



Review of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

2011–2016 extended to 2021



An Ghníomhaireacht
Tithíochta
The Housing Agency

October 2021



Contents

1. Introduction	/3
2. Structures	/6
3. National Assessment and Allocation Guidelines	/9
4. Local Strategic Plans (LSP)	/12
4.1 2015/2016 Local Strategic Plans	12
4.2 2021 Local Strategic Plans	13
5. Allocations 2016 to 2020	/16
6. Grant Schemes	/18
7. Mental Health Early Interventions Process	/21
8. Accessible Information	/23
9. Social Housing Applicant/Tenant Experience Survey	/27
10. Mental Health HSE Property Transfer Project	/29
10.1 Pilot Project CHO8	30
11. Design for Mental Health	/32
12. Congregated Setting	/34
13. Sharing the Vision	/37
14. Social Housing Application Form	/38
14.1 Medical/Disability Information Form (HMD Form 1)	39
15. Publications	/40
16. Initiatives Submitted by HDSG Members	/43
17. Other Areas of Interest	/50
18. Reporting	/54
Appendix 1: Priority Actions Update	/56
Appendix 2: Allocations by Category and by County	/62
Appendix 3: Applicant/Tenant Experience Survey	/66

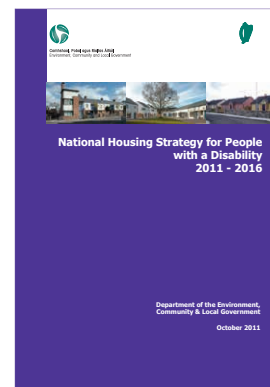
Anvers Housing Association, Letterkenny. Detached bungalow provided outside Letterkenny. This is a group home for 5 people with an acquired brain injury, plus 1 staff unit (6 in total).



Rowlestown Drive, Fingal - 8 wheelchair accessible units allocated to people with a physical disability.

1 Introduction

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) was published in 2011 and was supported by the then Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government and Minister for Health. The development of the strategy was a delivery on the Departments' commitments under the social partnership agreement Towards 2016. The strategy set out a clear vision.



Vision

To facilitate access, for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

The strategy uses the term “disability” in reference to four categories of disability, i.e. Physical, Sensory, Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Health.

It is important to note that housing allocations are made on the basis of need not, on a diagnosis.

The NHSPWD clearly sets out that the local authority is responsible for the provision of housing services while the provision of the associated health and personal social services are the responsibility of the HSE.

Strategic Aims

1. To promote and mainstream equality of access for people with a disability to the full range of housing options available suited to individual and household need.
2. To develop national protocols and frameworks for effective interagency cooperation which will facilitate person-centred delivery of housing and relevant support services.
3. To support people with a disability to live independently in their own homes and communities, where appropriate.
4. To address the specific housing needs of people with an intellectual and/or physical disability, moving from congregated settings in line with good practice, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community.
5. To address the specific housing needs of people with a mental health disability, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community, for people with low and medium support needs moving from mental health facilities, in line with good practice.
6. To consider good practice in the design, coordination and delivery of housing and related supports.
7. To facilitate people with a disability to access appropriate advice and information in respect of their housing needs.

8. To improve the collection and use of data/information regarding the nature and extent of the housing needs of people with a disability.
9. To provide a framework to support the delivery, monitoring and review of agreed actions.



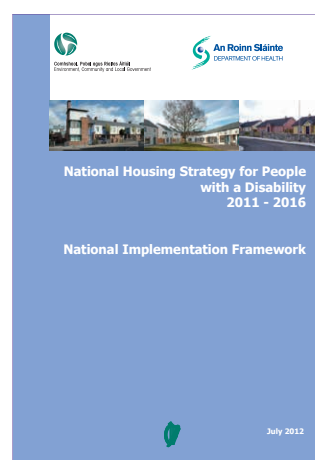
Castlemanor Retirement Village, Cavan - Castlemanor Retirement Village is a partnership project between Cavan County Council and Tuath Housing Association. There are 59 dwellings in this development. 50% of the dwellings are tenanted by disabled people.

In 2012 a National Implementation Framework was published that turned the 9 Strategic Aims into 18 Priority Actions each of which had several Key Measures. The Priority Actions are contained as an appendix to this document.

The Framework set out the stakeholders that were required to come together to deliver each of the Key Measures, as Lead Roles. Each Key Measure had documented Timelines and KPIs.

In 2016 with the publication of Rebuilding Ireland¹ the NHSPWD 2011 – 2016 was extended to the end of 2020 as many of the Priority Actions were still relevant and key to the increased delivery of housing for people with a disability. In 2020 the strategy was further extended to the end of 2021 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

With the dramatic changes in the economy over the lifetime of the strategy and most recently with Covid 19, it has not always been possible to deliver all the measures in the documented timelines. While housing delivery for people with a disability has increased, the boarder housing crisis has had an impact on delivery. Many of the actions from the NHSPWD that are ongoing are still relevant and desirable, if not essential, to the delivery of housing for people with a disability.



1 Rebuilding Ireland was the then Government Housing Plan that has been replaced by Housing for All gov.ie - Housing for All (www.gov.ie)

1.1 Purpose of Review

This review document will examine the various actions and measures achieved during the lifetime of the strategy. The report will consider and document some of the ongoing actions for follow through to the new national strategy. In addition, the document will examine each of the key measures to ascertain what progress was made on each.

The images contained throughout this document represent projects that have been delivered. These are both in the forms of homes for individuals and images representing policy or procedural change.



Hoban Park, Kilkenny. Hoban Park is a 38-unit social and affordable housing scheme which includes 15 single storey and 23 two storey houses. The mix of unit types and sizes is intended to create a sustainable multi-generational community, which integrates well with the surrounding mixed residential. Two single storey units have been allocated to residents of the former congregated setting facility - St. Patrick's Centre.

2 Structures

The importance of interagency cooperation was highlighted in the strategy as being a key component for the delivery of housing and related services. The structures proposed in the strategy were new and innovative, bringing the experts from housing delivery and support services together. This collaboration aimed to ensure the best use of resources by having expert views on the various elements required to increase housing delivery to people with a disability around the one table at both national and local level having the individual with a disability in the centre.

At national level two groups have been established, the Implementation Monitoring Group and the Housing Subgroup. At local level each Local Authority has established a Housing and Disability Steering Group. In more recent times this has involved the inclusion of Disabled Persons Organisations.

Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG)

The role of this group is to monitor the implementation of the strategy. A report on the progress under the priority areas is published by the group on an annual basis. The group meets bi-annually. The group is chaired by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and has a membership that is reflective of the various stakeholders to the delivery of housing and related supports for people with a disability.

Representation of the IMG includes individuals from the following:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Health, both Disability Services and Mental Health
- The HSE, both Disability Services and Mental Health
- The Housing Agency
- The City and County Management Association
- The Irish Council for Social Housing
- The National Disability Authority
- Inclusion Ireland
- National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Mental Health Reform

Housing Subgroup

The Housing Subgroup is a national group chaired by the Housing Agency. The Subgroup has met on 60 occasions over the lifetime of the strategy. The group has a defined Terms of Reference. The group is delivery focused and sets the agenda of work to be progressed in line with the vision set out in the NHSPWD in order to deliver on the Priority Actions.

The membership of the group consists of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), the Department of Health (DoH), the Health Services Executive (HSE), representatives from the City and County Management Association², the Irish Council for Social Housing, along with Approved Housing Bodies and Disability Sectoral representatives.

Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs)

A HDSG has been established in each local authority area. These groups were established to enhance the existing adhoc interagency cooperation and to bring a more coordinated approach to the delivery of housing and related services. A small number of pilot groups were set up in 2013 to test the concept as it was a new, more formal way of working. It brought together locally for the first time around the one table, the local authority, HSE from both Disability Services and Mental Health, Approved Housing Bodies and representative groups from the areas of the four disability categories.

Initially the primary focus of the groups was the preparation of the Local Strategic Plans. Following the real engagement that occurred to prepare these plans, the groups undoubtedly struggled to remain focused.

The Housing Agency has supported the groups over the years and with the input from the HSE at national level, has tried to ensure that the right people are around the table to assist in the increased delivery of housing for people with a disability and related supports.

In 2019 the Terms of Reference for the group was revisited by the Housing Subgroup. A more defined role and set of actions were prepared and circulated to the groups for consideration and adoption, as appropriate. The Housing Agency also commenced a series of sessions with the HDSG Coordinators in 2018 which have now become quarterly meetings.

The purpose of the meetings is to allow for discussion on issues that are raised at national level in a top-down approach but also to facilitate a bottom-up approach as issues raised at the HDSG tables are also discussed. The coordinators' meetings also allow for networking between the coordinators which hopefully will lead to consistency in local authorities' approach to applications for housing supports from people with a disability and ultimately to housing delivery.

The majority of HDSGs are now meeting regularly and have reviewed their membership and their role in assisting the delivery of housing to people with a disability.

Work on developing the structures is ongoing and progress has been made in recent months. As part of the development of the new strategy, research on the working of the groups has been undertaken.

Task Groups

Over the term of the strategy several groups were established. Some of these groups had a broad remit and met over a period of a couple of years such as the Mental Health Task Group and the Community Living Task Group. Other groups such as the Early Interventions Process Development Group or the Medical Form Review Group were single task focused and had a defined lifespan.

2 <https://www.lgma.ie/en/ccma/>

Community Living Task Group

This group was established under the auspices of the Housing Subgroup to look at relevant agenda items at a level of detail that was not possible for the Housing Subgroup. This group's focus was to discuss the challenges and barriers facing people with a disability living in the community accessing housing. This included highlighting inconsistencies across LAs in addressing scenarios and assisting in the development of the Housing Options documents outlined in Section 8 Accessible Documentation.

Mental Health Task Group

As with the Community Living Task Group this group was established under the auspices of the Housing Subgroup. The group examined issues specifically affecting people with mental health difficulties. This group's work included the initial setting up of the Mental Health Property Transfer Project and examining measures to raise awareness of enduring mental health difficulties among wider society.

Protocol Review Group

This group was set up to review the Protocols contained in the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability. This review was to be completed within a three-month period in 2017. The group examined whether the existing protocols were still relevant and if not to put new protocols in place. Each of the protocols in the strategy was reviewed and the Protocol for Individual Assessment of Need Protocol was updated.

The Early Interventions Process Development Group

This group, consisting of local authority, Approved Housing Body, and HSE staff, was established to assist in the delivery of Priority Action 5.1., Key Measure 5.1.1. The group was tasked with devising a manual and subsequent training session that was to be used for both local authority and Approved Housing Body staff to assist them to support individuals with mental health difficulties. More detail on the Early Interventions Process is contained in Section 7 of this document.

Medical/Disability Information Form Review Group

This group was established to examine the challenges being experienced by both applicants and local authority officials in the processing of applications from households with a disability and the ability to award a priority on foot of the information provided.

The group consisted of local authority and HSE representatives. The group developed a new Medical/Disability Information Form for submission with the application for Social Housing Supports. The form was introduced on the 19th of April 2021 and replaced the need for the consultant's letter. More detail on this form is contained in Section 14 Social Housing Application Form.

3 National Assessment and Allocation Guidelines

Strategy Aim 4 required that a protocol be prepared to govern the transfer of individuals from congregated settings into the community under the transitioning programme set out in the Report of the Congregated Settings Working Group – A Time to Move On. This protocol was prepared in 2013 and outlined how the challenges that faced individuals transitioning from congregated settings would be overcome.

As part of the work on this protocol the fact that the challenges that faced people transitioning were also faced by people living in the community or in the family home was evident. As a result, in 2014 the National Guidelines for Assessment and Allocation Guidelines Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability³ was prepared.

The guidelines were reviewed in 2016. This review received 24 submissions from various interest groups through the Housing and Disability Steering Group structure over a two-stage process.

The guide which was issued by Department Circular in November 2017 recognised that all individuals with disabilities can live independently with varying level of support and whether this support is in place or not at the time of application should not inhibit the assessment process.

The guide sets out 18 key messages that highlighted some issues that should be considered by local authorities to assist in addressing some of the challenges and barriers that people with a disability have encountered when trying to access social housing supports.

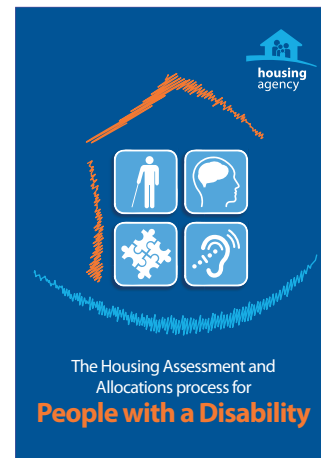
Some of the fundamental messages included the fact that information should be made available based on universal design principles of customer care and that all people with a disability are entitled to an assessment of housing need on the submission of a completed application form no matter where they are currently residing.

In order to ensure that individuals or households with the greatest need are prioritised, the guide also suggested that priority should be given in instances where a change in housing will improve or stabilise the circumstances of the individual or household. There was the suggested use of the Priority Information Form that was provided as an appendix to the document. During the consultation process in 2016 as part of the review of the 2014 guidelines, concerns were raised regarding the ability of individuals to apply for supports from the HSE without an offer of a tenancy and the perceived inability of local authorities to make an offer of a tenancy without the social or medical supports being in place. As a result, the guide suggested as one of its Key Messages the introduction of an 'Offer Zone' which would commence up to six months prior to a reasonable expectation that an offer of accommodation would be made. A few local authorities adopted this process for some of their allocations, such as direct build where there was a significant lead in time.

