

Galway City Strategic Plan for People with a Disability 2021 - 2026

Housing SPC Meeting - 26 November 2021

Earlier in 2021 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage requested that Housing & Disability Strategy Steering Groups (H&DSG) within each Local Authority administrative area prepare new Housing & Disability Strategic Plans for People with a Disability for the period 2021 – 2026. In tandem with same, the new National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (2022 – 2027) is currently being developed under the auspices of the Housing Agency. It is envisaged that the development of the new Plans will act as part of the consultation process for the National Strategy. Furthermore, the new Plans will be required to be reviewed to allow for the inclusion of any relevant aims, objectives or targets from the National Strategy.

In the case of the Galway City Council administrative area, the Plan was devised and agreed by the Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG) chaired by Galway City Council. Membership of the HDSG includes GCC, HSE, DFI, IWA, Brothers of Charity, Rehab Care, Peter Triest Housing Association, Co-operative Housing Ireland, COPE Galway, Galway Simon Community, Respond and Tuath, and Lived Experience membership from Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and the Independent Living Movement Ireland.

In developing the Plan, data as relevant was sought from members of the Steering Group and two drafts of the document were circulated to members for consultation with their members with feedback/submissions requested and received. The final draft was presented to the Steering Group at their meeting on the 17th November.

The vision of the Galway City Strategic Plan is to facilitate access for people living with disabilities to an appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, promoting equality of opportunity, individual choice, and independent living. The four categories of disability referenced in the Strategic Plan include:

- a) Sensory Disability
- b) Mental Health Disability
- c) Physical Disability
- d) Intellectual Disability and Autism

The Plan addresses housing need as identified in Ireland. The definition applies equally to all people with a disability. The data presented explores the following:

- Social housing waiting list in relation to physical, sensory, mental health, intellectual and unspecified needs.
- Social housing transfer list in relation to physical, sensory, mental health, intellectual and unspecified needs.
- Institutional residential settings in relation to the three institutional settings in Galway City (Brothers of Charity, Cheshire Homes and HSE Mental Health Services).

The total number of people with a disability on the Galway City Council housing waiting list is 431 (SSHA 2020). In addition, there are 29 people with a disability on the transfer list currently and 49 people with a disability in institutional residential settings.

Owner occupied housing stock also features in the Plan. This group is significant which is borne out through the number of applications to a variety of grant schemes operated by the Council (including

the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme; the Mobility Aid Grant Scheme; and the Housing Aid for Older People Scheme).

A section of the Plan outlines the on-going social housing delivery pipeline for Galway City for the period 2021 – 2026 noting the indicative nature of some proposals post 2023. Based on data contained in the plan delivery of accessible/lifetime homes for the period would amount to 272 homes which would be c.17 % of proposed homes to be constructed over the next 5 years. Within the overall number of social units expected, allocation of standard units will also be made to people with disabilities.

It is also noted that Wraparound Supports are critical to the sustainment of tenancies for a significant number of housing applicants with a disability. Wraparound supports are provided by the HSE through Personal Assistance Services, Home Help, Day Services, Respite Services, Home Sharing and Contract Families.

The Plan is underpinned by an overarching objective to ensure that the supply of housing solutions is adequate to meet the needs of people with disabilities in Galway City. Other key objectives include:

- Continue to establish, understand and map the housing needs of people with disabilities living in the Galway City Council area to determine requirements
- Ensure that the housing needs of people with disabilities are prioritised in the planning stages of proposed housing projects
- Develop interagency protocols to ensure housing delivery in line with effective support services to those who require it
- Promote and mainstream the concept of universal design and wheelchair liveable housing
- Implement actions in the area of housing and disability as outlined in *Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland* document.

Challenges, risks and opportunities associated with the implementation and delivery of these objectives are outlined. The need for on-going monitoring and evaluation of the objectives as outlined is also recognised.

It is accepted that there will always be an emerging need in the area of housing and disability. As a result, in line with census data, there is a need for continued monitoring of the situation in the City to ensure key trends are identified early, and there is continued and clear collaboration between all stakeholders. It is also acknowledged that housing needs of people with a disability are ever changing and there is a need to ensure the Plan has the capacity to respond to this.

Patricia Philbin
Director of Services – Housing & Social Inclusion