

Incorporating MSA Ferndale.



# Evaluation of the European Year of People with Disabilities



## Final Report

2004

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## **Evaluation of the European Year of People with Disabilities**

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### Submitted to:

EYPD Evaluation Steering Group

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## Executive Summary

### Factual Summary of EYPD

From information gathered through consultation, questionnaire analysis, Omnibus results, project reports and project visits and evaluation, the following can be stated:

- 22 projects were funded locally. All of these projects involved people with disabilities, families and carers. The projects contributed to meeting the main and sub-themes of the year and all projects produced tangible and intangible outcomes that will contribute to change;
  - Over 60 EYPD events and activities have been recorded as taking place throughout the year. This is the equivalent to an average of one event per week. These events and the information stands at them have been seen by 135,000 people (9%) of the Northern Ireland population. Events took place across Northern Ireland;
  - Northern Ireland media campaign ‘Think for a change. It’s time for change’ highlights the issues faced by people with disabilities;
  - Omnibus Survey which showed that around 1 in 7 persons were able to identify 2003 as the European Year of People with Disabilities. Just under half recalled seeing advertisements about disability; mostly on television. Around two in five people recalled an event associated with EYPD; mostly to do with the Special Olympics and this was also the one that around 5% reported attending. In addition, 40% of people questioned recalled seeing the advertisement demonstrating an increase in awareness;
  - EYPD was organised, co-ordinated and delivered by NIRSG with the support of OFMDFM. Prior to the NIRSG first meeting in September 2002 significant work was carried out by staff of OFMDFM to ensure that the year got underway. Subsequently, significant work was undertaken by the NIRSG through work in sub-groups which targeted specific topics and ensured that deadlines for delivery were met;
  - All of the EYPD projects, at various levels, have left a legacy. The legacy is demonstrated through the tangible and intangible outcomes that have been achieved;
  - Among the general public the Omnibus survey shows that among the wider public there does appear to be an awareness that people with
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disabilities are not treated as fairly as non-disabled persons and that they do not have access to the same opportunities. The Year impacted on people with disabilities through involvement in projects, events and activities. However, gaps remain in targeting and involving individuals and their families. While information and feedback was requested from individuals through website and publication of a letter to the editor of a number of newspapers, no responses were received;

- Raising awareness of disability. This aim was met in Northern Ireland through a variety of methods, for example, projects, media campaigns and events and activities;
- Participation of people with disabilities in society. This aim was achieved again through projects, events and increased awareness; and
- Promoting advocacy/mentoring. While a number of projects promoted this theme it was the least well recognised and achieved.

### ***Funded Projects***

It is the view of the evaluation team that the funding was distributed fairly and appropriately and that a similar process could be repeated in future years to achieve comparable outcomes.

The process in 2003 highlighted that projects targeting advocacy and mentoring were under-represented. Any future process should investigate how applications and subsequent funding to support the advocacy and mentoring theme could be boosted.

### ***Sustainable Change***

During discussions with OFMDFM and a number of stakeholders it was suggested that in order to build on the lessons and successes of the EYPD a number of strategies may be adopted including:

- The introduction of a high-profile pan disability week every year in Northern Ireland may be one way of maintaining the momentum of EYPD; and
  - Ongoing use of the media campaign, in particular television to ensure that awareness levels regarding disability issues continue to be increased.
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In conjunction with this, award schemes could be developed for innovative projects at government and industry level, to ensure ongoing participation by stakeholders.

### ***Organisation, Co-ordination and Delivery of EYPD***

While host departments/organisations may be undertaking work in the background, where possible steering groups should be formed in advance of designated years in order that sufficient lead in time is given for planning and co-ordination.

Prior to signing up to be part of a steering group members should be made fully aware of the commitment and responsibilities they will have so that continuity in decision making is maintained.

It is recommended that a co-ordinating group, at government level is developed to ensure that disability is given focus.

The development of subgroups/working groups in the disability area should be considered to ensure that, for example, there is ongoing media coverage of the issues facing those with a disability and further education of the public.

### ***Links***

Partnership working and the development of links both on a geographic basis and between sectors should be encouraged.

### ***Media Campaign***

Ongoing use of the media campaign, in particular television to ensure that awareness levels regarding disability issues continue to be increased.

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### ***Obstacles to Raising Awareness***

Encouragement of greater involvement of people with disabilities needs to take place in all areas such as, strategy development, project involvement and as leaders on committees.

### ***Obstacles to the Participation of People with Disabilities in Society***

It is recognised that in some instances there is an unwillingness on behalf of people with disabilities to become involved in society for a wide range of reasons i.e. barriers (physical, and social) and in some cases self-exclusion. These reasons need to be identified in order that a greater cross-section of individuals with a disability can be communicated with directly and their skills and experiences used to full potential. There is a need to target specific areas, for example, public transport, access and loneliness. This will be one of the tasks of the PSI Group.

### ***Promoting Advocacy and Mentoring***

The promotion of advocacy and mentoring requires a sustained and co-ordinated effort across all sectors, in particular education, health and social services. Lessons from promising examples such as Compass Advocacy should be widely shared.

### ***Central Involvement of People with Disabilities***

Central involvement of people with disabilities should be encouraged through the development of networks and work undertaken to encourage participation of individuals.

### ***Empowerment of People with Disabilities***

Further empowerment could be encouraged through funding of similar projects on a recurring basis and the development of networks to disseminate learning and to widely distribute videos, guides and directories that were produced as information sources.

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## Overall Conclusion

It can be concluded that within Northern Ireland, EYPD was broadly successful in meeting its aims and objectives. The key achievements of the Year can be summarised as follows:

- 22 projects were funded locally;
  - The funding of local organisations enabled activity to take place at a local level;
  - Over 60 EYPD events and activities have been recorded as taking place throughout the year;
  - All of the EYPD projects, at various levels, have left a legacy. The legacy is demonstrated through the tangible and intangible outcomes that have been achieved;
  - Specific objectives were achieved through a variety of methods, for example, projects, media campaigns and events and activities. Research showed that awareness was raised, within general society;
  - The advertising and media campaigns ‘Think for a Change. It’s time for change’ which highlighted the issues faced by people with disabilities was viewed as one of the greatest achievements of the year. In particular, it was felt that the TV advertisement was very effective in terms of directly involving people with disabilities and raising their profile;
  - The launch was seen as a key achievement of the Year.
  - Within government attention has been focussed and concentrated on people with disabilities and there has been recognition of disability as an equality issue;
  - Broad partnership working and networking between organisations from within the statutory, community and voluntary sectors;
  - Stimulation of debate which resulted in the discussion of issues affecting those with a disability;
  - The fact that NI was the only region of Europe to have an extension to EYPD provided an opportunity to give a lead to the rest of Europe in relation to the Bad Ischl Declaration (that was called for at the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness Congress in May 2003);
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- RNID and BDA have been working with the Equality Commission for NI to produce ‘Guidance on Providing Sign Language/English and Irish Sign Language/English Interpreters under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995’ since October 2003. The guidance, which will also be available on disc and video, is to be launched in October 2004 when DDA comes into full force. (The NI EYPD Steering Group called for recognition of BSL/ISL in 2003. This recognition was achieved when Secretary of State, Paul Murphy formerly announced recognition of both BSL/ISL in March 2004.); and
  - Members of EYPD NI Steering Group have made significant contribution to the Mental Health & Learning Disability Review (NI) including leading on specialist aspects of Mental Health & Learning Disability Working Groups.
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## Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Evaluation

On 3 December 2001, the European Day of Disabled People, the EU Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs unanimously approved a decision to declare 2003 "European Year of People with Disabilities".

In order to provide a conceptual framework for action for the European Year of People with Disabilities at all levels, what became known as “the Madrid Declaration” was proclaimed by more than 600 participants from 34 different countries during the European Congress of People with Disabilities held in Madrid in March 2002. This Declaration proposed an analysis of the current situation of people with disabilities in the European Union, which often leads to discrimination, social exclusion and poverty.

The Year was officially launched under the Greek Presidency in Athens on 26 January 2003.

The objectives for the EYPD were to:

- Raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities;
- Encourage reflection and discussion on equal opportunities;
- Promote exchange and good practice;
- Reinforce co-operation between all parties;
- Highlight the positive contribution of people with disabilities to society;
- Raise awareness of the diversity of disabled people; and
- Raise awareness of multiple discrimination.

Each EU Member State was free to develop its own theme for the Year, and was expected to develop a programme of activities and initiatives to celebrate and mark the Year, and to further their theme.

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## 1.2 The UK Theme

In the UK, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has the lead on disability issues within Government and has co-ordinated a programme of activities for the Year and represented the UK on the EU Disability Advisory Committee. The year was officially launched in the UK in the week beginning 20 January 2003.

The UK Theme was "*Promote Rights and Participation*", with sub-themes:

- Raising Awareness of Disability;
- Participation of People with Disabilities in Society; and
- Promoting Advocacy / Mentoring in support of the main theme.

DWP established a National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) whose remit was to develop, agree, implement, oversee and evaluate a strategy for a successful programme of activity in the UK for the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003. Part of DWP's responsibilities included the distribution of funding for local and regional projects throughout the UK.

DWP also set up a parallel Government Steering Group (GSG) to facilitate the promotion of the Year and decide Government strategy and inform discussion at the National Co-ordinating Committee. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) represented the Northern Ireland Executive on the GSG.

The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland devolved administrations each decided to set up individual steering/facilitating groups to assist in the oversight of activities in their own administrations.

A closing event was held at Lancaster House to celebrate the end of the EYPD in the UK on 1 December and was hosted by the Prime Minister and Mrs Blair. Representatives from the projects, the Government and the EC gathered to celebrate the Year's achievements. The Prime Minister said: 'The European Year of

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Disabled People has been a terrific opportunity for groups up and down the country to celebrate the rights and participation of disabled people in all walks of life. Much has been achieved, but it does not end here. The Government's commitment to extending rights and opportunities is undiminished and the achievements of this year will, I'm sure, last well into the future”.

In addition, the Government published a document on 30 December 2003, "Government and the European Year of Disabled People 2003 - A Year of Progress" to mark the end of the Year. The document illustrates some of the initiatives the Government and the devolved administrations took during 2003 to support the UK theme for the Year which was to "Promote Rights and Participation".

### **1.3 EYPD in Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland is not a member state of the European Union but is rather a region within the UK. Direct comparisons cannot be made between activities of a region and those of any member state.

