



# Outcomes-focused Monitoring System for the New Directions Interim Standards



## Introduction

This paper has been drafted by the National Disability Authority and the HSE Adult Day Services Office to provide an overview of the work that is underway to put in place an outcomes-focused monitoring system to assess funded Adult Day Services against the Interim Standards for New Directions.

The National Interim Standards Steering Group has been in place since February 2023 and both, the Day Services – Voices Together subgroup, and the Outcomes-focused monitoring subgroup have been in place and working since the summer of 2023 to progress the development of an outcomes-focused monitoring system. These groups have commenced their work but given the nature of the work it has taken some time and effort to get to a point where there is information to share and consult on.

This paper will provide some background information on why we are developing this monitoring system, a summary of the work already carried out, including a briefing overview of the proposed approach to monitoring day services, and next steps.

## New Directions

Adult Day Services are a key component of support services that enable people with disabilities to have valued roles within their community. Day Services are provided in line with the 2012 **New Directions** policy, which is underpinned by the values of Person-Centredness, Community Inclusion, Active Citizenship and Quality.

During the development of the New Directions report, the feedback received from consultations was that there could be “striking differences in people’s experience of services” and that standards were required for adult day services. Therefore, New Directions report recommended that

- A quality assurance system and guidelines should be developed to underpin New Directions
- An audit tool to help with self-evaluation, internal monitoring, and continuous quality improvement should also be devised
- The quality assurance system should apply to all providers in all disability sectors
- Service Providers should be provided with guidelines to support them in aligning their internal systems to the quality assurance system
- It should be established how the HSE-led quality assurance system would link with the relevant statutory regulatory bodies.

Since the publication of New Directions, there has been significant work undertaken and progress made in advancing the report’s recommendations related to standards and quality improvement, and developing this monitoring system will continue to progress these recommendations.

### **New Directions Interim Standards**

Through the structure of the New Directions Implementation Groups (NDIG) the **New Directions Interim Standards** were developed<sup>1</sup> and published in 2015. An implementation plan to implement the Interim Standards was developed in conjunction with the day service sector (and discussions with HIQA). Implementing the Interim Standards has two phases;

- Phase 1: Develop a process of continuous quality improvement for day services in line with the Interim Standards.
- Phase 2: Develop a monitoring system that provides a mechanism for assurance, quality, and safety of day services.

### **Phase I: EASI – Evaluation, Action, Service Improvement**

To progress Phase I a continuous quality improvement process (EASI – Evaluation, Action, Service Improvement) that includes engagement with service users, staff and management was developed, piloted and rolled out on a phased basis from 2017 to 2019. Covid-19 meant that efforts to embed the EASI process in all locations were challenging. However, work in building capacity (through guidance, training, and webinars) has ensured that New Directions locations are now conducting annual EASI self-evaluations to develop annual quality improvement plans.

As part of the EASI process, day service locations electronically submit their EASI tool “National Report”. The National Reports are analysed by the HSE for statistical reporting purposes. However, the EASI tool is not scrutinised, so locations / service providers do not currently receive feedback on their continuous quality improvement process. There have been calls from providers for feedback on their self-evaluation and continuous quality improvement process, and this monitoring system aims to provide feedback to support continuous quality improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Standards are referred to as “Interim” because although they were drafted using a similar structure to HIQA standards and HIQA was made aware of their development there was no indication at the time of development when or if HIQA would adopt the standards.

## Phase 2: Developing a monitoring system

Building on phase 1, the HSE engaged with Interim Standards Groups at CHO level and convened a workshop for stakeholders in 2022. This consultation reflected on the work to date to implement the Interim Standards and the self-evaluation process.

In addition, the stakeholders at this workshop had initial discussions on possible future directions. What emerged from those discussions was a general consensus that there was an appetite for moving to some form of external assessment of the quality of Adult Day Service locations, but that there needed to be an appropriate balance between flexibility and standardisation, between accountability and supporting learning and acknowledging good practice and between focusing on governance and focusing on the outcomes for the individual. The feedback from this workshop was used to inform the initial work on designing the monitoring system.

HIQA has reconfirmed that it has no immediate plans to regulate Adult Day Services and is supportive of a monitoring system that provides a mechanism for assurance, quality and safety of day services. Therefore, the HSE is progressing this work to develop a monitoring system to continue the implementation of the Interim Standards.

### **Work done on developing an outcomes-focused monitoring system**

The HSE commissioned the Interim Standards Steering Group in 2023 (consisting of the HSE, disability umbrella bodies and the NDA). A Project Plan was developed and approved by the Steering Group in March 2023. The objective of the project is to;

“Develop a monitoring system to assess day services’ progress towards achievement of the Interim Standards for New Directions to assist stakeholders to deliver services and supports in accordance with the vision and stated objectives outlined in the New Directions and the Value for Money reports.”

The Project Plan set out the role of two subgroups tasked with progressing the key tasks set out in the Project Plan and reporting to the Steering Group.

- 1) The **Day Services – Voices Together subgroup** is tasked with ensuring that individuals who attend adult day services are included in the design process
- 2) An **Outcomes-focused Monitoring subgroup** is tasked with developing the relevant frameworks and guidance etc., to underpin the monitoring system.

