



**Strategic Plan
for
Housing Persons with Disabilities
2022-2027**

Kildare Housing and Disability Steering Group

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Executive Summary

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability sets out the framework for the delivery of housing for people with a disability through mainstream housing policy. This reflects Government policy that all public services should meet the needs of people with disabilities as an integral part of their function, i.e. mainstreaming of services to people with disabilities. The Kildare Housing and Disability Strategy 2022-2027 has been prepared in accordance with national policy and the vision is to facilitate access for disabled persons 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 for the period 2022-2027.

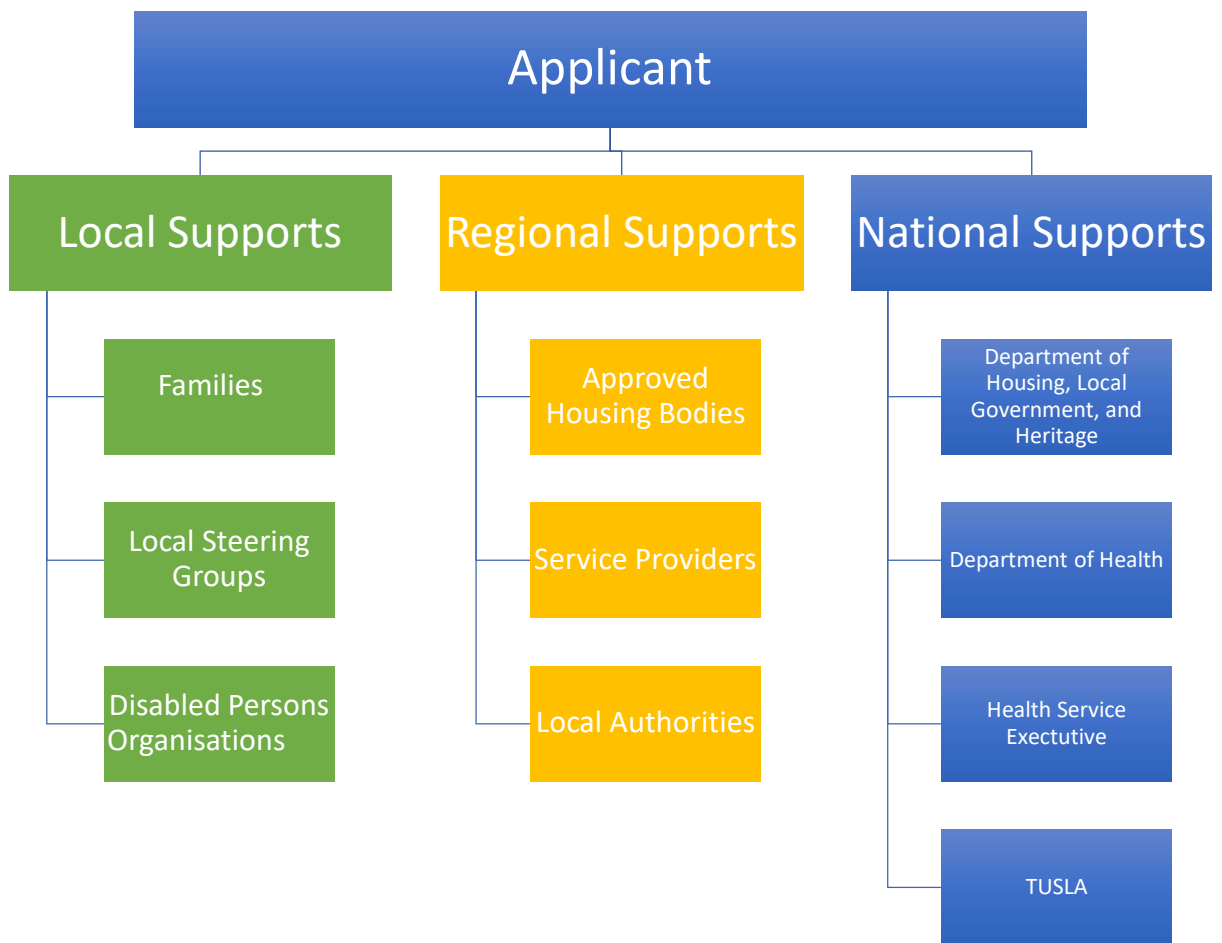
The Strategy expects, while acknowledging the challenges, that this should be achieved within the mainstream housing environment. The core goal of the Strategy is to meet the identified housing needs of disabled people locally whether they are currently living in the community and or in a congregated setting.

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.

The overarching aim and objective of this strategic plan is to ensure that people with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others.

The preparation of the Strategic Plan involved engagement with a number of key stakeholders at national, regional and local level, as set out in Figure 1. The ongoing engagement and interaction of all will be necessary to ensure that the targets and objections of this Plan are achieved.

