

Louth County Council

Strategic Plan for Housing Persons with Disabilities

1. Purpose and Goal

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 - 2016, published in 2011, and the associated National Implementation Framework, which are joint publications by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Health were developed as a part of a coherent framework, in conjunction with the Government's mental health policy, A Vision for Change and the Report of the Working Group on Congregated Settings, to support people with disabilities in community based living with maximum independence and choice.

The vision of the Strategy 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. This should be achieved within the mainstream housing environment.

Our core goal is to meet the identified housing needs of people with disabilities locally; those making an application from the community and those who are transitioning from a congregated setting. The four categories of disability referred to in the Strategy are:

- (a) Sensory disability
- (b) Mental health disability
- (c) Physical disability and
- (d) Intellectual disability

The National Implementation Framework includes the following strategic aims

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.

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.

It is intended that the strategy will form an integral part of the Housing Services Plans and will promote and support the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities using all appropriate housing supply mechanisms. This strategy will also support longer term strategic planning.

2. Housing Need

Housing need has been defined as the extent to which the quantity and quality of existing accommodation falls short of that required to provide each household or person in the population, irrespective of ability to pay or of particular personal preferences, with accommodation of a specified minimum standard and above. This definition applies equally to all people with a disability.

In relation to people with a disability living in congregated settings, deinstitutionalisation refers to the move away from housing people with disabilities in residential institutions, where all services were generally provided on site, to community based settings. Large residential institutions, while maximising the pooling of support services, segregate residents from the community and from normal social life. Research has demonstrated that such institutions are not able to deliver the same quality of life for their residents as community based alternatives.

The guiding principle of the report of the Congregated Settings working group, Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – A Strategy for Community Inclusion, is that 'each person is a citizen of the State. No service provider, third party or the HSE own a person and can solely determine or control the services and supports to be provided to that individual.'

It would be hoped that those individual who currently live in the community would be presented with solutions that where practical would allow them to continue to live in the community with the necessary supports.

3. Roles and Responsibilities within the Disability Sector

3.1 Individuals

Individuals who have a disability which creates or affects their Housing Need, must in the first instance contact the Housing Authority with regards to that Housing Need. Generally this would be addressed through the Housing Application process but it could also be through the Housing Grants Scheme. Unfortunately in both cases no guarantee can be given that the requests supports or adaption can be put in place as resources will be allocated on a priority of need basis.

3.2 Housing Authorities

Local Authorities acting as Housing Authorities have a key role in the provision of social housing supports for all eligible persons with a disability, including people currently living independently, or with families or in other arrangements. In many cases the solution for the individual will also require the support of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

3.3 Health Service Executive (HSE)

The HSE is the agency tasked with responsibility for care. In some cases the HSE is the direct service provider to an individual. In addition, the HSE is the current funding agency of support services by third parties. The HSE is also one of the main drivers of the deinstitutionalisation of residents from congregated settings.

In addition, the HSE must also identify individual support costs and continue to provide funding for residents in their new housing environments. The HSE has the

overall statutory responsibility for the management and delivery of health, care and personal social services. In respect of disability services, the HSE's responsibility is fulfilled by the provision of services directly by the organisation and also, to a very significant extent by the funding of non-statutory organisations to provide such services on its behalf. The HSE aims to support each individual with a disability in living as normal a life as possible, in an environment that provides opportunities for choice, personal development, fulfilling relationships and protection from exploitation and abuse. With regard to individuals currently residing in a congregated type setting, the HSE strongly supports their transition to more socially inclusive community integrated services and is fully committed to ensuring that people with disabilities will be actively and effectively supported to live full inclusive lives at the heart of their family, community and society.

3.4 Department of Health

The Department's role in relation to service for people with disabilities is to provide the policy and legislative framework to enable the ongoing strategic development, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of health and social services to support people with a disability to live in the community. This includes working with other Government Departments, the HSE and relevant agencies to enhance people's health and well-being.

3.5 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government has overall responsibility for developing and implementing housing policy for people with disabilities, both for those living in the community and those who will be transitioning from institutional care in the coming years.

