



National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027

Executive Summary



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Disability Terminology

Language is extremely important. There are many words and terms that are used to identify disability in Ireland and internationally and the way these words are understood differs across different groups. This was apparent during the consultation to support the development of this Strategy.

As part of the development of this new Strategy, disability terminology was considered. Input was received from a number of Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) and international good practice was also examined.

For some people, the term 'disabled people' is a source of pride, identity and recognition that disabling barriers exist within society and not within individuals. This approach is in line with the social model of disability. The social model of disability looks at how society is structured and how it disables people. It is not based on a person's impairment. It is about the barriers that exist in terms of attitudes, policy development, access or lack of supports, and how this can prevent people from participating in society as equals, with choice and control over their own lives.¹

For others, the term 'people with a disability' or 'people with an intellectual disability' has the same meaning and is important to those who want to be recognised as a person before their disability. In keeping with the development process of the new Strategy, and in ensuring that all groups are represented, this Strategy will take a collaborative and inclusive approach to disability terminology.

This Strategy uses the term 'disabled people' in its title and for general use throughout the Strategy, the implementation plan and related documents. However, terms for specific groups of people, such as 'people with intellectual disabilities' and 'people with psychosocial disabilities or mental health difficulties', will also be used within the Strategy where appropriate. This is reflective of the collaborative approach to the development of the Strategy and in recognition of the need to be open to the evolving nature of language over time.

1 See here: Social model of disability | Disability charity Scope UK for further information on the social model of disability

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Figure 2: Contributors to the Development of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People (2022 - 2027)

1 Introduction

The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 aims to build upon the work achieved through the previous National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (2011-2016 (NHSPWD) (extended to 2021)).² This new Strategy has been developed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in association with the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) under the guiding principles of Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland. It documents the framework for the delivery of housing for disabled people through mainstream housing policy.

The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 (NHSDP) sets out the vision for the cooperation and collaboration of Government departments, state agencies and others in delivering housing and the related supports for disabled people over the next five years.

The vision for the Strategy is:

To facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community.

To further enable equal access for disabled people to housing with integrated support services.

Ireland is one of the few countries that has a specific strategy for housing for disabled people. The development of this second housing strategy specifically for disabled people demonstrates the Government's commitment to providing equal access to housing for all. The Strategy also outlines that no one Government department or organisation can deliver on the vision of the Strategy. The delivery must be done in a coordinated and collaborative way, in line with the UNCRPD, with disabled people at the centre. Delivering on "Article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community", ensures disabled people have equal rights in accessing housing and equal rights to accessing supports necessary to enable them to live independently within the community.

This strategy is being published as part of a suite of documents including an Easy-to-Read version and Audio version. The Strategy sets out the Government's ambitions to meet the housing needs with related supports in community settings for disabled people in the form of outcomes.

The overarching vision of the Strategy is to facilitate disabled people to live independently and be included in their communities. The development of the vision was driven by feedback from the first stage of the consultation.

² Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 (extended to 2021)*. Accessed November 2021: gov.ie - National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016 (www.gov.ie)

The vision is supported by six themes that outline the areas where action is required in order to deliver the vision. Each theme has a set of desired outcomes that need to become a reality to support and deliver the vision of the Strategy. The themes and each of the desired outcomes have been developed as a result of the feedback from the consultation.

It was agreed during the refinement of the feedback from the two rounds of the consultation that living independently and being included in the community was such a core requirement that additional general provisions over and above the Themes were required to ensure that the vision is delivered. Several general provisions have been included as part of this strategy.

The provisions will also ensure that this strategy aligns with Housing for All – A new Housing Plan for Ireland. Housing for All is a whole of Government ambitious plan to deliver a long-term sustainable housing system. The plan includes specific actions for housing for disabled people.

The Implementation Plan that will be prepared and published by the end of Q2 2022 will contain the detail of how the outcomes can be achieved. The Strategy contains some initial actions that will be commenced ahead of the publication of the Implementation Plan.

The inclusion of such actions shows the Government's intention to address the issues faced by disabled people accessing housing and provide a clear signal to the stakeholders that action is required immediately.

