



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2017-2020

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Executive Summary

About the Strategic Plan

Housing choice for most people with disabilities is severely limited due to their particular accommodation needs. According to the 2016 Census, 12.6 % of the population of the County of Galway had disabilities, with many people living in housing unsuited to their needs. This is the first plan by Galway County Council to focus on people with disabilities who are unable to access suitable housing, including people who want to move out of traditional institutional living to community-based homes. The plan aims to improve social housing so that people can have suitable homes with the supports they need to live in the community.

Working Together

Galway County Council is committed to putting people with disabilities at the centre of housing policy. We have developed this plan with:

- the Council's allocations, capital and assessments departments;
- the Health Service Executive's (HSE) mental health, physical and intellectual disability services;
- disability-specific and general housing associations; and
- Disability service providers.

The Strategy outlines the roles and input of each of these groups, particularly the Council's strategic planning and co-ordination role in providing social housing and the HSE's contribution of support services. It is part of a wider national agenda designed to enable people with disabilities to take part in mainstream society.

Galway County Council has formed a Housing & Disability Steering Group to lead the formulation and implementation of this Strategy.

What's in the plan?

The plan identifies the pathways the Council will follow to house people with disabilities. It profiles the unmet housing needs of this population and considers how mainstream housing supply mechanisms can better address those needs. Most importantly, it recommends the setting up of an operational team which will include the range of relevant organisations who can assist in finding housing solutions that suit people with disabilities.

Taking a person-centred approach

People with disabilities have a wide variety of needs and ambitions so a person-centred approach and co-ordinated action is needed.

Solving the Problem

Traditionally, there has been little information about the level and nature of unmet housing need among people with disabilities. This Strategy pulls together the available data, highlighting the gaps in our knowledge.

The tables and figures within the Strategy give a summary of the numbers of people with disabilities and housing needs. It is taken from current Galway County Housing Waiting List and the Transfer List (of existing social housing tenants).

The homeless support agencies in Galway County through their support planning process with service users, capture data relating to each individual's physical and mental health issues. This data is used to guide the supports put in place for individuals both pre and post settlement into appropriate tenancies. All data is recorded on PASS, a national shared client database.

The numbers of people with disabilities who want to live independently in homes that meet their needs is likely to grow, and the Strategy tries to estimate these numbers.

Pathways to suitable housing

The Strategy identifies the routes to suitable homes for people with disabilities. These include:

- 1. Social housing tenancy (renting a home from the Council or an Approved Housing Body (AHB));**
- 2. Securing suitable rental housing in the private sector; and**
- 3. Adapting the owner's home to meet their needs.**

1) Providing suitable social housing

The Strategy examines who is eligible to go on the Social Housing Waiting List based on their household income and whether their home meets their needs. The Government's Social Housing Strategy 2020 sets out to provide additional social housing units including a mix of newly built, council acquired, part V and AHBs, along with housing units made available on long-term leases with private owners. These will be an important source of housing for people with significant mobility impairments.

There is also a proposal in The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 that Local Authorities reserve some units for People with Disabilities. This Strategy details Galway County Council's commitment to this proposal. The Strategy also recommends that more attention be paid to design issues to take account of the needs of people with disabilities when houses are being built or renovated. It also recommends involving the prospective tenant in the design process where possible.

2) Private rental sector

For some people with disabilities the private rented sector can offer adequate accommodation, at least for a time. However, currently there are many challenges within the private rented sector such as extremely limited supply, limits on rent allowance and poor housing standards. The relatively new Housing Assistance Payment scheme, which will eventually replace the Rent Supplement scheme, may help more people to access affordable private rented accommodation.

3) Adapting the home

Most people with disabilities live in a home owned by the family, a home that can become unsuitable following the onset or progression of a disability. In recent years Galway County Council has approved numerous applications for housing adaptation grants. For the period 2015 – 2016, Galway County Council approved 295 Housing adaptation grants for owner occupied homes.

Suitable personal supports

This Strategy describes the personal supports that someone with a disability needs if they are to live in their own home. Some of these supports relate to medical needs but most are social supports that need funding from the HSE. The role of technological aids is also explored. In addition, the Council acknowledge that they and other appropriate agencies must work more closely together to enable people living in institutions to move into the community. This synergy must also apply to people living with disabilities who wish to leave the family home and live independently.

Putting the Strategic Plan into Action

The Steering Group responsible for compiling this Strategy have identified a number of key actions which will serve as both targets and areas for review over the course of the strategies implementation.

These targets will fall under 4 broad categories for delivery which are:

- 1) Activating the Strategy
- 2) Promoting the supply of more disability-friendly housing
- 3) Monitoring access to available housing
- 4) Improving supports for people in need of housing

These key actions will identify what Galway County Council and their partners should do to enable people with disabilities to live independently. They also highlight how a well-resourced, integrated and interagency approach is essential to achieve this.

Background

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011 - 2016, and the associated National Implementation Framework outlines a number of actions that are required by the various stakeholders to ensure that mainstream housing options are available to people with a disability. Rebuilding Ireland the Government Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness extended the timeframe of the NHSPWD to 2020.

The commitment to develop the strategy was outlined in the Partnership Agreement, "Towards 2016", and underpinned in the 2007 housing policy statement, "Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities". "Towards 2016" recognised that people with a disability often have fewer choices in providing for their housing and accommodation needs and recommended the development of a Strategy as a priority action. The Government's Housing Policy Statement, published in June 2011, supports the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability as part of a framework of initiatives to provide for the housing needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged households. In addition, the Statement recognises the range of initiatives available to address the needs of people with a disability, including through supports available under the Capital Assistance Scheme, the suite of housing adaptation grant schemes and the need for the delivery of better outcomes for vulnerable, disadvantaged and specific needs households while achieving maximum return for the resources invested.

