



Sligo County Council

Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability

2016 - 2019

1. Purpose and Goal

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 - 2016, published in 2011, and the associated National Implementation Framework, which are joint publications by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Health were developed as a part of a coherent framework, in conjunction with the A Vision for Change (the Government's mental health policy) and a Time to Move on from Congregated Settings (the Report of the Working Group on Congregated Settings) to support people with disabilities in community based living with maximum independence and choice.

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 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

While not explicitly mentioned in the Housing Strategy for the purpose of this plan Category (d) will be intellectual and/or 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.

The households covered by the strategy have been deemed by Sligo County Council to be eligible and qualified for Social Housing Support as having a basis of need where a member of the household has a disability. This assessment is carried out in accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 (as amended).

It is intended that the strategy will form an integral part of the Housing Services Plans 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 the local authority 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.

2. 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 size etc. that is required to allow them to live appropriately.

2.1. Congregated Settings and the Learning Disability & Autism Services

In relation to people with a disability living in congregated settings, deinstitutionalisation 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. It is no longer acceptable that individuals with an intellectual disability are accommodated or receive services within congregated settings. These facilities do not support the rights based agenda that we strive to uphold as their advocates

The de-congregation of Cloonamahon and Cregg is the most important priority for the Learning Disability and Autism Service of the HSE over the next 5 years. It is important to set targets for all the stakeholders involved including the HSE, Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, Local Authorities and the various disability representative groups over the next 5 years..

There is a need to adopt a different pathway to housing people with a disability that respects their needs and rights. The Learning Disability and Autism Service have commenced this process with a policy that since 2014 there have been no new admissions to congregated settings instead, the target is towards community services.

The individuals still residing in congregated settings tend to be people with aging/mobility/medical or challenging needs. There is a need for purpose built bungalow style accommodation which also has capacity for sleep over staff. This type of accommodation is not readily available in the locations required.

2.2. Mental Health Services

From a Mental Health perspective the ethos of supporting clients to live productive and meaningful lives despite vulnerabilities that may persist is paramount and is underpinned in the national policy document "A Vision for Change"

The majority of new service users with severe mental illness will not require community residential facilities but will need varying degrees of support to live in individualised, independent accommodation.

Close co-operation with relevant housing authorities and organisations is required to ensure that this commitment towards people with severe and enduring illness is honoured. Tenancy agreements need to be developed and agreed between service users and specific housing authorities and organisations whether in the public or private sector.

3. Roles and Responsibilities within the Disability Sector

3.1 Housing Authorities

Local Authorities acting as Housing Authorities have 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. In many cases the solution for the individual will also require the support of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

3.2 Health Service Executive (HSE)

In some cases the HSE is the direct service provider to an individual. In addition, the HSE is the current funding agency of support services by third parties. The HSE is also one of the main drivers of the deinstitutionalisation of residents from congregated settings.

In addition, the HSE will identify individual support costs and continue to provide funding for residents in their new housing environments. The HSE has the overall statutory responsibility for the management and delivery of healthcare and personal social services. In respect of disability services, the HSE's responsibility is fulfilled by the provision of services directly by the organisation and also, to a very significant extent by the funding of non-statutory organisations to provide such services on its behalf. The HSE aims to support each individual with a disability in living as normal a life as possible, 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 a congregated type setting, the HSE 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 full inclusive lives at the heart of their family, community and society.

3.3 Service Providers

This would include HSE (direct service provision) service providers and the non-statutory service providers. Responsibilities will include the development of an overall project plan to include person centred plans, provision of information with regard to housing options, supporting the individual with regard to application for assessment of housing needs, access to external advocates, support around tenancy arrangements, care support needs identified, assistance with the development of circle of supports etc. Service providers must also participate in the local implementation teams, identify any obstacles / challenges to transition etc.

3.4 Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies will be the main 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.

