



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
**Government of Ireland**

# **National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016**

**Fourth Report on Implementation:  
January – December 2017**

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government  
[www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie)

**The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 - 2016 was due to expire in 2016. The Strategy was re-affirmed under *Rebuilding Ireland*, the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness and extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims.**

## **CAS FUNDED HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**



**The seven homes pictured above were designed and built by the Irish Wheelchair Association with CAS funding in Belmullet, County Mayo. The houses are tailored to the specific needs of the occupants.**



**This house was built by Tinteán Housing in Ballincarrig, County Carlow with CAS funding. It is an award winning group home provided for people with disabilities and is designed and constructed to passive house standards.**

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## Glossary of Terms

**AHBs** – Approved Housing Bodies

**CAS** – Capital Assistance Scheme

**CCMA** – County and City Management Association

**Congregated Settings** – as defined in the 2011 HSE Report *Time to Move on from Congregated Settings, A Strategy for Community Inclusion*, where ten or more people share a single living unit or where the living arrangements are campus based

**DHPLG** – Department of Housing, Planning, Local Government

**Decongregation** – the transitioning of people with intellectual, physical and mental health disabilities from institutional care to more appropriate community based living arrangements

**DoH** – Department of Health

**DFI** – Disability Federation of Ireland

**HAP** – Housing Assistance Payment

**HSE** – Health Service Executive

**HDSGs** – Housing & Disability Steering Groups(Local Authorities)

**HIQA** - Health Information and Quality Authority

**HA** - Housing Agency (Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency)

**IMG** - Implementation Monitoring Group

**NDA** – National Disability Authority

**NHSPWD** – National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

**TSO** – Tenancy Sustainment Officer

**The work of this Group has been undertaken in line with the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 and this report meets the criteria as set out in the Transparency Code.**

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011 – 2016* was published in October 2011 and the associated *National Implementation Framework* was published in July 2012. These documents are joint publications by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG-hereinafter referred to as ‘the Department’) and the Department of Health (DoH) and are available on the Department’s website [www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie). Building on the commitment given in the *Programme for Government* to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities, the *NHSPWD* was re-affirmed in *Rebuilding Ireland* and extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims.

The Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG) is responsible for reporting on progress made in the implementation of the *NHSPWD* in accordance with Strategic Aim 9 of the Implementation Framework. This is the fourth such progress report and covers the period January to December 2017. The Strategy and the Framework both refer to the need for interagency cooperation as a fundamental element to the achievement of the aims of the Strategy and provide for the development of national protocols and frameworks to support this co-operation. The necessary structures for such co-operation are now well embedded between all agencies involved in implementing the Strategy, including the disability sector, and these will continue to underpin Departmental policy over the lifetime of the Strategy.

The Housing Subgroup of the Housing Agency comprises representatives from DHPLG, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Department of Health (DoH), local authorities, the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and various disability representative organisations (including the IWA, affiliated to the DFI). It has a key role in the implementation of the Strategy and, as such, the DHPLG and DoH wish to acknowledge its work and commitment and note the further progress made in 2017 in implementing the *NHSPWD*. The Departments are also appreciative of the contribution and continued support of the IMG. It’s expertise in evaluating and reporting on the

challenges for people with disabilities seeking housing support under the Strategy is instructive for those tasked with implementing it. We look forward to continuing our partnership with all stakeholders and to maintaining steady progress through our collaborative efforts with the HSE, the Housing Agency and the disability sector.

**Chapter 2** of the report sets out details of the implementation, monitoring and reporting framework.

**Chapter 3** of the report outlines the progress which has been made by the Housing Subgroup during 2017 under a range of themes:

- **Interagency Cooperation**
- **Guidance and Supports for Local Authorities**
- **Actions at Local Level**
- **Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated**
- **Settings**
- **Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in 2017**
- **Mental Health**

**Chapter 4** sets out conclusions in relation to progress to date and the importance of continued partnership in taking work forward.