Social Housing Strategy 2020

The Social Housing Strategy 2020 rests on three pillars; the first of those pillars commits to increased provision of permanent social housing. The Strategy supports the acquisition of 35,000 new units over the period 2015 to 2020; in consultation with local authorities and with Approved Housing Bodies, annual delivery targets were agreed for 2015 and for subsequent years. An enhanced role for AHBs is central to the Government's vision for the provision of these additional housing supports.

Rebuilding Ireland – An Action Plan for Housing & Homelessness (July 2016)

A series of commitments have been outlined in the Government's latest Housing Strategy which set out how they plan to deliver Social Housing to meet the needs of people with a disability who are on housing waiting lists around the country. The Action Plan is designed to:

- Provide for the needs of older people or people with a disability living in social housing
- Provide targeted support to private houses, via the Housing Adaptation Grant, Housing Aid for Older People and Mobility Aids Grant
- Enable older people and people with disabilities to remain living independently in their own homes for longer and also to facilitate early return from hospital stays
- Continue to support the transitioning of people with disabilities from congregated settings to community-based living, through ring-fenced housing capital provision

National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Strategy was launched in 2004, building on existing policy and legislation including: the Employment Equality Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Equality Act 2004, the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and Government policy of mainstreaming service provision for people with disabilities within the State agencies that provide services to citizens generally. The National Disability Strategy comprised 4 elements:

1. The Disability Act, 2005;
2. The Citizen's Information Act, 2007;
3. Sectoral plans – 6 Government departments, including the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) were required to develop sectoral plans under the Disability Act;
4. A multi-annual investment programme.

Under the Disability Act 2005, public bodies must ensure that people with disabilities are included in their mainstream provision of services and provide the support required to facilitate that inclusion.

Each Sectoral Plan outlines actions to ensure that people with a disability have access to the quality public services that underpin life choices and experiences. The Sectoral Plan of the DHPCLG, which was developed in consultation with people with disabilities, outlines the steps to be taken to improve provision of services to people with a disability by the

DHPCLG and local authorities and sets out national objectives and guidelines for access to services and built facilities. It also includes measures to be taken in the areas of the building and planning codes, heritage sites and public bodies under the Department's aegis.

Key objectives of the Plan, which are relevant to this Strategy, are:

- To encourage and facilitate access to appropriate housing and accommodation for persons with disabilities;
- To update standards set out in Part M (Access for People with Disabilities) of the national Building Regulations; and provide for more effective enforcement of these standards;
- To ensure access to information on local authority services for persons with disabilities and similar access to information on services provided by the Department and bodies under its aegis;
- To ensure a high level of awareness among all staff of the requirements of persons with disabilities.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006 and signed by the Irish Government in March 2007. The Convention seeks to ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to access housing, choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live, on an equal basis with others, and have access to necessary supports to assist living and inclusion in the community.

Article 19 refers to living independently and being included in the community, stating that: "Parties to this Convention recognise the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:

- (a) Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;
- (b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;

(c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs”.

It is the Government’s intention to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, taking into account the need to ensure that all necessary legislative and policy requirements under the Convention are first being met.

Report of the Congregated Settings Working Group

A working group, chaired by the HSE, and with representation from service provider, self-advocates, umbrella organisations for people with disability, parent and user representatives, the Department of Health and the National Disability Authority, prepared a review of the needs of clients currently accommodated in congregated settings.

The working group identified the number of congregated settings and identified that over 4,000 people with disabilities lived in these settings. An in-depth survey gathered information about the people currently living in congregated settings, their service provision and their lives, and the resources being invested in the provision of these services. The group recommended a physical move of residents from congregated settings to community based living.

The Congregated Settings Group identified that building capacity in the local community is critical to successful outcomes for those transitioning to community living. This relates to including those involved in access to required community services e.g. transport, education, training, day activity and other individualised supports. The Congregated Settings Report – “Time to Move on from Congregated Setting” – was published on 28th June 2011 by the HSE.

A Vision for Change – Report of the Expert Working Group on Mental Health Policy.

A Vision for Change, which was launched in 2006, provides a framework for action to develop the mental health service over a 7 to 10 year period. The report recommended the closure of old psychiatric hospitals and the reinvestment of the resources released by these closures in mental health services. The HSE has developed a strategy for the phased closure of admissions to the remaining hospitals and the relocation of patients to community based accommodation in line with the recommendations of A Vision for Change.

In terms of housing, the reports sets out a series of recommendations in order to effectively meet the needs of people with a mental health disability. These include facilitating appropriate access to housing and the provision of suitable and affordable accommodation types and mechanism to prevent people with a mental health disability from becoming homeless. Further, the reports states that access to housing for individuals with mental health disabilities should be on the same basis as any other citizen

and envisages that the majority of people with a mental health disability will not require residential care but will be able to live in mainstream housing with varying levels of support. It emphasises that the provision of social housing is the responsibility of the local authorities, and recommends development of liaison arrangements between authorities and mental health services to ensure appropriate housing is provided to people with a mental health disability.

Purpose and Goal of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011-2016, published jointly by the DHPCLG and the DoH in 2011, sets out the Government's broad framework for the delivery of housing for people with disabilities through mainstream housing options. The Strategy was affirmed under *Rebuilding Ireland*, the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness and extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims.

Implementation of identified actions in the NHSPWD 2011-2016 is being driven primarily by the Housing Agency by means of a dedicated sub-group, comprising representatives from DHPCLG, the HSE, DoH, Local Authorities, the ICSH and various disability representative organisations. Much work has been done to deliver on various initiatives to support both new supply of dedicated housing for people with disabilities and provide for the adaptation of existing stock.

An Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG) was established to monitor and report on progress. The current Strategy will be extended beyond its original timeframe to continue to deliver on its aims. As part of the overall implementation of these aims, a Strategic Plan will be drafted in each local authority area which will identify and address the housing needs of people with a disability over the next 5 years. These are currently being collated by the Housing Agency into a draft National Strategic Plan, to be finalised in 2017. These plans will inform the specific supply response for people with disabilities at a local level, including, for example, accessibility requirements in new social housing stock.