Figure 1: Key Stakeholders



Personal Stories

An important learning from the previous Strategy is that working together and taking a person-centred approach is critical in order to achieve the aims of the Strategy, as the two personal stories below demonstrate:

<p>Following the identification of a family with medical needs, early engagement with a housing developer resulted in the inclusion of modifications to a new build bungalow without significant costs or requirements for retrofitting. Members of Kildare’s Housing Allocations team engaged with the staff at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH), an Advocacy group, the developer and KCC technical staff. The NRH noted that the ‘very well-designed property and attention given to the layout would meet the needs of the person with a disability and greatly assist the family and support team in using the specialist equipment required’.</p>	<p>I remember the excitement when I received a call from Kildare County Council offering me a home. I was aware of the Mental Health Team advocating for me but it was still a shock when I got the call. Moving into my own home has been a big change for me and I feel that it was the best thing I could have done for my mental health. I love my home and think that it has had a massively positive impact on my mental health. As my home is a new build, I had to source all the flooring and furnishings myself which I really enjoyed as I felt that I could put my own stamp on my home. Creating Foundations helped me greatly with applying to the Community Welfare Office for assistance. Living in my new home has had a great impact on my routine and I have found that I am cooking more regularly and going out for walks and exercising more as a result. I am linking in more with my friends who live locally, and I really like the estate that I am living in.</p>
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1. Introduction and Purpose of the Local Strategic Plan

The vision of the Strategy is to facilitate access, for disabled persons, 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 for the period 2022-2027.

The Strategy expects, while acknowledging the challenges, that this should be achieved within the mainstream housing environment. The core goal of the Strategy is to meet the identified housing needs of disabled people locally whether they are currently living in the community and or in a congregated setting.

The four categories of disability referred to in the Strategy are:

- I. Sensory
- II. Mental health
- III. Physical
- IV. Intellectual

For the purposes of this plan Category (IV) will include intellectual and/or Autism.

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.

This document which has been prepared by the Housing and Disability Steering Group aims to fulfil the requirements of the Strategy and provide the local authority and other housing providers with information that will help to inform and guide housing provision for people with a disability over the next number of years.

The strategic aims of the plan are to achieve a coordinated and integrated approach to meeting the housing needs of disabled people at a local level, while also ensuring disabled persons have freedom, choice and control over their housing options where possible and ensuring the Steering Group has representation from those with lived experience in order to ensure disabled persons are involved in decisions relating to their housing needs.

2. Awareness and Promotion of the Strategic Plan

All Steering Group members agree to promote awareness and understanding of the local strategic plan among the disabled community and communicate how the plan aims to meet the needs of people with physical, intellectual, mental health and sensory disabilities locally. All members agree to encourage disabled persons organisations to engage with the strategic plan.

Steering Group members agree to ensure that the Plan and its aims and achievements are communicated to their organisations and the wider disability network by ensuring the Strategic Plan is on the agenda of any relevant meetings within their own organisations. The local strategic plan will be supported and promoted through the HSE Mental Health Service governance structure via the Community Living Implementation Group (CLIG) which reports upwards to the Service Improvement Group.

Awareness and promotion of the plan will also be achieved through social media posts and communication with the wider disability network including inviting these organisations to attend Steering Group meetings to allow them to give presentations on their ongoing work and to encourage discussion around how the Strategic Plan, the Steering Group members and the wider disability network can work together to promote the Plan. Consideration shall be given to publishing minutes of Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) meetings on the Local Authority Website.

Kildare County Council's Communications Officer will be invited to attend a Steering Group meeting to assist the Group in setting out a Communications Plan. The purpose of the Communications Plan is to raise awareness of the strategic plan within key stakeholder organisations and the wider community and create understanding of its goals and objectives, and how it can support those in need of these services. Briefing sessions shall be organised with key agencies such as the Local Authority and HSE to ensure consistency with key aspects of the plan.

3. Stakeholder Engagement and Steering Group Functionality

Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Individuals

People with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others¹.

Key Considerations include:

- **Location in the person's preferred Community**
- **Connection to families and friends**
- **Continuity of care services for existing supports such as Disability Access Services and Mental Health Teams**
- **Close to local amenities**
- **Access to public transport**
- **Safe and secure**
- **Accessible housing with suitable adaptations**

An individualised approach to housing and suitable supports promotes the inclusion and participation of a person with a disability in everyday life and communities. Access to housing adds value and status to the lives of all citizens. People with disabilities have the same rights as other citizens to access housing to create homes that enhance their lives and support their inclusion in, and contribution to, society.

3.2 Families

In many cases families are the first assistance and support in relation to the provision of appropriate accommodation for persons with a disability. The family also

¹ [Article 19 of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

becomes the advocate for the individual with the consent of 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, if appropriate, on planned actions with the permission of the individual. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act commenced on 26 April 2023. Assisted decision-making is the process in which persons lacking in or with limited capacity can be facilitated insofar as possible to make decisions about their own lives.

3.3 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).

