



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016

Sixth Report on Implementation: January
– December 2019

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(Chaired by the Housing Agency)

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 - 2016 was due to expire in 2016. The Strategy was re-affirmed under *Rebuilding Ireland*, the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness and extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims.



Adapted 2 bed units constructed by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council for people with disabilities at Rochestown Gardens, Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin.

Glossary of Terms

AHBs – Approved Housing Bodies

CAS – Capital Assistance Scheme

CALF-Capital Advance Leasing Facility

CCMA – County and City Management Association

CONGREGATED SETTINGS– the 2011 HSE Report *Time to Move on from Congregated Settings, A Strategy for Community Inclusion* is concerned with all individuals with intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities living in larger congregated settings. Larger congregated settings were defined for the purpose of the project as living arrangements where ten or more people share a single living unit or where the living arrangements are campus-based.

DHPLG – Department of Housing, Planning, Local Government

DECONGREGATION–the transitioning of people with intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities living in larger congregated settings from institutional care to more appropriate community based living arrangements.

DoH – Department of Health

DFI – Disability Federation of Ireland

HAP – Housing Assistance Payment

HSE – Health Service Executive

HDSGs – Housing & Disability Steering Groups (Local Authorities)

HIQA - Health Information and Quality Authority

HA - Housing Agency (Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency)

IMG - Implementation Monitoring Group

NDA – National Disability Authority

NHSPWD – National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

TSO – Tenancy Sustainment Officer

UNCRPD-United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

The work of this Group has been undertaken in line with the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 and this report meets the criteria as set out in the Transparency Code.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (*NHSPWD*) 2011-2016 was published jointly by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (now Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government) (DHPLG) and the Department of Health (DoH) in 2011. The Strategy sets out the Government's broad framework for the delivery of housing for people with disabilities through mainstream housing options. The Strategy and Implementation Framework (published in 2012) were developed as part of a coherent framework, in conjunction with the Government's mental health policy *A Vision for Change*. All of these were adopted as the policy framework to support people with disabilities to access community-based living with maximum independence and choice. Building on the commitment given in the *Programme for Government* to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities, the *NHSPWD* was re-affirmed in *Rebuilding Ireland* and extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims.

The Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG) is responsible for reporting on progress made in the implementation of the *NHSPWD* in accordance with Strategic Aim 9 of the Implementation Framework. The Strategy and the Framework are both fundamental to the achievement of these aims and provide for the development of national protocols and frameworks to support co-operation by all of the agencies involved in the delivery of services to people with a disability. The necessary structures for such co-operation are now well embedded between the agencies involved in implementing the Strategy, including the disability sector, and these will continue to underpin Departmental policy over the lifetime of the Strategy.

The Housing Subgroup is driven by the Housing Agency and comprises representatives from DHPLG, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Department of Health (DoH), local authorities, the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and various disability representative organisations. It has a key role in the implementation of the Strategy and, as such, the DHPLG and DoH wish to acknowledge its work and commitment throughout 2019. The Departments are also appreciative of the

contribution and continued support of the IMG and look forward to continuing our partnership with all stakeholders to ensure that the collaboration with the HSE, the Housing Agency and the disability sector is maintained to continue to achieve the aims and objectives of the Strategy.

Chapter 2 of the report sets out details of the implementation, monitoring and reporting framework.

Chapter 3 of the report outlines the progress which has been made by the Housing Subgroup during 2019 under a range of themes:

- **Interagency Cooperation**
- **Guidance and Supports for Local Authorities**
- **Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated Settings**
- **Mental Health**
- **Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in 2019**

Chapter 4 sets out conclusions in relation to progress to date and the importance of continued partnership in taking work forward.

Chapter 5 sets out the priorities for 2020 in meeting the key aims of the *NHSPWD*.

Chapter 2: Monitoring, Reporting & Implementation

Implementation Monitoring Group (IMG)

The IMG published its first Progress Report in 2014 covering the period September 2012 – December 2013. The second Progress Report covering the period January 2014 – December 2015 was published in 2016 and the third report for January-December 2016 was published in 2017. The fourth report was published in 2018 and the fifth in March 2020. All five reports are on the Department's website and can be found here: Details of the IMG members during 2019 are set out in **Appendix 1**.

The Group held two meetings during 2019.

