

Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People

2022 – 2027

County Louth

Revised Strategy – April 2024

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Introduction

County Louth is situated in a prime location on the eastern seaboard between Belfast and Dublin, the two main cities in Ireland, north and south respectively. The road and motorway network places the county at easy access to airports, major cities and provide residents with significant and diverse economic, social, and cultural opportunities. County Louth has a population of 128,884 as of census 2016 making it the second most densely populated county in Ireland, behind Dublin. Of the total population 85,224 people live in urban areas and 43,660 in rural areas (Census 2016). The County has two large towns – Drogheda (population of 40,956) and Dundalk (population of 39,004); and it also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford.

According to the Census 2016 the number of persons with a disability in county Louth is 17,881 equivalent to 13.9% of the population, which is higher than the national average of 13.5%. The persons with a disability can be categorised as below;

Physical disability	4,238
Sensory disability (hearing 2764 and visual impairment 1632)	4,396
Mental health disability	3,139
Intellectual disability and / or autism	6,108

In the Census 2016 individuals may have recorded multiple types of disabilities and difficulties among the 11 options available. For the purpose of this Strategic Plan, these have been grouped using the above four disability categories.

Census 2016 shows that there has been a steady increase in the population of County Louth; from 122,897 in 2011 to 128,884 in 2016, an increase of 4.8%, and then to 136,911 in 2020, an increase of 6.2% (CSO DIHA06). There has been a similar trend regarding disabled people and the increase has been much larger than in the general population; from 15,932 (12.9%) in 2011 to 17,881 (13.9%) in 2016, equivalent to 12.2% increase. (Census 2016)

In terms of housing, it is reported that 15% of people who have a disability lived in social housing compared to 10% of the general population. (NDA fact sheet, 2018) It is envisaged that by 2026 it is expected that the population with a disability will increase by roughly 20 per cent. One-third of this increase is due to the increased size of the population and two-thirds of the increase is due to the ageing of the population. (NDA Fact Sheet 1, 2018)

Legislative background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted in 2006. Ireland signed the Convention in 2007, ratified it in March 2018 and it came into force on 19 April 2018. “There are specific articles of the convention that are called out as being significant when developing housing strategy for disabled people” (National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 – implementation Plan, 2023)

Article 1 states that persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Article 4.1 (f) states that the Parties agree to undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, which should require the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disabilities, to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines.

Article 4.3 In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organisations.

Article 9 states that to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

Article 19 of the UNCRPD states that the parties to this convention recognise the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that

- a) Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement.
- b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential, and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community.
- c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

Article 21 states that the parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others, and through all forms of communication of their choice.

Furthermore, the article 28 states that the parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realisation of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability.

The Disability Act, 2005, is designed to advance and underpin the participation of people with disabilities in society by supporting the provision disability specific services and improving access to mainstream public

services. It places a significant obligation on public bodies to make buildings and services accessible to people with disabilities, provides for sectoral plan in key service areas, requires public bodies to take positive actions to employ people with disabilities and provides for the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. The Disability Act is a key element of the National Housing Strategy for disabled people. The Strategic Plan builds on the existing policy and legislation including the Employment Equality Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000, The Equality Act 2004, the Education for persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and on the policy of mainstream services for people with disabilities. Overall, the Act puts in place a strong framework which seeks to make significant and long-term improvements to the lives of people with disabilities.

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.

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 Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (as amended) puts in place a legal framework for adults who require, or may require, support around decision-making, either now or in the future.

The section 2 (1) states that the relevant person means (a) a person whose capacity is in question or may shortly be in question in respect of one or more than one matter, (b) a person who lacks capacity in respect of one or more than one matter, or (c) a person who falls within *paragraphs (a) and (b)* at the same time but in respect of different matters, as the case requires.

The section 8 states that a relevant person is presumed to have capacity in respect of the matter concerned unless the contrary is shown in accordance with the provisions of the Act. It also states that the relevant person shall not be considered as unable to make a decision in respect of the matter concerned merely by reason of making, having made, or being likely to make, an unwise decision. Also, the relevant person shall not be considered as unable to make a decision in respect of the matter concerned unless all practicable steps have been taken, without success, to help him or her to do so. There shall be no intervention in respect of a relevant person unless it is necessary to do so having regard to the individual circumstances of the relevant person.

Section 3 (1) states that a person's capacity shall be assessed on the basis of his or her ability to understand, at the time that a decision is to be made, the nature and consequences of the decision to be made by him or her in the context of the available choices at that time.

Section 3 (2) states that A person lacks the capacity to make a decision if he or she is unable to understand the information relevant to the decision, retain that information long enough to make a voluntary choice, use

or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision, or communicate his or her decision (whether by talking, writing, using sign language, assistive technology, or any other means) or, if the implementation of the decision requires the act of a third party, to communicate by any means with that third party.

The act provides for three types of decision support arrangements for those who currently or may shortly face difficulties when making certain decisions:

Sections 10 and 14 provide for the appointment of a **Decision-Making Assistant** to assist the relevant person to obtain their relevant information, advise the person by explaining relevant information and considerations relating to a relevant decision, ascertain the will and preferences of the person on a matter the subject or to be the subject of a relevant decision and assist the person to communicate them, assist the person to make and express a relevant decision, and endeavour to ensure that the person's relevant decisions are implemented. It also clarifies that a decision-making assistant shall not make a decision on behalf of the person.

Sections 18 and 19 provide for appointment of a **Co-decision-maker** to jointly make with the relevant person one or more than one decision on the person's personal welfare or property and affairs, or both. The co-decision maker shall advise the person by explaining relevant information and considerations relating to a relevant decision, ascertain the will and preferences of the person on a matter the subject of, or to be the subject of a relevant decision and assist the appointer with communicating the appointer's will and preferences, assist the appointer to obtain the appointer's relevant information, discuss with the appointer the known alternatives and likely outcomes of a relevant decision, make a relevant decision jointly with the appointer, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that a relevant decision is implemented as far as practicable.

Sections 38 and 41 give power to Court to appoint a **decision-making representative** for the relevant person for the purposes of making one or more than one decision specified in the order on behalf of the relevant person in relation to his or her personal welfare or property and affairs, or both. A decision-making representative shall make a relevant decision on behalf of the relevant person and shall act as the agent of the relevant person in relation to a relevant decision.