4. Demand and Supply

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 approach taken to providing suitable and appropriate housing to people with disabilities will ensure that agreed disability specific general requirements and known individual requirements are met in all design and procurement briefs to meet both current and projected need of present and anticipated applicants. A proportion of any projected housing procurement may be forward planned and reserved to meet the demand from people with disabilities on local Housing Lists. An accessibility brief will be agreed and set out to inform the requirements that should be part of any brief 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).

4.1 Current demand

The current demand will 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 and then is consolidated for the county at Paragraph 4.1.8:

4.1.1 Housing Waiting Lists

People with a disability currently on social housing supply lists, are tabled below:

	Total*
Physical	16
Sensory	4
Mental Health	37
Intellectual	155
Subtotal	212

*Figures from full housing list, including transfers, subsequent tables are components of this table

4.1.2 Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)

AHBs operating in Sligo have an existing housing stock of 406 units. The normal allocation path for housing with AHBs is through the Local Authority Housing Waiting List, however there may be occasions where an Approved Housing Body has their own waiting list of people. The table below reflects the list.

	Total
Physical	0
Sensory	0
Mental Health	1
Intellectual	0

4.1.3 Housing Transfer Lists

Sligo County Council has an existing housing stock of 2126 units at 2nd April 2015. Annually a number of tenants, through new disability or injury, require alternative accommodation due to the inadequate nature of their existing living accommodation. This can be addressed

through a transfer arrangement if appropriate accommodation is available. The decision to transfer may be made as a less costly alternative to adaption works or were necessary adaption works are not feasible due to the nature of the property.

	Total*
Physical	3
Sensory	1
Mental Health	0
Intellectual	0

* These numbers have been included in the overall need given in Table 4.1.1

4.1.4 Homeless Persons

A number of individuals that are engaged with Homeless Services have a disability. This is particularly the case with Mental Health. The number of clients with a disability currently engaged with Homeless Services are tabled below.

	Total (on Housing List and included in 4.1.1	Not on Housing List or Application closed, awaiting Further Information
Physical	0	2
Sensory	0	0
Mental Health	2	5
Intellectual	0	0
Subtotal	2	7

4.1.5 Emerging Disability Need

The Local Authorities can only deal with Housing Applicants and households already identified to them through the Social Housing Support Application Process. However, it is accepted that there will always be an emerging need in this area. This is forecast based on past evidenced presentations and projections from those currently in receipt of care and under 18. The needs of individuals will vary and as a result the housing needs will vary

The table below sets out an annual and five yearly forecast of the emerging need under ten categories.(template supplied by Department of Environment , Community and Local Government)

Category	Source	Likely Disability	Annual Forecast of Presenting Numbers	5 year forecast
1	People in Care (Foster or other under 18)	Learning Disability	3	15
2	Emergency presentations Physical & Sensory	Physical & Sensory	2	10
3	Early intervention services		0	0
4	People availing of Day Services with a future need	Learning Disability	17	85
5	Residential Care waiting lists	-	0	0
6	Community Group Homes unsuitable due to nature of Disability	Learning Disability	22	110
7	Individuals placed in Nursing Homes inappropriately		0	0
8	Individuals living in Mental Health Hostels	Mental Health	3	15
9	Mental Health Acute Wards or Residential Units	Mental Health	3	15
10	Mental Health residential waiting lists	Mental Health	0	0
	Total		50	250

4.1.6 Owner Occupied Stock

Requirements for adaption or alternative accommodation due to disability arise in Owner Occupier properties. From a housing authority perspective, this can be gaged by the number of applications made annually for either Housing Adaption Grants or Mobility Aids Grants. The table below outlines the number of applications made annually under these schemes for the last three years from which the assumptions for the number of predicted applications over the coming years contained in the second table.

	2012	2013	2014
Housing Adaption Grants	38	47	71
Small Works	33	40	61
Major Works	5	7	10
Mobility Aids Grants	13	31	30
Total	51	78	101

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Housing Adaption Grants					
Total Estimated	100	100	100	100	100

4.1.7 Congregated Settings

There are two Learning Disability Congregated Settings in County Sligo located at Cregg House, Rosses Point, and Cloonamahon with a total of 152 people currently residing in the facilities. A number of these individuals will need to be re-housed outside of County Sligo because of their local connections and own preferences, the remainder will require Social Housing support in Sligo.

