



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029

Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998



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Structure of the Traveller Accommodation Programme

The programme is divided into seven sections with the contents of each section outlined as per below.

Section 1

This section outlines a range of socio-economic facts in relation to County Louth as well as the legislative framework which governs the requirements for all Housing Authorities to develop a Traveller Accommodation Programme. It also outlines progress under the previous programmes.

Section 2

This section sets out Louth County Council's policy in relation to meeting the accommodation needs of Travellers.

Section 3

This section sets out the Strategy Statement which details Louth County Council's approach for securing the implementation of the programme.

Section 4

This section outlines the assessment of existing and projected need for Traveller accommodation during the lifetime of the programme.

Section 5

This section details the measures for implementation and the proposals for the forthcoming five years.

Section 6

This section outlines the purpose of LTACC and the requirement and importance of consultation.

Section 7

This section outlines the conclusions and summarises the programme.



Section 1: Introduction

Background

County Louth is geographically the smallest county in Ireland occupying an area of 826 square kilometers. It is however characterised as a county strategically located on the eastern seaboard between Belfast and Dublin, the two main cities in Ireland, north and south respectively. The roads and motorway network give the county quick access to airports, major cities and provide residents with significant and diverse economic, social and cultural opportunities. Consequently, this creates a strong basis for the future successful development of the county and its main towns. County Louth has a population of 139,703 as of Census 2022. Significant settlements include Drogheda, Dundalk as well as Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford.

A total of 445 Traveller households are estimated to reside in County Louth according to the local authority annual count carried out in November 2023. There were 930 individual Travellers (489 females and 441 males) in Louth in Census 2022, compared with 771 individuals in 2016. It must be noted that the Traveller population can be under-reported, as many Travellers do not disclose their Traveller identity, often for fear of discrimination. There were 32,949 Travellers in Ireland, compared with 30,987 in 2016 (+6%). This included 16,777 females and 16,172 males. Irish Travellers make up less than 1% of the population so, for comparison purposes, it can be helpful to use rates per 1,000 of the population. This shows that in Census 2022, six out of 1,000 people in the State were Irish Travellers. Census 2022 also highlights again a lower average life expectancy among the Irish Traveller population than in the overall population. Children under the age of 15 made up 36% of Irish Travellers compared with 20% of the total population. At a national level, 15% of the total population was aged 65 years and over while for Irish Travellers, the equivalent figure was just 5%.

According to Census 2022, the proportion of married Travellers dropped from 49% in 2016 to 44% in 2022. Irish Traveller men were more likely to be either single (47%) or married (46%) than Irish Traveller women (42% single and 42% married). Approximately 10% of Irish Traveller women were separated or divorced compared with 5% of Irish Traveller men. Irish Traveller women were also more likely to be widowed (5%) than Irish Traveller men (2%). 15% of Travellers experienced a long-lasting condition to a great extent, nearly twice the rate for the total population usually resident in Census 2022. There were 29,900 Irish Travellers living in private households in Census 2022. The majority



were living in permanent housing, while 2,286 people were living in temporary housing units such as caravans and mobile homes. The proportion of Irish Travellers living in private households who were living in caravans, mobile homes or other temporary accommodation was 8% in 2022, down from 12% in 2016.

According to the 2023 local authority annual count the majority (86%) of Traveller households in Louth avail of permanent accommodation i.e. standard social housing, Traveller Group Housing, Halting Site Accommodation or are owner occupiers. 10% of households avail of private rented accommodation and 3% share accommodation with family or friends. 1% of the households live in homeless emergency accommodation / hubs. The current accommodation situation of Traveller households is illustrated in the below table:

Current Accommodation Situation (by Traveller Household)											
District	Social Housing			Private rented			Owner occupier	Sharing dwelling	Temporary dwelling	Homeless Unit	Total
	SSH	GHS	HS	HAP	RS	N/A					
Ardee MD	9	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	15
Drogheda BD	43	5	0	4	0	0	4	3	0	2	61
Dundalk MD	213	12	8	33	0	6	82	10	0	5	369
Total	265	19	8	37	0	6	90	13	0	7	445

In terms of Traveller Specific Accommodation, there is one halting site in Dundalk and there are 5 Traveller Group Housing Schemes (in Drogheda, Dundalk and Dunleer) in County Louth.

Louth County Council is the single local authority for County Louth. Since the implementation of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, County Louth has three Municipal Districts which are:

- Ardee Municipal District
- Drogheda Borough District
- Dundalk Municipal District

There is a broad range of services provided by the local authority including housing provision, road design & maintenance, environmental services, planning & development, promotion of economic development & tourism, libraries & cultural services and fire & emergency services. The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Council's overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Louth in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It is a blueprint



for development in County Louth and is the over-arching strategic framework for sustainable development in spatial, economic, social and environmental terms. It offers clear guidance on sustainable development policies and objectives over a range of issues including, but not limited to: settlement, sustainable communities, movement and transport, heritage and climate action.

Legislative Background

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 came into effect on the 10th of September 1998. The primary purpose of the Act is to provide a comprehensive legislative framework which requires housing authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers normally resident within their administrative areas. The provisions of the Act play an integral part in promoting social inclusion and equality and counteracting discrimination that may be experienced by members of the Traveller community.

A summary of the main provisions of the 1998 Act is outlined as follows:

- To provide that each housing authority must prepare and have adopted a programme of Traveller accommodation in their area.
- Adoption of a Programme is a reserved function. However, in the event of the members failing to adopt a Programme within the specified timeframe, the Chief Executive is required to adopt the Programme by way of Chief Executive's Order.
- To provide for an extensive public notification and consultation process in respect of the preparation of a Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- To require housing authorities to take reasonable steps to secure the implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes.
- To provide for the establishment of a Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to facilitate consultation with Travellers.
- The requirement of local authorities to include objectives concerning Traveller accommodation in County and City Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

Louth County Council is therefore required to prepare and adopt a new Traveller Accommodation Programme and the Minister directed in Circular 46/2023 that the next Traveller Accommodation Programme should be for the period from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2029.



