

How to develop a Housing with Support Scheme for Older People Framework Toolkit

(Arising from the learning from
the Phase 1 of the Dublin City Age
Friendly Housing with Support Model)

Dr Kathy Walsh
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Contact Details
Housing Agency
53 Mount Street Upper
Dublin 2

01 656 4100
info@housingagency.ie

For further information, please visit
www.housingagency.ie
or **www.dublincity.ie**

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The views expressed in this toolkit are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Dublin City Council or the Housing Agency.

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Introduction and overview

Aim of the toolkit

The overall aim of this framework toolkit is to provide a guide for social housing providers interested in developing Housing with Support projects for older people. This toolkit is a way of capturing and sharing the learning arising from the Dublin City Age Friendly Housing with Support project.

How to use the toolkit

The toolkit outlines, for Phase 1 of the project, the key stages and steps to take when thinking of developing a Housing with Support project. Phase 1 covers the stage from the initial concept, or idea, to the formal acceptance by an Approved Housing Body to develop the Housing with Support project. The toolkit starts out with an explanation of what is meant by Housing with Support, why this is important now and then continues to describe the four key stages to consider in Phase 1 and the action steps to be taken at each of the four stages. At the end of the toolkit is a resources section which identifies some of the key publications and organisations working in this area.

The toolkit will be expanded and built upon as the learning arises over the next two phases of the project.

What is Housing with Support?

Firstly, it is important to understand what Housing with Support means, its' key features, its' advantages and disadvantages, and what distinguishes it from other types of tenure, particularly sheltered housing.

Definition of Housing with Support

Housing with Support is a housing option, primarily for older people (defined as 55+), whereby:

- (i) Occupants have tenancy agreements that allow them to occupy self-contained dwellings;
- (ii) Occupants also have *specific agreements* that cover the provision of care, support, domestic, social, community or other services;
- (iii) The wider community also benefits by way of *access to clearly defined communal areas*.

The model thus provides an alternative housing option for older people that falls somewhere between living independently in the community and nursing home/residential care. It is perhaps useful to think of it as “sheltered housing plus”, in that it also incorporates care, support and community dimensions (in addition to wardens and alarms systems).

Key features of Housing with Support

The core ingredients of Housing with Support are:

- Purpose-built, accessible building design that promotes independent living; enabling residents to age in place;
- Fully self-contained properties where occupants have their own front doors;
- An office for use by staff serving the scheme and sometimes the wider community;
- Communal spaces and facilities;
- Access to care and support services on site with a facility for emergency services;
- Community alarms and other assistive technologies;
- Safety and security built into the design, with fob or person-controlled entry.

Why now?

In Ireland, the proportion of people 65 and over is growing rapidly, and many people are now living longer and healthier lives. This demographic transformation provides both opportunities and challenges, particularly as the number of older people totally reliant on state supports is relatively high, and expected to increase. More than one-quarter of all people (26%) aged 50-and-over have no income other than state support (TILDA, 2014). An ageing population brings implications for policy, service delivery, and long-term planning in diverse areas such as health and housing. Two key areas of concern when considering Ireland's ageing population are the provision of suitable housing and the cost of healthcare (associated with the provision of support and, where required, long-term care); with health costs relating to older people expected to rise from a GDP figure of 6% currently, to a GDP figure of 11% by 2050, as demand for health services grow.

The third goal in the National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013) is *'to enable people to age with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.'* Research has found that while older people's clear preference is *'to stay in their own home and community for as long as possible,'* over time *'they may need more care and support and their houses may become unsuitable.'* The Housing with Support model is an alternative housing option for older people which can enable them to live independently for longer and avoid early and potentially unnecessary admission to long-term residential care settings (e.g. nursing homes)

Stages in the development of Housing with Support (Phase 1)

There are four key stages in the development of a Housing with Support project. See Figure 1 for details

Figure 1: Stages in the development of a Housing with Support project





Stage 1 Set-Up

Step 1: Determine whether Housing with Support is an appropriate model

When assessing whether Housing with Support is an appropriate model for the housing project consider some of the advantages and disadvantages which have been summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of the Housing with Support model

| Group | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| For tenants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater choice Can support people to live independently for longer Tenants have specific tenure rights to occupy self-contained dwellings. Tenants have increased care and support options | |
| For health service/ care and support providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can reduce expenditure on long-term residential care. It can also prevent/reduce unplanned hospital admissions while supporting timely discharge | <p>There are additional ongoing <i>revenue and capital</i> costs linked to the need to provide access to care and support services (at higher level than would generally be provided in sheltered housing).</p> |
| For social housing providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It provides an option to encourage and enable older people to downsize and free up family housing | <p>There are additional <i>capital</i> costs as a result of the requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All units to be self-contained and capable of being adapted to tenants changing health needs, • The need to provide sufficient communal spaces capable of adapting to meet tenants' changing needs |