The **Day services – Voices Together subgroup**, which includes individuals who are supported by Adult Day Services, has the role of ensuring that the voice of individuals who attend day services is informing the work of the outcomes-focused monitoring subgroup.

The **Outcomes-focused Monitoring subgroup** is working on scoping out a proposed approach to outcomes-focused monitoring. It has developed a draft Monitoring Framework which has drawn on a number of sources, including the EASI Resources (developed by the Interim Standards Project Managers in collaboration with services providers), the 2016 National Outcomes Framework for Disability Services, and the draft Quality Framework (A Quality Framework: supporting persons with disabilities to achieve personal outcomes [draft 2018]) in particular.

The Monitoring Framework was developed to underpin the monitoring system and will be used by an Assessor when carrying out a Monitoring Visit to a Location. The Framework outlines the outcomes that an individual would experience in relation to each standard and a list of questions and sources of evidence that an Assessor could use to gather information during a monitoring visit to determine if the Day service is aligning its services and support to the standards.

### **The proposed approach to monitoring**

We are very much still in the early stages of development and will continue to consult with you over the coming year on the proposed monitoring approach. At this point, the following elements are being considered as part of the monitoring system:

- a **Monitoring visit** by a HSE assessor to assess against the Interim Standards or the values of New Directions (Person Centredness, Community Inclusion, Active Citizenship and Quality)
- a **Desktop review** to review a Locations EASI tool prior to a Monitoring visit
- a **report on the findings** of the monitoring visit shared with the provider
- a provider developing a **quality improvement plan** following a Monitoring Visit
- recognition of good practice and **support for services to improve quality** where identified.

The Steering Group have agreed on a set of **principles** that should underpin the proposed monitoring system, however, they may change following consultation with stakeholders. The principles state that the monitoring system should,

- prioritise the **experiences** and **outcomes** of individuals, focus on their rights (including their rights under the UNCRPD) and ensure that their **voice is heard**
- promote **person centredness, active citizenship** and **community inclusion** in line with the values in New Directions
- strike an **appropriate balance** between **accountability** and **quality improvement**
- support **organisational learning** and **continuous quality improvement**
- focus on the **elements of services** that have the most **impact on individuals' outcomes**

- be developed and implemented based on a **collaborative, partnership-based approach**
- ensure that **assessors** are appropriately **trained, mentored** and **skilled** at working with **people who avail of Adult Day Services**, their **families** and **service providers**
- ensure that monitoring reports are **consistent** and **fair**

The Steering Group has endorsed the idea that **existing information** from a **location's EASI tool** should be provided to Assessors to inform a **desktop review** prior to a Monitoring Visit. It is intended that this approach will ensure that the monitoring approach **builds on the EASI process** and contributes to monitoring being **less burdensome** on providers. It is hoped that by reviewing EASI tools and reports as part of the desktop review the **assessors' time** during the assessment visit will be freed to focus on the impact of the service on the **outcomes for the individual**.

## Next Steps

### **Informing all adults who attend Day Services (Q3 2024)**

Communications for adults attending Day Services will be issued through the Day Services – Voices Together subgroup. Further communications will be issued to day service managers and their teams. These communications will include new easy read documentation to refresh on New Directions, the Interim Standards, and an introduction to the monitoring of day services. We encourage each service provider to revisit the existing and the new easy read information with adults attending day services.

### **Consultations to inform the development of the monitoring system (Q3 2024)**

In order to inform the development of this monitoring system we will conduct consultations with stakeholders to provide information and gather feedback on key aspects of the proposed outcomes-focused monitoring system. The following consultations are planned for Q3 2024;

- 1) Focus groups with people who attend day services
- 2) A survey will be sent to family members
- 3) Interim Standards Organisational Leads
- 4) Direct support staff - Online consultations

### **Trailing and evaluating the monitoring system (Q4 2024)**

Following the consultations, we will begin a Trial in Quarter 4 2024 for 6 - 9 months across 60 day service locations to further develop and improve the monitoring system. The trial and evaluation will focus on **developing, reflecting** and **refining** core elements of monitoring. The Steering Group has approved an approach to a **trial and evaluation** of the monitoring system. The Steering Group has approved that the current Interim Standards Project Managers should be the assessors **for the purposes of trial only**. More information on the Trial will be shared throughout the consultation and before it begins.

The trial will focus on standards related to **person-centred services** because it is a core value of New Directions and central to supporting people to achieve their outcomes. A lot of work has progressed in recent years on Person-Centred Planning in response to service providers seeking more support in this area. Most recently, the HSE has developed a 90-minute Person-Centred Planning eLearning module for staff with certification, accessible on [HSeLand](#).

### **Implementing the monitoring system (Q4 2025)**

The HSE is committed to developing the monitoring system in **partnership** with individuals supported by Adult Day Services and service providers. It is acknowledged that what is being developed is **challenging** but **innovative** and can potentially have **significant positive impacts** on individuals supported by Adult Day Services. Therefore, the monitoring system will be built in **stages** over the coming years through a process of **development, reflection, and refinement**.

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