A summary of key dates and actions is outlined in the table below and it is highlighted that the Minister has specified the 31st of December 2024 as the latest date by which the accommodation programme must be adopted.

Date	Action
December 2023	Provide 1 months' notice to stakeholders before making an assessment of need.
Jan/Feb 2024	Conduct assessment of estimated existing and projected need during the period of the programme and types of accommodation required
March/April 2024	Analysis of results of assessment of need
May/June 2024	Preparation of draft Traveller Accommodation Programme
1 st July 2024	Publish notice in newspapers that draft programme is available for inspection and circulate draft programme to all stakeholders
30 th August 2024	The latest date for receipt of written submissions on draft programme
1 st October 2024	Submission of draft programme to Council members for adoption (3 months before the latest date for adoption i.e. 31/12/2024)
31st December 2024	The latest date for adoption of the programme
21 st January 2025	Latest date for adjournment of Council meetings
21 st February 2025	If there is failure to adopt the programme by elected members a further 1 month is allowed before the programme, as may be modified, is adopted by Chief Executive's Order
Following adoption	Publication and submission to the Minister of the adopted programme.
30 th June 2027	A review of the 6 th Traveller Accommodation Programme must be carried out no later than 30/06/2027.

Louth County Council acknowledges the recognition in Dail Eireann on 1st March 2017 of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation. The Council also recognises the importance of consultation with all interested parties in developing and adopting the 6th Traveller Accommodation Programme. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) provides a forum for ongoing consultation and collaboration with Travellers and Traveller interest groups. Committee members participate in LTACC by having regard to Government policy as set out in 'Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership, Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector' in 2022. The document highlights the values and principles that underpin the relationships necessary at all levels to provide effective support to communities; in particular, the most disadvantaged and marginalized. The values include social justice, empowering communities, sustainable development, active participation, human rights, equality and anti-discrimination and social inclusion. The principles outlined include respect, harmonization, implementation, subsidiarity, value for money and collaboration.

The Council notes its legal obligation under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty requires public bodies to promote equality,



prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by its' policies and plans. To meet the core requirements of the Duty, the Council must assess, address and report annually on developments and achievements in regard to equality and human rights issues and actions in an accessible manner for the public. The Council is committed to ensuring equality is promoted and discrimination against Travellers is prevented in the planning, design and provision of accommodation services. This includes consulting with Traveller communities, ensuring that Traveller-specific needs are met, and their rights are respected as an ethnic minority group, and taking measures to address any inequalities or barriers that may exist.

Section 4(1) of the Equal Status Act, 2000 states that discrimination includes a refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such special treatment or facilities it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail himself or herself of the service. Furthermore, section 6(1)c states that a person shall not discriminate in providing accommodation or any services or amenities related to accommodation or ceasing to provide accommodation or any such services or amenities.

The Disability Act, 2005 places a statutory obligation on public service providers to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities. Under the Act people with disabilities are entitled to have their health and educational needs assessed, have individual service statements drawn up setting out what services they should get, access independent complaints and appeals procedure, access public buildings and public service employment.

Implementation of previous Programmes (2000 – 2024)

The first five Traveller Accommodation Programmes have mainly included provision of standard social housing. Whilst 29 Traveller Group Housing units were included in the previous programmes only 10 (34%), of which 4 were re-let units, were provided. The main reasons for the planned Traveller Group Housing Schemes not progressing are the below:

- the intended tenants had left the administrative area.
- the intended tenants chose another accommodation option.
- planning permission was refused.

Halting site accommodation has been provided through re-letting of the existing bays in Dundalk.



The implementation of the first five programmes is summarised in the below table:

Traveller Accommodation Programmes 2000 – 2024												
Programme	SSH			GHS			HS			Total		
	Target	Provided	%	Target	Provided	%	Target	Provided	%	Target	Provided	%
2000 – 2004	33	46	139	13	2	15	4	3	75	50	51	102
2005 – 2008	58	46	79	4	2	50	3	3	100	65	51	78
2009 – 2013	66	60	91	6	4	67	5	3	60	77	67	87
2014 – 2018	58	75	129	0	0	0	0	14	0	58	89	153
2019 - 2024*	49	72	147	6	2	33	0	8	0	55	82	149
Total	264	299	113	29	10	34	12	31	258	305	340	111

* 2005 - 2008 GHS provision is re-let units in an existing scheme, not new units

*2019 - 2024 figures as per 01/05/2024. TAP was extended to 31/12/2024

* 2019 - 2024 GHS provision is re-let units in an existing scheme, not new units

In addition to provision of housing, 20 caravan loans have been provided during the first five programmes; 1 caravan loan 2000 – 2004, 14 caravan loans 2014 – 2018 and 5 caravan loans during 2019 – 2024.



Section 2: Policy Statement

The Council aims “to facilitate the provision of a high quality, suitable mix of adaptable, lifetime housing that meets the needs of all residents in the County; based on the principles of place making, compact growth, and healthy, sustainable communities where housing is close to services and where sustainable modes of transport can be facilitated” (County Development Plan 2021 – 2027). The Council stands for democracy, integrity, openness and accountability, and input from the people who live, work and do business in Louth is important to ensure the development of a shared vision for the county.