3 National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for Social Housing Provision for People with a Disability | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (old.gov.ie)

Other Key Messages included:

- Introduction of a co-correspondent facility that allows notification of correspondence.
- Joint applications for social housing support from households that are not related or in a relationship. Applicants need not be sharing at the time of application.
- Seeking that an individual who has an interest in/ownership of a property that they cannot reasonably occupy the property due to their support needs or other such issues not to be considered as being adequately housed.
- Allow for the allocation of accommodation to an individual where a housing need arises irrespective of any adaptations that were made to the individual's current place of residence.
- Allowing the personal circumstances of an individual to influence the size, design and type of the required housing.
- If a person has a progressive condition such that their current housing will become inappropriate due to the worsening of the disability and/or their circumstances, they should be considered as having a housing need. This also applies to an adult still living at home with ageing parents.
- Allow the use of the discretion clause for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) to facilitate people with a disability to access the scheme.
- People with a disability shall not be deemed adequately housed when their current address is a congregated setting, institution, hospital/nursing home, community-based group home, or when they, although an adult, remain in the family home due to their personal circumstances and/or support needs.
- Where a person with a disability is transitioning from a congregated setting to community-based living, facilitate a transfer to a new property where the service provider/or other party in consultation with the individual has sourced a more suitable property.
- Recommendation 7 of the Report of the Working Group on Congregated Settings '*Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – A Strategy for Community Inclusion*' is that person-centred principles should guide the new support model that will allow people with disabilities, whether from a congregated setting or institutional care setting, to live in dispersed housing with tailored supports in the community.
- Applications from people transitioning from a congregated setting shall have their Basis of Need recorded as "current accommodation is an institution, emergency accommodation or a hostel" under the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2014.



The Guidelines reiterated the need for local authorities to strategically plan and deliver housing for people with a disability. This planning should take into account individuals and households with disability as their Basis of Need and those classified as having specific accommodation requirements arising from their disability on the Local Authority's Record of Qualified Households (Waiting List). This planning should also be in line with the target set out in their Local Strategic Plan.

Implementation of some of the aspects of the guidelines has been slow. While it is not readily apparent why this is, lack of awareness of the guidelines may have been an issue. To raise awareness of the Key Messages and to assist frontline staff in the local authorities to implement the messages, a summary document was prepared and circulated to all local authorities in November 2018.

The National Guidelines for Assessment and Allocation Guidelines Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability formed part of the HDSG agendas in a number of areas in 2019 to again try to raise awareness of the content of the guidelines.

It is important that the messages are understood by local authority staff and where possible, taken on board for implementation. This will require full buy in from the top down in local authorities.

The messages are fundamentally important to easing the path for applicants to Social Housing Supports and ultimately an allocation of a new home. It is of importance that cognisance is taken of the National Guidelines for Assessment and Allocation Guidelines Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability by local authorities and that these are embedded into the process of the local authorities.



Connaught Grove, Athboy, Co Meath. This scheme consists of 28 dwellings with 4 of the dwellings specially adapted for people with a physical disability.

4 Local Strategic Plans (LSP)

Priority Action 1 seeks to 'Ensure equitable access for people with disabilities to relevant social housing supports'. Two of the Key Measures (1.1.3 and 1.1.4) aim to assist in addressing this access by putting in place strategies to meet the identified need under the four categories.

1.1.3 Housing authorities will develop specific strategies to meet the identified housing needs of people with physical, intellectual, mental health and sensory disabilities locally. These strategies will be informed by the assessments of housing need and broader formalised consultation with relevant statutory agencies, service users' groups and disability organisations. These strategies will form an integral part of local authority Housing Services Plans and will promote and support the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities using all appropriate housing supply mechanisms.

1.1.4 In line with the development of specific disability housing strategies, housing authorities will consider reserving certain proportions of units to meet specific identified need within each disability strategy.

The establishment of the Housing and Disability Steering Groups in each of the local authority areas acted as the conduit for the preparation of these strategies.

4.1 2015/2016 Local Strategic Plans

The initial groups that set about preparing the strategies opted to prepare a single Strategic Plan that would look at the need across the four identified categories of disability i.e. Physical, Sensory, Intellectual and Mental Health. This practice was then replicated across all local authority areas as the strategies were prepared.

It was recognised and accepted by the Housing and Disability Steering Groups that local authorities can only deal with identified need, but they were also cognisant of the fact that there was an unidentified need in communities that needed to be acknowledged. As a result, many Housing and Disability Steering Group embarked on trying to quantify this unidentified or emerging need. Several different methodologies were used, and it was a snapshot on a particular date depending on when the plan was being prepared. While the data may not be reliable due to the different dates of preparation and the different methodologies used, the exercise did confirm the fact that there is potentially a large unidentified housing need. This highlights the importance for individuals to identify their housing needs to the local authority. It is important that they are supported by all stakeholders to achieve this as this is the only way that the local authority can plan for such needs. In addition, it demonstrates that awareness of this importance does not exist in the community.

A number of local authorities and disability organisations have run campaigns to try to raise awareness of the importance of an individual making the local authority aware of their housing need, both among the community generally and among disability service providers who may support individuals with a disability to prepare and submit an application for Social Housing Support.

The Local Strategic Plans also set a target for delivery for each local authority. In some instances, this was an overall percentage of their allocations each year and in other cases it was given as a percentage of the delivery types.

Since 2016 local authorities have reported on their allocations to people with a disability through The Housing Agency (More detail on this is contained in Section 5).

4.2 2021 Local Strategic Plans

In 2021 due to the fact that many of the existing LSPs were expired and as part of the preparation for the development of the new national strategy, the Housing and Disability Steering Groups were tasked with preparing new Local Strategic Plans. A template was issued to all HDSGs through the local authority coordinators. The template was more detailed and more challenging to all of the stakeholders to try to ensure that a holistic view was taken in order to deliver appropriate housing with any required related supports. The template also allowed for the Housing and Disability Steering Groups to set measurable targets and tasks.

The suggested chapters for the 2021 LSPs was as follows:

1. Purpose of the Local Strategic Plan.
2. Awareness and promotion of the Local Strategic Plan.
3. Stakeholder Engagement and HDSG Functionality.
4. Local Aims and Objectives.
5. Quantify the current need of housing and Identify sources of potential emerging need.
6. Housing Delivery Pipeline.
7. Supports – social and care.
8. Challenges, risks and opportunities.
9. Targets and Deliverables under the Strategy.
10. Reporting.

A total of 23 LSPs have been submitted to The Housing Agency in advance of the deadline for completion in order for an analysis of these plans to be conducted by The Housing Agency to feed into the consultation process and drafting of the new national strategy. It is understood that a number of other Housing and Disability Steering Groups are in the process of completing their plans.

Some of the key points raised were:

Independent Living

Supports: The provision of support is limited due to funding and an absence of coordination. This limits the capacity to deliver housing successfully to many people on the housing list. Broadly the suggested actions are the introduction of an offer zone with reviews and greater funding for PAs. It was also suggested further use of assistive technologies and the need to focus on homes for life.

Decongregation: A lack of coordination and need for further supports are cited as major barriers to decongregation. Transitioning from congregated settings offers an opportunity to improve the provision of community-based supports but there are challenges in maintaining both community supports and supports in congregated settings during the transitional period which means there are calls for additional funding.

Private rental markets: The HAP scheme currently presents a barrier to disabled people in accessing housing as there are many delays and a disparity between current market rents and the capped limit. Additionally, those in the private rental market can also be vulnerable to exploitation and housing insecurity. A review of HAP limits is suggested, greater tenancy support, maintaining initiative to sustain tenancies, more legal safeguards for those in tenancies and greater cooperation with the HSE and key workers.

Supply: There is a cited lack of supply of suitable affordable accommodation to meet the current demand. It was suggested that the focus should be on increasing supply through new builds and adaptations to existing homes. A specific proportion of units for disabled people and specific identified need be agreed upon and targeted. All government funded social housing should include a percentage of wheelchair accessible units and universal design should be central in all new builds.

Assessment and Allocation Process

Access to information: Plans identify a lack of available information and the absence of a single source for all information. Numerous LSPs support the IWA's Think Ahead, Think Housing campaign as well as a development of a one-stop-shop for information on all entitlements and services.

Complicated and inconsistent process: Many cite reports of people feeling overwhelmed and unsupported in applying for housing support. Further clarity on the housing path is deemed necessary to offer real choice, a designated person for families could aid the process as well as a focus on housing needs as opposed to clinical diagnosis in applications.

Adaptations: The housing adaptation scheme is viewed as having too low a cap not in line with building cost inflation and all persons residing in the home are included in the household income criteria. A review and updating of these limits and criteria are called for. AHBs currently have no direct source to adaptation funding and local authorities could also benefit from increased funding for adaptations. Increased funding could prevent crisis housing situations. There are also calls for the CAS process to be streamlined.

Interagency collaboration

Align housing and supports: Greater interagency cooperation is needed to overcome challenges around coordinating supports and housing. An integrated relationship is key to ensure independent living and could be aided by mechanisms to review the offer zone, protocols to align timelines for housing and supports and collaboration to coalesce fragmented services. Establishment of a Disability Action Team to facilitate structures for shared forward planning for disabled people, shared case management across key services and multi-agency offer zone review.

Meeting targets: Additionally, greater communication and mechanisms could help stakeholders cooperate more efficiently. Relevant stakeholders require a more cohesive, integrated approach to progress the goals of the National Strategy.

Design

Universal design: The majority of Local Strategic Plans call for a review of Part M to incorporate a universal design approach to housing that are future proof and liveable units. There is also a call for greater emphasis on the Lived Experience of Disabled People in revisions of universal design.

Innovative design: Calls for development of innovative housing design that looks at providing spaces for carers/personal assistants or shared spaces in smaller residential units. Collaborative work and research could improve innovative housing design and assistive technologies.

Planning

Data: There is an absence of information available on existing and future demand which affects planning and understanding. Local authorities have called for systems to be put in place to capture statistics on disability and housing need to enable accurate targets and proactive plans to be put in place on a collaborative basis. Emerging need should also be identified, and housing lists should be kept up to date. There should be greater alignment between housing demand and the type of housing being developed.



5 Allocations 2016 to 2020

Since 2016 the Housing Agency has collected data from local authorities on their allocations to individuals or households with a disability. All local authorities have returned the allocation figures over the 5-year period.

Table 1 below sets out the overall allocations since 2016 under each category of disability.

Disability	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Physical	682	833	761	1,231	1,038
Sensory	88	118	155	239	222
Mental Health	194	365	318	632	521
Intellectual	215	199	167	296	312
Classification	27	64	142	-	-
Total	1,206	1,579	1,543	2,398	2,093

Table 1: Allocations to household where a disability exists.

The collection of the data was refined in 2018 to ensure that the data collected from each local authority was under the four different categories of disability, which resulted in a slight decline in the figures. In 2019 the request for data was further refined to ensure that each local authority reported on the same types of allocations and that allocations to older persons were not included as part of the figures even where mobility issues existed.

The overall number of allocations of homes by local authorities under all basis of need fell in 2020 as a result of the restrictions due to Covid 19 and this reduction had a knock-on effect on the number of allocations to people with a disability.

Table 2 overleaf provides a breakdown by local authority of the allocations made.

Local Authority	Total 2016	Total 2017	Total 2018	Total 2019	Total 2020
Carlow County Council	26	27	27	40	37
Cavan County Council	15	23	5	46	31
Clare County Council	40	58	20	32	19
Cork City Council	55	0	34	57	57
Cork County Council	76	93	118	77	121
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	53	119	80	107	60
Donegal County Council	20	39	23	34	43
Dublin City Council	102	267	214	214	163
Fingal County Council	41	84	67	165	149
Galway City Council	27	24	13	111	80
Galway County Council	34	47	37	64	97
Kerry County Council	74	88	50	189	158
Kildare County Council	15	68	113	94	86
Kilkenny County Council	37	57	59	21	33
Laois County Council	21	43	27	33	78
Leitrim County Council	15	28	28	28	20
Limerick City and County	20	36	73	63	94
Longford County Council	15	34	65	16	34
Louth County Council	54	55	47	84	124
Mayo County Council	40	27	16	107	30
Meath County Council	36	32	32	144	95
Monaghan County Council	26	35	6	30	15
Offaly County Council	7	12	10	31	28
Roscommon County Council	28	20	20	59	39
Sligo County Council	43	32	30	29	31
South Dublin County Council	84	88	78	107	44
Tipperary County Council	60	34	109	39	65
Waterford City and County	27	15	34	31	33
Westmeath County Council	12	25	24	56	43
Wexford County Council	89	57	50	207	106
Wicklow County Council	14	12	34	74	80
TOTAL	1,206	1,579	1,543	2,389	2,093

Table 2: Allocations per Local Authority Area

6 Grant Schemes

Priority Action 3.2 seeks to support the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to enable them to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Key Measure 3.2.1 looks to *Ensure continued priority is given to the provision of appropriate funding for the undertaking of adaptation works for local authority tenants with a disability and for the operation of the Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for people with disabilities⁴ in private housing.*

Table 3 below demonstrates the continued commitment to ensuring that the objective of this key measure is delivered with over 30,000 grants issued to the end of 2020.

Year	No. grants	Value €'000
2011	3,273	27,695
2012	3,088	26,147
2013	2,506	20,885
2014	2,192	17,386
2015	2,600	20,841
2016	2,714	20,867
2017	3,449	27,857
2018	3,622	29,739
2019	3,891	32,246
2020	3,165	26,653
Total	30,500	€250,316

Table 3: Housing Aid for People with a Disability 2011 to 2020

It is expected that 2021 will have delivered another significant number of grants which will result in people with a disability remaining in their homes. In addition to the above grant there is also the Housing Aid for Older People and Mobility Aid Grant ⁵that may have contributed to individuals or households with a disability remaining in their homes.

