

Achieving Accessibility for People with Disabilities in Ireland

Presentation to BCI

By Mary Van Lieshout

Head, Research & Standards Development

National Disability Authority

April 2005



This presentation....

Introduction to the NDA

Overview of Accessibility Initiatives:

- a) National legislation/policies/programmes
- b) NDA initiatives: Public Services Accessibility project; Barcelona Declaration; Research; Standards

Conclusion



The NDA in context

- ...‘A National Disability Authority should be established” – Commission Report 1996
- Commitment to Mainstreaming
- Dissolution of National Rehabilitation Board and creation of Comhairle and the NDA; and transfer of services to NEPS, Health Boards and FAS- 2000



The NDA Act (1999)

- Majority of Members to be people with disabilities, their families, or carers
- To assist the Minister in the co-ordination and development of policy;
- To undertake and commission relevant research
- To advise the Minister on standards
- To monitor the implementation of standards and codes of practice
- To recognise the good standards and quality with an awards system



Mission of the NDA

- Promote and help secure the rights of people with disabilities;
- Influence and shape public policy and legislation;
- Work to ensure that services to people with disabilities are of the highest standards and quality



NDA Core Values

- A rights based approach
- Ensure needs and rights of people with disabilities are enshrined
- Promote empowerment and participation of people with disabilities
- Underpin the promotion of an inclusive society



Legislative/Policy Underpinning for Accessibility

- Building Control Act (1990)
- Part M: Building Regulations (97 – 2000)
- Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities 1996
- Employment Equality Act 1998
- Equal Status Act 2000
- PPF Commitment 2000
- Equality Act 2004
- Anticipated Legislation...Disability Bill 2004?
Disability Access Cert



NDA Work on Accessible Public Services in Context

- Programme for Prosperity and Fairness

“19 Each Government Department will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to make its services and those of agencies under its remit accessible to people with disabilities. To facilitate effective action and acceptable standards in this regard, the NDA will issue guidelines in accordance with international norms and will award an accessibility symbol to compliant public offices. Government Departments and agencies will take all reasonable action to qualify within five years.

-

- 20 Adequate resources will be provided to the NDA and the Department of JELR to monitor, guide and audit progress towards the achievement of this commitment.”



NDA/DJELR Excellence Through Accessibility Award

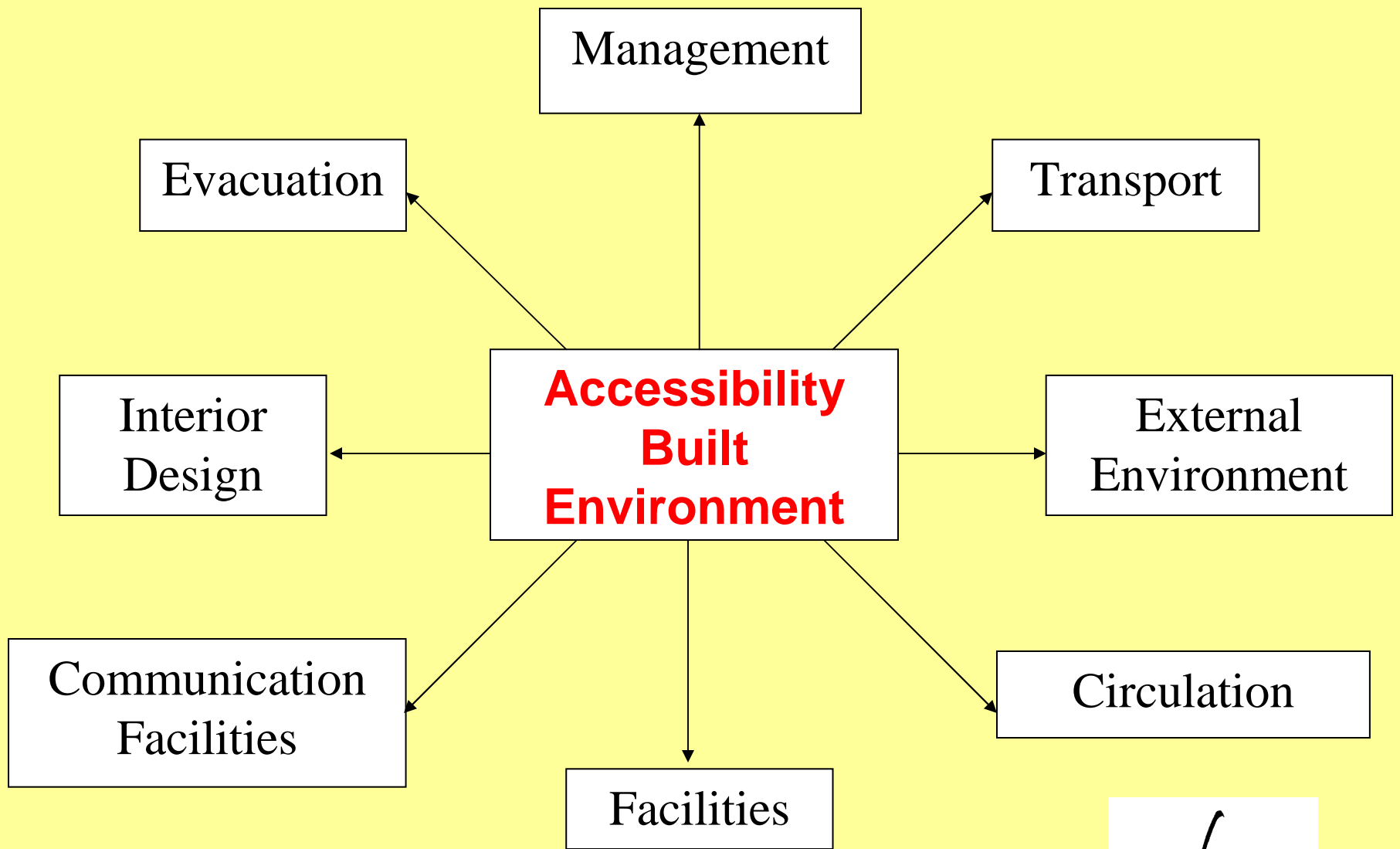
- Rewards accessibility in Quality Customer Services, Information Communications Technology, Built Environment
- 14 Guidelines
- Reflect the Principle of Universal Access
- Promotes Continuous Improvement – 3 grades of award: Committed, Quality, Excellence
- Aim to launch mid 2005



