

# STANDARDS NEWS

## Newsletter from NDA's Standards Unit

### Summer 2008 Number 8

#### **New NDA Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites**

Subsection 30(1) of the Disability Act 2005 allows relevant Ministers to request that the NDA draft codes of practice for public bodies relating to the matters referred to in sections 26 to 29 of the legislation. In October 2007, the NDA was asked to prepare and submit a draft code of practice in relation to section 29 of the Act which is entitled: Access to heritage sites.

Section 29 of the Disability Act 2005 places a statutory obligation on the heads of public bodies to ensure that, as far as practicable, heritage sites in their ownership, management or control – in whole or on part - to which the public has access, are accessible to people with disabilities and can be visited by them with ease and dignity.

This obligation does not, however, apply if this would have a significant adverse effect on the conservation status of a species or habitat or the integrity of a heritage site or if it would compromise the characteristics of the heritage site.

The NDA's draft Code of Practice is aimed at those who manage heritage sites which are owned or leased by public bodies. It will also provide important information for people with disabilities who, along with their carers, advocates and representative organisations frequent these heritage sites for leisure or business purposes.

Subsection 30(2) of the Disability Act 2005 empowers the NDA to consult with such persons or bodies as it considers appropriate. In March 2008 Government Departments were given an initial opportunity to present their observations on an initial draft of the Code. In April 2008, the NDA commenced a national consultation process in relation to a second draft. The NDA received submissions from a range of interested parties and further amendments were made to the document. Following this consultation process, all Government Departments were given a final opportunity to comment on the amended draft.

In July 2008, a final draft passes to the NDA Board for its consideration and approval before being forwarded to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. When the relevant Minister is satisfied with the content of the draft Code, it will be declared, by Ministerial order, an approved code of practice for the purposes of the Disability Act 2005.

It is expected that an approved Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites will be given approval as a statutory instrument before the end of this year.

The NDA will then make the Code available in a range of accessible formats.

**For more information contact:**

Edward Crean, Senior Standards Officer at [ecrean@nda.ie](mailto:ecrean@nda.ie)

## Monitoring Implementation of NDA Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies

In 2006, the NDA published a 'Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided to Public Bodies', to provide guidance and support for public bodies in meeting their new obligations under Sections 26, 27 and 28 of the Disability Act 2005.

The Code was declared, by government order, an approved statutory Code of Practice under the Disability Act 2005, in April 2006 (ref. Statutory Instrument no. 163 of 2006).



In line with its statutory functions under the National Disability Authority Act 1999, NDA is now monitoring the implementation of this Code of Practice.

Following a period of consultation which ran until 31 January, 2008, a monitoring questionnaire was circulated to the heads of all public bodies impacted by the Code, 30 April.

Completed questionnaires are due to be returned in August and analysis and reporting of responses will follow by end of year.

### For more information contact:

Dr. Anne-Marie Rooney, Standards Officer at [amrooney@nda.ie](mailto:amrooney@nda.ie)

## NDA Conference for Access Officers

The NDA hosted its second Access Officer Conference on Wednesday, 7 May, 2008, at Hodson Bay Hotel, in Athlone.

The aim of the Conference was to provide further support for Access Officers appointed under Part 3 of the Disability Act, 2005, in fulfilling their role to maximum effect.

Access Officers were updated on new developments and guidance from the NDA and other bodies, relevant to their role and responsibilities.

You can review the conference presentations and additional materials at:

<http://www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/5BACBC53CBA6818D8025744900587DA7?OpenDocument>

### For more information contact:

Dr. Anne-Marie Rooney, Standards Officer at [amrooney@nda.ie](mailto:amrooney@nda.ie)

## Towards Best Practice in the Provision of Respite Services for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Respite care is a support service for people with disabilities and their families intended to maintain service users in their homes. Respite enables carers to have a break and can provide additional supports for the person with a disability.

The difference in value placed on the location, duration, and administration of respite care by different stakeholders has resulted in a lack of consensus on the best way to provide services.

While there is no model of best practice, the recent UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the National Disability Strategy (2004) show a concern at a policy level for identifying and pursuing standards.

Research recently undertaken at the Child and Family Research Centre at NUI, Galway has sought to identify principles of best practice based on literature review and interviews with selected stakeholders. Four categories of respite care were identified: informal help from friends and family; formal respite care in the service user's home; out-of-home respite facilities; and recreation and holiday breaks. The benefits of these services for the carer, in whom stress can be reduced, the service user, who can gain new experiences, and the family, when parents can spend time with other children, are discussed. As with all such support services, respite care is best seen among a range of inter-connected, complimentary services with the service user and their family at the centre.

Eight principles of best practice in the provision of respite care were identified by the research that may be useful as a start-point for further research and practice development.

These are:

- That respite services be person-centred and family-centred;
- That respite services be provided on a rights basis;
- That respite be defined as a support service and regarded among a system of support services;
- That there be a single point of access to respite care services in a given administrative area;
- That respite services be designed in consultation with families in acknowledgement of their expertise in providing care;
- That respite be designed to facilitate the service user in building relationships in their community;
- That respite services be age-appropriate and develop as the service user develops;
- That respite care services have clear goals and that systematic and regular review ensure achievement of those goals or change of provision.

**For more information consult:**

<http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/downloads/featured-publication.pdf>

## Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities



In April, the NDA launched an important new publication entitled 'Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities'.

Ensuring safe egress in an emergency is a complex issue requiring careful forward planning.

A broad range of factors must be considered including:

- the design and usage of a building
- the training of staff
- the provision of appropriate equipment and facilities.

'Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities' will be of special interest to facilities managers, accommodation officers, health and safety personnel, access officers, disability liaison officers and human resource professionals in the public sector. It will also be of interest to design consultants and disability organisations involved with accessibility matters as well as people with disabilities, families and carers.

This important guide will assist organisations to plan effectively for the speedy and safe evacuation of staff and customers with disabilities. Readers will find information on:

- evacuation strategies
- alarm equipment
- evacuation equipment
- training
- specific building types, including healthcare buildings, educational buildings and heritage buildings.

It also provides details of an appropriate planning process to ensure that people with disabilities can safely evacuate a building in case of emergency.

There is a practical 'risk assessment checklist' to help organisations to assess their current situation.

'Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities' can be accessed at: <http://www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/195244135ECA466B8025741F00529C24?OpenDocument>

**For more information contact:**

Excellence through Accessibility team at [eta@nda.ie](mailto:eta@nda.ie) or 01 608 0447.

## New 'Building for Everyone' Guidelines



The NDA built environment guidelines, Building for Everyone 2002, are currently undergoing an extensive revision.

This project will see the guidance updated and the scope broadened.

The new Building for Everyone, to be published by NDA's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, will consist of a series of nine booklets.

New areas will include a booklet which provides guidance to planners, as well as a booklet for the management of buildings. The latter is critical to ensuring that a building or environment, which has been designed to be accessible for all, is used by its occupants in the most beneficial way and that it is maintained in that way over time.

The booklets are currently being drafted and reviewed.

A consultation period will be held later this year, and a launch date is expected in Spring 2009.

**For further information contact:** Dr. Antoinette Fennell, Project Manager, at [afennell@ceud.ie](mailto:afennell@ceud.ie)

**If you would like to receive this Newsletter on a regular basis, please forward your contact details to: [standards@nda.ie](mailto:standards@nda.ie)**