European Semester 2022-2023 country fiche on disability equality

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With comparative data Annex provided by EDE

Ireland

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European Disability Expertise (EDE) provides independent scientific support to the Commission's policy Unit responsible for disability issues. It aims to mainstream disability equality in EU policy processes, including implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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1 Executive summary and recommendations

1.1 Key points and main challenges for Ireland in 2022

Disability and the labour market

The disability employment gap remains wide but there was progress in support programmes through the Pathways to Work Strategy 2021-2025, and Green Skills for the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2021-2030.[2] The Department of Social Protection could link more effectively with SOLAS (the Government agency for FET), the education training boards (ETBs) and community education providers in universal design of learning frameworks and accessibility. Opportunities remain to audit the workplace experience programme for accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Ireland has yet to complete its final action plan of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for persons with disabilities or fully implement the recommendations of the *Make Work Pay* report. Lack of career guidance in education settings hinders transition to higher or further education. Policy advice from the National Disability Authority on vocational rehabilitation has yet to be implemented.

Disability, social policies and healthcare

The Disability Capacity Review to 2032 is welcome, along with the Disability Action Framework to transform disability services in line with the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Although Ireland is working towards deinstitutionalisation, progress is slow. The National Disability Authority points to a lack of evaluation or update of social inclusion measures by local authorities despite funding for relevant measures. Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone has achieved little thus far. Its Implementation Plan 2022-2024 was published in March 2022 with deliverables for the next three years. It will be important to monitor progress. Ireland has launched a new Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 but has yet to finalise the implementation plan.

Disability, education and skills

There is evidence of transition planning for children moving through the education system, particularly those progressing from preschool settings to primary education. The access and inclusion model for early years continues to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in early-years settings, however it still needs to support children that may need one-on-one support, or those who require healthcare assistance for complex needs. A review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 is underway, with a report to be finalised. The National Disability Authority recommends completing a review of Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 to ensure a joined-up approach to support persons with disabilities in education settings. While 'inclusion' is a buzzword within educational strategies, it is important to evaluate the operationalisation of such policies.

Investment priorities for inclusion and accessibility

All retrofitting programmes for public and residential buildings should include an audit for accessibility and assistive technology. Only 3 % of the disability budget in 2018 was spent on community services and supports to help people with disabilities

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[2] See: https://www.solas.ie/programmes/green-skills/.

participate in the community and live as independently as possible, which hinders decongregation and social inclusion. Under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, local authorities are required to 'develop actions at community level to build and sustain disability-competent and welcoming communities'. However, no update has been provided on these actions despite funding appropriated.

1.2   Recommendations for Ireland

These recommendations are based on the evidence and analysis presented in the following chapters of our report.

Recommendation: Strengthen the liaison between public employment services and wider educational and community initiatives to improve skills and digital literacy.
Rationale: Ireland's Pathways to Work strategy extends employment services beyond the registered unemployed to include additional groups receiving working-age payments, such as persons with disabilities. This presents a unique opportunity to strengthen liaison between the Department of Social Protection, SOLAS, education and training boards, and community education providers. Public Employment Services by Intreo can strengthen their liaison and support of persons with disabilities who are unemployed or re-entering the labour market by providing them with information on all the options available to them, e.g. work placement options, higher or further education and training, or community education programmes, and provide support in accessing the recommended path. Intreo job coaches and employment liaison support officers should receive disability awareness training.

Recommendation: Progress deinstitutionalisation in line with Article 19 of UN CRPD.
Rationale: An increase in the disability budget for community services and support is required at the community level to enable the transition of persons with disabilities from institutionalised settings to their wider communities, this includes accountability of funding requested by local authorities to provide social inclusion activities for persons with disabilities.

Recommendation: Provide career guidance within special education and mainstream settings, particularly at secondary level to support transition to higher or further education and training settings.
Rationale: The rollback on the provision of career guidance within special education and mainstream settings hinders the flow of information and support in the transition of persons with disabilities looking to increase their skills or enter employment. Career guidance has a unique role in enabling a person to consider their options and provide a supportive space to discuss the opportunities available to them. Education and training boards have established a 'support to apprenticeship group'. It is important to assess how this group supports persons with disabilities for an apprenticeship programme, or during an apprenticeship programme to assess remaining barriers. The National Disability Authority recommend that SOLAS monitor pre-apprenticeship developments, which will help to understand the pathway of persons with disabilities into successful apprenticeships.

Recommendation: Audit accessibility and assistive technology within the National Retrofit Plan for public and residential buildings.

Rationale: Within the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Ireland is a focus on deep retrofitting of public and residential buildings. Considering aging demographics across Europe it is pertinent to incorporate an assessment of accessibility and assistive technology of residential homes to ensure that persons with disabilities and older people can remain mobile, independent, and digitally connected within their own homes.

2   Mainstreaming disability equality in the 2022 Semester documents

2.1   Country Report (CR) and Country Specific Recommendation (CSR)

The following key points highlight where a disability perspective was considered, or should be considered, in the CR/CSR. We address the most relevant of these in the next chapters.

The Country Report for Ireland draws attention to the wide disability employment gap and the elevated risk of poverty and social exclusion. It highlights how meeting these challenges for persons with disabilities is key to meeting Ireland's wider 2030 targets, and implies a need for targeted support. It evidences the disability employment gap in Ireland as the largest in the EU at 38.6 %. In 2020, people with disabilities had an almost 14 percentage points higher chance of being at risk of poverty or social exclusion than the general population, 33.9 % vs 20 %. It also refers to the lack of availability of social services for people with disabilities.

The 2022 Country Specific Recommendations for Ireland contained no direct reference to disability, however, key recommendations that may have added significance for persons with disabilities include those relating to:

- targeted support for households most vulnerable to energy price hikes;
- support for people fleeing Ukraine;
- investment for the green and digital transition;
- implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan and previous CSRs;
- including active labour market integration support and upskilling, reforms of social and affordable housing, pensions and healthcare;
- sustainability of the state pension system.

There were no new recommendations addressing labour market or social policy issues.

2.2   National Reform Programme (NRP) and Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)

The following key points highlight where the situation of people with disabilities or disability policies are relevant to the NRP/RRP. We analyse the most relevant of these in the next chapters:

- National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 (extended to 2022);[3]
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024;[4]
- National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027;[5]
- Pathways to Work Strategy;[6]

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[3] See: https://nda.ie/publications/justice-and-safeguarding/national-disability-inclusion-strategy/national-disability-inclusion-strategy.html.

[4] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/83c2a8-the-comprehensive-employment-strategy-for-people-with-disabilities/.

[5] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/60d76-national-housing-strategy-for-disabled-people-2022-2027/.

- Roadmap for Social Inclusion,[7] which seeks to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities;
- Budgets 2021 and 2022 include measures to support people with disabilities including the establishment of a Disability Participation and Consultation Network;
- Cost of Disability Report (December 2021).[8]

There is no direct reference to disability in the summary of the RRP published on the Commission website, however, key measures of relevance might include:
- energy efficiency in residential and public buildings;
- digitalisation of public administration, in particular the healthcare system;
- promoting digital skills;
- IT equipment to disadvantaged learners in schools;
- access to the labour market for jobseekers;
- increasing the supply of social and affordable housing;
- Example project: Work Placement Experience Programme.

Ireland's RRP refers explicitly to disability only twice: identifying that persons with disabilities are included in Government equality strategies (p. 14), and with reference to eligibility for the Work Placement Experience Programme (p. 15). It does not refer directly to the National Disability Inclusion Strategy or Ireland's obligations under the CRPD. There is passing acknowledgement of vulnerability to poverty and low participation in the workforce for vulnerable groups (including persons with disabilities). There is reference to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the actions on education, without specific reference to learners with disabilities. In all other areas the relevance of disability equality must be inferred and would benefit from more explicit mainstreaming.

2.3   Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans

It is important that Semester plans align with national disability strategy. In Ireland, this refers to the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 with a decision to extend the strategy for an additional year into 2022. The original five-year national strategy was developed for the period 2017-2021, in preparation for ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), with initial progress evaluated in 2019 and again in 2021 with suggested priorities for 2022. There is a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024, and a National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 was published in 2022. This National Action Plan is mentioned in the 2022 NRP.[9]

Relevant recommendations arising from participation in the UN CRPD are highlighted in the following chapters. The last UN CRPD Committee recommendations to Ireland are not yet scheduled; the most recent submission by

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6   See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1feaf-pathways-to-work-2021/.
7   See: https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/0b2e3d-minister-doherty-publishes-roadmap-for-social-inclusion-2020-2025/.
8   See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1d84e-the-cost-of-disability-in-ireland-research-report/.
9   See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d3761-national-reform-programme-2020/, p. 31.

Ireland was in 2021 and the response from the Committee has not yet been scheduled.

3 Disability and the labour market – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

Ireland's initial CRPD implementation report was submitted in 2021[10] but dialogue with the UN CRPD Committee is not yet scheduled.

Article 27 UN CRPD addresses Work and Employment.