The NHSPWD framework also supports the Government's de-institutionalisation policy, which is being led by the DoH and the HSE. The HSE are dedicating considerable resources to this programme, to help accelerate progress, and DHPCLG provided ring-fenced funding of €10m in 2016 under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), specifically for the provision of accommodation for people with disabilities transitioning from congregated settings.

The role of the CAS is becoming more prevalent in facilitating the supply of housing specifically for people with disabilities.

The table below shows a number of CAS funded projects in Galway County which are ongoing or have been delivered recently.

AHB	Address of Project	Category of Tenant	Construction or Acquisition	No. Of Units	Estimated Cost.
Claregalway Housing Association	Baile Chláir	Elderly	Construction	14	€1,855,000
Mountbellew Housing Association	Mountbellew	Disabled	Construction	3	€824,000
Mountbellew Housing Association	Mountbellew	Elderly	Construction	2	
Cluid Housing Association	Ballinasloe	Elderly	Construction	17	€2,793,000
Cluid Housing Association	Letterfrack	Disabled	Construction	5	€2,963,000
Cluid Housing Association	Letterfrack	Elderly	Construction	8	
Peter Triest Housing Association	Ballinasloe	Disabled	Construction	4	€850,000
Cluid Housing Association	Letterfrack	Homeless	Construction	6	€2,793,000
Cluid Housing Association	Letterfrack	Disabled	Construction	5	
Respond Housing Association	Headford	Homeless	Acquisition	2	€395,000
Respond Housing Association	Headford	Elderly	Acquisition	2	
Tearmann Eanna Teo	Ros an Mhíl	Disabled	Acquisition	6	€1,877,000

Tearmann Eanna Teo	Ros an Mhíl	Elderly	Acquisition	7	
Tearmann Eanna Teo	Indreabhán	Disabled	Acquisition	2	€355,000
Tearmann Eanna Teo	Indreabhán	Elderly	Acquisition	2	
Tearmann Eanna Teo	Ros an Mhíl	Disabled	Acquisition	2	€1,180,000
Tearmann Eanna Teo	Ros an Mhíl	Homeless	Acquisition	2	
Tearmann Eanna Teo	Ros an Mhíl	Elderly	Acquisition	4	
Tuath Housing Association	Ballinasloe	Congregated Setting	Acquisition	1	€366,000
Peter Triest Housing Association	Athenry	Congregated Setting	Acquisition	4	€405,000
Respond Housing Association	Tuam	Congregated Setting	Acquisition	1	€242,000
Respond Housing Association	Tuam	Congregated Setting	Acquisition	1	€184,000
Respond Housing Association	Tuam	Congregated Setting	Acquisition	1	€238,000

From the above table there are 101 units in agreed projects under CAS and approximately 40% of these are expected to come on stream this year with the remainder expected in 2018.

Further provision through Approved Housing Bodies will be dependent on CAS funding, availability of suitable properties and the need.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
AHB / CAS Units expected to be provided	40	60	20	20

Purpose and Goal

The vision of the Strategy is to facilitate access, for people with disabilities, 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.

The Strategy expects that 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 people with disabilities 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:

- (a) Sensory disability
- (b) Mental health disability
- (c) Physical disability and
- (d) Intellectual disability & autism

The National Implementation Framework includes the following strategic aims

- Housing Authorities will develop specific strategies to meet the identified housing needs of people with physical, intellectual, mental health and sensory disabilities locally. These strategies will be informed by the assessments of housing need and broader formalised consultation with relevant statutory agencies, service users groups and disability organisations.
- These strategies will form an integral part of local authority Housing Services Plans and will promote and support the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities using all appropriate housing supply mechanisms.
- In line with the development of specific disability housing strategies, housing authorities will consider reserving certain proportions of units to meet specific identified need within each disability strategy.

It is intended that this Strategy will form an integral part of Galway County Council's Housing Services Plan 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 that has been prepared by the Housing and Disability Steering Group aims to fulfil the requirements of the Strategy and provide Galway County Council 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.

Strategic Plan

Vision

Through forward planning and sustainable design, Galway County Council and Partners will increase and improve the range of housing solutions for people with a disability to ensure that people with a disability will have a home suitable to their needs with supports that are required to facilitate them living in the community.

Mission

Galway County Council promotes equal access to housing by ensuring that people with a disability are placed at the centre of housing policy and by encouraging better communication and co-operation between all the relevant statutory and voluntary stakeholders.

Values

- **Inclusion:** We aspire to include adults, children and their families across the full spectrum of disabilities in the housing solution process.
- **Innovation:** We seek to use the latest technology to improve the quality and range of housing options for people with disabilities.
- **Collaboration:** We will work closely with all statutory and voluntary stakeholders to provide the housing & support services to which people with disabilities are entitled.
- **Sustainable Design:** We aspire to establish the concept of Universal Design and Wheelchair Accessible Homes as an integral part of the housing design process.

Objectives

1. To establish and map the housing needs of people with disabilities in the County of Galway.
2. To ensure that the supply of housing solutions is adequate to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the County of Galway.
3. To facilitate the delivery of a wide range of housing solutions using existing and innovative supply mechanisms.
4. To ensure that the housing needs of people with disabilities are prioritised in the planning stages of proposed housing projects in terms of design, allocation and management e.g. Part V arrangements and other proposals.
5. To instil practice whereby in multi-unit developments, the design and planning of housing units for people with disabilities is considered first, establishing design parameters for the scheme overall.
6. To produce guidance to explain and demonstrate the approach to universal design in housing including best practice built examples and reference material.
7. To promote and mainstream the concept of universal design and wheelchair accessible housing.
8. To ensure that person centred plans are in place for all those moving from congregated settings into the community where there is a reasonable expectation of a housing unit becoming available.
9. To ensure that support services are in place for people with disabilities who may require them.
10. To meaningfully engage with all statutory and voluntary agencies to enhance networking and develop better communication.
11. To encourage and facilitate collaboration and partnership in housing delivery.
12. To work with all service providers to ensure that all areas of disability are given equal importance.