The County Development Plan aims to secure the provision of accommodation under Traveller Accommodation Programmes during the lifetime of the plan. The overall aim of housing policy in Louth is to promote equality and enable every household, where a housing need has been established, to have available to them a dwelling of good quality, in a location of their choice, in so far as is possible.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029 will operate within the context of relevant Government policy, Housing for All, The National Strategy for Disabled People 2019 – 2027, The Action Plan on ‘Housing Options for our Ageing Population’, Housing First (Homeless Strategy) and the National Youth Homeless Strategy. In recognising Travellers’ identity as an indigenous minority ethnic group, the local authority will provide, within the resources available, suitable accommodation to Travellers, dependent on their needs and preferences. Louth County Council outlines its commitment in the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 – 2026 to delivering new houses under the Government policy, including allocations to Traveller applicants.

The Council continues to be proactive in the delivery of social and affordable housing and is working closely with the various government departments, agencies, stakeholders and developers in the progression of projects.

Provision of Accommodation

Applicants seeking social housing accommodation, including Traveller Specific Accommodation, are required to submit housing applications and relevant documents in accordance with Housing Regulations 2011. If the applicant has specific circumstances or a disability, the Council will consider such issues when assessing the housing need. It is the policy of the Council to consult with Traveller applicants regarding their accommodation needs and requirements to provide, where appropriate, Traveller Specific Accommodation. However, this may not always be available to each applicant and therefore other



available options will be explored and offered. The Council will provide social housing to Traveller applicants who have their housing need established and have been included in the Council's housing waiting list. The Council will decline to assist those applicants who have adequate accommodation available to them in another local authority area.

The allocation of properties will be based on the Council's Scheme of Allocations which includes provision of dwellings to Traveller applicants. This policy document sets out the priorities and procedures for allocating social housing units. It outlines the need to achieve a balance in allocating housing units between the accommodation needs and preferences of applicants, the well-being of existing tenants and the community as a whole and the need to make best use of publicly funded resources.

There are a full range of housing options available in the provision of accommodation for Travellers, including:

- Standard Social Housing Accommodation
- Traveller Group Housing
- Traveller Halting Site Accommodation
- Private house ownership
- Private Rented Accommodation with support of HAP

The Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027 recognises the equal right of people with a disability to an adequate standard of living in the community and their right to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live. It also acknowledges the right of persons with disabilities to freedom of expression and opinion, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others.

The purpose of the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled people is to “facilitate access, for disabled people, to the appropriate range of housing *and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living*” (National Housing Strategy for disabled people 2011 – 2016).



Council Social Workers review the housing needs of Travellers who have a disability and require specific housing and consult applicants about their area of choice for accommodation.

Fire Safety

The Council has taken actions to maintain fire safety and fire safety awareness on Traveller specific sites. The services of the fire safety officers within the Council have been engaged to conduct fire safety inspections on Traveller specific accommodation sites. The Council provide equipment including fire blankets and smoke detectors to residents.

Homelessness

Louth County Council provides a range of services to assist persons that are determined as homeless in accordance with section 2 of the Housing Act 1988. The types of assistance provided to homeless persons is as defined in Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988. A range of homeless support and prevention services are in place. Travellers experiencing homelessness may access these services as outlined in section 3 of the programme.

Estate Management

A well-maintained housing stock and the attractive appearance of a housing estate enhance the quality of life and the social well-being of tenants. All Council housing stock, including Traveller Specific Accommodation, is managed on the same basis in accordance with *A Statement of Policy on Housing Management for Rented Local Authority Housing Stock*. The policy covers the following areas: Housing Management Systems, Tenant Involvement & Participation, Maintenance, Estate Focused Management, Lettings of Dwellings, Rents, The Tenancy Agreement and Performance Management.

A tenancy agreement outlining the terms and conditions is required for all tenancies and all tenancies are subject to the payment of differential rent. In the interests of all tenants living on the site or estate, the Council enforces the requirements of the tenancy agreement. Each tenant has a responsibility to ensure that the terms of the tenancy agreement are met in full. Estate management also includes securing the interest of the tenants in the enjoyment of the house and the avoidance, prevention and abatement of anti-social behavior in the housing estates. Louth County Council operates an Anti-Social Behavior Strategy for addressing anti-social behavior emanating from Council owned dwellings and estates. Anti-Social Behavior emanating from the privately owned dwellings or from tenants of the private rented sector is not



a matter for the local authority. Complaints in this regard should be made directly to the landlord or An Garda Síochana.

Temporary Dwellings

The Council has a procedure to ensure a coordinated response, when temporary dwellings are identified, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation as appropriate:

- Section 10 of Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 as amended by Section 32 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998
- Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2002
- District Court Order record no. 41E98
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
- Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1948
- The Roads Act 1993
- Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 (as amended)
- Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878 as amended by Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992.

Temporary dwelling means any tent, caravan, mobile home, vehicle, other structure or thing (whether on wheels or not) which is capable of being moved from one place to another, and is or was used for human habitation, either permanently or from time to time or was designed, constructed or adapted for such use. Public place means any street, road or other place to which the public have access whether as of right or by express or implied permission and whether the subject to or free of charge and any property or other land owned or occupied by or leased to a public authority.

A Council Officer will investigate the circumstances of the household in the temporary dwelling and take appropriate action. In County Louth, under the Sanitary Services legislation, four locations have been designated as prohibited areas for the use of temporary dwellings. These sites are at Ardee Road in Collon, Daly's Cross in Collon, Racecourse Road in Dundalk and Whiterath in Dromiskin.



Section 3: Strategy Statement

Implementing Authority

Louth County Council is the implementing authority for the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029. The housing section is responsible for the provision of suitable, cost effective and, quality accommodation and the implementation of the programme. A Housing Strategy was prepared as part of the Council's County Development Plan 2021 – 2027; in accordance with the requirements of *Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*.