Housing Subgroup (Housing Agency)

Implementation of the Strategy is being driven by a dedicated Subgroup chaired by the Housing Agency. The Terms of Reference of the Subgroup are set out in the first Progress Report. Details of the 2019 membership of the Subgroup are set out in **Appendix 2**.

The Subgroup met four times during 2019 to progress a range of priority actions within an agreed work plan for the year which included;

- Continued support for the transitioning of people with intellectual and physical disabilities from congregated settings;
- On-going work on the roll out of a national project to transition people with low and medium mental health support needs to more appropriate community living arrangements;
- Raising awareness about disability issues and housing requirements;
- Supporting the work of the local authority Housing and Disability Steering Groups;

- The development of a number of housing documents to enable people with disabilities to access housing support effectively and easily; and,
- The development of a mental health early intervention manual for tenant support.

Details of progress on key issues over the period January to December are set out in **Chapter 3.**

Chapter 3: Progress on Implementation

Progress on implementation is reported under a number of key areas:

- **Interagency Cooperation**
- **Guidance and Supports for Local Authorities**
- **Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated Settings**
- **Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in 2019**
- **Mental Health**

Interagency Cooperation

- The framework of interdepartmental and inter-agency cooperation continued over the course of 2019 to underpin key working relationships between all of the relevant agencies. At national level, DHPLG, DoH, HSE, the HA and the disability sector continued to work together supported by the HA chaired Subgroup and working groups reporting to it.
- Government policy on decongregation (as outlined in the 2011 HSE Report *Time to Move On from Congregated Settings*) is a matter for the DoH and is supported by the NHSPWD. The DHPLG is represented on the HSE led Time to Move On subgroup which is responsible for driving the implementation of the decongregation programme.
- Four meetings of the subgroup were held in 2019. The DHPLG is also represented on the wider HSE Transforming Lives Working Group to which the Time to Move on subgroup reports. This group met quarterly in 2019.
- The mental health project for low and medium support needs is a Priority Action under the NHSPWD Implementation Framework. Details of the pilot project to begin implementation of the Action are addressed in earlier IMG Reports. Following a successful Pilot rollout of the project

commenced in 2018 and continued in 2019. The progress of the project is overseen by a Steering Group, chaired by the Housing Agency with representation from DHPLG, DoH and the HSE, the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and the local government sector.

Guidance and Support for Local Authorities (Housing Agency)

- The role of the Housing Agency is to support the effective implementation of the *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016* (NHSPWD) and to ensure that there is a consistency of approach at local level to the housing of people with disabilities.
- The Agency works with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) and the Department of Health (DoH), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), local authorities and representatives of disability organisations to achieve the aims of the Strategy.
- In 2019 the Agency continued to provide guidance and support for local authorities to enable them to progress the housing needs of people with disabilities in a planned and equitable way.
- The Housing Agency Sub-Group and working groups or single focus groups act as an effective forum to bring the relevant services together to ensure that the priority actions of the Strategy are achieved.

Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) and Local Authority Strategic Plans

- Priority Action 1 of the Implementation Framework (2012) requires that mechanisms are put in place at national and local level to support all persons with a disability who have a housing need to have their needs assessed. The Framework specifies that local authorities should develop strategic plans for the housing of people with disabilities, informed by the local authority assessment of housing need's process and broader formalised consultation with stakeholders. In addition, the establishment of Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) in each city/county to facilitate integrated and timely responses to the housing needs of people with a disability is provided for in Priority Action

2 as a key measure in the establishment of a robust interagency framework to drive progress at the local level. Accordingly, the Steering Groups were established in each of the 31 local authorities between 2015 and 2017, with the support of the Housing Agency who drew up their Terms of Reference and provided guidance.

