



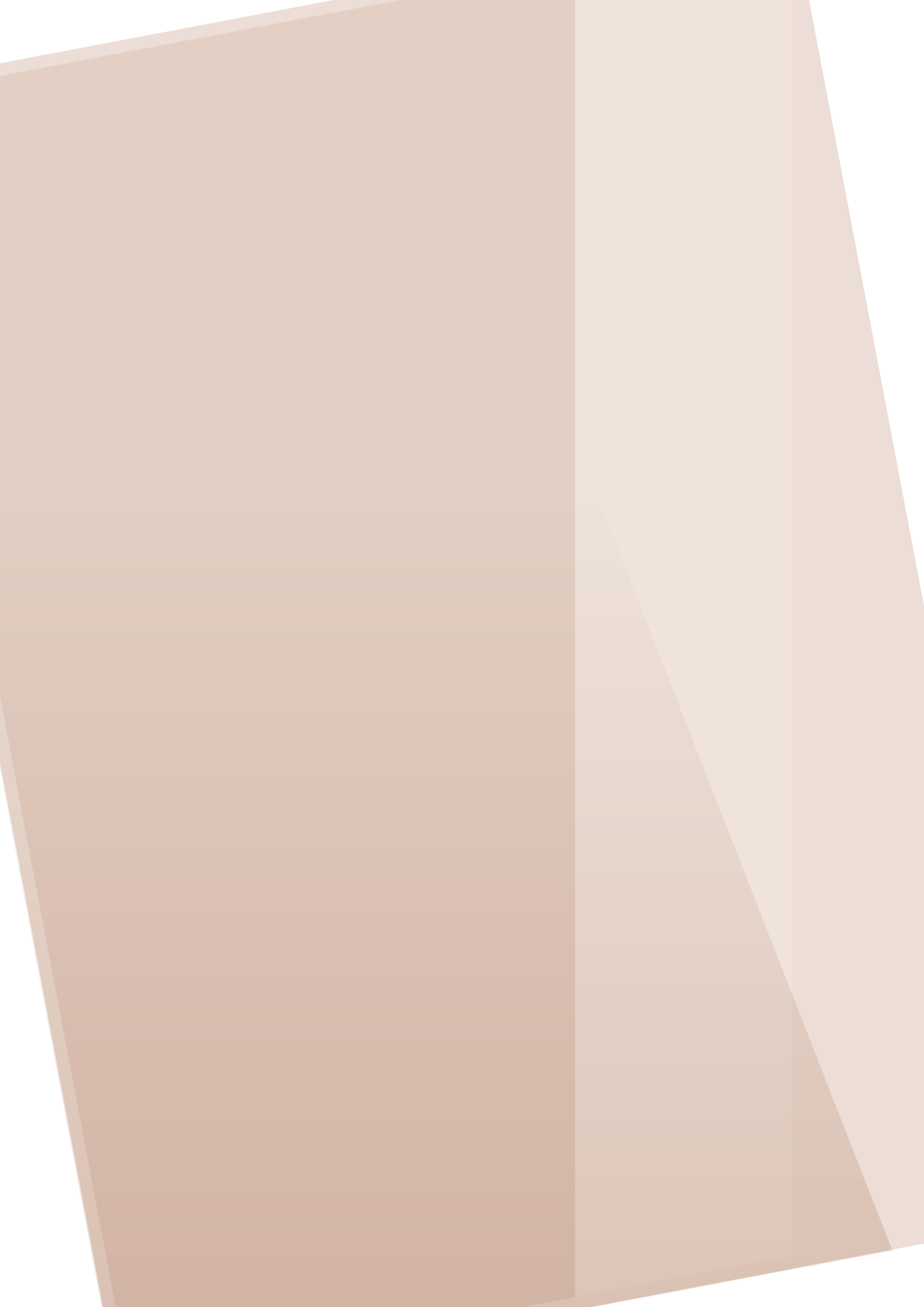
An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Activity Progress Report to end 2024 on Implementation of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027



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Glossary

ABII	Acquired Brain Injuries Ireland
AHB	Approved Housing Body
Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015	This is the statutory framework to support decision making by adults who have difficulty in making decisions without help
CAS	Capital Assistance Scheme
CCMA	City and County Managers Association
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CHO	Community Healthcare Organisation
DCDE	Department of Children, Disability and Equality
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DoH	Department of Health
DAT	Disability Action Team
DISC	Disability and Inclusion Steering Committee
DLR	Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
DPO	Disabled Persons Organisation
HIQA	Health Information and Quality Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
HD	Hidden Disability
HA	Housing Agency
HMD Form 1	Housing Medical/Disability Form 1
HDSG	Housing and Disability Steering Group

ILMI	Independent Living Movement Ireland
ICSH	Irish Council for Social Housing
IWA	Irish Wheelchair Association
KCC	Kildare County Council
LA	Local Authority
LAMA	Local Authority Members Association
NDA	National Disability Authority
NHSDP	National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027
NISG	National Implementation Steering Group
P&A-CALF	Payment & Availability-Capital Advance Leasing Facility
RIG	Regional Interagency Group
SHIP	Social Housing Investment Programme
TSO	Tenancy Sustainment Officer
UN CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UD	Universal Design

Message from the Chair of the National Implementation Steering Group

The National Implementation Steering Group (NISG) was set up in February 2023 to oversee the implementation of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027. The members of the group are drawn from a wide range of stakeholders involved in the disability and housing sectors, including those with lived experience.

The group met ten times from February 2023 to the end of 2024. During this time, our members have assisted in the development and delivery of many projects and reports, for example the new Home and Supports Hub website and the Information and Communications Strategy. In addition, members were central to the establishment of Thematic Groups and several papers which are currently in development. The group also monitor the quarterly returns on progress by relevant stakeholders on the actions contained within the National Implementation Plan for the Strategy which are collated by the Housing Agency.

I, on behalf of the members, would first like to recognise the level of engagement of stakeholders with the reporting on the Implementation Plan. The work to date has been challenging with regards to monitoring the large number of actions being implemented and with the help of the NISG we look forward to improvements being made with the reporting of actions. It has been very rewarding for our membership to see the efforts at both national and local level to realise the vision of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027.

We are looking forward to the review of the Implementation Plan. A particular focus for our membership for the review will be to ensure that any outstanding actions remain relevant, refresh these existing actions and to develop where appropriate new actions that will reflect the needs of disabled people and also to deliver on the commitments of the Government.

Regards,

Claire Feeney

Chair of the National Implementation Steering Group



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The Report provides an overview of the Strategy and the progress to end-2024 on each of the six Themes. There are 27 associated Outcomes, which between them have 107 Actions. By end-2024, 76 of these Actions are underway.

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Executive Summary

This Activity Progress Report to end 2024 on Implementation of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 has been prepared by the Housing Agency on behalf of the National Implementation Steering Group, the group responsible for overseeing implementation of the Strategy, in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The Report provides an overview of the Strategy and the progress to end-2024 on each of the six Themes. There are 27 associated Outcomes, which between them have 107 Actions. By end-2024, 76 of these Actions are underway.

The Report also provides data on the provision of Social Housing Support to disabled people over this period. In 2023, 2,297 social housing allocations were made to disabled people, representing 17% of the overall social housing allocations. In 2024, 2,924 allocations were made, representing 19% of overall social housing allocations.

A number of key activities and events from 2023-2024 are highlighted, that were informed or mandated by the actions of the Implementation Plan. These include public awareness campaigns, the development of the Home and Supports Hub website, the publication of the Review on the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme and the delivery of specialised training by the Housing Agency.

A deeper dive into the progress of each Theme is provided and the Report also highlights some case studies on certain Actions within the Implementation Plan, highlights of projects relevant to the Strategy, and reflections from key members of the National Implementation Steering Group (NISG), chaired by the Housing Agency, on the Strategy to-date.





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There are good practice examples in several Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs), such as the development of focused action teams and the expansion of lived experience representation.

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The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027

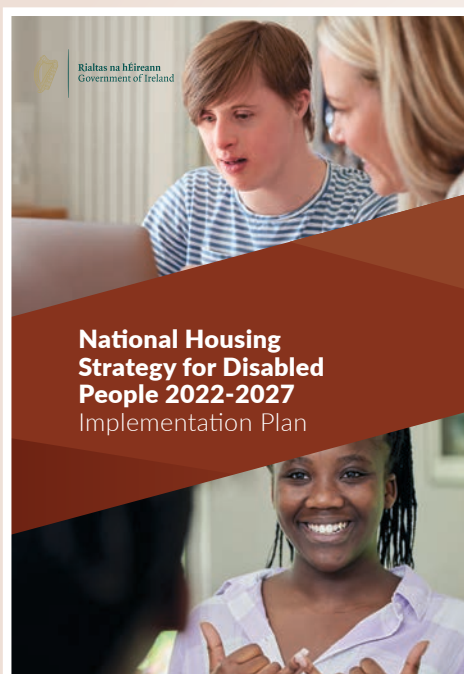
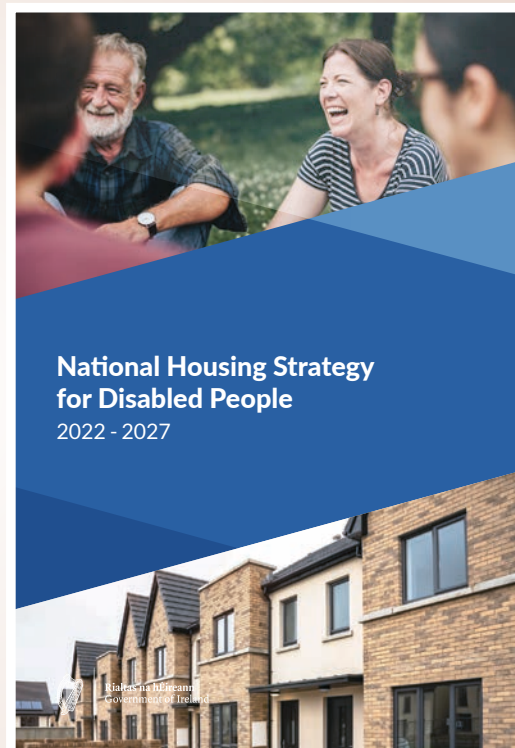
1.1 National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027

The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027 was published in January 2022. The Strategy sets out the ambitions with regards to housing with related supports for disabled people during this period.

The vision of the Strategy is to:

- facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community.
- further enable equal access for disabled people to housing with integrated support services.

The development of the Strategy, and the suite of documents that accompany it, are informed and underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities¹.



1.2 The Implementation Plan for the Strategy

The Implementation Plan for the Strategy was published in June 2023 and built upon the outcomes and actions set out in the Strategy. The Plan documents the actions under six strategic themes that will be required to deliver on the outcomes and assigns those actions to specific stakeholders. The Plan also sets out indicative timeframes as well as Key Performance Indicators for each action.

Whilst work was ongoing throughout 2022 and early 2023 to develop the Implementation Plan, activity under the Strategy continued. The Implementation Plan provides an update on this activity.

The Implementation Plan was designed to be agile to respond to changes in circumstance over the lifetime of the Strategy including competing demands and changes in structures both at national and local level.

¹ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) | Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD)



2

Implementation Governance

2.1 Brief Overview of progress

In late 2023 the Housing Agency commenced the task of collecting and collating progress reporting on the actions in The Implementation Plan. Due to the complexity of the actions and the multiple leads in actions it took two quarters to develop appropriate reporting templates. The input from stakeholders on the quarterly reporting, which allows us to be in a position to complete this Activity Progress Report, is appreciated. It is noted however that due to the nature and complexity of many of the actions that form as part of the review process, the reporting will be moved to biannual.

Chapter 4 on Key Activities and Events 2023-2024 will highlight achievements and events that were informed or mandated by the actions of the Implementation Plan and Chapter 5 on Themes Overview will provide details of progress under the Themes and Outcomes.

There are six themes with 27 associated outcomes which between them have 107 actions. Of the 107 actions, 103 should have been actioned by Q2 of 2024 and to date 76 have been commenced.

2.2 National Implementation Plan

The National Implementation Steering Group was established in February 2023. The group is responsible for driving the implementation of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 and the monitoring of progress. The group can also convene Thematic groups to advise the National Implementation Steering Group as required on the actions under the relevant themes contained in the Strategy. The group is chaired by The Housing Agency and meets on a bi-monthly basis. The group have met on ten occasions since its establishment up to the end of 2024.

The following stakeholders are represented on the group^{1b}:

- AslAm.
- City and County Managers Association (CCMA).
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY).
- Department of Health (DoH).
- Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage (DHLGH).
- Disability Federation of Ireland.
- Health Service Executive (HSE).
- Housing Agency.
- Inclusion Ireland.
- Independent Living Movement Ireland.
- Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH).
- Mental Health Reform.
- National Disability Authority.
- National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers.

As outlined, the NISG has responsibility for monitoring the progress on the actions contained in the Implementation Plan. The multitude of stakeholders and the complexity of some actions can make monitoring the implementation of the strategy challenging. The review of the Implementation Plan offers an opportunity for the group to advise on improvements needed to ensure the monitoring of actions can be accessed more readily by our members.