Provision of Accommodation

Louth County Council aims to provide accommodation that responds to the different needs of Travellers utilising various forms of social housing delivery. These include direct provision through the capital programme and acquisition by the Council and Approved Housing Bodies, re-letting of vacant units, houses sourced through private developers' "Part V" obligations, houses sourced through various leasing schemes and private rented accommodation supported by Housing Assistance Payment. The Council's Housing Delivery Action Plan aims to provide 1357 social housing units to applicants approved for social housing during the period 2022 – 2026. Travellers who wish to undertake the provision of their own accommodation may access supports such as home loans and grants.

Resourcing the Programme

The delivery of social housing units is subject to the appropriate level of funding being made available by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Funding is currently available through the Social Housing Capital Investment Programme (SHCIP) which provides funding for capital projects, acquisitions including Part V and Compulsory Purchase Order acquisitions.

Full funding for the provision and refurbishment of Traveller Specific accommodation is provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The delivery of the new Traveller Group housing schemes and refurbishment of the existing schemes in this programme will be subject to the availability of funding from the department.



Louth County Council will continue to engage with the department to secure funding for the provision of the various social housing options.

The Council utilises the expertise of its staff such as technical and administrative staff, housing finance staff, assessment officers, tenant liaison officers, anti-social behaviour investigation officers and social workers in housing provision, maintenance and management of accommodation, as required.

Co-operation with Approved Housing Bodies

Louth County Council has a strong working relationship with various Approved Housing Bodies operating in the county for the delivery of social housing options. The approved housing bodies deliver social housing, in partnership with the Council, through capital projects, acquisitions and leasing and are funded through Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP), Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF).

Allocation of Accommodation

Social housing accommodation is allocated in accordance with Louth County Council's Allocations Scheme. The Council also nominates applicants from the Council's housing list for the tenancies of the Approved Housing Bodies.

Louth County Council operates **Choice Based Lettings (CBL)** system to enable qualified housing applicants to have equal opportunity to exercise greater choice and involvement in selecting a new home. Most of the Council and Approved Housing Body properties are advertised on the Choice Based Lettings website where applicants can view and express interest in a property. In order to be considered as a tenant of a CBL property applicants must express interest in the CBL website. It is acknowledged that there are applicants who are unable to use the CBL system for a variety of reasons. The Customer Services staff of Louth County Council can assist with the use of CBL. Certain properties such as wheelchair accessible and adapted units, ground floor accommodation, some older person's dwellings, and some standard units are reserved for disabled people or older people and therefore are not advertised on the CBL. These units are allocated to housing applicants based on their specific needs. Vacant units in the existing Traveller Group Housing Schemes and Halting site bays are allocated to qualified Traveller applicants based on their specific needs. Traveller Group Housing Schemes are provided, within the available resources of the Council, to Travellers who have requested and agreed to be accommodated together.



In addition to nominating applicants under the Traveller Accommodation Programme for permanent social housing dwellings in their area of choice, Louth County Council's Social Workers assess from time to time the housing need and preferences of individual Traveller applicants who may have specific circumstances or disability and require adapted dwellings. Council Social Workers can therefore nominate these Traveller applicants for allocation of suitable dwellings, in accordance with the Scheme of Allocations and the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027.

Homelessness

The Council's Homeless Services provide a range of prevention initiatives including specialist tenancy sustainment and support services for persons and families at risk of homelessness. These services are dedicated to meet the individual circumstances of the client. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) place finder service assists homeless clients in sourcing accommodation in the private rented sector and provides financial assistance where required.

In partnership with the nongovernmental organization (NGO) sector, Louth County Council provides Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) to homeless families and individuals. These services provide on-site key working supports for all service users. The Council also subsidises the use of private emergency accommodation when required.

In accordance with National Housing First Implementation Plan, Louth County Council, in conjunction with the HSE, provides long-term housing solutions together with intensive wrap around supports to those in long-term homelessness. Louth County Council is the lead authority for the North-East region and the contracted regional Housing First service provider is Peter McVerry Trust.

Estate management

Maintenance is a fundamental aspect of estate management principles. The Council is responsible for the maintenance that are required to sustain the main structure of the property such as structural, plumbing and electrical and heating repairs and for some estate infrastructure such as internal roads, footpaths and alleyways. The maintenance is carried through reactive maintenance and planned maintenance. Tenants are expected to take care of the property and gardens and be responsible for all day-to-day minor repairs.



Whilst the Council has the primary responsibility for maintenance and management of its housing stock and estates, the tenants of the Council are encouraged to develop a sense of ownership and where feasible to actively participate in the estate management through resident committees. The successful tenant participation can bring about vast improvements in the quality of life for residents of local authority housing estates and can help to prevent the deterioration of an estate. The Council's tenant liaison officers are tasked with managing the tenant and landlord relationship and enhance tenant participation.

Louth County Council employs an Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Officers to investigate complaints of anti-social behaviour emanating from Council owned dwellings and estates and to address incidents of anti-social behaviour. Louth County Council also co-operates with An Garda Síochana and other agencies in addressing anti-social behaviour.

Rents are calculated in the basis of a differential rents scheme taking into account the total household income and household composition. Tenants are encouraged to use Household Budget Deduction, Bank Standing Order, Direct Debit or An Post Payment Card as their rent payment method. Louth County Council expects all tenants to have their rent account without arrears at all times. All rent accounts are monitored and tenants with rent arrears are encouraged to meet with the rents section to discuss how the matter can be best resolved.

Tenants' responsibilities and obligations are outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and further information is provided in the Tenant's handbook. All new tenants are required to attend pre-tenancy training where tenants' rights, responsibilities and the Council's obligations are clarified. Where Tenancy Agreements are being broken repeatedly, Louth County Council will issue Tenancy Warnings and initiate eviction proceedings, if required.

Disability

In addition to allocating permanent social housing units to approved applicants on grounds of disability under the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027, grants are available for households who need to adapt their property to meet the need of the household member with a disability.