- Membership of the Groups include disability advocacy representatives for the four disability categories as well as representatives of the local authority including the Director of Housing Services as Chair of the Group, the HSE and approved housing bodies. The Groups are now operational in all local authorities and continue to be supported by the Housing Agency to plan for the current and future needs of people with disabilities in each local authority area. The Groups meet at least four times a year locally and a co-ordinator for each Group also meets with the Housing Agency at national level on four occasions annually.
- Each Steering Group has put a five-year Strategic Plan in place some of which some are due to be renewed in 2021. An annual review mechanism was built into each strategic plan to enable the individual local authority to assess targets, evaluate operations, highlight issues that need to be addressed and ensure that they are functioning as the Strategy intended.
- The Housing Subgroup reviewed the HDSG Terms of Reference (TORs) to assist the operations of the groups in 2019 and a new baseline TOR was issued nationally.
- The Housing Agency intensified its support work with the HDSGs in 2019 and a number of meetings were held by the Housing Agency for the local authority HDSG representatives to ensure that they are fully aware of the key role that the HDSGs have in the housing of people with disabilities and to enable them to work proactively on the Groups to achieve their aims.
- As well as the informative value to the participants these sessions enable the local authority staff involved to meet colleagues in different authorities dealing with similar issues. It is intended to continue these meetings with a view to-

- developing a consistency of approach to the delivery of housing for people with a disability;
 - raising awareness of specific disability related topics;
 - informing the direction/work of the Housing and Disability Steering Groups;
 - other issues as they arise.
- In 2019 the Agency, in consultation with the LGMA, continued work on the development of a comprehensive form for local authorities to capture data relating to the allocation of housing to people with disabilities which is essential data to facilitate planning at local and at national level.

Allocation of social housing by local authorities to people with disabilities-reporting

- In 2019 local authorities continued to report to the Housing Agency on the allocations of social housing to people with a disability in 2018. The results of the reporting exercise continues to reflect the substantial efforts undertaken by local authorities to provide housing for people with a disability. Year-on-year the statistics show improvements with allocations to people with a primary basis of need as a disability increasing from 1,206 in 2016 (the first year for which statistics were compiled) to 1,401 in 2018. The majority of local authorities met the targets set in their Local Strategic Plans.
- The breakdown of the allocations based on the category of disability in 2018 was:

Physical	761
Sensory	155
Intellectual	318
Mental Health	167

Summary of Social Housing Assessments

- The 2019 *Summary of Social Housing Assessments* showed that 4,126 households had specific accommodation requirements due to the fact that one of their members had a disability, representing 6% of the total. These numbers

showed a marginal increase on the 2018 figures which were 4,037 or 5.6% of the total across all four categories of disability.

- The 2019 figure compares with a decrease in applications based on disability of 6.7% between 2017 and 2018 while in the period 2013-2016 the number of people in this category had increased by 13.7%.

Design Roadmap and Other Documents

- The *housingforall* website was published online in 2018. The website is a design roadmap developed by the Housing Agency developed by the Housing Agency in response to an identified need for a one stop shop for existing information and provides an overview and links to existing published legislation and guidance on designing to meet the housing needs of people with a disability or older people.
- Local authorities continued to disseminate the Housing Options booklet in English, Plain English, Irish and Easy Read published by the Housing Agency. The booklet gives a comprehensive overview of the housing options available to people with disabilities through local authorities.

Mental Health Property Transfer Project

- This project is one of the key deliverables under Strategic Aim 5 of the NHSPWD which aims to address the specific housing needs of people with a mental health disability moving from HSE run hostels and community residences to tenancies in the community . Details of the project are set out below in *HSE Developments*.
- The Housing Agency continued to provide support to the project for which funding has been secured until the end of 2020 when the model will be reviewed.

Mental Health Early Intervention Manual and Training Programme

- Strategic Aim 5 of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability identified a need for training of local authority staff to ensure that they are in a position to deal with the complex needs of people with a mental health disability. The difficulties experienced by some of this group can lead to difficulties in obtaining and maintaining suitable accommodation. To address

this a Task Group of the Housing Agency Sub-group was set up to examine the issues around this and to look at ways in which the negative outcomes for people with a mental health disability could be addressed. The group comprised members of the Housing Agency, the HSE, Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and local authorities. A key finding of the group was that early detection of an issue was vital to management of the difficulties being experienced.

- A manual to assist local authority and approved housing body staff was published in 2019 to support applicants and tenants with mental health disabilities to access and maintain accommodation. The manual provides an Early Interventions Process which is based on a series of questions and a risk assessment to enable the staff member to identify and act on concerns they may have around an application or the maintenance of a tenancy. The aim is to provide support at as early a stage as possible to prevent or reduce the severity of a negative housing outcome for the person concerned.
- The manual also offers staff a better understanding of the main mental health conditions and enhances their skills in recognising the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a person with whom they are interacting is experiencing. The manual gives an overview of the HSE Mental Health Services and resources available who also assisted with the material for the manual and for the training programme.
- A training programme for local authority and approved housing body staff based on the Early Interventions Process was rolled out in 2019. The training is tiered based on the level of interventions that an individual staff member has with applicants or tenants. The face-to-face training course is aimed at office-based staff who conduct interviews with applicants or tenants. At the end of 2019 seven local authorities and 140 people (including staff of approved housing bodies) had completed the face-to-face training.
- In addition to the face-to-face training the training programme provides online training, videos and brochures and posters for staff who have less formal interactions with people with a mental health disability.