Since the introduction of the National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability, all adults with disabilities are entitled to apply for an assessment of housing need and shall not be deemed adequately housed when their current address is a congregated setting, institution, hospital/nursing home, community based group home, or when they, although an adult, remain in the family home due to their personal circumstances and/or support needs, including their need for adapted living conditions where the family home is unsuitable.

The numbers currently on the housing list do not reflect the actual housing need for people with disabilities in the county. It is essential that the various disability groups operating in the county encourage the people they represent who have not applied for housing, but are eligible to do so, to apply for inclusion on the council housing list. Production of promotion flyers for distribution through disability groups will assist with this action.

3.4 Health Service Executive (HSE)

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.

It is the responsibility of the HSE to 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 healthcare and personal social services. In respect of disability services, it is the HSE's responsibility to provide services directly and also, through the funding of non-statutory organisations to provide such services on its behalf.

The HSE's Corporate Plan confirms a commitment to continue to work to reimagine disability services, to be the most responsive, person-centred model achievable with greater flexibility and choice for the service user. The HSE will support people with disabilities to live a full life in the community with access to a range of person-centred community services and supports and will work to ensure compliance with standards and the highest quality of life of each individual. The HSE will also reduce the number of people living in institutional settings, by collaborating with non-statutory agencies to provide more appropriate community-based accommodation. Disability service providers work closely with the individual, their families and advocates to develop plans for each person to ensure they are fully supported in all elements of life such as relationships, employment, hobbies, recreational activities and personal choice. The HSE and all relevant stakeholders are fully committed to supporting the transition to community living and will continue to do so ensuring that people with a disability are at the centre of all decision making about their lives.

3.5 TUSLA

The Child and Family Agency is committed to providing high quality services to children and families at earliest opportunity across all levels of need. Providing help to children and families early in the stage of a difficulty can prevent situations getting worse. Identifying children both living at home and in care with a current or future need is important in planning for current and future housing provision.

3.6 Service Providers

In addition to the HSE there are a number of non-government organisations in Kildare providing housing related supports to people with disabilities. These supports include, but are not limited to, the development of person centred plans, provision of information with regard to housing options, provision of support with regard to an application for assessment of housing needs, access to an external advocate, support regarding tenancy arrangements and care support needs identified. Service providers must also participate in the local implementation teams, identify any obstacles / challenges to transition etc.

3.7 Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies will be the main 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.

3.8 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.

The Department of Health has an additional specific role with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the management of the ring-fenced funding for the housing provision for people transitioning from congregated settings.

3.9 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

The Housing and Disability Steering Group structure was proposed under the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability to oversee the implementation of the strategy at local level. The HDSGs are to be chaired by the Director for Housing within the Local Authority. It is envisaged that all representatives on the group should be at a senior level and should be competent at representing the needs of the various disability groups.

3.10 Steering Group Members

The Terms of Reference for the Group are set at national level for adoption by the local groups and the Steering Group members agree to adhere to the terms of reference. The group agrees to work with wider stakeholders in the disability sector, where appropriate to invite them to attend Steering Group meetings to encourage their engagement with the Group and the Strategic Plan. These advocacy groups will be encouraged to promote the strategy where possible amongst the wider disability networks.

The importance of ensuring the membership of the Steering Group includes persons with lived experience is recognised and the Group will work to ensure that those with lived experience are represented on the Group in order to ensure their involvement in decisions relating to their housing needs.

4. Local Aims and Objectives

All local aims and objectives must align with the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027.

The vision for the strategy is:

“To facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community. To further enable equal access for disabled people to housing with integrated support services”.

The Themes of the strategy are as follows;

Theme 1 – Accessible Housing and Communities

Theme 2 – Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports

Theme 3 – Affordability of Housing

Theme 4 – Communication and Access to Information

Theme 5 - Knowledge, Capacity, and Expertise

Theme 6 – Strategy Alignment

The overarching aim and objective of this strategic plan is to ensure that people with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others [Ref Article 19 of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities].

An individualised approach to housing and suitable supports promotes the inclusion and participation of a disabled person in everyday life and communities. Access to housing adds value and status to the lives of all citizens. People with disabilities have the same rights as other citizens to access housing to create homes that enhance their lives and support their inclusion in, and contribution to, society.

Kildare County Council’s Corporate Plan 2024-2029 supports the aims and objectives of this strategy by the inclusion of the following supporting strategy: “To provide suitable, accessible social housing and housing supports for older persons and people with a disability and to support homeowners to carry out necessary adaptations/improvements to enable them to continue residing in their home.”

Kildare County Council's County Development Plan 2023-2029 is committed to implementing the frameworks for the delivery of housing for disabled people as set out under the 'National Housing Strategy for Disabled People' 2022-2027'.

"It is a strategic principle of the development plan to develop a network of sustainable neighbourhoods which have a range of facilities, a choice of tenure and universally designed adaptable house types, promote social inclusion and integration of all minority communities. Social inclusion is about ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to, community life regardless of their age, ability, nationality, ethnic group, religion or any other of the many characteristics that contribute to diversity in our communities and society".

