



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Galway County Council

Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability
2021-2026

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1. Purpose of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026

‘Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland’ is the government’s housing plan to 2030. It has four overarching objectives:

- Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability
- Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion
- Increasing New Housing Supply
- Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

These objectives are a requirement for all local authorities under the ‘Housing for All’ national strategy.

The purpose of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disability 2021-2026 is to facilitate access for people with disabilities to the appropriate range of housing supports, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living. This Strategic Plan has been developed by Galway County Council in partnership with stakeholders such as the HSE, Disability Service Providers and Housing service providers. The purpose of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability (SPHPD) is for Galway County Council to work towards meeting the identified housing needs of housing applicants with a disability in the region who:

- are linked to a disability service provider / HSE and living in the community (with their families, carers)
- are not linked to a disability service provider / HSE and have a disability
- are transitioning from a congregated or service setting

Galway County Council’s Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 will inform the new National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities (NHSPWD).

Galway County Council’s strategic plan will be cognisant of relevant policy and legislation, namely:

- Time To Move On From Congregated Settings, HSE (2011)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse - National Policy and Procedures, HSE (2014)
- The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014)
- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015
- Sharing the Vision – a Mental Health Policy for Everyone, HSE 2020
- National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Ratified 2018)
- Irish Sign Language Act (2017 – Commencement Order 2020)

UN CRPD Articles 19, *Living Independently and Being Included in the Community*, and 28, *Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection*, outlines that disabled people have an equal right to access public housing schemes and grants, to live independently in the community, with choices equal to others. People with disabilities have lived with extremely high levels of poverty and social exclusion for years, which often perpetuate or exacerbate the problems with housing that they experience. Under the UN CRPD, disabled people should be entitled to an adequate standard of living including housing, the opportunity to choose their place of residence on an equal basis with others and the opportunity to live independently in the community.

This strategy is informed by the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability which sets out its vision; *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 purpose of Galway County Council's strategic plan is to work towards a rights-based approach to housing, universal access and community inclusion for people with disabilities living in County Galway. Galway County Council will endeavour to achieve this within the mainstream housing environment.

The four categories of disability referred to in this strategy are:

- 1) Sensory disability
- 2) Mental health disability
- 3) Physical disability
- 4) Intellectual disability

Autism is recognised by Galway County Council as a disability. Currently it is not recognised on the Disability and/or Medical Information Form (HMD - Form 1) as a category of its own – this will require addressing nationally. Galway County Council will consider each application on its own merit.

See Appendix 1: Categories of Disability

2. Scope of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026

An application for prioritisation for housing under the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 can be made on a case by case basis or by a group of applicants being supported by a disability service provider / HSE.

An application for prioritisation under the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 is open to any housing applicant who has a disability. The decision to grant that prioritisation is subject to the outcome of assessment based on the information and evidence provided on the Disability and/or Medical Information Form (HMD - Form 1). The form states the information provided will be used to assess if priority status should be awarded to an application.

Forms will be collated by the Applications team in Galway County Council. Some applications will be straight forward and decisions will be made within Galway County Council. Others may require discussion and recommendations from a sub-committee of the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG).

The HMD – Form 1 form states:

“When we give a person priority status on disability or medical grounds, this means they go nearer to the top of the waiting list, as set out in the Local Authority’s Allocation Scheme”;

Priority status may be awarded if the following three criteria apply to your household:

- you or someone in your household has a disability or a medical condition and
- the current accommodation is not suitable to meet the needs of the person with a disability or medical condition and
- a change in housing will improve or stabilise the circumstances of the person with a disability or medical condition.

Refer to [Appendix 2](#) to view the [HMD - Form 1](#).

3. Awareness and promotion of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability

According to the national census in 2016, there are 22,523 people in County Galway living with one or more disability. This is 13% of the overall population of the County. Engaging with such a large number of people is not possible unfortunately. For those who avail of disability services or supports through an organisation, it was possible for a level of engagement to take place.