Proposed New Medical/Disability Information Form

- In 2019 a Task Group of the Housing Agency commenced an examination of the requirements on the social housing application form relating to the awarding of a medical/disability priority in the context of an overall review of the form. The Task Group was comprised of HSE and local authority officials who consulted with a number of stakeholders including the Housing and Disability Steering Group Facilitators, the HSE Mental Health Housing Coordinators, the Housing Practitioners Forum and the Housing Sub-Group.
- The purpose of the review is to streamline and standardise the information required as well as how this information is processed across local authorities with the intention to ensure that the appropriate level of information is sought to determine if the provision of accommodation will have a direct positive impact on the health and quality of life of the person with a disability. It will also determine if a priority status is warranted in individual cases.
- Use of the new medical/disability form was piloted in four local authorities (Fingal, Kilkenny, Sligo and Leitrim) for three months in 2019.

Transition of People with Disabilities from Congregated Settings (HSE)

- The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the *Time to Move On from Congregated Settings: A Strategy for Community Inclusion Annual Report 2018* was published in July 2019. The report provides data and analysis on the progress that was made in transitioning people from congregated settings to community living during 2018 and examines the overall progress achieved over the seven-year period 2012-2018, since the policy was introduced. Both reports are published on the HSE website www.hse.ie/timetomoveon.

Progress achieved in 2019

- At the end of 2019, there were fewer than 1,960 people still resident in a tracked congregated setting and 116 people had completed their transition to community living during the year. There continued to be a particular focus in 2019 on achieving moves from the priority sites, which are settings with significant issues

in achieving compliance with the National Standards for Residential Services, as regulated by HIQA. Two centres completed their decongregation in 2019 which brings the number of centres that have now closed during the implementation of the Time to Move On policy to 16. In addition to this there are now 19 centres with less than 10 residents remaining and 76% of the residents remaining are living in units that are stand alone or on a campus with 9 or fewer others.

- As in previous years, capital funding was allocated in 2019 to the HSE by the Department of Health for the acquisition and refurbishment of properties to accommodate individuals transitioning from priority institutions identified by the HSE, where all other funding avenues have been exhausted. The National Estates and Disability Oversight Group (established in 2016) continued to co-ordinate activity, share learning and develop resources to support the teams in HSE Estates, HSE Social Care and Service Providers to work collaboratively to ensure that allocated funding is effectively utilised for the benefit of service users in accordance with person-centred plans.
- A Service Reform Fund is in place to support the phased transition to the person-centred model of services and supports funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, the DoH, HSE (Social Care and Mental Health Services) and Genio for the period 2016-2019. In 2019 funding continued to support 10 projects supporting transitions from the priority settings.
- Work by the HSE to improve public communications and promote the positive experiences of those transitioning from congregated settings continued in 2019. A number of newsletters and other features detailing the impact of the policy in developing homes in the community and supporting people to move to new lives were developed.
- In 2019 the 'Making a Home' resource document for service providers was finalised and published. It is a practical guide to creating a home and supporting a move to the community.

- In 2019 a Location Review Subgroup completed the review of existing congregated settings and models of service to support best practice in the future. The review group focussed on two key areas;
 1. A review of current residential services in order to determine which locations meet the criteria of a congregated setting and to examine how the policy is applicable in each location.
 2. Supporting people with disabilities and significant residential support needs. The final reports with recommendations were under consideration at the end of 2019.