With the introduction of Direct Rule, observer status was granted on both committees. Forging links to establish joint events was therefore made difficult.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Disability Action NI and OFMDFM represented Northern Ireland interests on the National Co-ordinating Committee. Within Northern Ireland a Regional Steering Group (NIRSG) was formed (see Appendix I for a full list of members) which aimed to promote and develop a successful programme of activities within Northern Ireland for EYPD, in line with the strategy set out by the DWP National Co-ordinating Committee and Government Steering Group.

As in the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland adopted the theme of "*Promote Rights and Participation*", with sub-themes:

- Raising Awareness of Disability;
  - Participation of People with Disabilities in Society; and
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- Promoting Advocacy / Mentoring in support of the main theme.

In addition to project-based funding, the NIRSG co-ordinated a diverse media campaign to promote the EYPD themes, in support of the aims of the initiative.

The Northern Ireland Launch event was held on the afternoon of 22 January 2003 at Grosvenor House in Belfast. Among the 180 guests were the Minister, service users, project winners, members of the Northern Ireland regional EYPD Steering group and local members of the European Parliament. To conclude the Year, the Secretary of State hosted a reception on 29 March 2004 at Hillsborough Castle, for all those individuals and groups who had helped to make the Year a success.

#### **1.4 EYPD 2003 in Ireland**

In Ireland the year was co-ordinated by the National Disability Authority.

Over 300 people attended a national Summit event held at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham in Dublin on 21 January 2004 to mark the successful climax of EYPD in Ireland. Willie O'Dea TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, opened the event with a speech in which he reflected on the achievements of the Year.

Present at the Summit were representatives of the 46 projects and 7 flagship projects who received funding from the European Union and the Irish Government. Each of the projects presented their key learning points and recommendations to take forward during four breakout sessions under the themes of the Irish Year: Awareness Raising, Employment, Youth & Disability & Rights, and Responsibilities & Partnership.

#### **1.5 Funding & Projects**

The European Commission set aside €12 million to support EYPD. The UK's share of this was just under £50,000 for launch events

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and £500,000 for project activities. The UK Government contributed another £2 million for project activities. The total funds allocated to EYPD projects was £2.3 million. This money was used to fund 174 projects, which were selected by the National Co-ordinating Committee.

Of the 174 projects supported by DWP, 12 were in Northern Ireland (3 regional projects and 9 local projects).

Funding was augmented by additional allocations from the Northern Ireland Government, totalling £102,103. This one-off funding supported 22 projects locally under the EYPD.

## **1.6 Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the EYPD is required under Article 13 of the EU decision 2001/903/EC. This requires the Commission to submit, by 31 December 2004, a report to the European Parliament and relevant Committees on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the initiative, including an assessment on long-term impact.

Each region participating in the initiative has to carry out an evaluation, and these reports must subsequently be synthesised into the overall evaluation document referred to above. The terms of reference for the evaluation are outlined below:

- Establishing a comprehensive record of funded projects and other EYPD activities throughout the year;
  - To evaluate the outcomes both tangible and non-tangible of funded EYPD projects and a qualitative overview of broader EYPD-related activities;
  - To evaluate the organisation, co-ordination, and delivery mechanism for the EYPD;
  - To comment on the legacy of EYPD projects;
  - To assess the impact of the Year on people with disabilities, their families and wider general public and to reflect on their views; and
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- To make an overall assessment of the extent to which the stated aims of EYPD were met in Northern Ireland.

## **1.7 Structure of the Report**

This report reflects the team's work under phases 1- 8 of the project. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Research Approach
  - Section 3: Information Gathering
  - Section 4: Funded Projects and other EYPD Activities
  - Section 5: Organisation, Co-ordination and Delivery of EYPD
  - Section 6: Impact of the Year on People with Disabilities, Families and General Public
  - Section 7: Extent to which the Stated Aims of EYPD were met in Northern Ireland
  - Section 8: Summary and Conclusions
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## Research Approach

### 2.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides a brief summary of the approach taken to gather information at each phase of the project. A detailed methodology and Project Initiation Document (PID) were agreed at the outset of the evaluation.

### 2.2 Methodology

The methodology undertaken was divided into 8 phases as follows:

- Phase 1 – Project Initiation
- Phase 2 – Assessment of data availability
- Phase 3 – Role and impact of the NIRSG
- Phase 4 – Operation and effectiveness of projects
- Phase 5 – Assessment of the effectiveness of EYPD
- Phase 6 – Views of the wider community
- Phase 7 – Efficacy of the funding process
- Phase 8 – Reporting

### 2.3 Key Tasks Undertaken

In order to meet the requirements of the terms of reference and to move through the stages of the methodology a number of key tasks were undertaken. These tasks are summarised below and many are discussed in more detail throughout the report:

- Project Initiation took place in August 2003;
  - PID was agreed and finalised;
  - List of groups obtained from NICVA;
  - A letter was drawn up and circulated to a sample of groups across the sector. The letter was sent week commencing 3 November following steering group approval;
  - Contextual information/strategic context was compiled;
  - Documents received from OFMDFM included press releases, funding applications, scoring criteria, event information, NIRSG minutes;
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- Funding applications were initially reviewed and a full list of all applicants compiled;
- A short questionnaire/list of questions was drawn up for use in telephone and face-to-face interviews with members of the NIRSG. Interviews took place in November and December;
- A questionnaire was designed to facilitate a postal survey to all successful and unsuccessful applicants. The same questionnaire was also sent to a sample of organisations from the wider environment, i.e. the broad disability sector (50);
- Copies of the questionnaire were also placed on the EYPD website;
- Visits were made to 9 funded projects. During visits consultation took place with project staff and where possible project participants using pro-forma questionnaires. Visits were made between November and January;
- Discussions took place with Real Choices (the UK Evaluator) to determine the projects they would be visiting and the questionnaires they would be using;
- Questions were placed in the NISRA Omnibus survey. Coverage and questions are outlined in section 3.2.1;
- Visits were undertaken to 4 day centres;
- Information analysis; and
- Production of draft and final reports.

## **2.4 Summary**

This section of the report has outlined the tasks undertaken to gather information throughout the course of the project.

The following sections of the report provide details on how information was gathered and addresses the terms of reference of the evaluation.

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## Information Gathering

### 3.1 Introduction

This section of the report will provide some detail on the sources used to gather information. The information gathered and the findings from the analysis are discussed throughout the entirety of the report.

### 3.2 Information Sources

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were issued to all organisations that had applied for funding – all successful and unsuccessful project applicants comprising 130 organisations in total. In addition, the questionnaire was also distributed to a random sample of 50 organisations throughout the disability sector.

The questionnaire was also placed on the EYPD website to gather responses from the general public.

From the 180 questionnaires issued, 48 responses were received. This is an overall response rate of 27%. Four successfully funded projects responded to the questionnaire with the remaining responses received from either unsuccessfully funded projects or those who did not apply for funding. There was no significant difference in responses received from successfully and unsuccessfully funded projects.

There were no responses received from the questionnaire posted on the website.

The questionnaire gathered information on EYPD awareness, events attended and organised, thoughts on the aims and themes of the Year, advantages and disadvantages of having a Year designated to people with disabilities, funding and sustainability.

An analysis of questionnaire findings can be found in Appendix V.

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### **3.2.2 *NIRSG Interviews***

The Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group (NIRSG) is made up of 16 organisations from the disability sector, six public sector bodies, and representatives from the private sector, trade unions, local government, the European Commission, and the NI Human Rights Commission.

Members of the steering group were consulted primarily through telephone interview. In total 22 members were consulted. Issues addressed included: NIRSG representation; decision making; management process; obstacles; links; achievements; disappointments; obstacles to awareness; obstacles to participation; promotion of advocacy; advantages of the Year; disadvantages of the Year; sustainable change; empowerment; central involvement of people with disabilities; media campaign; funding process; projects; and lessons as to how EYPD could have achieved its aims more effectively.

### **3.2.3 *Interviews with Sector Leaders***

In addition to consulting with the NIRSG a number of individuals were contacted for their views on the year due to their knowledge of the sector. In total 4 individuals agreed to take part in the consultation.

### **3.2.4 *Schools/Day Centres***

In order to ‘outreach’ to people who may not otherwise have taken part in the evaluation, visits were arranged to 4 schools/day centres. During the visits information was collected from pupils and adults attending day centres, teachers and classroom assistants. Issues discussed included, awareness of and involvement in EYPD, the themes of the Year, funding issues and advantages of having a year designated for people with disabilities.

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### **3.2.5 Advertising**

Northern Ireland was the only region within the UK to run a specific advertising campaign. The advertising campaign ran initially from 13 October 2003 to the 31 October 2003. The campaign comprised two advertisements one of 40 seconds which ran exclusively from 13 October until the 19 October followed by a combination of the main ad and a reminder ad of 20 seconds. The campaign was rerun between 8 March 2004 and 31 March 2004, in order to increase awareness.

The main message from the campaign was ‘Think for a change. It’s time for change’.

### **3.2.6 Omnibus Survey**

A total of 1,292 persons aged 16 years and over throughout Northern Ireland were individually interviewed as part of an Omnibus Survey commissioned by OFMDFM. A series of questions relating to EYPD and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) were asked along with questions probing the public’s understanding of disability and their attitudes towards them.

### **3.2.7 Letter to Editor**

A letter was issued to the editors of 50 regional and local papers seeking the views of participants, non participants, carers and families on the overall benefits of the EYPD, their participation in any events, successes they are aware of and any improvements that have taken place as a result of the Year. Responses were requested by the 23 April. The letter appeared in 5 newspapers across Northern Ireland:

- Ballymoney and Moyle Times;
- Ulster Herald;
- Down Recorder;
- Andersonstown News; and
- Down Democrat

To date no responses have been received.

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### ***3.2.8 Meetings with OFMDFM***

Throughout the course of the review regular contact was maintained with staff from OFMDFM. Information was provided on all events taking place, minutes of meetings, project applications, interim and final reports from projects and PR listings.

### ***3.2.9 Monitoring and Evaluation Sub Group***

In addition, the evaluation team issued an interim report to the monitoring and evaluation sub group which outlined work undertaken and outstanding tasks. Subsequently a meeting was held at which the sub group provided further direction to the evaluation team on how some of the tasks should be taken forward.

## **Funded Projects and other EYPD Activities**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section of the report will provide an analysis of applications, successful projects, how project aims met the overall aims and objectives of the year, tangible and intangible outcomes and other general information on activities.

### **4.2 Funding Process**

The funding scheme was officially announced at The Launch of the European Year in Northern Ireland on the 22 January 2003. An advertisement was placed in local press on 26 January 2003 seeking requests for grant applications. The closing date for applications was the 14 March 2003 giving organisations a 7 week turn around time to respond.

Initial requests for applications based on the advertisement were low. In mid February a total of 2300 flyers were sent to organisations listed on both the Disability Action and NICVA databases. This resulted in a total of 130 applications being made for funding.