13. To work with the HSE to ensure that required support services are available to facilitate the tenancy where required.
14. To work in collaboration with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that forward planning is at the centre of service provision.
15. To facilitate the development and use of peer support arrangements through collaboration with the voluntary disability sector.
16. To prepare an implementation plan detailing how the actions will be achieved and timescales anticipated
17. To carry out regular reviews of the Strategic Plan to assess its overall progress and outcomes achieved.
18. To develop pathways to independent living for people with a mental health disability

Obstacles

There are a number of obstacles which need to be addressed in order to achieve the vision and objectives outlined in this Strategy.

- The lack of a continuous supply of appropriate, affordable housing is a significant barrier to the effective delivery of housing for people with disabilities. In addition, difficulties with the funding streams envisaged for housing delivery have also slowed the pace of what was set out in the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities in 2011.
- Severe congestion within the rental market.
- Disparity between current market rents and Rent Allowance/HAP levels.
- Rent Allowance/HAP tenants' required adaptations/aids/appliances are often not accepted by landlords in private rented accommodation.
- No budget for Disability Service Providers to enable them to provide the staffing required to facilitate people with disabilities living independently in the community.
- Difficulties/restrictions within leasing schemes delivering social housing solutions.
- Even with a Housing Adaptation Grant, families are often unable to finance the excess cost required to complete home adaptation.

- Relevant departments who work with individuals with a disability and their families such as the Department of Health, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, and the Department of Social Protection require a more cohesive, integrated approach to progress the goals of this Strategic Plan and the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability.
- Avoiding social isolation for people with disabilities within communities presents a significant challenge. The implementation of formal supports such as Community Connector projects in the Mental Health sector along with informal linkages applicable to all housing and community developments to ensure all citizens are socially integrated and included in society.
- Avoiding circumstances whereby planning and development policy create barriers to addressing the housing needs of people with disabilities. Consultation at formulation stage will go some way to preventing this.

Housing Need

Housing need has been defined as:

“the extent to which the quantity and quality of existing accommodation falls short of that required to provide each household or person in the population, irrespective of ability to pay or of particular personal preferences, with accommodation of a specified minimum standard and above.”

This definition applies equally to all people with a disability.

The assessment of an individual need for Social Housing Support is based on the individual’s lack of ability to provide housing from their own means. The housing need is the type of housing and related need etc. that is required to allow one to live in an appropriate environment.

In relation to people with a disability living in congregated settings, de-institutionalisation refers to the move away from housing people with disabilities in residential institutions, where all services were generally provided on site, to community based settings. Large residential institutions, while maximising the pooling of support services, segregate residents from the community and from normal social life. Research has demonstrated that such institutions are not able to deliver the same quality of life for their residents as community based alternatives.

Some applicants will have very specific needs and provision should be tailored to meet their specific needs according to the guidelines submitted from the clinical multi-disciplinary team involved and subject to funding.

Roles and Responsibilities within the Disability Sector

Individuals:

People with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence, where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others. This is clearly set out as the vision of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD).

The key considerations include:

- Location in the person's preferred community,
- Connection to families and friends,
- 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.

Families

In addition to their significant advocacy role, families are very often the first assistance and support in relation to the provision of appropriate accommodation for persons with a disability. The challenges facing families must be recognised and in many instances the support of key partner agencies is required. This support may be in the form of physical adaptations to their home, moving home, respite care or personal assistant services.

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 on planned actions.

Housing Authorities

Galway County Council in its role of Housing Authority has 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. This role also extends to the provision of non-direct housing supports such as the development of appropriate

community infrastructure i.e. transport linkages, community accessibility, community environmental supports etc. In many cases individuals will also require funded supports e.g. via the Health Service Executive (HSE). It is often the case that the solution for the individual will also require support of a broad range of community based services.

Health Service Executive

The HSE has the overall statutory responsibility for the management and delivery of health, care and personal social services. In respect of Disability services/supports, the HSE's responsibility is fulfilled by the provision of services both directly by the organisation e.g. Home Help and also, to a very significant extent by the funding of non-statutory organisations (via Service Level Arrangements) to provide a range of services on its behalf e.g. Brothers of Charity, Ability West, PA Service Providers.

The HSE aims to support each individual with a disability to live the life they wish, in an environment that provides opportunities for choice, personal development, fulfilling relationships and protection from exploitation and abuse.

With regard to individuals currently residing in congregated settings, the HSE, as a main driver of de-institutionalisation, strongly supports their transition to more socially inclusive community integrated services and is fully committed to ensuring that people with disabilities will be actively and effectively supported to live relevant and meaningful lives close to their family and as members of their community. In order to sustain and adhere to this Strategy, the HSE must ensure that funding already allocated is realigned to meet the needs of those moving to new Homes.

Role of Central Government

The Department of Health's role in relation to services 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 the Environment, Community and Local Government also has a key role in that it has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of housing policy for people with disabilities, both for those living in the community and those who will be transitioning from institutional care in the coming years.

Service Providers

This includes both statutory e.g. HSE and non-statutory e.g. Threshold. Responsibilities will include the development of an overall project plan with the person at the very centre of

that. The provision of information with regard to housing options, supporting the individual with regard to applications for supplementary housing supports, access to external advocacy, support around tenancy arrangements, care supports needing to be assessed and identified. Service providers must also participate in the local implementation teams, and identify any obstacles / challenges to transition and living independently in a broader context for the person.

Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies operate as 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. All clients must be on the housing authority waiting list before being in receipt of an allocation. In a local context, Galway County Council nominate potential tenants for interview to AHBs based on the length of time on the housing waiting list and taking into consideration specific housing requirements such as a disability.

The AHBs working closely with Galway County Council include;

Chairde Aras Mhic Dara Teo
Cluid Housing Association
Connemara Sheltered Housing
Coolarne Voluntary Housing Project
Cooperative Housing Ireland
Cuan Mhuire Teo
Galway County Association for Mentally Handicapped
Homes for Dunmore
Irish Society for Autism Limited
John Paul Centre Housing Association
Loughrea Mental Health Association
Milltown Housing Association
Mountbellew VHA Ltd
North Connemara VHA Ltd
Peter Triest Housing Association Limited
Respond!
South East Galway Housing Association
St Vincent De Paul
Tearmann Eanna Teo
Tuam & District Mental Health Association
Tuam Voluntary Housing Agency
Tuath Housing Association
Williamstown Housing Committee Ltd

AHBs operating in Galway County have an existing housing stock in excess of in the region of 700 units which contributes significantly to the supply of social housing and meeting the needs of those on Galway County Council's housing waiting list.

Private Developers

Through Part V arrangements with local developers Galway County Council may purchase 10% of properties within private developments. These properties are then available to the Council for allocation to people on the housing waiting list.

Tusla – The Child & Family Agency

The role of Tusla in this process is written into legislation (Child and Family Act, 2013) and states the following responsibilities directly linked to housing and provision of appropriate supports;

- Supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families;
- Offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the Agency is required to maintain and develop the services needed in order to deliver these supports to children and families, and provide certain services for the psychological welfare of children and their families;
- Responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education;
- Ensuring that the best interests of the child guides all decisions affecting individual children;
- Consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency's policies and services;
- Strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services responsive to needs;
- Undertaking research relating to its functions, and providing information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions; and
- Commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services

Tusla and Their Role Locally

There are approximately 320 children in the care of Tusla Galway at any given time, with approximately 15-20 of those under the age of 18 years with a disability in one or more of the four specified categories within this Strategy.

Tusla Galway provides a range of Leaving and Aftercare Services. Their policy is to refer young people to this service from their 16th birthday onwards. Currently the Aftercare Service is working with approximately 100 young people, the majority of whom are in some form of education or training. A cohort also exists who struggle with homelessness or difficulties accessing and maintaining suitable accommodation. There are less than 10 young people within this group who have a disability. The Aftercare Service is provided until they are 21 years of age or longer if they remain in education or training.

Demand

The lead in time to any housing procurement can be significant and it is critical that all procurement plans can take account of both current and projected housing demand. The early identification of demand along with specific and individual need is crucial to managing the need. The supply mechanisms must therefore have regard to demand. An agreed approach must be taken which considers both general and specific requirements and that these are taken into consideration in all design and procurement briefs. By doing so, the demands of both current and projected applicants for housing supports can be met.

A number of factors should be considered to ensure that supply addresses demand,

- A proportion of projected housing procurement should be forward planned to meet the demand of people with disabilities on the Housing Waiting Lists.
- Accessibility briefs can be agreed and set out to inform the requirements that should be part of any project from the outset i.e. what is this project brief required to deliver in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities, general design, numbers of units, design of units, and how will this be achieved (Section 27 Disability Act).
- All briefs should give regard to the Community Living requirements of the individual

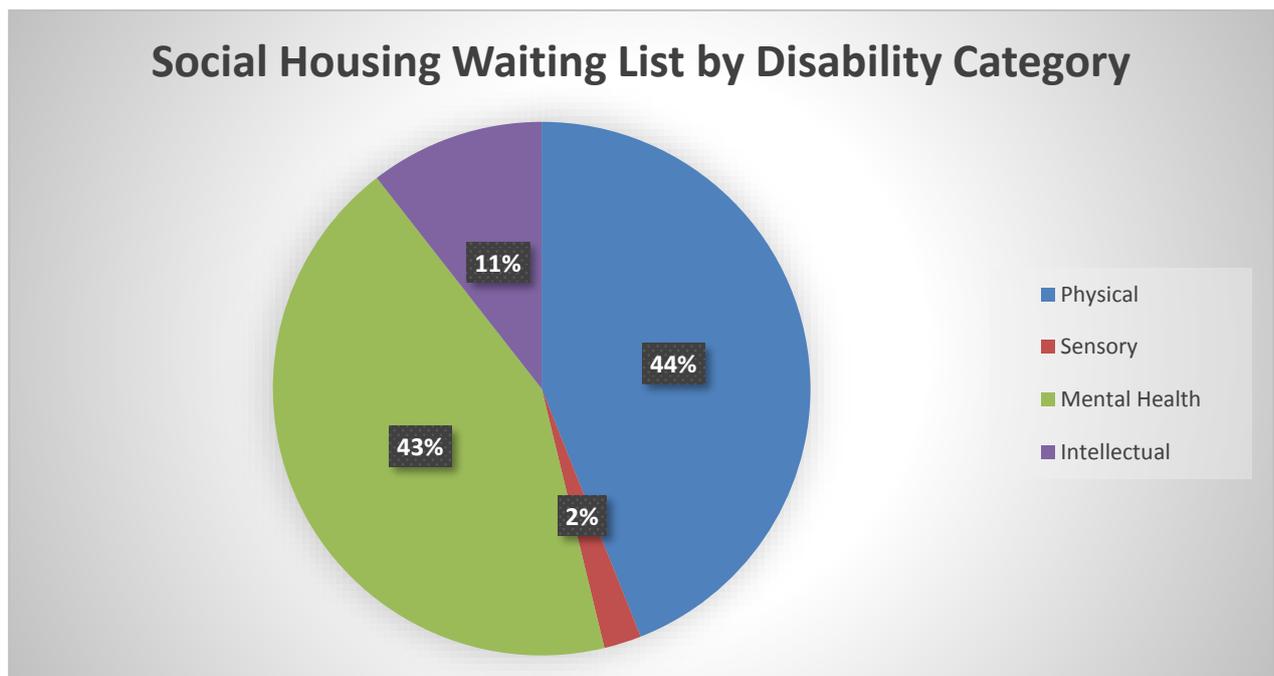
Current Demand

The current demand can 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. The relevant information from which the detail can be extracted is held as follows