Mental Health

- The *NHSPWD* gives effect to the housing commitments contained in the Government's mental health policy, *A Vision for Change*. Priority Action 5.3 of the *Implementation Framework* for the *NHSPWD* seeks to facilitate the transitioning of people with mental health difficulties with low and medium supports needs, from HSE mental health facilities to appropriate community settings. There was a recognition in the Strategy and the Framework that this group of people would require specific supports to help them to manage the transition to community living.
- A Pilot project was undertaken in Laois/Offaly in 2016/2017 which supported 14 persons to transition to community living arrangements as AHB tenants in a home of their choice. The Housing Agency carried out a final review of the Project at the end of 2017 and found it had many positive outcomes for the persons involved, thereby providing a good model on which to implement the national roll out in 2018. Funding for the tenancy sustainment element of the national roll out of the Project is met jointly by the DHPLG and the Department of Health/ HSE. The total cost of ten Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSO's) is estimated at €1.8m over a three-year programme 2018-2020.

- The Pilot project demonstrated that two distinct types of support are needed for people transitioning to community living with full tenancy rights and obligations. Firstly, **medical support** to maintain their mental health recovery, which will be provided by the multi-disciplinary Community Health Care Team; and, secondly, **'social care'** support in adjusting to more independent living including issues such as maintaining a tenancy, paying bills, maintaining their homes to a reasonable standard, integrating into the community etc. This support is provided by the Tenancy Sustainment Officers.
- A Steering Group, chaired by the Housing Agency has oversight of the roll-out of the Project nationally to ensure robust governance and accountability.
- This project is an example of the type of interagency co-operation that is essential to drive progress using the NHSPWD Framework.

Mental Health Housing Coordinators

- The HSE programme to provide housing coordinators in all CHO areas continued in 2019. The Housing Coordinator works alongside Community Mental Health Teams and supports service users with their housing needs. Their role is to foster effective partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders in order that evidence based models of practice may be established to support people with a mental health disability to access housing .The coordinators undertook Housing Agency training with local authority staff involved with the Housing Disability Steering Groups during 2019.

Housing Options for People with Disabilities: Funding and Progress in 2019 (DHPLG)

Mental Health Pilot

- In 2019 the DHPLG continued to part-fund (with the Department of Health/HSE) the cost of tenancy sustainment officers under the Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Project (see above page 14 **Mental Health**) which was rolled out nationally during 2018. The Tenancy Support (TSO) Model is being rolled out

across the country within the medium and low support HSE owned properties that are within the scope of this project. The funding of the TSO workers is being done on a 50/50 basis between the HSE and the DHPLG.

Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)

- The Department's Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) provides funding to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to assist them to provide housing for people with disabilities, the elderly and the homeless. In August 2017 the DHPLG issued a 'Call for Proposals' to inform local authorities that it was accepting applications for capital funding for the delivery of housing for the priority groups, including people with a disability, with a particular emphasis on moving people with disabilities from congregated settings to the community. This is a 'rolling call' for applications.
- CAS expenditure in 2019 was €97.7 million. It supported the delivery of 570 dwellings (142 through construction and 428 acquisitions) in 2019. Expenditure was up by €17.05 million on the 2018 expenditure of €80.65 million. The number of units provided was also up by 85 compared to the 485 dwellings (183 construction & 302 acquisitions) delivered in 2018.
- Of the 570 CAS units delivered in 2019 over 80 were for people with disabilities, including those moving from congregated settings.

CAS Circular 32/2019- New forms for all Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) Projects and additional technical and cost guidance for the provision of housing for people with a disability.

- Following extensive collaboration with the HSE DHPLG issued a new CAS Circular on 11 October 2019 (CAS Circular 32/2019) to all local authorities incorporating new forms for all CAS applications, but, in particular, providing additional guidance to authorities on the provision of CAS housing for people with a disability with particular emphasis on providing housing for people currently living in congregated settings.

- The Circular was issued to address common concerns of the HSE and local authorities which had arisen relating to application procedures and selection of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to provide CAS funded housing. It also gives guidance on the scale of provision, new build approaches, adapting existing dwellings, location, value for money and fire safety provisions.

Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)

- The Department offers financial support to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) in the form of a long term loan under the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) to assist with the financing of the construction or acquisition of homes that will be provided for social housing use including for people with disabilities. This loan facility can support up to 30% of the eligible capital cost of the project, where the homes will be provided under long-term lease arrangements to local authorities for social housing use. Funding is provided to AHBs through Local Authorities.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

- The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a form of social housing support for people, including people with disabilities, who have a long-term housing need. HAP is a flexible and immediate housing support that is available to all eligible households throughout the State and plays a vital role in housing eligible families and individuals.
- At the end of Quarter 4 2019 there were over 52,500 active HAP tenancies, of which 17,025 were set up in 2019. The total number of tenancies created since the scheme began in 2014 to end 2019 was over 71,000.
- Any household that qualifies for social housing support, and that is not currently housed by their local authority, can apply for HAP. A key principle of the HAP scheme is that eligible households source their own accommodation in the private rented sector, which best suits their needs, in their area of choice.