Similar to the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (2011-2016 (NHSPWD) (extended to 2021)) this strategy will use the term “disability” in reference to four categories of disability, i.e., sensory disability, mental health disability, physical disability, and intellectual disability. Psychosocial disabilities are also included when referring to mental health difficulties as this is in line with the social model of language. During the first year of the new Strategy, we will commence the process of working to strengthen the existing information of the housing needs within each category to allow for the proper strategic planning that is required to increase delivery of housing opportunities with related supports for disabled people. This will also be inclusive of disabled people that do not identify with one of the above specific categories such as those with a dual diagnosis or Autism.

2 Housing for All

Housing for All³ is the Government's housing plan to 2030. The overall aim of the housing plan for Ireland is that everyone in the State should have access to a home to purchase or rent at an affordable price, built to a high standard and in the right place, offering a high quality of life. The plan's vision is to have a steady supply of housing in the correct locations with economic, social, and environmental sustainability built into the system. It is estimated that there is a requirement for approximately 33,000 new homes each year to meet the need.

Pathway 2 - Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion has as an expected outcome - Improved equality of opportunity, individual choice, and independent living for disabled people.

The need for local authorities to include housing for disabled people in their Housing Delivery Action Plans will give a focus to the strategic planning for the identified need, while also taking cognisance of the forecasted need in the Department of Health's Disability Capacity Review to 2032 (2021)⁴.

Housing for All recognises the importance of the Housing and Disability Steering Groups but highlights the fact that they need to be strengthened, putting an onus on the groups to report on the implementation of all aspects of their Local Strategic Plans.

To deliver on these commitments, Housing for All sets out a number of actions that are required to meet the outcomes set out in the plan.

In addition to Housing for All, the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 will align with other strategies and policies.

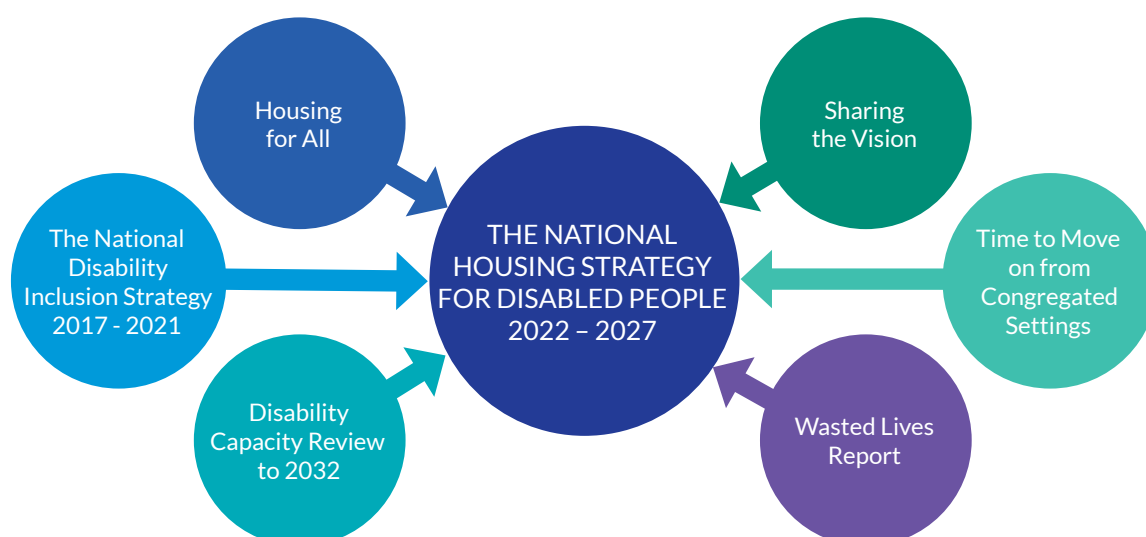


Figure 3: Strategy Alignment

3 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, *Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland*. Accessed November 2021: gov.ie - Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland (www.gov.ie)

4 Department of Health, *Disability Capacity Review to 2032 – A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032*. Accessed November 2021: gov.ie - Disability Capacity Review to 2032 - A Review of Social Care Demand and Capacity Requirements to 2032 (www.gov.ie)

3 The Strategy and the UNCRPD

The UNCRPD is the international treaty which promotes, protects, and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by disabled people.