**Chapter 5** sets out priorities for 2018 in meeting the key aims of the *NHSPWD*.

## Chapter 2: Monitoring, Reporting & Implementation

### Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG)

The IMG published its first Progress Report in 2014 covering the period September 2012 – December 2013. The second Progress Report covering the period January 2014 – December 2015 was published in 2016 and the third report for January-December 2016 was published in 2017. All three Reports are on the Department's website and can be found here. Details of current IMG members during 2017 are set out in **Appendix 1**.

The IMG met twice in 2017 on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 19<sup>th</sup> October. At the October meeting it was agreed that a draft report setting out progress in the period January – December 2017 would be prepared and submitted to the group for review and consideration, with a view to publishing on the Department's website by the end of the second quarter of 2017.

### Housing Subgroup

Implementation of the Strategy is being driven by a dedicated Subgroup chaired by the Housing Agency. The Terms of Reference of the Subgroup are set out in the first Progress Report. Details of current membership of the group are set out in **Appendix 2**.

The Housing Subgroup met on five occasions over the course of 2017 to progress a range of priority actions within an agreed work plan for the year. The 2017 work plan addressed, among other things;

- Continued support for the transitioning of people with intellectual and physical disabilities from congregated settings;
- On-going work on a pilot project relating to the transitioning of people with mental health difficulties with low and medium support needs to more appropriate community living arrangements;
- Raising awareness about disability issues and housing requirements;



- Issuing of revised guidelines following on a review of the National Guidelines on the Assessment and Allocation of Housing Provision for People with a Disability.
- The publication of a number of other documents to enable people with disabilities to access housing support more easily (details of these are provided in Chapter 3 on page 9).

Details of progress on key issues over the period January to December 2017 are set out in **Chapter 3**.

## Chapter 3: Progress on Implementation

Progress on implementation is reported under a number of key areas:

- **Interagency Cooperation**
- **Guidance and Supports for Local Authorities**
- **Actions at Local Level**
- **Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated Settings**
- **Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in 2017**
- **Mental Health**

### *Interagency Cooperation*

The Strategic Aims of the NHSPWD identified the need for a robust interagency framework at national and local level to facilitate person-centred delivery of housing and relevant supports. Good progress has been made in the reporting period, as outlined below.

- The framework of interdepartmental and inter-agency cooperation continued over the course of 2017 to underpin key working relationships between all of the relevant agencies. At national level, DHPLG, DoH, HSE, the HA and the disability sector continued to work together supported by the HA chaired Subgroup and Task Groups reporting to it.
- Government policy on decongregation (as outlined in the 2011 HSE Report *Time to Move On from Congregated Settings*) is a matter for the DoH and is supported by the NHSPWD. The DHPLG is represented on the HSE led Congregated Settings Working Group, which is implementing the decongregation programme. Eight meetings of the Group were held in 2017. The DHPLG is also represented on the wider HSE Transforming Lives Working Group which met quarterly in 2017, to which the HSE Congregated Settings Working Group reports.

- The overlap in membership of these various groups promotes cohesion in the implementation of key national policy objectives. Complementing the formal structures on-going engagement between the DHPLG, the DoH, the HSE and the HA is maintained on the cross-cutting issues between Departments/bodies.
- The Community and Voluntary Pillar also monitors the housing issues of people with disabilities as an element of its social inclusion remit. It met twice during 2017.

### ***Guidance and Supports for Local Authorities***

Guidance and support for local authorities continued throughout 2017 to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategy at local level.

