

Kilkenny Housing Disability Strategy

2025 - 2027



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

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1.0 Introduction

County Kilkenny's Housing & Disability Steering Group (HDSG) has prepared a new action plan regarding housing persons in the County who are living with a disability.

The Steering Group is made up of representatives from Kilkenny County Council's Housing Section, HSE, Approved Housing Bodies, Disabled Persons Representative Organisations and service providers. There is also a desire to include people with a Lived Experience on the Steering Group.

The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group is outlined in Appendix 1.

The Group's goal is to meet the housing needs of people with a disability locally, with a focus on forward planning, both in terms of need and having suitable houses and health and welfare supports available to meet that need in a timely manner.

This Strategy was initially prepared in 2021 and subsequently reviewed and amended to take account of the second National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 published in February 2022 and the National Implementation Plan published in June 2023. The actions listed in Section 8 reflect those to be progressed by Kilkenny's HDSG for the duration of this programme.

2.0 Strategy Vision

To facilitate access for people with a disability to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated, sustainable and timely manner, which promotes equality and human rights, individual choice, and independent living.

3.0 Strategy Function

The HDSG has a remit to deliver on the following themes supported by 27 Outcomes and 107 Actions.



Fig.1 Themes identified under the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People.

Housing Disability Steering Groups have been identified as the lead body for 11 actions, partner in 19 actions and stakeholder in 34 actions.

4.0 Strategy Formulation

Several processes have informed the development of this strategy, which have been guided by the value of democracy, as summarised below:

- Kilkenny's original Strategy was prepared prior to the publication of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027. This review of our Strategy is being undertaken to bring it in line with the National Strategy.
- As part of this process, all stakeholders have been consulted. Section 5.0 outlines these stakeholders and their functions.



**2 No. Wheelchair Accessible Apartments & 6 No. Accessible Apartments Glebeside, Castlecomer.*

5.1 Individuals

This Strategy aims to empower individuals to make decisions about their living arrangements. People with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others.

Key Considerations include:

- **Location in person's preferred community.**
- **Connection to families and friends.**
- **Continuity of care services for existing supports such as Disability Access Services and Mental Health Teams.**
- **Close to local amenities.**
- **Access to public transport.**
- **Safe and secure.**
- **Accessible housing with suitable adaptations.**

An individualised approach to housing and suitable supports promotes the inclusion and participation of a person with a disability in everyday life and communities. Access to housing adds value and status to the lives of all citizens. People with disabilities have the same rights as other citizens to access housing to create homes that enhance their lives and support their inclusion in, and contribution to, society.

5.2 Families

In many cases families are the first assistance and support in relation to the provision of appropriate accommodation for persons with a disability. The family may also become the advocate for the individual with the consent of the individual. The challenge, however, facing that family and household must be recognised and in many instances outside assistance is required, whether that is through physical adaption of existing property, relocation or whether it is through provision of support services to the household. The well-being of all members of the household must also be considered. Families should always be considered for consultation, if appropriate, on planned actions with the permission of the individual. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act commenced on 26 April 2023. Assisted decision-making is the process in which persons lacking in or with limited capacity can be facilitated insofar as possible to make decisions about their own lives.

5.3 Kilkenny County Council (Housing Authority)

Local Authorities acting as Housing Authorities have a key role in the provision of social housing supports for all eligible persons with a disability, including people currently living independently, or with families or in other arrangements. In many cases the solution for the individual will also require the support of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Since the introduction of the National Guidelines for the Assessment and Allocation Process for Housing Provision for People with a Disability, all adults with disabilities are entitled to apply for an assessment of housing need and shall not be deemed adequately housed when their current address is a congregated setting, institution, hospital/nursing home, community-based group home, or when they, although an adult, remain in the family home due to their personal circumstances and/or support needs, including their need for adapted living conditions where the family home is unsuitable.

The numbers currently on the housing list do not reflect the actual housing need for people with disabilities in the county. It is essential that the various disability groups and service providers operating in the county encourage the people they represent who have not applied for housing, but are eligible to do so, to apply for inclusion on the council housing list.



*Wheelchair Accessible Unit Circular Road, Kilkenny

5.4 Approved Housing Bodies

Approved Housing Bodies will continue to play an important role in the provision of housing under the initiatives set out in the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability. Kilkenny County Council will enable housing through various mechanisms including construction projects and will support AHBs to develop suitable housing for people with a disability.