- The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 regulates the landlord-tenant relationship in the private rented sector and sets out the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants. HAP supported tenancies are afforded the same protections available to all private rented tenancies.
- HAP provides households with more security than rent supplement and facilitates those households to increase their household income without the risk of losing their housing support.
- In cases where there is a distinct on-going dependent relationship, or where additional requirements are necessary in order to assist a person with a disability, local authorities may consider the individual circumstances, and, if deemed appropriate, seek to assist such households with additional HAP support.

Rent Supplement and Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

- Rent Supplement is, over time, to be replaced with HAP for households with a long-term housing need, although Rent Supplement will continue to be available for people who need short-term support in meeting their housing costs. It is the intention of the Department to complete the transfers from long term Rent Supplement to HAP by 2020, as outlined in the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness – Rebuilding Ireland. Once transferred from Rent Supplement to HAP, households are in receipt of a much more secure form of state support.
- As the HAP scheme replaces Rent Supplement, it is expected that more RAS tenancies will terminate than will commence.

Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability

Private Housing

- The Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for Older People and People with a Disability are for private homeowners and are funded 80% by the exchequer with a 20% contribution from the resources of each local authority. The purpose

of the grants is, where there is an established need, and subject to income, to facilitate adaptations to the houses of people with physical, sensory, intellectual or mental disability, or an older person with mobility difficulty in order that they may remain in their own homes for as long as possible. The three separate grants available under the scheme are:

- the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability (up to €30,000) aimed at facilitating changes needed to make homes suitable for a person with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability or a mental health difficulty. Eligible works include the provision of access ramps, stair lifts, accessible showers/toilets and house extensions;
 - the Housing Aid for Older People (up to €8,000) will cover costs relating to structural repairs or improvements, rewiring, replacement of windows and doors, provision of heating etc.;
 - the Mobility Aids Grant (up to €6,000) is aimed at adaptations to address the mobility problems of a member of the household. It covers stair lifts, grab rails, level access showers etc. These latter two grants enable older people to remain living independently in their own homes for longer and to facilitate early return from hospital stays.
- Funding of €71.25 million was allocated for the three grants in 2019, made up of €57 million in Exchequer funding and €14.25 million from local authority resources, an increase of some 8% on 2018. The responsibility for the apportionment between the three grant schemes is a matter for each local authority. Funding for these schemes has been increasing year on year since 2014 with 10,011 households benefitting in 2019. Further information in relation to targets and performance in relation to this scheme can be accessed at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/80913-public-service-performance-report-2019>

No of Grants paid				
	People With a Disability	Older People	Mobility Aids	Total
2015	2600	3127	1869	7596
2016	2714	3425	1871	8,010
2017	3449	3558	2073	9,080
2018	3622	3640	2151	9413
2019	3891	4009	2111	10011

Social Housing Adaptations

- The DHPLG also provides funding to local authorities for adaptations and extensions to the existing social housing stock to meet the needs of local authority tenants. The scheme applies to adaptations that are necessary to address the needs of older people or people with a disability who may require a downstairs bedroom or bathroom stair lifts; grab-rails; showers; wet-rooms and ramps etc.
- The scheme is demand-led and allows local authorities to prioritise works based on need. Exchequer funding meets 90% of the cost of such works, with the local authority providing the remaining 10%. In 2019 funding of €17m was recouped to local authorities supporting improvements in over 1,800 units.

Housing Adaptation Grant Forms

- The Department and the Housing Agency collaborated during 2019 on a project which arose from a commitment in Rebuilding Ireland to streamline the application process for the housing adaptation grants schemes and make them more accessible. Local authorities were consulted individually and workshops were held nationally as well as consultation with key stakeholders for people with disabilities and older people.