A comprehensive and accessible public Communications Strategy is planned with targeted actions to promote the Strategic Plan via:

- Galway County Council’s website and links to websites of partner organisations
- Galway County Council facilities around the county to display information
- Galway County Council’s social media pages with links to partner organisations to disseminate information, build general awareness and upload communiqués about the strategy
- Traditional Media

In addition to the membership of the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG), there are many organisations who have a key role to play in disseminating information such as:

HSE	Tusla	Galway Early Intervention Service
HSE – Mental Health, Primary Care, Older Persons, Disability	Ability West	Brothers of Charity – West Region
Youth Work Ireland	Jigsaw	Regional Co-ordinator for Traveller Health
Galway County PPN	DEASP	Galway Rural Development
Galway County Disability Forum	Independent Living Movement Ireland	Carers groups
Migrants groups	GRETB	Galway Citizens Information Centre
Community Response Forum	Galway County Sports Partnership	Galway County Age Friendly Alliance
Family Resource Centres		

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) will promote Galway County Council’s Strategic Plan through its member organisations based in Galway County, Community and Voluntary stakeholders, Galway County PPN and Galway County Disability Forum. Galway County Council is committed to making the Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disabilities 2021-2026 available to individuals, families and carers as widely as possible.

The Irish Wheelchair Association’s national ***Think Ahead, Think Housing*** campaign ([Appendix 3](#)) will be a useful reference for this strategy. .

The inclusion of the Ability West document ‘***Future Planning: Resource Pack for Individuals & Families*** provides useful guidance to individuals and families ([Appendix 4](#)). It includes comprehensive information about various types of services/supports within the intellectual disability sector. It outlines the challenges and considerations regarding future planning including housing and resources for supports.

4. Stakeholder Engagement and HDSG Functionality

The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 is guided by the continued involvement and oversight of the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG). Over the course of the 2021-2026 period, the HDSG will work towards developing the individual/client/family representation on the group to ensure the lived experience of persons with a disability is understood, shared and represented.

The HSDG will continue to have representation from the relevant stakeholders. There is a need for further subgroups to be developed to focus on the various categories of disability (Appendix 1). There is currently well-established links with the physical disability, mental health and intellectual disability sector.

Galway County Council will ensure the HDSG is effective and functions to the best possible standards by:

- Reviewing Terms of Reference on an ongoing basis to ensure there are minimal gaps in representation.
- Where there are gaps in representation on the HDSG, for example sensory disability (the deaf community and visually impaired and people with autism), a representative from one of DFI's member organisations based in County Galway will be identified and supported by DFI for inclusion on the HDSG.
- Galway County Council will ensure elected Councillors, members of the Housing and Planning Strategic Policy Committees and Housing and Planning Linkage group PPN representatives are aware of the HDSG and its work.
- Building strong working relationships between Galway County Council, the HSE and Community partners.
- Information sharing about for e.g. Disability Awareness training to be shared via the HDSG to enable all stakeholders including Galway Council staff to avail of training (subject to approval).

5. Aims and objectives

The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 is designed to facilitate the local implementation of UN CRPD Articles 19 (independent living), 26 (assistive technology) and 28 (adequate standard of living). The aims and objectives are outlined as follows;

5.1 Universal Design

The draft County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that *'Residential units will continue to be delivered for particular or identified needs of the population. This will be based on the principle of universal design and lifelong adaptability. These residential units will be located in sustainable locations in the first instance to ensure immediate access to local services and infrastructure and facilitate a greater degree of social inclusion'*. Ongoing and further development in this area is required. Galway County Council will continue to seek resources from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to deliver the required level of universal design. This will ensure long-term investment in the future proofing of the county's housing stock.

Galway County Council acknowledges that the adoption of the principle of Universal Design provides for greater sustainability of our housing stock, especially in the current circumstances of dramatically rising construction costs. It should be noted however, that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, remains as the sanctioning authority in respect of the adopted design standards, funding and project approvals. Higher levels of design for disability (including higher levels of universal design) can be sanctioned but such applications must be accompanied by supporting evidence and information in the form of clinical assessment/recommendation (for e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and related clinical fields) in respect of the particular circumstances of an identified prospective tenant.