Housing Waiting Lists

People with a disability currently on social housing waiting lists, **not** including people transitioning from congregated settings are in the following table;

	Aged 65+	Enduring Health Impairment	Traveller	General	Total
Physical	18	76	19	180	293
Sensory	1	2	3	9	15
Mental Health	7	60	17	204	288
Intellectual	1	27	4	38	70
TOTAL	27	165	43	431	666



Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)

As a response to demand and patterns in emerging needs, AHBs are responding proactively.

Housing Transfer Lists

Galway County Council has an existing housing stock of 2713 units. Annually a number of tenants require alternative accommodation as a result of disability or injury and the subsequent inadequate nature of their current accommodation. This arising need can be addressed through a transfer arrangement if appropriate accommodation is available. The decision to transfer allows for a less costly alternative to adaptation works or where necessary adaptation works are not feasible. The table below reflects the current transfer list which is based exclusively on disability need.

Category	Total
Physical	70
Sensory	4
Mental Health	52
Intellectual	6
Total	132

Homeless Persons

A number of individuals who are engaged with Homeless Services have a disability, with Mental Health being the most prevalent category. Clients with a disability currently engaged with Homeless Services are tabled below.

Category	Total
Physical	2
Sensory	1
Mental Health	7
Intellectual	2 (children)
Total	12

Emerging Disability Need

This Strategy only deals with Housing Applicants and households already identified to Galway County Council through the social housing application process. However it is accepted that there will always be an emerging need in this area. The forecast for emerging need is based on past cases and projections from those currently in receipt of care and under the age of 18. It is vital that such forecasts and applications are continually monitored to maintain accuracy. This can be achieved through the following processes;

- Determining trends of housing applications from people with disabilities identified in previous housing need assessments.
- Reviewing census and other disability specific, national and local research data.
- Monitoring trends in relation to societal changes.
- Collaborating with HSE Disability sectors in relation to persons U18 in their care with an emerging housing need.
- Collaborating with local disability organisations and representative groups
- Collaborating with local and national approved housing bodies.

On average 25% of housing applications received annually are from people with a disability.

Galway County Council Emerging Disability Housing Need

People in Care	Emergency Presentation / Early Intervention	Day Services with Future Need	Residential Care Waiting Lists	Unsuitable existing homes due to Disability	Inappropriate Nursing Home Placement	Mental Health Hostel	MH Acute Wards/ Res Units	MH residential Waiting Lists	Other	Total
30	0	120		380*	10	137	3	0	0	680

* This figure includes grant applicants, transfer applicants and 80 persons whom have not yet submitted their application

Children with a Physical & Sensory Disability

The HSE (*Disability Services Dept. - Primary, Community & Continuing Care*) view on emerging needs in Galway County notes the increased prevalence of complex Paediatric cases being discharged to the Community. Such cases require specialist care, predominantly nursing/medical input and/or specialist Health Care Assistance.

The environmental needs relating to the children at the centre of these cases are linked to ensuring the home can cater for the child's medical equipment needs along with the additional staffing required to be present to deliver the high level of medical care needed in a community setting.

Grant Funding to Address Needs in Owner Occupied Stock

Requirements for adaptation or alternative accommodation due to disability arise in owner occupied properties on a regular basis. From a housing authority perspective, this can be gauged by the number of applications made annually for funding in the following specific areas;

1. **Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme**
2. **Mobility Aid Grant Scheme**

The following table outline's the number of applications annually under these schemes for the last two years from which the assumptions for the number of predicted applications over the coming years contained in the second table.

Grant Type	2015	2016	Total Grants
Housing Adaptation for People with a Disability & Mobility Aid Grant scheme	198	268	466

Projections over next 4 years (based on average over previous 5 years)

Grant Type	2017	2018	2019	2020
Housing Adaptation for People with a Disability & Mobility Aid Grant scheme	165	165	165	165

Congregated Settings

The national project group for the implementation of the recommendations of the congregated settings report - "Time to Move on from Congregated Settings - A Strategy for Community Inclusion" has established a data set of all individuals residing in a congregated type setting. This data set is updated on a quarterly basis and will provide relevant information to the Housing Agency. In addition, a specific template has also been designed to capture details pertaining to each individuals housing requirements.

Service Provider	No of Individuals currently in CS	No of Individuals to Transition by 2019
Brothers of Charity	0	0
HSE / Mental Health Services	0	0
Total	0	0

Assumptions

The data gathering exercise conducted to compile this Strategy was extensive and relied heavily on the recently completed Housing Needs Assessment. It has involved raising awareness regarding the compilation of a Disability Strategy, actively seeking the input of service providers in Galway County whose client group have a disability.

The compilation of the Strategy also sought to establish links within the voluntary and statutory agencies by facilitating inter-agency sharing of information regarding clients with a housing need and to tap into the existing local knowledge base of members of the Housing and Disability Steering Group and their wider networks.

In compiling the total disability need in the County, a number of assumptions have been made, these include;

- Emerging need in after-care, emergency presentations of persons requiring housing.
- Adults with a disability living in the family home.
- Future of congregated settings
- HIQA regulations and the impact they have on housing options.
- Continued co-operation and sharing of information.

Delivery and Supply Mechanisms

Local Authority Stock.

There are approximately 2,713 social housing units of varying tenures in the County of Galway. An individual must apply to the Local Authority for Social Housing Support in order to be considered for housing.