Louth County Council provides Housing Adaptation Grants for disabled people, who are private house owners or tenants of Approved Housing Bodies, to assist with adaptation works to render a house more suitable for the accommodation of a disabled person. Grant assistance is means-tested and is provided



on a priority basis. There are three types of Housing Adaptation Grants available for older people and disabled people to help them make their home safer and easier to get around: Housing Adaptation Grant (HAG), Mobility Aid Grant (MAG) and Housing Aid for Older People (HOP).

A Council tenant can apply for adaptations to a Council house to render a house more suitable for the accommodation of a disabled person. The Council will always consider the most cost-effective option to address housing needs of the disabled person, which may include transferring to a more suitable dwelling. Provision of adaptation works is subject to survey, feasibility, cost effectiveness, budget, and decision by Council. In some cases, adaptations are not suitable, feasible or cost effective and in such cases the Council will offer the applicant a transfer to more suitable accommodation in their area of choice.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission emphasised the need for effective monitoring and evaluation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes to ensure that they meet international human rights standards and effectively address the needs of the Traveller community. The Commission called for a rights-based approach to be adopted in the development and implementation of these programmes, with a focus on ensuring the meaningful participation and consultation of Travellers in decision-making processes.

The implementation of the programme will be continuously monitored by way of the following arrangements:

- Records for the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation programme are kept by the housing section and progress reports are provided in the monthly Housing Team meetings.
- Progress report will be presented in each meeting of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
- Annual returns to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are provided as required.
- Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will be carried out in 2027 and will be completed by 31/12/2027.



Section 4: Assessment of Accommodation Needs

Assessment Methodology

An initial review of 69 housing applications was carried out and all Traveller housing applicants, apart from ten, were invited for an interview to confirm their choice of accommodation type, housing needs arising from a disability or medical condition and their areas of choice. Ten applicants were not invited for an interview as they had accepted an offer of accommodation, or the applicants were permanently relocating to another county or abroad.

Applicants were also asked about their use of Choice Based Lettings system. In connection with the assessment interviews all enquiries were responded to and general information about housing options were provided for those who required it.

Information received in the interviews was entered into the assessment databases for analysis. The housing need of those applicants who did not attend the interview and remain as open applicants on the housing waiting list was established from their housing application and entered into the databases.

Applicants who requested Traveller Group Housing in connection with the assessment interview were consulted regarding their preferences and the “group” i.e. families they wish to avail of the group housing with. The three households, who requested Traveller Group housing, were not invited to the second interview as they were not forming a new group for Traveller Group housing.

93% of the Traveller applicants included in the assessment attended the interview. The summary of the assessment correspondence, interview attendance and inclusion in the assessment is illustrated in the below table:

District	Initial Applicants No	Not invited	Assessment Interviews					Excluded Applicants No	Assessment Applicants No
			Invite to Appointment Letters			Attended			
			1st	2nd	Final	Yes	No		
Ardee MD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drogheda BD	13	3	12	5	5	7	2	1	9
Dundalk MD	56	7	47	15	7	41	2	6	43
Total	69	10	59	20	12	48	4	7	52
			Total	91	Total	52			



Applicants excluded from the assessment

Applicants who failed to attend the assessment interview were sent two reminder letters and were contacted by telephone and through family members, where possible, to encourage attendance in the interviews.

Those applicants who failed to attend three arranged interviews and no contact was made or their appointment letter(s) were returned by An Post with “gone away” “unknown at this address”, “not at this address” or “deceased” outlined, were referred to the housing assessment unit for their consideration. All of these housing applications were subsequently closed, and a letter was sent to the applicant by the housing assessment unit informing them about the closure of the application. These applicants were not included in the assessment.

Applicants who were provided permanent accommodation during the assessment period and their housing application was closed, were not included in the assessment.

Applicants who advised in connection with the assessment that they are not a Traveller or do not wish to be identified as a Traveller, were not included in the assessment.

The reasons for excluding 7 applicants from the assessment are clarified as follows:

- 3 applicants had their housing application closed.
- 4 applicants are not a Traveller or no longer identify as a Traveller.

Projected Need

The projected need was estimated based on the available information regarding household composition and ages of the household members of housing applicants, tenants of local authority and approved housing bodies, and owner occupiers. The categories of individuals below were included:

- Adult children living with parents who had not applied for social housing.
- Adults living with relatives who had not applied for social housing.



- Children of tenants, housing applicants, owner occupiers etc., who would reach the age of 18 during the duration of the programme i.e. 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2029.

Transient sites

Analysis of temporary dwelling records for the past five years was completed in order to establish the need for a transient site. In this analysis Traveller households who occupy a caravan on the road-side, yard, field, private land etc., while temporarily visiting the county, were considered.

Average waiting time

The average waiting time was set as nine years for the assessment and is used only as guidance and not as an exact requirement. The average waiting time is used to indicate housing need for each year of the programme. The majority of standard social housing vacancies are allocated via the Choice Based Lettings System (CBL), where applicants express interest for suitable vacancies. Due to the nature of the CBL system the waiting time for allocations fluctuates making it difficult to establish an average.

Use of Choice Based Lettings System (CBL)

The majority of social housing vacancies and new dwellings are advertised and allocated via the Choice Based Lettings system. Therefore, the applicants included in the assessment were asked about their use of CBL. For those applicants who did not attend the consultation, information was obtained from the CBL system. No usage of the CBL system was recorded for those applicants who had not expressed interest through CBL or had not logged into the CBL. As Traveller Group Housing, Halting Site accommodation and special needs dwellings are not advertised on CBL, the applicants requesting this type of accommodation only were excluded from the CBL usage record.