Under the Act, Decision Support Service (DSS) has been set up to provide information and guidance about the Act, register all decision-making arrangements and supervise compliance by decision-making assistants, co-decision-makers, decision-making representatives, and attorneys in the performance of their functions, and investigate any complaints.

Louth County Council is the Housing Authority in County Louth and has the main responsibility for provision of social housing supports in accordance with the Housing Acts 1966 – 2014 as amended and Social Housing Allocation regulations 2011 as amended. Louth County Council works in close cooperation with Approved Housing Bodies with regard to social housing provision. Louth County Council's housing department works to help the people of Louth to access comfortable, safe and affordable housing, while recognizing the diverse accommodation needs of the people. This can involve providing accommodation through a variety of schemes or assisting in the adaptation of existing accommodation through Grant Schemes. The relevant support and social care services are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive.

Review of the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People

The assessment and consultation for the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 was carried out in spring 2021 with the strategy document completed in June 2021. The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 was published on the 18th of March 2022. It is a five-year strategy which sets out the ambitions with regards to housing with related supports for disabled people during this period. The National Housing Strategy promotes a whole community approach to housing for disabled people when planning the provision of housing, including infrastructure, transport, education, and employment.

Following the publication of Implementation Plan for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People, a review of the Local Housing Strategy was carried out jointly by the members of the Housing and Disability Steering Group to align it with Implementation Plan. A workshop, facilitated by the Housing Agency, started the review process and number of HDSG meetings and sub-group meetings were held in connection with the review. All housing applications that were included in disability category in Housing system, as per 08/12/2023, were reviewed and housing need established, and recorded in Louth County Council's Housing system and disability database.

In connection with the review achievements and experiences gained during the first two years of the current Local Housing Strategy were considered.

During the first two years, 2022 and 2023, of the Local Housing Strategy 161 disabled people were provided social housing support in County Louth as shown in the table below.

Social Housing Allocations to Disabled People												
Year	Total No	Physical Provided		Sensory Provided		Mental Health Provided		Intellectual Provided		Allocations		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	Total No	Disability No	%
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	No	%
2022	93	48	52	5	5	21	23	19	20	511	93	18
2023	68	37	54	1	1	15	22	15	22	404	68	17
Total	161	85	53	6	4	36	22	34	21	915	161	18

18% of all social housing allocations 915 during 2022 and 2023 were made to disabled people, and the overall target of 130 allocations to disabled people during the first two years of the Local Housing Strategy were exceeded by 31 units.

Louth County Council provided 95 units of accommodation and the Approved Housing bodies provided 66 units of accommodation. The provided accommodation consisted of 59 single storey dwellings (3 standard, 48 adapted and 8 wheelchair accessible), 49 apartments (26 standard, 22 adapted and 1 wheelchair accessible) and 53 two-storey dwellings (42 standard and 11 adapted)

Inter-agency co-operation has been strengthened through local collaboration meetings between the social workers of Louth County Council and their counterparts in the Adult Mental Health Services. This collaboration has resulted in better housing outcomes for people with mental health disability and in many cases improved mental health. Similar collaboration meetings have been initiated with HSE Disability Services.

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). 421 Housing Adaptation Grants were issued in 2022 and 2023.

Housing Adaptation Grants				
Year	Completed			
	HAG No	MAG No	HOP No	Total No
2022	28	21	133	182
2023	118	28	93	239
Total	146	49	226	421

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.

During the past two years, disabled persons adaptations to 60 Louth County Council properties were completed as shown in the below table:

Year	Adaptation type			
	Extensions No	Bathroom (inc.moderate works) No	Other moderate No	Total No
2022	2	19	5	26
2023	3	25	6	34
Total	5	44	11	60

Overall, there are 39 Supported Housing Units in County Louth for people with an intellectual and/or physical disability and provide accommodation for 147 individuals and vary in size. The supported housing units are provided by Saint John of God Housing Association / Community Services, Health Service Executive, Louth County Council and Approved Housing Bodies as illustrated in the table below;

Existing Supported Housing Units in Louth						
District	Supported housing Units	Housing Provider				Residents No
		SJOG	HSE	LCC	AHB	
Ardee	18	7	7	2	2	69
Drogheda	7	4	3	0	0	24
Dundalk	14	7	3	3	1	54
Total	39	18	13	5	3	147

Section 1 Purpose of the Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy recognises the equal right of disabled people 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*)

Disability is defined as meaning, in relation to a person, a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social and cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment” (Disability Act, 2005). In this strategic plan, the term of “disability” is understood to recognise four categories of disability i.e.

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Mental health disability
- Intellectual disability and / or autism

Section 2 Awareness and Promotion of the Local Housing Strategy

Information and Communication Strategy for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 has been developed to promote the use of accessible information and communication methods that are more inclusive of the specific requirements of disabled people. The Strategy will enable key organisations to put practices in place that will assist them to become more accessible and inclusive, and foster an environment of ongoing learning and development. The vision of the Information and Communication Strategy is that disabled people will have equitable access to information provided by local authorities and other stakeholders in the housing, health and social care sectors and the disability community, and that local authorities and other stakeholders are communicating effectively and proactively with disabled people, in particular on issues that have a direct impact on the lives of disabled people.

Louth County Council will raise awareness and promote the Local Housing Strategy among its staff members through internal team meetings and information sessions. Information on the Local Housing Strategy will be provided to the elected members of the Council. The Council will raise awareness and disseminate the Local Housing Strategy to the public through its website and other social media outlets. In addition, the Council will also utilise the Local Community Development Committee network, Public Participation Network, Louth Libraries and Housing Newsletter. It is intended that the Local Housing Strategy will be promoted through various media channels including local media, local community radio and information sessions. Louth County Council will liaise with the Approved Housing bodies regarding the dissemination of the Local Housing Strategy. The Approved Housing Bodies will be encouraged to promote the Local Housing Strategy at every appropriate forum where they are represented.