1b This is the active membership for 2023-2024.

In addition, while engagement with reporting has been high, the reporting could benefit from increased detail regarding delivery on the ground and further action to ensure consistency of reporting across stakeholders.

The continued provision of social housing supports in 2023 as evidenced in the Social Housing Supports data² collected by the Housing Agency is welcome and trends are encouraging. However, the group are of the opinion that greater delivery of universally designed housing is required to meet the housing requirements of households whose needs exceed Part M.

One very beneficial aspect of implementation noted by our members is the strong policy and implementation structures in place to deliver the actions. In particular, the 30 Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) that cover each local authority area (Cork City Council and Cork County Council combined their HDSGs to cover the entirety of the Cork area), and the operational subgroups that have been set up under the HDSGs to increase collaboration and communication between stakeholders in the housing and disability sectors. There is more room for improvement through better integration of the work of the groups with other local authority policy areas, and more progress is needed in sourcing and supporting people with lived experience to contribute in a meaningful way to the work of the groups.

Of critical importance going forward is the delivery of housing options in tandem with provision of necessary supports to enable disabled people to live independently in their communities particularly disability services and social care supports. While progress is being made to enhance the coordination between local authorities and the HSE through the HDSG subgroups and the Regional Interagency Groups, there remains an amount of work to do.

The positive contributions of dedicated HSE Housing Coordinators in HSE Mental Health and HSE Disability teams who work with local authorities to identify and plan for the housing and support needs of disabled people in their area should not be underestimated. In areas where there are no HSE Housing Coordinators in place, the collaboration between the HSE and local authorities can be limited by their absence. The NISG members strongly urge that these posts remain in place and are expanded into each HSE area³. In addition, the structural change within the HSE at present is recognised by our members as a challenge in how it may impact on delivery of the actions going forward.

As with all strategies, the availability of funding to support the implementation of actions is an important factor. The commitment to support the expansion of the Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Service to cover all local authority areas at the outset of the Strategy facilitates the support of social housing tenants with mental health needs in their tenancies.

Navigating housing services and accessing support options can be a more complex process for disabled people. The delivery of a new website www.HomeAndSupportsHub.ie in July 2024 is warmly welcomed and is providing clarity for the public.

Finally, the increased allocation of social housing supports in 2023 and 2024 (as already highlighted) is a very welcome trend that must be built upon into the future.

² More details in Section 4.1 Social Housing Allocations for Disability.

³ There is commitment from the HSE to expand the role to other regions.



3

Other implementation
structures activity
2023 – 2024

3.1 Thematic Groups

Individual Thematic Advisory Focus Groups have been established for each of the six themes in the Strategy. The purpose of these groups is to advise the National Implementation Steering Group, as required, on specific actions under the relevant themes. The membership of the groups is made up of people with lived experience, experts in the relevant areas and other interested parties.

While five of the six Thematic Groups have been convened by The Housing Agency following consultation with the NISG, **Thematic Group Three** did not convene during this period, and therefore did not produce a report. The Groups advised on the following areas:

Thematic Group One (Accessible Housing and Communities):

The group met and provided suggestions and feedback for the completion of Action 1.2.3 (a): 'Examine and document international practice around good practice options for disabled people living in the community including shared living arrangements'. A paper is currently being finalised.

Thematic Group Two (Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports):

The group met and provided suggestions and feedback for the completion of Action 2.2.2: 'Examine the way the different regulatory frameworks interact with one another with a view to ensuring that they are not a barrier to the delivery of housing for disabled people'. A paper is currently being finalised.

Thematic Group Four (Communication and Access to Information):

The group provided input and feedback during the development stage of the Home and Supports Hub website, particularly in relation to its accessibility. The development of the website is outlined in outcome 4.4 'Information is provided in accessible formats in the one location'. The website was officially launched in September 2024.

Thematic Group Five (Knowledge, Capacity, and Expertise):

The group met and provided suggestions and feedback for the completion of Action 5.3.1: 'Design and deliver training sessions for stakeholders around all roles and responsibilities, creating a shared understanding of the role and responsibilities of each department and stakeholder'. A training video of all members of the NISG is in development, this will be a resource which outlines their roles within the Strategy.

Thematic Group Six (Strategy Alignment):

The group provided suggestions for the completion of Action 6.4.1: 'Continue to monitor the Strategy and its Implementation Plan to ensure it is in line with the UNCRPD and any cross Departmental UNCRPD plans and strategies, to ensure that housing provision and related support services are considered and delivered in tandem'. This is an ongoing action which involves continually monitoring the Strategy and Plan along with cross departmental plans and strategies.



3.2 Local Housing and Disability Steering Groups

The Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) are acknowledged in both the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People and the Implementation Plan as the most effective forum for the delivery of the outcomes of the Strategy at local level. There are 30 of these groups in existence covering each of the 31 local authorities in Ireland. The HDSGs are scheduled to meet quarterly and are chaired by the local authority Director of Housing, in some instances this role has been delegated to the Senior Executive Officer in Housing. The membership includes representation from local disability organisations, Disabled Person's Organisations, the HSE, Approved Housing Bodies and other relevant local services. In some cases, other areas of the local authority are also represented, for example technical, housing delivery and community staff.

Following publication of the Implementation Plan in 2023, The Housing Agency provided training to the HDSGs with regards to their role and responsibilities going forward. The groups are the lead for four actions under the Implementation Plan.

There are some very encouraging examples of initiatives arising out of the work of the HDSGs, some of which we have highlighted in the case studies chapter of this report. In addition, there is regular reporting by local authorities to the membership on the volume of allocations made to disabled households each year, and the pipeline delivery of homes for disabled people.

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However, membership, participation and attendance at meetings is reported to be challenging in some areas. In particular, some groups are having difficulty in sourcing members with lived experience or there is an absence of representation for specific categories of disability. Also, where there are lived experience members in place, improvements are required to ensure that members with lived experience are representative and appropriately supported where required so they can fully participate with work of the group. It is also noted that in line with the Information and Communication Strategy published by The Housing Agency all members need to do more to support individuals with lived experience to take part in the groups, this will include accessible information and timely issue of documentation for meetings. With regards to HSE representation on the groups, while it is noted there are demands on the time of General Managers of the HSE, there are some areas where HSE representation has been delegated to staff who do not have a remit to cover all of the relevant HSE teams that operate within the HDSG jurisdiction.

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Also, where there are lived experience members in place, improvements are required to ensure that members with lived experience are representative and appropriately supported where required so they can fully participate with work of the group.

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3.3 Regional Interagency Groups

The Regional Interagency Groups (Chaired by The Housing Agency) are in place to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between key representative stakeholders from the HSE and local authorities in a particular region. The groups were initially based on the nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) and the RIGs are now realigned with six new HSE Health Regions. The role of these groups is to enhance cooperation, collaboration and consistency of approach at an operational level.

Collaboration and cooperation between local authorities and HSE teams is not a new development. There is evidence of productive working relationships with regards to housing and supports between local authorities and the HSE teams in areas across Ireland. However, there is always room to enhance collaboration, in particular in areas where there are no formal supports in place to underpin interagency cooperation and collaboration. The groups are relatively new, having been established over the end of 2022 into 2023 and meet on a quarterly basis. There have been some challenges to date to ensure effective representation from each stakeholder, and to agree on areas for improvements on interagency cooperation and collaboration. More work is needed to ensure gains from those working relationships are not lost and there is a well-managed transition, particularly where there is a turnover of staff.

There is also a need to secure more HSE housing coordinator posts. In areas where these coordinators are in place there is evidence of increased coordination and collaboration between local authorities and the HSE at local level.

3.4 Tri-Departmental Group

The membership of the Tri-Departmental Group is made up of officials from the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, the Department of Health, and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. The group is in place to support the work of the National Implementation Steering Group.

Action 2.3.3 (h) enabled the formal process for HDSGs to escalate issues arising which are deemed to require consideration at a national level as appropriate. The group meets as required (twice to date) to consider and discuss issues that have been raised via the escalation process.

Issues escalated related to membership of HDSGs, clarification on standards required by the Health Information and Quality Authority and a proposal that fell outside the scope of either the Tri Departmental Group, or the NISG.



4

Key activities and events 2023-2024

4.1 Social Housing Allocations for Disability

The Housing Agency has been collecting data on an annual basis from local authorities on the number of social housing allocations available to disabled people since 2016. The annual returns include figures on the number of disabled housing applicants who accessed social housing during the same year.

Disability Social Housing Allocations by Category

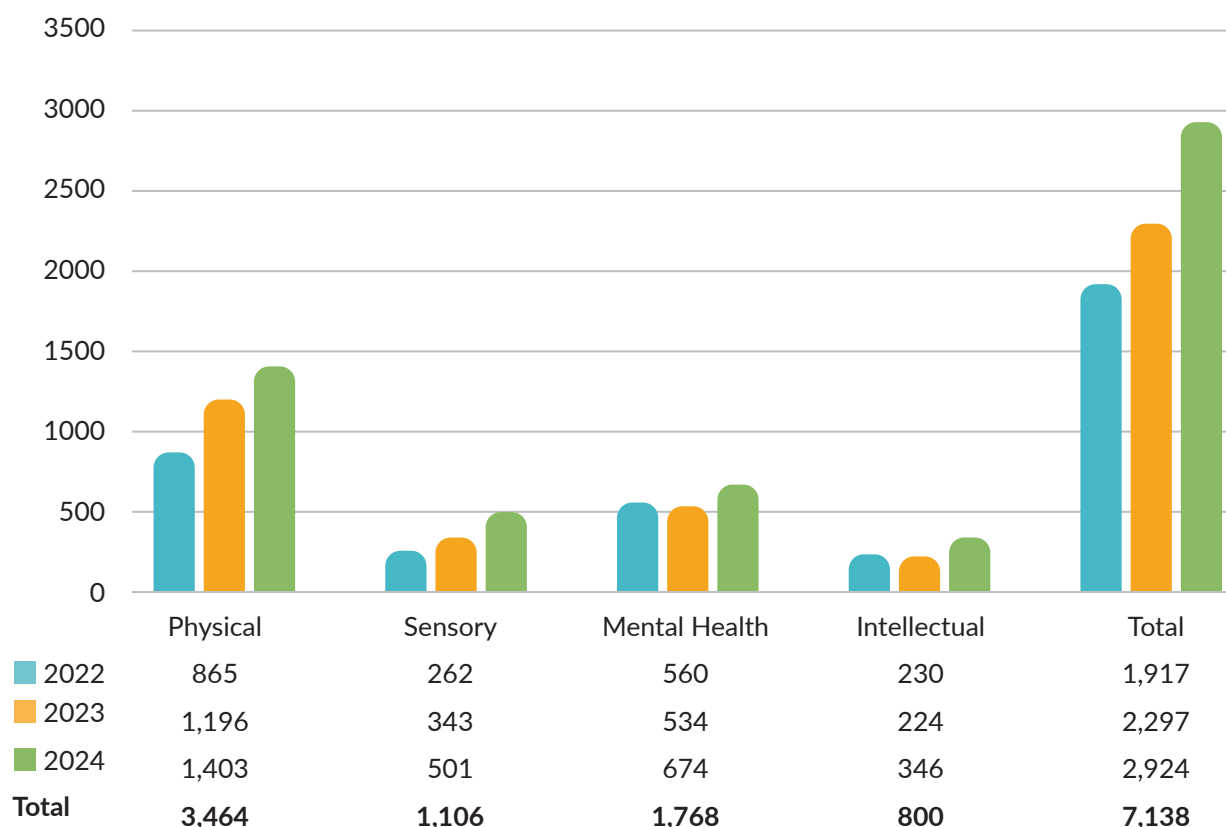


Figure 1: Disability Social Housing Allocations by Category

*The figures in Table 1 are collated from figures provided by local authorities to The Housing Agency. The figures relate to social housing allocations to households that have a social housing requirement due to a member of the household being a disabled person in line with the four categories as set out above.

Additionally, in previous years the data reported, including previously reported data for 2022, also accounted for where an applicant for social housing support was provided with the Housing Assistance Payment as a form of social housing support. The data in this report does not include this category.



Social housing allocations to disabled people has seen an increase year-on-year from 2018 onwards, with the exception of 2020. The decrease in 2020 is likely due to site closures and delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of social housing allocations to disabled people has increased to 2,297 tenancies in 2023 from 1,917 in 2022.

From 2022 to 2023 the overall number of social housing allocations made by local authorities increased by 20% while the number of social housing allocations to disabled people also increased by 20%.

This positive trend has continued for 2024 with 2,924 households allocated in 2024 representing 19% of overall allocations and a 27 % increase on the number of households allocated to disabled people in 2023.

The figures are broken down into four categories of disabilities: physical, sensory, mental health and intellectual. There was an overall increase in the number of allocations to people with a physical disability and people with a sensory disability. There was an overall decrease in the number of allocations to people with a mental health difficulty and people with an intellectual disability. Anecdotally, this has been attributed to both a lack of availability of one bedroom accommodation and a lack of required supports. Further analysis of this issue and measures to address it were considered during the Implementation Plan review.