5.5 Health Service Executive (HSE)

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

It is the responsibility of the HSE to identify individual care support costs and continue to provide funding for residents in their new housing environments, where applicable. The HSE has the overall statutory responsibility for the management and delivery of healthcare and personal social services. In respect of disability services, it is the HSE's responsibility to provide services directly and also, through the funding of non-statutory organisations to provide such services on its behalf.

The HSE's Corporate Plan confirms a commitment to continue to work to reimagine disability services, to be the most responsive, person-centred model achievable with greater flexibility and choice for the service user. The HSE will support people with disabilities to live a full life in the community with access to a range of person-centred community services and supports and will work to ensure compliance with standards and the highest quality of life of each individual. The HSE will continue to reduce the number of people living in institutional settings, by collaborating with non-statutory agencies to provide more appropriate community-based accommodation.

Disability service providers work closely with the individual, their families and advocates to develop plans for each person to ensure they are fully supported in all elements of life such as relationships, employment, hobbies, recreational activities and personal choice. The HSE and all relevant stakeholders are fully committed to supporting the transition to community living and will continue to do so ensuring that people with a disability are at the centre of all decision making about their lives.

5.6 TUSLA

The Child and Family Agency is committed to providing high quality services to children and families at earliest opportunity across all levels of need. Providing help to children and families early in the stage of a difficulty can prevent situations getting worse. Identifying children both living at home and in care with a current or future need is important in planning for current and future housing provision

5.7 Service Providers

In addition to the HSE there are a number of non-government organisations in Kilkenny providing housing related supports to people with disabilities. These supports include, but are not limited to, the development of person-centred plans, provision of information with regard to housing options, provision of support with regard to an application for assessment of housing needs, access to an external advocate, support regarding tenancy arrangements and care support needs identified. Service providers must also participate in the local implementation teams, identify any obstacles / challenges to transition etc.



*1 No. Wheelchair Accessible Unit & 14 No. Accessible Units Pairc Nua, Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny

5.8 Department of Health

The Department's role in relation to service for people with disabilities is to provide the policy and legislative framework to enable the ongoing strategic development, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of health and social services to support people with a disability to live in the community. This includes working with other Government Departments, the HSE and relevant agencies to enhance people's health and well-being. The Department of Health has an additional specific role with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the management of the ringfenced funding for the housing provision for people transitioning from congregated settings.

5.9 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

The Housing and Disability Steering Group structure was proposed under the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability to oversee the implementation of the strategy at local level. The HDSGs are to be chaired by the Director for Housing within the Local Authority. It is envisaged that all representatives on the group should be at a senior level and should be competent at representing the needs of the various disability groups.

5.10 Steering Group Members

The Terms of Reference for the Group are set at national level for adoption by the local groups and the Steering Group members agree to adhere to the terms of reference. The group agrees to work with wider stakeholders in the disability sector, where appropriate to invite them to attend Steering Group meetings to encourage their engagement with the Group and the Strategic Plan. These advocacy groups will be encouraged to promote the strategy where possible amongst the wider disability networks.

The importance of ensuring the membership of the Steering Group includes persons with lived experience is recognised and the Group will work to ensure that those with lived experience are represented on the Group in order to ensure their involvement in decisions relating to their housing needs.



*4 No. 1 Bed Accessible Homes Golf Links Road, Kilkenny

6.0 Current Disability Housing Need

Table 1 below records the number of applicants currently on Kilkenny County Council's social housing waiting list who have a disability, distributed per disability category (as of August 2025).

Housing List Statistics		
Category	Applicants	Percentage
Sensory	8	5%
Physical	42	29%
Intellectual	58	39%
Mental	32	22%
Unspecified	7	5%
Total	147	100%

Table 1

The total figure represents approximately 11.5% of the overall number on Kilkenny County Council's social housing waiting list.

Table 2 below outlines the total number of applicants with a disability that had their accommodation needs fulfilled during 2024 and as of August 2025.

Category	2024	August 2025
Sensory	2	-
Physical	12	7
Intellectual	1	8
Mental	2	2
Unspecified	-	2
TOTAL	17	19

Table 2

The total figure represents 12% of the overall number of housing allocations made by Kilkenny County Council in 2024.

Kilkenny County Council administers a number of grant options to assist older people and people with a disability in carrying out works which are necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for their accommodation needs. The following table outlines the Private Housing Grants undertaken by Kilkenny County Council in 2023 & 2024.