Assessment Findings

52 Traveller applicants were included in the assessment and 48 of these attended the assessment interview (92%).



Current accommodation position

The majority of the 52 applicants included in the assessment live in private rented accommodation (58%) or share accommodation with family or friends (29%). 13% of the applicants live in temporary dwellings (roadside caravans) or homeless emergency accommodation / homeless hubs and therefore can be considered having very unstable living conditions. The current accommodation position of the 52 applicants is summarised in the below table:

Current Accommodation situation Housing applicants							
District	Private rented			Sharing dwelling	Temporary dwelling	Homeless Unit	Total
	HAP	RS	N/A				
Ardee Md	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drogheda BD	3	0	0	3	0	3	9
Dundalk MD	25	0	2	12	1	3	43
Total	28	0	2	15	1	6	52

Reported disability need

In connection with the assessment interviews applicants were asked if they have a housing need arising from a disability or a medical condition. Information regarding inclusion in the disability category in the housing waiting list was obtained from the Council's housing system. 23 (44%) of 52 applicants reported having a particular housing need due to a disability or a medical condition and 6 of these were included in the disability category on the housing list as shown in the below table:

District	Applicants No	Assessment Interview						Housing List Disability Category	
		Reported Disability						Yes	%
		P	MH	S	I	Total	%		
Ardee MD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drogheda BD	9	2	0	0	0	2	22	0	
Dundalk MD	43	10	4	1	6	21	49	29	
Total	52	12	4	1	6	23	44	26	

Applicants, who had reported a disability or medical condition and were not included in the disability category, were advised to submit the Housing Medical and Disability Information form (HMD1 form) regarding their medical condition, so that further assessment of their housing need can be carried out and their housing need established.



Disability - Standard Social housing

Of the 48 applicants requesting standard social housing 21 (44%) reported a housing need arising from a disability or a medical condition. 6 (29) of these applicants are included in the disability category in the housing waiting list.

Disability - Traveller Group Housing

Of the 3 applicants requesting Traveller Group housing 1 (33%) reported a housing need arising from a disability or a medical condition. This applicant is not included in the disability category in the housing waiting list.

Use of Choice Based Lettings System (CBL)

39 (78%) of the 50 Traveller applicants included in the CBL assessment are using the Choice Based Lettings systems.

Assessment Interview					
District	Traveller Applicants No	Using CBL			Usage %
		Yes	No	Total	
Ardee MD	0	0	0	0	0
Drogheda BD	9	5	4	9	56
Dundalk MD	41	34	7	41	83
Total	50	39	11	50	78

* Two applicants excluded as seeking Traveller specific accommodation only

The use of Choice Based Lettings has increased considerably among Traveller applicants, from 42% in 2018 to 65% in 2022, and to 78 % in 2024. The use of CBL gives the applicants greater choice and equal opportunity to view properties on the website and express interest in suitable accommodation.

Requested Accommodation

In connection with the assessment interviews the majority (92%) of the 52 applicants requested standard social housing only. In addition, 4% requested standard social housing in combination with Traveller Group Housing indicating that they would accept the accommodation option which would become available first.



2% requested Traveller Group housing only and 2% halting site accommodation only. The requested accommodation is summarised in the below table:

Requested Accommodation						
District	Applicants No	Only			GHS	Total No
		SSH	HS	GHS	SSH	
Ardee MD	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drogheda BD	9	9	0	0	0	9
Dundalk MD	43	39	1	1	2	43
Total	52	48	1	1	2	52

SSH - Standard Social Housing
HS - Halting Site
GHS - Traveller Group Housing

An average waiting time of 9 years is used as a baseline and 33 (63%) of the 52 applicants included in the assessment would reach the average waiting time during the duration of the programme.

Standard Social Housing

31 of the 48 applicants who requested standard social housing as their only housing option would reach the current average waiting time during the current programme, as shown in the below table:

Standard Social Housing only									
District	Applicants No	Average Waiting Time 9 years reached						Not Reached	Total
		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total		
Ardee MD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drogheda BD	9	2	0	0	1	1	4	5	9
Dundalk MD	39	10	0	7	4	6	27	12	39
Total	48	12	0	7	5	7	31	17	48

Traveller Group Housing

Three applicants requested Traveller Group Housing either as their only housing option or in combination with standard social housing option:

- One applicant requested Traveller Group Housing in connection with an existing group housing scheme as their only housing option.
- One applicant requested Traveller Group Housing in connection with an existing group housing Scheme or standard social housing, which ever becomes available first.



- One applicant requested Traveller Group Housing or standard social housing, which ever becomes available first. The applicant has not formed a group to progress the Group Housing scheme.

These applicants do not reach the average waiting time during the course of the programme.

Halting Site accommodation

One applicant requested halting site accommodation in Dundalk. It is envisaged that the need for halting site accommodation in County Louth will be met through re-letting of the existing bays. Louth County Council has highlighted to the Traveller Accommodation Unit in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage that there is further demand by halting site residents for the mobile/caravan loan provision to purchase new mobile homes in order to remain living on the halting site. An allocation of 1 loan had been given to Louth County Council initially in the 2019 – 2024 programme and 4 additional loans were requested and approved. It is important that this scheme continues for residents wishing to live in a Traveller halting site.

Projected need

The estimation of the projected need indicates an accommodation need for 323 households during the duration of the programme. Whilst it has not been possible to establish the accommodation preference of these 323 individuals, it is envisaged based on the Traveller housing applicant's strong preference for standard social housing in county Louth, that the majority would consider standard accommodation.

Transient sites

There has been no record of Traveller households temporarily visiting County Louth and occupying a roadside caravan since 2021. The review of these records in recent years indicates that the demand does not currently exist for a transient site for visiting Traveller households outside the area. During the review of the 5th Traveller Accommodation Programme (2019 – 2024) the Council acknowledged the preference and views of Traveller housing applicants and a sample of tenants/owner occupiers for developing a transient halting site. A number of Travellers interviewed expressed a need for a transient site for young Traveller or newly married couples as their first home. In discussions with staff from other local authorities, it has been identified that transient sites are often not operating as short-stay sites. Their experience is



that occupants on these sites are residing there on a long-term basis. Should the demand for a transient site arise, the Council will consider this in connection with the review of this programme.