The decision to use a Housing with Support model in preference to another housing model while advantageous for tenants, generates three additional requirements as follows:

- The ongoing and active engagement of both housing providers and health and support care providers in the ongoing planning and development of the project.
- Additional costs in relation to capital expenditure by both the Department of Housing and the Department of Health.
- Additional costs in relation to ongoing revenue support.

If any of these three elements cannot be delivered the decision must be that Housing with Support is not suitable.

Step 2: Obtain senior stakeholder commitment

Getting a cross-disciplinary project like Housing with Support off the ground will require senior management commitment within the local authority (the organisation responsible for local housing provision) and the HSE (the organisation with overall responsibility for the provision of health care and support) at a minimum. Getting this commitment is imperative and will involve meetings with senior staff within the two organisations to:

- (i) Raise the profile of Housing with Support,
- (ii) Discuss the role Housing with Support could potentially play locally

The culmination of these meetings could be a seminar where the key partners agree to establish and actively participate in a Working Group to progress the project. Other key potential partners could include a representative of the local Age Friendly Alliance whose role it could be to represent the view of older people locally.

Step 3: Set-up a Steering Group

Step 3 is to set up a Steering Group to oversee and lead the project at a local level. Ideally this group would be made up of professionals knowledgeable about housing and/or support for older people. It would involve a cross section of sufficiently senior committed people; with a range of complementary skills drawn from the key project partners. The members of the group will need to develop and agree terms of reference. The group will also need to agree

- (i) Who will chair the group? An Independent Chair should be considered
- (ii) Who will provide the secretariat support?
- (iii) Who will undertake the actual work?
- (iv) The meeting schedule for the duration of the project. The initial stages of the project could take anything from 6-9 months.



Stage 2 Research and consult

Step 4: Examine, analyse and map available data to identify local need

It is important to understand the level of local need by carrying out:

- (i) An analysis of what housing is already in place for older people;
- (ii) An assessment of the extent to which these schemes meet the needs of older people locally (including those with disabilities).
- (iii) An assessment of demand for housing for older people.

This can be done by:

- Mapping existing social housing schemes for older people within the local area;
- Mapping these against essential services (including local health-care facilities such as Primary Care and Day Care Centres);
- Mapping concentrations of people over 55 (particularly 65+);
- Mapping concentrations of older people with disabilities specifically.
- An analysis of demand for social housing among older people (using the combined Housing Waiting and Transfer Waiting Lists for over 55's).
- An analysis of demand for social housing to assess potential future demand (using the combined Housing Waiting and Transfer Waiting Lists)¹.

After analysing all this information, it should be possible to make an assessment of the number of individuals within the local authority area in need of Housing with Support. This assessment should be supplemented by the HaPAI (2015) survey finding that 30% of all older people would be prepared to downsize if they could find suitable alternative accommodation (Age Friendly Cities and County Survey). It should also be possible to identify key areas of unmet need.

The Dublin City Age Friendly Housing with Support project mapping work was undertaken by the HSE Health Atlas, with data on social housing provision provided by Dublin City Council and the Irish Council for Social Housing.

Step 5: Consult older people

One way of gathering the viewpoints of older people living in the area is to hold facilitated consultation workshop/s focused on answering a number of key questions. It would also be useful to explore whether any similar consultation work has been previously undertaken that could be used for this purpose. Table 2 has some examples of some sample questions that could be used.

1. | Where this information exists, it will be a case of updating the data.

Table 2: Sample questions for consultations with older people

| |
|--|
| What three things would help you remain living independently for longer? |
| <p>What's good about where you live that helps you stay independent in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Community integration • The design and layout of your home • Community facilities • A sense of community • Safety and security • The role of technology • The external environment • A mix of ages |
| What supports are important? What extra supports would help as you get older? |
| What are your three key concerns in relation to the suitability of your home as you age? |

Attendees for the consultations could be identified with the support of the local Age Friendly Alliance and its' Older People's Council. Remember it is important to ensure that a wide cross section of older people attend and that the consultation/s are carefully recorded and written up to inform project development.