- The Housing Agency (HA) continued to provide ongoing support to the Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) established in all 31 City and County Councils since 2016 through attendance at their meetings and providing advice and support where appropriate. The HDSGs are chaired by the local authority Directors of Housing with membership including the HSE and disability representatives. Each HDSG has prepared a local strategy to meet the identified and emerging housing needs of people with disabilities in their areas with a view to developing annual targets for the delivery of housing to people with a disability on their housing waiting lists. The Plans provide for reviews of the operation of the Groups during the period of the Strategy.
- A review of the *National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability* (operational in housing authorities since 2014) was completed following extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders. The revised Guidelines issued to local authorities in October 2017. These are published on the websites of the Housing Agency at

<https://www.housingagency.ie/default.aspx> and of the Department at [https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/guidelinesf or housing provision for people with a disability 2017 amended 17 october 2017.pdf](https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/guidelinesf%20or%20housing%20provision%20for%20people%20with%20a%20disability%202017%20amended%2017%20october%202017.pdf)

- The revised Guidelines are a key resource for local authorities and other housing practitioners, people with disabilities and other stakeholders involved in supporting people with disabilities to access mainstream social housing. They take account of experience gained in the implementation of the Strategy since they were first put in place in 2014.
- The NHSPWD recognises that access to the appropriate information in accessible formats is a key element in facilitating equality of access to housing and related support services. To further this objective in 2017 the Housing Agency published *A Guide to Housing Options* which provides an overview on the various housing options and schemes available through local authorities including applying for social housing housing support, grants for housing adaptations etc.
- Easy Read and Plain English versions of the Housing Options guide and an Easy Read Guide to Completing the Social Housing Assessment Form were also published by the Housing Agency in a number of accessible formats. Feedback from local authorities during 2017 indicated that these documents are very popular with all applicants for social housing. In a very tangible way this underlines the progress made in mainstreaming the process of applying for housing support for people with disabilities.

### ***Design Roadmap***

- Work led by the Housing Agency Sub-Group began in 2017 on a Design Roadmap which will provide a pathway towards the information required to make informed decisions about the design of better homes for people with disabilities. The Roadmap will be underpinned by the principles of Universal Design and will illustrate how to access and understand in a

structured way the guidance that is required to ensure that every person has a home that is appropriate to their needs. The Roadmap will be finalised in 2018 and will be published on the website of the Housing Agency.

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

- The Code of Practice was published in September 2017 to provide advice and guidance in relation to the statutory responsibilities and duties accruing under fire legislation in respect of the building fabric and construction, and the on-going management of fire safety in community dwellings. It is estimated that there are well in excess of a thousand existing dwelling houses providing supported living for a range of residents including children, people with mental health issues, people with intellectual disability, or people with a physical disability.
- Community dwellings are not provided solely for the accommodation of people with disabilities, but are also used for other categories such as holiday lets for groups such as scouts etc. There is a legal obligation on the owners of these houses to take reasonable measures to guard against fire, and to ensure the safety of persons in residence in the event of fire.
- The Code of Practice is intended to provide for reasonable standards of fire safety, without imposing disproportionate requirements. The key objectives of the new Code of Practice are to provide for clarity and consistency in respect of fire safety for community dwellings, and improved advice and guidance to assist with compliance with the fire safety duties under the Fire Services Acts. People in control of such dwellings may provide alternative means of adhering to the Code provided the measures taken are equivalent to or superior to those provided in the Code.

- A presentation on the draft Code was given by professionally qualified staff of the Department to the IMG in April 2017.

## **Actions at Local Level**

### **Local Strategic Plans**

- In line with priority action 1.1 of the *Implementation Framework*, each Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG) has prepared a local Strategic Plan for its own County/City area. The aim of these Plans of which is to identify the housing needs of people with a disability, both current and emerging over the next five years. The Plans along with the annual **Summary of Social Housing Assessment (SSHA)** will allow local authorities to plan more strategically for the housing needs of people with a disability using all appropriate housing supply mechanisms. All 31 local authorities had completed their plans by 2017. Subject to final approval by each local authority, the local Plans will be published on local authority websites over the course of 2018.

### **Summary of Social Housing Assessment**

- The 2017 *Summary of Social Housing Assessment* showed 4,326 households (or 5% of the total numbers assessed) had specific accommodation requirements due to the fact that one of their members had a disability. Even though this represents a decrease of 2.9% on the overall figure for 2016 the following categories saw an increase in 2017 (mental health, physical and sensory disabilities). A general trend has emerged since 2013 of people with disabilities applying in greater numbers to housing authorities to have their housing needs assessed (between 2013 there was an increase of 29% in this figure).