#### ***4.2.1 Application Format***

In total 130 applications were received from a range of organisations detailing projects in a number of categories – arts, recreation, training, advocacy, sport, awareness, development of social skills and development of conferences, videos and educational booklets and leaflets.

Those who registered interest were sent an application pack that contained information on the Year, a timetable, what could and could not be funded and the selection process. The pack also contained an eligibility checklist that provided guidance on whether an organisation should apply for funding.

An application form was then completed that requested information on the organisation, the project title, money being applied for, how

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the project would meet the theme and sub themes of the Year, how people with disabilities would be involved and how the organisation would show that the project had been a success.

A detailed analysis of applications is provided below.

#### ***4.2.2 Analysis of Applications***

The European Year of People with Disabilities Grant Scheme received 130 applications for funding with only one organisation applying for two different grants. The maximum amount available under this scheme was £5,000. The range of monies requested was from £650 to the maximum of £5,000 with an average request of £4,500. Thus bids totalled nearly £600,000.

Of the 130 applications evaluated, 22 (17%) were successful bids; totalling £102,103.

#### ***4.2.3 Organisations Applying***

129 different organisations applied for a grant. Of these, the majority (72: 55%) came from organisations specifically related to people with disabilities but a significant number (53: 41%) came from community organisations. (In four instances it was difficult to determine the nature of the group). Slightly more grants were awarded to disability organisations (19% versus 15%).

39 applicants (30%) named one or more partner organisations. Of the 52 partnering organisations noted, over half (54%) were community organisations (including grant awarding bodies); 27% named a Health and Social Services Trust and 19% a disability organisation.

#### ***4.2.4 Geographical Coverage***

Of the 130 applications, 26 (20%) intended to have a Northern Ireland wide remit with the remaining 104 (80%) having a local focus. Although more regional (23%) rather than locally focussed projects tended to be funded (15%).

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***Table 1 - Breakdown of Application Localities***

<b><i>Area</i></b>	<b><i>Number</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
Belfast	34	26%
Londonderry	22	17%
Tyrone	14	11%
Antrim	13	10%
Down	11	9%
Armagh	7	5%
Fermanagh	4	3%

Applications from Antrim and Down tended to be more successful in obtaining funding compared to those from Belfast and Londonderry, i.e. there was no significant geographic bias in funding.

#### ***4.2.5 Disability Area***

Each application could be grouped according to the disability area it was proposed to cover. Table 2 gives the number of applications within each disability area that were successful and not successful. As the table shows, over two-fifths of applications targeted all disabilities, with learning disabilities the highest single disability group.

The pattern of successful applications was similar across these disability areas.

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**Table 2 - Number & Percentage of Applications by Disability**

Disability Area	Successful		Total
	No	Yes	
All Disabilities	46 42.6%	11 50.0%	<b>57</b> <b>43.8%</b>
Learning Disability	19 17.6%	3 13.6%	<b>22</b> <b>16.9%</b>
Physical Disability	9 8.3%	2 9.1%	<b>11</b> <b>8.5%</b>
Chronic Illness	9 8.3%	1 4.5%	<b>10</b> <b>7.7%</b>
Hearing Impaired	9 8.3%	1 4.5%	<b>10</b> <b>7.7%</b>
Mental Health	6 5.6%	2 9.1%	<b>8</b> <b>6.2%</b>
Autism	2 1.9%		<b>2</b> <b>1.5%</b>
Visual Impairment	4 3.7%	1 4.5%	<b>5</b> <b>3.8%</b>
Children with Disabilities	4 3.7%	1 4.5%	<b>5</b> <b>3.8%</b>
Total	108	22	<b>130</b>

#### **4.2.6 Type of Project proposed**

A wide range of projects were proposed. These have been grouped into the categories shown in Table 3. The largest grouping were proposals relating to training and awareness raising about disability.

**Table 3 - Number & Percentage of Applications by Type of Proposal**

Type of proposal	Successful		Total
	No	Yes	
Training - Awareness	43 39.8%	8 36.4%	51 39.2%
Activities, Sports, Recreation	23 21.3%	4 18.2%	27 20.8%
Arts, Exhibitions	19 17.6%	4 18.2%	23 17.7%
Conferences, Publications	14 13.0%	5 22.7%	19 14.6%
Equipment, IT	9 8.3%	1 4.5%	10 7.7%
	<b>108</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>130</b>

Although there were no differences among the type of projects funded, more proposals relating to conferences and publications tended to be successful.

Community organisations tended to submit proposals for activity and arts projects whereas disability agencies were more likely to submit conference and training applications.

### 4.3 Selection Process

An eligibility check on all applications was conducted in the first instance by government officials. It was agreed at this stage by the NIRSG that funding should be awarded to groups rather than individuals in order that a greater number of people with disabilities would benefit from the projects and initiatives to be undertaken.

A representative from OFMDFM attended a one day training session on scoring project applications. This training was provided by the NCC.

NIRSG members were asked to participate in the scoring process and subsequently 5 members received a half days training from the OFMDFM representative in order to undertake this role. Members also had to declare if they had an interest in any of the projects.

Projects were scored against the following criterion:

- Aim of Project and Themes and Sub Themes;
- Measure of Success of Project;
- Involvement of People with Disabilities;
- Business Plan; and
- Overall Feel Good Factor.

Projects were also categorised into broad headings:

- Activity Based;
- Video Production;
- Publications;
- Promotion;
- Conference/Workshops;
- Training and Awareness; and
- Arts.

The outcome of the selection process was the announcement by the Minister that 22 locally funded projects had been successful.

Organisations which had been unsuccessful in obtaining funding were issued a letter thanking them for their interest in the scheme. Letters did not contain detailed feedback as to why the application had been unsuccessful but did state that should feedback be required the organisation could contact the OFMDFM.

#### ***4.3.1 Successful Projects***

Within Northern Ireland there were a total of 22 locally funded projects as follows:

1. Greenhill YMCA: The Sky's the Limit
  2. Orbit Dance Company Artscare: Beyond the Veil
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3. Rainbow Gateway Club: Our Right to Participate
4. The Junction Club: In My Life
5. NIUSE: Time to Take Account
6. Ballymoney Disability Programme: Disability Forum Projects
7. Rethink Severe Mental Illness: The Label Nobody wants to Wear
8. Magherafelt and District Disability Forum: Open Doors – Access Guide
9. Voice for Vision: Wild Animals Up Close
10. Alzheimer’s Society: Social Inclusivity Project
11. CACPD: Level 2 Video for ISL
12. Shopmobility Bangor: Disability Extravaganza
13. Ashfield Riding for Disabled: Regional Dressage and Local Fun Day
14. Derry Healthy Cities: Foyle Fit for Life
15. Waterside Development Group: Gamelan – Gathering
16. Divis Music and Drama Collective: The Difference Project
17. Disability Action: Making it Happen
18. Contact a Family: Children’s World
19. Rural Community Network: Network News
20. Newry and Mourne Consortium : See the Ability not the Disability
21. MS Society NI: Ask Us – Healthcare Awareness
22. Lisburn YMCA: YMCA Learning Disability Project

A brief case study of each successful project can be found in Appendix VI.

#### ***4.3.2 Project Monitoring and Evaluation***

Each Northern Ireland funded organisation completed an application form and was asked to submit an interim report and final report for monitoring and evaluation purposes. 18 organisations submitted an interim report and 21 submitted a final report.

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### 4.3.3 *Project Visits*

A number of UK winners (nine: 3 UK; 6 NI) and Northern Ireland funded projects were also visited by members of the evaluation team. The projects visited were:

1. Greenhill YMCA: The Sky's the Limit (NI Funded)
2. Tor Bank School: Safe Hands in Safeway's (UK Funded)
3. Ballymoney Disability Programme: Disability Forum Projects (NI Funded)
4. Alzheimer's Society: Social Inclusivity Project (NI Funded)
5. Derry Healthy Cities: Foyle Fit for Life (NI Funded)
6. Rural Community Network: Network News (UK Funded)
7. CACPD: Level 2 Video for ISL (NI Funded)
8. Compass Advocacy Group: Regional Development Project (UK Funded)
9. Circles Network: NI Partners in Policy Making Programme (UK Funded)

Projects were visited to gather information directly from project organisers and participants on their views regarding EYPD.

### 4.3.4 *Aims and Objectives*

The following section of the report comprises a summary of how the funded projects reflected the aims and objectives of the Year. The projects in italics were visited by the evaluation team and information is based on interim and final reports and questionnaire analysis.

The UK Theme was "*Promote Rights and Participation*", with three sub-themes:

1. Raising Awareness of Disability;
  2. Participation of People with Disabilities in Society; and
  3. Promoting Advocacy / Mentoring in support of the main theme.
-

The funded projects submitted detailed applications, and interim and final reports which outline that many of the projects targeted more than one theme.

### ***1. Raising Awareness of Disability***

A number of projects had the primary aim of raising awareness of disability. Awareness was raised in a variety of ways, for example, through the organisation of conferences, media coverage, leaflet distribution and development of information packs.

The following list provides a sample of those projects that had the overarching aim of raising awareness:

- *The Junction Club: In My Life*  
*To hold a conference at which our members can explain what their lives have been like and what matters to them now*
  - NIUSE: Time to Take Account  
A one day conference (130 delegates) aimed at services users and key stakeholders to address issues such as accessing vocational training and employment opportunities, promoting the skills and abilities of people with disabilities to contribute to the economy
  - Rethink Severe Mental Illness: The Label Nobody wants to Wear  
To raise awareness of the detrimental effects stigma has on individuals experiencing severe mental illness
  - *Derry Healthy Cities: Foyle Fit for Life*  
*To create awareness, experience and access to a range of physical, leisure and alternative therapy activities to people with disabilities in the Foyle area*
  - MS Society NI: Ask Us – Healthcare Awareness  
To make healthcare professionals aware of the problems and difficulties faced by people living with MS
-

Awareness was raised across all sectors i.e. participants, carers, families, healthcare professionals, statutory organisations and the general public. In some instances the number of people attending any one event was small but perhaps would grow over time if the approach developed with the EYPD funding continued to be used by the successful applicants. A follow-up evaluation would be needed to ascertain the extent to which this happened.

## ***2. Participation of People with disabilities in Society***

Participation was a central aim for all of the projects. Participation was encouraged through a range of mechanisms including: sports activities; arts and dance; and social outings. Events and activities led to increased participation in society by those involved in the projects.

