

County Kildare Access Strategy

A Universal
Access Approach
2020-2022





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Foreword from Kildare County Council



Cllr Suzanne Doyle
Cathaoirleach



Peter Carey
Chief Executive

“Towards 2016”, the social partnership agreement sets out a vision for a society in which disabled people have the opportunity to work and to live a full life with family and as part of their community. The agreement suggests that this should be achieved through a long-term goal of ensuring access to buildings, transport, information, appropriate housing, advocacy and other public services. This strategy ensures that we, as a local authority, have a very clear purpose and a definite direction to follow in supporting the aims of “Towards 2016” and delivering a universally accessible environment and service.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the consultation process and to those who were involved in the preparation of this strategy document. This model of active participation helped to identify the challenges that disabled people in County Kildare are faced with on a daily basis and the information that was gathered formed the core of this strategy. It is through active participation that real change can take place.

This strategy presents an excellent opportunity to enhance the quality of life for disabled people in County Kildare and we look forward to supporting its delivery.

Cllr Suzanne Doyle
Cathaoirleach

Peter Carey
Chief Executive,
Kildare County Council



Introduction



Michael Hurley
Access Officer

According to the Census 2016, the total population with a disability residing in Kildare is 27,768 i.e. 12.5% of the population. Although a large proportion of our overall population self identify as disabled this sector still see themselves as marginalised as they believe that they are unable to participate fully in society due to the physical and attitudinal barriers that they experience. Disabled people want to lead independent lives and rightfully expect to be able to participate in all aspects of society.

This document is constructed around the social and rights model of disability which allows us to understand that the inequalities experienced by disabled people exist, not because of their impairment or condition but because of societal barriers. A simple example which demonstrates this point would be a building which can only be accessed by steps. A wheelchair user is excluded not because they are in a wheelchair but because we have not provided an alternative means of access. It is an important point to note that, to date, our environment, in the main, has been created by non-disabled people with non-disabled people in mind. This in turn has led to poorer living standards and social participation for disabled people.

With this mind and with such a significant number of the population in Kildare presenting with a disability we recognised the importance of engaging with this group in order to affect real change.

As a result, a workshop was convened on the 1st May 2019 to which a broad range of stakeholders were invited to attend from within Kildare County Council (elected members and

officials), other statutory bodies, community and voluntary sector agencies, and disability access groups. Disabled people were at the heart of this process and they were given the platform to influence policymakers and service providers.

The purpose of the workshop was to identify the key challenges and accessibility/disability issues faced by disabled people in Kildare.

A recurring view that was expressed throughout the workshop was that we should adopt the principle of universal design i.e. designing for everyone instead of one particular group which will have the effect of future proofing our society.

Universal Design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors.

This influenced the six key areas of focus which included:



Under the six headings a series of objectives and actions were identified to which a specific owner and a timeframe for completion was assigned. Addressing these actions will, in essence, help to create an environment where disabled people can have the opportunity to work and to live a full life with family and as part of their community.

The information gathered at this workshop, in addition to the information provided by local access groups across the county has been instrumental in the development of this strategy.

While every effort has been made to ensure that this strategy and the consultation process were as comprehensive as possible, it is also recognised that this strategy document is dynamic and will continually evolve and remain a “work in progress”.

In summary this document is a testament to our commitment towards ensuring that no section of our community is left behind in the future delivery of our services.

Michael Hurley
Access Officer





Vision

Our Vision is that County Kildare is universal to all and recognised as a leader in universal accessibility.



Mission

To support the removal of physical, attitudinal & communication barriers for all.



Values

Inclusion: The principle of universal design underpins inclusive practices. By addressing the physical, attitudinal & communicate barriers we can help create a more inclusive society within the county of Kildare.

Best Practice: We aim to use best practice guidelines around the area of universal accessibility & design.

Engagement: Everyone's voice is essential for the development & implementation of this strategy.

Collaboration & Partnership: We aim to consult and collaborate with all key stakeholders to improve universal accessibility.

Themes



Public Awareness Education
and Communication



Transportation
and Public Realm



Community Culture
and Heritage



Economic Development,
Enterprise and Planning



Partnership
and Collaboration



Housing
and Services



Public Awareness Education and Communication



Objective 1

To develop an awareness campaign to highlight accessibility/disability within Kildare County Council.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop a selection of training packs	KCC (Access Officer)	2020
Deliver awareness training to front line Kildare County Council staff	KCC (Access Officer)	2020
Deliver technical training to relevant sections such as engineers and architects	KCC (Access Officer)	2021



Objective 2

To develop an awareness campaign to highlight accessibility/disability within the community.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Deliver training to local business's around accessibility and economic benefit of embracing universal design approach.	KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups	2021
Deliver training to schools and community groups	KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups	2021-2022
Develop a website for Kildare Access Group with subsections for Local Access Groups	Intel / Maynooth Access Group	2020
Develop a suite of awareness campaigns e.g. Back in 5, Make Way Day. International Day of Persons with Disabilities	KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups	2020

Objective 3

Improve communication outlets.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Improve the accessibility of KCC website and make more user-friendly incorporating tools like Browsealoud	KCC (Access Officer and IT Section)	2020



Objective 4

Make the service users experience more accessible.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Introduction of JAM (Just A Minute) Card across county.	KCC	2021

Objective 5

Make the service users experience more accessible.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Promote the use of libraries as a central base for disability platforms to meet and share information.	KCC	2021