HSE Mental Health Services commits to the promotion of the Local Housing Strategy within their service by having specific staff members engaged with the Housing and Disability Steering Group. Those staff are the Principal Social Worker and the Rehabilitation Team Senior Social Worker (who will deputise for the Principal Social Worker). The Principal Social Worker provides feedback and updates on the Housing Strategy to the Louth Meath Mental Health Service. HSE Mental Health Services commits to the promotion of the Local Housing Strategy within their service by having specific staff members engaged with the Housing Disability Steering Group. Those staff are the Principal Social Worker and the Rehabilitation Team Senior Social Worker (who will deputise for the Principal Social Worker). The Principal Social Worker provides feedback and updates on the Housing Strategy to the Louth Meath Mental Health Service Catchment Area Management Team, and Senior Managers in that team disseminate information to their staff. The Principal Social Worker disseminates the Strategy and HDSG updates to the Louth Adult Mental Health Social Workers. In the absence of the Service User Engagement Lead the Service will develop a plan for engaging with the Consumer Panel to ensure information is provided on the Strategy.

HSE Disability Services will inform its staff members, service users and their families about the Local Housing Strategy as appropriate and will promote the Local Housing Strategy through Management Team meetings, Newsletter for staff and through their Communication Platforms and at every appropriate forum where they are represented.

Saint John of God Northeast Services are represented in the Housing and Disability Steering Group and will engage in sub-groups. Saint John of God Northeast Services are committed to the Local Housing Strategy and will disseminate it among its staff members, service users and their families and promote the Local Housing Strategy at every appropriate forum where they are represented.

The representatives of the Louth Disability Group will be encouraged to inform its members about the Local Housing Strategy as appropriate and to promote the Local Housing Strategy at every appropriate forum where they are represented.

Irish Wheelchair Association will promote the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People with its Senior Management Team and Board of Directors and amongst its local staff teams and service users through its internal communication and engagement pathways. Information sessions will be held for staff and members informing them of the key elements of the Local Housing Strategy. Irish Wheelchair Association will actively participate in the local Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG) as a specialist housing body or service provider for the physical disability sector. It will appoint a national lead and establish an internal framework to support its HDSG representatives to share learning and expertise and key information and messaging across local HDSGs. Disability Awareness training will be offered to all people engaged in housing for people with disabilities, including Local Authority and approved housing body design teams, allocation teams and management. Irish Wheelchair Association is happy to offer this disability awareness training based on its Best Practice Access Guidelines 4th Edition and 60 years' experience.

Section 3 Housing and Disability Steering Group

The Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG) facilitates an integrated response to the housing needs of disabled people and drives and monitors the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for disabled people. The HDSG also functions as a forum for the exchange of information and experience and functions as a link with the wider stakeholders including disabled people and their families. The membership of the HDSG consists of representatives from Louth County Council, Disability Services of Health Service Executive, Mental Health Services of Health Service Executive, Saint John of God Northeast Services, Disabled Person's Organisations, Organisations for Disabled People, and Approved Housing Bodies.

The revised strategy has been compiled by the Housing and Disability Steering Group. The member organisations of the group confirm their commitment to the requirements of the strategy and to work on an integrated interagency basis so that disabled people can avail of appropriate housing options and environments.

The HDSG may establish subgroups or working groups to progress the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People, and may invite representatives from other organisations, disabled people, and professionals to attend as required. The working groups or subgroups report to the HDSG on progress made. The HDSG may also assist in the establishment of forums to ensure the views, issues and challenges of the sector in more general are represented and that information from the HDSG is disseminated to the sector.

A formal Escalation Process is in place to allow the HDSG to escalate issues to be dealt with at a national level through the National Implementation Steering Group (NISG), where appropriate. This process is used when issues arise regarding the HDSG's actions within the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for disabled people, and where those issues cannot be resolved by the HDSG. The Escalation Process can also be used where attempts have been made to resolve issues at local level that may need national input such as interagency collaboration, operational issues affected by legislation, or clarification or interpretation of legislation or guidance. The Escalation Process should not be used for individual cases or as a complaint mechanism against any of the stakeholders on the HDSG, there are other processes in place for this. The Housing Agency will report regularly to the NISG on the number and nature of any escalations throughout the lifetime of the Strategy.

Louth County Council as the housing authority has the responsibility for provision of housing services. It has a multi-disciplinary housing team that advances the housing delivery programme, assessment of need and allocation of housing, maintenance and management of housing and tenancy services. The Council will collaborate with all stakeholders to coordinate the delivery of housing and relevant support services to disabled people.

The Approved Housing Bodies play an important role in social housing provision to disabled people. Louth County Council has a strong working relationship with various Approved Housing Bodies operating in the county for the delivery of social housing. 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).

The Irish Wheelchair Association will actively engage in the HDSG, proactively participating in agreed work streams to further implementation of the Local Housing Strategy and will encourage the participation of a wheelchair user with the lived experience in the HDSG. Irish Wheelchair Association will share its experience of working with and on behalf of people with physical disabilities and its resources of (i) Irish Wheelchair Association Best Practice Access Guidelines Edition 4 and (ii) Great Outdoors with the HDSG and its stakeholders. The Irish Wheelchair Association will offer Disability Awareness training to all people engaged in housing provision for people with disabilities, including Local Authority and Approved Housing Body design teams, allocation teams and management.

Mental Health Services of Health Service Executive will seek to be inclusive with service users, family members and carers in line with GDPR and will seek to ensure information from HDSG is disseminated to wider MHS to enable staff to support service users as effectively as possible with their housing needs. The work of HDSG will be fed back to into senior management in the catchment area and will be supported, promoted and information disseminated within the Mental Health Services and their service users.

Disability Services of Health Service Executive will seek to ensure information from HDSG is disseminated within the disability services and to service users and their families through Management Team Meetings, Communication Platforms, Children's Network Teams, progressing Disability Local Implementation Groups and any other forums the Disability Services are represented at.

Saint John of God Northeast Services provides support and care services for people with an intellectual disability who reside in Saint Mary's campus or live in the community. Saint John of God services works in close co-operation with Health Service Executive and Louth County Council regarding housing provision to people transitioning from Saint. Mary's campus to community-based living and those who do not have a secure tenure.

Louth Disability Group will be encouraged to engage with their networks of disabled people to feed in the lived experience of disabled people to Housing and Disability Steering Group and to promote the Local Housing Strategy.

Section 4 Current and Emerging Housing Need

For the purpose of this Local Housing Strategy disabled housing applicants have been categorised based on their required type, size and preferred location of housing and the level of required support services into two housing need categories; regular housing need and supported housing need.