The following list provides a sample of those projects that had the overarching aim of participation:

- *Greenhill YMCA: The Sky's the Limit*  
*To promote and encourage the participation of people with disabilities in outdoor activities*
  - Orbit Dance Company Artscare: Beyond the Veil  
To provide a challenging and adventurous experience for two dance companies of disabled dancers through the mediums of dance, music and art
  - *Alzheimer's Society: Social Inclusivity Project*  
*To enable people with dementia to rediscover their right to a rewarding social life, reducing their sense of isolation and social marginalisation*
  - Ashfield Riding for Disabled: Regional Dressage and Local Fun Day  
To enable 16 of our riders to participate in the Northern Ireland Regional Dressage Competition
  - Divis Music and Drama Collective: The Difference Project
-

To promote the rights and participation of people with a learning disability into mainstream drama, music and dance festivals/events

### ***3. Promoting Advocacy / Mentoring in support of the main theme (Rights and Participation)***

The participation of individuals in all of the projects will result in increased self-esteem and confidence which for some will improve self-advocacy and knowledge of rights and for others will provide the opportunity to meet individuals who will act as advocates or mentors in the future.

The following list provides a sample of those projects which had the overarching aim of promoting advocacy / mentoring:

- **Waterside Development Group: Gamelan – Gathering**  
To increase access to the arts for people with disabilities as well as empowerment and advocacy through training, mentoring and fun
- **Disability Action: Making It Happen**  
A conference to consider the results of a Disability Action survey which asked people with disabilities and disability groups what they believed were the key barriers/issues limiting people with disability's participation in NI society and one years work to set 'An Agenda for Change'.
- **Lisburn YMCA: YMCA Learning Disability Project**  
To foster personal development and encourage participation by introducing adults with a learning disability to workshops which will include practical work experience and structured training sessions

A smaller number of projects addressed this theme. This theme will require sustained effort in the years to come and perhaps the opportunity provided by EYPD was not fully exploited.

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#### *4.3.5 Tangible and Intangible Outputs*

There are a number of tangible outcomes from funded projects that will ensure that even if the projects are not sustainable the legacy of the Year will continue. These examples were collected from a range of sources including applications, questionnaires and project visits and are representative of the views of both project personnel, participants and the evaluation team. These outcomes include:

- Production of videos;
- Development of service guides and directories;
- Facilitation of conferences and seminars;
- Exhibitions – dance, art;
- Evaluation reports;
- Photographs and memory boards;
- Information packs, CD-Roms;
- Project Diaries;
- Media coverage; and
- Development of websites.

In addition, there are a number of intangible outcomes, that while difficult to quantify, have contributed to the personal development of individuals their families and carers. It is this legacy at an individual level that will ensure that the benefits of projects will continue long after the Year is over. These outcomes include:

- Increased knowledge;
  - Increased awareness of disability issues;
  - Increased self confidence and self-esteem of participants;
  - Development of transferable skills to other areas of life;
  - Improved co-ordination and communication;
  - Establishments of links and dialogue with policy makers;
  - Reduced social isolation;
  - Increased acceptance of people with a disability;
  - Encouraging individuals to make decisions;
  - Increased participation of people with disabilities;
  - Changing attitudes;
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- Development of relationships at individual and organisational levels; and
- Empowerment of individuals.

#### ***4.3.6 Stakeholder Consultation on Funded Projects***

With regard to the application process for funding, there was a consensus among those consulted that this was extremely well organised, not least because Northern Ireland adopted the model which had been used by DWP for the NCC and had the opportunity to improve upon the lessons learnt from that process. The process was deemed to be fair and inclusive although a number of stakeholders would have liked individuals to have been eligible for funding.

However, it was acknowledged that there was a tight timescale between the advertisement date and the date for submission which reduced the opportunity for a number of organisations to apply. It was felt that timing was also a restriction in terms of RSG members assessing application forms, in that those with the correct experience were not necessarily those who assessed the forms due to time pressures.

Some stakeholders felt that the funded projects adequately reflected the aims and objectives of the year although others cited gaps with regard to children-related projects and it was suggested by a few that advocacy and mentoring appeared to be low on the list.

#### ***4.3.7 Stakeholder Consultation on Sustainable Change***

The stakeholders were asked whether dedicating a year to people with disabilities was likely to achieve sustainable change. Based on the evidence of the year stakeholders felt that such change is not possible within such a short time. However, the measure of success will be that which lasts beyond the 12 month period as events are ephemeral. The attitude appears to be that this is just the beginning and that sustainable change beyond March 2004 will require commitment through a cultural change and through actions that can be implemented.

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What is important to remember is that in the view of stakeholders change is incremental for people with disabilities. The best expectation of the year according to stakeholders was to re-prioritise disability on the agenda of statutory organisations. Only then can legislative change and its impact on policy and strategy secure sustainable change.

#### **4.4 Other Activities**

##### ***4.4.1 List of events***

One of the objectives of the NIRSG was to ‘Develop ideas for celebrating and marking the European Year of People with Disabilities within Northern Ireland, and in developing a programme of activities and initiatives in Northern Ireland to support the UK Theme ‘Promoting Rights and Participation’ and associated sub-themes’. The steering group in conjunction with other government departments and the community and voluntary sector organised and participated in a number of events. It is estimated that these events reached approximately 135,000 people throughout Northern Ireland (9% of the population). These figures are based on event attendance and an estimate of the numbers of people who saw the promotional stands and information that was used at each event.

A comprehensive list of events can be found in Appendix II.

##### ***4.4.2 Press Coverage***

Throughout the Year articles and photographs appeared in newspapers across Northern Ireland detailing events that were to take place and that had taken place to mark the Year.

A list of press coverage can be found in Appendix III.

##### ***4.4.3 Visits to schools and Day Centres***

Focus groups were representative of those with a learning disability (adults and children) and included users, teachers, classroom

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assistants and day centre user committees. At the outset of the focus group members were told about the purpose of the meeting and that their views would be kept confidential. One or more members of staff were present during all focus group sessions.

During the sessions those attending were shown posters of the advertisements and in some instances were shown the video of the television advertisement. In addition, they were asked some questions about EYPD, their level of awareness and involvement, the aims of the Year and the advantages of having a specially designated Year. The cumulative findings from the focus groups are outlined below:

- Only one pupil was able to name 2003 as the European Year of People with Disabilities but several did recall it as being special for people with disabilities because of the Special Olympics;
  - No one identified the logo as being for the European Year;
  - The posters were recognised by many of the group participants and several were able to specify where they had seen them – on walls near shopping centres, on bus stops. However they were less clear about the messages that the poster were intended to convey;
  - The television ads were recognised by many of the participants although they were less sure when they had seen them; for example, some claimed (incorrectly) they had seen them the previous evening. A couple of people thought they recognised a person they knew in the ad. They felt it was a good idea for people with disabilities to be on television;
  - Members felt that TV ads, etc. were a good way of creating more awareness, but the EYPD ads had been too general – if they had had more explicit messages about the practical problems people with disabilities face they would have been more effective. They also felt that attitudes had been improving, but that more could be done. For example the provision of special parking places for people with disabilities at
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supermarkets, etc was very welcome but too often these were taken up by people who didn't really need them;

- The message “Think for a change. It’s time for change” appeared not to have any real meaning for them. No one could give examples of what the changes could be;
  - Several people had attended events to do with the World Games of Special Olympics in either Belfast or Dublin. Some others had seen pictures of the Games on television. No one could recall hearing about, or attending, any other special events. (Note: The groups were held before an event organised by one of the successful projects – the Junction Club – brought together over 60 people with learning disabilities from various day centres around Belfast for a one-day conference. However when talking to some members of the organising committee for this Club they mentioned the forthcoming conference but not the sponsorship received from EYPD.);
  - Most participants reported having no adverse experiences with regard to peoples’ attitudes and behaviours when they were out in public settings; people were generally nice to them. However most were accompanied by parents or staff. Some did mention a problem with name-calling that had happened in the past and a few spoke of difficulties they had in the neighbourhood of their homes. One person felt he had been made fun of at work. However it was not clear whether or not they were being singled out because of their disability;
  - Pupils knew about the problems some people with disabilities face, such as those with ‘hearing and mobility difficulties’, and felt that greater awareness on the part of the public would probably help. As far as access, etc. were concerned there was a view that considerable improvements had taken place already. There was definitely a need for greater public awareness of the potential of people with learning disabilities in the employment field;
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- All participants agreed that people with disabilities can speak up for themselves and that they should be allowed to do this. They explained how their committees provided a means for doing this and they wanted this to continue;
- The main messages they wanted to pass on to Government were the need for better services for people with disabilities – especially more staff; the need for more paid work and more activities to do in the evenings and at weekends;
- Members felt there was no reason why there shouldn't be a special year for people with disabilities, but that more effort was needed to draw attention to problems experienced by people with disabilities. For example there should be bigger signs showing specific difficulties. There should also be outings associated with the Year so that people with disabilities could feel part of it; and
- Staff of the centres also confirmed that no special activities had been organised by them as part of EYPD. Although they had seen the ads, most felt they were of limited relevance to people with learning disabilities. They felt that having a designated year was generally a good thing – citing the experience of Special Olympics in giving a more positive image of people with learning disabilities. However much greater efforts were needed to make people aware of the Year and to engage them in planning and organising events. For example, the centres were not told about the television ads, or the different events that were being organised.

## **4.5 Conclusions**

In total 130 funding applications were received from a range of organisations detailing projects in a number of categories – arts, recreation, training, advocacy, sport, awareness, development of social skills and development of conferences, videos and educational booklets and leaflets. Of the 130 applications evaluated, 22 (17%) were successful bids; totalling £102,103.

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As a result of funding there are a number of tangible outcomes from projects that will ensure that even if the projects are not sustainable the legacy of the Year will continue. In addition, there are a number of intangible outcomes, that while difficult to quantify, have contributed to the personal development of individuals their families and carers. It is this legacy at an individual level that will ensure that the benefits of projects will continue long after the Year is over

Although a limited sample of people were consulted, overall, there was a strong impression that EYPD had passed over many service users and staff directly involved in disability services. However there appeared to be a willingness among service users and staff to be involved in activities that raised the profile of people with disabilities within the wider community. Two suggestions made for future Years was having a more participative approach to the planning of the Year and finding mechanisms to generate more local initiatives.

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## Organisation, Co-Ordination and Delivery of EYPD

### 5.1 Introduction

This section of the report looks at the structures that were put in place to organise, co-ordinate and deliver the EYPD.