The Department's role is to provide the policy framework to enable the delivery of a range of housing options and solutions and to work with other Government Departments, housing authorities, HSE and relevant agencies in supporting people with disabilities to access and maintain appropriate housing suited to their changing needs within sustainable communities.

3.6 Families

In many cases families are the first assistance and support in relation to the provision of appropriate accommodation for persons with a disability. In many cases the family also becomes the advocate for the individual. The challenge however facing that family and household must be recognised and in many instances outside assistance is required, whether that is through physical adaption, move or whether it is through provision of support services to the household.

The well-being of all members of the household must also be considered. Even in cases of relationship breakdown families should always be considered for consultation on planned actions.

3.7 Service Providers

This would include HSE (direct service provision) service providers and the non-statutory service providers. Responsibilities will include the development of an overall project plan to include person centred plan , provision of information with regard to housing options, supporting the individual with regard to application for assessment of housing needs, access to external advocate, support around tenancy arrangements, care support needs identified , assistance with the development of

circle of supports etc. Service providers must also participate in the local implementation teams, identify any obstacles / challenges to transition etc.

3.8 Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies operate as housing providers under the initiatives set out in the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability, whether it is through Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), leasing or purchase models. All clients must be on the housing authority waiting list before being in receipt of an allocation.

4. Demand and Supply

The lead in time to any housing procurement can be significant and it is critical that all procurement plans can take account of both current and projected housing demand. The early identification of demand and specific and individual need is crucial to managing the need. The supply mechanisms must therefore have regard to demand.

The approach taken to providing suitable and appropriate housing to people with disabilities will ensure that agreed disability specific general requirements and known individual requirements are met in all design and procurement briefs to meet both current and projected need of present and anticipated applicants. There will be a number of options that need to be considered to ensure that supply addresses demand.

These can include that a proportion of any projected housing procurement may be forward planned and reserved to meet the demand from people with disabilities on the Housing Waiting Lists. Accessibility briefs can be agreed and set out to inform the requirements that should be part of any brief from the outset i.e. what is this project brief required to deliver in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities, general design, numbers of units, design of units, and how will this be achieved (Section 27 Disability Act).

4.1 Current demand

The current demand can be determined from various sources from which a comprehensive breakdown of need can be compiled. The breakdown of demand/need will include details on unit size, location, design and any other specific requirements. The figures set out below are extracted from the most recent Housing Needs Assessment which was undertaken in September last. An element of estimation and forecast is also required to address emerging need which probably can be quantified based on previous annual averages but not specific to location. The relevant information from which the detail can be extracted is held as follows and then is consolidated for the county of Louth at Paragraph 4.1.8-:

4.1.1 Housing Waiting Lists

People with a disability currently on social housing lists, including people transitioning from congregated settings are tabled below.

	North Louth	Mid Louth	South Louth	Total
Physical	71	32	69	172
Sensory	4	2	6	12
Mental Health	16	10	21	47
Intellectual	24	167	10	201
TOTAL	115	211	106	432

4.1.2 Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)

AHBs operating in Louth have an existing housing stock of 700 units. This includes capacity provided by Saint John of God for 11 clients in units in the community provided through the Capital Assistance Scheme.

Annually a number of tenants though new disability or injury require alternative accommodation due to the inadequate nature of their existing living accommodation. This can be addressed through a transfer arrangement if appropriate accommodation is available. The decision to transfer is made as a less costly alternative to adaption works or were necessary adaption works are not feasible. The following table reflects the current transfer list which is based exclusively on disability need.

	North Louth	Mid Louth	South Louth	Total
Physical	10	0	1	11
Sensory	0	0	0	0
Mental Health	1	2	1	4
Intellectual	7	5	1	13
Total	18	7	3	28

4.1.3 Housing Transfer Lists

Louth County Council has an existing housing stock of 3700 units. Annually a number of tenants though new disability or injury require alternative accommodation due to the inadequate nature of their existing living accommodation. This can be

addressed through a transfer arrangement if appropriate accommodation is available. The decision to transfer is made as a less costly alternative to adaption works or were necessary adaption works are not feasible. The table below reflects the current transfer list which is based exclusively on disability need.