## ***Reporting on the allocation of social housing by local authorities to people with disabilities***

- In 2017 local authorities engaged in a pilot/trial-run to report to the Housing Agency on the allocation of social housing to people with a disability in the previous year. The results of the reporting exercise reflected the substantial efforts local authorities had made in 2016 in providing housing for people with a disability, but also highlighted some variance and complexities in the manner in which local authorities collated their returns. To address this, a formal Implementation Report Form has been developed to provide more detailed guidance to local authorities when compiling their returns for 2017. These will be examined, and if found to be robust, will be published in due course.
- Local authorities disseminated the Housing Options booklet in English, Plain English, Irish and Easy Read published by the Housing Agency. The booklet gives a comprehensive overview of the housing options available to people with disabilities through local authorities. Work on an Easy Read version of the Housing Assistance Payment documentation was initiated at the end of 2017.

## **Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated Settings**

### ***HSE Developments***

- The second Progress Report on the Implementation of the *Time to Move On from Congregated Settings: A Strategy for Community Inclusion Annual Report 2016* was published in October 2017. The report provides data and analysis on the progress that was made in transitioning people from congregated settings to community living during 2016. The third Progress report on activity in 2017 was published in the third quarter of 2018 on the HSE website [www.hse.ie/timetomoveon](http://www.hse.ie/timetomoveon).

### *Actions Completed in 2017*

- At the end of 2017, there were fewer than 2,400 people still resident in a congregated setting and a total of 140 people had completed their transition to community living. There was a particular focus in 2017 on achieving moves from the priority sites, which are settings with significant issues in achieving compliance with the National Standards for Residential Services, as regulated by HIQA.
- As in 2016, €20 million targeted capital funding was allocated in 2017 to the HSE by the Department of Health for the acquisition and refurbishment of properties to accommodate individuals transitioning from priority institutions identified by the HSE, where all other funding avenues have been exhausted. The National Estates Disability Oversight Group (established in 2016) continued to co-ordinate activity, share learning and develop resources to support the teams in HSE Estates, HSE Social Care and Service Providers to work collaboratively to ensure that allocated funding is effectively utilised for the benefit of service users in accordance with person-centred plans.
- The HSE completed a comprehensive multi-annual housing need profile at the end of 2017 to determine what resources might be required to support people in congregated settings to access accommodation of their choice over the period 2018-2021. This profile has been submitted to the HSE Disability & Estates Oversight Group for review. This gives an indication of the potential demand for the various funding mechanisms over the next four years and the likely timescale of proposed projects. Subject to approval, this data will be shared to inform discussions with DHPLG and the HDSG's, particularly in terms of the viability and demand for social leasing options, CAS funding and other funding mechanisms.
- A Service Reform Fund is in place to support the phased transition to the person-centred model of services and supports funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, the DoH, HSE (Social Care and Mental Health Services)



and Genio for the period 2016-2019. In 2017 funding was allocated to 10 projects focussed on supporting transitions from the priority settings. Further information in relation to the Service Reform Fund will be available in the Third Progress Report for 2017 to be published in the third quarter of 2018.

- Work by the HSE to improve public communications and promote the positive experiences of those transitioning from congregated settings continued in 2017 with a number of training events and workshops with service providers. A video was developed with service users and their families detailing their transition journey and the story featured in the HSE Health Matters publication.
- The website specific to congregated settings [www.hse.ie/timetomoveon](http://www.hse.ie/timetomoveon), has been updated to include an Easy Read version of the Time to Move On Policy document. An Easy Read version has also been developed for service users.
- Work commenced in 2017 on the drafting of a resource document for service providers on the key focus areas in relation to “making a home” for a person with a disability moving from a congregated setting. The document will include creating homes for people with behaviours that challenge etc; balancing the home environment with regulatory requirements etc. ; provision of low sensory environment where required; information on the appropriate use of Assistive Technology. The document will be finalised in 2018.
- A Location Review Subgroup continued to review existing congregated settings and consider models of service that would support best practise in the future. The review is focussing on two key areas:
  1. A review of current residential services in order to determine which locations meet the criteria of a congregated setting and examine how

the policy is applicable in each location. The process for the review of these settings is being agreed and will commence in 2018.