Excellence through Accessibility...Guidelines on Built Environment

- Gdln 6 – Management of Built Environment
- Gdln 7 - External Environment
- Gdln 8 – Vertical and Horizontal Circulation
- Gdln 9 – Facilities
- Gdln 10 – Interior Design
- Gdln 11 – Evacuation





ICT and **QCS** are also critical



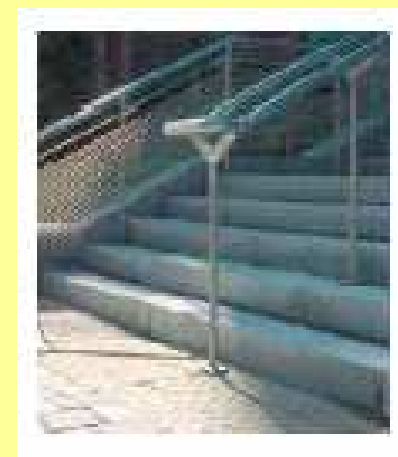
Management

- Building Management
- Access audit
- Maintenance
- Access handbook
 - Location, Floor plan layouts, Management and maintenance audits, Signage



External Environment

- Parking spaces
- Approach routes
- External ramps
- Steps avoided
- External lighting
- Heritage sites



Vert. and Hor. Circulation

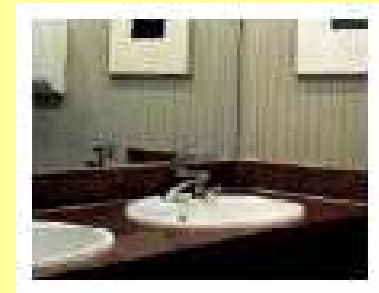
- Lifts
- Stairs
- Steps
- Corridors
- Doors



nda

Facilities

- Service areas
 - Reception
 - Restaurant
 - Waiting rooms
 - Meeting rooms
- Accessible toilet facilities



nda

Interior Design

- Lighting
- Surface finish
- Colour contrast
- Accessible fixtures and fittings



Evacuation

- Egress
- Emergency equipment
- Alarms
- Signage



nda

Communication Facilities

- Signage
- Counter and induction Loops
- Telephone Device for the Deaf
- Public access terminals



Barcelona Declaration

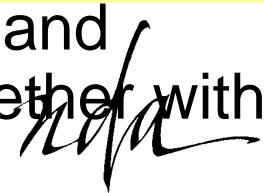
- Outcome of European Congress 1995
- Focus on promoting accessibility with Local Authority services/planning- commitment to “adopting measures towards the necessary adaptation of urban spaces, buildings and services of all types
- 100 Irish local authorities committed to Barcelona Declaration (largest no among EU)
- Also commitment in Ireland to disability proofing template of services



nda

NDA Research into Effectiveness of Part M

- - Questionnaires and telephone interviews of key stakeholders, people with disabilities, members of the design and construction industry & building control personnel.
- - Physical Survey of developments under construction
- Desk-top research and analysis of secondary data
- - Review of literature relating to Building Regulations in Ireland and the Building Control system
- - Review of Building Codes, Regulations and Standards applicable in other jurisdictions together with related literature

The logo for NDA (National Disability Authority) is located in the bottom right corner of the slide. It consists of the lowercase letters 'nda' in a stylized, cursive font, overlaid on a white rectangular background.

Only Preliminary Findings....

- Interviews with stakeholders suggest continuing concern of pwd regarding impact of Part M professional concern with with lack of rigour/technical adequacy of Part M;
- Findings suggest wide variance in inspections undertaken complaints procedures; need for more systematic, standardised data recording systems on complaints; building access and inaccessible toilets common areas for non compliance; wide variance in technical standards/level of detail (Part M vs Danis 3028/2001, Australian 14281-2000, etc.)

A white rectangular box containing the handwritten signature 'nda' in black ink.

NDA Collaboration with NSAI

- Current proposals to establish an ‘Access for All’ consultative Committee which will advise on development of Irish Standard for Access and Design
- Based on NDA doc Building for Everyone



Conclusions

- Wide range of initiatives nationally to promote accessibility
- Depends on public commitment to this goal, and particular commitment from political, professional spheres,
- Excellence in this area requires rigorous technical standards and monitoring processes