5.2 Proportional Representation

Proportional Representation is where the prevailing percentage of disability within the social housing list would be automatically reflected in new-build design without the requirement for further justification. For example, if the total

amount of applicants with a disability for social housing in Galway County is 22% then supply would be increased to 22%. Galway County Council acknowledges that proportional representation is recommended by advocacy groups and stakeholders. Galway County Council aims to increase housing supply year on year and it is noted that the ongoing demographic trends will see the number of people with a disability increasing by approximately 20% by 2026. It is therefore expected that Census 2022 will report a rise in the number of disabled people living in county Galway.

However, Galway County Council must work within departmental rules in terms of design standards for new-build housing and while it cannot currently commit to proportional representation, it is committed to advocating for higher levels of futureproofing for disability. *Note*: this is already the current standard – all new builds have wheelchair visitable bathrooms.

5.3 Accessibility

Galway County Council acknowledges the IWA's submission that all government funded, new social housing in Galway County should include a minimum of 7% of fully wheelchair accessible units Galway County Council will work towards this by reviewing housing applicants requirements in conjunction with the HMD 1 form and will aim to create an internal register of wheelchair accessible housing stock. Galway County Council will consider the Irish Wheelchair Association ***Best Practice Access Guidelines (4th Edition)*** as a standard of choice in all new building designs (Appendix 10).

Galway County Council is aware of the needs of an increasingly diverse population including children and adults with complex and multiple disabilities. The Irish Wheelchair Association recommends two levels of housing design: Lifetime Adaptable Housing and fully Wheelchair Accessible Housing. Alongside this is a need for a purpose-built approach for fully wheelchair accessible housing that will accommodate the person's needs, equipment and additional supports such as a PA or a carers bedroom. Galway County Council supports this and will work on advocating for this level of provision over the course of the 2021-2026 strategy and beyond.

5.4 Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology for housing design is recommended to support independent living and in developing efficiencies in the requirements for personal assistants/support staff and informal supports. The use of home/smart technology is encouraged and will be incorporated where feasible, subject to departmental approval. Galway County Council is open to consultation with designers of Age-Friendly smart home models to examine whether certain age friendly models of sustainable home and neighbourhood design can be modified or replicated to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of people with disabilities and their carers in County Galway.

5.5 Housing Grants

The Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) supports the call for a review of the Housing Adaption Grant limits. In addition, the HSDG supports the view that the household income criteria for housing grants requires review. It currently includes all persons residing in the home as opposed to the person to whom the grant applies and benefits and does not factor in the extra costs of living with a disability. The Galway County Council HDSG will work on advocating for these objectives in their work.

5.6 Representation of Applicants with a Disability

It is evident in the feedback from focus groups completed as part of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 that there is an **under representation** of housing applicants with a disability, in particular from those who are;

- linked to a disability service provider/HSE and living in the community (with their families, carers)
- linked to a disability service provider / HSE and have a disability
- residing in a congregated or service setting

The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 is a resource for service providers to work with individuals/families to encourage and support the right to secure housing tenure, alongside disability service supports.

5.7 Review of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability

The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 will be reviewed regularly to allow for consideration of national disability strategies, regulation or legislation developments.

6. Estimate of Housing Needs in the Disability Sector

6.1 Stats from Service Providers / HSE

These are overall figures of service users/clients using services in Galway, not specially related to housing applications – for information and context as to the demands on health and social care services.