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

According to the Social Scoreboard indicator, cited in the Semester package, the disability employment gap in Ireland is considered 'Watch but improving'.

Census data from 2016 indicates the employment rate of persons with disabilities was about half of the rate for persons without disabilities, 36.5 % vs 72.8 %.[11] Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Ireland of 32.9 % in 2020, compared to 75.7 % for other persons. This results in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 39 percentage points, which was the widest in the EU (estimated EU27 average gap 24.5, see Tables 2-4) or an employment chances ratio of 0.4. Statistics subsequently published on the Eurostat database indicate a disability employment gap of 38.8 percentage points in 2020, using a slightly different methodology, and rising to 41.3 points in 2021.[12]

The same data indicate unemployment rates of 21.6 % and 7.2 %, respectively in 2020 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Ireland was 42.0 %, compared to 81.6 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in the annex. According to national census data, in 2016, those with difficulty going outside of the home alone had the highest rate of unemployment at 45.8 per cent. Male unemployment exceeded female unemployment for all disability types, with those experiencing a psychological or emotional condition showing the greatest difference at 9.3 per cent.[13]

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment in 2020-2021, some caution is needed when interpreting trend data. There was also a time series break in the survey for Ireland in 2020.

In 2021, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) conducted analysis of the skills and employment gaps among persons with disabilities (also based on the EU-SILC and census data).[14] The ESRI analysis of employment data indicated that

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[10] Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Initial Report of Ireland under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2021, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fIRL%2f1.

[11] See: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp9hdc/p8hdc/p9chs/.

[12] Eurostat, Disability employment gap by level of activity limitation and sex (source EU-SILC), 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dlm200/default/table.

[13] See: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp9hdc/p8hdc/p9chs/.

[14] See: https://www.nda.ie/publications/employment/employment-publications/identification-of-skills-gaps-among-persons-with-disabilities-and-their-employment-prospects.html.

the negative impact of disability on likelihood of employment was stronger for men than for women, and for employees than for the self-employed. Additionally, it observed that the at-risk-of-poverty rates for people with disabilities in employment are much higher than for employed people without disabilities (see Section 4).

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 (CES)[15] aims to achieve an increase of 33 % to 38 % in the employment rate of persons with disabilities aged 20-64 by 2024. The annual assessment of the CES[16] by the National Disability Authority outlines what was achieved in 2021 and what remains for 2022. In this vein, it highlights achievements such as the introduction of a training grant (EUR 1 000) for jobseekers with disabilities using the EmployAbility[17] service as well as access to the workplace equipment adaptation grant (WEAG), personal reader grant (PRG) and the job interview interpreter grant (JIIG). The Department of Social Protection (DSP) increased upper earnings for those receiving disability allowance and blind pension in the 2022 budget as well as an increase to the general weekly means disregard entry point for disability allowance. The Department of Social Protection produced a guide entitled 'Get work supports if you have a disability'[18] to provide clear information for in-work support for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the Health and Safety Authority published a guide for employers with regard to inclusive health and safety practices for employees with disabilities.[19] To increase accessible public transport, the National Transport Authority installed changing places facilities at Connolly train station in Dublin with the intention of expanding these facilities.

The final action plan of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy remains to be finalised and agreed. In addition, work remains to be done to implement the full set of recommendations of the *Make Work Pay* report[20] and develop a supported employment programme for those with higher support needs. Career guidance is still lacking within special education and mainstream education settings for persons with disabilities. Additionally, policy advice on vocational rehabilitation has yet to be implemented. Public sector bodies continue to exceed the minimum target of employment of persons with disabilities at 3.1 % for 2020, however, awareness-raising and roll-out of supports and initiatives to assist public sector bodies achieve the target of 6 % is required.

As noted in the 2022 National Reform Programme, new initiatives to create employment and improve skills or retrain potential employees have been adopted.

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[15] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/83c2a8-the-comprehensive-employment-strategy-for-people-with-disabilities/.

[16] See: https://nda.ie/publications/employment/employment-publications/comprehensive-employment-strategy-nda-year-end-assessment-2021.html.

[17] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/service/8578c4-access-the-employability-service/.

[18] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f6d74-get-work-supports-if-you-have-a-disability/#support-to-find-a-job.

[19] See: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_and_forms/publications/safety_and_health_management/hsa_disability_guidelines_2021.pdf.

[20] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0fb542-make-work-pay-report/.

Specifically, these include the Pathways to Work Strategy 2021-2025[21] and the Workplace Experience Programme,[22] which aim to provide 3 000 and 10 000 places respectively. SOLAS has published guidance on universal design for learning within the further education and training sector[23] which it will be important to incorporate for the upskilling and retraining effort proposed in the National Skills Strategy, specifically the Green Skills for FET 2021-2030[24] and the Action Plan for Apprenticeships 2021-2025. The Department of Social Protection should work with SOLAS and the education and training boards to ensure that integrated literacy, numeracy and digital upskilling support is available if required to all participants on the scheme as an integrated part of the training on offer.

A National Training Fund[25] has been created to ensure upskilling and reskilling along with a National Skills Strategy[26] to further address the upskilling and retraining effort of those unemployed for over six months. A new Action Plan for Apprenticeships 2021-2025[27] has been developed to increase the number of apprenticeships available as well as a Green Skills programme[28] to train potential employees to retrofit domestic and commercial properties in line with climate sustainability goals.

Importantly, the Pathways to Work strategy extends employment services beyond the registered unemployed to include additional groups receiving working-age payments, such as persons with disabilities. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) research in Ireland[29] about employer engagement and system wide changes to support people with disabilities into employment noted how 'Ireland has an underdeveloped engagement structure with respect to information and support for the employment of persons with disabilities'. It will be important that the proposed job coach role within Intreo liaises with the Employers for Change service managed by the Open Doors Initiative to increase employer engagement and provide information and support on accessibility, reasonable accommodation, inclusive recruitment practices and the benefits of diversity within the private sector. The Workplace Experience Programme, which succeeds the DSP's Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS), reports that as of the end of 2021, 10 % of participants were persons with disabilities.[30]

The National Remote Work Strategy 2021[31] ensures that remote work is a permanent feature of the Irish workplace. It led to priority drafting of the Right to Request Remote Work Bill 2021,[32] which could improve opportunities for some persons with disabilities to take up employment remotely considering those who

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[21] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1feaf-pathways-to-work-2021/.
[22] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/service/95fe1-work-placement-experience-programme/.
[23] See: https://www.solas.ie/guidance-for-implementing-universal-design-for-learning-in-irish-further-education/.
[24] See: https://www.solas.ie/programmes/green-skills/.
[25] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/927a5a-ministers-publish-the-national-training-fund-expenditure-report-2019/.
[26] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/69fd2-irelands-national-skills-strategy-2025-irelands-future/.
[27] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0879f-action-plan-for-apprenticeship-2021-2025/.
[28] See: https://www.solas.ie/programmes/green-skills/.
[29] See: https://www.oecd.org/publications/disability-work-and-inclusion-in-ireland-74b45baa-en.htm.
[30] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, p. 30.
[31] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/51f84-making-remote-work-national-remote-work-strategy/.
[32] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/64d83-right-to-request-remote-work-bill-2021/.

have difficulty going outside of the home alone had the highest rate of unemployment. The regulatory impact assessment for this bill notes that such flexibility may help to increase labour market participation among groups including people with disabilities, and argues that 'Mobility, transport and physical access issues may make attending a workplace difficult. Working from home for persons with disabilities in some cases is the only viable alternative'. But it also notes concerns that 'remote work could hinder the visibility of employees with disabilities in the workplace' and should not obviate employer responsibilities to reasonable accommodation in the workplace (p. 10).[33]

Given the significant and increasing employment gap that continues for persons with disabilities and the range of measures in terms of employment and education now active to address upskilling and retraining of those unemployed, it is imperative that the Department of Social Protection ensures adequate and sufficient liaison is in place to support persons with disabilities to gain the training or experience necessary to enter or re-enter the labour market. Additionally, it is important that accessibility, reasonable accommodation and assistive technology are incorporated into the placement, employment, upskilling or retraining programmes recommended to them.

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[33] Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Right to Request Remote Work Bill 2021: Regulatory Impact Assessment, 2022, https://assets.gov.ie/213920/3ceb75f7-44fc-4312-a281-95e46cd4cabe.pdf.

4 Disability, social policies and healthcare – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

Ireland's initial CRPD implementation report was submitted in 2021[34] but dialogue with the UN CRPD Committee has not yet been scheduled.

Article 28 UN CRPD addresses Adequate standard of living and social protection.

Article 19 UN CRPD addresses Living independently in the community.

Article 25 UN CRPD addresses Health.