4.2 Public Awareness

Since the introduction of the Strategy there have been several awareness campaigns run to raise awareness of different topics among disabled people, their families and the general public. There have also been several training programmes delivered to local authority and AHB staff in line with the Strategy including training on Mental Health awareness, Assisted Decision Making and training run for HDSGs across the country.

4.2.1 NHSDP Awareness Campaign 2023

The awareness campaign undertaken in 2023 coincided with the launch of the Implementation Plan, beginning on 22 June 2023. The purpose of the campaign was to promote the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 (NHSDP) and its Implementation Plan. It sought to raise awareness locally and nationally with stakeholders, the general public, and throughout the disability sector through various platforms.

In preparation, key stakeholders were asked to submit their suggestions for the campaign. A multi stakeholder focus group was also held which included members from Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs), disability service providers, local authorities, HSE disability and HSE mental health services.

As a result of the feedback, The Housing Agency developed [videos](#) featuring five disabled people who generously gave their time to share their views and hopes for the Strategy. They also spoke about the importance of accessible housing, living independently, being included in the community, and consultation and effective participation.

The videos were shared on various social media platforms. Posters were also designed and were displayed in public transport hubs as well as in regional print and online newspapers. These resources were shared with stakeholders to maximise the coverage of the campaign.

A key message from the focus groups was the importance of continuing the awareness campaign as it was noted that a short campaign is often not sufficient. As a result, it was agreed that the awareness campaign will be ongoing, focusing on relevant topics at various points throughout the lifetime of the Strategy.

4.2.2 Journey to Independent Living Campaign 2024

A national awareness campaign aimed at disabled people, their families, stakeholders, and the general public commenced in June 2024. The campaign focused on promoting independent living to people across all tenure types. The main communication objectives were to raise awareness of the importance of planning ahead and engaging with housing and health services, highlighting the empowering nature of independent living, and describing the housing and support options available including how to access such services.

Three [videos](#) were developed featuring disabled people sharing their journeys to independent living and disseminated using a variety of social media including Facebook and LinkedIn.

The campaign used other channels including posters at busy commuter points and adverts in regional print and online newspapers. Videos, posters, and social media packs were prepared and issued to local authorities and other stakeholders for use at local level.

The campaign had a reach of 74,475 on LinkedIn, while on Facebook there had been 141,282 engagements with posts on the campaign by 9th August 2024. The Housing Agency and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage wishes to acknowledge the central role of the three people who shared their stories about their own journeys to independent living. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and this is attributed to the quality of input from each of the participants.

4.3 Development of the Home and Support Hub Website

A new Home and Supports Hub website went live in July 2024 in line with action 4.4.1. The website was designed as one of the actions under the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027. The website is a central resource of accessible information on housing and supports for disabled people and their families.

In accordance with Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), ensuring website's accessibility to disabled people was a particular focus during its development. The website has a range of accessibility tools such as an 'accessibility widget', with content written in plain English and links to additional Easy to Read formats where available.

The website is divided into five different sections as follows:

- Renting a home.
- Owning a home.
- Managing your home.
- Supports and Services.
- Policy and Legislation.

The National Implementation Steering Group would like to formally acknowledge the valuable input of people with lived experience who tested the system and others such as representatives of the HSE and Thematic Group Four of the NISG in the development of this website.



4.4 Training

4.4.1 Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015

In anticipation of the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, The Housing Agency organised and delivered in person and online training for local authority and Approved Housing Body (AHB) staff in 2022. This training covered the legal aspects of the new legislation, how it would be applied in real life scenarios, how the Act interacts with housing and social housing related issues, and also general awareness raising regarding the Act.

Following on from this, a further online training webinar was held in December 2023 which had 136 housing practitioners in attendance.

The Housing Agency has also developed and circulated:

- A short guide to the Act;
- Awareness raising posters for housing practitioners; and
- A full Housing Practitioner Guide to Assisted Decision-Making which informs local authority and AHB staff on how to promote decision-making as part of their roles.

Feedback from Practitioners was that there would be a need for more and ongoing support in this area and The Housing Agency will review this requirement for 2025.

4.4.2 Mental Health Awareness

In 2023, The Housing Agency organised a number of Mental Health Awareness webinars which had a total of 259 housing practitioners in attendance. The first training was delivered to managers in local authorities and AHBs to help them support staff experiencing mental health difficulties themselves or who need support engaging with customers who have mental health difficulties.

The second webinar was held twice to cater for the high volume of attendees, it was tailored to front-line housing staff who may interact with people who have mental health difficulties regularly. The general aim was to increase mental health awareness among local authorities and AHB staff, with a particular focus on addressing stigma and misconceptions about mental health.





5

Progress on Themes - Overview

The content of the following sections is drawn from the data and commentary provided by the lead stakeholders on their actions up to and including Q2 2024. A total of 99 stakeholders made returns out of 129 for the Q2 2024 period, which represents a 76.7% return rate.

Stakeholders were asked to report on actions of which:

- they were the assigned lead or joint lead in the Implementation Plan, and
- which were due for implementation up to and including Q2 2024.

An analysis was carried out on all the data contained in the reports to review progress on actions made under each of the six Themes of the Strategy. The objective of the analysis was to identify the percentage of lead stakeholders who reported having completed or are progressing-on-track with the actions associated with the 27 outcomes in the Implementation Plan, and conversely to identify those outcomes which are not progressing as expected.

Figure 2 below provides detail on the number of actions associated with each Theme and their corresponding outcomes.

The detailed position on the outcomes and actions will continue to be advanced through the work of the NISG in overseeing implementation of the Strategy, Implementation Plan and its successor plan.

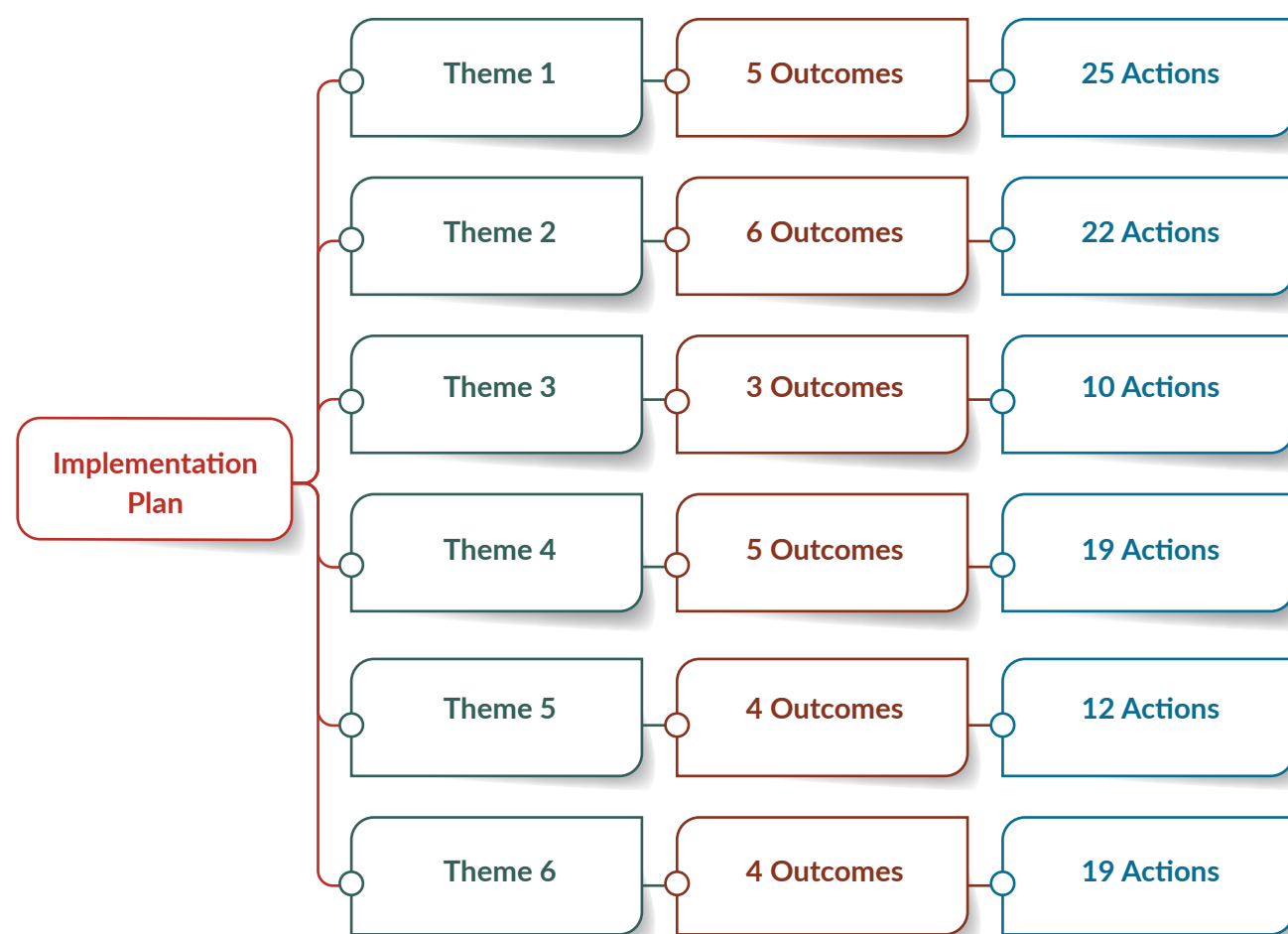


Figure 2: Number of Themes and associated outcome and actions in the Implementation Plan

5.1 Accessible Housing and Communities – Theme One

There are five outcomes under Theme One with 25 associated actions. Theme One focuses on the provision of accessible housing for disabled people and the promotion of accessible communities and universally designed homes.

This theme highlights the different needs that arise for disabled people when it comes to accessibility of their homes and to their local communities (easy access to services, shops and public transport, as appropriate), and by ensuring there are targets for the delivery of accessible homes. It also explores how we can better utilise Assistive Technology and ensure accessibility standards in housing developments.

5.1.1 Overview of progress on outcomes under Theme One:

As of Quarter Two 2024, progress on this Theme is mixed with two outcomes substantially advanced, two outcomes moderately advanced, and one outcome not advancing as expected.

Examples of work undertaken under this theme include:

- ➔ Promoting the use of vacant ground floor commercial or retail units to deliver appropriate housing for disabled people (more details can be found in the Case Studies section).
- ➔ The projects section of this report provides information on developments that have been highlighted by local authorities, some of which are being delivered by the AHB sector.

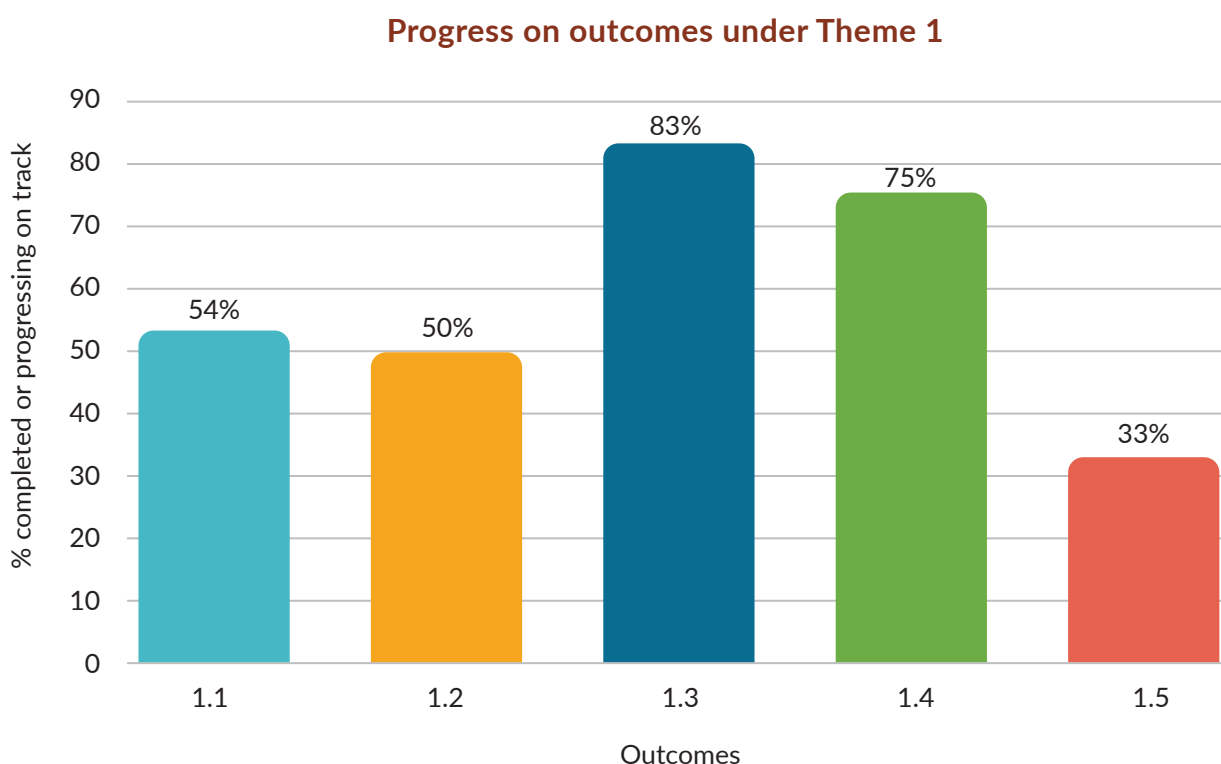


Figure 3: % of actions under outcomes that are completed or progressing on track

5.2 Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports – Theme Two

There are six outcomes under Theme Two with 22 associated actions. Theme Two seeks to build on the work that has already been progressed under the previous strategy by strengthening structures and by improving collaboration between relevant agencies.