The outcomes of the new national Strategy are and will continue to be informed by the relevant UNCRPD Articles, as well as the general principles of the UNCRPD and will promote the realisation of disabled people's rights.

The implementation of the new housing Strategy will be monitored through the lens of the Convention.

The articles of the Convention cover a wide range of areas including accessibility, independent living, education, health, and employment. A number of articles have particular relevance within this strategy. The following statements set out how the Strategy will address the various articles.

Statement of Intent - Article 4(1)(f)

The Strategy will promote the purposes of Article 4(1)(f) through the inclusion of a Universal Design approach to housing.

Statement of Intent - Article 4.3

The Strategy will promote the purposes of Article 4.3 through continued consultation and ensuring the effective participation of disabled people in decision-making, through local and national fora.

Statement of Intent - Article 9

The Strategy will promote the purposes of Article 9 through the increased provision of accessible homes in the right locations, accessible information and assistive technology, and building awareness of the need for accessible communities, thereby promoting people's participation in their communities.

Statement of Intent - Article 19

The Strategy will promote the purposes of Article 19 by ensuring that disabled people have access to housing and clearer pathways to accessing support services, promoting their inclusion in the community from a housing perspective.

Statement of Intent - Article 28

The Strategy will promote the purposes of Article 28 by ensuring disabled people have equal access to public housing and providing pathways to affordable housing.

Statement of Intent - Article 31

The Strategy will promote the purposes of Article 31 by collecting data to inform and enable the efficient coordination of housing and housing related services, that will be easily accessed and regularly published.

4 Themes

Living independently and being included in the community encompasses a wide variety of elements. These include promoting disabled people's inclusion through areas such as transport, employment, community and social services and housing. The Government's upcoming UNCRPD Implementation Plan will outline a cross government and department approach to implementing the Convention. One aspect of this will be Article 19 – Living Independently and being included in the community, and this strategy aims to complement and align with this work to ensure disabled people's rights are promoted, and people have access to housing.

The overarching vision of the Strategy, driven by the feedback to the consultation is to facilitate independent living. The themes below that have been developed are a result of the refinement of the feedback from the consultation process and contain the outcomes that are required to achieve this. The Implementation Plan that will be prepared and published by the end of Q2 2022 will contain the detail of how the outcomes can be achieved and progress monitored. However, the Strategy contains some initial actions that will be commenced ahead of the publication of the Implementation Plan. The inclusion of such actions shows the Government's intent to address the issues faced by disabled people accessing housing and to provide a clear signal to the stakeholders that action is required immediately.



Figure 4: Strategy Themes

In addition to the themes, the following provisions will be made to address other issues raised during the consultation and to align this strategy clearly to Housing for All:

- Each local authority will nominate Disability Friendly Housing Technical Advisors.
- Each local authority will nominate a representative from their Housing Departments to lead on the interagency collaboration.
- The HSE will nominate a housing coordinator in each CHO area for both Mental Health Services and Disability Services to lead on the interagency collaboration.
- The Housing Agency's role will be expanded to take a more proactive role in ensuring the delivery of the actions under the Strategy and to coordinate the interagency collaboration at regional and national level.
- The Housing Agency will be tasked with ensuring the smooth implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making Act for the Housing Departments of local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) including the preparation of guides and provision of training.

Theme 1 – Accessible Housing and Communities

Overview

This theme focuses on the provision of accessible housing for disabled people and the promotion of accessible communities and universally designed homes. It is informed by the UNCRPD and, in particular, Article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community and Article 9 – Accessibility which aims “to enable disabled people to live independentlyand ensure disabled people have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment.” It is important that this theme aligns with Housing for All, in particular:

- Pathway 2 – Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion, and
- Pathway 3 – Increasing New Housing Supply

This theme highlights the different needs that arise for disabled people when it comes to accessibility for their homes and their local communities (easy access to services, shops and public transport, as appropriate), and by ensuring there are targets for the delivery of accessible houses. This theme will also explore how we can better utilise Assistive Technology and ensure accessibility standards in housing developments.