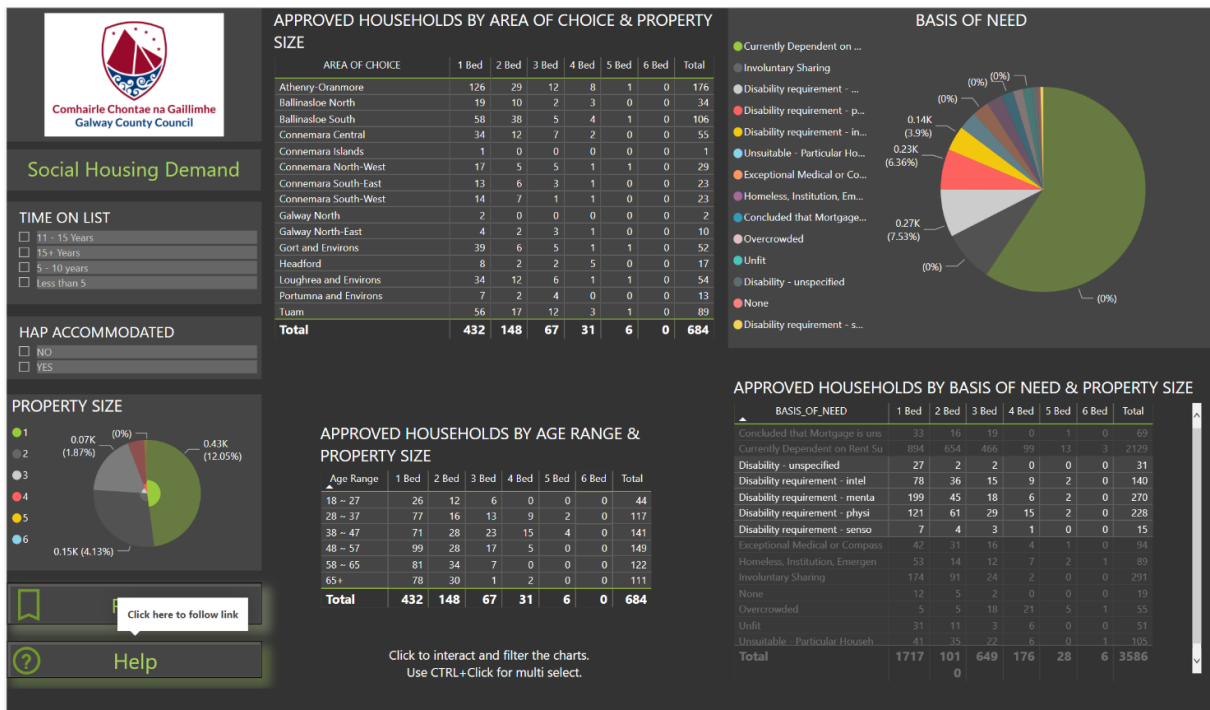
Category of Disability	Service Provider	No. of adults in receipt of services	No. of children in receipt of services
Mental health	HSE	5500 approx. (city & county)	1500
Sensory & Physical	HSE (18-65 year olds)	232 open cases 141 waiting list	
Physical	Enable Ireland	23	
Intellectual	Ability West / Brothers of Charity - West region	715	

6.2 Housing Demand

For up-to-date stats on housing demand, visit

<http://www.galway.ie/en/services/housing/demand/>

Below stats are a snapshot as of September 2021



APPROVED HOUSEHOLDS BY BASIS OF NEED & PROPERTY

BASIS_OF_NEED	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
Concluded that Mortgage is uns	33	16	19	0	1	0	69
Currently Dependent on Rent Su	894	654	466	99	13	3	2129
Disability - unspecified	27	2	2	0	0	0	31
Disability requirement - intel	78	36	15	9	2	0	140
Disability requirement - menta	199	45	18	6	2	0	270
Disability requirement - physio	121	61	29	15	2	0	228
Disability requirement - senso	7	4	3	1	0	0	15
Exceptional Medical or Compass	42	31	16	4	1	0	94
Homeless, Institution, Emergen	53	14	12	7	2	1	89
Involuntary Sharing	174	91	24	2	0	0	291
None	12	5	2	0	0	0	19
Overcrowded	5	5	18	21	5	1	55
Unfit	31	11	3	6	0	0	51
Unsuitable - Particular Househ	41	35	22	6	0	1	105
Total	1717	101	649	176	28	6	3586