4.1 Current Housing Need

Disabled people have a variety of housing needs; standard housing, adapted and wheelchair accessible housing and supported housing in the community. Also, the location of housing in terms of access to services, shops and other amenities, friends and family etc. is an important consideration. Some disabled people require social housing supports and others may need supports such as adaptations to their current accommodation to facilitate continued occupancy.

The current housing need is based on the 510 disabled housing and transfer applicants included in the housing waiting list as per 08/12/2023 as shown below;

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Physical disability | 204 |
| • Sensory Disability | 23 |
| • Mental Health Disability | 96 |
| • Intellectual Disability and /or autism | 187 |

Regular housing need

The regular housing need refers to disabled housing applicants who require no or low to medium level of supports. Currently there are 396 disabled housing and transfer applicants in this category seeking accommodation as shown in the table below;

Regular Housing Need					
Municipal District	Disability				
	P	S	MH	I	Total
Ardee	19	2	13	9	43
Drogheda	77	7	32	37	153
Dundalk	97	14	42	47	200
Total	193	23	87	93	396

The housing applicants have been placed in the municipal district where the majority of their areas of choice are located. The housing need of these applicants have been categorised as single-storey or two-storey housing requirement.

Single-storey accommodation need

There are 173 housing applicants who require single-storey accommodation which can include various types of units such as single storey dwellings, ground floor apartments or upper floor apartments with an elevator access. There are a variety of physical housing requirements and preferred locations of the accommodation. The single storey housing needs based on the municipal district and type and size of required accommodation is shown in the table below;

Single storey accommodation need																				
Municipal District						Standard					Adapted					Wheelchair accessible				
	Disability Category										(Minor with LAS / Ramp)									
	P	S	MH	I	Total	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Ardee	16	1	1	1	19	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	2	1	0	2	2	1	0	0
Drogheda	54	4	3	4	65	0	0	0	0	0	23	16	9	2	1	5	3	5	1	0
Dundalk	70	4	3	12	89	4	7	3	0	0	24	18	15	4	2	4	1	4	2	1
Total	140	9	7	17	173	4	7	3	0	0	52	40	26	7	3	11	6	10	3	1

Two-storey accommodation need

There are 223 housing applicants whose housing need can be met with a two-storey accommodation which can include standard two-storey dwellings, adapted two-storey dwellings and standard and adapted

apartments. The two-storey housing need based on the municipal district and type and size of required accommodation is shown in the table below;

Two-storey accommodation need															
Municipal District	Disability Category					Standard					Adapted (Ground floor facilities)				
	P	S	MH	I	Total	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Ardee	3	1	12	8	24	11	8	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Drogheda	23	3	29	33	88	29	12	27	11	0	3	1	1	3	0
Dundalk	27	10	39	35	111	27	17	29	21	3	1	4	6	2	1
Total	53	14	80	76	223	67	37	58	34	3	5	5	7	5	1

Supported Housing Need

The Supported Housing need refers to housing applicants who require significant level of supports, often 24hr supports, and also includes those transitioning from congregated settings to community-based living. These housing applicants live in various types of accommodation; Saint Mary's campus, Saint Bridget's complex, other residential units, and family homes.

The applicants have been placed in the municipal district where the majority of their areas of choice are located. Currently there are 114 housing applicants with a physical, intellectual, or mental health disability on the housing waiting list requiring supported housing in the community as shown in the table below;

Supported Housing Need											
Municipal District	Current Accommodation							Housing need			
	Physical		Intellectual			Mental Health		Standard	Adapted		
	Other residential	family home	Saint Mary's	Other residential	family home	Saint Bridget's	Other residential	two-storey	two-storey	single storey	wheelchair accessible
Ardee	0	0	36	1	11	1	2	8	0	4	39
Drogheda	2	1	5	1	19	0	3	13	1	6	11
Dundalk	1	2	4	3	19	0	3	9	1	10	12
Total	3	3	45	5	49	1	8	30	2	20	62

Supported Housing need – physical disability

There are 6 housing applicants with a physical disability who live either in the family home or a residential unit, and their housing need is shown the table below;

Adults with physical disability in family home / residential			
Municipal District	Total Housing need	Adapted	
		single storey	wheelchair accessible
Ardee	0	0	0
Drogheda	3	1	2
Dundalk	3	2	1
Total	6	3	3

These applicants housing and support needs to be further discussed with the applicants, their families, and the relevant supports services.

Supported Housing need - Transitioning from Saint Mary's campus

There are 45 housing applicants with an intellectual disability living in St. Mary's campus or in shared private rented accommodation supported by Saint John of God Northeast Services. These housing applicants have a supported housing need as shown in the table below;

Saint Mary's Campus and shared private rented				
Municipal District	Total Housing need	Standard two-storey	Adapted	
			single storey	wheelchair accessible
Ardee	36	0	0	36
Drogheda	5	1	0	4
Dundalk	4	1	1	2
Total	45	2	1	42

Based on 4 individuals living together in a supported housing unit there is a need for 11 units of supported housing in the community.

Supported housing need – other residential settings

There are 5 housing applicants with an intellectual disability who live in other residential settings and their housing need are shown in the table below;

Adults with Intellectual Disability in other residential settings			
Municipal District	Total Housing need	Standard two-storey	Adapted
			wheelchair accessible
Ardee	1	1	0
Drogheda	1	0	1
Dundalk	3	2	1
Total	5	3	2

Based on 4 individuals living together in a supported housing unit there is a need for 1 unit of supported housing in the community.

Supported Housing need – people living in the community

There are 49 housing applicants with an intellectual disability who live in the family home and are mainly cared for by their parents or other relatives. The housing need of these applicants is summarised in the table below;

Adults with Intellectual Disability in family home					
Municipal District	Total Housing need	Standard two-storey	Adapted		
			two-storey	single storey	wheelchair accessible
Ardee	11	4	0	4	3
Drogheda	19	10	0	5	4
Dundalk	19	4	1	6	8
Total	49	18	1	15	15

Based on four individuals living together in a supported housing unit there would be need for 12 units of accommodation for this category of applicants.