2. Identifying individuals whose support needs may require specific specialist solutions and to identify best practice models for the delivery of safe appropriate and person-centred care that can meet these support needs.

## **Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in 2017**

### ***DHPLG Leasing Arrangements***

- In line with government policy to mainstream housing options for people with disabilities in 2017 the DHPLG consolidated all leasing payments for social housing, including those relating to people with disabilities moving from institutional care to community housing into the general funding for leasing. New applications for leasing projects will be addressed through mainstream leasing. Contracts for three properties which had been approved in 2016 were completed in 2017 facilitating the transition of a further seven people to community living.

### ***Mental Health Pilot***

- DHPLG also part-funded the cost of a part-time tenancy sustainment officer for the Laois/Offaly Mental Health Pilot Project (see below page 21 **Mental Health**) which will be rolled out nationally during 2018.

### ***Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)***

- The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) provides capital funding of up to 100% to AHBs for the provision of independent living accommodation to meet the needs of persons requiring specific categories of housing, including the elderly, people with disabilities and homeless people.

- In August 2017 the DHPLG issued a further “*Call for Proposals*” informing local authorities that it was accepting applications for capital funding for the delivery of housing accommodation to cater for the priority groups under the CAS including people with a disability, with a particular emphasis on moving people with disabilities from congregated settings into community based living.
- No deadline applies to the submission of applications as this was an open, “rolling” call for applications. While, unlike 2016, the scheme did not ring fence funding for people moving from a congregated setting, it provided that the provision of accommodation under this heading remains a priority and that further CAS funding will be available for it.
- Funding totalling €3.9 million (up from €2.1 million in 2016) was approved in 2017 towards the provision of 41 homes for people moving out of congregated settings, and their carers. Total expenditure under the CAS in 2017 was €55 million, which supported the delivery of 439 homes including units for people with a disability. Of this number 82 were newly constructed homes and 357 purchases.
- The Department, in consultation with the HSE carried out a review of the design of CAS application forms in 2017. As a result of the review the forms were revised to ensure that they would capture both the information needed from all parties and the certification required from the HSE, in the two separate forms being completed by the AHB and the local authority. The revised forms issued to all local authorities in August 2017 along with the Department’s circular on the call for applications for capital funding.

### ***Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)***

- The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a form of social housing support for people, including people with disabilities, who have a long-term housing need. HAP was rolled out in four waves between September 2014

and March 2017. The nationwide roll-out of the scheme was completed, on 1 March 2017. This means that eligible households in all 31 local authorities may now avail of the HAP scheme. HAP provides a fast, flexible housing support to households in an area of their choice.

- To further enhance the flexibility of the HAP scheme, an inter-authority movement option was introduced in July 2017 whereby a HAP tenant currently on a local authority waiting list can access rented accommodation with HAP support in another local authority area subject to conditions.
- HAP provides a more integrated system that allows all social housing supports to be accessed through the local authority, as well as allowing recipients to take up full-time employment while retaining their housing support.
- The Homeless HAP Placefinder service has been operational since February 2015 across the Dublin Region and in Cork City Council since 2017 and provides a targeted support for homeless households who are finding it difficult to secure HAP tenancies. It will be extended nationwide in 2018.

### ***Rent Supplement and Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)***

- Rent Supplement is, over time, to be replaced with HAP for households with a long-term housing need, although Rent Supplement will continue to be available for people who need short-term support in meeting their housing costs. It is the intention of the Department to complete the transfers from long term rent supplement to HAP by 2020, as outlined in the ***Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness – Rebuilding Ireland***. Once transferred from Rent Supplement to HAP, households are in receipt of a much more secure form of state support.
- Similarly, RAS tenancies will also be phased out in favour of HAP over time.