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Ireland was 22.8 % in 2020, compared to 10.4 % for other persons of similar age – an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 12 percentage points (see Table 14, there was a break in time series for the Irish data in 2020). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 7.4 points (22.0 % for older persons with disabilities and 14.6 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in the annex also indicate the respective rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion and break these down by gender as well age. Recently updated data from Eurostat indicates the relative risk for the working age disabled population rose to 25.7 %, and for the older age group to 26.2 % in 2021.[35]

For persons with disabilities of working age (18-64) in Ireland, the risk of poverty before social transfers was 58.0 % and 22.8 % after transfers in 2020. The in-work-poverty rate for persons with disabilities in this age range was 9.3 %, falling to 7.7 % in 2021.[36]

Of interest to health policy are the data on self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (too expensive, too far to travel or waiting list). Disability equality gaps are evident here too and, on this basis, the rate for persons with disabilities in Ireland was 4.8 %, compared to 1.3 % for other persons.

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

Under the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025,[37] specific measures were adopted in Budgets 2021 and 2022 to support people with disabilities along with the establishment of a Disability Participation and Consultation Network and the

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[34] Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Initial Report of Ireland under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2021, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fIRL%2f1.

[35] Eurostat, People at risk of poverty by level of activity limitation, sex and age, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe010/default/table?lang=en.

[36] Eurostat, In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by level of activity limitation, sex and age, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe050/default/table.

[37] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/0b2e3d-minister-doherty-publishes-roadmap-for-social-inclusion-2020-2025/.

progression of the Cost of Disability Report 2021.[38] A Disability Capacity Review to 2032[39] has been published and a Disability Action Plan Framework[40] has been developed to outline the key priorities up to 2025. Importantly, the plan incorporates the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the UN CRPD to address the way in which disability services are delivered and how they can progress in light of aging demographics (the 2022 NRP observes a lack of social services for people with disabilities in Ireland). Children's services, support for young people with disabilities in severe distress, day services for school leavers, personal assistance and home support, respite services and housing within the community are all areas of priority that have been earmarked for transformation and consultation with persons with disabilities.

A recent judicial review regarding the assessment of need process determined that the standard operating procedure of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for the assessment of need process did not comply with the Disability Act and the HSE has currently stopped using the existing standard operating procedure.[41] In addition, recent legislative changes in Ireland include the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, the Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2018 and Ireland's international obligations under the UN CRPD. The HSE is pursuing implementation of the national mental health policy, Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone, however, despite the actions laid out in the policy, little has been achieved thus far aside from confirmation of 29 new child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) staff and five peer support workers in mental health services.[42] The Sharing the Vision Implementation Plan 2022-2024[43] was published in March 2022 and sets out programme deliverables for the next three years.

The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (NPAP)[44] contains actions targeting persons with disabilities including core funding for Cara (the national pan-disability sport organisation) and the sports for disability training framework,[45] which is designed to support the further development and delivery of specialised disability training courses through Cara.

The study *Moving In, Moving On*[46] indicated that quality of life outcomes improved for participants after they moved from congregated settings to the community including more opportunities to exercise and more choice and control over their daily lives. Despite the 60 % cost increase for providing person-centred services, it is important to progress the process of deinstitutionalisation in line with Article 19 of UN CRPD.

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[38] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1d84e-the-cost-of-disability-in-ireland-research-report/.
[39] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d3b2c-disability-capacity-review-to-2032-a-review-of-social-care-demand-and-capacity-requirements-to-2032/.
[40] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f7943-the-disability-framework-action-plan-working-group/.
[41] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, p. 34.
[42] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, p. 35.
[43] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2e46f-sharing-the-vision-a-mental-health-policy-for-everyone/.
[44] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/b60202-national-physical-activity/.
[45] See: https://www.sportireland.ie/news/sports-inclusion-disability-programme.
[46] See: https://nda.ie/publications/main-report-moving-in-moving-on.

Crucially, the National Disability Authority review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy highlights how Action 73 relating to social inclusion within local communities has yet to be progressed.[47] Despite local area co-ordination pilots taking place, no evaluation has been conducted to consider the importance of actors at local level supporting inclusive living in communities. The National Disability Authority is drafting research and planning consultations to inform an advice paper around social inclusion. Similarly, Action 74 contains no update that obliges local authorities to 'develop actions at community level to build and sustain disability-competent and welcoming communities' despite the local authorities applying for funding to improve the experiences of persons with disabilities in their communities indicating that actions are taking place at local level. The HSE *Disability Capacity Review to 2032*,[48] published in 2021, noted that 3 % of the disability budget in 2018 was spent on community services and supports to help people with disabilities participate in the community and live as independently as possible. The review recommends that there should be increased funding to these services.[49]

Sport Ireland is required to ensure that all facilities including gym equipment are accessible to persons with disabilities and that capital projects must conform to the seven principles of universal design. The Sports Inclusion Disability Programme received EUR 945 000 in 2021 to maintain and support the programme with sports inclusion disability officers delivering in 29 local sports partnership areas to develop sustainable clubs and programmes in all settings. The Cara inclusive volunteer programme included over 170 active volunteers that provided positive opportunities for persons with disabilities in sport and physical activity at club and community level. The National Museum of Ireland has named accessibility as one of its five values under its master vision statement 2018-2032, ensuring that collections and activities are wide reaching and seek to engage new audiences.

The mid-term review of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy indicators highlighted the slow pace of decongregation. In 2021, it was expected that 144 people were expected to move to new homes in the community however it was not confirmed if this was achieved.[50]

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is holding a public consultation on proposed changes to Part M of the building regulations to provide for changing places toilets in certain publicly accessible buildings. The National Disability Authority has carried out research on the estimated number of potential users of changing places in Ireland.[51]

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[47] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, p. 37.
[48] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d3b2c-disability-capacity-review-to-2032-a-review-of-social-care-demand-and-capacity-requirements-to-2032/.
[49] See: https://nda.ie/publications/social-community/a-review-of-approaches-used-to-create-liveable-communities-to-attain-full-participation-and-inclusion-for-disabled-people, p. 11.
[50] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, p. 40.
[51] See: https://nda.ie/news-and-events/news/estimated-number-of-potential-users-of-changing-places-toilets-in-ireland.

A new National Housing Strategy for Disabled Persons 2022-2027[52] was launched in January 2022 with a greater emphasis on independent living and community inclusion with six themes: (1) accessible housing and communities; (2) interagency collaboration and the provision of supports; (3) affordability of housing; (4) communication and access to information; (5) knowledge, capacity and expertise; and (6) strategy alignment. Work has commenced on the implementation plan for the strategy with a view to completion by the second quarter of 2022, however, this has not been finalised. In addition, 'Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland'[53] has been launched which is committed to ensuring that affordable, quality housing with a mix of housing design types provides social housing, including universally designed units.

The Cooperative Real Engagement for Assistive Technology Enhancement initiative (CREATE)[54] received EUR 2 million for 11 projects that aim to improve access to digital and assistive technologies for people with disabilities. While the projects funded, once complete, will create a foundation for digital and assistive technology to be of use for persons with disabilities in new operational settings, it will be important that the technology feeds into other areas, e.g. the new assistive technology passport could collaborate with the transport app or assistive technology devices within the home. Assistive technology should not create duplication, be fragmented, or create the need for additional technology or devices for persons with disabilities. It will be important to ensure that usability and operability of the assistive devices are co-created and person-centred from the outset.

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[52] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/60d76-national-housing-strategy-for-disabled-people-2022-2027/.

[53] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ef5ec-housing-for-all-a-new-housing-plan-for-ireland/.

[54] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/6d753-minister-for-disabilities-announces-2m-for-digital-and-assistive-technology-projects/.

5 Disability, education and skills – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

Ireland's initial CRPD implementation report was submitted in 2021[55] but dialogue with the UN CRPD Committee is not yet scheduled.

Article 24 UN CRPD addresses Education.

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC 2020 estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with caution due to relatively wide confidence intervals but they consistently indicate disability equality gaps (an average of 2-3 years provides a more stable indication). Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status in Ireland. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) are significantly more likely to leave school than non-disabled peers of the same age groups (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (aged 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider age range 30-39).

The state's initial CRPD report (noted above) includes some contextual statistics on the educational situation, based on Census data and other national sources. This suggests that the educational attainment gap had been closing up to 2016. It also summarises administrative data on the number of pupils taught in segregated or mainstream settings (circa 99 %). In the school year 2019/20, 12.2 % of entrants to higher education were students with disabilities, a figure that has been increasing in recent years.[56]

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Ireland and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021.

Early years
The access and inclusion model (AIM)[57] that supports the meaningful participation of children with disabilities in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme received a 14 % increase in capitation from September 2022, from EUR 210 per week to EUR 240 per week.[58] The funds enable services either to reduce the number of children in the preschool room or to buy in additional assistance to enable a lower adult-child ratio. Since 2016, 18 521 children in 3 871 settings have received targeted supports under AIM. A trial process is underway to

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[55] Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Initial Report of Ireland under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2021, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fIRL%2f1.

[56] Higher Education Authority, National Access Plan 2022-2026: Consultation paper, 2021, https://assets.gov.ie/136502/a244259a-d405-48eb-89d3-edd88d289907.pdf, p. 6.

[57] See: https://aim.gov.ie/.

[58] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, p. 24.

provide healthcare assistance to support the participation of children with complex healthcare needs in mainstream preschool settings. Learning from this process is under review.