Grants Approved & Committed				
SCHEME	No. 2024	AMOUNT 2024	No. 2023	AMOUNT 2023
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	169	€1,844,865	190	€2,029,306
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	11	€35,505	17	€64,934
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	292	€1,478,388	247	€1,243,162
Total	472	€3,358,758	454	€3,337,402

Table 3

The delivery of new social units is achieved through direct construction programme, Part V, Turnkeys, Acquisitions and Approved Housing Bodies.

An increased focus has been placed on maximising the number of Universal Design units that are delivered through the above mechanisms. In addition, disability is a recognised priority category in respect of Kilkenny County Council's Acquisition Programme.

In terms of Kilkenny County Council's direct construction programme, accessible units are included within housing schemes, based on verified need to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH).



*Croker's Hill Development

Kilkenny County Council Social Delivery Build Targets 2022-2026

Social Housing Delivery	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Targets	170	149	153	164	167	803
Delivery	144	185	179			
Delivery Relative to Cumulative Target	-26	+10	+36			

Table 4

Note: These targets are subject to change in line with Government policy.



*Adaptive re-use of an existing building to provide an accessible home at the Old Fire Station, Thomastown.

7.0 Themes

As referred to in Section 3.0, the second National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 identifies six Themes which emerged during the consultation process. These themes take account of the outcomes needed to facilitate independent living:

Theme 1 Accessible Housing and Communities

Theme 2 Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports

Theme 3 Affordability of Housing

Theme 4 Communication and Access to Information

Theme 5 Knowledge, Capacity and Expertise

Theme 6 Strategy Alignment

The below table outlines 20 actions aligned to the Themes from the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 that will be the focus for the Kilkenny Housing Disability Steering Group.

Attention on progress will be maintained through the Steering Group's quarterly meetings, with the objectives forming the set agenda items for the Steering Group's meetings during the lifetime of this Strategy.

Furthermore, the assessment of equality and human rights issues will also be apparent in implementing the Strategy, and progress on these issues will be tracked and reported on within the reporting procedures for the Strategy. The examples of good practice will inform the development of the priority actions as appropriate.

Collaboration is highlighted as a core objective of this Strategy. All collaborative work will be underpinned by the values of data confidentiality and privacy and will be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Steering Group commits to further expand the participation of people with a disability on the Group, in a manner that is both representative and accountable.

8.0 Kilkenny Housing Disability Steering Group Objectives and Actions

Objective	Actions	Responsible	Timeframe	National Strategy Theme
Housing Supply	1. To maximise delivery of accessible new social units through direct construction, Part V, Turnkeys, AHBs and acquisitions. Units to be specific to identified needs & approval secured from the Dept.	KCC/AHBs	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	2. To ensure that the proportion of housing supports provided to applicants with a disability is at least commensurate with the percentage of people with a disability on the housing list.	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	3. With regard to new pipeline delivery i.e. new schemes submitted to the department, units that meet Universal Design Standards will be maximised.	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	4. To participate, in Universal Design social housing projects with the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage with a view to informing national policy on the matter.	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	5. To sustain the level of budget provision in the County for adaptations, inclusive of central and local funding	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	6. To compile a register of accessible/adapted social housing properties suitable for persons with a disability.	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	7. Coordination between Local authority and HSE to plan and deliver on housing targets for people with a disability in the community.	KCC/HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 1 - Accessible Housing and Communities
	8. People with a disability have access to affordable housing schemes.	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 3 - Affordability and Housing

Objective	Actions	Responsible	Timeframe	National Strategy Theme
Health and Care Services	9. HSE to provide and coordinate, within the resources available, and to track and report on the development of Disability and Mental Health Services in the County, with particular attention to priority areas as Tenancy Support Services (Mental Health Services only), Social Care Providers, Personal Assistance Services, Rehabilitation Teams, and Respite Services. Engagement at national level would be pursued where the tracking and reporting identify shortages in the levels of services available.	HSE	Quarterly	Theme 2 - Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports
	10. Working with service users and service providers to identify levels of need and aim to identify housing solutions at an early stage. Once the needs of the service user are established providing personal or in-home supports to meet the individual's healthcare needs. These packages of care support will be reviewed as needed, having regard to budget and the needs of the individual.	HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 2 - Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports
Collaboration	11. To consider the establishment of a Disability Action Team (DAT) to facilitate structured shared forward planning in respect of applicants with a disability, and shared case management across the key services operating in the County. Appropriate housing solutions to be identified and pursued, including Group Living Schemes. Review of residents already housed in the community or community residences also to be undertaken by DAT. The operation of DAT will be in line with GDPR to ensure data confidentiality.	KCC/HSE	2026	Theme 2 - Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports
	12. Monitor and review the operation of interagency housing protocols, e.g., Hospital Discharge Policy, social housing application Medical Disability Form	KCC/HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 2 - Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports

Objective	Actions	Responsible	Timeframe	National Strategy Theme
Housing Pathway	13. Improve information for people and their families/carers about how they can access housing, ensuring communication in accessible formats and through accessible channels. Undertake campaigns to promote applications for social housing supports from persons with a disability in conjunction with the local disability sector, with learning to be captured from the IWA's 'Think Ahead, Think Housing' campaign.	KCC	2025 - 2027	Theme 4 - Communication and Access to Information
	14. Coordinate and share knowledge on housing and overcome identified barriers to accessing services by a person with a disability and ensuring that reasonable accommodation is made in respect of service design and delivery.	KCC/HSE/AHBs	2025 - 2027	Theme 2 - Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports
Participation and Awareness	15. Improve how people with a disability receive and get housing related information and supports by having a central point of contact (Housing Supports Officer) within the HSE. Develop/create accessible links between the HSE disabilities and Local authority housing websites.	HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 4 - Communication and Access to Information
	16. Dissemination of information on the work of the Housing Disability Steering Group to the identified disability groups/persons, to promote information flows, transparency, and accountability.	KCC/HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 4 - Communication and Access to Information
	17. Complete training delivered by the Housing Agency on roles and responsibilities of each department and stakeholder.	KCC/HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 5 - Knowledge, Capacity and Expertise
	18. Complete training delivered by the Housing Agency required to implement Assisted Decision-Making Act 2015	KCC/HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 5 - Knowledge, Capacity and Expertise
	19. Implement local actions under the Information and Communications Strategy (Housing Agency to develop)	KCC/HSE	2025 - 2027	Theme 4 - Communication and Access to Information
	20. Stakeholders are responsible for monitoring the delivery of social housing for people with disabilities, ensuring that strategies are effectively implemented and adjusted as needed.	KCC/HSE/AHBs	2025 - 2027	Theme 4 - Communication and Access to Information

9.0 HDSG Actions under National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 Implementation Plan

Summary of Actions where the HDSG is the Lead body.

Theme 1 Accessible Housing and Communities

Outcome 1.4

Local Authorities strategically plan for the housing needs of disabled people in their administrative area.

Action 1.4.4

“All Stakeholders must assist to inform the local strategic planning for the changing community support needs of disabled people in the community and those who are living in the family home as their carers get older.”

Theme 2 Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports

Outcome 2.3

Local authorities and the HSE work and collaborate efficiently, improving access to housing for disabled people.

Action 2.3.3

The Housing and Disability Steering Groups 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:

- a)** HDSGs will review their Terms of Reference and their frequency of meetings.
- b)** HDSGs will review their membership and ensure there is representation from Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) on each group. Membership should be reviewed annually (or as deemed appropriate) to ensure that there is fair representation.
- c)** HDSGs will report quarterly on their delivery, allocations, pipeline delivery and support packages.
- d)** HDSGs will examine how members represent their sector and how the group supports members to report back to their sector.
- e)** Establish subgroups of the HDSGs to deal with specific issues or groups, as appropriate.

- f)** All stakeholders communicate on pipeline delivery to allow for effective planning including gains from the close working relationship.
- g)** Ensure that delivery is provided in a co-ordinated way without competition for existing supply.
- h)** A formal process will be put in place through The Housing Agency to allow HDSGs to escalate issues to be dealt with at a national level, as appropriate.
- i)** HDSG to encourage and facilitate smaller specialised AHBs to undertake new projects.

Theme 4 Communication and Access to Information

Outcome 4.5

Better sharing of data to produce more collated data.

Action 4.5.5

Conduct a mapping exercise of county wide services under housing, health, and community for each county.

Theme 5 Knowledge, Capacity and Expertise

Outcome 5.1

Local authorities, the HSE, service providers and Approved Housing Bodies have the knowledge base, expertise, and capacity to provide services and relevant information to disabled people.

Action 5.1.5

HDSGs organise “shared learning” days in their local authority where representatives from LAs and disability services share learning with members.