## ***Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability***

### ***Private Housing***

- The suite of grants available to private home owners is 80% funded by DHPLG with a 20% contribution from the resources of each local authority. The three separate grants available under the scheme are:
  - the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability (up to €30,000)
  - Housing Aid for Older People (up to €8,000)
  - the Mobility Aids Grant (up to €6,000)
- In 2015 almost 7,600 households benefitted under the scheme at a cost of almost €48m, in 2016 over 8,000 households benefitted at a cost of over €50m and in 2017 over 9,000 households benefitted at a cost of over €60m as broken down in the table below. These figures include 20% funding provided from the local authority's own revenue resources.

<b>Grants paid</b>				
	<b>People with a Disability</b>	<b>Older People</b>	<b>Mobility Aids</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2015</b>	2600	3127	1869	7,596
<b>2016</b>	2714	3425	1871	8,010
<b>2017</b>	3449	3558	2073	9,080

### *Social Housing*

- The DHPLG also provides funding to local authorities for adaptations and extensions to the existing social housing stock to meet the needs of local authority tenants. The scheme applies to adaptations that are necessary to address the needs of older people or people with a disability who may require a downstairs bedroom or bathroom stairlifts; grab-rails; showers; wet-rooms and ramps etc.
- The scheme is demand-led and allows local authorities to prioritise works based on need. Exchequer funding meets 90% of the cost of such works, with the local authority providing the remaining 10%. DHPLG recouped almost €9.5m funding to local authorities in 2015 increasing to almost €13.5m in 2016. In 2017 funding of €13.1m was recouped to local authorities supporting improvements in over 1,300 units.

### *Mental Health*

- The *NHSPWD* gives effect to the housing commitments contained in the Government's mental health policy, *A Vision for Change*. Priority Action 5.3 of the *Implementation Framework* for the *NHSPWD* seeks to facilitate the transitioning of people with mental health difficulties with low and medium supports needs, from HSE mental health facilities to appropriate community settings.
- A Pilot project was undertaken in Laois/Offaly in 2016/2017 which supported 14 persons to transition to community living arrangements as AHB tenants in a home of their choice. The Housing Agency carried out a final review of the Project at the end of 2017 and found it had many positive outcomes for the persons involved, thereby providing a good model on which to implement the national roll out in 2018. Funding for the tenancy sustainment element of the national roll out of the Project will be met jointly by the DHPLG and the HSE. The total cost of ten Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSO's) is €1.8m over a three year programme 2018-2020.

- The Pilot project demonstrated that two distinct types of support are needed for people transitioning to community living with full tenancy rights and obligations. Firstly, **medical support** to maintain their mental health recovery, which will be provided by the multi-disciplinary Community Health Care Team; and, secondly, **'social care'** support in adjusting to more independent living including issues such as maintaining a tenancy, paying bills, maintaining their homes to a reasonable standard, integrating into the community etc. This support requires the skills of a Tenancy Sustainment Officer (TSO).
- A Steering Group, chaired by the Housing Agency, will oversee the roll-out of the Project nationally to ensure robust governance and accountability.
- This project is an example of the type of interagency co-operation that is essential to drive progress using the framework established under the *NHSPWD*.

## Chapter 4: Conclusions

The delivery of housing is a matter of utmost importance to Governments everywhere as no society can function to its potential unless it has a stable supply of housing that meets the needs of all its citizens. In this context, the Irish Government is committed to ensuring that quality housing in sustainable communities is provided for all, including for people with disabilities, whether they are moving from congregated settings or already living in the community.

It is for this reason that the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011-2016 was reaffirmed and extended to 2020 in the *Rebuilding Ireland* Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. The Strategy provides the framework for the delivery of housing for people with disabilities in Ireland as one element of the broader Government policy to provide for the mainstreaming of all public services for people with a disability. The aims of the Strategy continue to be supported at the highest levels of Government, while at local level, local authorities, the Housing Agency, the HSE and approved housing bodies are working together to ensure that the delivery of housing for people with disabilities is accorded the priority it deserves.