Theme 1 Outcomes

- There is an increase in the provision of accessible housing for disabled people by the setting of local, need-related targets for all social housing providers using a universal design approach, as appropriate.
- Disabled people are supported to avail of housing opportunities that arise through the increase in supports, both formal and informal.
- Communities and housing developments are more accessible for disabled people.
- Local authorities strategically plan for the housing needs of disabled people in their administrative area.
- Provision of housing and related supports, that is in line with UNCRPD principles, is supported through collaboration between the HSE and local authorities at both national and local level, and appropriate funding.

“Independent Living is wider than housing - the physical environment is key to enabling someone to live independently.” From Consultation Round 1

Initial Workplan⁵

- Review Local Delivery Action Plans and with the benefit of new data and research, e.g. the Cost of Universal Design Review by the NDA to inform policy and practice, set appropriate targets for provision and allocation from 2023 onwards.
- For 2022, local authorities have set their targets in Local Strategic Plans including such targets as:
 - 15% of all allocations of dwellings by a local authority being allocated to disabled people and appropriate health and social care being put in place to allow people to take up their housing opportunities.
 - 10% of new dwellings in all general social housing⁶ developments of 10 dwellings or more being reserved for households qualified under a basis of need of disability.
 - 50% of the new pipeline delivery⁷ being reserved for disabled people in each LA being wheelchair liveable i.e. meeting the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design's UD Home recommendations.
- These Local Strategic Plans will be reviewed during 2022 to take account of the outcomes and actions of the new Strategy and its Implementation Plan and to align with Local Delivery Action Plans and other actions from Housing for All.
- Co-ordinated action between local authorities and the HSE to plan and deliver on housing targets for disabled people in the community (including decongregation) in line with the forthcoming Disability Services Action Plan 2022-2025.
- Examine the possibility of the provision of a service in sourcing accommodation similar to that of the Place Finders in Homeless Services.
- Include other actions in the Implementation Plan to address delivery of the outcomes under this theme.

"You must look at housing and location and local services together. I may need a house with accessible shops nearby and other such issues locally like good paths in the local park or no steps to cross the Luas tracks -- etc. so if the housing is not supported locally by improved services, then they would not work for me as I cannot JUST stay in my accessible house"
From Consultation Round 1

Theme 2 – Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports

Overview

This theme seeks to build on the work that has already been done by strengthening these structures and by improving collaboration between the relevant agencies.

This theme includes outcomes relating to the improvement of effective collaboration between local authorities and the HSE, better inter-departmental cooperation, aligning housing and support services and the sharing of relevant information between agencies.

5 The tasks set out under the Initial Workplan for each Theme will also form part of the Implementation Plan as not all will be completed in advance of the publication of the Plan.

6 General here means non-specialist housing provision (e.g. homeless provision) and social housing includes local authority and AHB provision.

7 In general, to prevent obstacles/delay to social housing delivery by requiring scheme redesign, new pipeline delivery means new social housing schemes being submitted to the department for approval.

Theme 2 Outcomes

- Disabled people have a clear pathway to accessing housing and support services.
- A regulatory landscape/framework that best supports the delivery of housing for disabled people.
- Local authorities and the HSE work and collaborate efficiently, improving access to housing for disabled people.
- Local authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, the HSE and Service Providers work and collaborate efficiently, improving access to housing for disabled people, provision of community-based residential care for disabled people, and working towards ending provision of residential care in institutional or congregated settings.
- The Assessment and Allocation Guidelines are embedded in the policies and procedures of the local authorities and the HSE.
- Improved coordination and increase of capital and revenue funding for housing and related supports.

Initial Workplan

- Each local authority nominated representative from their Housing Departments will work closely with the HSE nominated housing coordinators in each CHO area for both Mental Health Services and Disability Services.
- Extend the Tenancy Sustainment role nationally through the AHB sector to work with local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to support people with psychosocial difficulties or mental health difficulties to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness.
- Examine existing models of housing and supports to inform the establishment of a number of pilot projects to determine the optimum way that housing and support can be aligned to best meet the needs of disabled people.
- Co-ordinated action between housing authorities and the HSE to plan and deliver on housing targets for disabled people (including decongregation) in line with the forthcoming Disability Services Action Plan 2022-2025.
- Examine the way the different regulatory frameworks interact with one another with a view to ensuring that they are not a barrier to the delivery of housing for disabled people.
- Examine peer support models nationally and internationally to develop structures to support people to live full lives within their communities.
- Review the National Assessment and Allocation Guidelines to update and strengthen the key messages and embed them in the policies and procedures of LAs and the HSE.
- Revisit Key Measure 2.3. from the NHSPWD 2011 to 2016 (extended to 2021) to formalise a framework for multiannual funding for the improvement of the coordination of capital and revenue funding for housing and related supports.
- The protocols developed under the previous Strategy need to be reviewed and updated by the relevant stakeholders to ensure that they are fit for purpose and to reiterate the commitment to the protocols.
- Include other actions in the Implementation Plan to address delivery of the outcomes under this theme.