It includes outcomes relating to the enhancement of effective collaboration between local authorities and the HSE, greater inter-departmental cooperation, aligning housing and support services and the sharing of relevant information between agencies.

5.2.1 Overview of progress on outcomes under Theme 2:

Progress on this Theme is mixed with three outcomes moderately advanced, and three outcomes not advancing as expected.

Examples of work undertaken under this theme include:

- ➔ The majority of HDSGs have convened sub-groups to cover specific topics including allocations.
- ➔ Work, as outlined at 3.3 above, is being progressed through the Regional Interagency Structures.
- ➔ Escalation Process was established as per Action 2.3.3 h which allows HDSGs to raise issues with the NISG or the Tri-Departmental Group as appropriate.

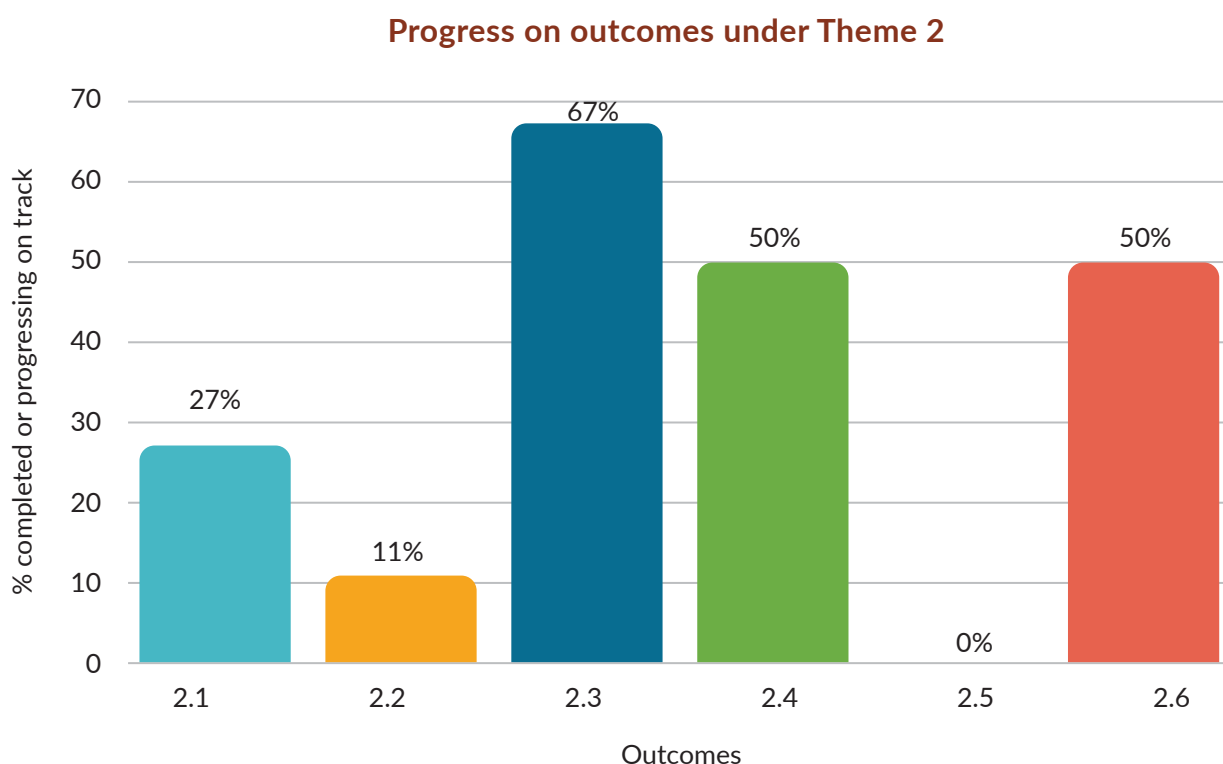


Figure 4: % of actions under outcomes in Theme Two completed or progressing on track

5.3 Affordability of Housing – Theme Three

There are three outcomes under Theme Three with 10 associated actions. Theme Three focuses on enabling access to affordable housing for disabled people. In keeping with Housing for All and, in particular, Pathway One-Supporting Home Ownership and Increasing Affordability, it is important that disabled people are included in the provision of affordable housing.

This theme examines this issue and aims to address the challenges disabled people experience within the private sector, in terms of home ownership and private renting.

5.3.1 Overview of progress on outcomes under Theme Three:

Progress on this Theme is advancing with two outcomes moderately advanced.

Examples of work undertaken under this theme include:

- Housing Adaptation Grant has been reviewed, reforms announced and introduced.
- Easy to Read documents for several Affordable Housing Schemes have been produced and published by The Housing Agency.

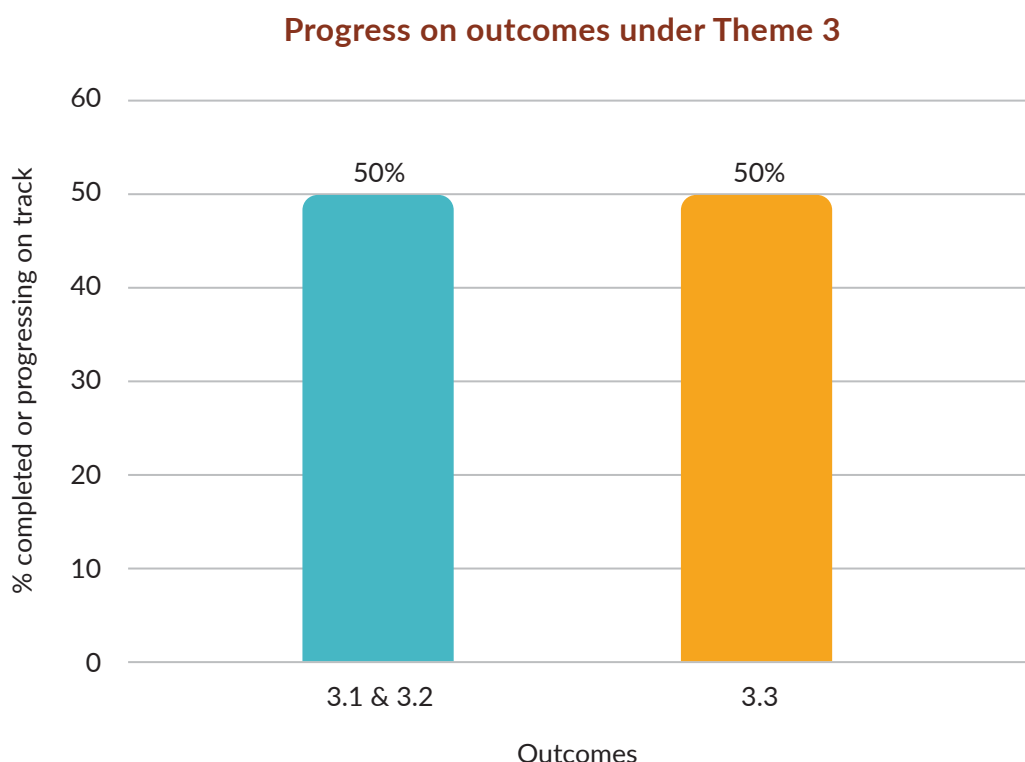


Figure 5: % of actions under outcomes in Theme Three completed or progressing on track

5.4 Communication and Access to Information – Theme Four

This theme focuses on communication and access to information. The Strategy will continue to build on the information/accessibility achievements of the previous Strategy. It is cognisant of the fact that communication is a two-way process.

The Strategy aims to ensure disabled people are not disadvantaged in communicating their needs and in the communication they receive. This includes providing information in a range of preferred accessible formats.

5.4.1 Overview of progress on outcomes under Theme Four:

Progress on this Theme is not advancing sufficiently with four outcomes not advancing as expected, and one outcome substantially advanced.

Examples of work undertaken under this theme include:

- Development of the Home and Support Hub website (as outlined on pages 24 and 39).
- The publication of the Information and Communications Strategy.

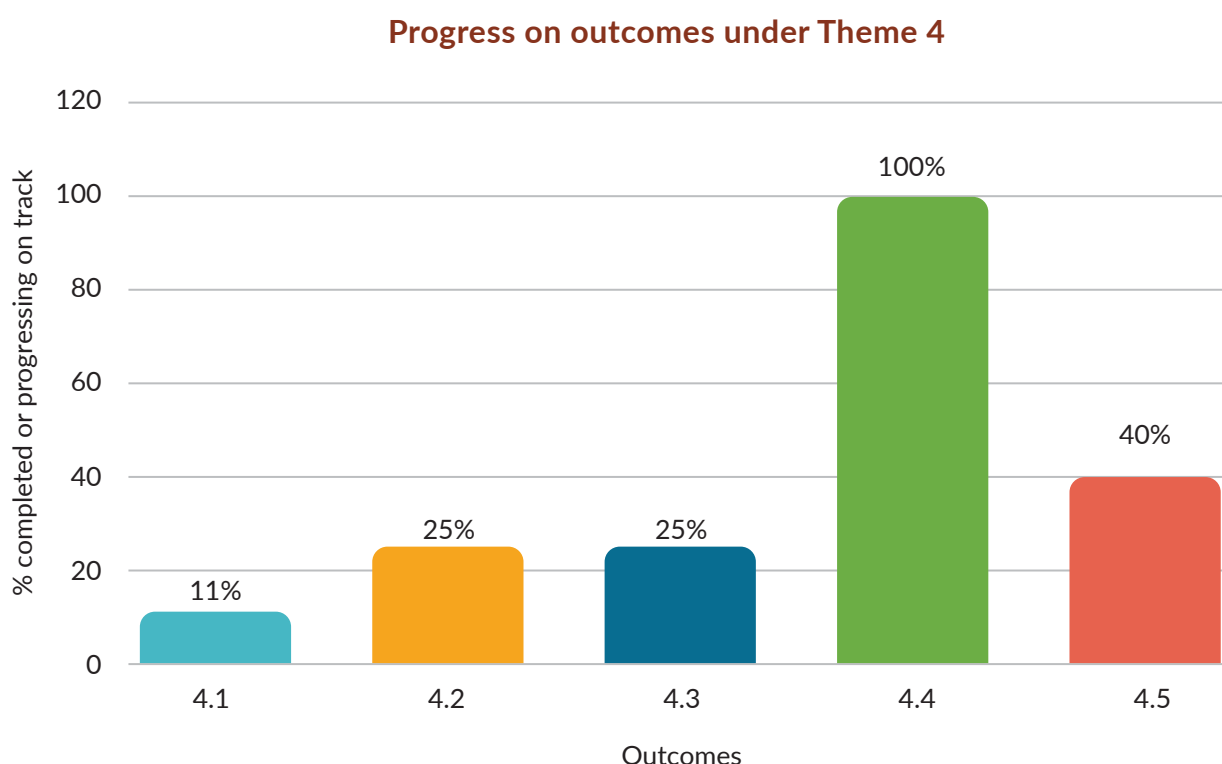


Figure 6: % of actions under outcomes in Theme four completed or progressing on track

5.5 Knowledge, Capacity, and Expertise – Theme Five

There are four outcomes under Theme Five with 12 associated actions. To optimise housing delivery and support services for disabled people, it is important to share information, to apply existing knowledge and to build upon the expertise within organisations. It is important to recognise that the capacity to deliver an inclusive service to disabled people requires human resources with dedicated staff as outlined in Theme Two.

Theme Five includes measures to increase awareness and understanding of disability and housing within relevant organisations. It also places an emphasis on increasing awareness regarding disabled people effectively participating and being included in their communities.

It includes outcomes relating to the building of knowledge and expertise within the housing sector on disability and on the building of knowledge and expertise within the HSE on housing and disability. It also acknowledges areas where cross-agency training is necessary, for example, the introduction and application of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 as well as ongoing training on the UN CRPD and public sector duty. Where appropriate and practical, training by disabled people will be included.

5.5.1 Overview of progress on outcomes under Theme Five:

Progress on this Theme is mixed with two outcomes substantially advanced, and two outcomes moderately advanced.

Examples of work undertaken under this theme include:

- ➔ Training on the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act has been delivered to local authority and AHB staff.
- ➔ Training has been delivered nationally to the HDSGs. This training continues to be a focus in 2025.
- ➔ Further training resources are being developed by The Housing Agency and will be delivered in due course.