⁴ gov.ie - Housing Adaptation Grants for older people and people with a disability (Private Houses) (www.gov.ie)

⁵ gov.ie - Housing Adaptation Grants for older people and people with a disability (Private Houses) (www.gov.ie)

	Housing Aid for Older People		Mobility Aid Grant	
Year	No. grants	Value €'000	No. grants	Value €'000
2011	6,510	27,098	1,975	6,381
2012	4,848	19,910	2,066	6,764
2013	2,815	11,247	1,690	5,548
2014	3,634	13,498	1,721	5,570
2015	3,127	11,267	1,869	6,284
2016	3,425	12,647	1,871	6,548
2017	3,558	13,254	2,073	7,295
2018	3,640	13,904	2,151	7,601
2019	4,021	15,426	2,111	7,593
2020	3,290	12,762	1,682	5,960
Total	38,868	€151,013	19,209	€65,544

Table 4: Housing Aid for Older People and Mobility Aid Grants Issued 2011 - 2020



Adaptations funded through Dun Laoire/Rathdown County Council and Wexford County Council for people with a physical disability.

Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness and the Housing Options for our Ageing Population Policy Statement both referenced the need to streamline the grant application process and make it more accessible to applicants.

The key priorities in reviewing the grants were to:

- Develop a single application form to cover all three grants,
- Make the documentation more accessible through plain English, and
- Standardise the application process and administration of the grants across all 31 local authorities.

The consultation on the review included:

- A detailed questionnaire to all local authorities,
- Meetings with individual local authorities,
- A series of workshops countrywide, and
- Meetings with several key stakeholders, including the National Disability Authority, Alone and Age Friendly Ireland.

In December 2019, the new single application form and revised guidelines for the grants scheme was issued by Department Circular (Housing Circular: 41/2019⁶). The month of January 2020 was used as a transitional period for the changes associated with the revised single application form and guidance to be implemented by local authorities. This became the normal process from February 2020.

The challenges for the various grant schemes during Covid 19 were overcome by all parties working together for the good of the applicant to ensure that as many grants as possible were completed and the appropriate payments made.



Proudstown Road, Navan, Co Meath consists of a 4 dwellings development. The dwellings are age friendly/disability proofed.

6 gov.ie - Circulars (www.gov.ie)

7 Mental Health Early Interventions Process

The NHSPWD has a specific strategic aim (Strategic Aim 5) directed at the Housing Needs of People with Mental Health difficulties. The aim recognises the complex nature of mental health difficulties and the challenges for an individual with such difficulties to maintain housing. The aim seeks to raise awareness within communities on mental health difficulties and to engage with communities to facilitate integration.

Many initiatives have been undertaken over the lifetime of the Strategy which may or may not be directly linked to the strategy. Local authorities working in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies on projects such as Housing First, the Slán Abhaile project, START project and others provide additional support to people with Mental Health difficulties before and during their tenancy.

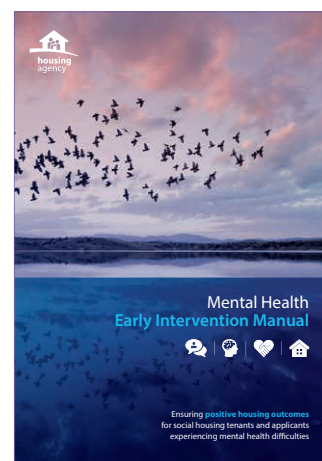
A more recent initiative that is designed to raise awareness among local authority and Approved Housing Body staff, as well as dispel some common myths, is the Mental Health Early Interventions Process.

A Task Group was set up in 2018 to look at ways of addressing the lack of awareness of mental health difficulties and how this can have negative housing related outcomes for individuals. The group identified that on many occasions and in many situations early detection of a difficulty can help to resolve the issue more easily and result in positive outcomes for all concerned.

A manual to assist local authority and Approved Housing Body (AHB) staff to support applicants and tenants that may be experiencing mental health difficulties was devised out of this engagement. The manual outlines what has been called an Early Interventions Process that is based on a series of questions.

The answers to these questions assists the staff member to establish an early intervention approach that can be used to identify and act on concerns regarding a mental health difficulty of a customer, in an effort to have a positive outcome for the individual concerned and the organisation. The aim is to ensure that support is provided where possible to a tenant or applicant at as early a stage as possible to prevent or reduce the severity of negative housing consequences for them.

There was linkages with the HSE Mental Health Services in devising the manual and rolling out the training and it has raised awareness among attendees to the barriers faced by those with mental health difficulties and assist them in their day-to-day interactions with tenants and housing applicants.



The manual aims to give the Local Authority and AHB staff a better understanding of the main mental health difficulties, enhanced skills in respect of recognising possible signs and symptoms a person may demonstrate when experiencing mental health difficulties, an overview of HSE Mental Health Services and the resources available.

The training carried out in 2019 and 2020 had different formats including face-to-face training, online video tutorials and online information sessions and was accompanied by brochures and posters. It is tiered to match the level of interaction that staff have with tenants and housing applicants. The face-to-face training course is aimed at office-based staff who conduct interviews or meetings with housing applicants and/or tenants.

The face-to-face training has reached almost 400 staff in local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies.

Additional Mental Health Awareness Information Sessions were held for staff of local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies during the Covid 19 pandemic to assist staff in their working and personal lives.

8 Accessible Information

As stated at the outset of this document, the vision of the NHSPWD is To facilitate access, for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

In order to allow people with a disability to make informed decisions regarding their housing needs, the information of what is available to them must be in an accessible format. Over the lifetime of the strategy information has been made available through the preparation of accessible documents and other mediums for imparting information. This included accessible formats for the consultation on the new national strategy.

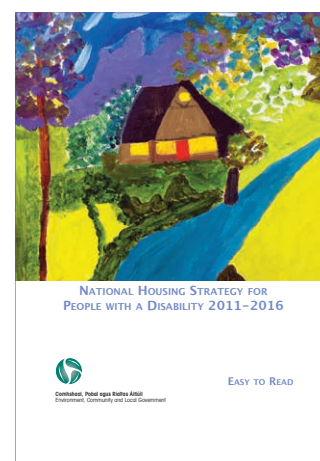
The first document that was prepared was an **easy read version of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016** by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

The preparation of the document ensured that people with a disability were aware of what was contained in the strategy. This was in line with the mantra of

‘nothing for us without us’.

As articulated earlier, it is vitally important that individuals or households with a disability make their housing need known to the local authority through the Social Housing Support application process, as that is the only way that local authorities can strategically plan for this need.

As a result, one of the first of the documents prepared was an **easy read guide to the completion of the Social Housing Support Application form**. The guide provides information on how to complete the application form and what documentation will be required to be submitted with the form.



This guide was updated in April 2021 to reflect the changes to the new Social Housing Support Application Form and associated regulations were introduced. The document was also made available to local authorities in PDF Format for upload to their websites.

Information is an important tool to assist in completing any task, in any walk of life. Ideally at all times, but, when possible, information should be available in a central location that is easily accessible to the individuals that require the information.

This is no different for those involved in the provision of housing for people with a disability, some might say that it is even more important to have information readily available in a central location for this cohort of stakeholders.

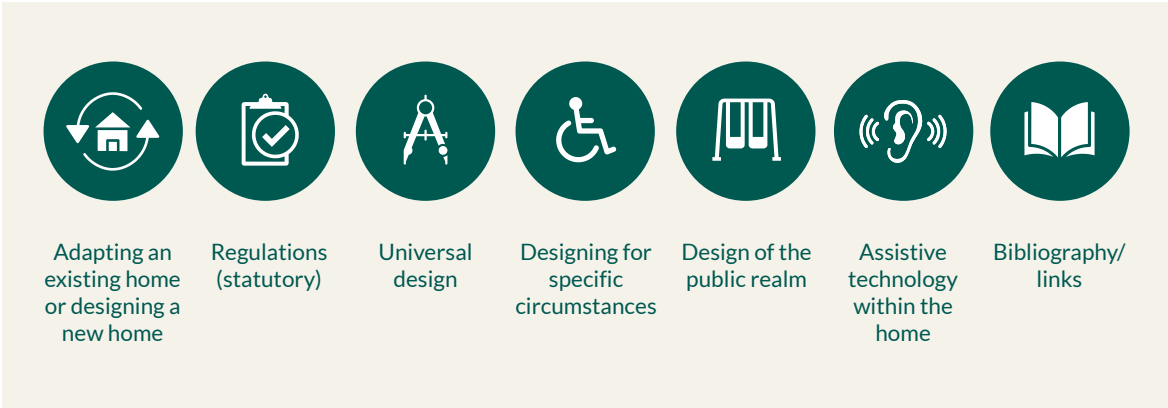
When considering housing delivery for an individual with the disability, family members, advocates and support workers should be able to access information conveniently. The Housing Agency produced a road map to **Designing Housing to Meet the Needs of All**.



The road map is provided as a website and a booklet. This is not a design guide but a bringing together of all the existing guidelines and standards in one place. The website supports the implementation of the NHSPWD.

The layout of the website, housingdesignforall.ie, is based as follows:

Roadmap



The development of the **Housing Options** documentation was one of the biggest undertakings of the accessible documentation initiative. The provision of the suite of documents was driven by the need to have all information relating to housing available in an easy-to-follow and concise document. Housing Options is available in English, Plain English, Easy Read and Irish.

The document covers:

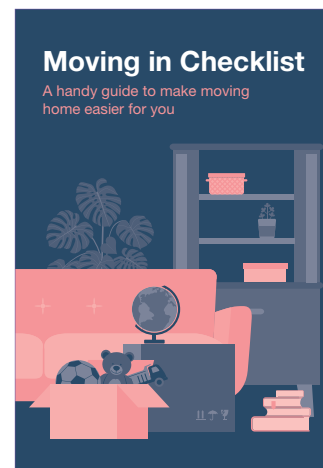
- Policy context
- Social housing support
- Social housing eligibility and need
- Applying for social housing support
- Assessment
- Housing waiting lists including Choice-based letting
- Allocation of housing
- Social housing provision options
 - Local authority stock
 - Approved Housing Body stock
 - Housing Assistance Payment
 - Older persons accommodation
 - Social leasing/Rental Accommodation Scheme
 - Private rented/Rent Supplement
 - Traveller accommodation
 - Owner occupied
 - *The Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme*
 - *Mobility Aids Housing Grant Scheme*
 - *Tenant Adaptation Works*
 - *Housing Aid for Older People*
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan

The document was also made available to local authorities in PDF Format for upload to their websites.



Another recent addition to the suite of documents is a **Moving in Checklist** that can be used by local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies for tenants moving into their new homes. The checklist can also be made available to Service Providers and advocate organisations for use by the people they support no matter what the tenure of the property they are moving into is.

The purpose of the checklist is to guide the individual with regards to things they will need to do as they move in to their new home. It allows the individual to tick off answers to questions and record answers in the booklet for use at a later stage, such as landlord contact details, their bin collection day etc.



Tower View, Strokestown, Co Roscommon. This is single storey, semi-detached, 2-bedroom dwelling allocated to a person with mental health disability.

9 Social Housing Applicant/ Tenant Experience Survey

There is anecdotal evidence that individuals who have mental health difficulties are reluctant to disclose this fact to their local authority when applying for social housing support for fear that this would negatively impact on their ability to receive housing support.

Key Measure 5.1.2 of the strategy sought that *Housing authorities will put a framework in place to ensure that applicants for social housing supports are provided with information regarding the implications of disclosure of a mental health disability, in the context of the effective assessment of housing support needs and appropriate prioritisation.* Albeit the use of the word *implications* suggests a negative outcome, this measure was to promote the disclosure to ensure that applicants were treated in a sensitive and appropriate manner and that the appropriate supports were in place from the outset. This was to ensure that the applicant had a positive outcome and to try to ensure that their tenancy can be sustained into the future.

The Mental Health Task Group established under the auspices of the Housing Subgroup looked at this issue in 2018. To gauge individuals experiences it was decided to carry out a questionnaire, the purpose of which was to try to establish the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing a mental health difficulty when applying for social housing or when an individual is a tenant of the Local Authority. The finding would then be used to inform the group of the way forward. The questionnaire is contained in Appendix 3 of this document.

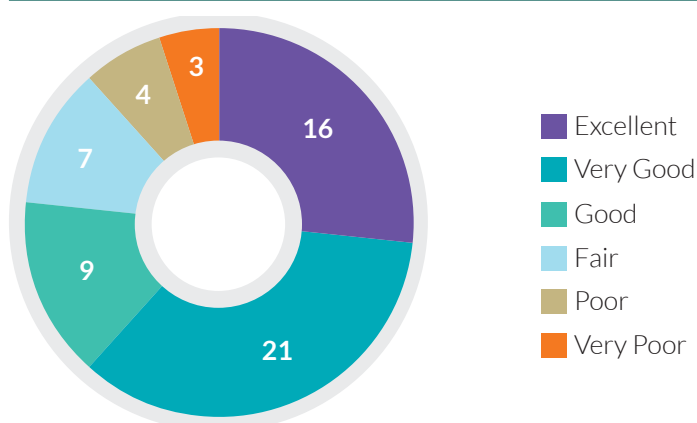
The questionnaires were issued out through the group in 2019 to a wide range of support staff who work directly with individuals with mental health difficulties. The work of the staff in supporting individuals to complete the survey was very much appreciated.

A total of 61 completed surveys were returned. Of these 61 individuals:

- 31 were applicants on the local authorities' Social Housing Waiting Lists,
- 7 were tenants of a local authority, and
- 23 were tenants of Approved Housing Bodies.