Supported Housing need – People with a Mental Health Disability

There are 9 housing applicants with a mental health disability living in St. Bridget's campus and other residential settings requiring individual tenancies with support packages in addition to Mental Health Services input as shown in the below table;

Adults with Mental Health disability				
Municipal District	Total Housing need	Standard two-storey	Adapted	
			two-storey	single storey
Ardee	3	3	0	0
Drogheda	3	2	1	1
Dundalk	3	2	0	0
Total	9	7	1	1

4.2 Emerging Housing Need

Considering that the general population and the number of disabled people in County Louth has been steadily increasing during the past years, it is likely that this trend continues. Subsequently, it can be envisaged that the number of disabled people on the housing waiting list will also continue increasing.

There are disabled people who have a likely housing need but have not applied for social housing support. For example, Saint John of God Northeast Services reported in 2021 that 63 of their service users, who live in the family home, have not applied for social housing support. The Mental Health Services report that the snapshot carried out in 2021 showed 20% of their service users are not included in the housing waiting list, despite having a housing need. The emerging housing need has been reflected in the targets for social housing provision.

Section 5 Housing Delivery

Louth County Council as the housing authority utilises a range of housing delivery mechanisms. The principle of Universal Design will be incorporated into all new builds where feasible and where funding is available. It is also intended that all ground floor apartments will have a Level Access Shower in lieu of a bath, where possible.

Louth County Council utilises a range of housing delivery mechanisms such as Capital Housing Delivery, Part V, Targeted Acquisitions, Approved Housing Body delivery and others, so that disabled people can avail of a variety of housing options and environments.

Currently, there are 949 units of accommodation in the housing delivery pipeline (up-to the end of 2026) of which 230 (24%) are adapted units. It is important to note that there will be changes to the housing delivery pipeline as the different schemes progress and new schemes are added to it.

654 units of accommodation of which 154 (23%) are adapted units are planned to be delivered by Louth County Council and are summarized in the table below;

Louth County Council																										
Housing Capital Delivery Programme 2022 – 2027																										
Location	No	Two-storey dwelling								Single-storey dwelling								Apartment								
		Standard				Adapted				Adapted				Wheelchair Accessible				Standard			Adapted			Year		
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3			
School Lane Dunleer	1											1														2024
Gort Uine Clogherhead	1				1																					2024
Moneymore Drogheda	1											1														2024
Muirhevnamor Dundalk	11			7							3						1									2024
Derryveigh Hoeys Lane Dundalk	2											1	1													2024
Boice Court Drogheda	72			33	4											2		23				10				2025
Clontygora, Muirhevnamor Dundalk	2												2													2025
Mount Avenue Dundalk	93		21	42	9										2	3		12				4				2025
Rathmullen Park, Drogheda	6		2	2															2							2026
Ann Street, Dundalk	16																		16							2026
Greenhills, Drogheda	50										45	5														2026
Ballymakenny East, Drogheda (PPP)	127	1 3	39	58	4	13																				2026
Ballymakenny West, Drogheda	97		40	30	9				4		12					2										2026
Dunleer	70		24	18	3				2		21					2										2026
Mullavaley, Louth Village	57		20	24	4				1		8															2026
Point Road, Dundalk	48		25	12	3						7					1										2026
Total	654	13	171	226	37	13	0	0	7	0	96	8	3	0	2	10	1	35	18	0	0	14	0			

Currently, 289 units of accommodation of which 70 (24%) are adapted units are planned to be delivered by Approved Housing Bodies and are summarised in the below table:

Approved Housing Bodies Housing Delivery Programme 2024 - 2027																								
Housing Development		Two-storey dwelling								Single-storey								Apartment						
Location	Units total	Standard				Adapted				Adapted				Wheelchair Accessible				Standard			Adapted			Planned Delivery Year
	No	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3	
Newtown View, Marsh Road, Drogheda	93		27	66																				2024
Dublin Road Dundalk	16		8	8																				2024
Racecourse Meadows Dundalk	12			12																				2024
Flaxmill Lane Drogheda	17																	7	7	3				2024
Friary Place Mill Lane Drogheda	49																	27	22					2024
Gernon Place Castlebellingham	20		2	2														1	8	7				2024
Duiche Roden, Dundalk (over 55s)	12																	6	6					2024
Connolly's Field, Dundalk (over 55s)	70																				59	11		2025
Total	289	0	37	88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	43	10	59	11	0	

Further housing developments by the Approved Housing Bodies are being considered, and the approval process for these developments has not yet been completed.

In addition to general housing provision, specially designed Supported Housing units are planned to be delivered in close co-operation with the relevant service providers. The below table illustrates the current planned delivery of supported housing units;

Supported Housing Delivery 2024 - 2027										
Location	Units No	Dwelling type		Housing Provider				Support Service Provider		Planned Delivery Year
		Single - Storey	Two- storey	LCC	AHB	SJOG	HSE	SJOG	HSE	
Coulter Place, Dundalk	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2024
Ballymakenny East, Drogheda	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2026
Greenhills, Drogheda	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2026
Louth Village	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2026
Point Road, Dundalk	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2026
Tierney Street, Ardee	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2027
Total	7	6	1	4	1	2	0	6	1	

Section 6 Support Services and Social Care

The provision of the relevant support and social care services is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive.

6.1 Physical disability

The Health Service Executive has teams established in County Louth for Adult Intellectual, Physical and Sensory disability who work with support services from outside agencies. The health Service Executive continues to work in close co-operation with Saint John of God.

6.2 Sensory disability

The Health Service Executive has teams established in County Louth for Adult Intellectual, Physical and Sensory disability who work with support services from outside agencies.

6.3 Mental Health Services

Access to Mental Health services is most typically through referral from GP for assessment with the relevant Community Mental Health Team or presentation in an A&E setting. Mental Health Services have some elements of community engagement such as Assertive Outreach and Home Base Teams and Rehabilitation and Recovery Teams in county Louth. Mental health services are currently limited in their capacity to provide specific tenancy related support in the community; and recognise the need to explore a range of tenancy supports in collaboration with the Housing and Disability Steering Group.

Specialist mental health services are provided in local community areas and include acute inpatient services, day hospitals, outpatient clinics, CAMHS, general adult, psychiatry of later life services, mental health of intellectual disability, community residential and continuing care residential services and peer led services. Sub-specialties include rehabilitation and recovery, eating disorders, liaison psychiatry and perinatal mental health, peer support and recovery education. A National Forensic Mental Health Service is also provided, including inpatient and in-reach prison services. All Mental Health Services are informed by a person-centered and recovery approach.