Theme 3 – Affordability of Housing

Overview

This theme focuses on enabling access to affordable housing for disabled people. In keeping with Housing for All and, in particular, Pathway 1- Supporting Home Ownership and Increasing Affordability, it is important that disabled people are included in the provision of affordable housing.

Disabled people in Ireland are a group that are at a high risk of poverty with a large percentage of disabled people living in poverty and experiencing deprivation. It is also well documented that there are high costs associated with having a disability in Ireland which the current system of disability supports does not sufficiently factor in.

This theme will examine these issues and address the challenges disabled people experience with the private sector, in terms of home ownership and private renting.

Theme 3 Outcomes

- Disabled people have access to affordable housing schemes.
- Disabled people can afford to purchase a home or rent at an affordable price.
- Grant Schemes funded by the various Government departments are fit for purpose with clarity on areas of responsibility including the use of technology.

Initial Workplan

- Engage with the stakeholders to the Cost Rental Scheme and Affordable Housing Schemes⁸ to explore the potential for target setting under each scheme as they are rolled out.
- Carry out additional studies of international good practice in the delivery of housing of different tenures for disabled people including schemes identified through the Disability and Housing: Approaches in Other Jurisdictions research.
- Review the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) to ensure that it is being operated to its full potential to deliver housing for disabled people.
- Examine the findings from the Cost of Disability research and how they relate to housing for disabled people.
- Review the terms and conditions of the various grant schemes involving a consultation phase.
- Include other actions in the Implementation Plan to address delivery of the outcomes under this theme.

Theme 4 – Communication and Access to Information

Overview

This theme focuses on communication and the access to information. The Strategy will continue to build on the information/accessibility achievements of the previous Strategy.

The Strategy is cognisant of the fact that communication is a two-way process. Being able to communicate is important in every aspect of life.

The Strategy will aim to ensure disabled people are not disadvantaged in communicating their needs and in the communication they receive. This includes providing information in a range of accessible formats and as far as is practical through ways/channels of communications they prefer.

8 See: gov.ie - Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland (www.gov.ie) for further information on the Cost Rental Scheme, Affordable Housing Schemes and the Capital Assistance Scheme

Theme 4 Outcomes

- A proactive and consistent approach is taken by agencies in the provision of information which will be coordinated by The Housing Agency.
- There is an increase in the communication between State Agencies and disabled people regarding their housing opportunities both from a housing and support perspective.
- Support people to have the time and opportunity to engage with services and local authorities that they need.
- Information is provided in an accessible format in the one location.
- Better sharing of data to produce more collated data.

Initial Workplan

- An Awareness Strategy to promote the Strategy will be prepared and published by The Housing Agency by the end of Q2 2022.
- An Information and Communication Strategy will be prepared and published by The Housing Agency by the end of Q3 2022. This will set out how communication will be conducted at national and local level during the lifetime of the NHSDP.
- Build on housingdesignforall.ie⁹ by providing a one stop shop of information on housing and related matters which will be managed and updated on an ongoing basis.
- Expand the provision of accessible documentation to all accessible formats.
- Include other actions in the Implementation Plan to address delivery of the outcomes under this theme.

Theme 5 - Knowledge, Capacity, and Expertise

Overview

To optimise housing delivery and support services for disabled people, it is important to share information, to apply existing knowledge and to build upon the expertise within organisations. It is important to recognise that the capacity to deliver an inclusive service to disabled people requires human resources with dedicated staff as outlined in Theme 2. Theme 5 puts forward measures to increase awareness and understanding of disability and housing within the relevant organisations. It also places an emphasis on increasing awareness regarding disabled people effectively participating and being included in their communities. It includes outcomes relating to the building of knowledge and expertise within the housing sector on disability and on the building of knowledge and expertise within the HSE on housing and disability. It also acknowledges areas where cross-agency training is necessary, for example, the introduction and application of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 as well as ongoing training on the UNCRPD and public sector duty. Where appropriate and practical, training by disabled people will be included.