APPROVED HOUSEHOLDS BY AGE RANGE & PROPERTY SIZE

Age Range	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
18 ~ 27	26	12	6	0	0	0	44
28 ~ 37	77	16	13	9	2	0	117
38 ~ 47	71	28	23	15	4	0	141
48 ~ 57	99	28	17	5	0	0	149
58 ~ 65	81	34	7	0	0	0	122
65+	78	30	1	2	0	0	111
Total	432	148	67	31	6	0	684

7. Emerging needs

The updated Social Housing Application Form being launched by the Department of Housing will include whether an applicant requires wheelchair accessible housing. This additional information will support Galway County Council in the future planning for wheelchair accessible units.

There is a need to review all existing people on the current approved housing list to establish the number of people who require wheelchair accessible housing as part of their current or future needs. The roll out of the Disability and/or Medical Information Form HMD - Form 1 will assist with this and in identifying emerging needs for people with disabilities going forward, including applicants who have mobility issues, sensory needs and other support needs.

The Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) welcome information from the HSE to identify any disabled persons resident in nursing homes in Galway County due to a lack of adequate personal and social care packages. Young people/adults with a disability leaving care should be highlighted to Galway County Council via the Tusla Aftercare Steering Committee.

Galway County Council aim to:

- Identify the number of wheelchair/disability accessible properties in the pipeline.
- Share information with applicants who are in the offer zone*.

*Offer zone:

- Applicant whose application has been processed by a full shortlisting review.
- Has supports from stakeholders confirmed and in place prior to a finalised housing allocation.

The HDSG will examine and develop a process for clients in the offer zone which will include regular communication between support services and Galway County Council.

8. Housing Delivery Pipeline

Galway County Council has a growing pipeline of social housing under construction. Own-build developments currently on site include 49 no. units at Fana Bhui in Tuam, 26 no. units at Hospital Road in Clifden, and 10 no. units at Cartron in Kinvara. The units are generally designed in accordance with the principle of Universal Design with a number of units specifically designed to provide for a higher level of physical disability (e.g. fully wheelchair-accessible units). The benefit of having a strong pipeline of delivery of own-build housing is that the design can be specifically tailored to the needs of the Council's social housing applicants.

With the benefit of additional evidence/ information/ supporting documentation, a higher level of provision is being included in a number of units. For example – a number of fully wheelchair accessible units are being included. Galway County Council is working to expand its housing landbank – as stated above this will facilitate delivery to meet the specific requirements of those on the housing waiting list – e.g. smaller-sized units, inclusion of bungalows etc. With a significant housing landbank, Galway County Council is very much in the driving seat to tailor delivery, including the provision for disability of various categories and needs.

9. Challenges and Opportunities

The following is a list of priorities that have been identified by stakeholders. This is not an exhaustive list. This strategy aims to offer proposed solutions. Additional actions are noted in section 12 also.

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Opportunities (Proposed Solutions)</u>
Pathways / Communication	<p>The Housing Coordinator post has been established in HSE Mental Health under the Service Reform Fund (SRF). The Service Reform Fund was created by the Department of Health; the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government; the Health Service Executive Ireland (HSE), Local Authorities, Atlantic Philanthropies, in collaboration with Genio, to implement service reform in Ireland in mental health, disability and homelessness.</p> <p>The HDSG recommends that this post should be replicated by the Physical, Sensory and Intellectual Disability Sector as it has proven to be a valuable model in supporting people linked to Mental Health services acquiring housing and liaising with Galway County Council.</p>
Representation of Applicants with a Disability (Point 5.6)	<p>The HDSG recommend the inclusion of a lived experience rep from each category of disability on the HDSG (if possible). The Lived Experience representative and service provider representative from each category of need can work in partnership. There would be an expectation that the lived experience representative has an interest / knowledge base in housing issues and is part of a broad consultative fora.</p>