The completion of five year strategic plans by all local authority Housing and Disability Steering Groups in 2017 was a landmark achievement for the Strategy and for local authorities. They are however, the beginning of the process rather than an end in themselves. These Plans are an integral part of the Housing Services Plans of each local authority, and over the five years of their lifespan, will ensure that the current and emerging housing needs of people with disabilities receive the priority they deserve in a targeted and responsive way through effective interagency cooperation. It is the function of the annual review mechanism built into the Plans to give a clear indication of how they are operating and to highlight issues that need to be addressed to ensure that they are functioning as the Strategy intended. The effective operation of the



Housing and Disability Steering Groups as local advocates for people with disabilities, supported by the Housing Agency, is fundamental to the success of the Plans and the Implementation Group will continue to monitor their performance at national level in 2018.

*The National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability* introduced in 2014 were revised and reissued to local authorities in October 2017 and are a key resource for local authorities and other agencies involved in the housing of people with disabilities. This significant body of work involved extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders and takes account of experience to date. Furthermore, the Housing Agency Easy Read documents published in 2017 to support people with disabilities to access social housing are an invaluable addition to local authority supports for people with disabilities and indeed, because of their accessibility, to the general public service user seeking housing information.

It is recognised that people with disabilities face unique challenges in securing accommodation and the IMG has articulated these in a number of forums. As such, the increased output under CAS in 2017 is welcome in view of the fact that the AHB sector has such a vital and growing role in the provision of housing for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The sector delivered one-third of all long-term social housing in 2017. The DHPLG and the HSE worked closely from early 2017 to streamline the application process under the CAS scheme for applications from people moving from congregated settings and the revised forms issued with the CAS call in August 2017. To ensure that the momentum is sustained, the Department is continuing to liaise with the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) the Housing Agency, the Department of Health, HSE and local authorities with a view to maximising output for people with disabilities in 2018 and 2019.

The Housing Agency Design Roadmap and the HSE Making Homes projects begun in 2017 will also, when completed in 2018, make a significant contribution to the work of those involved in the design and fit-out of homes for people with disabilities. These publications will support providers to be confident that they can deliver accommodation that not only meets the specific needs of people with disabilities but that is also comfortable and welcoming.

The publication of the new Code of Practice for Fire Safety in New and Existing Community Dwelling Houses in 2017 was another timely development for the Strategy. Existing standards under the Building regulations, designed for large institutions, were unsuitable for dwellings of a domestic scale to which people with disabilities were moving and detracted from the dwellings function as a home. The new Code addresses these issues and the presentations given to a number of Groups during 2017 on the new Code by professional fire advisers were particularly useful in clarifying how the Code will work in practice.

Another milestone reached in 2017 was the finalisation of the Pilot phase of the project to transfer people with low to medium mental health needs living in HSE accommodation to the local authority/AHB sector. In the final review of the Pilot the tenants involved in the Pilot reported a greater sense of well-being and control over their lives. Those involved are now tenants of an Approved Housing Body with all of the rights and obligations that confers but they will continue to have the support of a Tenancy Sustainment Officer to assist their recovery. The roll-out of the Project nationally in 2018 will mark another substantial achievement for the Strategy.

The progress outlined in this Report for 2017 is possible only because of the key working relationships between the relevant agencies and the disability organisations that are now firmly established. The partnership approach is a fundamental principle of the Strategy to support people with disabilities to achieve full integration and participation within communities of choice. It involves working together to provide not only secure and sustainable accommodation, but also person-centred community based health and care services. These are vital to a

successful transition to independent living and the ability to sustain it in the longer term. In an environment where limited resources are stretched ever further this is a challenging task which requires all stakeholders to maintain their focus on the aims of the Strategy and to continue to robustly pursue these at every level.

## Chapter 5: Priorities for 2018

Implementation of the Strategy will continue in 2018 through the Housing Subgroup, supported by the DHPLG, DoH, the HSE and the disability sector.