Physical and Sensory Disability Services have 1 congregated setting (5 person unit) in County Sligo – Cheshire Homes, Abbey View Sligo

Within County Sligo Mental Health Services own and manage 3 Supervised Residential Units for clients with enduring mental health illness. A Supervised Residential Unit provides 24 hour nursing care and each resident comes under the medical care of a Consultant Psychiatrist and local GP. One of the SRUs is a High Support Unit, another a Medium

Support Unit and clients at these units will not be seeking to be re-housed. The third unit is a Rehabilitation and Recovery Unit and some of the clients may seek to be re-housed.

Mental Health Services additionally have clients living in 9 Low Support Units located at Ard Na Greine, Connaughton Rd. Sligo, which are a mix of HSE owned, rented by the HSE on behalf of clients and private tenancies.

The table below identifies the number of people per Service Provider that remain in each facility. The number that it is known are on the Local Authority Housing List is also provided to ensure that there is not double counting of individuals already included in 4.1.1 above.

Service Provider	No. of individuals	On Housing List	New Need Identified
HSE Cregg House (learning disability)	73 for housing in Sligo	21	52
HSE Cloonamahon (learning disability)	29 for housing in Sligo	23	6
Cheshire Sligo (physical and sensory disability)	5	5	0
Total	107	49	58

This following table identifies the number of people that will be prioritised for transition by year. Assumptions made here have been documented in

4.1.8 Total Disability Need

Arising from Paragraph 4.1.1 to 4.1.7, it is evident that there is significant disability housing need in the county. The type of properties that are required will be difficult to determine as a forensic assessment of the individuals or their specific needs have not been carried out. However the table below summarises the basis disability needs within the county.

	Need as per Sligo County Council List (4.1.1)	Approved Housing Body (4.1.2)	Homeless Persons (4.1.4)	HSE Need not on Sligo County Council Housing list (4.1.5)	Total Need (HSE & Sligo County Council list)
Physical	16	0	2	5	23
Sensory	4	0	0	5	9
Mental Health	37	1	5	30	73
Intellectual	155	0	0	268 * (210 emerging plus 58 congregated settings)	423
Total	212	1	7	308	528

4.1.9 Assumptions

The data gathering exercise that has been completed to complete this Plan has not been to the level of a Housing Needs Assessment. It is based on knowledge of the people that are party to the completion of the plan and their wider networks.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service maintain both the National Intellectual Disability Database and a local Service Planning Database. These are updated on a bi-annual basis therefore information is accurate at that point in time. Variances will occur, but are small.

In compiling the total disability need in the county a number of assumptions have been made. These include:

- An average of 6 adults per year present to the Learning Disability and Autism Service for emergency/crisis need due to a break down or illness within their family.
- There are 48 people on the Learning Disability and Autism Service Referral Waiting List for immediate accommodation.
- Of the 152 people residing in Congregated Settings, nearly 50 % have a direct link/family tie to Sligo.
- It is important that people who have lived together for many years and are now regarded by themselves as family can relocate as a family unit to an area of their choice with amenities.
- The individuals still residing in congregated settings tend to have the greatest need as since 2006, 66 individuals have been relocated from Cloonamahon or Cregg House.
- The timeline for closure of Cloonamahon and Cregg House is 7 years, 2020. It is hoped as the plan is implemented to also use accommodation currently owned by HSE. The Learning Disability & Autism Service will work in partnership with Sligo County Council on the implementation of the plan.
- The aging medical and physical needs of people are increasing and current community accommodation which has been people's homes for the past number of years tend to be two storey average domestic dwellings. These houses are now not suitable from a needs and HIQA assessment.
- There are 171 young adults between 20 and 30 years of age. These clients are living at various locations around the county, some with their families and some in congregated settings. It is normal and customary for young people of this age to become independent of their families when they move into their own accommodation.
- It has to be understood that people's needs will change over time, and, while this is a guide to current needs, this will change according to needs. This will be communicated to the Local Authority.
- It is recognised that the rehousing of the individuals from congregated settings is an enormous challenge and finding the appropriate solutions to same will take time and resources.