<p>Design of units / developments</p>	<p>Stakeholders to be included at the design stage, particularly for the housing needs of specific client groups. Input and information sharing on models such supported living initiatives/developments (international best practice) to be welcomed.</p>
<p>CAS Proposals (Capital Assistance Scheme)</p>	<p>Galway County Council (Housing) will continue to liaise with Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's) and will specifically highlight the need for and integration of disability specific housing. Galway County Council will continue to support CAS applications. Galway County Council will advocate for the progression of supported living developments for vulnerable clients.</p>
<p>Income of Family</p>	<p>The income of person with a disability should be considered solely as opposed to the inclusion of the wider family/carer's income as part of the means test for housing. Applicants are likely to be residing with family due to their disability. Cases / Applications refused based on income may be appealed and a request for reassessment can be made based on their own income rather than that of the extended family (for e.g. other family members that are over 18).</p>
<p>Security of Tenure</p>	<p>Clients availing of mental health services residing in HAP accommodation have raised the issue of the 'mental stress of insecure tenure'. Housing options with more secure tenure such as provided by Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, RAS or Long Term Leasing (where possible) will be considered as preferable to HAP in the case of some persons with disabilities. HAP is an effective and valuable social housing option and is impacted by supply and demand in the same way</p>

	<p>as all housing options.</p> <p>As stated in the National Housing Strategy for Persons with a Disability – 9.32 p.114 ‘Security of tenure is a critical issue for people with mental health disabilities. A stable home is vital in promoting recovery and insecurity or uncertainty regarding accommodation can exacerbate a mental health disability. People may be at risk of relapse where tenure is lost or in doubt’. Galway County Council will collaborate with stakeholders on individuals cases via the HDSG subgroups where possible.</p>
<p>Clients who have been residing in an institution, acute or congregated setting</p>	<p>A congregated setting is defined as ‘where 10 or more people with a disability are housed in a single living unit or placed in accommodation that is campus or institution based’. An ‘institutional residential setting’ is defined as ‘any place in which people do not have, or are not allowed to exercise control over their lives and day to day decisions. An institution is not defined merely by its size. This definition helps to illustrate that the experience of institutionalisation is not related simply to location or size of the property, but rather to life conditions and the degree to which a resident has real and substantial control over their living arrangements.</p> <p>Under category of need, the length of time an individual with a disability has been residing in an institutional, acute or congregated residential setting <i>prior to making their housing application</i> may be taken into account. This will be determined on a case by case basis. Historically, residents in such settings may not have been aware,</p>

	<p>encouraged or supported to apply for social housing as they are currently. This was a restriction of their rights and resulted in a delayed application for social housing.</p>
<p>Applicants with a Disability who are Homeless</p>	<p>Applicants who have a disability who are also assessed as being homeless must be categorised as homeless on their housing application to ensure they are prioritised appropriately. Applicants with a disability who are homeless should be referred to the Homeless Unit in Galway County Council should they require homeless services. Supports and communication between disability services providers, homeless service providers and Galway County Council Homeless Unit is essential in supporting homeless clients who also have a diagnosed disability.</p>
<p>Co-Sharing / Group Living</p>	<p>Currently, persons allocated a tenancy with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) are considered to have their long-term housing needs met and are removed from the housing waiting list. Exceptions can be considered on a case by case basis for individuals in co-sharing arrangements to remain on the social housing waiting list.</p> <p>Individuals who are co-sharing in non-relative, non-partner arrangements (who are linked to a disability service provider / HSE / service setting) who are sharing a tenancy and who would prefer to be considered for a single unit of accommodation in future will be considered.</p>
<p>Pets / Emotional Support</p>	<p>Applicants raise the issue of the importance of a pet as an emotional support. Some approved housing bodies and management companies</p>