	North Louth	Mid Louth	South Louth	Total
Physical	9	2	9	20
Sensory	1	0	2	3
Mental Health	1	3	4	8
Intellectual	0	0	0	0
Total	11	5	15	31

4.1.4 Homeless Persons

Louth has always had a cohort of individuals in the Homeless category who for various reasons including addictions and disabilities have had a dependence on state support. In recent times the phenomena of “Wet Brain Injury” have become a pressing matter with although low numbers presenting, needs are considered quite high. Clients with a disability currently engaged with Homeless Services are tabled over.

	North Louth	Mid Louth	South Louth	Total
Physical	0	0	0	0
Sensory	0	0	0	0
Mental Health	13	4	8	25
Intellectual	0	0	0	0
Total	13	4	8	25

4.1.5 Emerging Disability Need

This strategy can only deal with Housing Applicants and households already or currently identified. However it is accepted that there will always be an emerging need in this area, which can arise from the following areas and is forecast below, on an annual basis, based purely on the sector's experience in Louth

This is forecast based on past evidenced presentations and projections from those currently in receipt of care and Under 18. It is vital that this is continually monitored to maintain accuracy and this is achieved through determining:

- Trends of housing applications from people with disabilities identified in previous assessments of housing need
- Census and other disability specific, national and local research data
- Trends in relation to societal changes
- Collaboration with HSE Disability sectors with particular adherence by health professionals to inform local councils regarding the emerging housing need of under 5s with a disability.(Section 8 of Disability Act, 2005)
- Collaboration with local disability organisations and representative groups
- Collaboration with local congregated settings
- Collaborations with national and local AHBs

In this category it would be accepted that the need over would require either significant adaption to existing accommodation or new build with individual requirements.

Source	Description	Likely Disability	Annual Forecast of Presenting Numbers
Aftercare Services	Those coming out of Foster Services	Intellectual Disability	6
Early Intervention Services	Those 0-6 Years.	Intellectual/Physical/Sensory Disability	6
Emergency Presentations	Disability due to an accident	Physical	6
Total Forecast Annually			18

4.1.6 Owner Occupied Stock

There are approximated 31,000 homes in the Louth which are owner occupied. Similar to other forms of tenure, requirements for adaption or alternative accommodation due to disability will arise. From a housing authority perspective this can be evidenced by the number of applications made annually for either Housing Adaption Grants or Mobility Aids Grants. The table below outlines the number of applications made annually under these schemes. It should be pointed out that not all applications are successful due to funding restrictions. These grants are based on a priority scheme that was issued by the Minister of Environment.

The table below illustrates the assessment of grants over the last 3 years.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
Housing Adaption Grants	133	110	122	145	365
Mobility Aids Grants	8	10	5	9	23
Total	141	120	127	154	542

4.1.7 Congregated Settings

The National project Group for the implementation of the recommendations of the Congregated settings Report – “Time to Move on from Congregated Settings- A Strategy for Community Inclusion” has established a data set of all individuals residing in a congregated type setting. This data set is updated on a quarterly basis and will provide relevant information to the Housing Agency. In addition, a specific template has also been designed to capture, in advance, details pertaining to each individual’s housing requirements. This information should be provided in the last quarter of the year prior to year of transition, in order for appropriate properties to be sourced and secured. This process will be required for the lifetime of the project.

Service Provider	No. of individuals	On Housing List
Saint John of God, Drumcar	165	165

4.1.8 Total Disability Need

Arising from Paragraph 4.1.1-7, it is evident that there is significant disability housing need in Louth, which is summarised in the following table. This table should always be read as at a single point of time, as circumstances change. However it does give a very realistic and up to date table of need

Category	Disability Grouping	Total	Category	North Louth	Mid Louth	South Louth
Persons Requiring Purpose Built or Designed Accommodation	Physical/Intellectual	273	Housing List	95	199	79
		165	Congregated Settings*	-	-	-
		59	Transfer List	29	12	18
		18	Emerging Need	6	6	6
Persons Requiring their existing accommodation to be adapted	Physical	120	Housing Adaption's Grants	40	40	40
Persons required standard accommodation with supports	Mental Health/Sensory	62	Housing List	21	12	29
		25	Homeless	13	4	8