It must be accepted that there is a risk that some estimations may be more onerous that will transpire and there may be an element of double counting or indeed omission. Every effort is made to ensure accurate projections of need but it is understood that this is the first time that such an extensive assessment of disability needs has been attempted.

5. 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 by direct provision or through non HSE agencies in the area of disability. Individuals must apply to the HSE for consideration for such supports. The supports for people in their homes are Personal Assistants and Home Support. Other services such as Day Care, Respite Services and full or part time Residential Services are also provided but must also be applied for and applicants will be assessed for suitability for the applied service.

5.1 Personal Assistance:

It is envisaged as far as possible that full inclusion and self-determination for people with disabilities is realised through access to the individual personal social supports and services needed to live a fully included life in the community.

Personal Assistance Services provide people with the opportunity to exercise control and choice in their lives. In so doing it enables disabled people to be active participants within their families, communities and society. Personal assistance supports the disabled person by the provision of direct individual one to one support and range from social/companionship supports to specialised high supports and care. The provision of publically funded personal assistance is based on needs assessment and approval for funding the HSE.

Applications for personal assistance services can be made through self-referral, GP's, PHN's, other medical professionals, voluntary support agencies or directly to the local HSE.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service currently provide individual packages of care to 28 people to access community services and live independently with support. This allows them to access day/educational/recreational/sporting opportunities.

There is a Transition Pathway Plan in place to support people accessing either new services/experiences particularly when there is a move of accommodation. This is based on a person centred care plan and ensures that supports are in place to aid a successful transition.

The Autism Service has a specific CAWT (Co-Operation and Working Together)* Transition Programme for those people either leaving home, education or children's services. This provides them with pathways and support as a bridge to new services.

- [*Co-Operation and Working Together – Partnership between the Health & Social Services in Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland which facilitates Cross Border Collaborative working in Health & Social Care.](#)

× [Adult Day Placement for Persons with Learning Disability](#)

5.2 Home Support:

The Home Support scheme 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 support works by the provision of number of hours of direct care per day to help the disabled person with a defined range of daily living tasks.

The provision of home support is based on a care needs assessment and approval for funding by the HSE. Services may be provided by the HSE directly, or by non-HSE providers. Applications for home support can be made through the persons supporting disability organisation, public health nursing service or directly to the local HSE.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service currently provide Home Support via Grants to 54 children and 30 adults and their families. These allow families and service users to buy in assistance to support them living in community settings. This will be extended to anyone who is assessed by the HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service referral team as requiring these supports.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service also support 38 people through the HSE Home Help Service. This is for those more able individuals and can be for help with cooking/cleaning/shopping, etc.

The HSE Physical & Sensory Disability Service ,in meeting the holistic needs of a person with a Physical and or Sensory Disability,carries out a home support assessment as part of the overall assessment process. This is to identify areas of unmet need or where support may be required. Community Services/Departments work in tandem to meet the overall needs of the person with a disability and if required a Public Health Nurse and Occupational Therapy Assessment may be required to determine the needs of the service user and required supports going forward.

Mental Health Services provide clients with support for day to day living – shopping, cooking, laundry and attending social events.

5.3 Day Services

Day Services provide a range of social and rehabilitative services for disabled people by offering an opportunity to have a meaningful day, develop personal, work and independent living skills and offering occasions to interact with the local community. Day Services are usually operated by voluntary agencies and include purpose-built centres or outreach facilities that provide day activation, such as recreational, sport and leisure facilities, supported work placements and specialized clinic facilities that provide a combination of medical and rehabilitation services.