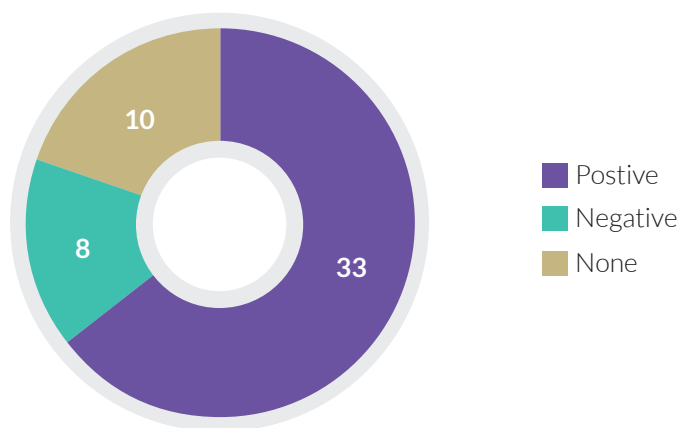
Chart 1 shows the responses when asked to rate the service that they received from their local authority over the previous 12 months. 1 individual did not answer the question.

Chart 1: How would you rate the service from local authority in the last 12 months?



44 people disclosed at the time of application that they had mental health difficulties; 8 people disclosed their issues at some stage to the local authority. 9 people did not disclose that they had a mental health difficulty. The reason for this non-disclosure ranged from not being asked, to not being aware that the individual had a difficulty with one person being 'worried that it would mean that I would be lower on the list and not get accommodation in a better place'.

Chart 2: Perceived effect on application or tenancy



The data collected has been used in various forums to promote the fact that disclosing a mental health difficulty will in the vast majority of cases have a positive outcome for the individual.

10 Mental Health HSE Property Transfer Project

Strategic Aim 5 of the NHSPWD relates to the housing needs of people with mental health difficulties. The aim gives effect to the housing commitments contained in the Government's mental health policy, A Vision for Change, in relation to meeting the housing needs of people with mental health difficulties, who have low and medium support needs, within communities. In recognition of the complex nature of mental health, a range of targeted responses are required to facilitate individuals to maintain housing and support independent living.

The Mental Health Property Transfer Project was to achieve the deliverables under Priority Action 5.3 of the NHSPWD to 'facilitate the effective transitioning of people with mental health disabilities from HSE mental health facilities to appropriate community settings within sustainable communities' and Priority Action 5.4 'development of a Housing Support Scheme for people transitioning from HSE mental health facilities'.

The HSE Mental Health Services are divided into nine geographical areas called Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO). The project included properties in six of the nine CHOs and consisted of almost one hundred and forty people in approximately fifty-two properties.

The project is ongoing and has two parts,

- 1) the transfer of residents in HSE owned properties to tenants of an Approved Housing Body (AHB) and
- 2) the transfer of the property from HSE ownership to the ownership of an AHB.

Both parts are interlinked and both parts have had their own complexities. The transfer of the residents of HSE properties to tenants of an AHB is extremely complex and each individual is different. In line with Priority Action 5.4, Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Officers (MHTSO) have been engaged to support individuals to transition from residents to tenants.

While the provision of the relevant mental health supports continues through the Rehab Teams, the MH Tenancy Sustainment Officers act as a support and advocate for the individual transitioning in relation to all tenancy issues. This includes budgeting, setting up of utility accounts, obtaining financial assistances through various Government schemes as well as a support to integrate further into the community as a tenant of the AHB.

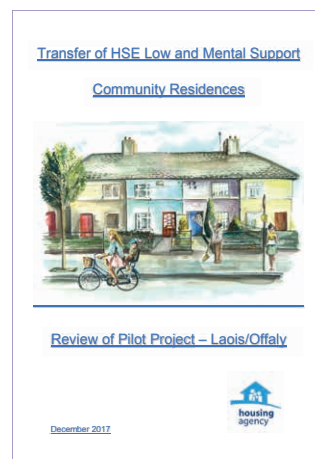
The MHTSO support will taper off as people become accustomed to their new status in their new home albeit in the same house but can be scaled back up in the event that any individual requires support in sustaining their tenancy.

The transfer of the properties to the Approved Housing Bodies from the HSE is by means of Freehold for a nominal fee. The properties are required to be used for accommodating people with mental health issues until it is determined by the HSE, in consultation with the AHB, that there is no longer a need for such properties for individuals or households with mental health difficulties. If this situation arises the property will first be offered to Disability Services and if there is no need identified by them then the property can be used for general social housing provision. The condition of the properties has varied due to age and the level of investment put into them over recent times.

10.1 Pilot Project CHO8

It was agreed in 2014 that due to the complex nature of the project and the fact that a number of the stakeholder to the process had not previously worked together on a project like this that a pilot would be established. The initial pilot project was initiated in 2014 by the commissioning of surveys on the four properties in Kildare (CHO7). After engagement with the HSE services on the ground it was decided that Kildare was not the most suitable area as a pilot for a number of reasons and the pilot was moved to Laois/Offaly (CHO8).

The Laois/Offaly Pilot was commenced in late 2015 with 5 properties and 14 residents and an interim report on the progress of the pilot project was presented to the Housing Subgroup in July 2016.



Two properties at Arden View (pictures overleaf) were two of the properties that were transferred to HAIL as part of the project. The residents not only obtained HAIL tenancies and the security which that gave them, but the properties also received a major overhaul, upgrade and modernisation.

The roll out of the project nationally commenced in 2017 with funding approved for 10 Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Officers. This funding was split 50:50 between the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the HSE Mental Health Services.

A total of 7.5 Tenancy Sustainment Officers have been appointed based on the number of properties and residents transferring as follows:

- CHO1 – 1 TSO
- CHO2 – .5 TSO
- CHO3 – 2 TSOs
- CHO5 – 2 TSOs
- CHO7 – 1 TSO
- CHO8 – 1 TSO

As part of the national rollout a number of properties were identified as being on long-term lease to the HSE from local authorities. Many of these are now being transferred to Approved Housing Bodies which will enable the residents to become tenants of the Approved Housing Body and be supported in doing so.

The experience has differed for the individuals and some have integrated well into life as an AHB tenant, but others have struggled and that is where the services of the MHTSO has been key to sustaining these tenancies. No tenancy has failed although a couple have ceased due to age related or medical changes for the tenants.

Arden View

Before



After



11 Design for Mental Health

Priority Action 5.1 refers to the Support of People with mental health disabilities to access and maintain appropriate housing within communities.

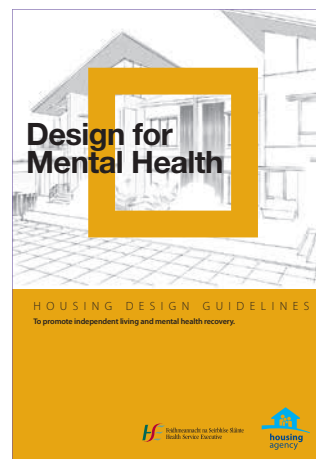
Accessing mainstream housing can be a challenge. This is not because they require specially adapted properties rather from additional barriers faced by those with mental health difficulties.

The Design for Mental Health⁷ was produced in partnership by the HSE and the Housing Agency. The document was the result of many years of work by a number of healthcare professional working in the area of mental health. The purpose of the guidelines is to identify ways to assist in lifting the barriers to a suitable home for individuals with mental health difficulties.

Good design can maximise functional abilities of individuals which in turn minimises the barriers faced by individual with mental health difficulties in accessing a suitable home.

The document is divided into 4 sections and appendices as follows:

- Section 1 is the Overview, which covers the basic concepts and factors that need to be considered when designing a home for someone with a mental health difficulty.
- Section 2 looks at The Home, advises on how important location is to independence and addressing social isolation. It also looks at dwelling types that are more suitable for individuals with with mental health difficulties.
- Section 3 looks at the Spaces within the Home, providing guidance on individual rooms and spaces.
- Section 4 provides guidance on Detailed Design of the building elements and services, such as internal lighting and heating.
- The appendices provides tools to assist in the implementation of the guidance.



⁷ <https://www.housingagency.ie/publications/design-mental-health-housing-design-guidelines>



Fingal County Council, HAIL, Avondale Court.

Avondale Court forms part of a larger development of 234 social rented, co-operative, co-ownership and affordable purchase family dwellings. HAIL was identified as a partner in this project to deliver specialist mental health supported housing.



Thurles Lions Trust Housing Association (TLT), Monastery Close, Co. Tipperary.

Monastery Close is a 34-dwelling development. There are 3 tenancies where the tenants have intellectual disabilities. They receive 24/7 support from a third-party care agency. There are 4 tenancies where the tenants are former residents of Matthew Bourke House and are in receipt of outreach tenancy supports.

12 Congregated Setting

The Working Group on Congregated Settings was set up in 2007 by the HSE to develop a national plan for transferring approximately 4,000 people with disabilities from 72 facilities in over 20 counties to community-based living.

A Congregated Setting was defined for the purpose of this work as a facility where 10 or more people live in either a single facility or in a campus type setting. The Group published a report in June 2011 'Time to Move on from Congregated Settings⁸ – A Strategy for Community Inclusion' which makes a total of 31 recommendations to deliver on Government policy towards community-based living for people with disabilities.

Strategic Aim 4 deals with the housing needs of people with intellectual disabilities, including the housing elements of the Time to Move on from Congregated Settings Report.

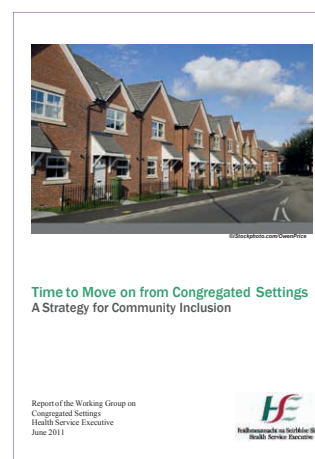
There are two Priority Actions with eight Key Measures that look to address meeting the needs of people living in the community and those transitioning from congregated settings.

One of the objectives of the overall strategy is to ensure that there is a multiagency approach to meeting the housing needs of people with a disability. This is fundamental for people transitioning from congregated settings.

Over the lifetime of the strategy several groups have worked in partnership to assist on delivering housing in the community for people leaving congregated settings. These include the HSE, Service Providers, Approved Housing Bodies and Local Authorities.

Three main principles were committed to by all stakeholders:

- People will be supported to live “ordinary lives in ordinary places”,
- People will be consulted and actively involved in any decisions about their home using a fully person-centred approach, and
- There will be meaningful engagement and communication with the individuals, families and advocates as appropriate.



8 Time to Move On from Congregated Settings - HSE.ie



Four-person home in Cloghabrody, Thomastown

In addition to the aims set out in the NHSPWD and the requirements under the Congregated Settings Working Group Report – A Time to Move on from Congregated Settings, Ireland has ratified the UN Charter on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Article 19 (a) Living independently and being included in the community of the Charter states that:

Parties to the present Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:

a) Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;

People with disabilities now have an equal right to access housing and to receive the supports necessary to enable them to live in their own home in the community. A person with a disability may choose to live alone or choose from a variety of arrangements from sharing with family, host families, friends and/or others who may or may not have a disability.

Housing options including private rented, social housing schemes or local authority housing, and purchased or new build are available to individuals moving from Congregated Settings. However, it is important that individuals supporting people with disabilities who are moving and those responsible for the provision of housing are working together, to achieve the best outcome for the person.

In 2013 an interim protocol had been developed to assist local authorities with the assessment and allocations processes for people with disabilities transitioning from congregated settings. This document was recognised at that stage as being precursor to the Assessment and Allocation Guidelines issued in 2014. The protocol set out under messages and dealt with general issues such as:

- Application Form and Documentation
- Assessment of Need
- Statement of Housing Accommodation

- Allocation of a Property
- Post Property Allocation

The document set out a number of recommended actions to make the transition from congregated settings smoother for people. These recommendations were incorporated into the Assessment and Allocation Guidelines (see Section 3 for more detail).

As stated previously the NHSPWD aim is to promote equality of access for people with a disability to the full range of housing options available and to support them to live independently in their own homes. Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) or other funding streams from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are not intended to provide residential care units or nursing home type accommodation but rather homes that are designed and/or adapted, as appropriate, for the needs of the individual or household although some of the homes may be considered as designated centres.

In 2015 clarity was brought to the process of applying for CAS Funding to facilitate the transitioning of individuals from congregated settings through the issues of Circular 45/2015. The circular was prepared in consultation with the HSE and set out guiding principles to be followed when seeking to provide housing for people with a disability.

The guidance adhered to the principles outlined in the National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability. The Guidance also had general application for other funding and delivery mechanisms such as Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and leasing. AHBs and service providers are required to engage with their local authority and the HSE in developing proposals and are required to include certification to this effect when submitting proposals to local authorities.

Engagement with individuals transitioning from congregated settings is ongoing. There have been many challenges to the programme that all stakeholders continue to work to overcome, including:

- the lack of suitable properties in areas that will allow for ease of integration into existing communities,
- the lack of multiannual funding for supports which can result in the inability of the HSE at local level to provide the certification required,
- the fact that many of the properties will be deemed to be designated centres and subject to HIQA Regulatory requirements,
- the lack of clarity on what would or could be funded by the various funding parties to the process and
- the draw on the resources of AHBs for other housing delivery.

In October 2019 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a circular regarding the new forms for all Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) Projects and additional technical and cost guidance for the provision of housing for people with a disability with an aim to address some of the ambiguity on funding that was raised (Circular 32/2019).

Circular 45/2015 and Circular 32/2019 can be located on gov.ie at <https://www.gov.ie/en/circulars/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/circulars/>

13 Sharing the Vision

A Vision for Change was published in 2006 and was referenced in the NHSPWD. Strategic Aim 5 seeks to deliver on the housing elements of A Vision for Change⁹. Many significant changes and improvements have taken place over the lifetime of A Vision for Change.