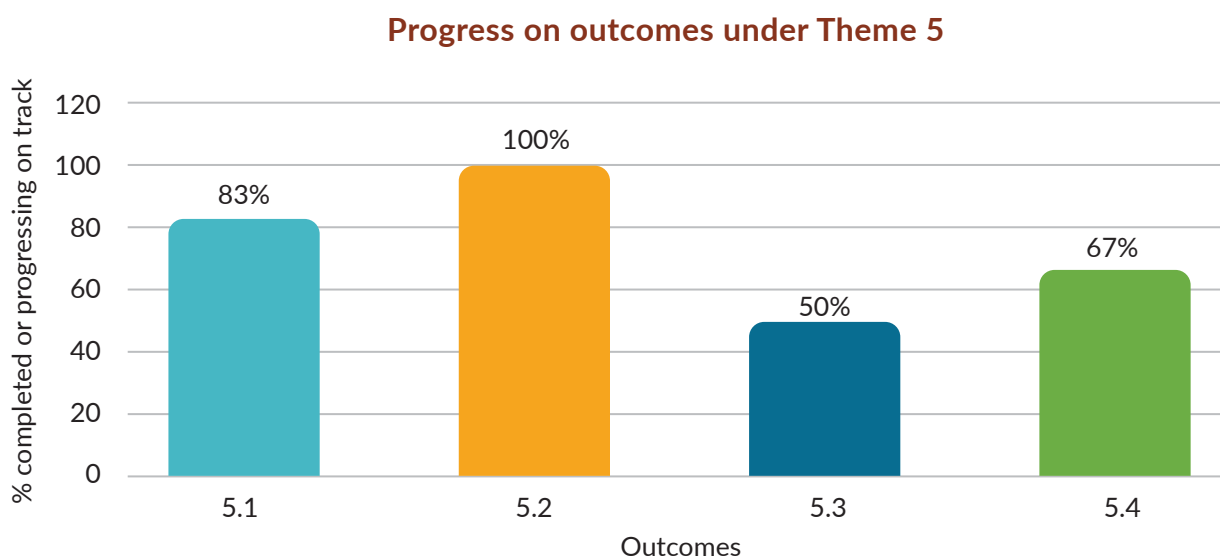


Figure 7: % of actions under outcomes in Theme Five completed or progressing on track

5.6 Strategy Alignment – Theme Six

There are four outcomes under Theme Six with 19 associated actions. This theme focuses on ensuring that all Government strategies and policies from a housing perspective promote the rights of disabled people, in line with the UNCRPD.

This will ensure that this Strategy complements and supports other strategies related to disability, such as Sharing the Vision, Time to Move on From Congregated Settings, and the work, in line with the Programme for Government commitment, to make progress on the need for housing with relevant supports identified in the Disability Capacity Review to 2032.

This theme also focuses on aligning other strategies and policies, such as Housing for All, and the Local Delivery Action Plans established under its framework, and the Public Sector Duty. It is important that all strategies not only align but promote the inclusion and effective participation of disabled people in their implementation.

5.6.1 Overview of progress on outcomes under Theme Six:

Progress on this Theme is mixed with one outcome substantially advanced, two outcomes moderately advanced, and one outcome not advancing as expected.

Examples of work undertaken under this theme include:

Under Housing for All, each local authority was required to prepare a Housing Delivery Action Plan setting out details of both social and affordable housing delivery as appropriate over the period 2022-2026, in line with the overall targets set under Housing for All, while having regard to the Housing Need and Demand Assessment to ensure the planned provision of housing for their area. Local authorities support the vision and strategic aims of the Strategy and facilitate access for disabled people through the appropriate range of housing, promoting equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living. These Housing Delivery Action Plans are published on relevant websites of local authorities.

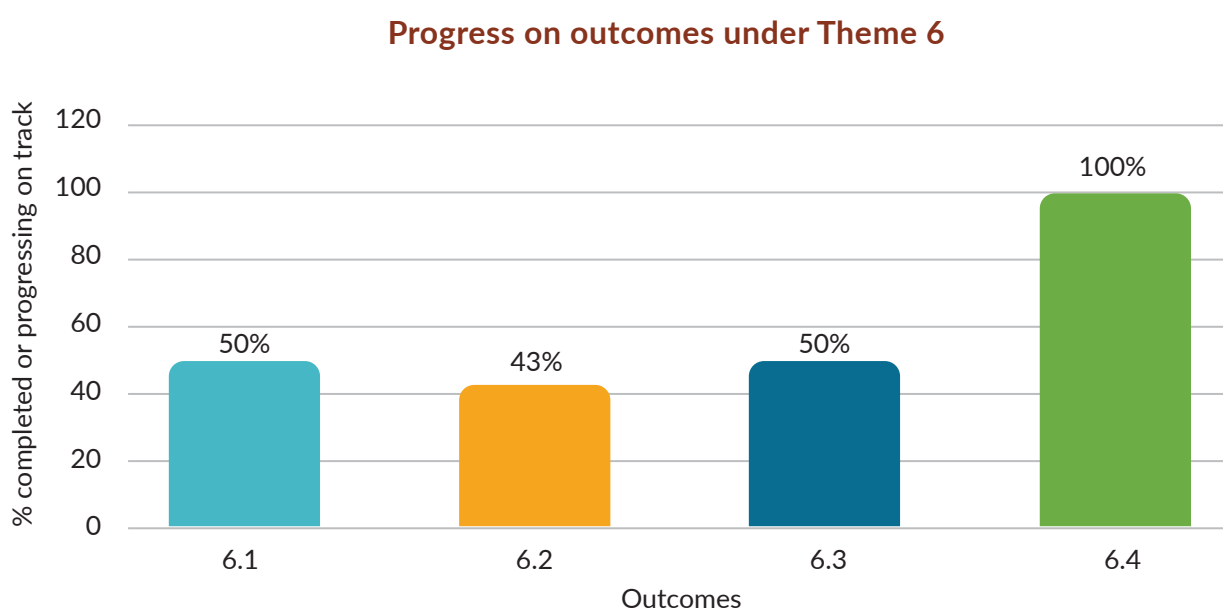
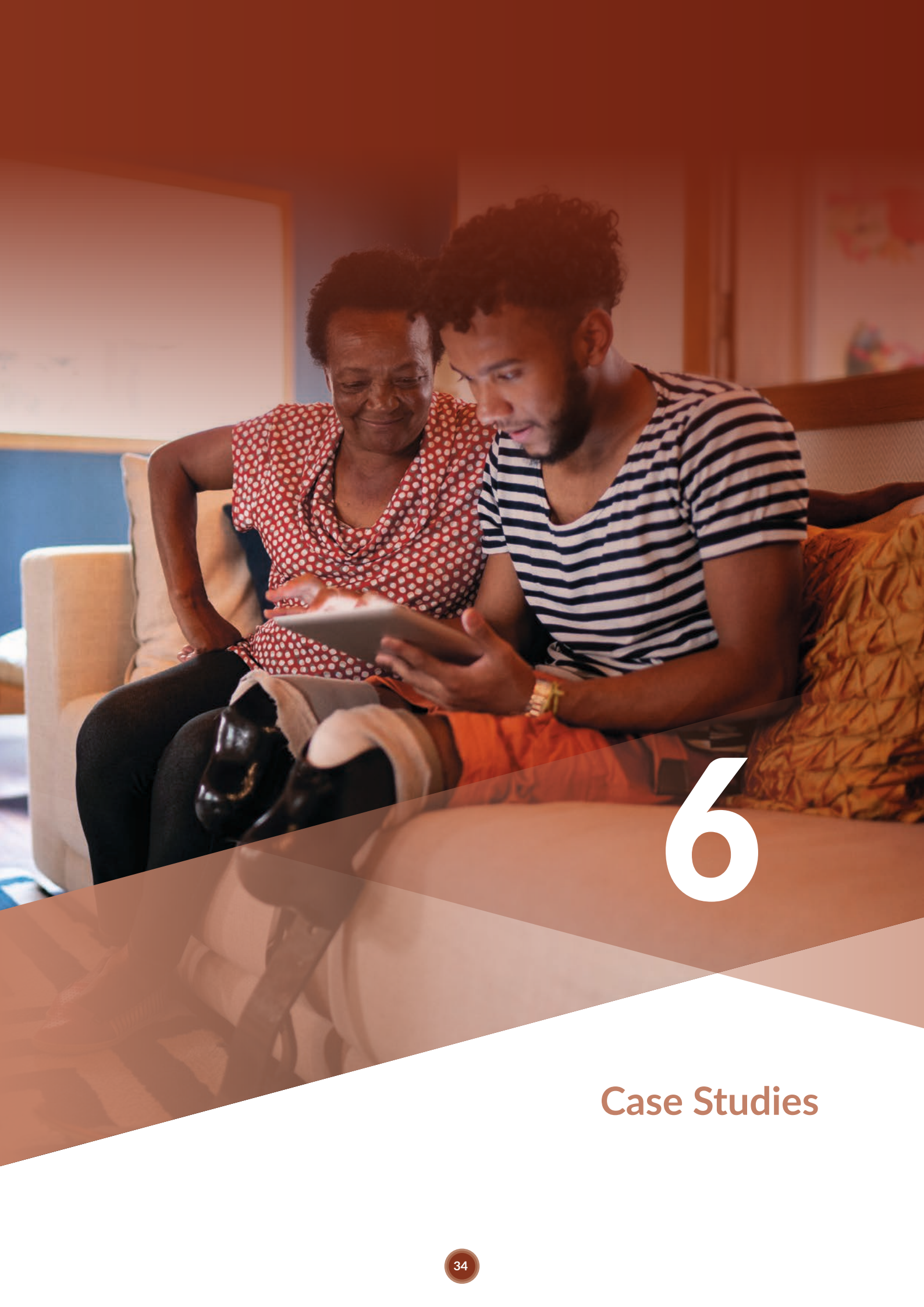


Figure 8: % of actions under outcomes in Theme Six completed or progressing on track



6

Case Studies

6.1 Action 1.1.6

Action 1.1.6

Promote the use of vacant ground floor commercial or retail units to deliver appropriate housing options for disabled people.

- **Lead:** The Housing Agency
- **Other Partners:** LA, AHBs and DHLGH
- **Timeline:** From Q3 2023
- **KPI:** Number of units in use

The work of The Housing Agency involves identifying ground floor units with the specific objective of bringing these units into use to meet the needs of disabled people. The Housing Agency engages with owners to highlight and explain further supports that are available that may be required to meet the overall objectives of maximising the re-purposing of vacant commercial units as quality housing in appropriate town centre locations.

For example, in one local authority who have a high level of need for disabled persons housing, The Housing Agency identified a ground floor, vacant commercial unit in a town centre location that appeared to have scope to be converted. The Housing Agency, with the endorsement of the local authority proactively engaged with the owner, outlined the various instruments available and sourced an AHB with which to partner. The owner was unaware of the suite of initiatives available and was very keen to bring the space back into use. Once the owner was happy to proceed The Housing Agency identified an AHB to progress the project with the owner. Currently, works are being identified to bring this property back into use for disabled persons housing.

The Housing Agency continues actively engaging with local authorities and property owners to promote and support this activity.

6.2 Action 1.3.4

Action 1.3.4

Engage with property developers and AHBs around making new developments more accessible. This engagement should not only be around the accessibility of the housing dwellings but must include the development in its entirety to ensure that the public realm is suitable for disabled people.

- **Lead:** Local Authorities (LA)
- **Other Partners:** DHLGH, other stakeholders
- **Timeline:** From Q3 2023
- **KPI:** Developers and AHBs include more accessibility measures in their developments

For the Q2 reporting by stakeholders 25 local authorities reported this action as 'progressing on track' or 'complete'. Many local authorities are including accessible housing in new developments where possible, although it was noted at times the developments are well underway by the time they become involved which can result in making changes to the development more difficult.

The following are some comments included by local authorities in the quarterly returns. These are the views of individual local authorities:

- Universal Design will be considered on all new developments together with identifying needs on the Housing Waiting List.
- There are ongoing discussions regarding Housing Delivery Action Plan developments as required.
- This requires additional resources to constantly monitor and follow up with developers and AHBs.

6.3 Action 2.1.2

Action 2.1.2

Extend the Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Officer role nationally through the AHB sector to work with local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to support people with mental health related difficulties to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness.

- **Lead:** HSE, DHLGH
- **Other Partners:** AHBs and LAs
- **Timeline:** Underway and ongoing for the lifetime of the strategy
- **KPI:** Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Officers appointed and services are operational nationally

Following a tender process in 2022, the Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Officer (TSO) role was extended nationally and now covers all 26 counties with the number of roles increasing from 7.5 to 14 under the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027.

TSOs provide perspective tenants with the support they need to move into their new home such as budgeting and working in close collaboration with local authorities, other AHBs and engaging with local voluntary and statutory agencies to ensure tenants have access to appropriate community supports to facilitate independent living.

The service is jointly funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the HSE, with The Housing Agency administering the service on behalf of the DHLGH.