- Circular 41/2019 issued to local authorities in December 2019 with the new application form and guidelines for the scheme. The operation of the new scheme will be kept under review.
- Further information in relation to the number of grants paid etc under these schemes is available at <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/statistics/social-and-affordable/other-local-authority-housing-scheme-statistics>.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

In April 2018 Ireland ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which commits the State to the progressive realisation of the economic and social rights enumerated in the Convention. The right to live independently in the community with choices equal to those in wider society with the necessary supports (if required) is provided for in Article 19 of the Convention. This means that people with disabilities may choose their place of residence and with whom they wish to live and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement. For a number of years now disability strategy and policy in Ireland across a range of services has put a strong focus on putting in place the appropriate structures to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled, through mainstream service provision policy, to live happily and independently in inclusive communities.

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011-2016 and Implementation Framework (2012) recognises that access to appropriate housing is fundamental to the achievement of independence and the nine Strategic Aims are the building blocks on which this is being achieved year-to-year. The Strategy supports the Department of Health/HSE policy on decongregation *Time to Move On from Congregated Settings-A Strategy for Community inclusion* and the housing elements of the mental health policy *A Vision for Change*. Progress with a programme as broad ranging as this is, of necessity, incremental but, notwithstanding this, the Strategy has achieved real change for people with disabilities since 2011. A key element of such change is that local authorities must now plan strategically for the existing and future needs of people with disabilities through their Housing and Disability Steering Groups and review their plans on an annual basis. Since the Groups have representatives with the lived experience of disability, this affords them the opportunity to be involved at the critical planning stage, and, to influence how local authorities address the needs of people with disabilities in the most appropriate manner. The work of the Housing Agency in 2019 in supporting and providing training to the Groups is critical to their effectiveness

particularly as some of the authorities are nearing the end of their first five-year cycle of Plans.

The NHSPWD continued to support decongregation in 2019 primarily through the funding provided to approved housing bodies under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) which funded the transition of 9 people from congregated settings while the CAS scheme provided over 80 dwellings overall for people with disabilities. A further two of the priority sites for decongregation were closed in 2019 and 116 residents moved to the community. Residents of congregated settings are eligible for social housing supports in the same way as other citizens and, in 2019, 11 of those transitioning to the community chose to access housing through their local authority.

While statistics have their place, to measure the success of such transitions solely in terms of numbers would not be an accurate representation of the herculean work done by all of those involved in such moves, including the residents who are moving, but to the outcomes of their work which is to 'transform lives' so that those moving may live self-directed lives like all other citizens in wider society. The number of congregated settings that are now closed under the *Time to Move On* policy stands at 16, and of the sites prioritised for decongregation, there are now 19 centres with less than 10 residents remaining of which 76% of the residents remaining are living in units that are stand alone or on a campus with 9 or fewer others. Those implementing the programme are now equipped with a wealth of knowledge and experience in managing the complex task of enabling people to make a successful transition from institutional to community living which will inform their actions in making further progress with the programme.

Participation in community life is also the philosophy underpinning the mental health tenancy sustainment project for people with low to medium mental health needs which continued in 2019 with seven tenancy sustainment officers in place nationally. This project is specifically designed to meet Strategic Aim 5 of the NHSPWD insofar as it relates to the housing needs of a defined group of mental health service users, recognising that the provision of appropriate supports is vital to their recovery and

their integration into the community.

A guidance and training manual for local authorities and voluntary agencies to enable them to address the complex housing needs of people with a mental health disability as envisaged in Strategic Aim 5 was published by the Housing Agency in 2019. It is a very welcome addition to the existing pool of published resources for the guidance of those working in the area of housing for people with disabilities and was complemented by training courses which were very well received. The manual is designed to give local authority housing and approved housing bodies staff the skills and confidence to manage housing issues that people with a mental health disability may experience because of their condition. Vision for Change had identified that some people with mental health issues find it difficult to maintain tenancies and can fall into homelessness as a consequence. The emphasis in the Housing Agency training manual is on identifying issues at as early a stage as possible in order that the tenant can be supported in whatever manner is appropriate to avoid such an outcome. Such an approach not only has benefits for the tenant involved but also for the service provider, and indeed for wider society in terms of the resources required for managing people in such circumstances.

