

Evaluation of SLIS National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) actions October 2022

Ann Clarke and Tom Martin researched the SLIS progress on the NDIS actions 2017-2022. They consulted Deaf organisations and other stakeholders for this evaluation. The most successful actions identified in the report were:

- Putting in place a register for interpreters.
- Extending remote interpreting hours.
- Providing on-going professional training and development to interpreters.

Actions that proved to be more challenging and difficult were:

- Increasing the number of sign language interpreters.
- Provision of a voucher/social inclusion scheme

The evidence base used by the report includes:

- Irish government **first report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021)** which highlighted achievements by SLIS in terms of
 - increased numbers of IRIS interpreters; running pilot programmes to provide access to interpretation; development of the register of sign language interpreters, and development of CPD for interpreters.
- The **Periodic Critical Review (PCR) of CIB (May 2022)** by the Department of Social Protection, which recommends review of the governance and oversight model for SLIS.

Stakeholders agreed that the current NDIS priorities need to be continued, along with the following key priorities for the next NDIS:

- Meaningful engagement with the Deaf Community on developments and implementation. “SLIS is well placed to lead out on consultation exercises with the Deaf community.”
- The funding model should be equality-based and resourced by multi-annual funding to allow for longer term planning and strategic development.
- Continue efforts to increase the availability and quality of sign language interpreters and resource TCD CDS to expand the numbers entering the profession.
- Develop IRIS, supporting SLIS to increase IRIS interpreter capacity and maintain the walk-in IRIS station in Deaf Village Ireland to meet the variety of needs.
- Develop an integrated remote interpreting platform for IRIS to include an App to meet on-demand needs of Deaf community.
- Urgently mainstream the Voucher scheme.
- Promote awareness and uptake of the services provided by Deaf interpreters.
- Resource SLIS to provide an annual programme of CPD.
- Ensure that RISLI is adequately funded to carry out its functions and that its governance structure is transparent and accountable.

The Evaluation recommendations outline an equality based and long term approach to builds on SLIS services and expertise to continue the progress to date, and are summarised below:

The provision of interpreting services (including remote interpreting) **should be on a social inclusion/equality basis**. Initiatives to tackle the social isolation and discrimination experienced by the Deaf community should not be short-term, as has been the case with the NDIS, but set within a long-term strategy, and should adhere to the principle of **collaboration** and commitment to s SLIS's strategy of '*Nothing about us without us*'.

Good **Governance** requires SLIS has the **capacity** to undertake the actions assigned. **Funding** of SLIS services should be on a multi-annual basis, including an integrated and user-friendly technology platform and App for IRIS the remote interpreting service.

SLIS and RISLI should **promote** the Irish Sign Language Act and the Register with the Deaf community, public bodies and the private sector.

SLIS and the Deaf community should co-design any necessary piloting, to include a clear timetable for **mainstreaming when a pilot is successful**.

SLIS should guide development to **increase the number of ISL interpreters** and be resourced to continue multi-annual **CPD training** supports for interpreters, in consultation with the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI).

The SLIS board are committed to engaging and tackling the inequalities experienced by the Deaf community building on the evidence base from the NDIS, the UNCRPD and Governance / PCR recommendations.

Overall Traffic Light Score

The following weighting system (Green = 5; Green/Orange = 4; Orange = 3; Orange/Red = 2; Red = 1) was used to calculate stakeholders' mean score for this action.

NDIS Action assigned to SLIS	Overall	Stakeholder score: out of 5 (%)
Extend ISL remote interpreting service to the evenings and weekends and expanded capacity for remote service through the recruitment of Irish Sign Language interpreters		4.08 (82%)
Increasing the number of trained Sign Language Interpreters and Deaf Interpreters		2.80 (56%)
Putting in place a registration and quality assurance scheme for interpreters		4.20 (84%)
Providing ongoing professional training and development		4.0 (80%)

Overall Traffic Light Score

NDIS Action from ISL Act (section 9)	Overall	Stakeholder score: out of 5 (%)
Social Inclusion/'Voucher' Scheme		2.75 (55%)