It is the policy of the Council to:

HO P8 Ensure that groups with specialist housing needs, such as older persons, people with disabilities, the homeless, Travellers, those in need of emergency accommodation including those fleeing domestic violence, are accommodated in a way suitable to each of their specific needs.

It is an objective of the County Development Plan 2023-2029 to:

HO O15 (d) "Require that all new residential developments in excess of 5 residential units provide for a minimum of 20% universally designed units in accordance with the requirements of 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' published by the National Disability Centre for Excellence in Universal Design."

HO 021 Meet the needs of older persons and people with a disability by requiring the provision of alternative accommodation, such as age appropriate homes, independent and assisted living units, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units (e.g. dementia specific units) to meet the needs of older persons and to facilitate the provision of a range of housing options for older persons in central, convenient and easily accessible locations, integrating such housing

with mainstream housing through the application of a location specific objective (Specific Local Objectives (SLO)) at appropriate and optimised strategic locations particularly on Council owned lands in mandatory Local Area Plans in County Kildare.

Ho 026 Support access for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated, timely and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice, and independent living.

HO 027 support and direct funding into the provision of specific purpose-built accommodation, including assisted/ supported living units, lifetime housing, and adaptation of existing properties in a manner that would not cause any undue delay to the delivery of same.

HO 028 support and provide housing that meets the diverse needs of disabled people and to implement the County Kildare Access Strategy - A Universal Access Approach 2020-2022 (and any subsequent reviews and plans). The Council will support and promote the principles of Universal Design in new and refurbished housing and in community buildings in the County.

The County Development Plan 2023-2029 identify the following actions:

HO A3 Ensure that all Kildare County Council new build housing stock is in compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations,

HO A4 In line with the Objectives and Actions in respect of Accessible Housing contained in the 'County Kildare Access Strategy - A Universal Access Approach 2020-2022', to ensure, measure and monitor that 10% of acquired housing stock meets the needs of those with a disability and 12% of Kildare County Council new builds are universally designed, and have regard to any revised actions in updated versions of the Access Strategy.

HO A5 Monitor the number of housing acquisitions and new builds and ensure that they meet the needs of those with a disability.

HO A6 Promote Ballymore Eustace as a national exemplar model of an age friendly, universally accessible, climate-friendly village and seek to facilitate and support this model for other settlements within County Kildare.

“The provision of housing for groups with specific housing needs, including the elderly, people with disabilities, the homeless, those in need of emergency accommodation and Travellers, at appropriate locations and in accordance with the policies and objectives of this Plan”.

The Programme for Government, published in June 2020 includes a commitment to: “Ensure that an appropriate mix of housing design types is provided, including universally designed units, and accommodation for older people and people with disabilities”.

Housing for All (2021) is the Government’s housing plan to 2030. Housing for All provides four pathways to achieving its overarching objectives:

1. Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability.
2. Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion.
3. Increasing New Housing Supply.
4. Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

The Mental Health Service will work strategically with local authorities to systematically identify mental health housing need and ways to address that need. The mental health service will utilise the “Design for Mental Health – Housing Design Guidelines” to promote independent living and mental health recovery.

This section of the strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that local aims and objectives remain relevant to any supporting documentation, such as those

referenced above, and to allow for the incorporation of any revised national disability strategies, regulations or legislation.

Housing for All, requires each local authority to nominate a Disability Friendly Housing Technical Advisor to assist with the technical aspects of housing developments.

5. Current need and potential emerging need

Review Housing Delivery Action Plans (HDAPs) and ensure targets for delivery of housing for disabled people are being met. Where these targets are not being met ensure that the HDAPs are revised to meet that target within the lifetime of the HDAP (*NHSDP Implementation Plan Action 1.1.1*)

The current demand will 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. 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.

5.1 Housing Waiting Lists

In County Kildare there are currently 6,575* people assessed as needing social housing support. This total figure includes those currently in receipt of social housing support in the form of accommodation provided under the HAP and RAS schemes, rent supplement and via leasing. Of the total number, 342 applicants have been assessed on the basis of disability needs. Analysis of these applications would further inform the requirements in terms of unit size, location, design and any other specific needs.

The table below details the categories of identified need based on information provided at the time of receipt of the housing application. Applications from individuals residing in congregated settings have been discounted from the 342 as they are accounted for separately under Congregated Settings.

Table 1: Category of Identified Need

Category	Total
Physical	88
Sensory	20
Mental Health	79
Intellectual	155
Total	342

*figures taken from Kildare County Council Social Housing List April 2024

5.2 Housing Transfer List

Of the 342 identified above, 85 of these are transfer requests. In the event of a person's accommodation becoming unsuitable due to disability, priority is given for transfer to a suitable property if available. Kildare County Council's Allocation Scheme for Social Housing 2016 sets out the transfer policy and the circumstances where consideration for a transfer may apply.