- DHPLG will continue to provide 100% funding under the Capital Assistance Scheme for projects to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities-a sum of €88.8 million is available for allocation in 2018.
- DHPLG, HSE and Housing Agency will continue to develop guidance in relation to technical and funding issues for CAS applications. A joint circular providing clarity on these issues will issue in 2018.
- The Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Programme will be rolled out at national level during 2018 overseen by a Steering Group. DHPLG and HSE will commence funding of the Programme.
- €66.2 million will be available for housing adaptation grants in 2018 (up by 10% on 2017) and additional funding may be made available later in 2018 if capital savings arise.
- DHPLG will continue to actively engage at national level with the HA, DoH, the HSE and representatives of the disability sector through participation in the various working groups and meetings.
- DHPLG will continue to work with the Housing Agency and local authorities to ensure that HDSGs are working effectively.
- The IMG will continue to monitor and report on implementation of the *NHSPWD*. This report for the period 2017 will be published on the DHPLG website. Progress will continue to be updated in the context of *Rebuilding Ireland*.

- The *Transforming Lives* accelerated implementation programme to relating to people with disabilities in Ireland, will continue in 2018.
- The HSE '*Housing Need*' profiling exercise which has identified the demand for the various funding mechanisms and the likely timescale of proposed projects to meet the housing needs of those in congregated settings will be forwarded to the relevant stakeholders i.e. HSE Estates, Housing Agency, DOH, and DHPLG to inform funding allocations and develop activity targets.
- DHPLG will continue to work with and support the HSE and DoH to progress the programme. The HSE target for transition in 2018 is 170 people.
- The HSE will allocate a further €20 million from the multi-annual *Capital Programme for Disabilities* to support the delivery of appropriate housing for people moving from congregated settings.
- The allocation of the remaining Capital Disability Funding for 2018-2021 will be finalised in 2018 and will help ensure the HSE and service providers can forward plan effectively to deliver quality housing solutions for this cohort of people.
- The HSE will commence the review of congregated settings locations.
- The Making Homes Report will be published on the websites of the HSE and the Housing Agency and disseminated to providers.
- The Housing Agency Design Roadmap will be finalised. It will be published on the Housing Agency website for people with disabilities.

## Appendix 1

### Membership of the Implementation Monitoring Group

Mary Hurley (Chair)	DHPLG
Derek Rafferty	DHPLG
Patricia Curran	DHPLG
David O'Connor	DoH
Brendan Tuohy	DoH
Deirdre Scully	HSE
Paul Braham	HSE
Claire Feeney	Housing Agency
David Silke	Housing Agency
Fiona O'Donovan	Disability Federation of Ireland
Hugh Kane	National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
Edward Crean	NDA
Shari McDaid	Mental Health Reform
Keelin McCarthy	Irish Council for Social Housing
Dolores Murphy	Disability Federation of Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair Association
Alison Connolly	Focus Ireland
David Girvan	Inclusion Ireland
Billy Coman	CCMA
Secretary;	Veronica Healy: Social Housing Reform Section. <a href="mailto:veronica.healy@housing.gov.ie">veronica.healy@housing.gov.ie</a> ; Tel: 01 8882388

## Appendix 2

### Membership of the Housing Subgroup

John O'Connor	Chair (CEO Housing Agency)
Claire Feeney	HA
David Silke	HA
Julie Ryan	HA
Billy McCarthy	DoH
David O'Connor	DoH
Paul Braham	HSE
Suzanne Moloney	HSE
John Browner	HSE (Estates)
Keelin McCarthy	Irish Council for Social Housing
Alison Harnett	National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
Catherine Keenan	Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council
Martina Smith	Housing Association for Integrated Living
Joe McGuinness	Louth County Council
Dolores Murphy	Disability Federation of Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair Association
Alison Ryan	Disability Federation of Ireland
Edward Crean	NDA
Kate Mitchell	Mental Health Reform
Derek Rafferty	DHPLG
Patricia Curran	DHPLG

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