Section 5: Measures for Implementation

Standard Social Housing Accommodation

The majority of standard social housing vacancies are allocated through the Choice Based Lettings System (CBL) based on the time on the housing waiting list and requiring the applicants to express interest for vacancies in order to be considered for an allocation. In the view of Traveller applicants' time on the housing waiting list the annual targets for standard social housing provision have been set as follows:

Standard Social Housing Annual Targets						
District	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
Ardee MD	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drogheda BD	2	2	1	1	1	7
Dundalk MD	8	2	7	4	6	27
Total	10	4	8	5	7	34

Traveller Group Housing

Two group housing schemes are being progressed and will be completed during the lifetime of this programme:

Traveller Group Housing				
Group Housing Schme	Dwelling No	Planned Completion		
		Initial	Status	Revised
Clontygora, Dundalk	2	2021	Design completed	2025
Derryveigh, Dundalk	2	2022	Design revision	2025
Total	4			

There have been significant delays in the delivery of these group housing schemes for a variety of reasons, and it is hoped that they will be provided as soon as possible.

There is no requirement for further new Traveller group housing schemes at this stage as the 3 applicants either requested accommodation in connection with an existing group housing scheme or have not formed a group i.e. families they wish to have group housing with.



Halting Site Accommodation

It is envisaged that the need for halting site accommodation in county Louth will be met through re-letting of the existing bays in Woodland Park Halting site. Applications for caravan/mobile loans for residents approved to reside in a halting site bay will be assessed and approved pending availability of funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Accessing Funding

The needs of Traveller housing applicants will be highlighted to the housing technical, capital and finance teams regularly at housing team meetings. This is to ensure appropriate project planning and maximum drawdown of funding that is available from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to support the implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Transient sites

The demand does not currently exist for development of a transient site in County Louth for visiting Traveller households from outside of the area. If records indicate a need for a transient site over the course of this programme the Council will consider this in connection with the review of the programme in 2027.

Additional Accommodation Supports

In addition to social housing provision there are various housing supports available to Travellers, for example:

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

HAP is a form of social housing support provided by local authorities. Under HAP the housing applicant will be required to find their own accommodation in the private rented sector. Where the applicant is eligible and approved for HAP, their local authority will pay, on their behalf, their monthly rent to their landlord. In return the applicant will be required to pay a contribution towards rent to the local authority. This will be a differential rent based on their household weekly income, in a similar way to the differential rents charged for all local authority housing. The housing application will remain open until they are eligible and offered permanent social housing.



Homeless Services

Travellers who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless can avail of the services of the Council's homelessness section. These services include provision of emergency accommodation and supports to secure alternative accommodation.

Local Authority Home Loan

A person who is unable to get a loan from a building society or bank, may be eligible for a local authority mortgage. A Local Authority Home Loan is a government backed mortgage for first time buyers and fresh start applicants, available nationwide from the local authority. It can be used to purchase a new or second-hand property, affordable housing or for self-build. The loan is a normal capital and interest-bearing mortgage which is repaid by direct debit, on a monthly basis. A first-time buyer can borrow up to 90% of the market value of the property. Maximum market values of the property that can be purchased or self-built in county Louth is currently €330,000.

Affordable Housing

Louth County Council aims to make newly built homes available at a reduced price for first-time and other eligible buyers who cannot afford to purchase a home at its open market value with a maximum mortgage and 10% deposit. The scheme is designed to help bridge the gap between what a purchaser can afford to pay and the price of a new home. If a home is purchased at a 20% reduction on the open market value, the local authority will have a 20% equity share in your home. Eligibility criteria includes: persons over 18 years of age; first-time buyer; purchasing power must not exceed 95% of the open market value of the home; a minimum deposit of 10% of the purchase price; right to reside indefinitely in the State; the affordable home will be the principle place of residence.

First-time House Purchase Grants for Travellers

A Traveller, who has purchased a private house for themselves, for the first time, can apply for a grant of €3,810. The Grant is paid by the local authority and must be claimed within 3 years of the purchase. The grant is not awarded to Travellers who seek to purchase their local authority house or any other house where the Local Authority has provided assistance by way of discounts, for example, affordable housing, incremental purchase scheme.



Caravan Loans

It is hoped that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will continue to provide the Nationwide Mobile/Caravan Loan Scheme for Traveller applicants who wish to live on a halting site and require assistance to purchase their own mobile/caravan. 5 loans were approved from 2022 to March 2024 when the pilot scheme concluded.

Conditions of the Scheme included:

- Loans may be advanced to a person assessed by the local authority as being in need of accommodation (either on the social housing waiting list or in need of an upgraded caravan/mobile as their principal residence) and not in a position to provide for same partially or fully from their own resources.
- The amount of a loan advanced will be subject to a maximum of €40,000 inclusive of VAT. The owner of the caravan must provide €500 deposit towards the purchase price. In cases of hardship, local authorities may use discretion.
- A maximum of €40,000 per application for all costs will be funded by the Department to the local authority.

Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme

From time to time the Council operates a scheme that gives local authority tenants the opportunity to buy their homes and get a discount on the price of the house based on their income. An incremental purchase charge, equal to the discount, will be placed on the house and will remain in place for 20, 25 or 30 years. The charge will be reduced each year by 2% if the terms and conditions of the scheme are followed. If the house is resold before the end of the charge period, the value of the outstanding charge on the house must be paid back to the Council. The tenant who buys their Council house must continue to live in the house for as long as they own it. Some properties do not qualify for sale, for example houses designated for older people or people with a disability, Traveller Group Housing, long-term leased and rental accommodation scheme units and apartments. Tenants must meet the criteria set out in the scheme to be eligible to apply.