The provision of day services are based on an individual needs assessment and approval for funding by the HSE. Applications for day services can be made through the person's supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service currently have 18 day/training/activation centres catering for 313 people in Sligo County. These services are accessible to all those through the Referral Process.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service are committed to establishing the “New Direction” * model of Day Placement opportunities throughout the County. This is based on a person centred care plan that is made available within the community in which live and is delivered through group or individualised supports. The service currently has Service Arrangements with 18 providers such as Family Resource Centres, Sports Partnerships and local community initiatives to offer a range of services where they are easily accessible.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service currently provide transport to approximately 200 adults to access their day service through the Local Link, National Transport Agency. It is envisaged that this scheme will expand to accommodate new day opportunities.

5.4 Respite Service

Respite services offers support to disabled people by providing temporary supported accommodation. This supported accommodation offers support to families and to the disabled person. Such support helps to maintain the independence for a person with a disability by encouraging interaction with their peers and offering a transition to independent living.

The provision respite services is based on a needs assessment and approval for funding by -the HSE. Applications for respite services can be made through the persons supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service in the past operated 6 centre based respite facilities, 3 for children and 3 for adults. While the children’s services remain, The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service are moving to a new model of Home to Home scheme respite. This ensures that if needed, people receive a break within the family structure rather than within a care facility. In the case of emergency respite or where a medical model is needed, this is still provided through Solas in Sligo.

Mental Health Services provide Respite Beds within the existing Supervised Residential Units and Group Homes

5.5 Residential Services

Residential Services both full and part time are provided by direct provision of the HSE or through non HSE agencies in the area of disability. The provision residential services is based on a needs assessment and approval for funding by the supporting voluntary agency or the HSE. Applications for residential services can be made through the persons supporting disability organisation or directly to the local HSE.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service are in the process of de-congregation of the Centres in Cregg House Sligo, Cloonamahon and Sligo. It is planned that these centres will close by 2020 and all persons living there will be more appropriately housed in communities either with their families or in locations they choose. It is normal practice that, during the transition from Congregated Setting Care to Independent/Supported Care, HSE nurses and care staff who have worked with such persons in the Congregated Setting will re-locate with the persons concerned. This provides a continuity of care. This practice will continue in the future.

A plan for the relocation of service users is in place and is reviewed on a year to year basis.

Mental Health Services have recently closed an 18 bed Supervised Residential in Co Sligo and with the provision of care moving to community based Community Mental Health Teams clients will increasingly be looked after within their own homes.

There are currently 48 houses in a number of locations throughout County Sligo accommodating 179 people of different needs and abilities. These houses are a mixture approved housing bodies, voluntary service providers such as North West Parents and Friends and HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service owned or rented accommodation.

The HSE intends to extend our relationship with Sligo County Council and the AHB sector to source future appropriate housing.

5.6 Service Providers

Sligo has a large number of direct HSE services for people with intellectual disability. This is a different model than the majority of Counties in Ireland who rely on service providers.

Personalised Support Packages are assessed, put in place and monitored by the HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service multidisciplinary team.

A service user forum is being established under the direction of Sligo Leader Partnership to provide advocacy for those undergoing the process of de-congregation.

A "Circle of Support" initiative is being piloted in local areas to provide people with support within their communities. This can be friends, volunteers, local clubs or family members. The initiative moves the support element away from Health Services and more community based. This project requires financial support to expand to all areas.

National Transport Agency, Local Link is a partner to provide transport to those people to access community services.

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service have developed a Home to Home Scheme which allows people requiring respite or support a link to a volunteer family in their own community.

A Transition Programme under the CAWT scheme is a vital pathway to individuals with Autism to move on to new opportunities.

The Assistive Technology Unit based in Sligo will work with people with disabilities, their family, carers and professionals to ensure they get full benefit from their computerised technology aids. To "Enable the Disabled". The Unit provides training on the use of computer or related devices. The training may be made available to the client, their carers and health professionals. The Unit will provide ongoing support to client users of computerised technology and their health professionals. It will act as a helpdesk service for these clients in resolving problems/questions.