Step 6: Consult with service providers

It is important to get the views of housing and/or support staff and service providers working with older people, in relation to what these professionals believe is required for a successful Housing with Support model. It will be important to explore whether any similar consultation work has been previously undertaken that could be used for this purpose. If it is decided that consultations are needed these could be undertaken using facilitated workshops focused on answering a number of key questions. See Table 3 for topics that could be used at these types of workshops.

Table 3: Topics to be explored with service providers

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Location requirements | Technology requirements |
| Physical layout requirements | Tenancy management issues |
| Support requirements | |





Attendees for this consultation/s could be identified with the support of the HSE, the local authority as well as voluntary organisations working to advocate for older people. Remember it is important to ensure that a wide cross section of professionals and stakeholders from different organisations attend and that the consultation/s are carefully recorded and written up to inform project development.

Step 7: Identify potentially suitable sites

The site identification process makes use of the maps developed as part of Step 4. The site selection guidelines contained in the 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities'² report would also be a useful support in this process. The process of narrowing down the selection of the sites may also be supported by a mapping of social

and other supports available locally (including social clubs, meals-on-wheels service, local transport, etc.) Once the overall level of demand and the key areas of unmet need/under provision have been identified, the next task is to identify a shortlist of potential development sites in/near these locations.

The availability of a local authority site with clear title within an area of unmet need/under provision close to relevant services would be one option. Another option might be a site owned by a Housing Association interested in developing this type of housing and in an area of need. Where this is not available the Steering Group will need to assess the shortlist, and select the best option from that list. The development principles from the Age Friendly Ireland (2014) Report on *Housing for Older People* could assist this process. See Table 4 for details of these principles.

Table 4: Age Friendly Ireland development principles

| Development principle | Description |
|---|---|
| Location | The site should be in walkable proximity to public and other essential services, recreation and amenities so that the tenants can easily access them/use them more readily* |
| Place-Making | The design must be able to support the creation of an attractive place to live, sensitive to the local context and urban form of the area |
| Re-use of Land | A brownfield site is more likely to be used, thus promoting the development of sustainable communities |
| Social and environmental appropriateness | The development needs to include a mix of dwelling types and sizes, based on the demographic profile of the area |

Source: AFI (2014) Report on Housing for Older People - Future Perspectives

**This is the key development principle in the selection process*

2. | Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2007) Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities.

Sites under consideration should be given a preliminary assessment to consider issues including site capacity, access, availability of services, utilities and zoning and planning considerations. Further guidance is contained in the Department of Housing and Planning Urban Design Manual 2009 which provides useful guidance on site evaluation and the integration of new developments within neighbourhoods.

Step 8: Visit other housing schemes for older people

Visits to a selection of different types of housing projects for older people would be useful to inform the thinking of the Steering Group members about what works well in these developments and what works less well. It also provides the group with an opportunity to clarify what their aspirations are for their Housing with Support project. The projects to be visited could be selected with the support of the Housing Agency and the Irish Council for Social Housing. Examples of interesting housing projects that could be visited are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5: Examples of Housing with Support type projects

| Name of Scheme | Type of Housing/Accommodation |
|--|--|
| <p>Colivet Court, Limerick</p> <p>Limerick City Council and Clúid Housing</p> | <p>This housing scheme for older people consists of 35 apartments. The apartments are organised around a private, secure, central landscaped garden. It provides tenants with own door access to the street. The facility is designed to create a social hub for residents and provides offices for local community groups. It includes caretaker accommodation (together with visitors' guest-room).</p> |
| <p>Great Northern Haven</p> <p>The Netwell Centre and Clúid Housing Association (Louth)</p> | <p>This housing scheme for older people has been fitted with sophisticated technology, which is designed to meet the changing needs of its residents over time. The housing scheme hosts an Ageing-in-Place research project, which provides valuable research in relation to housing for older persons. The project also provides a number of sustainable design features, from high levels of insulation, a central wood pellet boiler, mechanical ventilation heat recovery and a green roof for water attenuation.</p> |
| <p>McAuley Place</p> <p>(Nas na Riogh Housing Association Scheme for older people (Kildare))</p> | <p>This housing development, which opened in Spring 2011, consists of 53 self-contained apartments in the centre of Naas town. It is a managed service providing centrally located housing for older people capable of independent living. Each apartment comprises one bedroom with a fully equipped kitchen/sitting room and a bathroom with level-access shower. Wireless internet is available in all units.</p> |



A young boy and an elderly woman are looking at a tablet together. The boy is on the left, leaning in, and the woman is on the right, wearing glasses and a floral patterned top. The background is a warm, orange-toned image of a person's face, possibly the same woman, looking down. There are decorative elements of leaves in the top left and flowers in the bottom left.

