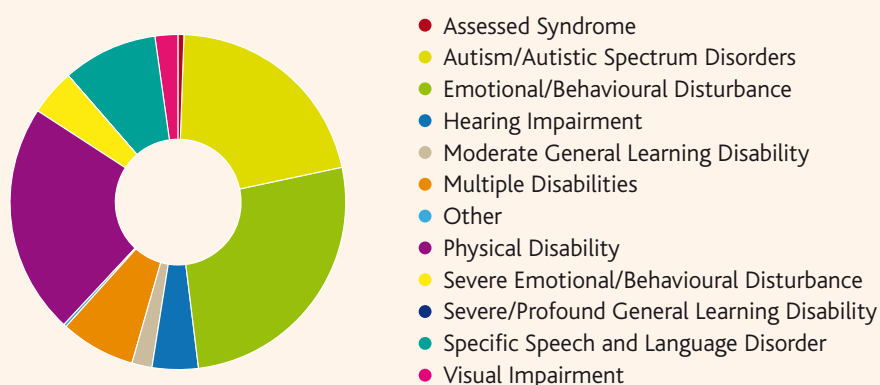
#### Primary Disability Category



## Post-Primary

Disability Category	No of Students
Assessed syndrome	66
Autism/autistic spectrum disorders	2,148
Emotional/behavioural disturbance	2,717
Hearing impairment	432
Moderate general learning disability	221
Multiple disabilities	731
Other	22
Physical disability	2,278
Severe emotional/behavioural disturbance	436
Severe/profound general learning disability	7
Specific speech and language disorder	931
Visual impairment	220
Students with a borderline or mild general learning disability or a specific learning disability (estimate)	10,010 <sup>11</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,219</b>

### Post-Primary Disability Category<sup>12</sup>



<sup>11</sup> This figure reflects the number of students with a high incidence disability in post-primary schools. In the 2012 NCSE annual report, the figures for the disability categories included a figure of 10,010 students in post-primary schools with a mild general learning disability, borderline mild general learning disability and specific learning disability. From 2012, some 700 resource teaching posts were pre-allocated to post-primary schools to support students with these learning disabilities and schools no longer made individual applications for these students.

<sup>12</sup> The post-primary disability chart above reflects the numbers of individual students with a low incidence disability in receipt of additional resource teaching support.

## Appendix 3A

### Description of Disability Categories as per DES Circular SP ED 08/02

High Incidence disabilities	
Disability category	Description
<b>Borderline mild general learning disability</b>	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a borderline mild general learning disability. The pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 70 to 79
<b>Mild general learning disability</b>	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a mild general learning disability. The pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 50 to 69
<b>Specific learning disability</b>	Such children have been assessed by a psychologist as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Being of average intelligence or higher.</li> <li>▶ Having a degree of learning disability specific to basic skills in reading, writing or mathematics which places them at or below the second percentile on suitable, standardised, norm-referenced tests.</li> </ul>
Low Incidence disabilities	
Disability category	Description
<b>Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)</b>	A psychiatrist or psychologist will have assessed and classified such pupils as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-IV or ICD-10 criteria  <b>Note:</b> In 2013, the DES also informed the NCSE that a diagnosis using DSM-V would meet the criteria for the allocation of resources
<b>Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems</b>	Such pupils are being treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist for such conditions as neurosis, childhood psychosis, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and conduct disorders that are significantly impairing their socialisation and/or learning in school
<b>Hearing impairment</b>	Such pupils have a hearing disability that is so serious it impairs significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech, thus preventing them from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction. Most of them have been prescribed hearing aids and are availing of the services of a visiting teacher

Low Incidence disabilities	
Disability category	Description
<b>Moderate general learning disability</b>	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a moderate general learning disability. The pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 35 to 49
<b>Multiple disabilities</b>	Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities meet the criteria for two or more of the low incidence disabilities described above
<b>Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome</b>	Such pupils with an assessed syndrome, eg Down syndrome, William's syndrome and Tourette's syndrome in addition to any of the other low incidence disabilities
<b>Physical disability</b>	<p>Such pupils have permanent or protracted disabilities arising from such conditions as congenital deformities, spina bifida, dyspraxia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brittle bones or severe accidental injury. Because of the impairment of their physical function, they require special additional intervention and support if they are to have available to them a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities.</p> <p>Many require the use of a wheelchair, mobility or seating aid, or other technological support.</p> <p>They may suffer from a lack of muscular control and co-ordination and may have difficulties in communication, particularly in oral articulation, as for example severe dyspraxia</p>
<b>Severe and profound general learning disability</b>	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a severe or profound general learning disability. The pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed as being below 35. In addition, such pupils may have physical disabilities
<b>Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems</b>	The criteria for severe EBD are that the pupil is in the care of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist for a severe clinical disorder. A very small number of pupils would be expected to fall within this category

Low Incidence disabilities	
Disability category	Description
Specific speech and language disorder	<p>Such pupils should meet each of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In the case of specific speech and language disorder it is a pupil's non-verbal or performance ability that must be within the average range or above, that is, non-verbal or performance IQ of 90 or above.</li> <li>▶ The pupil must also have been assessed by a speech and language therapist and found to be at two or more standard deviations (SD) below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level ( – 2 SD or below, or below a standard score of 70) in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development.</li> <li>▶ Two assessments, a psychological assessment and a speech and language assessment are necessary in this case.</li> </ul>
Visual impairment	<p>Such pupils have a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, thus interfering with their capacity to perceive visually presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams and the written word. Some will have been diagnosed as suffering from such conditions as congenital blindness, cataracts, albinism and retinitis pigmentosa. Most require the use of low-vision aids and are availing of the services of a visiting teacher.</p>

## Appendix 4

Table 1: SNA posts allocated

School type	December 2013
Primary school	6,283.85 <sup>13</sup>
Post-primary school	2,102.5
Special	2,201.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,588.17</b>

Table 2: Resource teaching posts allocated

School type	December 2013
Primary school	3,230.36
Post-primary school	2,414.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,645.11<sup>14</sup></b>

<sup>13</sup> Figures include 60 child care workers allocated directly by the DES under the Early Start Scheme.

<sup>14</sup> In addition, 1,061 class teachers were allocated to the 118 special schools for students with special educational needs.