6. Delivery and Supply Mechanisms

6.1. Local Authority Stock

Local Authorities are the largest landlord in the country with approximately 125,000 housing units. An individual must apply to the Local Authority for Social Housing Support in order to be considered for housing and there are a number of criteria that needs to be met including income limits, being unable to provide housing from their own means and being considered as being inadequately housed in their current accommodation. A tenant of a Local Authority will pay an income related differential rent.

6.2 Approved Housing Body Stock

Approved Housing Bodies have become a major player in the provision of Social Housing Support to people from all sections of the community. There are over 700 Approved Housing Bodies in the country of varying types and sizes. The housing provision of these also differ with some approved housing bodies dealing primarily with general housing provision while others have a more specialised role.

In Sligo there are approximately 16 Approved Housing Bodies providing housing. This includes the following type of accommodation:

- General housing
- Older person accommodation
- Housing for people with disabilities
- Homeless accommodation

To avail of Approved Housing Body owned accommodation an individual/household must in most cases apply and qualify for Social Housing Support with the Local Authority.

Approved Housing Bodies provide accommodation through

- New build
- Purchases
- Leasing

While Approved Housing Bodies access private finance to fund some of their development/purchases, they also receive the following funding from the State through the Local Authorities under :

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

6.3 Social Leasing Initiative

In order to increase the availability of properties for social housing provision, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), launched the Social Housing Leasing Initiative in 2009. This involves housing authorities leasing properties from private property owners for the purposes of providing accommodation to households on social housing waiting lists.

Leasing introduces greater flexibility in the composition of the housing stock and provides the opportunity for housing authorities to benefit from market conditions to increase output and meet housing need in a cost effective manner.

6.4 Rental Accommodation Scheme

The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is an initiative by the Government to cater for the accommodation needs of certain persons in receipt of rent supplement, normally for more than 18 months and who are assessed as having a long-term housing need. RAS is a collaborative project between the Department, Local Authorities, the Department of Social Protection.

6.5 Housing Assistance Payment

A new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) has been introduced for people who have a long-term housing need and who qualify for social housing support. It is being administered by housing authorities and will eventually replace long-term Rent Supplement for people with a long-term housing need, though Rent Supplement will continue to be available for people who need short-term support to pay their rent.

HAP is being introduced under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, together with a series of Statutory Instruments.

This payment has been piloted in a number of local authorities and commenced in Sligo in November 2015. As part of the Action Plan to tackle emergency and short-term homelessness, announced in December 2014, it was extended on a pilot basis to homeless households in the Dublin region.

As Rent Supplement is generally not payable to people in full-time employment, it can be a disincentive to taking up work. However, people on HAP will be able to take up full-time employment

7. Potential Supply

Each of the supply mechanisms listed above have been analysed to examine the potential of each to provide accommodation in the coming years for people with a disability. The plan is cognisant of the need to be realistic in any policy that is put in place in attempting to meet the needs of people with disability under each supply mechanism.

It must be noted that undergoing a process of elimination of institutionalisation will take many years and we must be realistic in this regard.

A priority action is to put in place a protocol to ensure that all agencies i.e. HSE, AHB's and the Council are not pursuing the same properties on the market.

7.1. Local Authority Sector

Sligo County Council provides units of accommodation to meet the needs of people with a disability through the Housing Capital programme by way of:

- Acquisitions,
- New builds,
- Voids Programme i.e. Returning long term vacant Council units to productive use
- Adaption's and extensions to Council Stock.
- Part V units.

Casual vacancies are also refurbished under revenue budgets.