The service is divided into 11 different areas with the TSO service being provided by the following organisations:

- HAIL Housing.
- Sophia Housing Association.
- Focus Ireland.
- Cork Mental Health.
- Good Shepard Centre Kilkenny.

Since March 2023, the TSOs report monthly to the Housing Agency on the number of clients supported and the activities of the service. The report includes information of the number of active clients, length of time they have been in their tenancy, type of property they are living in, disengagements, and refusals.

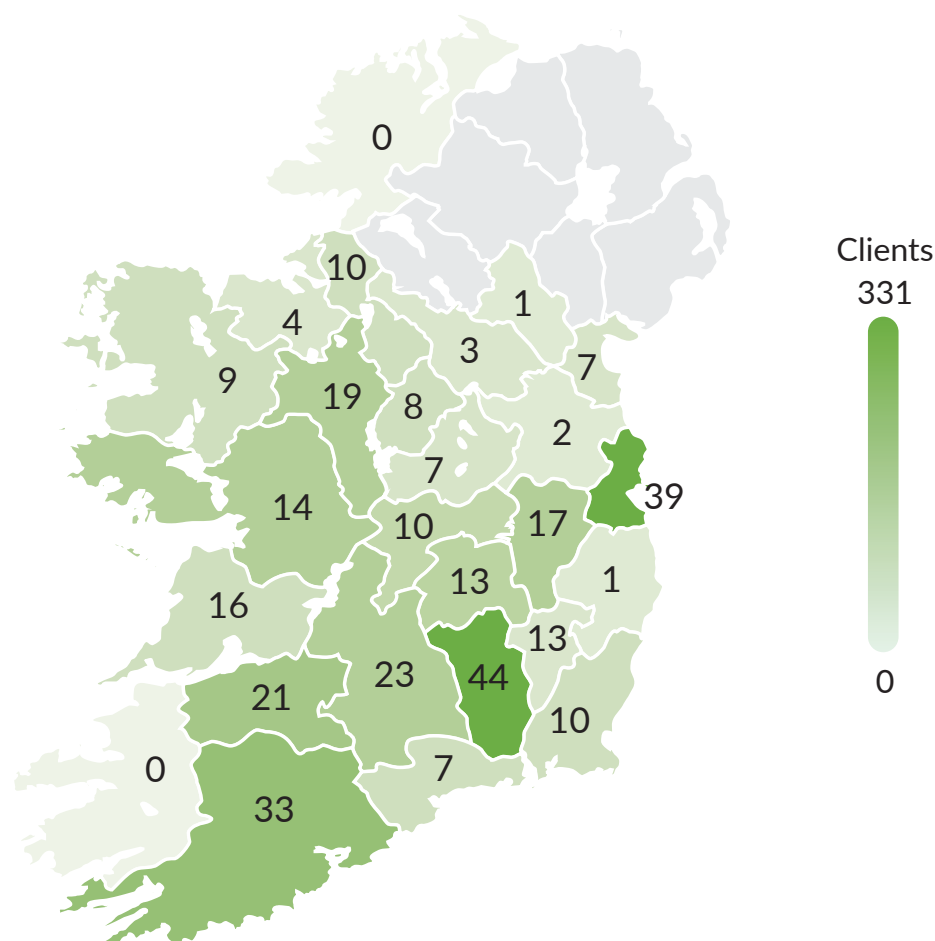
Clients supported in each county December 2024

Figure 9: Total Clients Supported Nationally January to December 2024.

Figure 9 shows the total number of clients supported by Mental Health TSOs in each local authority area January to December 2024.

It is important to note the number of clients supported by the Mental Health TSO tends to vary due to a variation of factors including but not limited to:

- demand.
- population.
- other services embedded in the area.
- lack of awareness of tenants with a mental health need in the area.
- local authorities struggling to find properties.
- engagement from local authorities.

The highest number of clients supported in 2024 was in Kilkenny with 31 people availing of the support in May 2024. A number of lots have reached capacity for referrals which points to the success of the service.

6.4 Action 2.3.3b

Action 2.3.3

The Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) have been identified in both Housing for All and the new Strategy as key to the implementation of the Strategy at local level. As a result, the following will be actioned:

b) HDSGs will review their membership and ensure there is representation from Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) on each group. Membership should be reviewed annually to ensure that there is fair representation.

- **Lead:** HDSGs
- **Other Partners:** All HDSG Members
- **Timeline:** Q4 2023
- **KPI:** There is an increase in DPO membership in all HDSGs

For the Q2 reporting by stakeholders 26 HDSGs reported this as 'progressing on track' or 'complete'. Many HDSGs commented that they have reviewed their membership, with some commenting that new members from DPOs, people with lived experience and from AHBs have come on board.

It was also noted in reports that support would be welcome at a national level to ensure DPO membership remains in place. There have been issues for people with lived experience to attend groups in some areas. The NISG are actively trying to support the HDSGs to source representatives from DPOs and people with lived experience to ensure there is adequate representation.

6.5 Action 3.3.1

Action 3.3.1

Review the range of housing grants available to assist with meeting specific housing needs, including the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, and implement relevant changes in line with Action 7.4 of Housing for All.

- **Lead:** DHLGH
- **Other Partners:** All stakeholders
- **Timeline:** Q4 2023
- **KPI:** Revised Scheme in operation

The recent Housing (Adaptation Grants for Older People and Disabled People) Regulations 2024 (SI No 612 of 2024) provide the legal basis for the introduction of the key recommendations set out in the Report on the Review of the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability (September 2024). The Revised Scheme came into operation on 1 December 2024.

The key changes include an increase in the grant limits of over 30%, an increase of 25% in the income thresholds for eligibility. The legislation also adjusts the burden sharing for local authorities by reducing the local authority funding contribution to 15% (from the existing 20%) together with

a number of amendments to the means test. Key changes in the Regulations include:

- An increase in the maximum level of Housing Adaption Grant for Disabled People to €40,000 (an increase of €10,000);
- An increase in the maximum level of the Housing Aid for Older People Grant to €10,700 (an increase of €2,700); and
- An increase in the maximum level of the Mobility Aid Grant of €8,000 (an increase of €2,000).

Over 13,000 grant claims were paid in 2023. Since the launch of the scheme in November 2007, significantly increased levels of activity continue to be experienced by local authorities with over 160,000 grant claims being paid to older people and disabled people. This has facilitated those applicants to remain in their own homes and communities, and in the case of many older people preventing premature entry to residential care.

“The Housing Agency has developed the Home and Supports Hub website (HomeAndSupportsHub.ie), which is a resource for disabled people to access information on the various housing options and supports available to them⁴.

”

6.6 Action 4.4.1

Action 4.4.1

Housingdesignforall.ie will be used as a platform to develop a new dynamic and accessible repository of information on housing and related matters to include:

- a) Information on housing and related matters will be provided in various formats that are accessible and easily located.
 - b) Where possible, information from all stakeholders will be provided as part of the site with links provided to external useful information that cannot be held locally or is subject to ongoing change.
 - c) Mapping tools for application processes will be included to allow disabled people to visualise the application processes and timescales involved.
- **Lead:** HA
 - **Other Partners:** All stakeholders
 - **Timeline:** Q2 2024
 - **KPI:** Website launched

The Housing Agency has developed the Home and Supports Hub website (HomeAndSupportsHub.ie), which is a resource for disabled people to access information on the various housing options and supports available to them⁴. The website was formally launched by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in September 2024.

⁴ It should be noted that Housingdesignforall.ie remains a live website.

The website covers the various types of tenure including social and affordable housing options and application processes for housing schemes. It also includes information on buying a property and how to access grants and financial supports to make required adaptations to disabled people's homes. As schemes and processes can change, this website will be kept up to date to ensure the information is correct and remains relevant.

The website has a range of accessibility tools, it is in plain English and is suitable for screen-readers. It has been checked for accessibility by the NDA and Vially (digital accessibility company based in Ireland). As a result of stakeholder feedback, it was decided to include videos to explain different aspects of housing processes instead of the mapping tools outlined above. These videos were added to the website in Q4 2024 and the development of additional videos is planned for the website.

6.7 Action 6.2.4

Action 6.2.4

Local authorities will be positively open to offering transfers to disabled people where the current accommodation including location is no longer appropriate for the disabled person.

- **Lead:** LAs
- **Other Partners:** HSE and service providers
- **Timeline:** Underway and ongoing
- **KPI:** Guidance provided to LAs and the Assessment and Allocation Guidance updated to reflect same

For the Q2 reporting by stakeholders 22 local authorities reported this as 'progressing on track' or 'complete'. Many local authorities reported this approach is part of their transfer policy while other deal with cases on an individual needs basis. It was noted that when accommodation becomes available to suit a household's needs a transfer option is explored.

The background of the slide features a photograph of a new residential development. Several modern, two-story houses with grey gabled roofs and light-colored walls are visible. Some houses have brickwork on the gables. In the foreground, a yellow excavator is partially visible, suggesting ongoing construction or landscaping work. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange gradient that covers the bottom half of the slide.

7

Highlights of projects
and their progress

7.1 Interagency collaboration

7.1.1 Decongregation of St. Patricks Centre, Kilkenny

Aurora (formerly St Patricks Centre, Kilkenny) is an intellectual disability provider who has provided residential and day services for the past 50 years. Aurora supports 80 adults who have profound and multiple disabilities throughout the county of Kilkenny, the majority of those supported are deemed 'medically vulnerable' and have complex associated health issues. The people they support have for many years been 'invisible citizens' who whilst living on a campus within 1 km of Kilkenny City had little opportunity to be physically or socially present within their local communities.

In line with national policy 'Time to Move on from Congregated Settings' Aurora have been going through the process of de-congregation since 2017, concluding in December 2020 - this was the end of an era and the beginning of new chapter in the lives of those they support.

Huge milestones have been achieved; the people who transitioned into the community have settled well and are being supported to embed within their local communities. The quality of the community houses is of a high standard and offer a real sense of 'home' for people. They support various configurations of community houses including single supported arrangements, parallel arrangements and shared arrangements for 2, 3 or 4 housemates.

Aurora have worked collaboratively with the people they support, their families, staff teams, Unions, local and national HSE, HIQA, and Approved Housing Bodies to enable full de-congregation. Pivotal to the de-congregation of the campus was the collaboration with Kilkenny County Council; achieving great outcomes in terms of accessible community homes with tenures aligned to other Kilkenny Citizens. Aurora has been an active member of the HDSG since 2017 enabling the identification of the housing needs of those they work with and potential properties that were available or future proposed local authority/approved housing body projects.

Throughout this collaboration all stakeholders have 'honed' their respective requirements and have a clear understanding of what each party needs to achieve fast paced and responsive housing solutions. In order to expedite the de-congregation process Aurora secured a number of properties through the private rental route with intention to swap these properties out for long term housing tenures and this process is ongoing within the HDSG framework.

An example of this successful partnership is a purpose-built property located in Kilkenny for 4 individuals. Given the very specific needs of the residents there were numerous accommodations that had to be factored in from design and planning stages to finishing. The local authority was fully receptive to the development of this property tailored to accommodate four people with very complex disabilities and access issues. The development was made possible through funding from the DHLGH. The homes were delivered through a variety of funding streams including Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), Payment & Availability -Capital Advance Leasing Facility (P&A-CALF) and Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

“

Huge milestones have been achieved; the people who transitioned into the community have settled well and are being supported to embed within their local communities. The quality of the community houses is of a high standard and offer a real sense of 'home' for people.

”

The accessibility of the purpose built premises in Kilkenny follows the universal design principles and therefore has plenty of room for turning circles, large bathrooms, wide hallways, doorways, level access etc. It is a good example of a property that looks like an ordinary community house within a community setting whilst offering the extra ordinary requirements that these residents require. The four individuals who now reside there, finally have been able to take their rightful place within the community and will be supported to become part of the fabric of this local area. This level of detailed planning and design has been consistent from the Kilkenny County Council Housing Team across all properties sourced and secured on behalf of those served. Aurora acknowledged and praised the support received from this team in Kilkenny County Council as they have worked tirelessly with Aurora through the HDSG to source and secure appropriate housing. Since de-congregation both the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Minister of State for Disability and have separately visited different community dwellings to see real life examples of successful policy implementation and interdepartmental working to achieve the common goal of realising peoples housing rights. Aurora believe that Kilkenny County Council Housing Team have been key stakeholders, evidencing a true commitment to supporting this progressive achievement.

7.1.2 Galway HDSG Subgroup

Galway County HDSG Mental Health Subgroup was shortlisted in the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) All Ireland Housing Awards 2024 in the Working in Partnership Category. This award commends collaboration between organisations or groups that achieve the best possible outcomes. The group was also a finalist in the LAMA (Local Authority Members Association) Community & Council Awards 2023, shortlisting in the category of Best Mental Health Initiative.



This person-centred subgroup allows for simultaneous progression of housing and support for people with enduring mental health issues who may otherwise struggle in navigating the various separate systems to make an application for housing, obtain a property, access supports and maintain a tenancy. It is a partnership approach between Galway County Council Housing Department and HSE Community Healthcare West Mental Health Services, to address the needs of people accessing both services, with their consent.