10.0 Implementation Structures

Implementation of the Strategy will be overseen by the HDSG, which will meet at least 4 times per year. A Quarterly reporting template has been prepared by the Housing Agency to report on progress in the implementation of the National Implementation Plan. Regular reports will also be provided to the Housing Strategic Policy Group.

Review membership of local Housing Disability Steering Group

A review Terms of Reference and Review membership of local HDSG was undertaken in 2024 (see appendix 1). A further review of the membership of the HDSG will be undertaken following the adoption of this strategy.

Subgroups

The HDSG is proposing to establish a Subgroup between Kilkenny Co Council and the HSE to formalise the pro-active interagency case management of social housing applicants with a disability, who require multi agency supports. The Housing Disability Steering Group may establish further subgroups where it considers it appropriate.

Annual Programme of Work

The county Kilkenny Housing Disability Steering Group will agree annually a programme of work, which will be informed by the actions under the National Implementation Plan for which it is the lead body, and which will identify specific initiatives to support these actions. The Steering Group will also identify measures to support and monitor progress of actions where it is listed as a partner or stakeholder under the National Implementation Plan.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HOUSING AND DISABILITY STEERING GROUP

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is the international treaty which promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by disabled people.

The outcomes of the new national strategy are, and will continue to be, informed by the relevant UNCRPD Articles, as well as the general principles of the UNCRPD and will promote the realisation of disabled people's rights.

NHSDP Regional Interagency groups

Regional interagency groups have been established as part of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People (NHSPD) 2022-2027. These groups will bring together the local authority and HSE disability and mental health representatives to allow for co-operation and collaboration at an operational level and will:

- Aim to bring consistency across their organisations, and
- Evaluate any pilot structures or process progressed in their area.

Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs)

Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) were established in each local authority area under the National Housing Strategy for People with Disability 2011 to 2016. The new national strategy 2022 to 2027 reaffirms the structure of the HDSGs as the most effective forum for the delivery of the outcomes of the Strategy at local level.

The purpose of the group is to assist in the delivery of the Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities, working with the Regional Interagency Groups and the Housing Agency, to facilitate feedback on matters arising and pilot projects identified and to implement actions as outlined in the NHSDP 2022-2027 Implementation Plan.

Role of HDSG

- To increase understanding of the housing and support needs of disabled people.
- To understand and plan for emerging housing need.
- Develop and Implement a Strategic Plan to ensure realistic yet challenging actions, in line with the NHSDP, that will result in increased delivery of appropriate/varied types of housing for people with disabilities, and to also ensure that while the targets are based on the identified need (Housing Waiting List) that they take cognisance of emerging need.
- To monitor the plan for delivery of social housing for persons with disabilities against the targets set at each meeting. This will include the ongoing review of the Council and AHB pipelines for delivery to allow for input into the appropriateness of developments for specific housing types.

- Establish and embed structures and procedures to facilitate interagency cooperation to deliver housing and supports to people with disabilities.
- Developing, monitoring and reviewing of local interagency protocols, as appropriate.
- Acting as a forum for the exchange of information and experience.
- Provide feedback and constructive challenge as necessary to the Department of Housing regarding barriers that exist to meeting the housing requirements of people with disabilities.
- Increase awareness of housing opportunities among people with disabilities.
- Incorporate the lived experience into the delivery of all actions and the development of any projects proposed.

Membership

The membership of the Steering Group will be: -

- Local Authority Director of Housing Services (Chair)
- HSE Representatives, Disability and Mental Health designated points of contact
- Representative from service providers in each of the four disability sectors operational in the local area
- Representatives from up to 3 approved housing bodies at Manager Level
- Representatives from the local authority, designated housing technical and monitoring points of contact

Representatives should be at a senior level and should be competent in representing the needs of the various disability groups. Local authority representatives from relevant sections of the local authority such as Housing Allocation, Architects Department, Housing Development, Planning, Building Control, Social Work etc. should attend meetings, where appropriate.

The **term of the membership** of the Steering Group will be **24 months** and the membership will be reviewed at the end of this period to ensure that there is fair representation across the sector.

Facilitation and Administrative Support

The steering group will meet a minimum of four times per year with administrative support by the LA designated liaison officer. During certain stages of the implementation of the Strategy and the Strategic Plans there may be a requirement to meet more regularly.

Working Groups will be developed to reflect the key themes of the NHSDP to meet between scheduled steering group meetings to enable a productive output and understanding.