7.1.1 Local Authority Housing Policy

- a) The council's allocation scheme in accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 2009 and Social Housing Allocation Regulations 2011 will apply to allocations and transfers to people with disabilities under this strategy.
- b) All houses acquired will be assessed for suitability with a view to 15% being utilized for people with a disability.
- c) That a minimum of 15% of all units in developments of ten units or more constructed by the Local Authority are designed specifically for people with a disability. In developments of less than ten units consideration will be given to providing one unit in each.
- d) Where a vacancy arises in an adapted or disability designed dwelling, the priority for a subsequent allocation will be given to an applicant with a disability on the current housing list.
- e) There may be opportunities to provide accommodation for people with disabilities where the Council are in negotiation with developers to secure units under Part V agreements, these should be pursued.
- f) Each design or procurement brief for new housing by the Council will include a section on Accessibility and Universal Design that sets out what the project will deliver i.e. number of adaptable and fully wheelchair accessible units. The future needs of the tenant shall be assessed and considered in the design of their proposed units in consultation with the tenant, their occupational therapist and their advocate.
- g) In line with the Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) Regulations 2015 regulations houses provided for persons with disabilities making the transition from congregated settings to community-based living under the National Deinstitutionalisation Programme will be excluded from tenant purchase / incremental purchase schemes.
- h) All options including transfers to a more suitable property will be considered in consultation with the tenant before committing to adapting their existing property to address their disability.
- i) Disability Awareness Training will be provided for front of house Council staff.
- j) Accessible Design training will be provided for Council design and procurement staff.

7.2 Approved Housing Bodies Sector

AHB's in conjunction with the County Council have a number of projects currently ongoing to provide accommodation of high standard to meet needs. This is built upon annually through the traditional 'Call for Proposals' with the Department in providing new or renovated units for people with disabilities.

Allocation of these units are subject to nominations from the Council.

7.2.1 Approved Housing Bodies Policy

- a) That a minimum of 15% of all units in developments of ten units or more constructed by the AHB are designed specifically for people with a disability. In developments of less than ten units consideration will be given to providing one unit in each-the specific need to be determined by the County Council.
- b) Where a vacancy arises in a Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funded project for people with a disability, the subsequent allocation will be taken from the current housing list for someone with a disability.
- c) Approved Housing Bodies will continue to develop Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) proposals in conjunction with Sligo County Council which will have identified the need.
- d) The principal of Universal Design and accessibility will be incorporated in all new builds, such accommodation will also be designated as units that will always be retained in the stock of the AHB for future use for similar applicants
- e) All options including transfers to a more suitable property will be considered in consultation with the tenant before committing to adapting their existing property to address their disability

7.3 Social Housing supported accommodation in the Private Rented Sector.

(Social Leasing/Housing Assistance Payment/Rental Accommodation Scheme)

Engagement with the private rented sector will take place to include information sessions to raise awareness of the benefits of people with a disability as tenants. It is recognised, in terms of the provision of disabled accommodation through this mechanism, that it is unlikely that the potential of this sector to provide a supply is a viable option unless there are financial incentives towards adaptations and subsequent re-instatement,.

This is to be reviewed in 2017 in the light of funding and experience to establish if it is a realistic potential source.

7.4 Private Housing Sector

- a) Universal Design and accessibility should be encouraged in all future design and new builds.
- b) The existing disabled persons grants schemes continue as set out at 4.1.6.

8. 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 of a real choice in how they live their lives.

The supply of suitable 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.

As already indicated, County Sligo is in a unique position, having two relatively large Learning Disability Congregated Settings within close proximity. The presence of these Settings, with special schools attached, has contributed to a larger number of individuals with intellectual disability living in the Sligo Area and therefore requiring housing, compared to other Counties. This has also resulted, over the years, in families relocating from other Counties to the Sligo area to avail of the Services provided, or, sending their family members to Sligo to live. The increased population is reflected in the figures presented in this document.

The Transition Plan will have to take into account that the local population and infrastructure of towns in Sligo will not support a large number of services over a short period of time.

The current stock of houses the HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service are not all suitable for people with intellectual disability and their aging needs and will require replacement in the near future.

The vast majority of individuals remaining in Cloonamahon and Cregg House require a bungalow style dwelling to cater for their needs and to future proof as a home for life. It is accepted that the supply of 5 or 6 bedroomed bungalows in County Sligo is limited and this will require an extensive building programme in partnership with County Council, approved housing bodies and HSE over the next 5 years.