6.4 Intellectual disability

The Health Service Executive has teams established in County Louth for Adult Intellectual, Physical and Sensory disability who work with support services from outside agencies. The Health Service Executive continues to work in close co-operation with Saint John of God Northeast Services.

Saint John of God Northeast Services is a section 38 voluntary service funded by the Health Service Executive to provide care and support to people with an Intellectual Disability in County Louth. The service has 50 houses presently in the Northeast Region providing residential supports for 212 people. Saint John of God Services are committed to ensuring that the people they support experience a life and lifestyle of their choosing in their communities. It promotes social inclusion and deliver human rights-based care in a person-centered manner. In keeping with Health Service Executive's "A Time to move on" document 2011 Saint John of God Northeast have a long history transiting people with an Intellectual Disability from Saint Mary's campus to community living. Saint John of God Northeast Services also provide support to approximately 150 people in their 7 Day services in County Louth and 93 of these people live at home with their families.

Section 7 Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Whilst the provision of housing and related support services to disabled people can be challenging there are opportunities to address many of the challenges locally by the relevant organisations working together. There is also a formal process available for HDSG to escalate issues to be dealt with at a national level through the National Implementation Steering Group (NISG), where appropriate. The Housing and Disability Steering group provides a forum for strengthened multi-agency collaboration. Some of the challenges which need to

be addressed in order to achieve the outcomes and actions of the Local Housing Strategy are summarised below

7.1 Emerging acute housing need among people with intellectual disabilities

There is a considerable number of adults with an intellectual disability living in the family home, often cared for by elderly parents. Some have not applied for social housing support, and their families may not be aware of the possibility to apply for social housing supports or are reluctant to do so for a variety of reasons. There is a need for development of an individual plan for housing and related support services in order to avoid crisis situation from emerging.

7.2 Funding for support services (24 hour) for supported housing in the community

Whilst Louth County Council in conjunction with the Approved Housing Bodies have opportunities to provide supported housing units in the community, the main challenge continues to be funding for the relevant support services. There is a requirement for a secure and sustainable funding stream for support services.

7.3 Capital funding for decongregation

There is a significant need for capital investment to advance the decongregation which is a particularly expensive process. Currently, the Health Service Executive is dependent on private providers.

7.4 High cost of returning adapted properties to habitable use

Central Government ring-fenced funding for void works and smaller adaptations to suitable vacant properties would speed up the turn-around of these dwellings and facilitate allocation of accommodation to disabled people and older people.

7.5 Challenges in delivering nationally supported Housing Adaptation Schemes for disabled people

The housing adaptations to Council properties are 90% funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (the Department). High demand for adaptations, increased construction costs and limited resources are challenges for delivering a work programme annually. Similar challenges exist for Housing Adaptation Grants, which are 80% funded by the Department, for disabled people who are private house owners or tenants of the Approved Housing Bodies.

7.6 Lack of contractors for adaptations to Council houses and Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes

Both the Council and the applicants for Housing Adaptation Grants have experienced difficulties in securing contractors, in particular for smaller adaptations which is causing delays in progressing the work programmes.

7.7 Difficulties to secure approval / funding for larger wheelchair accessible units or larger dwellings

Due to density requirements for housing developments the Council has experienced difficulties in obtaining approval and funding for larger single storey units, e.g. wheelchair accessible units and larger (4-bedroom units) standard dwellings to meet disability need.

Section 8 Targets of the Local Housing Strategy

The annual targets for the Strategic Plan are presented in two categories; regular housing provision where the disabled housing applicants have no or low to medium support needs, and supported housing provision where the disabled housing applicants have significant support needs.

8.1 Regular Housing provision

In connection with review of the Local Housing Strategy, the targets for regular housing provision were amended. They are based on the identified and emerging housing need and the envisaged housing delivery programme. Considering that both the housing need and the housing delivery programme evolve, the annual targets for social housing provision will be reviewed regularly. The annual targets for social housing allocations for disabled people can be found in the table below;

Social Housing Allocations Annual Targets					
Year	Physical Disability	Sensory Disability	Mental Health Disability	Intellectual Disability	Total
2022	20	4	15	10	49
2023	40	6	15	20	81
2024	53	5	23	25	106
2025	46	6	21	22	95
2026	46	6	22	23	97
2027	48	6	21	22	97
Total	253	33	117	122	525

Louth County Council will endeavor to reserve 10 percent of new dwellings in general social housing developments of 10 dwellings or more for households qualified under a basis of need of disability.

8.2 Supported Housing provision

The targets for the supported housing provision are based on the identified and emerging housing need and the envisaged housing delivery programme. The possible future vacancies in the existing 39 Supported Housing Units have been taken into consideration. The provision of Supported Housing is dependent on the agreement for provision of the relevant support and care services at the planning stage.

Intellectual disability

There is a need for 11 supported housing units in the community to provide permanent accommodation for the remaining 45 individuals transitioning from Saint Mary's campus or unsecure tenancies. Whilst there is an indicative need of 13 units of supported housing for people with an intellectual disability living in the family home or in short-term supported housing it is envisaged that many of these individuals can be accommodated in the arising vacancies in the supported housing units. 5 new supported housing units for people living in the community is included in the targets, which will be reviewed on regular basis.

Louth County Council will collaborate with the Approved Housing Bodies, Health Service Executive and Saint John of God Northeast Services regarding provision of these supported housing units. In addition to the capital housing delivery programme of Louth County Council and Approved Housing Bodies the below housing delivery models will be explored;

- Targeted Acquisitions by Louth County Council and by Saint John of God Housing Association with support of CAS funding will be considered for securing units for supported housing where the Saint John of God Northeast Services is the support service provider.
- Possibility of securing supported housing units as part V contribution will be explored and Louth County Council intends to liaise with developers in this regard.

Mental Health Disability

Whilst there are currently 9 housing applicants with significant support needs in the mental health disability category it is envisaged that there will be further housing applicants with this level of support need. It has been established that individual tenancies with support packages in addition to mental health services input will be required.