Disabled Person's Adaptations to a Council House

A tenant can apply for disabled person's adaptations to a Council house for the purposes of carrying out works that are reasonably necessary to render a house more suitable for the accommodation of a disabled



person. The Council will always consider the most cost-effective option to address housing needs of the disabled person, which includes transferring to a more suitable dwelling. Provision of adaptation works is subject to survey, feasibility, and budget.

Disabled Persons Grant for private house owners

Grants are available for disabled people, who are private house owners or tenants of Approved Housing Bodies, to assist in the carrying out of works which are reasonably necessary for the purpose of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a disabled person. Grant assistance is means-tested and will be provided on a priority basis and is subject to budget.

Housing Aid Grant for Older people

Housing Aid for Older People, who are private house owners or tenants of Approved Housing Bodies, is available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions where works are deemed necessary to make the house habitable for the applicant or weather proof in extremely urgent cases. Grant assistance is means-tested and is provided on a priority basis, which will be determined from information supplied on the application form and following an inspection from a Council official. Grant assistance is subject to budget.

Housing Transfers

Tenants of the Council can apply for transfer to more suitable accommodation in certain circumstances such as over-crowding, under-occupancy, and disability. A tenant of Approved Housing Body can apply for transfer within the AHB housing stock. In situations where the approved housing body is unable to provide suitable accommodation the tenant can submit application to the Council.



Section 6: Consultation

Traveller Accommodation Programmes are required to be prepared and implemented in consultation with other local public authorities, community groups and other bodies, Travellers both directly and via the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC), Traveller Support Groups in the area, if any, and the public in general.

The purpose of this consultation process is to ensure that the interests of all concerned with or affected by proposals for Traveller Accommodation are considered and to facilitate a planned and comprehensive response by housing authorities to the accommodation needs of Travellers.

Notice of intention

Notice of the intention to prepare the new Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 1st January 2025 – 31st December 2029 and to carry out an assessment of existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers was given to the below bodies:

Meath County Council	Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
Monaghan County Council	Clanmil Ireland
Cavan County Council	
Irish Traveller Movement	Cluid Housing Association
Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre	Foscadh Housing Association
Louth Traveller Movement	North & East Housing Association
St. Vincent De Paul	Oaklee Housing
Health Service Executive	Respond Housing Association
Tusla Child and Family Agency	Tuath Housing
Simon Community Dundalk	Hail Housing Association
Women's Aid Dundalk	Peter McVerry Trust
Drogheda Homeless Aid	Focus Ireland
Drogheda Women's and Children's Refuge	Simon Community Dublin
National Social Inclusion Office	

Submissions were received from Cena (Approved Housing Body), National Traveller MABS, The Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness, the National Traveller Health Implementation Group and a coalition



report from three organisations: Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, the Irish Traveller Movement and the National Traveller Women's Forum.

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

The role assigned to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee is to:

- Advise in relation to the preparation and implementation of any accommodation programme for the functional area of the appointing authority concerned,
- Advise on the provision and management of accommodation for Travellers, and
- Provide a liaison between Travellers and members and officials of the appointing authority concerned.

The membership of the Louth County Council's LTACC comprises 12 members: 3 elected members, 5 Travellers/representatives of Traveller bodies and 4 Council officials. The LTACC was notified of the intention to prepare a new Traveller Accommodation Programme and to carry out an assessment of existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers and were also consulted in this regard.

A meeting was convened on 20th May 2024 where this draft programme report was presented to the members and discussed.

Individual Travellers

Individual Traveller housing applicants in county Louth were consulted in relation to their accommodation needs and preferences in connection with assessment interviews.

Public Consultation

Section 9(1) of the Act requires local authorities to publish in not less than one newspaper circulating within the functional area of that relevant housing authority stating its proposal to adopt, amend, replace the accommodation programme with regard to submissions received in writing in relation to the Draft Programme. The Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029 was made available for inspection in accordance with statutory requirements by all appropriate bodies, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the general public. Submissions were invited in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The draft Programme was put on public display on



1st July 2024 and the relevant public notice advised that Louth County Council would have regard to any submissions in writing received not later than the 30th August 2024.

One written submission was received on the 29th of August 2024 from Cena (Approved Housing Body). The main issues outlined in the submission were discussed at the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee held on the 16th of September 2024.



Section 7: Conclusion

The majority of Travellers in county Louth have had a strong preference for standard social housing for a long time and this trend continues. Consequently, the past Traveller Accommodation Programmes have mainly included standard social housing provision and Louth County Council has exceeded its targets in regard to provision of standard social housing during 2000 – 2024. The provision of 34 units of standard social housing during the course of this programme (2025 – 2029) is envisaged to be achieved through allocation of newly built and casual vacancies of the Local Authority and Approved Housing Bodies. The standard social housing will mainly be allocated through the Choice Based Lettings system.

Whilst there has been some interest in Traveller Group Housing in the past many of the intended Group housing schemes did not materialise due to various reasons. There are challenges such as securing sites for Traveller Group Housing, Louth County Council receiving the necessary capital resources and the possible changes in accommodation needs and preferences of applicants over the course of the programme. It is hoped that these challenges can overcome through a process of partnership with the relevant agencies, Travelling community and the interested parties and the general public. It is important that the members of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee play a proactive role; in particular, creating a formal structure for dialogue between the Travelling Community and Louth County Council.

Louth County Council recognises the importance of anti-racism and cultural awareness and will commit to facilitating cultural awareness training for LTACC members and all relevant staff working with Traveller applicants and tenants.

In order to ensure that the programme reflects the accommodation needs of Travellers a review of the programme will be carried out in 2027. Considering the accommodation needs of Travellers and other circumstances the targets of the programme can be amended following the review, if required.



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