The NHSPWD recognises that housing for people with disabilities requires a partnership approach since there are a multiple of agencies, Departments and organisations involved. All of the work detailed in this report, which builds on work detailed in previous reports, is founded on a partnership model which is now established on a structured basis and is an embedded feature of the Strategy. From producing documents to managing the transition of residents from congregated settings the evidence of collaboration between agencies is evident and is key to the changes that have been made to the lives of people with a disability as a result of the Strategy.

The review of the Strategy which is due to commence in 2020 will no doubt again recognise the value that the partnership model has brought to implementation of so many of the strategic aims and seek to continue and strengthen it in any future

strategy. As we look to 2020 there are many things that remain to be achieved but the progress so far will ensure that the momentum is sustained to ensure that housing for people with disabilities remains a high priority for all of those involved in its delivery.

Priorities for 2020

- Implementation of the Strategy will continue in 2020 through the Housing Subgroup, supported by the DHPLG, DoH, the HSE and the disability sector.
- The IMG will continue to monitor and report on implementation of the *NHSPWD*. This report for the period 2019 will be published on the DHPLG website. Progress will continue to be updated in the context of *Rebuilding Ireland*.
- The *Transforming Lives* accelerated implementation programme relating to people with disabilities in Ireland, will continue in 2020. DHPLG will continue to work with and support the HSE and DoH to progress the programme. The HSE target for transition in 2020 is 132 people.
- The HSE will allocate a further tranche of funding in 2020 from the multi-annual *Capital Programme for Disabilities* to support the delivery of appropriate housing for people moving from congregated settings and sustain the progress of the programme.
- The allocation of the remaining Capital Disability Funding for 2018-2022 will be kept under review and managed to ensure the HSE and service providers can forward plan effectively to deliver quality housing solutions for people with disabilities.
- The HSE will progress the implementation of the recommendations in the two documents: The Review of the congregated settings register and the Report on best practice for those with significant specialist residential support needs.
- The Making a Home Report will be developed in an Easy Read format to

make it accessible to more people.

- The Housing and Disability Steering Groups will review the targets for delivery that they set in their Strategic Plans with a view to to increase supply and plan more strategically for the needs as identified.
- The Housing Agency will continue to engage with the LGMA to discuss the existing uses, reporting facilities and capabilities of the iHouse system in the preparation for the Annual Implementation Forms which will issue to local authorities to capture their allocations to people with a disability in 2019.
- DHPLG and HA will continue to monitor the operation of the new streamlined Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme.
- DHPLG will continue to provide 100% funding under the Capital Assistance Scheme for projects to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities.
- The Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Programme rolled out nationally in 2018 will continue during 2020.
- DHPLG will continue to actively engage at national level with the HA, DoH, the HSE and representatives of the disability sector through participation in the various working groups and meetings.
- A review of the NHSPWD will commence in 2020.

Appendix 1

Membership of the Implementation Monitoring Group

Paul Lemass	DHPLG
Caroline Timmons	DHPLG
Alan Byrne	DHPLG
David O' Connor	Department of Health
Michael Murchan	Department of Health
Brendan Tuohy	Department of Health
Deirdre Scully	HSE
Paul Braham	HSE
Claire Feeney	Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency
Karen Murphy	Irish Council for Social Housing
David Silke	Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency
Hugh Kane	National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
Edward Crean	National Disability Authority
Kate Mitchell	Mental Health Reform
Dolores Murphy	Irish Wheelchair Association and Disability Federation of Ireland
Fiona O' Donovan	Disability Federation of Ireland
Alison Connolly	Focus Ireland
David Girvan	Inclusion Ireland
Rose Kenny	CCMA

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Appendix 2

Membership of the Housing Subgroup

John O'Connor	Chair (CEO Housing Agency)
Claire Feeney	HA
David Silke	HA
Julie Ryan	HA
Billy McCarthy	DoH
David O'Connor	DoH
Paul Braham	HSE
Suzanne Moloney	HSE
John Browner	HSE (Estates)
Karen Murphy	Irish Council for Social Housing
Kevin Ryan	Irish Council for Social Housing
Brian Lambe	Cluid
Alison Harnett	National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
Catherine Keenan	Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council
Martina Smith	Housing Association for Integrated Living
Barry Lynch	Kildare County Council
Dolores Murphy	Disability Federation of Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair Association
Alison Ryan	Disability Federation of Ireland
Edward Crean	NDA
Kate Mitchell	Mental Health Reform
Caroline Timmons	DHPLG
Alan Byrne	DHPLG



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