Supported housing units are provided by Louth County Council, Approved Housing Bodies, the HSE and Saint John of God. In order to achieve the below targets close collaboration with the Health Service Executive and Saint John of God Northeast Services is necessary to ensure that the required support services are available for the occupants of these supported housing units. Whilst there is a need for 16 Supported Housing

units, it is envisaged that the below provision of supported housing is feasible to achieve during the lifetime of this Local Housing Strategy.

Supported Housing Units Annual Targets		
Year	Intellectual Disability	Total
2022	0	0
2023	0	0
2024	3	3
2025	3	3
2026	2	2
2027	2	2
Total	10	10

The above targets will be reviewed and amended during the lifetime of this Local Housing Strategy.

Section 9 Outcomes and Actions

The over-all aim of this Local Housing Strategy is to meet the identified housing need of disabled people under-pinned by provision of relevant support and social care services. Louth County Council, as a housing authority, is responsible for the provision of housing services and the Health Service Executive has the responsibility for the provision of relevant support and social care services. The outcomes and actions of the Local Housing Strategy, where the lead agencies are Louth County Council, the HSE and the Housing and Disability Steering Group, are grouped under six themes.

Theme 1 Accessible Housing and Communities

This theme focuses on the provision of accessible housing for disabled people, the promotion of accessible communities and universally designed homes.

Outcome 1 There is an increase in the provision of accessible housing for disabled people by the setting of local, need-related targets for all social housing providers using a universal design approach, as appropriate.

Action 1.1.1 Louth County Council will review Housing Delivery Action Plan and work to deliver on targets for housing for disabled people.

Action 1.1.2 The Housing and Disability Steering Group will review the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People and align it with the National Implementation Plan.

Action 1.1.3 The Housing and Disability Steering Group will report quarterly on the implementation of the

Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People regarding housing for disabled people to the Chief Executive, Strategic Policy Committee and The Housing Agency

Action 1.1.4 Louth County Council must ensure that they are aware of the housing need of disabled people in their area.

- a) Recording the actual housing need of new applications for social housing support, where the basis of need is disability, in a consistent way in the Louth County Council's Housing system and the disability database

Disabled people are entitled to assessment of housing need following the submission of an application for social housing support and the Housing Disability and Medical Information Form, which facilitate the assessment of housing need of disabled persons. A priority status may be awarded for a housing applicant with a disability if the below three criteria applies to the applicant's household:

- a member of the household has a disability or a medical condition and
- the current accommodation is not suitable to meet the need of the disabled person or person with a medical condition and
- a change in housing will improve or stabilise the circumstances of the disabled person or person with a medical condition.

Note: Louth County Council engages with the individual disabled housing applicants and, with the applicant's consent, with their family, advocates, and service providers, regarding their housing and support needs and preferences. This provides the applicant with an opportunity to express their views and obtain information about available housing options and facilitates provision of suitable accommodation and the relevant support and social care services.

- b) Review housing applications to determine the needs of each individual that has a basis on need of disability and record the need of the household in the Louth County Council's Housing system and the disability database.

Note: The Social Workers of Louth County Council review housing applications from disabled people on regular basis and update the housing need in the I-house system and the disability database.

- c) Utilise the data in Louth County Council's Housing system and disability database to strategically plan for the housing needs of disabled people.

Note: The identified housing need of disabled people is recorded in Louth County Council's Housing system and the disability database to enable extraction of information for planning of housing delivery programme. The data regarding housing needs of disabled people informs the housing delivery programme in terms of type, size, and location of the

accommodation. It also facilitates allocation of accommodation individual housing applicants i.e. matching a housing applicant with a suitable property.

Outcome 1.2 Disabled People are supported to avail of housing opportunities that arise through the increase in supports, both formal and informal.

Action 1.2.2 Louth County Council and the HSE work together to plan and deliver on housing targets for disabled people in the community (including de-congregation) in line with the forthcoming Disability Services Action Plan

Action 1.2.3 The housing and disability steering group will examine and document international practice around good practice option for disabled people living in the community including shared living options and will engage with all stakeholders to identify good practice models to pilot in at least one area.

Action 1.2.4 Louth County Council monitors offers to ensure that accommodation offered is suitable for household's need with specific disabilities through the quarterly reports to the Strategic Policy Committee and Housing Agency

Note: Louth County Council records the refusals of accommodation and reasons for the refusals in the Housing system. Refusals of accommodation by households, where the basis of need is disability, and reasons for refusals are also recorded in the disability database.

Outcome 1.3 Communities and housing developments are more accessible for disabled people.

Action 1.3.1 The County Development Plan is used to promote accessibility in the wider community for disabled people including transport, education, employment, and health services, and to promote the use of Universal Design in private developments including the Part V obligations.

Action 1.3.4 Louth County Council will engage with property developers and AHBs around making new developments more accessible, not only around the accessibility of the housing dwellings but also the development in its entirety to ensure the public realm is suitable for disabled people.

Note: Louth County Council engages with the Approved Housing Bodies individually to discuss and plan social housing provision, including housing for disabled people.

Outcome 1.4 Louth County Council strategically plans for the housing needs of disabled people in its administrative area

Action 1.4.1 Louth County Council must conduct an audit of their current social housing waiting list to establish the number of disabled people on the list.

Note: Louth County Council's Housing Assessment and Social Worker teams conduct ongoing assessment of housing applications, where the basis of need is disability, and the housing need is recorded in the I-house system and the disability database.

- Action 1.4.2 Louth County Council as part of their housing stock survey should commence recording their current housing stock to establish the number of properties which are adapted for disability including the number of wheelchair liveable properties in their stock.

Note: There are a number of adapted and accessible properties in Louth County Council's housing stock that can be used for the accommodation of disabled people and older people when they become vacant. Louth County Council will explore how the existing information on housing stock can be utilised and recorded in an accessible way, and if necessary, establish if a new stock survey is required.

- Action 1.4.4 All stakeholders must assist to inform the local strategic planning for the changing community support need of disabled people in the community, and those who are living in the family home as their carers get older.

Outcome 1.5 Provision of housing and related supports that is in line with UNCRPD principles is supported through collaboration between the HSE and Louth County Council at both national and local level, and appropriate funding.

- Action 1.5.2 The HSE will provide information on new supported places and expanded supports for existing places which were provided in the previous quarter, as part of the "quarterly reporting" set out as part of Housing for All. This is to allow for holistic engagement by the HSE and Louth County Council to ensure that housing opportunities are realised for disabled people.

