



An Bille Uathachais, 2022

Autism Bill 2022

Mar a tionscnaíodh

As initiated



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ACTS REFERRED TO

Employment Equality Act 1998 (No. 21)

Equal Status Act 2000 (No. 8)

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (No. 25)



AN BILLE UATHACHAIS, 2022
AUTISM BILL 2022

Bill

entitled

An Act to provide for an autism strategy to be prepared and published, and to provide for related matters. 5

Be it enacted by the Oireachtas as follows:

Short title and commencement

1. (1) This Act may be cited as the Autism Act 2022.
- (2) This Act comes into operation three months after its passing. 10

Interpretation

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—
“autism” includes Asperger’s syndrome, Rett’s syndrome, Heller’s syndrome and any other pervasive developmental disorder that seriously affects a person’s capacity to take part in normal social interaction or to form social relationships; 15
“carer” means an individual who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for a person with autism;
“Minister” means the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth;
“public body” has the same meaning as it has in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. 20

Amendment of Employment Equality Act 1998

3. Section 2(1) of the Employment Equality Act 1998 is amended by the insertion, after “behaviour” in paragraph (e) of the definition of disability, of “or seriously affects a person’s capacity to take part in normal social interaction or to form social relationships”.

Amendment of Equal Status Act 2000

4. Section 2(1) of the Equal Status Act 2000 is amended by the insertion, after “behaviour” in paragraph (e) of the definition of disability, of “or seriously affects a person’s capacity to take part in normal social interaction or to form social relationships”. 25

Autism strategy

5. (1) The Minister shall prepare and, not later than 12 months after the passing of this Act, publish a strategy on autism, in accordance with the following requirements:
- (a) the strategy shall be prepared as a coordinated, integrated and cross-cutting strategy which requires all relevant Ministers of the Government and public bodies (as identified by the Minister in the strategy) to co-operate in its implementation; 5
 - (b) the strategy shall outline how the needs of persons with autism, in terms of accessibility to education, other public services, employment and social inclusion, can be met by public service providers; 10
 - (c) the strategy shall have an emphasis on how the needs of families and carers can be met, by setting out a roadmap of actions for the development and improvement of family support services;
 - (d) the Minister shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy by other Ministers of the Government and public bodies; 15
 - (e) each relevant Minister of the Government and public body shall publish a progress report every three years on the implementation of the strategy so far as they are concerned.
- (2) The strategy shall provide for—
- (a) the compilation and publication of accurate data on the prevalence of autism in the State, including autism in adults, and into the nature and extent of related needs, 20
 - (b) public service providers to set up data collection systems to identify and record the number of persons within their client bases who have autism, and to calculate current and future needs for services, 25
 - (c) the Minister to establish an autism awareness campaign, including an information website and a traditional and online media strategy,
 - (d) the provision of autism awareness training for persons in the public service who frequently deal with adults with autism,
 - (e) the development of a pathway of care which clearly maps services for adults with autism, with the aim of ensuring the consistent availability of those services across the State, 30
 - (f) the development of a range of services to address the needs of adults with autism, including health care, educational, employment and social needs, throughout their lives, 35
 - (g) a best practice model of service delivery, assessment, diagnosis and intervention for service users with autism, drawing on international expertise,
 - (h) guidance to health service providers on how to meet the needs of persons with autism and their families and carers,
 - (i) detailed examination of the needs of families and carers and how these needs are to be met by developing and providing appropriate support services, 40

- (j) a clear system of accountability and scrutiny relating to autism service provision, to be overseen by the Minister.
- (3) The Minister shall keep the autism strategy under review and shall publish a revised strategy at intervals of not more than seven years.
- (4) The Minister shall issue guidance to public bodies in connection with the implementation of the autism strategy, which guidance shall provide for such bodies to—
 - (a) provide autism awareness training for all relevant staff,
 - (b) provide specialist autism training for key staff, such as general practitioners and community care assessors,
 - (c) develop a clear pathway to diagnosis and assessment for persons with autism,
 - (d) put services into commission based on adequate population data.
- (5) Not more than three years after the publication of the autism strategy, and at intervals of no more than three years thereafter, the Minister shall prepare a report on implementation of the autism strategy and shall lay a copy of the report before each House of the Oireachtas as soon as may be after its preparation.

Costs

- 6. The Minister and other Ministers of the Government and public bodies, in performing the functions conferred on them by this Act shall ensure that the cost of performing those functions is met from within the resources available to them and on the presumption that the moneys provided by the Oireachtas towards meeting their costs will not, by reason only of the passing of this Act, be increased.

An Bille Uathachais, 2022

BILLE

(mar a tionscnaíodh)

dá ngairtear

Acht do dhéanamh socrú maidir le straitéis uathachais a ullmhú agus a fhoilsiú, agus do dhéanamh socrú i dtaobh nithe gaolmhara.

Na Teachtaí Ivana Bacik, Breandán Ó Húilín, Alan Ó Ceallaigh, Ged de Nais, Aodhán Ó Riordáin, Seán Ó Searlóg agus Donncha Mac Gabhann a thug isteach,

23 Meitheamh, 2022

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BILL

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entitled

An Act to provide for an autism strategy to be prepared and published, and to provide for related matters.

Introduced by Deputies Ivana Bacik, Brendan Howlin, Alan Kelly, Ged Nash, Aodhán Ó Riordáin, Seán Sherlock and Duncan Smith,

23rd June, 2022

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