The follow-on strategy, Sharing the Vision¹⁰, was published in June 2020. The structure of this strategy is that there are four Domains under the Core Values and Service Delivery Principles.

Domain 3 is Social Inclusion. *'This domain focuses mainly on people living with complex mental health difficulties who are most vulnerable to social exclusion arising from stigma and discrimination, inadequate accommodation of their needs in workplaces, and insufficient access to income, housing, employment and training or education.'* (STV Chapter 4)

This chapter goes on to explain the areas of discrimination that may be faced by someone with complex mental health difficulties including access to education, health, employment and social protection. Access to housing is also an area where people with mental health difficulties can struggle. Access to good-quality, secure and appropriate housing can facilitate and sustain recovery.

Sharing the Vision has several recommendations (Recommendations 67 – 70) that are housing related that will need to be reflected in the new national strategy.



St Vincent De Paul, Cuan Iosa, Ballymote, Co Sligo is an 8 dwelling development. The houses are allocated to people with a mental health, intellectual and physical disabilities.

⁹ gov.ie - A Vision for Change (www.gov.ie)

¹⁰ gov.ie - Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone (www.gov.ie)

14 Social Housing Application Form

In 2021 changes were made to the Social Housing Application Form. These included changes to the application form itself as well as the introduction of a new Medical/Disability Application Form HMD Form 1.

The new application form is in circulation since the 19th of April 2021 and must be used for all applications after that date.

Under Section 6 of the application form an applicant can describe the reason for seeking support as being on Disability Grounds.

Which of the following best describes your reason for seeking support?

Disability grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involuntary sharing facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rent increase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eviction/notice of termination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unable to provide accommodation from own resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire/other damage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overcrowded	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unfit accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/family home (involuntary sharing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsustainable mortgage	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, give details

In Section 8: Housing Requirements there is an option to select Adapted Housing as the type of housing that best meets the needs of the applicant, however, in addition to this there is a new option of Wheelchair liveable that an applicant can select.

PART 8: HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Please indicate type of social housing support that best meets your needs.

Adapted housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement Works In Lieu scheme (IWILs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site for private house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved Housing Body (AHB)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer (include rent account number below if applicable)*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demountable dwelling (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rented local authority accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Extension to local authority house	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single level housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveller group housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single rural dwelling (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveller halting site bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Wheelchair liveable	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Separate application forms are required, discuss with your local authority.

14.1 Medical/Disability Information Form (HMD Form 1)

The 2021 amendment to the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 allows for the replacement of the need for a Consultants Letter if seeking support on disability or medical ground with the new Medical/Disability Information Form (HMD Form 1). The form was designed in consultation with local authority and HSE representatives and was piloted in four local authorities. Following feedback from staff, applicants and people supporting applicants, several changes were made to the form prior to its rollout in April 2021.

The purpose of the form is to ensure that the local authority is given the appropriate information to assess an applicant.

The form will also provide consistency across local authorities and will ensure that the individuals or families most in need of housing on Disability Grounds will be given the appropriate priority.

The image shows a thumbnail of the HMD-Form 1 Disability and/or Medical Information Form. The form has a blue header with the title 'HMD-Form 1 Disability and/or Medical Information Form' and several icons representing different types of disabilities. The form is divided into sections: 'About this form', 'What is priority status and who we give it to', 'Who needs to fill out and sign each section of this form', and 'Other information'. The 'About this form' section explains that the form is for anyone applying for social housing or a social housing transfer due to a disability or medical grounds. The 'What is priority status' section explains that priority status is given to those who are nearest to the top of the waiting list. The 'Who needs to fill out and sign' section specifies that sections 1 and 2 are filled out by the person with a disability or medical condition, while sections 3 and 4 are filled out by a Healthcare Professional. The 'Other information' section lists the professions included under Healthcare Professional and states that an Occupational Therapist report must be provided where there is a need for a specific accommodation requirement.



Sligo County Council, Harbour View, Rosses Point Road, Sligo

Harbour view is a 14-apartment development. 1 apartment was allocated to a person with a physical disability, 1 apartment was allocated to a person with an intellectual disability with 2 apartments were allocated to people with a mental health disability.

15 Publications

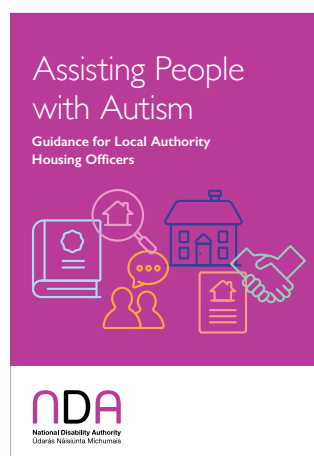
Social Housing and People with Mental Health Difficulties

This document was developed in 2013 by the National Disability Authority to highlight the issues that may face people with mental health difficulties when accessing or retaining a social housing tenancy. The document highlights the importance of housing for someone with mental health difficulties and provides practical advice to housing practitioners on dealing with someone with a mental health difficulty through the HELP mode. This is a four-stage model, Hear, Empathise, Limit and Progress.



Assisting People with Autism

This guide was developed and published by the National Disability Authority in 2018. This guide provides background information about autism for staff in local authorities. The guide was developed to give an understanding of autism to try to ensure that the best support possible was given to people who may be applying for social housing. The guide also provides information on how to meet the housing needs of people with autism.



Making a Home

This document was developed by the HSE as a resource for service providers and other stakeholders who are supporting people with disabilities to move to their own homes in the community. The document maps the practical steps that may need to be navigated from the time a home is selected through to when the person moves in, essentially the process of “making a home”. It was not intended to be prescriptive but designed to be used as a guide and reference tool.

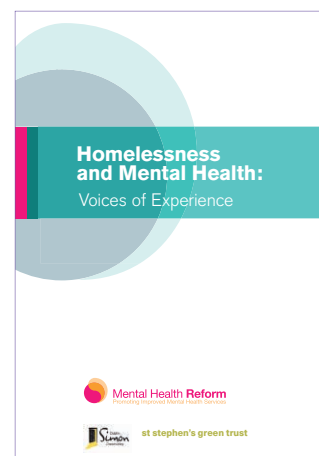
It is divided into sections that each focus on specific areas that may need to be considered when supporting a person to move into a new home. These include health and safety, design and planning, supporting the individual, moving in and the policies governing the property if any.



Homelessness and Mental Health: Voices of Experience

The Homelessness and Mental Health: Voices of Experience sets out the findings of the research phase of the 'Homeless Adults Speak Out on Mental Health' campaign. This study, published by Mental Health Reform in 2017, resulted from a Dublin Simon Community Client Action Group (CAG) event on mental health which took place in November 2014. The event demonstrated that there was a strong interest among homeless people in having improved mental health services.

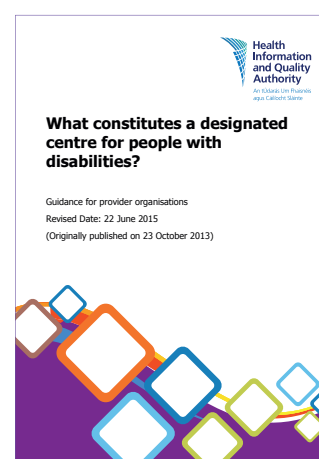
There appeared to be no existing research that documented homeless people's own perspectives of the barriers they face in accessing mental health supports. Mental Health Reform commissioned Dr Rebecca Murphy to carry out a narrative research study with a view to provide an evidence base for the 'Homeless Adults Speak Out on Mental Health' campaign.



What constitutes a designated centre for people with disabilities?

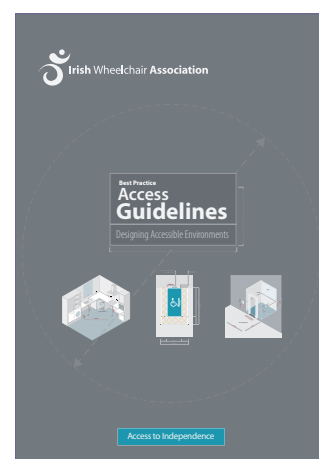
This document was published in June 2015 as a revised document of the 2013 guidance.

This document was developed for registered providers and for intending registered providers of residential services for people with disabilities. The guide set out the definition of a designated centre, identifying designated centres and what services are excluded.



Irish Wheelchair Association – Access Guidelines

Access Guidelines - Designing Accessible Environments is the fourth version of the guidelines published by the Irish Wheelchair Association. The guidelines contain a set of recommendations, along with information and guidance the IWA hope will influence future legislation including regulations and improving access standards for wheelchair users.



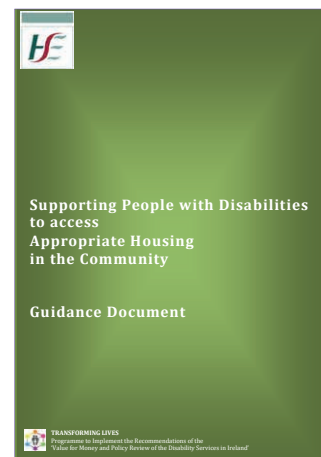
Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland

The National Disability Authority's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design describes Universal Design as the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. The Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland is part of the work published by the centre on housing.



Supporting People with Disabilities to Access Appropriate Housing in the Community

In 2020 the HSE under the Transforming Lives Programmes prepared this guide for service providers and other stakeholders who are supporting people with a disability to move to their own homes in the community primarily from a congregated setting. This document recommends that it is read in conjunction with the Housing Options publication prepared by The Housing Agency (see Section 8 Accessible Documents).



Sligo County Council, Knappagh Road, Sligo.

Knappagh Beg Court is a 28-dwelling development. 8 houses were allocated to people with physical/sensory disability, 2 houses were allocated to people with a mental health disability and 1 house was allocated to a person with an intellectual disability.

16 Initiatives Submitted by HDSG Members

The following list of projects and initiatives is not an exhaustive list of achievements during the lifetime of the strategy as many other excellent project and initiatives were introduced. These projects and initiatives were submitted by Housing and Disability Steering Group members from around the country following a call for such projects and initiatives by The Housing Agency. The projects and initiatives are listed in no particular order.

Project No. 1

Intensive Tenancy Sustainment Service

The Mental Health service in The Midwest secured Service Reform Fund¹¹ (SRF) Genio¹² funding in August 2018 to set up the North Tipperary Intensive Tenancy Sustainment service. The need for this service was identified following consultation with stakeholders in North Tipperary.

This service provides intensive tenancy support to adults with mental health difficulties who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness who require varying levels of support. A key worker system of support is provided to each person with the ultimate aim of resettling the person to permanent, independent living in the community with or without supports as follows:

- Tenancy support staff source quality accommodation, work in partnership with relevant community services including Tipperary Co Council, carry out comprehensive assessments of individual needs and ensure participants are supported in accessing and availing of health and social services as appropriate.
- Two Tenancy Support staff are employed by Focus Ireland and work as part of the two mental health teams in North Tipperary. Each of the Tenancy Support workers are integrated with the local Community Mental Health Teams in Nenagh and Thurles and attend weekly Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings regarding clients they work with.

The service has been extremely successful with the prevention of homelessness, resettlement, and rehousing supports. All the service users would have been at serious risk of losing their tenancies.

Project No. 2

START - Support for Tenancy and Recovery Targets

START is a project which aims to provide 36 secure tenancies with support for mental health service users with identified housing and support needs in Counties Kilkenny, Carlow, Tipperary (South) and Wexford between July 2019 and June 2021.

¹¹ See Section 12.4 for more detail

¹² Genio is a Company Limited by Guarantee (Reg no.: 454839). Genio Trust is an Irish registered charity (RCN 20075606, CHY 19312). Registered office: 19-21 Westland Square, Pearse St., Dublin 2, D02 YH27, Ireland. To date, the Irish Government has invested €41m and the Atlantic Philanthropies has invested €27m through Genio to assist in service reform efforts.

Having somewhere to live is essential to recovery. The project is guided by the principles of the NHSPWD and the HSE's National Framework for Recovery in Mental Health 2018-2020. This includes Service User engagement in the project's development. It recognises the value of specialised housing support as Service Users transition to independent living in the community and sustain their tenancies.

START is a joint collaboration between the Housing Department in four LAs in the Southeast, two AHBs and the HSE Mental Health Services with support funding from HSE Service Reform Fund (SRF). In County Kilkenny, the AHB is the Good Shepherd Centre/Kilkenny Voluntary Housing Association, in Counties Carlow, Tipperary (South) and Wexford it is Focus Ireland. A governance structure, Key Performance Indicators and Standard Operational Procedures have been agreed by all stakeholders.

Project No. 3

Irish Wheelchair Association

Na Fraoch is a small housing development completed in 2017 by the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). The development is located in Logmore, Belmullet, Co. Mayo and consists of 7 two-bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalow houses with assistive technology to support tenants to live independently.

Assistive technology reduces dependence on others for assistance, including informal and formal supports, and increases independence. It also reduces the costs of a personal assistant service as less supports are required. The development is highly sustainable, the houses are built to IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines and are lifetime adaptable therefore reducing need for adaptations and future costs. The A3 Energy Rating of the houses and air to water heating source increases efficiencies in terms of energy costs and comfort for tenants. The development has an Open Plan appearance to the front of the houses, common areas and driveways throughout the developments and towards IWA's Resource & Outreach Centre. Tenants living independently can access local services, integrate and contribute to the local community and economy. IWA tenancies are long-term, and the houses are designed to support people with physical disabilities to continue to live independently, supported by assistive technology, formal 24/7 supports and accessible design.