Under the 'First 5', the Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families (2019-2028),[59] Objective 9 focuses on supporting the transition from early learning settings to primary education, offering an opportunity to improve transitions for children with disabilities by strengthening information exchange between early learning and childcare (ELC) settings, children and parents, and primary schools; continuity of curriculum and pedagogy between ELC and primary; and good practice as a foundation to ensure a seamless transition to further learning stages.[60] To achieve this, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) led the 'Let's Get Ready' campaign that provided guidance for parents on practical steps they could take to support their children in the months leading up to the transition to primary school, including a transitions pack. Further training such as *Lámh* sign language, Hanen Teach Talk and sensory processing and early learning for early years professionals to support children with disabilities are now available online on demand.

Primary and Secondary Education

The social inclusion model (SIM) pilot recommenced in October 2021. It provides tailored in-school therapeutic supports, such as speech and language and occupational therapy, with the aim of achieving better outcomes for children. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training necessary and roll-out of the new frontloaded allocation model for special needs assistants (SNAs) was not possible and was deferred to the beginning of 2022/23 school year. There is increased emphasis within training programmes for teachers and special needs assistants on the principles and practice of inclusive education. The national training programme for SNAs commenced in January 2021 with 3 500 places available on the programme over four years and includes modules on inclusion, communications and language, a range of special needs and information on caring for students with additional care needs. Similarly, the revised *Céim*: standards for initial teacher education set out the requirements and definition of 'inclusive education' including support for the development of student teachers' ability to provide for the learning needs of all pupils by using, for example, a universal design for learning framework. All new primary and post-primary programmes submitted to the Teaching Council for accreditation must be in alignment with *Céim*.[61]

A full review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act) is underway to ensure that it is reflective of the lived experiences of students and families. A Steering and Advisory Group was to be established in 2022 to review this legislation and complete a report by early 2023. The National Disability Authority has suggested that a review of Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 be carried out in parallel to ensure that the EPSEN Act and the Disability Act operate in tandem

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[59] See: https://first5.gov.ie/.
[60] National Disability Authority (2020), Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2019: NDA Year-end Review, p. 9. Available at: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-ces.
[61] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-ndis, pp. 25-26.

to provide people with disabilities/special education needs with a joined-up approach to assessment and support provision, considering the feedback received from parents of children with disabilities who experience the provision of support as fragmented.

Further and Higher Education and Training
Inclusion is one of the core strategies of the Statement of Strategy (2021-2023) for the Department of Further and Higher Education, Training, Research and Science published in March 2021. It recognises the needs of vulnerable learners, people who are most marginalised and people with special and additional needs. The Action Plan for Apprenticeship (2021-2025) was launched in April 2021 aiming to provide 'apprenticeships for all' with deliverables explicitly including a structure that is inclusive in terms of access and delivery and a range of resources have been developed by the support to apprentices group established by ETBs.[62] Additionally, the National Disability Authority notes in its end of year review of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy that SOLAS should 'gather data on pre-apprenticeship developments to support people with disabilities'.[63] Persons with disabilities are a core target group of the 10-year Adult Literacy for Life Strategy (2021-2030).[64] Importantly, the strategy highlights how 'assistive technologies can allow people who cannot use a pen to write, that have difficult in speaking to communicate, and offer specialised software to support learning disabilities' which will contribute to participation in further upskilling of digital literacy in the form of online learning and support that is integrated to address workplace literacy, numeracy and digital literacy as progress takes place.[65]

Since 2020, guidance on universal design for learning was provided[66] for practitioners throughout the FET sector with further online webinars organised by Education Training Board Ireland.

The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021, reviewed in 2018, exceeded targets including those for students with physical or mobility disabilities, deaf students or those hard of hearing and students that are blind or have low vision. A consultation process took place and the next five-year National Access Plan (2022-2026) has been published.[67]

The Reach Fund 2022[68] aims to fund community education programmes for disadvantaged learners and increase the participation of those taking literacy and skills programmes including improving the digital infrastructure of community education providers to increase the capacity to deliver online learning. The Department of Social Protection should also play a key role in helping to identify, and source support for unmet literacy needs among jobseekers and those subsequently placed in employment.

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[62] See: https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/resources/, p. 50.
[63] See: https://nda.ie/publications/nda-independent-assessment-of-implementation-of-ces, p. 17.
[64] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/655a4-adult-literacy-for-life-a-10-year-literacy-strategy/.
[65] See: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/655a4-adult-literacy-for-life-a-10-year-literacy-strategy/, p. 49.
[66] See: https://library.etbi.ie/library/UDL.
[67] See: https://assets.gov.ie/136502/a244259a-d405-48eb-89d3-edd88d289907.pdf.
[68] See: https://www.solas.ie/reach-fund/.

Emphasis on transition planning is evident as projects and pilot projects have been rolled out to address entry to primary school and exit from secondary school into further education for children and young people with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, see example of training by the charity WALK.[69]

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[69] See: https://www.walk.ie/what-we-do/training/.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

Ireland's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) consists of 16 investment measures and 9 reforms across 3 components. This is supported by EUR 989 million in grants, of which 42 percent supports climate investments and reforms and 32 per cent will foster digital transition. The Technological Universities Transformation Fund is allocated EUR 40 million while funding to address the digital divide and digital skills is not specified. eHealth projects will receive EUR 75 million however accessibility is not explicitly addressed, although it is envisaged that all communications within the HSE follow Ireland's open data health policy and the web content accessibility principles.

Key digital investments relate to the digitalisation of Irish enterprises, the digitalisation of public administrative services, the funding for connectivity and ICT devices to schools. The programme to provide digital infrastructure and funding to schools is allocated EUR 64 million while the digital transformation in enterprise project is allocated EUR 85 million. The later project outlines the digital transformation of the workspace in which it will be important to highlight the potential of digital technology and assistive devices for employees according to the National Remote Working Strategy.

Key green investments relate to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments in private and public buildings. The Work Placement Experience Programme (WPEP) is allocated EUR 27 million while the SOLAS Green Skills Action Programme is allocated EUR 114 million; both programmes offer important links for case officers and case management workers to highlight as areas of possible transition for persons with disabilities seeking employment. It will be imperative that persons with disabilities are actively included in the Green Skills programme and that retrofitting of public and private buildings includes the development of assistive technology to increase accessibility. Within these investments, persons with disabilities need to be targeted using the 10-year adult literacy programme to improve digital access and skills. This requires enhancing liaison between the Department of Social Protection's public employment services, community education providers receiving Reach 2022 funding, and education and training boards within regional localities. Universal design and accessibility should be key within these new initiatives.

The European Social Fund[70] provides significant investment at regional level[71] across Ireland to support education and community initiatives such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and the education and training boards (ETBs). Improved outcomes for persons with disabilities are required from these initiatives given the increasing gap in employment statistics. Additionally, increased investment is required to target social inclusion of persons with disabilities within their communities. While funding is available through local authorities, no evaluation has been carried out to assess the outcomes. Such a focus on the importance of social inclusion at local level is crucial considering the effort towards decongregation and independent living that is underway.

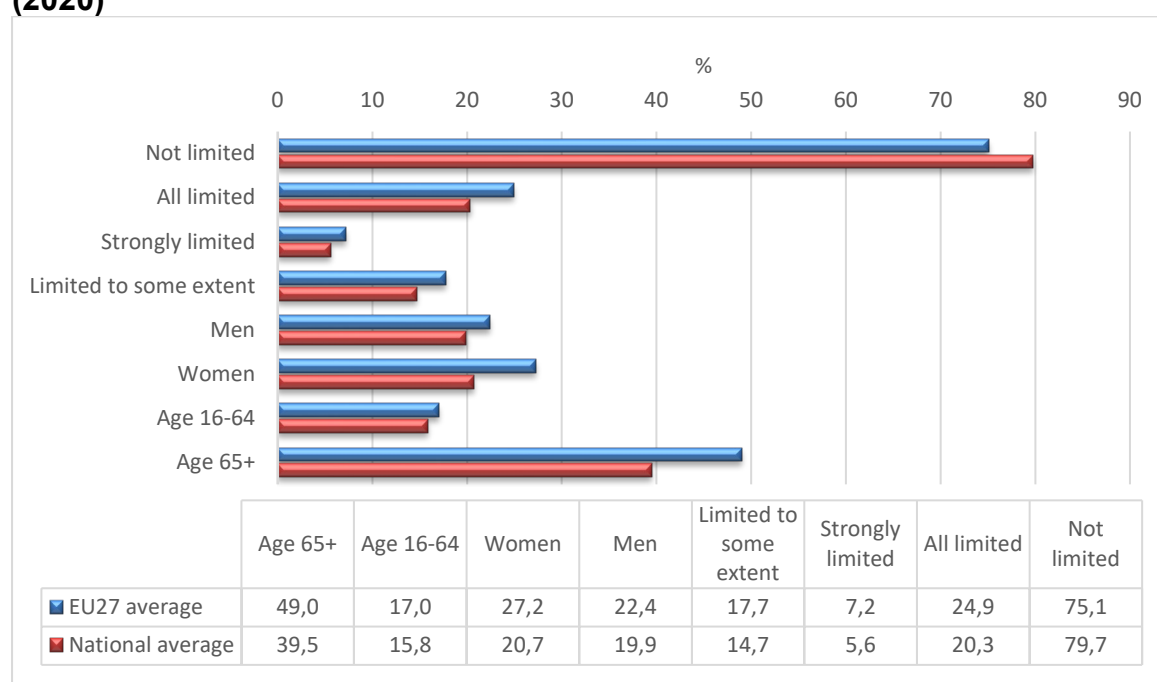[70] See: https://eufunds.ie/european-social-fund/.
[71] See: https://eufunds.ie/list-of-operations/.