There are a number of criteria that need to be met including:

- Income under the stated threshold,
- Being unable to provide housing from their own means
- Being considered to be inadequately housed in their current accommodation.

A tenant of Galway County Council will pay an income related differential rent. In order to minimise future adaptation works, Galway County Council will, where feasible, utilise Universal Design models in the provision of social housing.

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)

Approved Housing Bodies have become a major supplier in the provision of Social Housing Support to people from all sections of the community. In Galway County there are a number of Approved Housing Bodies providing housing. This includes the following type of accommodation:

- General housing
- Older person accommodation
- Housing for disabled people
- Homeless accommodation
- Housing for people with mental health difficulties

While AHBs access private finance to fund some of their developments and purchases, they also receive the following funding from the State through the Local Authorities:

- Capital Assistance Scheme
- Capital Advance Leasing Facility
- Payment and Availability Agreements

Table below outlines recent projects delivered by AHBs specifically for people with disabilities

AHB	Address of Project	Category of Tenant	No. Of Units
Cluid Housing Association	Letterfrack	Disabled	5
Cluid Housing Association	Letterfrack	Elderly	8
Peter Triest Housing Association	Gort	Disabled	3

Housing via Leasing of Privately Owned Housing Stock

While the provision of housing specifically for people with disabilities via these means is less frequent, the prevalence of Social Housing demand being met cannot be ignored in an overall sense.

- **Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)** – with requirement to be in receipt of rent supplement for a period of 18 months. At the end of 2016, Galway County Council had 404 households on RAS tenancies. This includes 110 households transferred to voluntary housing under RAS with the remainder in private rented accommodation.
- **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)** – By end of 2016 Galway County Council had 388 households on the HAP scheme. Negotiations are ongoing with the Department of Social Protection with regards to the transfer on a phased basis of approximately 1,500 households who are currently in receipt of long term rent supplement. This process will also include a cohort of people with disabilities.

These options are available to all people who qualify for social housing supports, including those moving from congregated settings and those requiring housing on disability/medical grounds.

Galway County Council Housing Delivery Targets

Acquisitions	New Builds	Vacant	Part V	RAS/HAP/Leasing	Other
10%	20%	10%	20%	10%	Continue with disability grants and the use of universal design according to building regulations and funding

Housing Support Initiatives

The Health Services Executive (HSE) is committed to supporting disabled people in their own home. The HSE support people in their own home directly or by facilitating non HSE agencies in the area of disability. Some of the services are:

Personal Assistance (PA)

Personal Assistance Services provides people with the opportunity to exercise control and choice in their lives. PA supports are intended to assist individuals to maximise their independence in the many facets of life's requirements. The ethos of PA is not *doing for* but rather providing supports to the individual in need areas such as: Community Participation, accessing employment/training/education, managing the Home, personal care etc. PA is a flexible support service and can be unique to each Service Users requirements.

Currently the allocation of PA supports is based on a prioritised assessment of individual need by the HSE and availability of funding to meet those needs. Applications for PA can be made via the many non-statutory providers who have a Service Arrangement with the HSE or via the Disability Services Department, or directly to the local HSE.

Home Help

Home Help is direct support scheme, operated by the HSE. It aims to help people who need medium to high caring support to continue to live at home independently. Home Help is based on provision of number of hours of direct care per day to help the person in their daily tasks of living.

Day Services

The HSE deliver day services directly via a community based model entitled New Directions. This model calls for a blurring of the boundaries between 'special' and 'mainstream' services so that people can access supports most suited to their needs.

This model encourages people with disabilities to maintain high expectations for themselves and of their Community. It also encourages families and services to adopt an attitude of positive risk-taking. It encourages providers to strive for greater outcomes from their current services. The provision of day services are based on an individual needs assessment and available resource to meet the persons need. Applications for Day support services can be made directly via the Provider.

Respite Service

Respite services offer support to disabled people by providing temporary supported accommodation. Respite offers support to the person and their families. The provision of respite services is frequently resource dependent. Applications for Respite can be made via many avenues e.g. Primary Care Team or directly via the service provider etc.

Ability West and Brothers Of Charity Services Galway offer non centered based respite for individuals with an intellectual disability via Home Sharing and Contract Family respite.

Home Sharing

This involves a child, young person, or adult spending time with a host family in the community. The host family is recruited, assessed, trained, supervised, and supported by the Service. The Home Sharing Scheme was set up in partnership with Ability West.

Contract Families

Contract Families are similar to host families. Contract families are requested to offer placements to individuals with specific needs. Contract Families receive a retainer, and they generally offer 16 sessions a month for short breaks and respite to families.

Challenges

There are a number of challenges that will have to be addressed in order to achieve the vision of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability, but we must approach the task in a positive manner and without giving false expectations to individuals we must give hope a real choice on how they live their lives.

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.

It must also be noted that in a number of cases, even if the most appropriate property was identified, they would not be able to avail of the opportunity due to the lack of support to live independently. There is a need to define what the nature of support required is i.e. ADL support, supervision supports, identifying alternative support options outside the traditional model of a property and task related staffing needs to exist. This requires flexibility on behalf of housing authorities and HSE. This Strategy attempts in its initial

efforts to quantify the need with regard to satisfying the housing needs of persons with a disability. This in itself has been a challenge and once this Strategy is formally adopted it will also bring to light further need across Galway County. A close collaboration between the various care providers and the housing authority is therefore vital in this regard.

It is also recognised that within the grouping of service users currently housed in congregated settings there is a cohort who are considered medically fragile and their needs will continue to fall directly with the care provider. The preparation of quality person centred care plans will assist in the future housing needs of these and all housing applicants.