Project No. 4

Thurles Lions Trust Housing Association

The AHB's development at The Stanwix Home, Thurles, Co. Tipperary consists of 19 social housing dwellings (9 one-bedroomed units, 5 one-bedroomed terraced units and a five-bedroomed bungalow). The tenants are supported to live independently in the development. The project also includes a new five-bedroomed bungalow that accommodates four adults who require residential supported accommodation as well as one carer.

Project No. 5

Tuath Housing

This development at Royal Canal, Ardmore Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath consists of 44 homes. There is a mix of housing types catering for varying needs such as single person and family requirements, older persons and people with disabilities. All homes will be disabled access compliant with lift access to the main apartment block and some homes will have level access wet rooms for persons with disabilities or mobility issues.

Project No. 6

Fold Ireland

Fold Ireland's development at Abelard Square, Phoenix Park, Dublin is an apartment development with 31 dwellings. Smartzone's technology is used in the development. The development has a wellness suite of services, which includes motion and connected health monitoring, allowing loved ones and carers to either communicate in real time to the resident or be notified of changes in their routine. The technology aims not only to assist the tenants but also provides help to family members and carers.

Project No. 7

Wicklow County Council

Wicklow County Council carried out a refurbishment project at an Old School House. The project which saw the transformation of an Old School House building into a 7-unit scheme comprising of one- & two-bedroom apartments that provided ground floor and accessible accommodation for 7 households. Priority allocation was given to applicants with disabilities and elderly with mobility issues. All ground floor units have their own front door with ramp access and level access wet rooms, enabling these apartments to accommodate persons with a disability and/or reduced mobility. The apartments are located in the town centre and are high efficiency "A" rated homes.

Project No. 8

Kilkenny County Council, Hoban Park, Callan

Kilkenny County Council developed a 38-unit social & affordable housing scheme in Hoban Park. The development includes 15 single story, and 23 two story houses. The mix of unit types and sizes is intended to create a sustainable multigenerational community, which integrates well with the surrounding mixed residential neighbourhood. It is located next to John John Lockes GAA grounds & close to Callan town centre. Two single story units have been allocated to former St. Patrick's Centre residents. Part 8 Planning Permission was obtained in February 2017. Work commenced on site in June 2018 and was completed in September 2020.

Project No. 9

Tuath Housing and Cavan County Council - Castlemanor Retirement Village, Cavan Town

Castlemanor Retirement Village is a partnership project between Cavan County Council and Tuath Housing Association which has resulted in the delivery of 59 new homes in Cavan using Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funding made available by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. Tuath Housing purchased these properties through three phases - 10 units on 17th June 2014, a further 20 units on the 17th of February 2017 and finally 29 units on 7th October 2019. 50% of the units are tenanted by persons with disabilities.

All 59 units are occupied with individuals and families that are either over the age of 55, are OAPs or disabled people. These properties consist of 2-bedroom self-contained bungalows located 3km outside Cavan Town which is serviced by the local link bus service. The development has landscaped gardens throughout and can cater for a diverse range of needs due to the property layout of having a wet room, low level kitchens etc.



Project No. 10

IDRS, Mullingar Housing Association

IDRS- Intellectual Disability Residential Services in Mullingar has a strong working relationship with Mullingar Housing Association. Mullingar Housing Association have provided support and funding to IDRS clients to improve the quality of life for clients to live independently in the community. The Health Service Executive Longford/Westmeath Disability Service/IDRS linking in with Mullingar Housing Association ensured that clients got the supports and funding they required. This lifted the barriers that people with intellectual disabilities experience when trying to live independently.

Project No. 11

Slan Abhaile, Dublin

Slan Abhaile provides both practical help such as setting up utilities, making connections with Community Welfare Officers, form filling, helping to establish a daily routine in relation to daily activities e.g., shopping, cooking, cleaning, sourcing white goods and furniture, setting up rent payments, direct debits as well as providing emotional support to counter social isolation. An external evaluation of this project was conducted in 2018 and found that the project enabled a significant improvement in people's quality of life. In 2021 the project is being expanded to work with 13 local community mental health teams in HSE CHO9 in addition to three rehabilitation teams and the Usher's Island Team for the homeless.

Project No. 12

Northwest Simon Community, Donegal

Tenancy support and outreach services are provided by Northwest Simon Community, St. Colmcille Hostel and the Homeless Action Team. The Northwest Simon Community provides tenancy support and other services, with many clients coming within the intellectual and mental health disability categories in particular. Furthermore, the extensive outreach service provided from St. Colmcille Hostel reaches out in many instances to clients with a disability. All of these agencies are brought together under the Homeless Action Team which strives to support people in existing accommodation and render solutions where people find themselves homeless.

Project No. 13

HAIL, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown

Under the National Mental Health Transfer Project, HAIL continues to work in partnership with the HSE, local authorities and the Housing Agency to deliver projects that transfer both HSE and local authority owned properties and residents to HAIL. HAIL also operates the Regional Visiting Support Service, providing visiting support to clients in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown. The service provides recovery oriented mental health and practical tenancy sustainment support to clients in their home and community for an average of 6 months. Referrals can be made from a wide range of services: Mental Health teams in hospitals to support clients who are being discharged, community Mental Health teams, GP surgeries, community, and voluntary groups. The service also supports clients with mental ill health who are moving out of homelessness to ensure that they remain in recovery and sustain their tenancies as they resettle into their new communities. The service adopts a holistic, person-centred, adaptive, and inter-agency focused approach to their work.

Project No. 14

Cheshire Ireland, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown

This project provides accommodation and support for 3 people in one unit provided by Respond, Cheshire, the HSE and the local authority in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.

Cheshire Ireland supported people with physical and neurological disabilities to move to a home of their own with supports to live a good life in the community. This work was undertaken in line with the HSE policy 'Time to Move on from Congregated Settings'. Cheshire Ireland worked with Respond Housing Association to deliver a property with adaptations in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, for 3 individuals with supports funded through CAS. The collaboration and partnership between Respond, Cheshire, the HSE and the local authority is an excellent example of good practice to be emulated by the Steering Group.

Project No. 15

Saint John of Gods, Celbridge, Kildare

The Laurels was specifically designed to provide housing to 4 vulnerable people with complex physical and mental disabilities. The new tenants have access to on-site supports from Saint John of God Community Services staff to live independently. In order to increase their quality of life and community sustainability, housing affordability was not only assessed in terms of economic viability; the environmental and social sustainability of the housing project was also taken into consideration. The Design Team assessed a range of economic, environmental, and social criteria to ensure that the construction practices in the housing development were more sustainable so to reduce their environmental impact.

Project No. 16

Tuath, Knocknacarra, Galway City

These 13 apartments were allocated to tenants from the council waiting list for persons with specific categories of need, to include those with physical and intellectual disabilities, over 55s and those from a homeless background. The apartments were completed to include wheelchair access, level-access showers and grab rails to provide all tenants with an opportunity to live independently. The apartments cater for a wide range of disabilities including wheelchair users, people with mild physical disabilities and people with intellectual or sensory disabilities. This block of apartments has increased the availability of accommodation for persons with a physical or intellectual disability whilst also reducing the overall waiting list for social housing in Galway city.

Project No. 17

HAIL, Fingal

Avondale Court forms part of a larger development of 234 social rented, co-operative co-ownership and affordable purchase family dwellings. The development also includes 4 communal facilities including a creche, an administrations office and a recreational space built in partnership with NABCo and Fingal County Council. The approach sets out to achieve a more balanced range of housing types and tenure options in the community. HAIL was identified as a partner in this project to deliver specialist mental health supported housing. The scheme was praised for its excellent support services and strategy for integration of residents into the local community, being a very effective solution, which delivered a cohesive internal community while linking successfully with the external neighbouring community. This scheme won an ICSH award and was built in partnership with CHI under CAS via Fingal Council. Hail has 18 properties within the larger development. They have a good mix of tenure; some housing people with physical disabilities, some with mental health difficulties and general needs.

Project No. 18

Slí Éile, Mallow, Cork

The Slí Éile Farm (SEF) Project is a community farm in Mallow, Cork where people experiencing mental health difficulties find safety, acceptance & support for their recovery. SEF provides a living environment with structure, routine, and meaningful occupation of all the daily tasks required for the running of this organic farm combined with support for each person to identify and achieve their goals and move on to independent living. It comprises 5 group homes and 3 apartments (12 units of accommodation in total). SEF is developing an organic market garden and aims to open a farm shop – providing further interaction with the wider community. Tenants at the farm are also actively involved within local clubs and activities in the village.

Project No. 19

HAIL, Longford

Two Longford County Council owned houses that have been leased to the HSE long term for the provision of accommodation to people with mental health difficulties have been transferred to HAIL. In addition, 1 house owned by the HSE was also transferred to HAIL. A CAS application for funding was approved by the DHLGH to upgrade all the properties. HAIL purchased an additional house using CAS funding to facilitate the easy movement of tenants out of the 3 properties being upgraded. Any vacancies in the properties will be allocated to people with mental health difficulties from the local authority waiting list and in partnership with the HSE. HAIL provides tenancy sustainment support to the tenants to enable independent living, with tenants having their own HAIL tenancy. A total of 9 tenants are housed in this project, all with severe and enduring mental health difficulties. The tenancy sustainment support funding is provided in partnership by the DHLGH and the HSE and the project is fully supported and facilitated by the local authority.

This project falls under Objective 5 of the NHSPD 2011 – 2016: *To address the specific housing needs of people with a mental health disability, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community, for people with low and medium support needs moving from mental health facilities, in line with good practice.* This is an example of good partnership work between several agencies with the heart of the project being the tenants.

Project No. 20

HAIL, Wicklow

HAIL's Wicklow Project provides Mental Health support and Tenancy Sustainment to clients referred by Wicklow County Council and the HSE. Under this project 15 clients have been referred for supports. Hail has provided 48 co-created care plans to support their clients. The support plans encompass topics such as employment, mental health, physical health, legal issues and substance misuse. The majority of clients under this project reside in a Local Authority tenancy. The Peer Support Program in HAIL has grown in 2020 with 16 PSV's and over 45 HAIL clients being provided with 1 on 1 Peer Support. Wicklow HAIL clients have availed of on-line Peer led WRAP & social groups. In 2021 they plan to recruit a Wicklow based Peer Support volunteer to further support our Wicklow clients.



17 Other Areas of Interest

17.1 Protocol Review

The NHSPWD contained several Protocols as appendices to the document. These protocols were:

- Individual Assessment of Need Protocol
- Support Costs Protocol
- Individual Assessment of Need Protocol – Mental Health

As part of the development of The National Guidelines for Assessment and Allocation Guidelines Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability, and due to changes in legislation that extended the Individual Assessment of Need to all individuals, this protocol was reviewed and updated in 2017. The revised protocol for this assessment is contained as an appendix to the 2017 guidelines.



Wexford County Council, Carrick-on-Bannow, Wexford

3 bed detached bungalow allocated to a person with a physical disability.

17.2 Code of Practice for Fire Safety in New and Existing Community Dwelling Houses

This code of practice was developed and published in 2017. The development included personnel from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), and non-government organisations (NGO's) specialising in community care, in conjunction with fire safety consultants and architects.

The purpose of the code was to provide guidance for fire safety in community dwelling houses with up to six residents whether there was a carer(s) in the property or not. These community dwelling houses are generally small in scale. The intended users for this code are designers, specifiers, property managers and staff working on/in community dwelling houses.



Pairc na Craobhai, Gorey, Wexford County Council

Two 3 bed detached bungalows allocated to people with a physical disability.

17.3 Summary of Social Housing Assessment

To qualify for social housing support, households must be both eligible and in need of social housing support. The purpose of the Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA), previously known as the Housing Needs Assessment, is to capture the total number of households who have been qualified for social housing support across the country and whose social housing need has not been met, to better understand the level of need for such support. It is a snapshot at a point in time of the housing lists of 31 local authorities.

The SSHA is carried out by local authorities under Section 21 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and the Social Housing Assessment (Summary) Regulations 2016. The regulations in 2016 changed the frequency of the count from every three years to an annual count.

It is important to note that the key figure reported in the SSHA is referred to as 'net need'. Net need is the total number of households who qualified for social housing support and whose need for support is not being met.