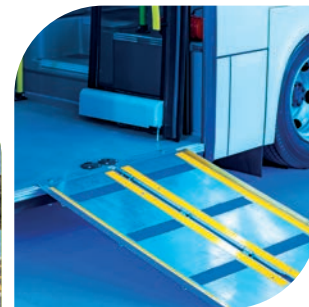
Transportation and Public Realm



Objective 1

Ensure that the built environment is accessible for all.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop a template for an accessible streetscape	KCC (Public Realm Team & Access Officer)	2020
Survey to be completed in all municipal areas to ensure adequacy of disabled parking bays (location and number)	KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups	2020-2022
Following survey of adequacy of disabled parking bays, link in with Bye-Law reviews and update accordingly.	KCC (Roads Department & Access Officer)	2020-2022
Develop a policy around sandwich boards and other shop paraphernalia	KCC (Environment, Planning)	2021
Pedestrian Crossings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review length of crossing • Countdown on pedestrian crossings at major junctions 	KCC (Roads)	2021





Community Culture and Heritage



Objective 1

To ensure universal design approach is followed when designing playgrounds, parks and heritage sites.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
A survey of all playgrounds to be completed for accessibility needs.	KCC (Parks section, Local Access Groups, Access Officer)	2021
Work with parks department to deliver accessible play opportunities	KCC (Parks section, Local Access Groups, Access Officer)	2020-2022
Look at ways for ensuring better access to recreational and heritage sites	KCC (Parks, Access Officer)	2020-2022
Make events and festivals more accessible e.g. use of Mobiloo. Develop a policy around making events more accessible.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020-2022
Review of all signage at recreational sites to ensure it meets accessibility standards.	KCC (Access Officer)	2022
Develop a directory of accessible recreational areas and sports facilities	KCC (Parks, Sports Partnership and Access Officer)	2022
Develop virtual reality tours of main attractions for people unable to access sites	KCC	2022



Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning



Objective 1

Market Kildare as an Accessible Friendly County.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Identify and map Kildare's access friendly business and tourist sites.	KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups	2022

Objective 2

Promote a Universal Design Approach for new public buildings.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
When designing new public buildings or refurbishing old buildings encourage the use of universal design standards in excess of Part M of Building Regulations	KCC (Access Officers + all relevant sections)	2020-2022
Incorporate Changing Places where possible in any new public buildings	KCC (Access Officer, Planning Section)	2020-2022

Objective 3

Work with local businesses to promote accessibility.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Accessibility section of shop front grant to be expanded to include a more widespread choice of accessibility improvements	LEO	2020
Promote shop front and accessibility grant scheme with local businesses	KCC (Access Officer, LEO) & Local Access Groups	2020-2022
Explore the possibility of having a grant solely for accessibility improvements	KCC (Access Officer and Economic Development section)	2022
Introduce Annual Awards Scheme for best practice around accessibility e.g. Gold Star Awards	KCC (Access Officer, LEO) & Local Access Groups	2020-2022
Design Universal Symbol to promote Accessible Friendly business's	KCC (Access Officer, LEO) & Local Access Groups	2022
Encourage businesses to incorporate Changing Places where possible	KCC (Access Officer, Planning Section) & Local Access Groups	2020-2022





Partnership and Collaboration



Objective 1

To develop and continue partnerships with organisations representing disabled people, other agencies and Non-Government Organisations.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop a directory of county access groups with a focus on raising their awareness and profile.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020-2022
Continue to develop partnerships with service providers and organisations.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020-2022
Establish a county forum to centralize collective thinking and build on existing collaborations with access groups and organisations.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020

Objective 2

To work closely with all directorates within KCC for the successful implementation of this strategy.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop a coordinated partnership of all the various directorates in KCC.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020
Establish an access team in KCC made up of champions from each directorate.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020
Collaborate with chamber of commerce and LEO and Kildare Fáilte to promote accessibility.	KCC (Access Officer)	2020-2022





Housing and Services



Objective 1

To ensure that our housing stock provides for Accessible Housing.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Ensure and monitor that 10% of acquired housing stock meet the needs of those with a disability (dependent on market availability) and 12% of KCC new builds are suitable for those with a disability.	KCC	2020-2022

Objective 2

To ensure that all housing stock meets the required standards.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Build all KCC housing stock to Part M of the Building Regulations.	KCC	2020-2022

Objective 3

To ensure that the application process for housing assessment is as accessible as possible.

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Review our housing application process – create online applications where possible.	KCC	2020

Acknowledgements

Mr. Michael Hurley, Access Officer of Kildare County Council wishes to acknowledge the collaboration and interagency working which took place in the preparation of this strategy. I gratefully acknowledge the contribution of all those who actively participated in our workshop and the local access and disability groups across the county who were part of the consultation process. Their guidance has been invaluable. I would like to acknowledge the support given by the facilitators who devoted their time, energy and commitment in participating in the workshop.

Particular thanks are extended to Mr. Peter Carey (Chief Executive of Kildare County Council), Mr. Niall Morrissey (Director of Service), Ms. Sonya Kavanagh (Director of Service), Mr. Peter Minnock (Director of Service), Ms. Susan Bookle (LCDC Coordinator) and elected members for their support in the development of this strategy.

I would like to especially thank Ms. Majella O'Keefe (Chair of Naas Access and Disability Group) for her hard work and dedication in supporting the development of this strategy document. We all look forward to continuing to work together in making County Kildare universally accessible for all.





For further information contact:

Michael Hurley

Access Officer

t. 045 980707

e. mhurley@kildarecoco.ie



Comha rle Contae Ch Il Dara
Kildare County Council