Theme 5 Outcomes

- Local authorities, the HSE and Approved Housing Bodies have the knowledge base, expertise and capacity to provide services and relevant information to disabled people.
- Knowledge and expertise regarding disability issues are integrated into all relevant organisations.
- There is an understanding of each other's roles among the various stakeholders that results in an improved service to disabled people.
- Local authority and Approved Housing Body staff implement the changes required to meet their obligations under the Assisted Decision-Making Act 2015.

9 See here for further information: Home - Housing for All (housingdesignforall.ie)

Initial Workplan

- Training sessions will be run for stakeholders around all roles and responsibilities, creating a shared understanding of the role and responsibilities of each department and stakeholder.
- The Housing Agency will prepare and deliver a training programme to local authority housing staff and staff from Approved Housing Bodies on process and procedural changes required to implement the Assisted Decision-Making Act 2015.
- Include other actions in the Implementation Plan to address delivery of the outcomes under this theme.

Theme 6 – Strategy Alignment

Overview

This theme places a focus on ensuring that all Government strategies and policies from a housing perspective promote the rights of disabled people, in line with the UNCRPD. This will ensure that the new National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 complements and supports other strategies related to disability, such as the Sharing the Vision and the Time to Move on From Congregated Settings Strategy for de-congregation, and the work, in line with the Programme for Government commitment, to make progress on the need for housing with relevant supports identified in the Disability Capacity Review to 2032.

This theme will also place a focus on aligning other strategies and policies, such as Housing for All, and the new Local Delivery Action Plans established under its framework, and the Public Sector Duty.¹⁰

It is important that all strategies not only align but promote the inclusion and effective participation of disabled people in their implementation.

Theme 6 Outcomes

- The Strategy is underpinned by Housing for All and the new Local Delivery Action Plans established under its framework.
- The Government strategies such as Sharing the Vision, A Time to Move on from Congregated Settings complement and feed into the new National Housing Strategy for Disabled People and associated Implementation Plan.
- The Implementation Plan for this Strategy will take cognisance of the Disability Capacity Review to 2032, and 'Wasted Lives'.
- There is an alignment of strategies promoting the rights of disabled people so housing provision is not considered in a silo.

Initial Workplan

- Undertake a mapping of the relevant policies to be considered and coordinated with this Strategy, to develop further actions for this theme as a start for 2022.
- Include actions in the Implementation Plan to address delivery of the outcomes under this theme.

10 Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Accessed November 2021: gov.ie - Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (www.gov.ie).

5 Implementation Plan

Chapter 9 above outlines the outcomes that are required from the Strategy along with some of the initial actions that will be required to achieve these outcomes. It is important that a detailed Implementation Plan is prepared in a timely manner following the publication of the Strategy.

The Housing Agency will be tasked with preparing the Implementation Plan. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will lead a tri-departmental Working Group that will be responsible for signing off on the Implementation Plan. The Working Group will request the partners to the delivery to attend Group meetings on an ad hoc basis as required to obtain commitments from the partner organisations on the delivery of relevant actions. The Group may request additional information and clarity on any aspect of the plan. The Housing Agency will provide the administrative support to this Group.

The Implementation Plan will document the actions required to achieve each outcome under the various Themes.

5.1 Implementation Structures

The NHSDP 2022 to 2027 seeks to build on the work that has been done in establishing these structures and to bring the work of the groups to the next level.

It is proposed that the following structures are established:

- National Implementation Subgroup
- Housing and Disability Steering Groups
- National Thematical Focus Groups
- Regional Interagency Groups
- Bi-monthly meetings of the dedicated disability personnel in local authorities.

A new forum is being planned, to create a link between central Government and local authorities on the application of the UNCRPD at local authority level. The National Implementation Subgroup will establish the appropriate linkages to that forum in respect of housing when established.



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Government of Ireland