It is important for the Steering Group to formally record the learning arising from the site visits in order to ensure that those that were not able to attend the visits are able to fully benefit from the learning.

Step 9: Look at international examples

In an ideal world, the members of the Steering Group would have the opportunity to visit some good practice examples of Housing with Support schemes in other jurisdictions. In the absence of the resources to do this it would be important that the Steering Group engage with similar types of housing projects in other countries to learn about what works well, as well as what the challenges are. This engagement would require a brief review of the international literature as a minimum. It could also involve an examination of work done by others in this area. The resources section of this toolkit identifies some of the key publications and organisations working in this area.

Stage 3 Plan

Step 10: Assess costs and funding possibilities

The funding of the Housing with Support model is one of the most critical questions to be addressed by the Steering Group, with two types of funding required:

- (i) Capital funding (for the project build) and
- (ii) Revenue funding (for the project operation on an ongoing basis. Capital funding can come from a range and combination of public and private sources.

Capital Funding

There are currently two routes to access public funding for social housing purposes: The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and Payment and Availability Agreements (with or without a Capital Advance Leasing Facility Loan (CALF)). Currently neither funding route is exactly suited to funding Housing with Support, given the additional costs associated with the provision of the level of communal facilities required for this model. Both of these options will require engagement with the Department of Housing Capital Appraisal Process. See Table 6 for details of the different stages of this process currently available.

Table 6: The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) approval process

| | |
|--|---|
| Stage 1 – Capital Appraisal | This is a high-level project appraisal. The local authority makes sure that the business case for the project is in order to gain approval in principle for funding from the Department of Housing. |
| Stage 2 – Pre-Planning | This is a pre-planning check on procurement, the consistency of the design with design guidelines, cost and value for money. |
| Stage 3 – Pre-Tender Design and Stage 4 Tender Report | This stage involves two final assessments on cost pre-tender, and cost and procurement prior to the award of tender. |

Revenue Funding

Clarity and commitments in relation to the provision of multi-annual funding to enable the future operation of the project are crucial to the viability of the project. It is of critical importance that the HSE include the principle of the provision of revenue funding for the project in their current

operational plans. According to the HSE *‘once a new service is funded and initiated in annual budgets – this cost is automatically carried over in budgetary terms into the next year under ‘Existing Level of Service’ arrangements, unless specifically stated that it has a finite lifespan.’*