5.3 Homeless Persons

There are currently 7 persons accessing homeless accommodation that have identified that they have a disability and that are on the social housing waiting list. But assessments carried out by Kildare County Council's homeless team would infer a much higher level of disability amongst homeless people, see figures below.

Table 2: Homeless Emerging Needs

	Single Adults - Hostels, Emergency Accommodation, transitional units	Families in Emergency Accommodation, family hubs, transitional units
Mental health	30	7
Physical	16	1
Sensory	11	3
Total	57*	11*

*figures provided from assessments carried out by Kildare County Council's homeless team where a person has declared they have a disability

Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2024 - 2026

An analysis of households placed in emergency accommodation in 2022/2023 highlighted the issue of Mental Health as a significant contributing factor to homelessness in the region.

The expansion of the Housing First programme and prioritising funding streams within the HSE to deliver the necessary health and mental health supports, together with a focus on construction and acquisition of 1 bed units, will be significant in continuing to tackle homelessness for individuals with complex needs. This alignment of housing and health again reinforces the objectives of the Housing First National Implementation Plan 2022-2026.

Housing First National Implementation Plan 2022-2026

Housing First is a housing-led approach that enables people with a history of rough sleeping or long-term use of emergency accommodation, and with complex needs, to obtain permanent secure accommodation, with the provision of intensive supports to help them to maintain their tenancies. Housing First recognises that a stable home provides the basis for recovery in other areas. The new National Implementation Plan now provides for the creation of 1,319 additional tenancies over the period 2022 to 2026. There are currently 43 active Housing First tenancies in Kildare (as at May 2024).

The continued implementation of Housing First in the region represents a significant intervention in addressing the needs of high support need clients and will be a key focus for 2022-2026.

Homeless Action Team

The Homeless Action Team (HAT) provides a multidisciplinary approach to solving the needs of homeless persons or homeless families and facilitates the proactive interagency case management of homeless households. The service is provided with the close partnership of the HSE, Department of Social Protection and Voluntary Housing Bodies.

HATs comprise the local decision-making expertise available to people who are homeless in the specific locality and includes health, housing and Approved Housing Bodies who provide emergency, transitional or long-term residential accommodation.

Family Hubs

There are two family hubs in Kildare currently managed by the Peter McVerry Trust through an SLA with Kildare County Council. The hubs, located in Athy and Prosperous, provide supported temporary accommodation for individuals and families accessing homeless services supports through the care of trained social care staff.

5.4 Emerging Disability Need

Local Authorities can only deal with housing applicants and households already identified through the Social Housing Support Application Process. However, it is accepted that there will always be an emerging need in this area. For example, Dara Community Living currently supports people who live in ordinary houses in the community, including some individuals who are supported to live in their family home predominantly in Kildare. Dara Community Living estimates that over the next 5 years they will see an emerging need of 45.

5.5 Owner Occupied Stock

Requirements for adaption or alternative accommodation due to disability arise in Owner Occupier properties. From a housing authority perspective, this can be estimated 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, based on these figures we can estimate 421 applications per year for housing adaptation grants and 9 applications per year for mobility aid grants.

Table 3: Housing Adaptation and Mobility Aid Grants

Grant Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Housing Adaption	494	410	391	390	420
Mobility Aids	2	0	17	8	19
Total	496	410	408	398	439

5.6 Congregated Settings

There are three Congregated Settings in County Kildare with approximately 81 people currently residing in the facilities. The table below identifies the number of people per Service Provider that remain in each facility.

Table 4: Congregated Settings in Kildare

Service Provider	Number of individuals accommodated
St. Raphael's	62
Leixlip Road, Celbridge	13
Moore Abbey	6
Total	81

5.7 Mental Health

The Housing Strategy for People with a Disability recognises that "there are limitations in existing data in relation to the living arrangements of people with a mental health disability." The lack of data on housing need among people with a mental health disability has arisen due to a number of factors which include lack of knowledge among mental health service users and their family members about how to apply for social housing along with a hesitancy about disclosing a mental health disability to local authority officials.

These factors, among others, have led to a traditional under-reporting of housing need among people with a mental health disability which now needs to be rectified for the purposes of the 5-year Strategic Plans. People in acute wards and other hospital settings are catered for in the Emerging Need Section.

As part of the National Transfer Project, The Kildare West Wicklow HSE Mental Health Service transferred two of its low support community residences to HAIL through Kildare County Council. As a result of this 8 Mental Health Service Users now have a tenancy.

The HSE Kildare West Wicklow Mental Health Service has completed a Housing Needs Audit with all of its service users. The results indicate that there are 122 Individuals currently on the social housing list and 168 who need to apply for access to social housing support.

5.8 Total Disability Need

It is evident that there is significant disability housing need in county Kildare. The types of properties required will be difficult to determine, as a detailed assessment of the individuals and their specific needs has not been carried out. However, the table below summarises the disability needs within the county.