7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database[72] and statistical reports.[73]

Unless specified, the summary statistics are drawn from the most recent EU-SILC data available to researchers from Eurostat. The EU-SILC sample includes people living in private households and does not include people living in institutions (congregative households). The sampling methods vary somewhat in each country. The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether 'for at least the past 6 months' the respondent reports that they have been 'limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do'.[74]

Table 1: Self-reported 'activity limitations' as a proxy for impairment / disability (2020)

	Age 65+	Age 16-64	Women	Men	Limited to some extent	Strongly limited	All limited	Not limited
EU27 average	49,0	17,0	27,2	22,4	17,7	7,2	24,9	75,1
National average	39,5	15,8	20,7	19,9	14,7	5,6	20,3	79,7

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate 'disability' equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do not report 'activity limitations'.[75] National estimates for Ireland are compared with

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[72] Eurostat Health Database: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database.

[73] Eurostat (2019) Disability Statistics: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

[74] The EU-SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM).

[75] This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at: http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators.

EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.[76] There was a time series break for Ireland in 2020 so some caution is needed in comparison with earlier years.

7.1   Data relevant to disability and the labour market

Table 2: EU and Ireland employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)

	No disability	Some disability	Severe disability	Disabled women	Disabled men	Non-disabled women	Non-disabled men	Disabled total
EU27 average	75,3	56,8	30,3	48,2	52,8	69,4	81,1	50,3
National average	75,7	39,7	15,5	31,9	34,1	69,7	81,7	32,9
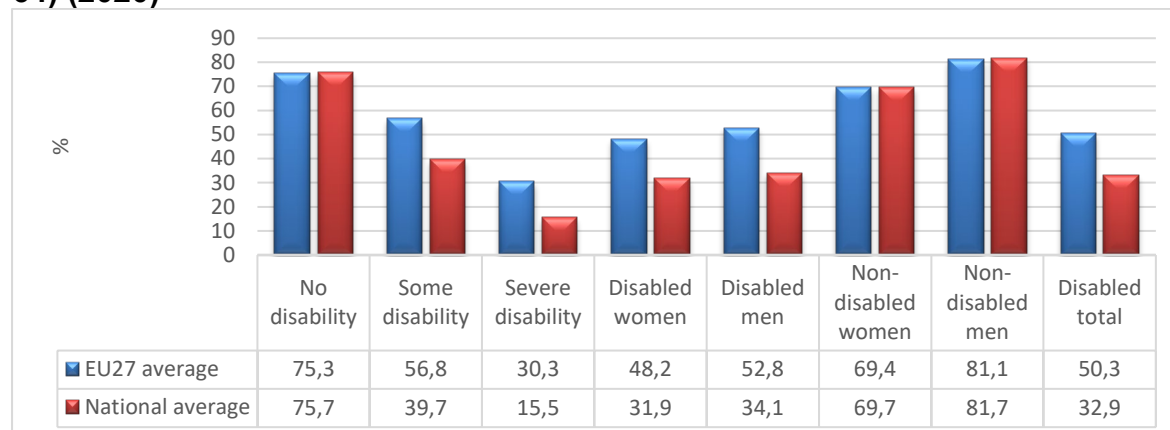
Table 3: Employment rates in Ireland, by disability and age group (2020)

	age 16-24*	age 25-34	age 35-44	age 45-54	age 55-64
Disabled	14,9	36,4	41,8	37,3	26,0
Non-disabled	32,4	79,2	84,0	81,9	67,8

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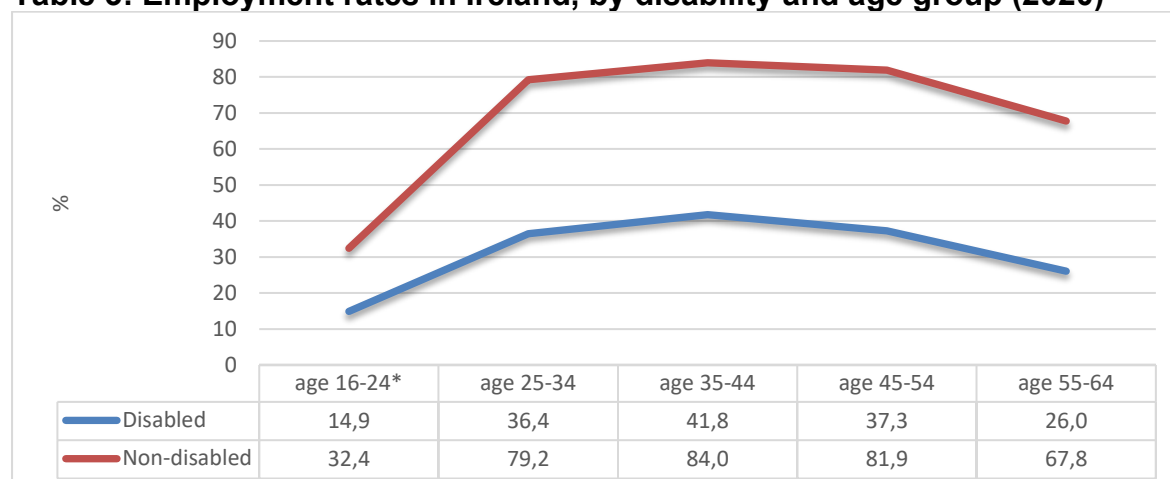
[76]   The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changed the EU average. EU27 averages have been affected also by time series breaks in other large countries, such as Germany.

Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
National (disabled)	33,1	29,0	27,6	27,1	27,9	26,5	28,3	29,1	26,2	32,2	37,3	32,6	32,9
National (non-disabled)	70,9	65,1	62,3	61,9	63,0	64,1	67,2	70,4	71,3	74,3	77,6	76,5	75,7