Step 11: Develop a vision and a vision document

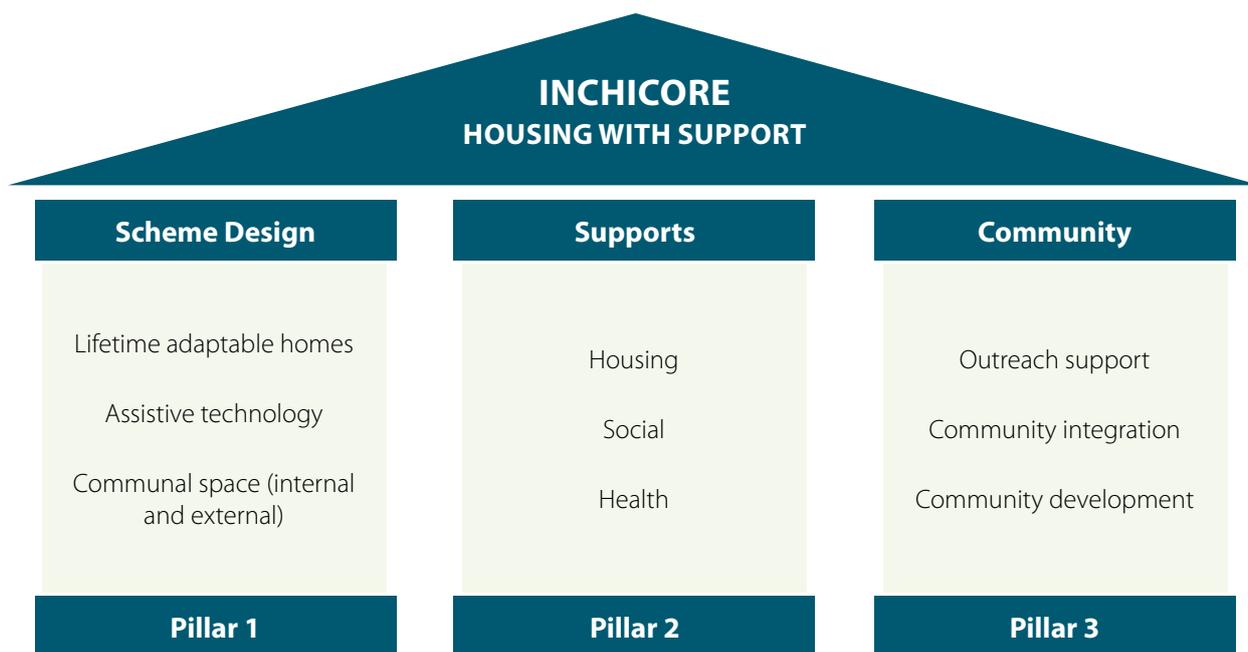
The vision document purpose is to pull the learning together in a structured way and provide the overall direction for the project. Some key topics to be addressed within this document are:

- The rationale for the use of a Housing with Support model
- The concepts underlying the model
- The key elements/pillars of the project

- Who the project is for?
- The partners involved in the project and the way the partnership works
- Funding (capital and revenue)
- The site selected

The Dublin City Age Friendly Housing with Support project’s vision included three pillars, see Figure 2 for details.

Figure 2: Pillars of the Dublin City Housing with Support Vision



Source: Dublin Age Friendly Housing Steering Committee (2016) 'Inchicore Housing with Support Demonstration Project-A partnership between Housing, Health and Community' Vision Document.

Step 12: Establish a project Working Group

This group would be made up of health and housing professionals with the technical skills and knowledge necessary to assist in the development and oversight of detailed project specifications (Step 13). This group would also be responsible for the management and oversight of Steps 14-17. This group would report to the overall Steering Group who would continue to oversee and lead the project.

Step 13: Prepare an internal scoping study

Once the vision has been clearly articulated and the site selection has been finalised the next stage of the project is the development of an internal scoping study. The purpose of this scoping study is to determine whether a development is possible on the chosen site to achieve the agreed vision. The preparation of this internal scoping study will be a key task of the project Working Group and will require the involvement of both architects and health and care specialists. Developing this, will almost certainly result in ongoing modifications to the scoping study. The challenge being to find a balance between the aspiration for a flagship project and the need to ensure the project is affordable.

Key issues that will need to be discussed and agreed include:

- The size of the units
- The mix of units (no. of one-bedroom units, no. of one-and-a-half bedroom units, no. of two-bedroom units, etc.)
- Referrals and allocations policies
- The balance of private and communal space (linked to the unit sizes)
- What is to be included in the communal spaces, with consideration given to avoiding duplication of existing facilities in the area.

Once the internal scoping study has been agreed it can then be used to develop the detailed specifications for construction and development. These specifications will in turn be included in the Expression of Interest.



Stage 4 Implementation

Step 14: Develop an Expression of Interest (EOI)

An expression of interest is a method for providers of goods and/or services to register their interest in supplying them. The expression of interest referred to here, is the document describing the requirements and specifications of the project and seeking information from potential providers to demonstrate their ability to meet those requirements. The information to be included in the document is largely drawn from the internal scoping study and the report defining the vision. The process of putting together this document provides the Working Group and its members with a further opportunity to review and revise what is to be undertaken.

Below lists the type of information that should be included in an expression of interest.