Table 5: Disability Needs

Physical	84
Sensory	23
Mental Health	67
Intellectual	170
Congregated Settings	81
Total	425

5.9 Assumptions

The data gathering exercise that has been carried out to complete this Plan has not been to the level of a Housing Needs Assessment. The knowledge of the people that are party to the completion of the plan and their wider network has been used.

In compiling the total disability need in the county, a number of assumptions have been made. These include:

- The number of local authority housing applications determined to be in need of social housing based on disability is 342, this represents only those that have self declared, it is reasonable to assume that there are people who have not declared their disability.
- Housing list data does not include those who declared on medical grounds and it is reasonable to assume that a significant percentage of these may have a disability.

6. Housing Delivery Pipeline for Persons with a Disability

Each local authority must ensure that they are aware of the housing need in their area by:

- a) Recording the actual housing need of all new applications for social housing support where the basis of need is disability in a consistent way on the LA's housing system.
- b) Reviewing their Housing Waiting List to determine the needs of each individual that has a basis of need of disability and record the housing need of the household on the housing system.
- c) Using this data to strategically plan for the needs of disabled people in the area as set out in Action 1.1.1.
- d) Updating the iHouse and other systems to reflect the new requirements and develop autogeneration of reports for HDSGs.

(NHSDP Implementation Plan Action 1.1.4)

6.1. Local Authority Stock

An individual must apply to the Local Authority for Social Housing Support in order to be considered for housing and there are a number of criteria that needs to be met including income limits, being unable to provide housing from their own means and being considered as inadequately housed in their current accommodation.

A tenant of a Local Authority will pay rent calculated in accordance with a differential rent scheme, which is based on income. At present there are 8,030 social housing units provided in County Kildare, this includes local authority stock, Rental Accommodation Scheme RAS, Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and Social Leasing. While options such as local authority housing, HAP and social leasing may be available to people with disabilities, it is only with the appropriate supports that these options can be presented as a realistic housing solution.

6.2 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 provision while others have a more specialised role. In Kildare there are approximately 38 Approved Housing Bodies providing 3,060 housing units. This includes general housing, older person accommodation, housing for people with disabilities and homeless accommodation.

To avail of Approved Housing Body owned accommodation an individual/household must apply and qualify for Social Housing Support with the Local Authority. Accommodation is provided through new build, purchases and leasing. While Approved Housing Bodies access private finance to fund some of their development/purchases, they also receive the following funding from the State through the Local Authorities under the Capital Assistance Scheme and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility.

6.3 Housing Assistance Payment / Social Leasing / RAS

Presently 1,741 households are availing of HAP. HAP will eventually replace Rent Supplement. HAP is available to all people who qualify for social housing supports, including those moving from congregated settings and those residing in the community requiring housing on disability/medical grounds. Households who avail of HAP remain on the social housing list.

Currently 169 households are availing of the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). RAS is a three-way agreement between private landlords, tenants and Kildare County Council; Kildare County Council is responsible for paying rent to the landlord on behalf of the tenant. Households who were assigned a RAS property remain on the housing list.

6.4 Owner Occupied

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

7 Supports – social and care

The Health Services Executive (HSE) is committed to supporting people with disabilities in their own home. The HSE support people in their own home by direct provision or through non HSE agencies in the area of disability. Individuals must apply to the HSE for consideration for such supports. The supports for people in their homes are Personal Assistances and Home Support. Other services such as Day Care, Respite Services and full or part time Residential Services are also provided but must also be applied for and applicants will be assessed for suitability for the applied service. 7.1 and 7.2 below are housing support packages that allow individuals to live independently in their homes.

7.1 Personal Assistants

Personal Assistant Services provides people with the opportunity to exercise control and choice in their lives. In so doing it enables disabled people to be active participants within their families, communities and society. Personal Assistants support the disabled person by the provision of direct individual one to one support. The provision of personal assistants is based on needs assessment and approval for funding by the supporting voluntary agency or the HSE. Applications for personal assistants can be made through the persons supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

7.2 Day Services

Day Services provide a range of social and rehabilitative services for disabled people by offering an opportunity to have a meaningful day, develop personal, work and independent living skills and offering occasions to interact with the local community. Day Services include centres that provide day activation, such as recreational, sport and leisure facilities, supported work placements and specialised clinic facilities that provide a combination of medical and rehabilitation services.

The provision of day services is based on an individual needs assessment and approval for funding by the supporting voluntary agency or the HSE. Applications for day services can be made through the supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

New Directions is the HSE's approach to supporting adults with disabilities who use day services in Ireland. New Directions sets out twelve supports that should be available to people with disabilities using 'day services'. It proposes that 'day services' should take the form of individualised outcome-focused supports to allow adults using those services to live a life of their choosing in accordance with their own wishes, needs and aspirations. There is a structure set up within the nine HSE Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) nationally to implement New Directions. These CHO New Directions Implementation Groups have representatives from every HSE funded adult day Service Provider within the CHO area.