The group allows for discussion of each applicant's individual needs, will and preference, development of actions plans and bridging the gap between two large and complex systems; the Local Authority and the HSE.

It offers a communication pathway and for decisions to be made. More importantly, it allows for people with enduring mental health needs to progress having their own homes and tenancies utilising a rights and community based approach.

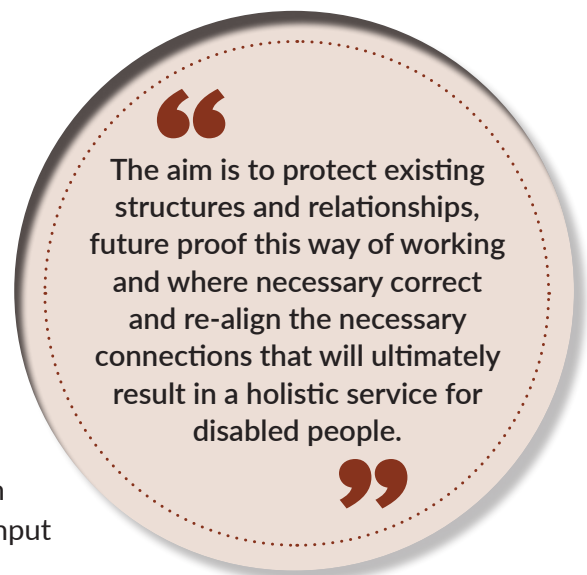
7.1.3 Regional Interagency Groups

The role of the Regional Interagency Groups is to bring together local authority representatives and the HSE representatives for both Disability Services and Mental Health Services to allow for cooperation and collaboration at an operational level. The groups are facilitated by The Housing Agency, who chair and provide administrative support to the Groups.

The Groups are an opportunity to increase connections, work towards common objectives and develop a shared understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities. Additionally, these provide a forum that will be crucial to progressing actions that require input from the HSE and the local authorities in each region.

The groups recently underwent restructuring to reflect the changes from the nine CHO areas to six Health Regions. The inclusion of this change to the structure in the Terms of Reference ensured this happened with minimal disruption.

Progress has been made through these groups and the primary focus of all groups has been the development of a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the future relationship between these stakeholders. The aim is to protect existing structures and relationships, future proof this way of working and where necessary correct and re-align the necessary connections that will ultimately result in a holistic service for disabled people. Thus far, one Regional Group has entered its Memorandum with three further groups at the final stages of entering an agreement. In the remaining Regional groups, progress is also being made and there will be benefits from the work of other groups that are farther into their journey that can be utilised.



7.2 Improved Processes

7.2.1 HMD Form 1 Review project in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

The introduction of the HMD Form 1 had the effect of increasing the volume of applications received requesting priority. This was particularly the case on grounds of mental health. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLR) collaborated with the HSE Mental Health Housing Coordinator and other mental health professionals to provide a level of expertise in the area of mental health. This included providing advice on information provided, but also to raise awareness in the various services and with other medical professionals around the rationale and purpose of the form they were completing. The outcome of the collaboration was:

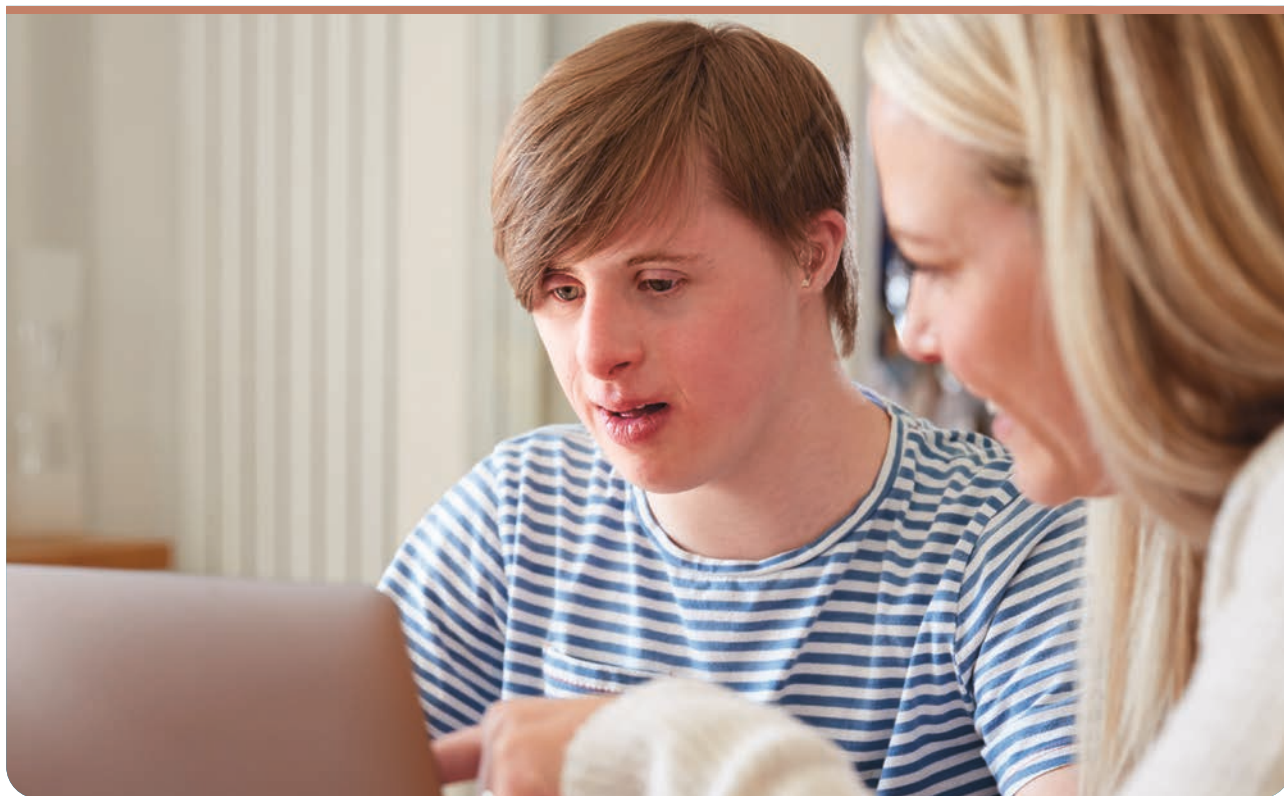
- HMD Form 1 reviewed and progressed for applicants more efficient and effectively.
- Prioritisation for people with severe and enduring mental illness where appropriate.
- Shared Learning:
 - e Mental Health issues and how they can impact housing need and ability to engage with the allocations process.
 - e Understanding of the local authority allocations process.
 - e Awareness and access to appropriate supports identified.

The effective interagency working has fostered trust between agencies and improved outcomes for those with enduring mental health in DLR.

7.2.2 Clare County Council HDSG Subgroup

The subgroup that has officially been formed is a continuation of the work that was already taking place between the disability case manager and the allocations officer in the local authority. All allocations which take place are in line with the scheme of allocations for the local authority, this subgroup allows the collaboration of professionals involved to ensure the appropriate supports are in place when a suitable property is identified for an individual. The reason it works so well in this area is because of the good working relationship that has been created between the case manager (HSE) and the local authority. The local authority will inform the HSE of upcoming housing developments and the HSE can then see if there are people on their waitlist that the properties would be suitable for and put a business case forward for funding for supports (if applicable). And vice versa if the HSE is aware that a particular person will require a particular type of property then they will contact the local authority to see if there are properties currently available or due to becoming available over the coming months. "It's pretty straightforward stuff it's just about getting the conversations started, the needs known and working together".

HSE Midwest is currently in the process of updating and reviewing their current waitlist. Once this is accurate and up to date, this template will be used at subgroups between the local authority, HSE and service providers.



7.3 Information and Awareness

7.3.1 Wicklow County Council focus on accessibility information and promotion.

Wicklow County Council, in partnership with the Disability Federation of Ireland, launched a Disability and Inclusion Steering Committee (DISC) in 2023. Along with this, they established their first Disability and Inclusion Strategy for the county and introduced the role of Disability and Inclusion officer, a role which complements the work of the council's access officer. Wicklow County Council has partnered with Hidden Disabilities Sunflower and introduced HD Sunflower car parking spaces throughout the county.

7.3.2 Fingal County Council information on promotion of information.

In May 2023, Fingal County Council released their local Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2021-2026. Fingal hosted a launch event at their civic offices in Swords to raise awareness among relevant organisations, disabled people, and the public about the Strategy. The event was attended by wide range of organisations and people with lived experience.

To complement the launch of their Strategy, Fingal County Council also produced and published a video online outlining the commitment that the Council has given to providing housing for disabled people across the county. As part of its steering group, the Council has a wide range of experience on it including those with lived experience, members of approved housing bodies and also representatives of disability groups across the county.

7.3.3 West Be Well Website

WestBeWell is an online mental health resource for Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. It is the most comprehensive resource of wellbeing, mental health promotion and suicide prevention initiatives in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. One of the first initiatives of its kind, it promotes timely, safe, evidence-based mental health messages and local and national mental health supports and services by Health Service Executive (HSE) or other state-funded services, as well as mental health and suicide prevention education and training programmes and events across a multi-channel digital platform.

“It is the most comprehensive resource of wellbeing, mental health promotion and suicide prevention initiatives in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.”

The West Be Well Group was set up in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. Supported by the HSE Head of Mental Health Services, its members include the HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention, HSE Communications, Children and Young Person's Services Committee Tusla, Mindspace Mayo (youth mental health service) and a Communications Coordinator. It has received funding through the Children and Young People's Services Committee and Healthy Ireland and continues to receive funding from the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and HSE Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

Effective communication of mental health messages is a shared action in key HSE-led policies, i.e. Connecting for Life, Suicide Prevention Action Plan Galway Mayo and Roscommon 2022-2024, Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone (2020) and the HSE Galway, Mayo and Roscommon Mental Health Services 3-year Strategic Plan (2024).

West Be Well members welcomed the very informative presentation given by the Local Authority Services and Inclusion Section of The Housing Agency in relation to the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People Implementation Plan 2022-2027. They were particularly interested in learning more about ways in which to ensure that information being provided is available in a more accessible format. West Be Well is open to improving its current offering, in line with policy and good practice.

West Be Well's social media accounts are:

- <https://www.facebook.com/WestBeWell> (Tag @WestBeWell).
- <https://X/WestBeWell1> (Tag @WestBeWell1).
- <https://www.instagram.com/westbewell1/> (Tag @westbewell1).

7.3.4 Irish Wheelchair Association

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) has undertaken significant information and awareness work with its staff and members on both the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 and the Information and Communication Strategy.

The IWA is represented on 29 out of 30 Housing and Disability Steering Groups. The IWA also has a support mechanism for its staff and people with lived experience who are on HDSGs. It has used this forum to inform and upskill staff and members on the NHSDP. The IWA has paid particular attention to Themes 1, Accessible Housing and Communities and Theme 2, Interagency Collaboration and Provision of Housing.

Other work undertaken regarding the NHSDP includes:

- Sharing posts on its social media channels.
- Adding a link on its website to NHSDP 2022-2027.

Regarding the Information and Communication Strategy, the IWA has raised awareness internally by presenting a PowerPoint presentation to its key stakeholders of the main actions and key performance indicators of the Strategy. While the IWA already uses accessible information and communication methods the organisation feels there are opportunities for learning and for using communications methods which are even more inclusive of the specific requirements of disabled people. In 2025, the IWA plans to nominate a champion for the strategy and to inform The Housing Agency of its commitment to adopt the strategy.



7.4 Integrated Housing

7.4.1 Clare County Council

Clarecastle (2023)

In 2023, Clare County Council completed the construction of a five-bed group home and a specially adapted two-bedroom unit in Clarecastle, County Clare. The completed units are managed by Acquired Brain Injuries Ireland (ABII) and through extensive and early consultation between Clare County Council and ABII, the units were designed and constructed to meet the needs of the tenants. This development is located within a village setting, with every amenity within walking distance. The town of Ennis is also within close proximity. It was important to Clare County Council to develop a scheme such as this and to provide suitable housing for people on the Council housing list who have additional needs. This development was delivered under the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

7.4.2 Cork City Council

Puolavone, Ballincollig

Cork City Council had a large construction project of 64 units at Poulavone, Ballincollig. The development was delivered under the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP). This delivery consisted of three fully wheelchair liveable units; a one-bed two-person ground floor apartment, a two-bed three person bungalow and a three-bed five person bungalow. In addition, eight two-bed three person bungalows with level access, incorporating low level showers were also constructed on this site for applicants with mobility restrictions or disabilities. This delivery is reflective of Cork City Council progress in meeting the existing but also the emerging needs of disabled people for Social Housing supports. The fully wheelchair liveable units are the first delivered under the new Strategy, but they certainly will not be the last with further projects incorporating similar type units at various stages of planning and construction across Cork city.