	<p>stipulate that no pets / no dogs are permitted. This can be negotiated on a case by case basis where there is evidence to support that the pet is an emotional support animal (with reasonable restrictions based on size of pet relative to the size of the property and the behaviour of the pet etc). Galway County Council cannot guarantee that an AHB or other housing provider can accommodate a pet.</p>
<p>Compatibility, Tenancy & estate management, safety for vulnerable clients with a disability</p>	<p>Certain features, which are frequently detrimental to the health safety and welfare of tenants with a disability should be considered when allocating housing, for e.g.: estates with significant anti-social behaviour; estates with a known problematic young population; problematic sites (for e.g. corner sites), locations isolated from the community; locations too close to close to main roads with heavy traffic (as these may have an increased level of noise irritation)' – ref. page 116 of the National Housing Disability Strategy.</p> <p>Suitability for housing will be considered on a case by case basis and compromises may have to be considered due to supply issues. Considerations regarding compatibility, estate management and client vulnerability can be discussed on a case by case basis with the relevant stakeholders at the shortlisting stage.</p>
<p>Clinical Input</p>	<p>The <u>HMD 1 form</u> states that:</p> <p><i>Section 3 and 4 are to be filled out by <u>two Healthcare Professionals who work with the person with a disability or medical condition.</u> A Healthcare Professional includes the following</i></p>

	<p><i>professions: Consultant, General Practitioner (GP), Mental Health Nurse, Public Health Nurse, Occupational Therapist and Social Worker. If you are considering using a Healthcare Professional not listed above, please contact your Local Authority to confirm if this is acceptable. An <u>Occupational Therapist report must be provided where there is a need for a specific accommodation requirement.</u></i></p> <p>For housing applicants with a disability who have a specific accommodation requirement and who are linked with the health and social care sector (HSE, Disability service providers etc.), clinical assessment / recommendations will be required to support the client’s progression to housing.</p>
<p>Supports: Health & Social Care</p>	<p>Galway County Council acknowledge that there are limited resources available to disability service providers from the HSE and Dept. of Health to enable services to provide the staffing and supports required to facilitate some clients with disabilities to avail of supported or independent living in the community.</p> <p>There is an ongoing gap between the housing need/provision and the support/care need in some cases, specifically regarding individuals who require a regular support worker input to provide support with activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs can include personal care, dressing, transferring/ambulating, and support with meals. This can also include support to access the community safely, for e.g. accessing public transport, support with managing safeguarding</p>

	<p>issues, managing finances, paying bills, doing shopping etc.</p> <p>Ongoing and regular communication via the HDSG and relevant subgroups will assist with the communication aspect of these cases. Ongoing advocacy is required on a case by case basis by the disability service providers to the HSE for resources. Legislation and policy regarding individualised funding for supports for service users should also be progressed at a national level.</p>
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Other Challenges to note:

- Lack of supply of appropriate, affordable housing in the private sector
- Severe pressure on the private rental market
- Construction cost inflation and labour availability
- Rent Allowance/HAP tenants' requiring adaptations/aids/appliances are often not accepted by landlords in private rented accommodation.
- Challenges within leasing schemes delivering social housing solutions.
- Families are often unable to finance the excess cost required to complete home adaptation despite the funding available via the Housing Adaptation Grant scheme.

10. Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion is about people with disabilities being supported to have a normal life in their community like everybody else and to access the same services – we don't 'spend time in the community', we live in the community. We go to shops, cafes, pubs, gyms, concerts, football matches, choirs, hobbies, socialise, meet friends, family, etc. Peer Support Workers, Housing Support Workers and Social Care staff have a role in supporting persons with disabilities to become part of their local community. The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 is underpinned by the ethos of Social Inclusion and the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 (Appendix 12).

11. Reporting

Minutes of HDSG meetings will be circulated promptly to the committee following meetings.

Where possible and if time allows, Galway County Council reports regularly at HDSG meetings on social housing stats, waiting lists generally and specifically regarding applicants with a disability.