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)
Note: Microdata concerning employment status was not available for Germany and Italy in this data release, which affects the EU27 average (which is therefore estimated). There was a time series break for Ireland in 2020.
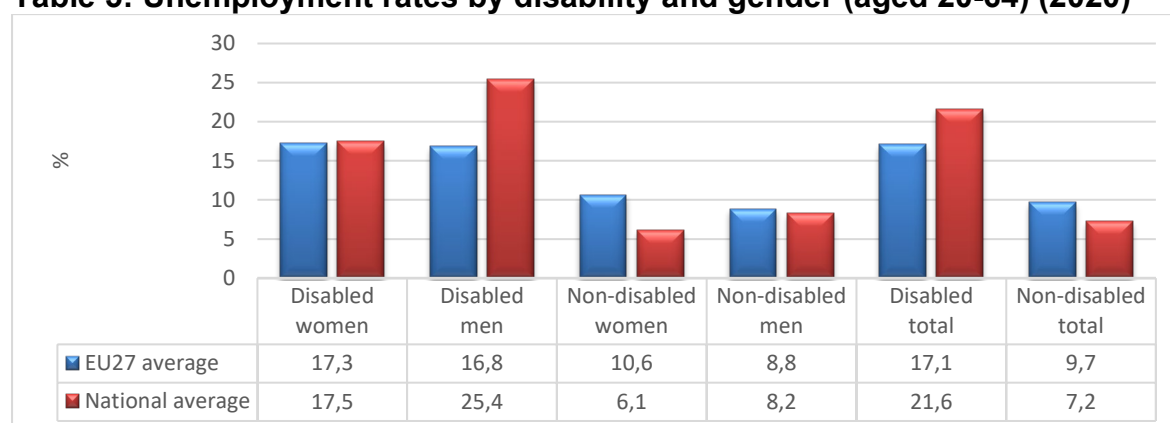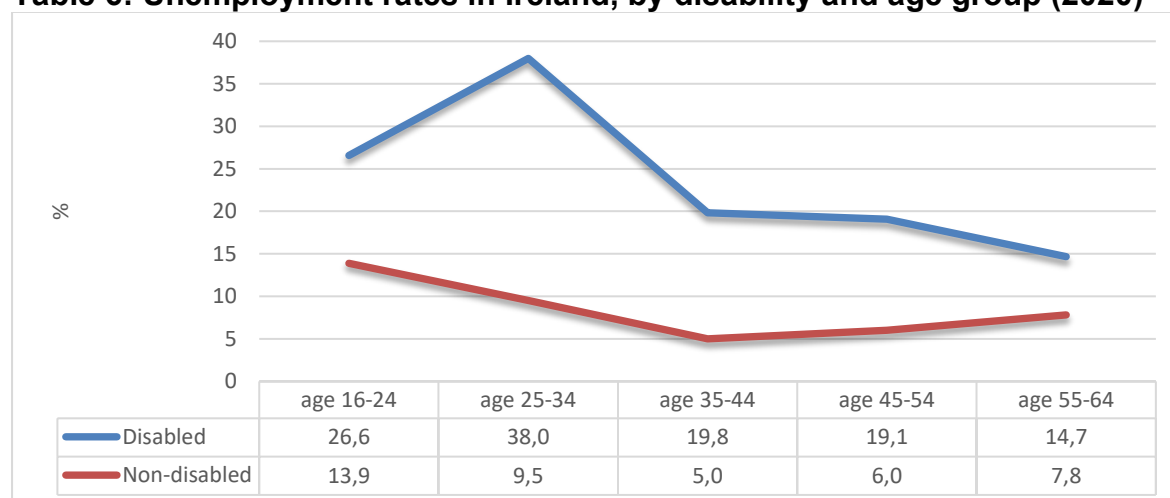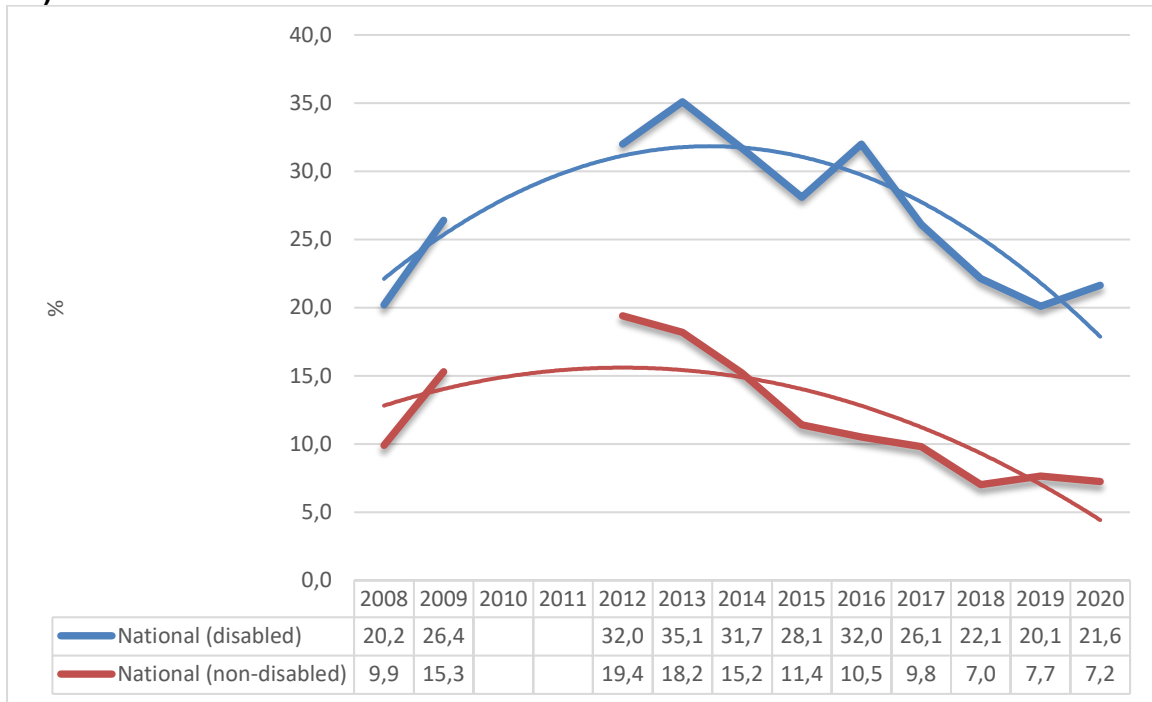
7.1.1 Unemployment

Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)

	Disabled women	Disabled men	Non-disabled women	Non-disabled men	Disabled total	Non-disabled total
EU27 average	17,3	16,8	10,6	8,8	17,1	9,7
National average	17,5	25,4	6,1	8,2	21,6	7,2

Table 6: Unemployment rates in Ireland, by disability and age group (2020)

	age 16-24	age 25-34	age 35-44	age 45-54	age 55-64
Disabled	26,6	38,0	19,8	19,1	14,7
Non-disabled	13,9	9,5	5,0	6,0	7,8

Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
National (disabled)	20,2	26,4			32,0	35,1	31,7	28,1	32,0	26,1	22,1	20,1	21,6
National (non-disabled)	9,9	15,3			19,4	18,2	15,2	11,4	10,5	9,8	7,0	7,7	7,2

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.2 Economic activity

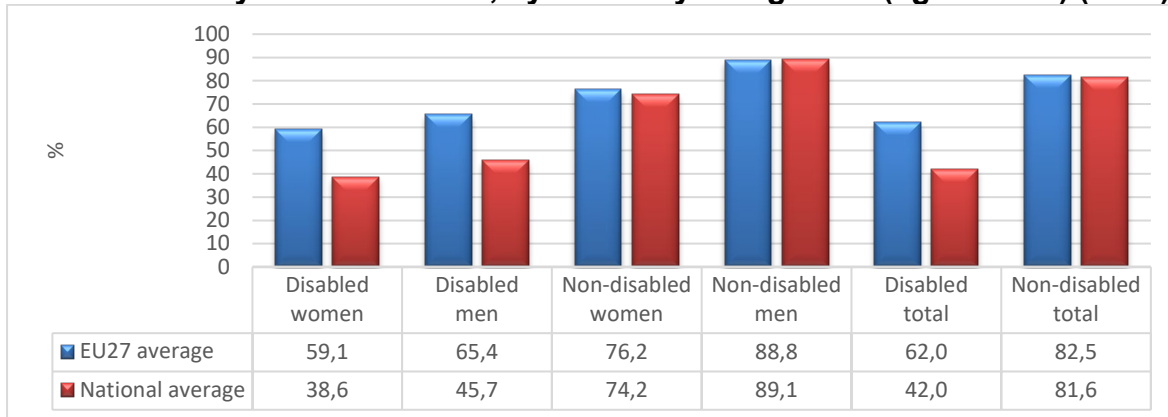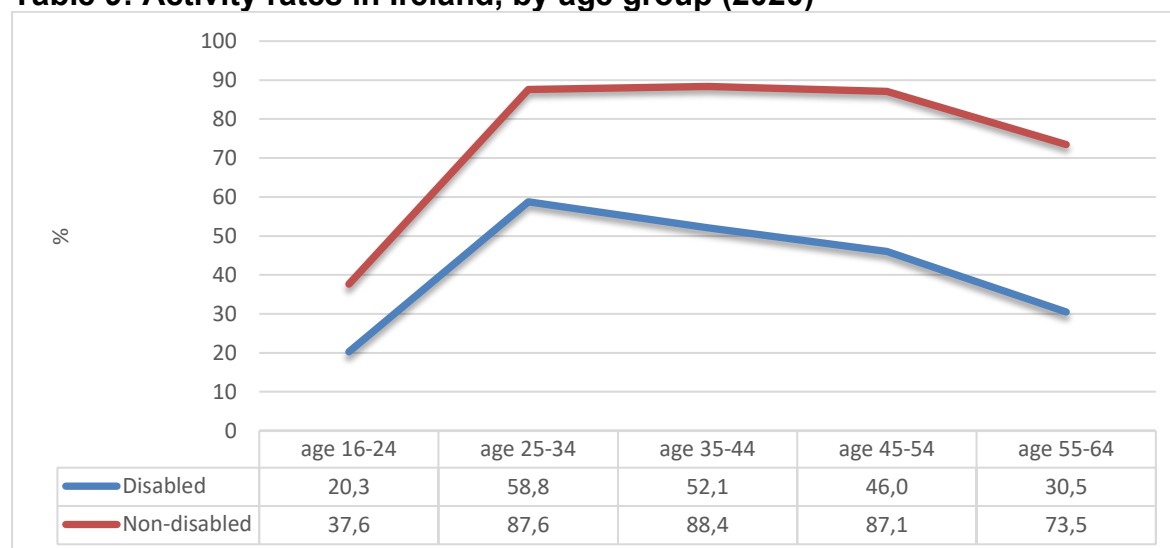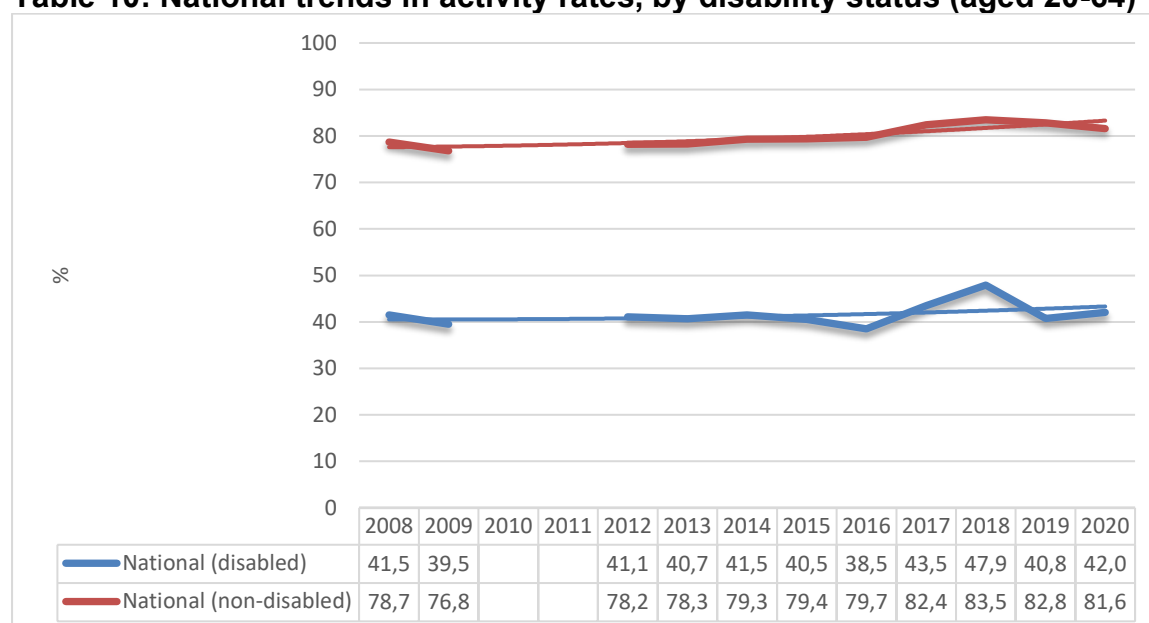**Table 8: Activity rates in Ireland, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)**