7.4.3 Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Glencairn (2023)

In July 2023, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLR) delivered a 43-unit development at Glencairn consisting of:

- Four wheelchair liveable bungalows;
- 16 apartments built to Universal Design standards; and
- 23 apartments.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, DLR Housing engaged proactively with Park Developments to identify a secure site for this purpose-built accommodation. Park Developments agreed with DLR to submit a revised planning application to improve the Part V delivery from 34 units to 43 units and incorporating UD Homes and Wheelchair specifications noted above. Planning permission for this scheme was granted on 26 November 2021 demonstrating that Part V, purpose-built accommodation can be planned and delivered with effective collaboration from all parties.



Columba Park, Killiney (2024)

Columba Park in Killiney is a development of 49 homes delivered under Part V in DLR comprising houses, duplexes, and apartments. The development was delivered in May 2024 and funded through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The development includes:

- 8 one-bed ground floor own door homes with level access bathrooms.
- 1 four-bed bungalow.

DLR worked in partnership with the HSE Disability Housing Coordinator and Saint John of Gods to provide a shared community house and accessible one-bed unit for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The co-location specifics of the accommodation meant that with transfers from other sites, up to 10 individuals could be housed appropriately across the schemes with funding from the HSE. The other accessible homes at Columba were matched to disabled people with an appropriate need.

7.4.4 Kildare County Council

Pairc na Manach, Kildare

Páirc na Manach is a new development of 204 homes on the outskirts of Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Clúid Housing intend to acquire 99 units within this development, and these will include Cost Rental, General Needs social housing, and 17 level-access ground floor apartments managed by Clúid's age-friendly housing department, Clann. The accessible units will comprise a mix of 1 & 2 bed accessible apartments, and a smaller number of Universally Designed apartments. All apartment types include wet-rooms and Tunstall 24/7 Emergency Response Systems. Clann's residents will be supported by a dedicated Scheme Manager. Clúid and Kildare County Council (KCC) have worked closely to align the unit types with the needs of KCC housing applicants and will continue to work in partnership to allocate these much needed homes as subsequent phases complete. This project was funded through the P&A -CALF funding stream.

7.4.5 Fingal County Council

Wellview Infill Project (Wellview Grove, Avenue & Terrace), Mulhuddart, Dublin 15 (2023):

Delivering 20 new social houses as an infill scheme, including 7 two-bedroom houses, 7 three-bedroom houses and 6 four-bedroom houses. All 6 four-bedroom houses (30% of the units) were designed and constructed to be suitable for adaption for disabled people and people with specific medical needs and include age friendly design elements and a ground floor bedroom and bathroom with a level access shower. The development was delivered under the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

Liscappagh, Cappagh Road, Finglas, Dublin 11 (2023):

This project delivered 69 new social units including 36 one- and two-bedroom apartments over three floors, and 33 two- and three-storey houses.

A total of 16 units (23%) including 5 one-bedroom ground floor apartments, 7 two-bedroom ground floor apartments, and 4 four-bedroom houses (ground floor bedroom and bathroom) were designed and constructed to be suitable for adaption for people with specific medical needs, and include age friendly design elements. The development was delivered under the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

7.4.6 Wexford County Council

Ard na Gaoithe (2024)

Ard na Gaoithe, designed by OBFA Architects, has been delivered on site over 2 phases, completing in November 2024. The scheme comprises 44 units in total with mixed occupancies. The unit breakdown consists of:

- 4 x 4 bed semi detached 2 storey houses.
- 14 x 3 bed semi detached 2 storey houses.
- 6 x 1 Bed Apartments.
- 16 x 2 bed apartments.
- 4 x 3 Bed apartments.

The scheme was funded by SHIP Construction, with tenants moving in over the calendar year of 2024 as the respective phases reached completion.

The scheme delivers multiple amenity spaces of different natures, critical to creating a sense of place and community. This also links both phases of development and ensures the overall scheme is cohesive and integrated.

12 of the units are ground floor apartments suitable for adaptation for disabled people and people with specific medical needs.





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Appendix

Short Reflections

1. NISG Member - from the Mental Health Unit, Department of Health

Mental Health Unit express our full commitment to achieve on the delivery of Action 6.2.7 (i.e. the delivery of Recommendations 67 and 68 of **Sharing the Vision**) in collaboration with Housing Agency and Dept of Housing colleagues and other stakeholders. We look forward to ensuring that both recommendations can be delivered by the end of 2024, which includes the full implementation of the agreed protocol (Rec 68), the deadline as set out in Sharing the Vision's Implementation Plan 2022-2024. Mental Health Unit notes the continued positive impact of allocations of housing to people with disabilities, including mental health-related disabilities, as a key output of great significance to the delivery of policy that cuts across government, including Sláintecare, **Sharing the Vision**, etc. (see p.25 of NHSDP Implementation Plan). We welcome continued progress and reporting in this regard and note the impact of the strong policy delivery structures enabled by the Implementation Plan document itself.

2. NISG Member - from the National Disability Team, Health Service Executive

Implementation of the actions in the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People is complex for HSE Disability Services due to the number of LAs involved in some areas. The local steering groups are assisting with getting the right people around the table for discussions on needs etc. Progress is being made in the areas where local steering groups are up and running in a meaningful way and in particular where subgroups of the local steering groups have been developed. Having a dedicated lead for housing in each HSE area is also key to progressing and the HSE currently has leads in 4 of the 9 CHO areas. In the 5 areas that do not have a dedicated lead there is a named person for communication purposes only and who will coordinate the collation of the Quarterly Returns. This resource deficit requires attention from the HSE and DCDE

Coordination and oversight at HSE national level is necessary to ensure ongoing focus on the Strategy – this is challenging in light of current structural change within the HSE i.e. national office/centre no longer has an operational remit.

There is a lack of clarity as to how the national actions will progress e.g. reviews of policies and procedures, international research etc – who are the named responsible persons for both HSE and Housing at national level.

On a positive note the team feel that the monthly Disability Action Team (DAT) meetings with local authority are helpful and very positive and help to maintain close working relationships.

3. NISG Member - from the Disability Federation of Ireland

The NHSDP was widely welcomed by disabled people and disability organisations, following an open inclusive consultation process. The NHSDP is ambitious and grounded in the UN CRPD. It has driven positive developments including the new homeandsupportshub.ie website, and greater promotion of universal design, including the appointment of Disability Friendly Technical Advisors - albeit funding is needed to make these standalone roles.

The lived reality for many disabled people is that the system fails them, not delivering much-needed appropriate housing and social care supports. Too many disabled people are living in

unsuitable accommodation, with families despite wanting to move out, or in nursing homes or congregated settings. We must future proof our housing stock by building sufficient universally designed homes. We also need to amend Part M of the building regulations to ensure construction of wheelchair liveable (rather than visitable) housing.

Housing Adaptation Grants require increased investment and reform. To ensure disabled people can access social housing on an equal basis, the Capital Assistance Scheme must be reformed so that it can meet demand. Greater coordination is needed between Local Authorities and the HSE, to ensure housing and support needs are planned for and met in tandem. This must be driven at national level by strong cross-Departmental structures.

There are good practice examples in several Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs), such as the development of focused action teams and the expansion of lived experience representation. However, some HDSGs could work more effectively, improving areas like greater integration with other Local Authority plans; ensuring HDSGs set clear, costed, transparent targets; and greater representation of senior HSE staff, community and voluntary organisations providing housing/ housing supports, and lived experienced representatives. Greater representation of sensory disabilities and autism is particularly needed.

The NHSDP has the potential to address the significant barriers to accessing housing that disabled people face. To deliver on its ambitions it is essential that sufficient funding is put in place.

4. NISG Member - from the National Disability Authority

The National Disability Authority (NDA) welcomes the work done to date on the delivery of the NHSDP. We recognise that some actions were slow to start but that implementation of the action plan now seems to have a renewed focus.

The development of the new National Disability Strategy (NDS) continues which seeks to have a small number of impactful actions. Delivery of the NHSDP will be very important within the overall implementation of the NDS and there is likely scope to be even more ambitious. The mid-term review of the NHSDP will be a good opportunity to reassess ambition and focus on the more outcome focused actions rather than the process focused actions.

Increasing universally designed housing, which is included in the NHSDP, requires ongoing attention as the housing crisis puts more attention on cost and speed of delivery. In this context, Universal Design risks being deprioritised. The pace of decongregation – the process to transition people from institutional living arrangements to ordinary homes in the community - has slowed in recent years but this is also receiving renewed focus through the Action Plan for Disability Services with plans to access more housing outside of the health sector. Achieving this will require more flexible ways of working and all sectors working together towards a common vision of disabled people living more independently with choice and control over where, how and with whom they live.

The NDA looks forward to continuing to input to the National Implementation Steering Group.

5. NISG Member - from the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH)

As the NHSDP nears the end of its third year, the ICSH commends the work of the Housing Agency and the National Implementation Steering Group (NISG) on their work in implementing the Strategy to date.

In accordance with the implementation plan, the ICSH look forward to continuing to support the delivery of housing for disabled people in the AHB sector by engaging with larger developing AHBs and building capacity in the sector. We will continue to advocate for streamlined funding models that help build this capacity. ICSH will also continue to encourage a multi-agency approach through our work with Government Departments and Agencies.

ICSH would welcome a review of how the successes of the NHSDP are being measured, through effective data collection, particularly in relation to delivery of homes for individuals under the four pillars of disability. The mid-term review of the NHSDP will be a good opportunity to look at this.

The ICSH looks forward to continuing to work together with The Housing Agency and the NISG and successfully completing actions on behalf of the AHB sector.





6. NISG Member- from Inclusion Ireland

The successful implementation of the Strategy for people with disabilities faces significant challenges. The sheer number and variety of stakeholders involved make it difficult to track progress and hold everyone accountable. The slowing decongregation process and decreasing number of adapted social housing units raise concerns and the uneven participation of local authorities further complexifies the global sense of progress across Ireland. Furthermore, the lack of fully funded access officer positions in some local authorities means they may struggle to implement the plan effectively. Inclusion Ireland specifically highlighted difficulties in getting people with intellectual disabilities involved in HDSGs due to barriers like transportation, inaccessible meeting formats, and a lack of support. These issues combined paint a concerning picture regarding the ability of the Strategy to achieve its goals.

7. NISG Member - from the Independent Living Movement of Ireland.

Independent Living Movement of Ireland (ILMI) is a cross impairment Disabled Persons' Organisation which adheres to a rights-based social model of disability to achieving choice and equality for disabled people. ILMI has identified adequate and liveable housing for disabled people as one of its most critical policy areas. ILMI strongly believes that Article 19 of the UN

CRPD can come to fruition if and only if disabled people are actively and effectively consulted in public policy formulation and implementation.

It is in this spirit that ILMI values strongly the work of NISG towards overseeing the implementation of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027. As a member of the NISG, ILMI seeks to highlight some of its housing-related actions in line with the strategy. ILMI facilitated a collective space for its members to identify key political demands the outcome of which put housing as a key priority (<https://ilmi.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ILMI-Invest-in-Inclusion.pdf>).

Additionally, ILMI engaged with different stakeholders including with Members of the Oireachtas to create awareness and design ways for collective effort on housing for disabled people. ILMI and its members used different avenues to reach out to election candidates with a political ask on housing. ILMI continued to support the establishment of local DPOs and assist members who participate in the different Housing and Disability Steering Groups.

ILMI acknowledges and commends the efforts of all NISG members which are encapsulated in the Annual Report. It notes that progress has been made across the different implementation modalities albeit progress has not been even. ILMI underscores more effort is required in harmonising actions across the multi-stakeholder and complex structure housing policy and delivery which is inclusive of disabled people. It also seeks further support to disabled people who are members of local HDSGs.

8. Short Reflection from the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage

In this Activity Progress Report of the Implementation Plan', the DHLGH wishes to acknowledge the role played by the National Implementation Steering Group and the Housing Agency as Chair and secretariat in driving forward the implementation of the Strategy. The participation of Disabled Persons Organisations and other disability groups in the NISG, thematic groups and HDSGs remains invaluable to the work of implementation.

The Housing Agency continues to ensure that disabled people are well informed on access to appropriate housing support. The Home and Supports Hub (www.HomeAndSupportsHub.ie) developed by The Housing Agency provides a valuable tool to find the information on housing and supports needed to access independent living. It is vital that we continue to provide useful and accessible information to the public to inform their own decision-making.

The publication of the Report on the Review of the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People, together with the implementing regulations, serves as a key milestone in improving this significantly important grants scheme which includes over 30% increases in the grants limits and 25% increase in income thresholds. Allocations to disabled households as a percentage of the overall allocations of Social Housing Support, are continuing to represent a high percentage of at 17% of the overall allocation in 2023. Furthermore, the DHLGH continues to support the key role played by Mental Health Tenancy Sustainment Officers under this Strategy.

The DHLGH remains committed to the strategy and implementation plan recognising the importance of remaining agile in response to changing circumstances over the lifetime of the NHSDP to ensure that the vision for the cooperation and collaboration of Government Departments, state agencies and others in delivering housing and the related supports for disabled people is maintained.

Notes

[illegible]



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