7.3 Respite Service

Respite care is defined as "temporary residential care, based either in a centre or community based, that is intended to support the maintenance of people with disabilities in their own homes. It can cover a crisis period, take place on a periodic basis to enable a carer to have a break, or can provide the person with disability with medical, therapeutic or support services". The provision of respite services is based on a needs assessment and approval for funding by the supporting voluntary agency or the HSE. Applications for respite services can be made through the persons supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

7.4 Residential Services

Residential Services both full and part time are provided by direct provision of the HSE or through non HSE agencies in the area of disability. The provision of residential services is based on a needs assessment and approval for funding by the supporting voluntary agency or the HSE. Applications for residential services can be made through the persons supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

8. Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

To achieve the vision of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability a number of challenges need to be addressed. Many of the challenges facing people with a disability in need of social housing supports are multi-dimensional. State bodies and other organisations need to work together to ensure fluidity and coherence in responding to the housing needs of people with disabilities.

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.

The Housing and Disability Steering Group is the first step in developing an interagency partnership to ensure a collaborative approach and that the responsibility is jointly shared across every stakeholder. For people transitioning from a congregated setting the stakeholders who work most closely together with the disabled person at local level, are the Housing Authority, Service Provider and the HSE. For many people with disabilities who have lived in congregated services or with their families for long periods of time, there is often a fear associated with moving into one's own home in the community. It is vital, therefore, that appropriate care and support services are put in place that will enable the individual to live as independent a life as is possible.

A Regional Interagency Group will be established to bring together Kildare County Council and the Health Service Executive representatives for both Disability Services and Mental Health Services, this will increase cooperation and collaboration at a local level. The group will:

- Examine operational issues and ways to improve the collaboration between housing services and healthcare services.

- Establish and embed structures and processes to facilitate interagency cooperation to deliver housing and supports to Disabled People.
- Drive the implementation of Actions under the NHSDP Implementation Plan as appropriate.
- Consider and implement pilot projects as set out in the NHSDP Implementation Plan.
- Organise training between agencies to develop and improve the knowledge and understanding on housing within healthcare services, and on healthcare within housing services.

8.1 Funding

A need exists within the wider community for long-term solutions in relation to housing. As part of the delivery of housing, both private and social, it is vital that adequate supports are available to enable people to live as independently as possible in the community. An integrated relationship between the support services and the housing authority is crucial to address these challenges on an ongoing basis. The Steering Group can play a vital role in building and developing such relationships.

Funding for adaptations is a challenge for people in their existing or new homes. If a person owns their own property and needs adaptations in order to return to the property, they may be eligible for grant funding through their local authority (Housing Adaptation Grants Scheme). As the older population increases the local authority would welcome the provision of additional funding to allow for the extension of grants schemes for private and social housing stock.

Increased funding and a rolling funding scheme at a national basis would greatly enhance the Housing Adaption Grants and Mobility Aids Grants scheme which allows for adaptation or due to disability in owner occupier properties. In addition, it is critical that adequate funding is provided nationally to deliver appropriate housing solutions for people with disabilities; this is particularly important in light of existing pressures on local authority housing waiting lists.

Kildare County Council will continue to support Approved Housing Bodies to deliver suitable housing, through the provision of the Capital Assistance Scheme.

Additional funding needs to be ring fenced to provide for personal supports to ensure the transition from home/residential care is adequate to meet the needs of the individual availing of independent living and continued funding is sometimes required to maintain initiatives in order to sustain tenancies.

8.2 Housing Supply

A proportion of any projected housing procurement may be forward planned and reserved to meet the demand from people with disabilities on local housing lists. An accessibility brief will be agreed and set out to inform the requirements that should be part of any brief from the outset.

In some cases it is an important factor to ensure that accommodation is matched to the individuals taking up residence from the outset, as the concept of “a home for life” will have to take into account likely changes of need over time.

8.3 Supports Services

It must be noted that in a number of cases, even if the most appropriate property was identified, an individual may not be able to avail of the opportunity due to lack of support to live independently. It is vital that adequate supports are available to enable people to live as independently as is possible, in the community. An integrated relationship between support services and the housing authority is crucial, to address these challenges, on an on-going basis. This relationship will be developed through engagement with the Kildare Housing and Disability Forum and the Regional Interagency Group.

8.4 Social Housing Demand

Due to the nature and the extent of the disabilities experienced by many clients, their needs can change significantly over a short period of time. There is, therefore, a need for recognition of this fact by all agencies, coupled with the associated need for a degree of flexibility in responding to such changing circumstances.

A more detailed analysis of housing lists in order to develop a clearer understanding of housing need for people with disabilities, including those in institutional care, needs to be developed. It is acknowledged that people who register for social housing may not always declare that they have a disability and not all persons in supported accommodation are on the social housing list. A significant amount of work was undertaken over the lifetime of the last Strategic Plan by the council to capture accurate details of those with a disability who are on the housing list. Further research and analysis in this area is warranted in order to better understand the demand for social housing and support services for people with a disability in our county. It is also acknowledged that the needs of individuals wishing to avail of social housing can change significantly over a relatively short period of time. There is, therefore, a need for recognition of this fact by all agencies coupled with the associated need for a degree of flexibility in responding to such changing circumstances.