Disability Category	2013	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Physical	1,392	2,098	2,084	1,696	1,731	1,493
Mental Health	1,034	1,687	1,691	1,522	1,603	1550
Intellectual	1,078	1,561	1,571	1,474	1,550	1597
Sensory	190	347	381	361	380	362
Other	244	60	45	42	55	55

17.4 Service Reform Fund

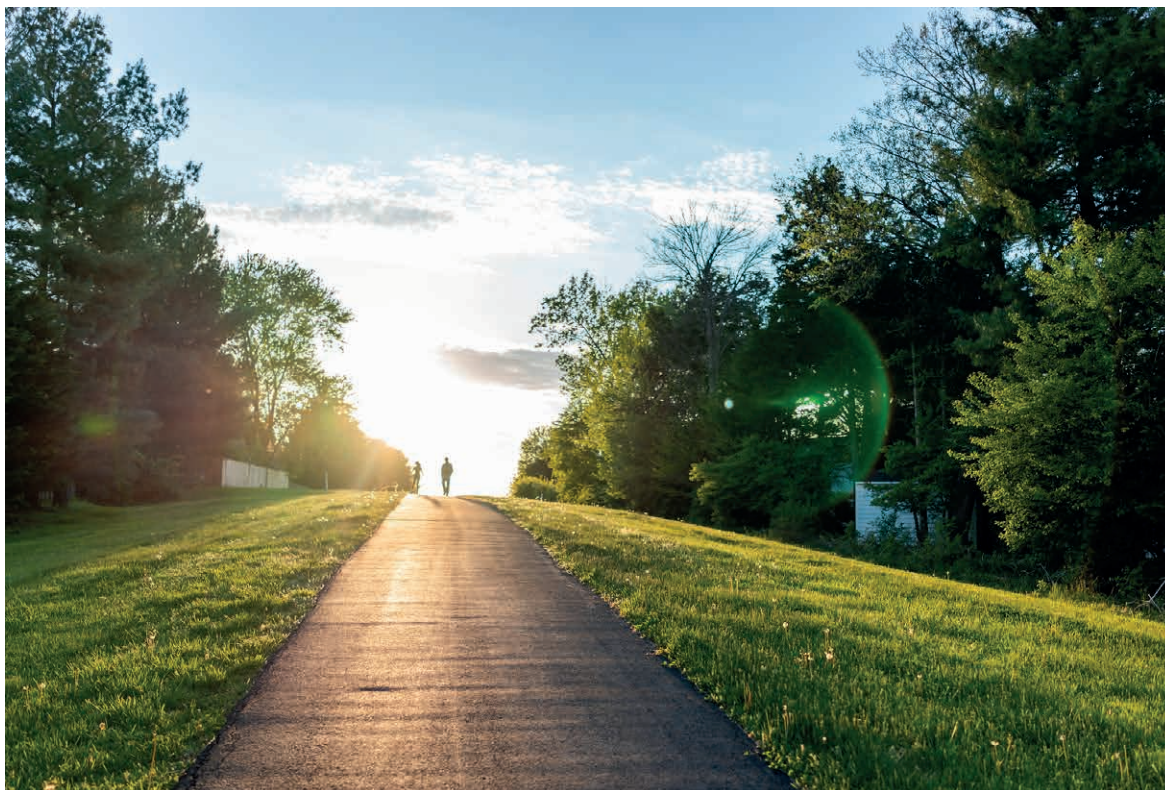
The Service Reform Fund (SRF) was founded in 2015 to promote self-directed and community-based services. The SRF is a €45m programme and its main purpose is to facilitate significant integration and personalisation across a range of disability, mental health and homeless services. The main partners in the SRF are the Department of Health, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the HSE, the Atlantic Philanthropies and Genio. By the time the SRF was established a body of evidence on personalised, community-living had been gathered based on demonstration projects across the country and rigorous evaluations. This demonstrated that personalised, community-based accommodation had better outcomes for the person being supported and could be delivered in a cost-efficient manner.

There were however many challenges in terms of implementation. There was a need to fund the significant transition costs associated with switching from systems which had relied on congregated settings to ones based on personalised, community services. There was also a significant need for capacity-building for staff in the area of personalised services and for the work to be supported, co-ordinated and facilitated from the centre of the HSE, in collaboration with other government agencies. The SRF was designed to support the regional structures of the HSE (the Community Health Organisations) to develop and implement integrated plans for personalised services. This happened in tandem with the national offices in Mental Health and Disability Services and wider government working to implement the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability and other related policies. Overall, the SRF sought to implement complex systems change across a range of state agencies and service providers in a way that ensured that the will and preference of the individuals being supported was at the heart of these social services.

Over the period 2015 to 2021 significant progress was made in bringing about systemic reforms to advance government policy objectives in relation to supporting people to live self-directed lives in communities across Ireland. In the disability field, for example, support was provided in 2017 to 10 congregated settings which were under regulatory pressure from the Health Information and Quality Authority to improve the standards of their services. Change teams from the staff were trained in self-directed living methods and new structures and processes were designed. New ways of supporting people were introduced into the community-based services that protected them from the day-to-day pressures of running the older, more traditional congregated services. An action inquiry approach was used by Genio to help justify the supports offered for the specific challenges facing institutions engaging in change. Financial support was provided to cover the costs of these change teams and to contribute to the costs of running congregated and community-based services in parallel over this period. The initial targets for people to be supported to move into the community have now been exceeded and many of these services, which were perceived as highly traditional, congregated services, have changed radically to become community-based and far more personalised in their approach.

Within mental health services, a Housing Coordinator post was put in place in each of the nine CHOs with SRF support. The coordinators have developed strategic objectives at local and national level to support people with mental health difficulties to identify and address their housing needs and to optimise their opportunities to live independently in the community. The key achievement of this work has been the partnership development between HSE mental health services, local authorities, Approved Housing Bodies and other relevant parties. This has the potential for long-term change in housing for people with mental health difficulties moving from hospital or hostel environments or other accommodation in the community which fails to meet their needs.

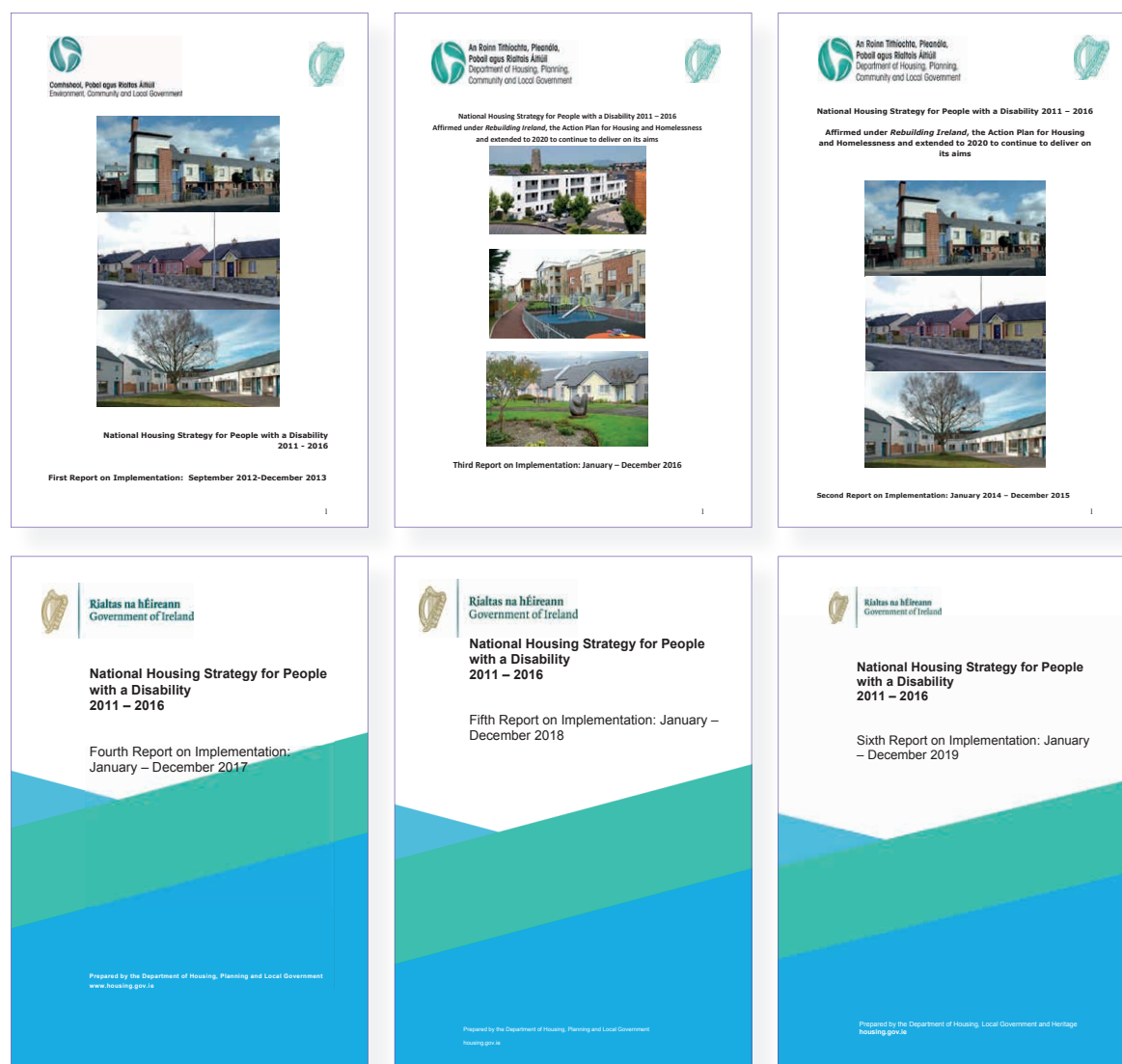
The SRF funding for the Housing Coordinator posts ceased in 2020 and it was hoped that all CHO areas would continue to support the role at local level. This has happened in some areas but not all and this has been a loss to the structures and relations formed over the period that the posts were funded through the SRF.



18 Reporting

Strategic Aim 9 seeks an Effective Monitoring and Implementation Framework. As outlined in Section 2 Structures, an Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG) was established. The group consists of representatives of the key stakeholders and sectors in connection with supporting the delivery of housing for people with a disability and the related social or medical supports. The IMG is chaired by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and meets biannually.

In line with Key Measure 9.1.2 the IMG prepares and publishes an annual progress report.



The structure of the reports is as follows:

- **Chapter 2** of the report sets out details of the implementation, monitoring and reporting framework.
 - **Chapter 3** of the report outlines the progress which has been made under a range of themes:
 - Interagency Cooperation,
 - Guidance and Supports for Local Authorities,
 - Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated Settings,
 - Mental Health, and
 - Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in the given year.
 - **Chapter 4** sets out conclusions in relation to progress to date and the importance of continued partnership in taking work forward.
 - **Chapter 5** sets out the priorities for the following year in meeting the key aims of the NHSPWD.
-

Appendix 1: Priority Actions Update

Priority Action	Final Update and Summary
1.1: Access to Social Housing: Ensure equitable access for people with disabilities to relevant social housing supports	Five-year strategic plans were completed by all local authority Housing and Disability Steering Groups under the NHSPWD in 2014/2015. These strategies are an integral part of the plans of each local authority and ensure that the housing needs of people with disabilities are monitored, reviewed and met in a targeted and responsive way through effective interagency cooperation. New Local Strategic Plans have been prepared and submitted as part of the consultation process for the new National Strategy by 23 Housing and Disability Steering Groups.
1.2: Long Term Leasing Initiative and Rental Accommodation Scheme: Promote the increased use of leasing and RAS to meet the longer-term housing needs of people with disabilities.	<p>The Assessment and Allocation Guidance (2017) includes measures under HAP, RAS and Leasing.</p> <p>More ambitious targets are to be set for allocations to people with disabilities under HAP and RAS as many Local Authorities exceeded their targets.</p> <p>Additionally, the Housing Adaptation Grants form commenced in Jan 2020 now captures requests for adaptations to rental properties.</p> <p>The Leasing Programme will be phased out over the lifetime of Housing for All. The concentration is to be on direct build by local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies.</p>
1.3: Increased Access to the Private Rental Sector: Promote the increased use of the private rental sector to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities.	<p>Measures were included in the Assessment and Allocation Guidance, to allow local authorities, where appropriate, the use of the discretion clause for HAP to facilitate people with a disability to access the scheme.</p> <p>In addition, where appropriate, the provision and level of rent supplement must be determined in a fair and equitable manner in line with the policies of the Department of Social Protection.</p>

Priority Action	Final Update and Summary
2.1: Coordinated approach to service delivery	<p>To date each local authority has established a Housing and Disability Steering Group. Membership includes the Local Authority Director of Housing Services as Chair, relevant Local Authority staff, HSE representatives, a representative from each of the four disability sectors operational in the local area, and representatives from the Approved Housing Bodies sector. The NHSPWD sets out that these groups should meet at least four times a year. Some HDSGs are functioning better than others. Some HDSGs meet as required, others have not met in some time. In Housing for All one of the actions relates to the role of the HDSGs regarding the reporting on the Local Strategic Plans.</p>
2.2: Support National Interagency Protocol Framework	<p>The structures that have been established to monitor and deliver the implementation of the strategy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Monitoring Group (Bi-annual – oversight role) • National Housing Subgroup (Bi-Monthly– delivery focused) • Task Groups (as required – problem solving focus) • Single agenda focus groups (as required – delivery focused) • Local Housing and Disability Steering Groups (Quarterly – at local authority level and delivery focused) <p>The Housing Subgroup reviewed the Terms of Reference (TOR) for HDSGs in 2019 and a new baseline TOR was issued to each HDSG for adoption. Part of the role is the monitoring of the agreed interagency protocols such as the Individual Assessment of Need Protocol, Support Costs Protocol and Individual Assessment of Need Protocol (Mental Health).</p>
2.3: Improved Coordination of Disability Funding	<p>Circular 45/2015 required AHBs and service providers to demonstrate that they have engaged with the relevant housing authority and their local HSE Social Care Disability Office prior to applying for funding under the CAS. This ensured that the housing and support elements required would be available to the individual to transition from Congregated Settings.</p>
3.1: Effectively meet the long-term housing accessibility needs of people with disabilities	<p>www.housingdesignforall.ie - Design Roadmap. This website, a Housing Agency initiative, was a response to an identified need for a one stop shop for existing information. The website provides an overview and links to existing published legislation and guidance on designing to meet the needs of all. The website works as a signpost for anyone involved in the design of housing for people with a disability. It aims to aid the design and development of accessible housing while being mindful that accessibility can mean different things to different people.</p>

Priority Action	Final Update and Summary
<p>3.2: Support the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to enable them to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible</p>	<p>The housing adaptation budget and number of adaptations approved has increased year on year under Rebuilding Ireland.</p> <p>A new application form was devised to streamline the 3 grants available - the Housing Adaptation Grant for Mobility Needs, for Older People and for People with a Disability.</p> <p>Action 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 has been overtaken by Action 2.17 of Rebuilding Ireland. The target of the Housing Adaptation Grant drawdown to 10,000 homes was increased in 2017 (up from 8,000 in 2016) and the application process streamlined (Section 6 of this document contains more detail)</p>
<p>4.1: Support the transitioning of people with intellectual and physical disabilities from congregated settings to more appropriate community-based living arrangements</p>	<p>The Local Strategic Plans strengthened the capacity of local authorities and AHBs to advance appropriate housing solutions for people with a social housing need to live in the community, whether they are currently residing in the community or in a congregated setting. The HSE, as funding agent, must continue to take a lead role in the implementation of policy to support people to transition from congregated settings. The transition of individuals from Congregated Settings is managed by the Service Providers that provide the social supports, on some occasions in partnership with an AHB. There are two main funding streams for the provision of suitable properties, the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) from the DHLGH and HSE Capital Programme.</p> <p>Several initiatives have been undertaken to overcome the barriers to independent living experienced by people leaving congregated settings or people diagnosed with certain mental health conditions and disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design for Mental Health guide published by the HSE and The Housing Agency • National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for SH Provisions for People with a Disability – reviewed and published in 2017 and issued to local authorities by the DHPLG via Circular 37/2017. • The HSE employs 9 Housing Co-ordinators nationally whose brief is to drive the role of mental health services in the implementation NHSPWD. Unfortunately, not all these roles have been retained by the CHO areas.

