



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



4 June, 2010

Circular SHIP 2010/13

Capital Assistance Scheme: Proposals for the provision of accommodation by Approved Housing Bodies for people with specific categories of housing need

To Each Director of Housing

Dear Director

I am directed by the Minister for Housing and Local Services, Mr Michael Finneran T.D. to advise you of revised arrangements for the submission of proposals by Approved Housing Bodies under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) for the provision of housing to meet the accommodation needs of older people, persons with a physical, mental health, intellectual or sensory disability, elderly returning emigrants and persons exiting temporary homeless accommodation etc.

The objective is to deliver a responsive and flexible system of housing supports that is capable of taking into account the diversity of housing needs of older people and people with specific categories of need and to do this in a sustainable and cost-effective way.

There is a need to align housing supply for meeting specific categories of need with actual demand, ensure equity and consistency of operation across all local authority areas and to obtain optimum effectiveness from the available funding.

Policy context

The Government's commitment to older people, people with a disability and other groups with specific accommodation needs, is set out in the [Programme for Government 2007-2012](#) and includes a broad range of actions as part of a strategic response to enhance the range of housing supports and services available to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. These actions include the development of a National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability and the preparation of a new National Positive Ageing Strategy.

The main aims and objectives of the [National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability](#) is to facilitate access to an appropriate range of community based housing services, including related supports, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, and with particular regard to the specific needs of people with mental health and intellectual disabilities. Accordingly, proposals for housing projects should reflect the full spectrum of disability, physical, mental health, intellectual and sensory.

The new *Positive Ageing Strategy* takes forward the commitment to better recognise the position of older people and to ensure coherence and integration in the planning and implementation of the programmes for older people, including the housing programme. The Strategy will set out policy in relation to the provision of sheltered housing for older people and include protocols for the integrated management and delivery of housing and related care services.

It is essential that the planning and provision of housing supports for people with specific categories of housing need is done in a way that reflects overall national policy in these areas.

Optimising delivery under the Capital Assistance Scheme

The Capital Assistance Scheme, administered by the Local Authorities, is the principal funding mechanism under which the Approved Housing Bodies are enabled to provide sustainable and long-term accommodation for these target groups. Accordingly, the basis on which CAS funded projects are advanced and developed, from conceptual stage through to the submission of funding proposals, should reflect the need for housing supports, the local authority policies and strategies for meeting this need and, in particular, a more cohesive and co-ordinated approach to delivery.

Aligning supply with need

Aligning the supply of housing for meeting specific categories of need with actual demand and ensuring that the necessary accommodation is provided in accordance with national policies and objectives requires focus on the need to evaluate the way in which projects are advanced from conceptual stage through to their submission to the local authority for approval under the voluntary & co-operative housing programme. It is essential that only those projects which meet identified local housing need are advanced beyond Project Appraisal stage and recommended for funding approval under the CAS programme. Accordingly, a framework is needed whereby local authorities, having identified the nature and extent of housing for people with specific categories of need within their administrative area, request approved housing bodies to put forward cost-effective and sustainable proposals for meeting this need.

National call for proposals

The approach being adopted to undertake the provision of social housing support by approved housing bodies will require the housing authorities (city and county councils) to issue an annual "call for proposals" for suitable projects to meet identified local needs. Approved housing bodies will, in turn, submit proposals which will be examined and, following an appraisal by the housing authority, will then be submitted to the Department for inclusion in the voluntary & co-operative work programme.

The Department will assess all proposals submitted and, having regard to the level of available funding, announce the projects to be approved under the work programme for the year.

Authorities should carry out the annual call for proposals in time to make submissions to the Department by end October of each year. Any applications received after this date will not be considered under the current round of funding by the Department.

In issuing a call for proposals, authorities should ensure that appropriate notices are placed in local newspapers, allowing sufficient time for approved housing bodies to make submissions. The Irish Council for Social Housing and the National Association of Building Co-operatives will alert affiliated housing bodies to the intended call for proposals.

Housing authorities should aim to provide approved housing bodies with as much information as possible in relation to the nature and extent of the specific categories of housing need which

exists within their administrative areas. The call for proposals should broadly identify the category and location of this need, with more detailed information to be made available to the approved housing bodies on request.

Criteria to be used in assessing proposals

Proposals should be appraised in accordance with procedures set out in Circular VCH 2/08. It is a matter for each authority to decide on the criteria to be used in the assessment and ranking of proposals, having due regard to local housing need and the priorities and objectives set out in their housing strategies. Approved housing bodies should be made aware of these criteria in advance of submitting their proposals.

The criteria to be used by the Department in assessing projects for inclusion in the annual work programme will come under four main headings:

- (i) the extent to which the proposals address local housing need and housing strategies;
- (ii) compatibility with national policy and priorities, which may change from year to year;
- (iii) the effective use of resources to meet housing need, in particular project costs and the extent to which capital funding can be used to leverage investment through the social housing leasing initiative; and
- (iv) a regional spread of projects.

In submitting projects to the Department for funding approval, authorities should submit a copy of the Project Brief together with the authority's appraisal of the proposal. Where more than one project is being submitted authorities should provide a priority listing.

Special call for proposals in context of present housing market conditions

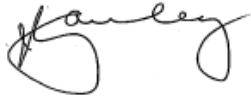
For 2010 only, the Department is carrying out an additional and special call for proposals designed to target newly built housing units or units which are close to completion and/or capable of adaptation to meet specific categories of housing need. This call will issue shortly. A memorandum, providing additional information on the special call for proposals, is attached.

Although the Department will issue the special call for proposals submissions will be made through the individual authorities in the normal way. Authorities are asked, having regard to the market conditions which presently obtain and the need to expedite delivery of the programme, to urgently assess these proposals, carry out all necessary statutory planning and building control inspections and submit a request for funding, to include a Project Brief and the appraisal/assessment report, to the Department by 20 August, 2010. The Department will assess all the proposals submitted and approve projects by end September. Some €25 million is being set aside this year to support the acquisition of properties. Costs of completing/adapting properties may be carried forward into 2011.

Enquiries relating to this circular may be directed to:

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Copies of this circular are available electronically on the Sharepoint System.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ganley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "G".

Jim Ganley
Voluntary & Co-operative Housing Unit.