	Disabled women	Disabled men	Non-disabled women	Non-disabled men	Disabled total	Non-disabled total
EU27 average	59,1	65,4	76,2	88,8	62,0	82,5
National average	38,6	45,7	74,2	89,1	42,0	81,6

Table 9: Activity rates in Ireland, by age group (2020)

	age 16-24	age 25-34	age 35-44	age 45-54	age 55-64
Disabled	20,3	58,8	52,1	46,0	30,5
Non-disabled	37,6	87,6	88,4	87,1	73,5

Table 10: National trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
National (disabled)	41,5	39,5			41,1	40,7	41,5	40,5	38,5	43,5	47,9	40,8	42,0
National (non-disabled)	78,7	76,8			78,2	78,3	79,3	79,4	79,7	82,4	83,5	82,8	81,6

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Ireland

Disability data is not yet available from the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Ireland were disaggregated from ad hoc modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.[77]

The Central Statistical Office has published summaries based on the 2016 census data, although these are not updated from other sources.[78]

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[77] Eurostat Health Database: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database.
[78] CSO statistical summary release, Census of Population 2016 – Profile 9 Health, Disability and Carers, https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp9hdc/p8hdc/p9chs/.

The SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit[79] provides data on the number of persons with disabilities participating in further education and training in Ireland.

7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2020)

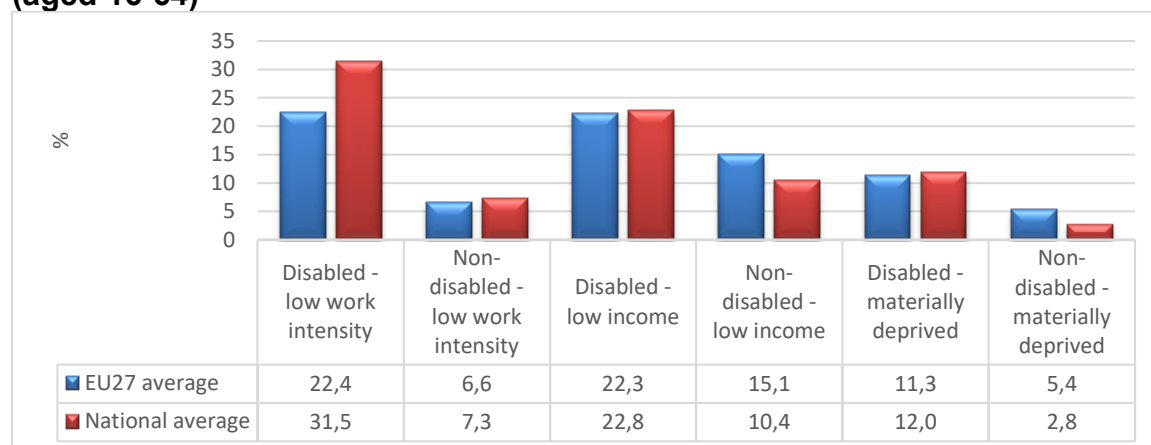**Table 11: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and risk (aged 16-64)[80]**

	Disabled - low work intensity	Non-disabled - low work intensity	Disabled - low income	Non-disabled - low income	Disabled - materially deprived	Non-disabled - materially deprived
EU27 average	22,4	6,6	22,3	15,1	11,3	5,4
National average	31,5	7,3	22,8	10,4	12,0	2,8

Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

	No disability	Some disability	Severe disability	Disabled women	Disabled men	Non-disabled women	Non-disabled men
EU27 average	18,9	26,6	34,6	29,8	27,8	19,8	18,1
National average	15,4	30,0	44,3	33,9	33,8	17,0	13,8
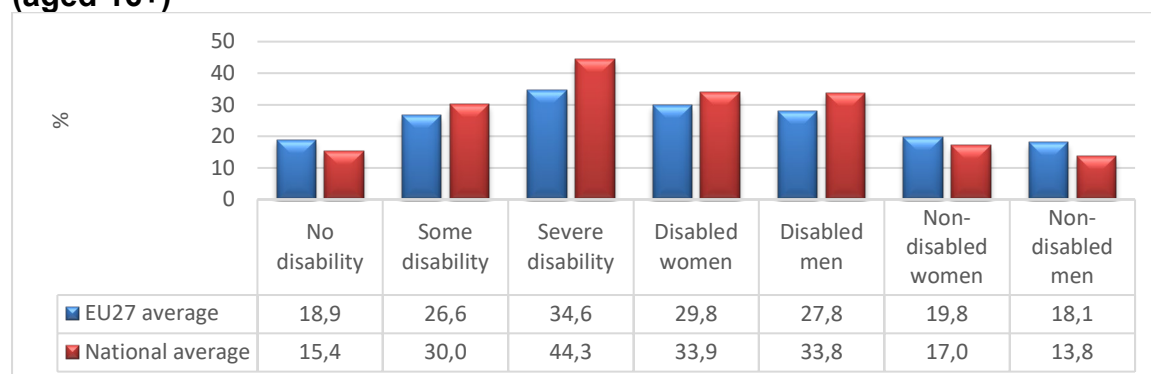
Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)

	Disabled (16-64)	Non-disabled (16-64)	Disabled (65+)	Non-disabled (65+)
EU27 average	34,3	19,6	23,2	15,7
National average	39,9	15,5	23,3	15,0

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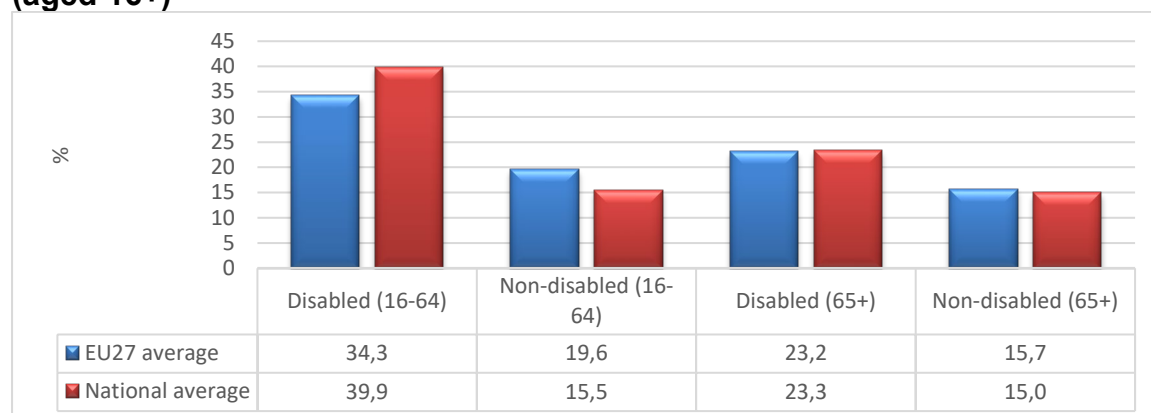
[79] SOLAS (2020) FET in Numbers 2019. Learners with Disabilities, https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/a4dcab3b27/disabilities-fet-report-2019.pdf.

[80] Aged 16-59 for Low work intensity.