- An introduction to the project
- The structure of the project
- The services to be delivered by the successful tenderer
- Funding details
- Details of the time frames for putting in place the development agreement (following an additional feasibility study and review stage)
- Details of the proposed agreement between the tenderer and the commissioner
- EOI Submission requirements, deadlines and formats
- Details of how the expressions of interest will be assessed
- The vision document (As an appendix)
- A preliminary schedule of accommodation
- Site information
- Specific HSE and other requirements

Step 15: Manage the EOI process

The Dublin City Age Friendly Housing with Support project was able to use the Communications Development Protocol between local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) as the framework for the management of their expression of interest process. Other organisations may have similar protocols. Where these types of protocols are not followed/in place, the commissioning body will need to identify potentially suitable tenderers and circulate the Expression of Interest to them. Whatever process is used, the commissioners ideally need to allow at least a six-week period for this process, to give the interested tenderers a two-week window for queries, the commissioners two weeks to respond, with two further weeks provided to finalise the submission. It is also useful if the tenderers are required to submit their responses in a very structured way, following a prescribed format and using word limits. The overall result of which will be concise submissions that can be easily assessed.

Step 16: Assess the EOI's received and award the contract

An assessment committee should be established to evaluate the completed expressions of interest received. Ideally this group would be a subcommittee of the Working Group and should include some individuals with particular technical skills to score particular aspects of the submission. This group should score and shortlist the submissions received. The submissions ideally would need to meet a minimum score before they are deemed eligible. The organisations whose submissions meet the minimum score and are ranked in the top three to four should be invited to make a presentation to the assessment sub-group based on their submission. Following that presentation, the assessment committee should be able to identify the most suitable candidate and

report this to the Working Group. Following that the Working Group/Commissioner should offer the contract to the proposal that receives the highest score from the assessment group.

Step 17: Check the overall feasibility of the project

It is important that both the commissioner and the successful tenderer confirm the feasibility of the project. The development of a feasibility

study and review for the delivery of the project provides a mechanism for checking this. As part of this process the successful tenderer and the commissioner would agree the detailed brief and qualitative standards for the accommodation to be built and the brief and standards for the operation of the facility when complete. This is the opportunity for both parties to confirm the feasibility of the project. See Table 7 for details of the items that should be addressed within the study and review.

Table 7: Items to be addressed at the feasibility study and review stage

| |
|--|
| The agreed detailed design brief, including a detailed schedule of accommodation, qualitative description of the required facilities and design standards required to be achieved |
| Feasibility study for the development |
| Programme with key milestone dates for delivery |
| Order of magnitude cost plan |
| Financing proposal, (including confirmation of preliminary capital appraisal approval if relevant) |
| Project management proposal including processes for completion of procurement, design, planning, construction and commissioning. This should include a register of project risks with proposed mitigation measures |
| Proposed serviced standards for the operation of the completed facility. The care and services provided to each of the residents will be in agreement and under the guidance of a service level agreement with the HSE |
| Identification of the key personnel or technical resources to ensure delivery of the project including the proposed Project Manager |
| An agreed review protocol to set out the interaction of the AHB and client bodies during the project to ensure that the agreed standards are achieved |





The study and review should be completed within a specific timeframe (e.g. four to five months) and be undertaken in consultation with the Working Group, through monthly meetings as well as more regular meetings with a subgroup of the Working Group to discuss and agree the work to be undertaken in more detail. If the findings of the study and review are not positive, then either party has the opportunity to exit from the process. Should the parties agree to proceed with the project, tenderer and the commissioner will enter a Development Agreement based on the Feasibility Study and Review. The format of the Development Agreement will be agreed by the two parties during the Feasibility Study and Review, will include a programme for delivery, subject to planning approval or other matters outside the control of the two parties and conditional on receipt of funding approval and necessary statutory approvals.



Conclusions

This toolkit draws together the four key stages involved in:

- (i) The decision to select and progress a housing with support development and the identification and recruitment of the key stakeholders that need to be involved.
- (ii) The research and consultation processes to be undertaken in relation to defining what specifically is required by older people at a local level.
- (iii) The development of a project specific vision and related project specifications in relation to what is required and how it might be funded.
- (iv) The development and organisation of the tendering process, required to ensure the appointment of a suitable tenderer capable of delivering the project.

Social housing providers and others interested in using a Housing with Support model can use it to:

- Inform their decision making in relation to, the use or not, of a Housing with Support model.
- Determine who needs to be involved in the project.
- Identify the research and consultations that need to be undertaken.
- Develop the project vision.
- Identify possible funding opportunities.
- Develop and manage the tendering process.
- Appoint the successful tenderer.

The toolkit also provides a useful overall framework to guide this initial stage of project establishment.

This toolkit will be further refined and developed as Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Dublin City Age Friendly Housing with Support project in Inchicore develops.



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