### 5.2 Organisation of the Year

In May 2002 it was decided that within Northern Ireland the Equality and Social Need Division of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) would be the co-ordinating Government Department for the EYPD. Within the Equality and Social Need Division an EYPD Unit was set up, led by the Head of Division. From May onwards the following actions took place:

- May 2002 – In order that the Northern Ireland Regional Steering group (NIRSG) was all encompassing, nominations were requested from the following areas: umbrella group; learning disability; sensory disability; visual disability; access; age; youth; physical disability; hidden disability; and carers. Subsequently letters were sent to approximately 35 organisations requesting nominations for membership of the NIRSG. Organisations were asked: ‘Where possible, we would encourage organisations to nominate individuals with a disability to serve on the RSG as we value the personal experience they can bring to the work of the group’. Of the 28 members nominated 7 (25%) declared a disability;
  - June 2002 – Date established for the first NIRSG meeting;
  - July 2002 – 1300 disability related organisations were sent general information on the EYPD. Members were asked to publicise the Year within their own organisation and were asked to notify OFMDFM of any events they had planned or to register these on the EYPD website;
  - August 2002 – NIRSG membership finalised;
  - September 2002 – First NIRSG meeting took place. At this meeting members were asked if any gaps existed in the
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composition of the group. No gaps were identified. Membership of 4 sub groups was established;

- NIRSG met on a 4-6 weekly basis, in total 11 meetings were held and 4 of these were outside Belfast. Sub groups met monthly or more regularly as required; and
- On an ongoing basis, event organisation, publicity, information gathering and communication with NIRSG through email and telephone.

Work to organise and co-ordinate the Year was carried out by:

- One full-time secondee from an external organisation;
- Two OFMDFM staff members (with other core duties); and
- Administration support was provided by the Division.

### **5.3 The Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group**

The Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group (NIRSG) comprised members from 16 organisations from the disability sector, six public sector bodies, and representatives from the private sector, trade unions, local government, the European Commission, and the NI Human Rights Commission.

The Group was chaired by the Head of Equality and Social Need Division. Vice Chair of the group was the Head of Disability Unit, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The terms of reference for the group state the following accountabilities:

- Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson to conduct meetings;
  - Members to receive monthly progress reports from the Secretariat;
  - Appropriate Membership to report progress to the Department for Work and Pensions Government Steering Group and National Co-ordinating Committee;
  - Decisions to release Executive Programme Fund monies for activities relating to the Year should be made only with reference to the agreed Department for Work and Pensions eligibility criteria;
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- Members of the Regional Steering Group and any sub groups should declare any interest in Executive Programme Funds (EPF) funded activities;
- Decisions to release funding for the European Year of People with Disabilities from the Executive Programme Fund will only be made by the Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group as a Group, via the Chairperson; and
- There should be a quorum of six members of the NI Regional Steering Group, excluding the Chairperson, making decisions on Executive Programme Fund monies for European Year activities.

Due to the large representation on the steering group and the range of issues to be addressed a number of sub groups were formed:

- Launch sub group;
- Monitoring and Evaluation sub group;
- Communications sub group; and
- Funding sub group.

The NIRSG aimed to promote and develop a successful programme of activities within Northern Ireland for the EYPD, in line with the strategy set out by the DWP National Co-ordinating Committee and Government Steering Group. The NIRSG had responsibility to:

- Plan the launch of the European Year of People with Disabilities in Northern Ireland in January 2003;
  - Develop ideas for celebrating and marking the European Year of People with Disabilities within Northern Ireland, and in developing a programme of activities and initiatives in Northern Ireland, to support the UK Theme ‘Promoting Rights and Participation’ and associated sub themes;
  - Link with member or partner organisations in publicising the Year, feeding in ideas, and stimulating activities to mark and support the European Year, to include liaising with counterparts in ROI;
  - Consider methodologies for maximizing use of activities and resources of partner organisations throughout the Year to
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assist in contributing to the UK Themes, for example, encourage incorporation of EYPD themes into existing partnership activities; and explore possibility of sponsorship of specific EYPD events in NI;

- Secure successful Executive Programme Funding bid for the European Year of People with Disabilities and where possible provide resources and other assistance for the Year from its own and linked organisations;
- Monitor UK-wide PR strategy and ensure the development of NI interests;
- Monitor progress of EYPD activities on a quarterly basis and review as necessary;
- Advise and support organisations including those of and for people with disabilities in developing their activities for the European Year; and
- Organise the ceremonies to mark completion of the Year.

Following consultation with the majority of the NIRSG members, the following paragraphs document their thoughts regarding the groups representation, the EYPD management process, the obstacles encountered organising the Year, decision-making within the group and links made during the Year.

### ***5.3.1 RSG Representation***

The majority of RSG members concurred that membership of the group was very much representative of a wide range of organisations associated with disability. However, the single greatest criticism regarding the steering group's composition was the lack of representation of individuals with disabilities; and to a lesser extent the actual number of disabled persons within the group.

With regard to geographical representation, there was a general consensus that by seeking the involvement of regional organisations, inevitably headquarters are located in the greater Belfast area and that it is the responsibility of these members of regional organisations to ensure information is filtered down to a local level.

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Overall, it was agreed that it would be impossible to achieve full geographical representation, by disability type without the group becoming unwieldy and consequently ineffective.

### **5.3.2 *EYPD Management Process***

The greatest criticism of the management process was the lack of preparation leading up to the year. For example, the first six months were spent primarily planning and getting to know the faces around the table. In effect, the year was perceived as more of a pre-year by a number of members. It was suggested that greater preparation in advance of the year would have increased its effectiveness significantly.

It was acknowledged that while the majority of civil servants are not familiar with the field of disability (unless it is their specific area of work), the overall management of the process by OFMDFM was regarded as effective, with good chairmanship and excellent administrative support.

It was felt by a few members that there was a lack of innovation involved i.e. disability groups and activities continued to function and operate as they previously had. It was voiced that OFMDFM focussed more on the process involved to the detriment of focussing on people with disabilities.

As the process was set within OFMDFM there were restrictions in terms of red tape, ministerial approval etc. It was highlighted that greater freedom and awareness was experienced in the Republic of Ireland where a committee was set up outside of government.

Greater ownership by members was deemed necessary. For example, the suggestion was made that prior to the first steering group meeting, it would have been useful for each member to have had a one-to-one meeting with the key drivers on the steering group in order to fully understand and sign up to the commitment and responsibilities involved in becoming a member.

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### ***5.3.3 Obstacles Encountered Organising the Year***

It was felt by stakeholders that a number of obstacles associated with the organisation of the year were encountered, including the following:

- The RSG was led by civil servants and not the community/voluntary sector;
- Management of (unrealistic) expectations;
- Short lead-in time resulting in lack of planning/preparation at all stages; and
- Lack of ownership by the RSG, i.e. not involved in decision making.

### ***5.3.4 Decision-Making within the RSG***

There was little dispute amongst steering group members that each individual was given the opportunity to express opinions and be respectfully listened to. However, there was a view held by a number of members that agendas were strongly led by OFMDFM. Whilst this is not surprising, given their administrative role in the group, there was a feeling that many (particularly bigger) decisions were made prior to meetings and that associated discussions at meetings were merely rubber-stamping exercises and that “the long arm of government” oversaw the whole year and ultimately controlled the process.

Members respected that decision-making must be balanced with taking actions forward and at times it was difficult to achieve cohesion and unanimity on certain issues due to the breadth of representation of the group. On the whole, decisions were made by the majority.

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### 5.3.5 *Links*

There was a general consensus amongst members that links, particularly with NCC UK, NCC RoI and Europe could have been improved. It was felt by a number of members that there was an absence of any European ‘flavour’ to the year which was a great omission as, in addition to disability, Europe and learning from counterparts was the essence of the year. There was a feeling that there was too much focus on local activity and not enough on the broader picture across Europe.

Conversely, some members were of the opinion that whilst it was important to understand that the year was part of some grand plan, there had to be a specific Northern Ireland focus.

Links specifically with the UK and RoI were felt to be poor, given the fact that links did actually exist (members of the steering group sat on the NCC). Any involvement with the UK/RoI was thought to be low on the agenda of OFMDFM and the RSG.

## 5.4 **Conclusions**

With regard to the organisation, co-ordination and delivery of EYPD a number of conclusions can be reached:

- There was a small number of people with disabilities involved in the leadership of the year;
  - An options appraisal should be undertaken in the light of this year’s experience as to whether similar events should be administered outside of Government;
  - Greater attention should be paid to neighbouring countries and Europe;
  - There is a need for longer lead-in time; and
  - There is a need to ensure continuity and to consolidate achievements of the year in the form of a continuity plan.
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## **Impact of the Year on people with disabilities, families and general public**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This section of the report will review the key methods by which the impact of the Year on people with disabilities, families and the general public was measured. The main method used was the Omnibus Survey for Northern Ireland. Results from the Eurobarometer Survey and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Attitudinal Survey have been included for general comparison purposes. It should be highlighted that the data probably does not address adequately the views of people with disabilities as they are less likely to be approached by interviewers doing surveys.

### **6.2 Omnibus Survey**

A total of 1,292 persons aged 16 years and over throughout Northern Ireland were individually interviewed as part of an Omnibus Survey commissioned by OFMDFM. A series of questions were asked relating to the European Year of People with Disabilities (EYPD) and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) along with questions probing the public's understanding of disability and their attitudes towards their inclusion within society.

In the survey the following questions were asked specifically relating to the EYPD:

- Can I ask, do you know what 2003 was the European Year of?
  - In October/November 2003 a media campaign was launched to raise awareness about issues affecting people with disabilities. Do you recall seeing ANY of these adverts?
  - Were you aware of any events or activities which were organised for EYPD?
  - Please specify the event/activity.
  - Did you attend any projects, events or activities which were organised for EYPD?
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- Please specify the event/activity.

The analysis of these questions shows that:

- Around 1 in 7 persons were able to identify 2003 as the European Year of People with Disabilities.
- Just under half recalled seeing advertisements about disability; mostly on television.
- Around two in five people recalled an event associated with EYPD; mostly to do with the Special Olympics and this was also the one that around 5% reported attending.

### **6.2.1 Knowledge of EYPD**

Overall 200 persons (15.5%) were able to name 2003, as the European Year of People with Disabilities. A Discriminant analysis<sup>1</sup> was used to identify the characteristics of people most likely to name the year compared to those that do not. This identifies a group of variables that best discriminate the two groupings; with the variables that contribute most to the discrimination given in order. (NB: Other variables were entered into the analysis but they did not significantly contribute to the discrimination – see footnote).