The requirement that each person moving to new accommodation has to have a link to the County will provide a major challenge as the two congregated settings were historically used as a service for people from all over the island of Ireland. In most cases, the people have lived in these institutions for most of their lives, have no links to their original address and have become families within where they now live.

Accommodation will have to be matched to the individuals taking up residence as the concept of "a home for life" will have to take into account likely changes of need over time.

Individuals relocating to community settings must have medical and support facilities and local services within a reasonable distance for access. This will mean that accommodation will have to be located in and around towns.

There is a lack of new build of new schemes in or around the urban area of Sligo as the development of the boom years did not yield the desired new offer for Sligo itself but rather in surrounding towns of lower need.

9. Opportunities

9.1 Use of Technology

The new Social Housing Strategy 2020 provides an opportunity now to promote new housing for persons with a disability. Opportunities under this renewed Social housing provision strategy will be maximised where possible along with larger ongoing projects being promoted locally such as the Cranmore Regeneration Scheme.

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 could be considered for use are:

- Remote monitoring Systems
- Fall Prevention/Detection Systems
- Person Alarm Systems
- Living Environment Controls including access, lighting, heat

The HSE Learning Disability and Autism Service have Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Physiotherapists as part of their team to assess aids and appliances for individuals.

The HSE Assistive Technology Unit based in Sligo work with people with disabilities, their family, carers and professionals to ensure they get full benefit from their computerised technology aids.

The plan will ensure that a collaborative approach is taken between Sligo County Council, The HSE Assistive Technology Unit, Sligo IT, and other appropriate agencies to ensure the full use of assisted technology to support people to live independently in the community.

10. Time Lines

The Plan is time-lined to run from 2016 – 2019, however, it must be clearly recognised that the ability of Sligo itself to deal with the disability needs identified is under real pressure given the reality that a substantial element of the needs established has built up in the county over decades. It is envisaged that it will take the resources and time lines of many more plans to adequately address the need.

11. Annual Targets

To meet the targets set out in chapter 7 - Potential Supply.

To ensure that the universal design and wheelchair accessible principle is considered in all new build Council housing.

To draw up local protocols to ensure collaboration between all relevant agencies when a person with disability is allocated /nominated to a Social Housing unit.

The HSE to put in place a package of funding and supports that will ensure that personal supports are available for people with a disability transitioning from congregated settings to independent living for the life time of the tenancy.

HSE to commit to “ ring fenced” funding for personal supports (as required) when people with a disability are allocated housing by the Council /AHB.

Existing and new national protocols will be built upon and strengthened at local level through engagement with the HSE and other bodies to ensure a person with disabilities can live independently with appropriate supports.

13. Review Mechanisms

This plan will be reviewed at the end of the first quarter of each year in order to report on the deliverables for the previous year and to examine the accurateness and appropriateness of the information compiled, and to review proposed outputs for the following year. The needs will be reviewed following the outcome of the next National Housing Needs assessment.

MEMBERSHIP OF STEERING GROUP

Organisation	Representative
Sligo County Council	Bartley Gavin Acting Director Of Services (Chairman)
	Joe Murphy Senior Executive Officer
	Joe Gethin Administrative officer
Health Service Executive	Martin Beirne Social Housing Co-ordinator
	Joanna Mc Morrow Service Manager Physical & Sensory Disability Service
	John Truelove Project Officer Learning Disability Service
	Joy Synnott/Thomas Connell Mental Health Services
	Maria Gilmartin Learning Disability Services

Organisation**Representative**

The Carers Association

Rosaleen Doonan, Development Manager

Cheshire Ireland

Deirdre Chapman/Carina Murphy

Irish Wheelchair Association

Jeanette Beirne, Assisted Living Services

Disability Federation of Ireland

Jennifer Van Aswegen, Regional Support officer

Oaklee Trinity Ltd Housing Association

Martin Meek Supported Housing Manager

Sophia Housing Association

Carol McLoughlin Project Manager