Other challenges highlighted by the Steering Group in developing this Strategy include;

- Insufficient funding prevents the development of support services that would allow people to live more independently
- This also affects people who have been able to live independently but with increasing needs through infirmity or old age and being unable to access support services in their current accommodation, require higher levels of residential support.
- The Congregated Settings report, with its interpretation of the challenges contained in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, poses major developmental challenges for the centres where there are larger numbers of people with disabilities in residential services.
- There is a challenge to understand and enhance the general willingness of our society to be more inclusive of people with disabilities, and to capitalise on this trend toward inclusion in implementing housing that further reinforces this trend. This progress towards inclusion is expressed in legislation and government policy and also from a grassroots community experience of people being willing to engage with people with a wide variety of disabilities in the open activities of social exchange. Widespread recognition that disability is more a social issue than a medical one demands that concrete actions from the statutory bodies and from the community sector advance broad inclusion, integration and access. This trend will be challenging in a housing context but will bring great benefits to all concerned
- In the context of homelessness and service users with disabilities, the following issue was raised in respect of single adults presenting as homeless and the associated issues seeming to be quite invisible. Although the numbers of presentations of note are small and infrequent they are arguably on the increase. In addition to this point, the risk of homelessness is also very real for some individuals, especially so relating to those who present with a mental health disability, as they struggle to cope with living independently. The age profile of many of these

individuals means that they don't qualify for many support interventions for example home-help. More notable has been the numbers of families in emergency accommodation with children with learning disabilities and the challenges they face in securing appropriate housing

Opportunities

The continued development of technological solutions can only assist or compliment the physical care and housing provision, however notwithstanding this should always be considered. Engagement with Community Development Agencies is required in order to realise this Strategy.

Note – The importance of living as part of a community for people with disabilities is a key feature of the wider community based housing model. Agencies who facilitate courses and programmes for people to include those with disabilities contribute significantly to enhancing positive mental and physical health for people within their homes.

Use of Technology

There have been major advances on 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.

Some of the technologies that should be considered for use include;

- 1 Remote monitoring systems
- 2 Fall prevention/detection systems
- 3 Personal alarm systems
- 4 Living environment controls including access, lighting and heat.
- 5 Adequate broadband and internet access to support technology based service models
- 6 Implementation of the Smart Housing concept in support of the out of hours support which many service users require in terms of monitoring and security.

Universal Design

The principal of universal design should be included in all new build developments and should be considered in any Development Plan processes as an approach to achieve long term cost savings through avoidance of retrofit and adaptation costs. Universal Design should, where feasible, constitute the minimum specification for some or all of new build and newly acquired property.

Actions for Implementation of Strategy

Planned Actions	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeline
To designate a Project Manager within Galway County Council with overall responsibility for the delivery of the Strategy	Galway County Council	HSE Approved Housing Bodies	Q2 2017
To designate people in the relevant Council Departments with responsibility for delivery of the Strategy	Galway County Council		Q3 2017
To promote engagement by all statutory and voluntary stakeholders by measures such as linking into their information networks, supporting people with disabilities to draft personal plans where required, assisting the registration of unmet need.	Galway County Council	HSE Approved Housing Bodies Advocacy Groups	Ongoing

To monitor on a quarterly basis the number of units allocated to people with disabilities to ensure that there is equity of distribution.	Galway County Council	HSE Approved Housing Bodies Congregated Settings	Q3 2017
To seek to establish and maintain the agreed minimum % allocation of housing units to people with disabilities in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme	Galway County Council		Ongoing
To engage with relevant statutory and voluntary stakeholders to improve information about homeless people with disabilities	Galway County Council	Homeless Action Team Approved Housing Bodies COPE Galway Galway Simon Threshold	Q3 2017
To ensure that the principle of Universal Design are at the centre of all new housing construction projects.	Galway County Council		Ongoing
To support an inter-agency disability training module for relevant council staff utilising end user experiences and input.	Galway County Council		Ongoing
To review the roll out of the Strategy on an annual basis and to identify barriers and blockages to its delivery	Galway County Council	HSE Approved Housing Bodies Congregated Settings	Q1 2017 & Ongoing

Timelines & Review Mechanisms

The time-line for this Strategy will be ongoing with a built in quarterly scheduled review over its lifespan. This methodology has generally been successful in the roll out of the various Traveller Accommodation Programmes and will be utilised in this Strategy with an initial programme for the 2017-2020 period with annual targets set within same.

This plan will be reviewed at the end of each quarter of each year in order to report on the progress of each of the targets identified within the Strategy. A review of the previous year's work and to examine the accuracy of the information and proposed outputs for the coming year is key to the success of the Strategy being adhered to.

The input of direct and non-direct service providers, and more pertinently people living with disabilities into the Strategy formulation and review process is very important.

APPENDIX A

Membership of the Galway County Council Housing & Disability Steering Group

- Michael Owens, A/Director of Services, Galway County Council.
- Gerard Scully, Senior Executive Officer, Galway County Council.
- Mary Forde, Senior Social Worker, Galway County Council.
- Eibhlin Ellis, Social Worker, Galway County Council.
- Caroline Hannon, Clerical Officer, Galway County Council.
- Lorraine Kelly, Senior Mental Health Social Worker, HSE West.
- Mary G Killion, Principal Social Worker, Rehab & Recovery, HSE West.
- Michael Keady, Regional Coordinator for Rehabilitation, HSE West.
- John Fitzmaurice, Business Manager, HSE West.
- Mary O'Donnell, Disability Services Manager, HSE West.
- Sean Conneally, Director of Services, Brothers of Charity.
- Clare Lenehan, Duty of Care Project Director, Enable Ireland.
- Marcella Flanagan, Housing Manager, Cluid Housing, Galway.
- Kathleen Aspel-Mortimer, Housing Officer, Cluid Housing, Galway.
- Breda Crehan-Roche, CEO, Ability West, Galway.
- Martin O'Connor, Assistant CEO, COPE, Galway.
- Bill Griffin, CEO, Galway Simon Community.