Priority Action	Final Update and Summary
<p>4.2: Ensure a multiagency approach to meeting the needs of people with a disability, both living in the community and those leaving congregated settings</p>	<p>Informal engagements at local level between the various stakeholders including Service Providers, AHBs, the LAs and the HSE have contributed to many people moving to independent living in the community. This engagement needs to continue and be enhanced by more formal engagements at a senior level. The ongoing work of the members of the Housing and Disability Steering Groups should assist this local and less formal engagement, but the HDSGs need to meet regularly and work together to ensure disabled people's needs are at the centre of the discussions and actions.</p>
<p>5.1: Support people with mental health disabilities to access and maintain appropriate housing within communities</p>	<p>The Housing Agency developed a Mental Health Early Intervention Manual and training programme to assist housing staff to support existing tenants and housing applicants that may be experiencing mental health difficulties. The purpose is to apply an Early Intervention Approach that employees of LAs and AHBs can use to identify and action concerns regarding a mental health difficulty, to ensure that there is a positive outcome for the individual concerned.</p> <p>The HSE employed Housing Coordinators in all CHO areas to address issues in housing for people with mental health difficulties. In the main they developed effective partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders and sought to embed evidenced based models of practice which create sustainable pathways to housing for people living with mental health issues. Unfortunately, the Housing Coordinator posts have not been retained by all CHO areas.</p> <p>The Housing Agency conducted a survey to ascertain social housing applicants' experiences when disclosing their mental health difficulty to the LA. The identified issues were used to inform process and training. These will also be used to develop training programmes for LA and AHB staff in the new strategy.</p>
<p>5.2: Support integration of people with mental health disabilities within communities</p>	<p>The aim of this action was that in the interest of people with mental health difficulties a specific strategy be developed to address this issue. However, following consideration and discussion, all LAs and AHBs have Anti-Social Behaviour strategies that are deemed sufficient to deal with any issues arising.</p>

Priority Action	Final Update and Summary
<p>5.3: Facilitate the effective transitioning of people with mental health disabilities from HSE mental health facilities to appropriate community settings within sustainable communities</p>	<p>The MH Property Transfer Project is one of the key deliverables under Strategic Aim 5 of the NHSPWD which aims to give security of tenure to the residents of HSE owned hostels and community residences. If the residents choose to be included in the project, they become tenants of an AHB and are supported in this transition by Tenancy Support Officers (TSO) who are co-funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the HSE but employed by the AHB. The project has been rolled out nationally and is under way in 6 out of the 9 HSE CHO Areas.</p> <p>This project is an example of the type of interagency co-operation that is essential to drive progress using the framework established under the NHSPWD. The introduction of the TSOs has been a key driver to the success of this project and will continue to support the new tenants to sustain their tenancies. The success of this project shines a light on the integral role that the TSO plays in sustaining tenancies of those with mental health difficulties and preventing homelessness. The funding requirements are modest for the benefits achieved.</p>
<p>5.4: Development of a Housing Support Scheme for people transitioning from HSE mental health facilities</p>	<p>The residents are supported in this transition by Tenancy Support Officers (TSO) who are co-funded by the DHLGH and the HSE but employed by the AHB. The project has been rolled out nationally and is under way in 6 out of the 9 HSE CHO Areas.</p>
<p>6.1: Development and implementation of good practice models to support people with disabilities within communities</p>	<p>Good practice models to support people within their communities are ongoing all over the county. Samples of some of the models are contained in Appendix 4 and as images throughout this document.</p>
<p>7.1: Integrated approach to information provision</p>	<p>Local authorities advised there was no requirement for an advice centre as they have customer services and LA websites etc. to provide information.</p> <p>Information is circulated locally through the HDSG, and this should continue through into the new local strategic plans.</p> <p>The online consultation that was carried out as part of Round 1 of the consultation for the new strategy has indicated that while information may be available in many different areas, it can be hard to locate and there is a lack of coordinated information. The lack of coordination needs to be addressed as part of the new strategy as well as raising awareness of how to access information. The provision of information on housing and on supports, as well as associated application processes, need to be provided as a package whether by the LA or the HSE.</p>

Priority Action	Final Update and Summary
8.1: Identify the full nature and extent of the housing and related support needs of people with disabilities in order to deliver appropriate housing solutions	A LA can only plan for the households that are contained on their Social Housing Waiting Lists. However, the LA must be aware of the needs of the individuals on their lists if they are to plan appropriately. Some progress was made with the development of the Local Strategic Plan but the progress was not sufficient to allow LAs to meet the needs in a strategic manner into the future. The approach on funding for new build development needs to be examined as it has been cited by many as a barrier to the delivery of accessible dwellings.
9.1: Effective Monitoring and Implementation Framework	<p>The Strategy and the associated Implementation Framework both refer to the need for interagency cooperation as fundamental. The structures for the required interagency cooperation have been established. The Implementation Monitoring Group prepares an annual update of progress under the strategy. The group currently meets bi-annually and progress reports are published under a number of key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency cooperation • Guidance and supports for local authorities • Actions at local level • Transition of people with disabilities from congregated settings • Housing options for people with disabilities • Mental health

Appendix 2: Allocations by Category by County

Local Authority	Physical 2016	Physical 2017	Physical 2018	Physical 2019	Physical 2020
Carlow County Council	7	6	6	16	22
Cavan County Council	12	17	5	16	14
Clare County Council	13	18	6	9	12
Cork City Council	31	-	22	35	42
Cork County Council	48	53	74	54	63
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	16	45	35	46	20
Donegal County Council	10	26	13	22	28
Dublin City Council	70	174	107	167	134
Fingal County Council	25	7	41	88	77
Galway City Council	12	11	7	50	30
Galway County Council	21	34	26	23	30
Kerry County Council	43	48	19	76	7
Kildare County Council	13	39	45	40	44
Kilkenny County Council	21	42	26	8	12
Laois County Council	0	24	18	12	34
Leitrim County Council	5	10	10	8	12
Limerick City and County Council	12	20	31	33	51
Longford County Council	8	22	14	14	28
Louth County Council	32	41	24	46	76
Mayo County Council	23	9	6	40	18
Meath County Council	27	17	17	72	46
Monaghan County Council	14	21	4	15	9
Offaly County Council	2	7	6	15	13
Roscommon County Council	13	8	7	24	8
Sligo County Council	29	11	15	8	10
South Dublin County Council	34	43	40	65	29
Tipperary County Council	37	19	55	28	38
Waterford City County Council	26	11	27	18	21
Westmeath County Council	8	18	19	23	19
Wexford County Council	60	32	19	119	45
Wicklow County Council	10	-	17	41	46
Total	682	833	761	1,231	1,038

Local Authority	Sensory 2016	Sensory 2017	Sensory 2018	Sensory 2019	Sensory 2020
Carlow County Council	0	1	1	6	1
Cavan County Council	1	0	0	5	0
Clare County Council	1	4	0	4	0
Cork City Council	3	-	0	2	1
Cork County Council	7	15	20	11	27
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	7	11	12	16	11
Donegal County Council	2	2	2	3	1
Dublin City Council	7	12	6	15	7
Fingal County Council	0	0	1	14	7
Galway City Council	3	2	1	7	3
Galway County Council	4		1	1	5
Kerry County Council	19	11	7	25	37
Kildare County Council	0	7	26	18	10
Kilkenny County Council	1	0	5	0	0
Laois County Council	0	1	2	1	4
Leitrim County Council	0	0	0	2	1
Limerick City and County Council	1	5	2	12	20
Longford County Council	0	3	23	0	1
Louth County Council	0	2	2	1	5
Mayo County Council	0	0	1	8	3
Meath County Council	2	7	7	30	31
Monaghan County Council	0	3	0	0	0
Offaly County Council	0	2	0	3	1
Roscommon County Council	0	1	3	2	3
Sligo County Council	1	1	2	3	1
South Dublin County Council	13	14	4	15	5
Tipperary County Council	8	3	15	5	9
Waterford City and County Council	1	2	1	0	9
Westmeath County Council	2	0	0	6	0
Wexford County Council	5	8	7	20	9
Wicklow County Council	0	-	4	4	10
Total	88	117	155	239	222

Local Authority	Mental Health 2016	Mental Health 2017	Mental Health 2018	Mental Health 2019	Mental Health 2020
Carlow County Council	11	11	11	10	10
Cavan County Council	1	0	0	22	13
Clare County Council	11	18	11	16	0
Cork City Council	14	-	1	14	8
Cork County Council	16	17	18	6	19
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	9	53	32	40	25
Donegal County Council	0	10	5	7	6
Dublin City Council	15	55	7	24	18
Fingal County Council	8	18	19	35	37
Galway City Council	5	6	3	24	22
Galway County Council	2	5	8	34	43
Kerry County Council	8	21	24	83	68
Kildare County Council	0	21	32	18	8
Kilkenny County Council	5	4	4	1	8
Laois County Council	0	12	6	15	22
Leitrim County Council	1	12	12	14	7
Limerick City and County Council	2	7	9	16	19
Longford County Council	2	6	1	2	2
Louth County Council	11	7	8	17	14
Mayo County Council	8	6	5	44	9
Meath County Council	3	4	4	29	10
Monaghan County Council	6	6	1	4	5
Offaly County Council	2	1	2	8	11
Roscommon County Council	1	10	7	19	15
Sligo County Council	6	11	5	10	15
South Dublin County Council	37	13	7	21	7
Tipperary County Council	1	11	36	5	17
Waterford City and County Council	0	0	4	7	3
Westmeath County Council	0	5	5	11	21
Wexford County Council	6	15	24	46	42
Wicklow County Council	3	-	7	21	18
Total	194	365	318	623	522

Local Authority	Intellectual 2016	Intellectual 2017	Intellectual 2018	Intellectual 2019	Intellectual 2020
Carlow County Council	5	9	9	8	4
Cavan County Council	1	6	0	3	4
Clare County Council	15	18	3	3	7
Cork City Council	4	-	0	6	6
Cork County Council	5	8	5	6	12
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	21	10	1	5	4
Donegal County Council	8	1	1	2	8
Dublin City Council	10	26	8	8	4
Fingal County Council	8	20	6	28	28
Galway City Council	7	4	2	30	25
Galway County Council	7	7	2	6	19
Kerry County Council	4	8	0	5	46
Kildare County Council	2	1	10	18	24
Kilkenny County Council	10	11	24	12	13
Laois County Council	0	6	1	5	18
Leitrim County Council	9	6	6	4	0
Limerick City and County Council	5	4	7	2	4
Longford County Council	5	3	27	0	3
Louth County Council	11	5	13	20	29
Mayo County Council	9	9	4	15	0
Meath County Council	4	4	4	13	8
Monaghan County Council	6	5	1	11	1
Offaly County Council	3	2	2	5	3
Roscommon County Council	14	1	3	14	13
Sligo County Council	7	9	2	8	5
South Dublin County Council	0	9	15	6	3
Tipperary County Council	14	1	3	1	1
Waterford City and County Council	0	2	2	6	0
Westmeath County Council	2	2	0	16	3
Wexford County Council	18	2	0	22	11
Wicklow County Council	1	-	6	8	6
Total	215	199	167	296	312

Appendix 3: Applicant/Tenant Experience Survey



**An Ghníomhaireacht
Tithíochta**
The Housing Agency

SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICANT/TENANT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The purpose of this questionnaire is to establish the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing a mental health illness when applying for social housing or when an individual is a tenant of the Local Authority.

1. Which of the following best describes you?	
I am on the waiting list for social housing	
I am a Tenant living in a local authority property	
I am a Tenant living in an Approved Housing Body property	
2. Can you indicate your local authority or Approved Housing Body?	
3. Overall, how would you rate the service you have received from local authority in the last 12 months?	
Excellent	
Very good	
Good	
Fair	
Poor	
Very Poor	

4. Did you disclose your mental health illness when applying for social housing? Please provide your reasons for disclosing or not disclosing this information.	
Yes, I informed the local authority when I first applied	
Explanation:	
I did not give details when I first applied but I did while waiting on the list	
Explanation:	
I did not give details while on the list but I did when I became a tenant	
Explanation:	
No, I have not let the local authority know of my mental health condition at any stage	
Explanation:	
5. If you did disclose your illness to the local authority at any time, what effect did it have on your housing application or tenancy?	
Positive	
Explanation:	
Negative	
Explanation:	
None	

6. In your own opinion what are the advantages and disadvantages if any, of disclosing your illness to the local authority?

Advantages:

Disadvantages:



**An Ghníomhaireacht
Tithíochta**
The Housing Agency