The people most likely to know that 2003 was the European Year of Disabled People (in order of importance) were:

- **Parent of a child with a disability** (25% of those with a child knew EYPD compared to 18% of those with children and 9% with no children);
- **Educational qualification** (24% with tertiary qualifications knew EYPD compared to 12% with primary or secondary);
- **Age Group** (Around 18% of people over 25 knew EYPD compared to 2.5% of those under 25 years);
- **Area of N. Ireland** (EYPD was known best in Belfast – 22% and the South-East – 18% compared to other areas - 13%); and

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<sup>1</sup> The predictor variables included in the Discriminant analyses were gender, age group; marital status; employment status; Catholic or Protestant; owned or rented housing; education qualification, friends with disabilities; parent of child with disabilities; urban or rural; area of NI;

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- **Friends with disabilities** (22% with a ‘lot of friends’ knew EYDP compared to 11% with no friends).

### 6.2.2 *Publicity for Issues Affecting People with Disabilities*

The numbers and percentage of people who reported seeing each type of publicity is given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Number and Percentage of People Seeing each type of Publicity (N=1,292)**

<b>Publicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
TV ads	556	43.0%
Posters/billboards	123	9.5%
Press ads	109	8.4%
None of the above	693	53.6%

Overall, 36 persons (2.8%) reported seeing all three types of publicity; 117 (9.1%) two types and 446 (34.5%) one type.

Linking this information with knowledge of EYPD gives the following breakdown:

- 146 persons (11.3% of total) had seen publicity and named EYPD;
- 54 persons (4.2%) had not seen the publicity but named EYPD;
- 452 persons (35.1%) had seen publicity but did not name EYPD; and
- 637 persons (49.4%) neither saw the publicity nor named EYPD.

Discriminant analysis was again used to identify the characteristics of those who recalled some form of publicity. Those most likely to have seen publicity were:

- **Gender:** 53% females had seen publicity compared to 40% males;
  - **Educational qualifications:** 50% of people with secondary and tertiary qualifications had seen the publicity compared to 37% primary qualifications;
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- **Religious affiliation:** 53% of Catholics had seen publicity compared to 42% Protestants;
- **Friends with disabilities:** 60% of those with a lot of friends had seen the publicity compared to 49% of those with a few friends and 41% with no friends;
- **Area of N. Ireland:** Publicity was seen more by people in Belfast – 55% and least in the South – 39%. In other areas it was around 46%; and
- **Parent of a child with a disability:** 60% of those who had a child with disabilities had seen publicity compared to around 44% of those with/without children).

### 6.2.3 *Awareness of EYPD activities*

Overall 516 persons (40%) said they were aware of activities organised for EYPD. However 88% of these were mentions of the World Games for Special Olympics. Other mentions were of conferences, training events, awareness raising and fund-raising.

In all 64 persons (5% of total) reported they had participated in an event and again these were mostly related to Special Olympics and fund-raising.

### 6.2.4 *Other Disability Related Questions*

In addition, a range of questions were asked relating to issues surrounding disability.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland undertook a ‘Public Attitudes to Disability in Northern Ireland’ survey in 2001. In 2001 there were 1155 interviews undertaken representing a response rate of 63%. The results of this survey (where comparable) are stated in italics.

- About 20% of people reported having a lot of friends and acquaintances with disabilities although over 66% report having a few such friends and acquaintances. *In 2001 over 50% of respondents said that less than 25% of their friends*
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*were people with disabilities, while only 1% felt that most of their friends were disabled;*

- 66% of the sample under-estimated the proportions of people with disabilities in the population;
  - Mobility problems were the condition most frequently associated with disability followed by visual and hearing impairments and brain injury;
  - 25% of people did not consider ‘learning disability’ to be a disability;
  - Around 20% of people could name laws associated with disability, notably the DDA and a further 25% recalled the DDA when prompted;
  - Although 70% of people thought there was much less discrimination towards people with disabilities than 10 years ago, 66% of people questioned did not feel that people with disabilities had the same opportunities as people without disabilities. *76% of respondents in 2001 believed either slightly or strongly that people with disabilities do not have the same opportunities as people with disabilities. The proportion with this attitude has fallen slightly since earlier surveys i.e. 82% in 1997;*
  - 70% of people felt that public services such as pubs and shops did not cater adequately for the needs of people with disabilities. *47% of respondents in 2001 compared to 61% in 1997 felt that shops did not cater adequately for the needs of people with disabilities. In 2001 57% of respondents felt that pubs, restaurants and places of entertainment did not cater adequately for the needs of people with disabilities. This compares to 61% in 1997 i.e. more people feel people with disabilities are catered for;*
  - Around 60% of people were in favour of children with disabilities attending the same schools as non-disabled children. Over half the parents of school-age children would welcome this and a further 40% had no objections. Less than 10% would object or have reservations. *In 2001, 66% of respondents agreed that children with disabilities should attend the same schools as non-disabled children. This finding is consistent with earlier surveys;*
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- Over 33% of respondents felt that educating the public to show greater tolerance would be the most effective way of helping people with disabilities and another 33% favoured making laws; and
- In general, people who had tertiary level qualifications and/or who had people with disabilities among their friends and acquaintances were the most likely to be positively disposed to the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

A full analysis of the Omnibus Survey can be found in Appendix IV.

### ***6.2.5 Conclusions from Omnibus Survey***

Arguably this is the first comprehensive survey of the attitudes in Northern Ireland towards people with disabilities and taken with the findings from a study undertaken within the Republic of Ireland that covered somewhat different areas, they offer a helpful snapshot of public attitudes at the beginning of a new century on the island of Ireland.

Among the wider public there does appear to be an awareness that people with disabilities are not treated as fairly as people without disabilities and that they do not have access to the same opportunities. A sizeable majority would support their rights towards greater social inclusion, for example in attending the same schools as non-disabled children; more so in the North than in the Republic of Ireland.

Nearly half of the people interviewed were aware of the DDA and they viewed the passing of laws as second only to educating the public to be more tolerant of people with disabilities, in terms of helping this group within society.

Television advertising about disability had been recalled by over 40% of persons interviewed; four times those reporting seeing posters or newspaper ads. Likewise the World Games for the Special Olympics held in Dublin in June 2001 were recalled by

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nearly two in five persons and 1 in 20 had had some involvement linked with the games or another event related to disability.

Nonetheless nearly one third of persons in NI had no friends or acquaintances with disabilities; upwards of 50% in the Republic of Ireland. This lack of contact was found to impact on people's knowledge about disability and on their attitudes towards this group. Hence, it would appear that a priority for improving public's perceptions of disability, is for them to get to know a person with a disability.

Future surveys in Northern Ireland could usefully include questions relating to the access that people with disabilities have to employment, housing and transport and to establishing if the respondent has or has had any disabilities or long-term illnesses.

The low proportion of people recalling that 2003 was the European Year of People with Disabilities is perhaps not too surprising and indeed it could have been boosted by the presence in Ireland of the World Games of Special Olympics. Limited effort and resources were used to target the general public within Northern Ireland.

### **6.3 Eurobarometer Survey**

On 17 February 2004, a new Eurobarometer survey was published on the evaluation of EYPD 2003. The survey showed that the European Year was recognised and understood by a good percentage of EU citizens and served as a valuable awareness raising campaign. The survey also highlighted that the public had increased awareness and concern for people with disabilities, when compared to a survey carried out in 2000.

“The EYPD was the beginning of a new dynamic process improving opportunities for all people with disabilities”, said Margot Wallström, acting European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs. “The exceptional mobilisation of stakeholders during the Year, including people with disabilities and their families, demonstrated a broad desire to move towards concrete social, economical, political and cultural participation of

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people with disabilities and the full achievement of equal opportunities”.

A third of Europeans were aware of the campaign by September 2003, the survey revealed. Particularly encouraging was that the objectives of the EYPD, to raise awareness and understanding of people with disabilities, were largely understood. Some 42% of those who were aware of EYPD believed that the campaign was to promote the rights of people with disabilities. An erroneous view that it was about fundraising was held by 25%, while 21% thought it was designed to portray people with disabilities in a more positive light.

The main form of conveying the EYPD message was through the media, which was cited by 81% of interviewees as their source of information on the Year. This was said by those reporting on the survey for the EU to demonstrate the media's increased awareness of people with disabilities situation. This was especially important as media coverage in 2003 was restricted by the many other newsworthy events during the year.

Some 61% of EU citizens, who were aware of the Year felt that it had contributed to informing people about difficulties faced by people with disabilities in their everyday life, whilst just over half (51%) felt that it had paved the way towards people with disabilities receiving the same rights as others.

The survey results showed that differences in awareness and attitude towards disability were more likely to be on a country by country basis, rather than on the basis of other factors such as age, gender or occupation. The countries which showed the greatest awareness of the EYPD were Republic of Ireland, Luxembourg and Austria. Ireland had the highest level of awareness, at 73% of interviewees; this is likely to be linked to the fact that the Special Olympics were held in Ireland last year. The UK had the lowest level of awareness, 21%.

As well as giving feedback on the success of the EYPD, the survey also highlighted that the public has increased awareness and

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concern for people with disabilities, when compared to a survey carried out in 2000.

The report of the Eurobarometer survey noted that the European Year provided added incentives for EU Member States to look at new policy and legal developments towards achieving equal opportunities for people with disabilities. These were said to include more pro-active measures for people with disabilities while laying foundations on which future long-term action can be built. For example, some Member States, such as Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, Greece and Sweden have put in place action plans on disability. Others such as France, Ireland, the UK, Belgium and Portugal have reviewed their laws related to disability or are preparing new ones.

### **6.3.1 Conclusions**

The impact of EYPD on people with disabilities, their family and the general public has been measured through repeated surveys which seem to point to the development of more positive attitudes among the public to the needs of people with disabilities. Surveys have also highlighted that one single but major national/international event such as the Special Olympics may be a more effective way of reaching the wider public.

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## **Extent to which the stated aims of EYPD were met in Northern Ireland**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The comments within this section of the report have been drawn primarily from the consultation process that took place with stakeholders, in addition to questionnaire analysis, project questionnaires and reports and visits. An objective assessment and evaluation of the key issues raised can be found in Section 8.

This section looks at the extent to which the stated aims of EYPD were regarded as having been met, namely raising awareness, the participation of people with disabilities in society and the promotion of advocacy /mentoring. The degree to which people with disabilities were centrally involved in the Year and the degree to which they have been empowered are also discussed. The final paragraphs detail the achievements and disappointments of the Year in addition to the advantages and disadvantages of having such a year dedicated to people with disabilities.

#### ***7.1.1 Obstacles to Raising Awareness***

One of the aims of EYPD was to create more awareness of people with disability in society and stakeholders were asked to comment on the obstacles encountered when trying to do this.

There was felt to be a general ignorance (and at times, prejudice) within society regarding broad issues concerning disability and the part that people with disabilities can play within society as a whole. It was suggested that the biggest obstacle lies in people's conception of what it means to have a disability.