* Accommodation does not have to be location specific

4.1.9 Assumptions

The data gathering exercise that has been conducted to compile this plan has not been to the level of the Housing Needs Assessment. It has involved raising awareness regarding the compilation of a Disability Strategy, outreaching to those services in County Louth whose client group have a disability, establishing links within the voluntary and statutory agencies, interagency sharing of information regarding client users with housing need and tapping into local knowledge of the people that are party to the completion of the plan and their wider networks.

In compiling the total disability need in the county a number of assumptions have been made, these include;

- Emerging need in aftercare, emergency presentations, adults with disability living in family home
- Future of congregated settings
- HIQUA regulations and its impact on group homes
- Continued co-operation and sharing of information

5. Delivery and Supply Mechanisms

5.1.1 Local Authority Stock

Housing Authorities maintain a stock of units including Disability specific accommodation. Where specific new builds are required the current delivery mechanism for social stock is through the Part V process. This process requires developers to commit to providing social units within any developments being

constructed. The Housing Authority will maintain a list of applicants in this category including completed Occupational Therapist reports outlining their specific needs.

In every Part V discussion with developers the Housing Authority will require an element of disability specific accommodation. Such accommodation will also be designated as units that will always be retained in the stock of the housing authorities for future use for similar applicants.

In order to minimise future adaption works, the Housing Authority in other new build cases will utilise Universal Design models where feasible

5.1.1.1 Local Authority Stock Policy

- a. Where a vacancy arises in an adapted or disability designed dwelling, the subsequent allocation will be taken from the current housing disability list.
- b. Every Part V Agreement must address an element of identified Disability Need
- c. The principal of Universal Design will be incorporated into all new builds.
- d. Any new allocation to a Disability Unit which has specific Disability Adaption's will not be made available for acquisition by tenant, in order to preserve a future use.
- e. The Housing Authority will always consider a transfer option to a more suitable property before committing to adapting the existing property.
- f. Where any significant adaption is made to a tenant's dwelling, that dwelling will again be designated as a unit not available for acquisition by a tenant, in order to preserve a future use.

5.1.2 Approved Housing Body Stock

Approved housing bodies have become a major player in the provision of social housing support to people from all sections of the community. There are over 700 approved housing bodies in the country of varying types and sizes. The housing provision of these also differ with some approved housing bodies dealing primarily with general housing provisions while others have a more specialised role. In County Louth there are approximately 10 approved housing bodies providing housing. This includes the following types of accommodation;

- General housing
- Older person accommodation
- Housing for people with disabilities
- Homeless accommodation

To avail of approved housing body owned accommodation and individual/household must, in most cases, apply and qualify for social housing support with the local authority. The approved housing bodies provide accommodation through;

- New build
- Purchases
- Leasing

While approved housing bodies access private finance to fund some of their developments they also receive the following funding from the state through local authorities;

- Capital Assistance Scheme
- Capital Advance Leasing facility
- Payment and Availability agreements

5.1.2.1 Voluntary Housing Body Stock Policy

- a) Where a vacancy arises in a Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funded project, the subsequent allocation will be taken from the current housing list.
- b) Voluntary Housing Bodies will continue to develop Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) proposals in conjunction with Louth County Council who have will have identified the need.
- c) The principal of Universal Design will be incorporated into all new builds.
- d) The Voluntary Housing Body will always consider a transfer option to a more suitable property before committing to adapting the existing property.

5.1.3 Social Leasing/Housing Assistance Payment/Rental Accommodation Scheme

Due to current economic and financial conditions it is unlikely that there will be any prospect of large scale capital investment in provision of standard local authority units. The social housing support options through Social Leasing Models and Housing Assistance Payments will be the main delivery mechanism.

5.1.3.1 Social Leasing/Housing Assistance Payment/Rental Accommodation Scheme Policy.

- a. In any Multiple Leasing Model being considered, a disability element shall be requested to be included
- b. It will be recognised that this model may be best suited to those in the Mental Health or Sensory cohort.