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and previous UDB)

Table 14: Trends in the risk of poverty after social transfers, by disability and age group

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Disabled (16-64)	22,0	19,5	22,6	23,4	24,2	26,2	32,1	28,1	31,7	23,2	22,8
Non-disabled (16-64)	13,6	14,8	15,6	14,9	16,5	15,0	14,2	13,9	11,4	9,9	10,4
Disabled (65+)	9,8	12,1	16,0	11,6	13,1	15,5	16,5	17,7	23,3	24,1	22,0
Non-disabled (65+)	9,9	10,3	10,9	10,0	11,1	12,2	16,7	13,5	18,6	15,3	14,6
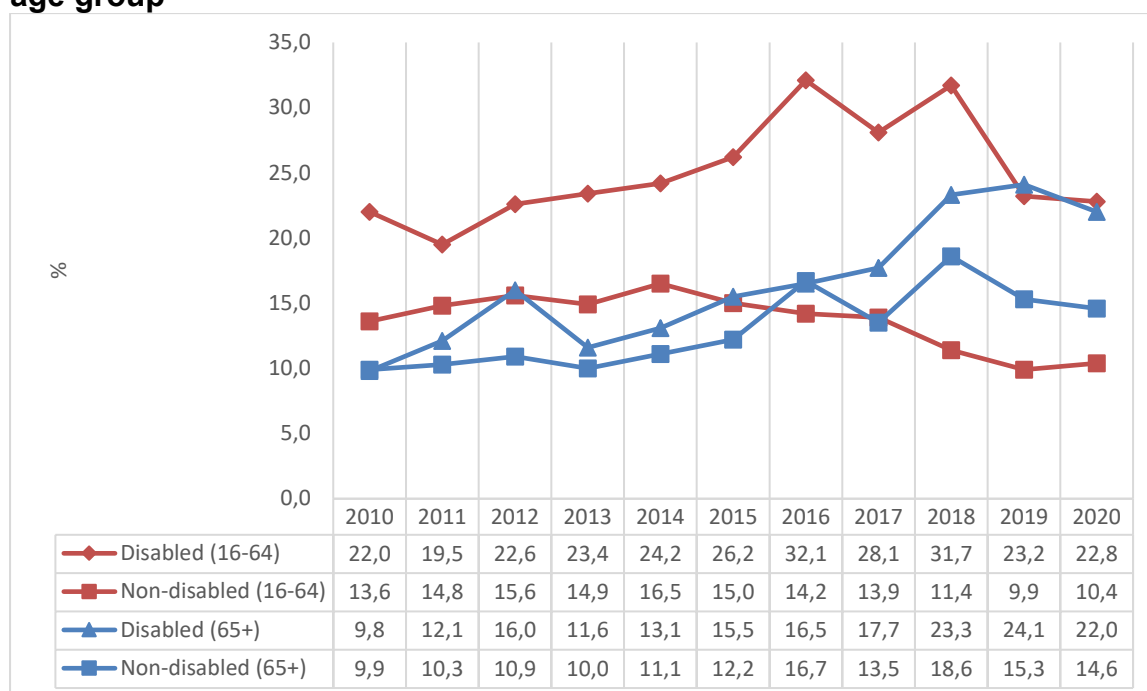
Source: Eurostat Health Database [hlth_dpe020] – People at risk of poverty
Note: This table shows national trends in financial poverty risk, rather than the general AROPE indicator (which is not as comparable between age groups due to the effect of paid employment); the survey does not distinguish 'activity limitation' for children under 16.

Table 15: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination, 3-year average (%, aged 16+)

	No disability	Some disability	Severe disability	Disabled total
EU27 average	1,0	3,6	6,5	4,4
National average	1,3	4,4	6,1	4,8
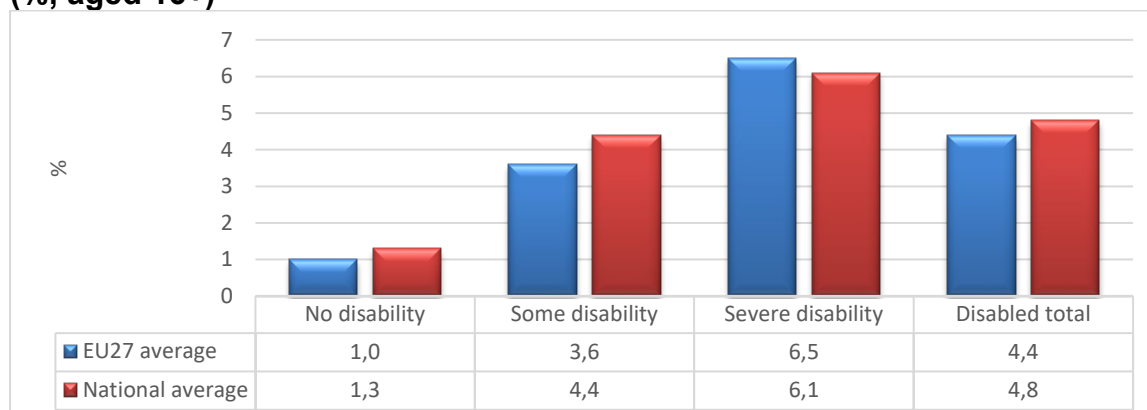
Source: Eurostat Health Database [hlth_dh030] – 'Too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list'
Note: Due to large variations an average of three years is indicated. EU mean averages are also skewed by high values in a minority of countries within disability groups but median averages for the total disability and no disability groups in 2020 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or healthcare data in Ireland

The EU-SILC data provides a comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates. In addition to the summary tables presented so far, the

Eurostat disability database also contains breakdowns concerning disability and poverty before and after social transfers, as well as in-work-poverty.[81]

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

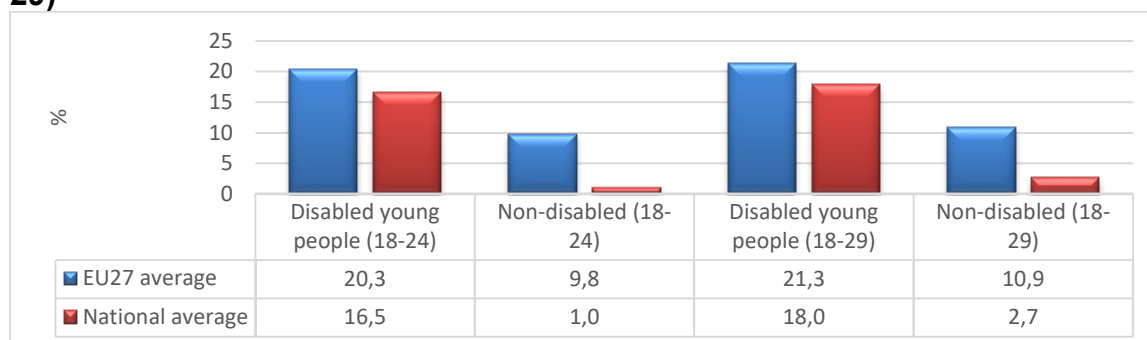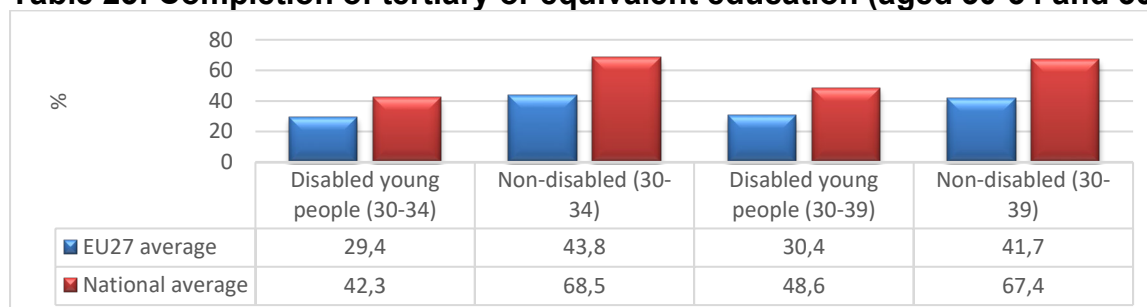**Table 24: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)[82]**

	Disabled young people (18-24)	Non-disabled (18-24)	Disabled young people (18-29)	Non-disabled (18-29)
■ EU27 average	20,3	9,8	21,3	10,9
■ National average	16,5	1,0	18,0	2,7

Table 25: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)

	Disabled young people (30-34)	Non-disabled (30-34)	Disabled young people (30-39)	Non-disabled (30-39)
■ EU27 average	29,4	43,8	30,4	41,7
■ National average	42,3	68,5	48,6	67,4

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)
Note: Confidence intervals for the disability group are large and reliability low (due to the small sample size in the target age group). An average of several years may be needed to establish trends or to compare breakdowns by gender. There were fewer than 50 observations in the disability age group 30-34, which should be treated with some caution.

7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Ireland

Ireland operates a special education stream for persons with disabilities and provides support within mainstream school settings. Statistics on the allocation of special needs assistants to both special education classes and mainstream primary classes are available from the National Council for Special Education.[83]

Some administrative data is also provided in the European Agency's Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE), concerning the population of enrolled students identified with special educational needs in Ireland, but only to 2016-2017.[84]

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[81] Eurostat Health Database: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database.
[82] There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.
[83] See: https://ncse.ie/statistics.
[84] European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Statistics on Inclusive Education, https://www.european-agency.org/data/data-tables-background-information.