A number of those consulted stated that it takes the hand of power to change legislation. However, whilst OFMDFM were seen as the appropriate lead player, it was felt that they should have involved potential employers and that other government departments and agencies should have been more fully involved.

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It was agreed that raising awareness is very difficult to do and that employers in particular must be made to understand that disability is a priority with respect to equal opportunities.

### ***7.1.2 Obstacles to the Participation of People with Disabilities in Society***

Another aim of EYPD was to increase participation of people with disabilities within society. There were a number of obstacles identified, for example, physical access to transport and buildings due to mobility and access issues, results in people with disabilities being dependent upon others. It was reported that transport is not changing because there is no law in place to say that it must do so.

Those consulted stated that the attitudes and perceptions of the general public, including fear and prejudice which can lead to social exclusion were acknowledged as barriers to the participation of disabled persons within society.

There is felt to be a degree of unwillingness by some persons with disabilities to get involved. Some stakeholders stated that systems are in place to help people with disabilities but that they must be prepared to help themselves. It was further suggested that the onus needs to be placed onto people with disabilities. The majority opinion tended to emphasis the barriers that society places in the way of people with disabilities.

### ***7.1.3 Promoting Advocacy/Mentoring***

The third aim of EYPD was to promote the advocacy of people with disabilities and to provide mentoring in support of this. In the view of many stakeholders, this is the one area which has been neglected throughout the year. Some respondents were unaware that this was an aim and overall it is felt that little strategic improvement has taken place in this area as a result of the year. Whilst a number of projects have promoted advocacy and mentoring it is felt that much work is needed here.

### ***7.1.4 Central Involvement of People with Disabilities in EYPD***

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Whilst many stakeholders agreed that people with disabilities were the central focus of the year, their actual involvement in activities (excluding funded projects) was limited and the scope existed for people with disabilities and their carers to be more fully represented and included.

#### ***7.1.5 Empowerment of People with Disabilities***

There was divided opinion as to whether or not the year encouraged empowerment of people with disabilities. Certainly, the locally funded groups felt empowered. However, there is little way of knowing the power of advertising and publicity and in the view of some stakeholders is an impossible concept to measure.

#### ***7.1.6 Media Campaign***

Overall the media campaign was viewed to be very effective by stakeholders with a good style and approach adopted through the involvement of local people with disabilities. Positive feedback was received regarding the product although it was thought to be too short a campaign and it was suggested that perhaps it could be used again in the future. (The campaign was subsequently rerun in March/April of 2004).

There were a number of criticisms of the media campaign. For example, it was introduced very late into the year and for many whilst it was good, it was slightly complex i.e. links to EYPD were not apparent. There was no direct mention of EYPD and therefore despite the key message involved, there was a lack of understanding as to the timeliness of the campaign.

#### ***7.1.7 Anticipated Achievements at Outset of EYPD***

Stakeholders were asked to state what they had hoped (at the outset) that the year would achieve. A number of common themes emerged. For example, through the generation of publicity, the desire to raise the awareness about and the profile of persons with disabilities within general society was high on the agenda.

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Others hoped that the year would provide a stepping stone to ongoing change whereby something could be achieved that would have an enduring effect, such as legislative change, organisational policy change and attitudinal change. There was a strong emphasis on improved opportunities and attitudes regarding the training, recruitment and employment of persons with disabilities.

In relation to a legacy, it was suggested by a number of those consulted that some form of regional group or forum to deal with disability issues should be set up once the year concluded.

A number of stakeholders had hoped that the year would encourage the statutory sector and civic society to accept that disability is not just a health issue but a major equality issue and that the year would enable people with disabilities to feel valued and rather than part of an isolated/hidden group that they could achieve lasting and measurable participation within society.

#### **7.1.8 Actual Achievements of EYPD**

Actual achievements of the year, according to stakeholders, included the following:

- The majority of members cited the advertising and media campaigns as the greatest achievements of the year. In particular, it was felt that the TV advertisement was very effective in terms of directly involving people with disabilities and raising their profile;
  - The launch was very successful. The Northern Ireland Launch event was held on the afternoon of 22 January 2003 at Grosvenor House in Belfast. Among the 180 guests were the Minister, service users, project winners, members of the Northern Ireland regional EYPD Steering group and local members of the European Parliament;
  - The funding of local organisations enabled activity to take place at a local level;
  - Awareness was raised, within general society;
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- Within government attention has been focussed and concentrated on people with disabilities and there has been recognition of disability as an equality issue;
- There was a distribution of money from government that would not normally have taken place;
- Broad partnership working and networking between organisations from within the statutory, community and voluntary sectors;
- Stimulation of debate which resulted in the discussion of issues affecting those with a disability;
- The fact that NI was the only region of Europe to have an extension to EYPD provided an opportunity to give a lead to the rest of Europe in relation to the Bad Ischl Declaration (that was called for at the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness Congress in may 2003);
- RNID and BDA have been working with the Equality Commission for NI to produce ‘Guidance on Providing Sign Language/English and Irish Sign Language/English Interpreters under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995’ since October 2003. The guidance, which will also be available on disc and video, is to be launched in October 2004 when DDA comes into full force. (The NI EYPD Steering Group called for recognition of BSL/ISL in 2003. This recognition was achieved when Secretary of State, Paul Murphy formerly announced recognition of both BSL/ISL in March 2004.);
- Members of EYPD NI Steering Group have made significant contribution to the Mental Health & Learning Disability Review (NI) including leading on specialist aspects of Mental Health & Learning Disability Working Groups; and
- A range of other high quality activities were undertaken (see Appendix II).

### ***7.1.9 Disappointments of EYPD***

Stakeholders cited the following, amongst the disappointments of the year for them:

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- The lead-in time and the extremely slow start to the year were highlighted as major disappointments. Once the year did begin there was a lack of momentum. It was suggested that:
  - There should have been an event straight after the launch;
  - A monthly event thereafter following the launch;
  - The media campaign should have commenced earlier; and
  - There was a strong feeling that disability issues were not picked up until the advertisement was launched.
- It was felt that the Special Olympics had a much higher profile;
- There were many groups/individuals on the RSG who had their own agenda and there was a lack of investment/sign-up to the vision at the start of the year;
- Some stakeholders questioned what practical difference has actually been made as a result of the year; given the low profile and lack of sustainable achievements; and
- Many stakeholders stated that no legacy has been left behind.

#### ***7.1.10 Advantages of the Year***

The majority of responses in relation to the advantages of dedicating a year to people with disabilities surrounded the raising of awareness.

The year was viewed very much as a launch pad for change whereby systems and building blocks for the future were put in place. It was felt that the year should represent the start of a process of focussing peoples' minds and activities and giving a voice to people with disabilities, through the identification of what needs to happen and the setting of an agenda for action.

The year, through the RSG, brought together a body of individuals from different backgrounds and with different disabilities, under the guidance of government and the development of future partnerships based on this union (if realised) should be an advantage of the year.

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### *7.1.11 Disadvantages of the Year*

The single greatest disadvantage identified with dedicating a year to people with disabilities is that such an awareness year is needed at all. There was a general feeling by stakeholders that awareness should be ongoing and that everyone should be accepted within society thereby removing the notion that people with disabilities are different. Asking people with disabilities to identify as a group was viewed to be patronising and the question was raised of what happens once the year is over - are people with disabilities no longer a priority?

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## Summary and Conclusions

### 8.1 Introduction

Throughout the report, stakeholder views and contextual information on EYPD have been provided. This section of the report comprises a factual summary of EYPD followed by an analysis and evaluation and overall conclusion.

### 8.2 Factual Summary of EYPD

From information gathered through consultation, questionnaire analysis, Omnibus results, project reports and project visits and evaluation, the following can be stated:

- 22 projects were funded locally. All of these projects involved people with disabilities, families and carers. The projects contributed to meeting the main and sub-themes of the year and all projects produced tangible and intangible outcomes that will contribute to change;
  - Over 60 EYPD events and activities have been recorded as taking place throughout the year. This is the equivalent to an average of one event per week. These events and the information stands at them have been seen by 135,000 people (9%) of the Northern Ireland population. Events took place across Northern Ireland;
  - Northern Ireland media campaign ‘Think for a change. It’s time for change’ highlights the issues faced by people with disabilities;
  - Omnibus Survey which showed that around 1 in 7 persons were able to identify 2003 as the European Year of People with Disabilities. Just under half recalled seeing advertisements about disability; mostly on television. Around two in five people recalled an event associated with EYPD; mostly to do with the Special Olympics and this was also the one that around 5% reported attending. In addition, 40% of people questioned recalled seeing the advertisement demonstrating an increase in awareness;
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- EYPD was organised, co-ordinated and delivered by NIRSG with the support of OFMDFM. Prior to the NIRSG first meeting in September 2002 significant work was carried out by staff of OFMDFM to ensure that the year got underway. Subsequently, significant work was undertaken by the NIRSG through work in sub-groups which targeted specific topics and ensured that deadlines for delivery were met;
- All of the EYPD projects, at various levels, have left a legacy. The legacy is demonstrated through the tangible and intangible outcomes that have been achieved;
- Among the general public the Omnibus survey shows that among the wider public there does appear to be an awareness that people with disabilities are not treated as fairly as non-disabled persons and that they do not have access to the same opportunities. The Year impacted on people with disabilities through involvement in projects, events and activities. However, gaps remain in targeting and involving individuals and their families. While information and feedback was requested from individuals through website and publication of a letter to the editor of a number of newspapers, no responses were received;
- Raising awareness of disability. This aim was met in Northern Ireland through a variety of methods, for example, projects, media campaigns and events and activities;
- Participation of people with disabilities in society. This aim was achieved again through projects, events and increased awareness. It is recognised that work needs to continue in this area especially to encourage involvement of individuals with a disability; and
- Promoting advocacy/mentoring. While a number of projects promoted this theme it was the least well recognised and achieved.

### **8.3 Analysis and Evaluation**

The following paragraphs provide an analysis of activities and processes that were undertaken throughout EYPD and an evaluation of issues raised. Where appropriate lessons learnt and

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areas to be considered further are highlighted at the end of each issue.

### **8.3.1 Funded Projects**

From the analysis of applications for funding it can be seen that:

- Applications were received from groups specifically related to disability, non-disability related groups and community organisations;
- Applications were received from across Northern Ireland;
- Applications were received across disability areas; and
- Proposals were received for a range of projects.

Every effort was made to ensure that applications were received from all sectors i.e. the official announcement, an advertisement and flyers sent to a range of organisations. A timescale of seven weeks for submission of applications is deemed to be appropriate, however it is recognised that for some organisations this may have been less due to their lack of knowledge of the scheme.