8.5 Congregated Settings

As people move from congregated services into their own homes there are often funding challenges in trying to maintain the congregated service to ensure that people who are still living there have appropriate support, care and services available to them, but also ensuring that the services are available to those living in their new homes in the community. During the transition process there can often be funding deficits that should remedy themselves once the congregated service closes. However, in the interim service providers are often trying to provide services in circumstances where no resources are available. 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.

Opportunities

Developments in the areas of assistive technology, housing design and construction, funding and delivery mechanisms for housing are all providing opportunities to build and/or retrofit housing to meet the needs of a person with a disability. Further developments, particularly in the area of technological supports would be very much welcomed, together with a recognition on the part of national Government of the part

that they can play in helping people to live independently, most particularly be the expansion of funding streams such as housing adaptation grants to meet the cost of assistive technology. Kildare County Council has appointed a Disability Friendly Technical Advisor who will work with housing providers to assist with technical aspects of housing developments, including procurement, assessment and appraisal.

8.6 Assistive Technology

There have been major advances in 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. Technologies such as Remote Monitoring Systems, Fall Prevention/Detection Systems, Person Alarm Systems and Living Environment Controls including access, lighting, heat can work very successfully to assist a person in maintaining independence. The advice and guidance of an Occupational Therapist can play a key role in identifying appropriate technologies for people with disabilities.

8.7 Universal Design

Kildare County Council's County Development Plan 2023-2029 requires all new residential developments in excess of 5 residential units to provide for a minimum of 20% universally designed units in accordance with the requirements of 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' published by the National Disability Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, this supports the development of dwellings that are designed to be sufficiently adaptable to enable people to live comfortably through different stages of their lives and changing household need.

The principles underpinning Universal Design in Housing are: integration within the local community, ease of approach entry and circulation, ease of use, understanding and management and flexibility/adaptability at minimum cost. A Universal Design Home is not a particular type of house. It is an approach to building homes using a range of planning, design, construction and attitudinal refinements to create the living space. Following these principles will assist in the provision of a lifetime/adaptable home and/or a wheelchair accessible home to meet the long-term needs of a person with a disability.

8.8 Funding

While elements of funding are challenging there are also opportunities. The Capital Assistance Scheme [CAS] provides 100% funding to approved housing bodies [AHBs], subject to compliance with certain conditions, to provide accommodation for people with a disability. In addition, the Capital Advance Leasing Facility [CALF] is a facility available to assist AHBs to access private or Housing Finance Agency [HFA] loan finance for the purchase, and, in some cases, construction of units, that will then be made available for social housing under the leasing initiative. CALF is one of the main capital funding streams for the supply of social housing.

9. Targets and Deliverables

The following targets and objectives have been set for delivery of units for people with disabilities and will be reviewed following publication of Housing for All and the National Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability.

Table 6: Acquisition and New Build Targets

Acquisitions	Target of 10% but depending on market availability
New Build	Minimum of 12% suitable for persons with disability
Vacant	Priority for adapted properties will be to people with disability on Housing List
Part V	Use negotiations to deliver units where appropriate
RAS / HAP / Leasing	Suitable properties will be prioritised accordingly
Other	a) Principal of Universal Design incorporated into new builds where appropriate b) Continue to develop with AHBs under CAS c) Continue with Grants Scheme for Owner Occupiers

In relation to Kildare County Council construction projects, the needs of persons with a disability will be assessed in the context of the specific construction projects under consideration. The demand for housing persons with a disability who have expressed a preference for that area, and the suitability for these projects to include housing which meets the needs of the persons identified with specific needs will be examined and considered at the design stage. This will include standards above those required under the Building Regulations where a higher standard of design is required such as the need for full wheelchair accessibility. The council will continue to engage with Approved Housing Bodies regarding the need for the inclusion of units which meet the needs of persons with a disability who are included on the social housing list.

10. Reporting

Kildare County Council will monitor on an ongoing basis the allocation of social housing to persons with a disability.

Kildare County Council will coordinate and return the quarterly implementation report to the Housing Agency.

This report will be provided to the council's Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC). The strategic plan will continue to be included in the SPC work programme and as an agenda item on the Senior Housing Meeting.

The Steering Group will work to raise awareness of the strategy as set out in the Communications Plan.

Abbreviations

HDSG Housing & Disability Steering Group

KCC Kildare City Council

HSE Health Service Executive

AHB Approved Housing Body

CS Congregated Setting

DHLGH Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

CAS Capital Assistance Scheme

CALF Capital Advance Leasing Facility

RAS Rental Assistance Payment

HAP Housing Assistance Payment