Regular updates will also be provided regarding Housing Adaptation Grants.

12. Action Plan

	Action	Role	Review
1.	Galway County Council will work towards a rights-based approach to housing, universal access and community inclusion for people with disabilities living in County Galway.	G.co.co	Annually via HDSG
2.	The Disability and/or Medical Information Form <u>HMD - Form 1</u> will be implemented to allow for individual applications to be made for prioritisation under the <u>Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026</u> .	G.co.co	Year end 2021
3.	A comprehensive and accessible public Communications Strategy to promote the <u>Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026</u> will be implemented.	G.co.co	Year end 2021
4.	The HDSG will work towards developing the individual/client/family representation on the group to ensure the lived experience of persons with a disability is understood, shared and represented.	HDSG	2022
5.	There is a need for further HDSG stakeholder subgroups to be developed to focus on each category of disability.	HDSG	2022

6.	Galway County Council will aim to implement the principle of Universal Design.	G.co.co	Ongoing
7.	Galway County Council will aim to increase housing supply and work towards proportional representation provision for disability.	G.co.co	Ongoing
8.	Galway County Council will create an internal list of local authority and AHB wheelchair accessible housing stock.	G.co.co	2022
9.	The use of Assistive Technology for housing design where feasible and funded by the DoHLGH.	G.co.co	Ongoing
10.	The HDSG will advocate for a review of the Housing Adaption Grant upper limit of €30,000 due to the current building costs.	HDSG	Ongoing
11.	Galway County Council and the HDSG will encourage and support service providers to work with individuals/families to support people to apply to be on the social housing waiting list to make their housing needs known.	HDSG	Ongoing
12.	The HDSG will examine and develop a process for clients in the offer zone which will include the communication with the support services.	HDSG	2022

13.	The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 will be reviewed regularly to allow for consideration of national disability strategies, regulation or legislation developments.	HDSG	Annually
14.	The Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) welcomes information from the HSE to identify any disabled persons inappropriately resident in nursing homes in County Galway who require housing. Support packages will need to be identified by the HSE.	HSE G.co.co	Ongoing
15.	Galway County Council will prioritise young disabled adults leaving state care (Tusla) via Social Work and the Aftercare Steering Committee.	Tusla G.co.co	Ongoing
16.	Galway County Council and the HDSG will work towards solutions to the challenges identified in Section 10 of this document.	HDSG	2021-2026

13. Appendices / Resources

(Click on the links to access documents)

- [Appendix 1:](#) Categories/Definitions of Disability
- [Appendix 2:](#) Disability and/or Medical Information Form [HMD - Form 1](#)
- [Appendix 3:](#) IWA: Think Ahead, Think Housing FAQ's
- [Appendix 4:](#) 'Future Planning: Resource Pack for Individuals & Families availing of Ability of West Services'
- [Appendix 5:](#) Disability Federation Ireland – Submission to HDSG
- [Appendix 6:](#) Ability West & Brothers of Charity West Region – Submission to HDSG
- [Appendix 7:](#) Mental Health Services – Submission to HDSG
- [Appendix 8:](#) Design for Mental Health Housing 2017
- [Appendix 9:](#) Supporting People with Disabilities to access Appropriate Housing in the Community (Mental Health Services) – Guidance Document
- [Appendix 10:](#) Irish Wheelchair Association Best Practice Access Guidelines (4th Edition)
- [Appendix 11:](#) Housing Options
- [Appendix 12:](#) Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025
- [Appendix 13:](#) National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016

14. References

- 'Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland'
- Rebuilding Ireland – An Action Plan for Housing & Homelessness (July 2016)
https://rebuildingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Rebuilding-Ireland_Action-Plan.pdf
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Time to Move on from Congregated Settings
A Strategy for Community Inclusion
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/congregatedsettings/time-to-move-on-from-congregated-settings-%E2%80%93-a-strategy-for-community-inclusion.pdf>
- Sharing the Vision – A mental Health Strategy for Everyone (Department of Health, 2020).