The process followed was fair and followed NCC guidelines. In addition, those assessing applications also followed decisions taken by NIRSG, for example, that only groups should be funded.

While some stakeholders may have felt that projects related to children were not adequately represented, this is a reflection of the applications received. From 130 applications, five were specifically related to children with disabilities (3.7%). Of the five received, one was successfully funded.

*It is the view of the evaluation team that the funding was distributed fairly and appropriately and that a similar process could be repeated in future years to achieve comparable outcomes.*

*The process in 2003 highlighted that projects targeting advocacy and mentoring were under-represented. Any future process*

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*should investigate how applications and subsequent funding to support the advocacy and mentoring theme could be boosted.*

### **8.3.2 Sustainable Change**

Stakeholders primarily felt that EYPD was just the beginning and that sustainable change beyond March 2004 would require commitment through a cultural change and through actions that can be implemented.

Stepping stones to change have taken place, for example, statutory and voluntary bodies have been brought together to focus on the issue of disability. This change in attitude by government sets the scene for long-term change. For example:

- Northern Ireland Office are establishing a scheme which will facilitate fast tracking for people with a disability;
- All Departments and Agencies have been issued with guidance on providing venues that promote access for all, for example, fully accessible and provision of interpreters; and
- A Disability Unit Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) Group is being created which will be formally launched during the second half of 2004. The group will be comprised of representatives from all government departments, the community and voluntary sector and those with a disability. The group will look at policy, strategy development and communication with individuals with a disability.

All of these government initiatives reflect the commitment to sustainable change and that disability issues continue to receive focus.

*During discussions with OFMDFM and a number of stakeholders it was suggested that in order to build on the lessons and successes of the EYPD a number of strategies may be adopted including:*

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- *The introduction of a high-profile pan disability week every year in Northern Ireland may be one way of maintaining the momentum of EYPD; and*
- *Ongoing use of the media campaign, in particular television to ensure that awareness levels regarding disability issues continue to be increased.*

*In conjunction with this, award schemes could be developed for innovative projects at government and industry level, to ensure ongoing participation by stakeholders.*

### **8.3.3 Organisation, Co-ordination and Delivery of EYPD**

EYPD was organised, co-ordinated and delivered by NIRSG with guidance and support from OFMDFM. One of the criticisms of NIRSG was the lack of representation of individuals with disabilities and to a lesser extent the actual number of disabled persons within the group. Requests were made from 35 organisations which were asked ‘where possible, we would encourage organisations to nominate individuals with a disability to serve on the RSG as we value the personal experience they can bring to the work of the group’. Of the 28 members nominated, seven declared a disability (25%). It is recognised that encouraging individuals with a disability to participate in groups such as NIRSG is difficult due to the inability to contact individuals directly in the first instance. As this is an ongoing problem it is one of the issues that the PSI on disability will aim to address.

Whilst some members expressed the view that OFMDFM ‘controlled the decision-making process’ others highlighted that decisions ‘were made by consensus’. Consideration could be given to how the year was managed by other countries to assist in exploring options for future.

Due to their role as the hosting department for the Year, OFMDFM provided information and feedback to the group on issues discussed and while it was felt by some to be ‘intrusive’ it was necessary in order for the year to maintain momentum.

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*While host departments/organisations may be undertaking work in the background, where possible steering groups should be formed in advance of designated years in order that sufficient lead in time is given for planning and co-ordination.*

*Prior to signing up to be part of a steering group members should be made fully aware of the commitment and responsibilities they will have so that continuity in decision making is maintained.*

*The development of subgroups/working groups in the disability area should be considered to ensure that, for example, there is ongoing media coverage of the issues facing those with a disability and further education of the public.*

#### **8.3.4 Links**

Feedback has indicated that links with other areas i.e. Europe and sectors were disappointing. It was felt that opportunities to promote the Year in Northern Ireland and to develop partnership working were not maximised, for example, communication with industry leaders to promote the aims of the Year and to ensure that a legacy was established.

Links were established and maintained with the UK NCC through attendance at the meetings by an OFMDFM representative. Feedback from the UK NCC was provided to members at all NIRSG meetings.

Representatives had observer status on the ROI NCC but due to the political situation in Northern Ireland joint events could not be organised.

Due to tight timescales the focus of the Year was placed on organising events and activities within Northern Ireland and, subsequently, development of links may not have received sufficient priority.

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### **8.3.5 Media Campaign**

Overall, the media campaign was viewed as being effective in both style and approach. It should be noted that Northern Ireland was the only region within the UK to run a specific advertising campaign.

Following the advertisement in October/November, the results of the Omnibus Survey show that television advertising about disability had been recalled by over 40% of persons interviewed; four times those reporting seeing posters or newspaper advertisements. The campaign was re-run in March/April in order to increase awareness.

*Ongoing use of the media campaign, in particular television to ensure that awareness levels regarding disability issues continue to be increased.*

### **8.3.6 Obstacles to Raising Awareness**

A number of obstacles to raising awareness were identified by stakeholders, for example, ignorance and at times prejudice within society and lack of involvement of employers and departments and government agencies.

Steps were taken throughout the year to overcome some of the obstacles encountered:

- Media campaign – TV advertising, posters and newspaper advertisements aimed at society in general;
  - Events throughout the year at which information boards were displayed and which it is estimated 135,000 people attended or saw;
  - Breaking the Barriers conference which involved representatives from all government departments and agencies; and
  - Promotion of awards for organisations which develop initiatives for people with disabilities i.e. the Employer Awards Scheme.
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*Encouragement of greater involvement of people with disabilities needs to take place in all areas such as, strategy development, project involvement and as leaders on committees.*

### **8.3.7 Obstacles to the Participation of People with Disabilities in Society**

Again a number of obstacles to the participation of people with disabilities in society were highlighted including lack of transport, poor accessibility and prejudice and fear.

It has been identified that there is a need to empower people with disabilities to advocate and challenge discriminatory and illegal (under Disability Discrimination Act) practices.

*It is recognised that in some instances there is an unwillingness on behalf of people with disabilities to become involved in society for a wide range of reasons i.e. barriers (physical, and social) and in some cases self-exclusion. These reasons need to be identified in order that a greater cross-section of individuals with a disability can be communicated with directly and their skills and experiences used to full potential. There is a need to target specific areas, for example, public transport, access and loneliness. This will be one of the tasks of the PSI Group.*

### **8.3.8 Promoting Advocacy and Mentoring**

While a number of projects promoted this theme it was the least well recognised and achieved. Advocacy and mentoring deserves particular focus in NI in the future. The following should be considered if advocacy and mentoring are to be promoted:

- Service culture does not promote people with disabilities as equal partners or as decision-makers;
  - There is lack of advocacy and mentoring opportunities;
  - Extra difficulties are experienced by people with disabilities in attending meetings; and
  - Communication aids are not readily available or used.
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*The promotion of advocacy and mentoring requires a sustained and co-ordinated effort across all sectors, in particular education, health and social services. Lessons from promising examples such as Compass Advocacy should be widely shared.*

### **8.3.9 Central Involvement of People with Disabilities**

People with disabilities were involved in the activities and events associated with the year, for example, the launch, the media campaign and the successfully funded projects. Furthermore, disabled groups and project winners were invited to attend steering group meetings held throughout the province.

Involvement in all of the above (meetings and events) related mainly to disability organisations and no facility existed to enable individuals to become involved in activities. Therefore, the primary source of inclusion was through organisations and individuals not associated with organisations were effectively excluded. In part this reflects the difficulties encountered by Government in trying to communicate with people with disabilities who are not affiliated to or active members of groups. Equally it is possibly compounded in Northern Ireland by a less well developed network for people with disabilities to come together.

*Central involvement of people with disabilities should be encouraged through the development of networks and work undertaken to encourage participation of individuals.*

### **8.3.10 Empowerment of People with Disabilities**

Whilst there was divided opinion among stakeholders as to whether or not the year encouraged empowerment a number of examples demonstrate that empowerment of people with disabilities has taken place:

- 22 projects were locally funded providing facilities to develop and involve those with disabilities, families, carers and the general public resulting in increased self confidence and self esteem;
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- Videos, guides and directories have been produced providing information for people with disabilities;
- The media campaign increased empowerment through increasing knowledge and awareness by the general public of issues faced by people with disabilities on a regular basis;
- Establishment of links and dialogue with policy makers (Breaking the Barriers Conference); and
- Encouraging individuals to make decisions.

*Further empowerment could be encouraged through funding of similar projects on a recurring basis and the development of networks to disseminate learning and to widely distribute videos, guides and directories that were produced as information sources.*

#### **8.4 Overall Conclusion**

It can be concluded that within Northern Ireland, EYPD was broadly successful in meeting its aims and objectives. The key achievements of the Year can be summarised as follows:

- 22 projects were funded locally;
  - The funding of local organisations enabled activity to take place at a local level;
  - Over 60 EYPD events and activities have been recorded as taking place throughout the year;
  - All of the EYPD projects, at various levels, have left a legacy. The legacy is demonstrated through the tangible and intangible outcomes that have been achieved;
  - Specific objectives were achieved through a variety of methods, for example, projects, media campaigns and events and activities. Research showed that awareness was raised, within general society;
  - The advertising and media campaigns ‘Think for a Change. It’s time for change’ which highlighted the issues faced by people with disabilities was viewed as one of the greatest achievements of the year. In particular, it was felt that the TV advertisement was very effective in terms of directly involving people with disabilities and raising their profile;
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- The launch was seen as a key achievement of the Year.
  - Within government attention has been focussed and concentrated on people with disabilities and there has been recognition of disability as an equality issue;
  - Broad partnership working and networking between organisations from within the statutory, community and voluntary sectors;
  - Stimulation of debate which resulted in the discussion of issues affecting those with a disability;
  - The fact that NI was the only region of Europe to have an extension to EYPD provided an opportunity to give a lead to the rest of Europe in relation to the Bad Ischl Declaration (that was called for at the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness Congress in may 2003);
  - RNID and BDA have been working with the Equality Commission for NI to produce ‘Guidance on Providing Sign Language/English and Irish Sign Language/English Interpreters under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995’ since October 2003. The guidance, which will also be available on disc and video, is to be launched in October 2004 when DDA comes into full force. (The NI EYPD Steering Group called for recognition of BSL/ISL in 2003. This recognition was achieved when Secretary of State, Paul Murphy formerly announced recognition of both BSL/ISL in March 2004.); and
  - Members of EYPD NI Steering Group have made significant contribution to the Mental Health & Learning Disability Review (NI) including leading on specialist aspects of Mental Health & Learning Disability Working Groups.
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