5.1.4 Owner Occupied.

This category of households is the largest in the county and their only recourse in the case of disability is through the grants scheme.

5.1.4.1 Owner/Occupier Policy

- a. It is recommended that Universal Design should be encouraged in all future design and builds
- b. It is recommended that the existing grants schemes continue.

5.2 Potential Supply

Each of the supply mechanisms listed above have been analysed to examine the potential of each to provide housing in the coming years. It is important that we are realistic in any policy that is put in place of forecasting that is done to try to meet the need of people with disability under each scheme.

5.3 Housing Support Initiatives

It would be vital to ensure the sustainment of any tenancy allocated that every potential tenant has a personal care plan agreed with the care provider. This will assist both the tenant and the general estate management of the area. Currently within the local authority area there are a number of initiatives as listed below:

- Coordinated approach to service delivery
- Establishment of County Louth Housing Disability and Steering Group
- Interagency Co-operation

5.4 Local Initiatives

- Louth County Council Tenancy Sustainment Programme
- HSE Supported Lodgings – adult fostering scheme
- Joint Collaboration between VHBs particularly in relation to provision of specialist supports

6. Challenges

There are a number of challenges that will have to be addressed in order to achieve the vision of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability, but we must

approach the task in a positive manner and without giving false expectations to individuals we must give hope a real choice on how they live their lives.

The primary challenge is and will be the availability of funding. With such critical and speciality of need, provision cannot solely come from general allocations. This matter must be kept under continuous review.

The supply of housing is a common challenge that is faced by all individuals, young and old, trying to source appropriate accommodation whether it is through social housing support, the private rental market or private home ownership. However for some people with a disability where their income is limited or there is a requirement to have the property adapted, the challenge is even bigger.

It must also be noted that in a number of cases, even if the most appropriate property was identified, they would not be able to avail of the opportunity due to the lack of support to live independently.

This strategy attempts in its initial efforts to quantify the need with regard to satisfying the housing needs of persons with a disability. This in itself has been a challenge and once this strategy receives attention it will also bring to light further need, particularly in the community.

This same need will develop as conditions deteriorate and the long term solution will involve the care element increasing or even taking over in certain cases. A close collaboration between the care provider and the housing authority is therefore vital in this regard.

It has also to be recognised that within the grouping of service users currently in congregated settings there is a cohort who are considered medically fragile and their needs will continue to fall within the care provider.

The preparation of quality person centred care plans will assist in the future housing needs of all housing applicants.

7. Opportunities

The continued development of technological solutions can only assist or compliment the physical care and housing provision, however notwithstanding this should always be considered.

7.1 Use of Technology

There have been major advances on assisted living technologies that allow people to stay in their homes longer and to live more independent lives while having the security of the assistance of the technology.

Some of the technologies that could be considered for use are;

- Remote monitoring systems
- Fall prevention/detection systems
- Personal alarm systems
- Living environment controls including access, lighting and heat.

7.2 Universal design

The principal of universal design should be included in all new build developments and should be considered in any Development Plan processes.

8. Time Lines

The timeline for roll out of this strategy should be based on an ongoing basis with perhaps a five year scheduled review. This methodology has generally been successful in the roll out of the various Traveller Accommodation Programmes and will be utilised in this strategy with an initial Programme for the 2015-19 period with annual targets set within same

9. Annual Targets

Annual Targets for the 2015-19 Period	CAS Units	CLSS Units	Council Stock	Leased Units	Housing Assistance Payment Model	Privately Owned Stock
Households accommodated in Purpose Designed Accommodation	3	-	3	-	-	-
Households who have their existing Accommodation adapted by the Housing Authority/VHB	-	3	25	-	-	-
Households who are provided with Housing Supports to maintain their tenancies	5	-	10	5	20	-
Private Households who are supported through the Housing Disability Grants Scheme	-	-	-	-	-	120

10. Review Mechanisms

This plan will be reviewed at the end of the first quarter of each year in order to report on the deliverable for the previous year and to examine the appropriateness of the information and proposed outputs for the coming year.