Theme 2 Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports

This theme includes the outcomes relating to the improvement of effective collaboration between local authorities and the HSE, better inter-departmental cooperation, aligning housing and support services and the sharing of relevant information between agencies.

Outcome 2.1 Disabled People have a clear pathway to accessing housing and support services.

- Action 2.1.1 Louth County Council to nominate a representative from their housing department to work closely with a person nominated by each CHO Mental Health and Disability Services to ensure that housing and support services are aligned as appropriate and to develop an early notification system so that housing will be available and support applications are processed accordingly.

These representatives will work together to act as a point of contact for each other in their organisation, in order to address issues and barriers to the increase in delivery of housing opportunities with related supports for disabled people.

These representatives will report to the Housing and Disability Steering Group on the progress made as a result of this close working relationship.

Action 2.1.3 Louth County Council's will work with housing providers to assist with the technical aspects of housing development including procurement, assessment, and appraisals.

Action 2.1.5 The HSE will regularly review levels of need and work with service users to identify accommodation solutions at early stage. Package of care support for individuals and families will be reviewed as needed, having regard to budget.

Outcome 2.2 Regulatory landscape / framework is in place that best supports the delivery of housing for disabled people.

Action 2.2.5 Louth County Council and AHBs will engage with HIQA regarding people living in residential homes to ensure that they are awarded their rights as tenants in the properties they live.

Louth County Council and AHBs will award the tenancy to individuals living in single occupancy units and in shared occupancy units.

Outcome 2.3 Louth County Council and the HSE work and collaborate efficiently, improving access to housing for disabled people.

In addition to the collaboration between representative from Louth County Council's housing department and the nominated persons from CHO Mental Health and Disability Services, inter-agency cooperation will be strengthened through:

- a) continuation of the regular inter-agency collaboration meetings between Louth County Council's social workers and the Mental Health Services to facilitate referrals, information sharing and planning for housing and related support services for individuals who require no or low to medium level of supports. This inter-agency co-operation facilitates provision of housing and related support services in a person-centered and integrated manner to individual housing applicants.
- b) Continuation and further development of the regular inter-agency collaboration meetings Louth County Council's social workers and the HSE disability services to ensure better housing outcomes for people with intellectual and/or physical disability.

Action 2.3.3 Housing and Disability Steering Group has been identified as key in both Housing for ALL and the new Housing Strategy for disabled people as key to the implementation at local level. As a result, the following will be actioned:

- a) HDSG will review its terms of reference and the frequency of meetings.
- b) HDSG will review its membership annually to ensure that there is representation from Disabled Persons Organisations, and fair representation.
- c) HDSG will report quarterly on the delivery, allocations, pipe-line delivery and support packages.

- d) HDSG will examine how members represent their sector and how the group supports members to report back to their sector.
- e) HDSG will establish sub-groups of the HDSG 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 coordinated way without competition for existing supply.
- h) HDSG to encourage and facilitate smaller specialised AHBs to undertake new projects.

Outcome 2.4 Louth County Council, Approved Housing Bodies, the HSE and Service providers work and collaborate efficiently, improving access to housing for disabled people, providing community-based residential care for disabled people, and working towards ending provision of residential care in institutional or congregated settings.

- Action 2.4.1 Support will be provided to build the capacity within the AHB sector to increase delivery of housing to support independent living in the community and implement de-congregation:
- a) Encouraging use of the DHLGH Design Templates where appropriate
 - b) Providing practical advice and support on projects from inception
 - c) Establish a network for the Disability Friendly Technical Advisors to allow for a coordinated approach to the support provided to AHBs, Service Providers and others.

Outcome 2.5 The Assessment and Allocations guidelines are embedded in the policies and procedures of Louth County Council and the HSE

- Action 2.5.2 Louth County Council will review its Assessment and Allocations Guidelines

The review will be conducted through the Housing Strategic Policy Committee process with the review to be completed by the end of 2024.

Theme 3 Affordability of Housing

This theme focuses on enabling access to affordable housing for disabled people. The lead agencies for actions under this theme are the Housing Agency, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Theme 4 Communication and Access to Information

This theme focuses on communication and access to information; and aims to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in communicating their needs and in the communication they receive.

Outcome 4.1 Proactive and consistent approach is taken by agencies in the provision of information which is coordinated by the Housing Agency

- Action 4.1.2 Louth County Council, AHBs and the HSE will conduct an audit on what information on housing and related support need to be made more accessible for disabled people. This will be done

through consultation and input from the Housing and Disability Steering Groups and will include the following:

- a) Review the documentation in use and ensure that they use standardised templates.
- b) Ensure that the information is readily available and easily accessible on their websites.

Action 4.1.3 Louth County Council, through the HDSG, will raise awareness and promote housing opportunities.

- a) Informing about the importance for disabled people applying for Social Housing Support early to avoid emergency placements in group settings.
- b) Reaching out to isolated families in rural areas to apply for Social Housing Support
- c) Addressing negative attitudes towards disabled people living in the community, highlighting positive stories of people in local authority setting
- d) Raising awareness of intersectional marginalisation that occurs for some disabled people as a result of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc. and how this negatively impact their ability to secure appropriate accommodation.
- e) Residing in community living for those with mental health difficulties

Action 4.1.4 Louth County Council will promote the library as a point of accessing information.

Outcome 4.2. There is an increase in communication between the State Agencies and disabled people regarding their housing opportunities both from housing and support perspective.

Action 4.2.2 Increase awareness of applying for housing and support services by outlining clear steps on how disabled people can apply

Action 4.2.4 Louth County Council will provide annual updates in an accessible format to applicants regarding their status on the housing list.

Note: Louth County Council provides updates to housing applicants including disabled people in connection with the Summary Social Housing Assessment (SSHA) or upon a request. However, the exact position on the housing list or the estimated waiting time cannot be established as it depends on the applicant's housing need and availability of suitable accommodation; type, size, required facilities and location of the accommodation.

Action 4.2.5 Louth County Council will implement an online Social Housing Support Application that allow individuals to upload change of circumstances at any time and to allow for the Summary of Social Housing Assessment to be carried out, when developed and rolled out nationally.

Outcome 4.3 People are supported to have the time and opportunity they need to engage with services and Louth County Council

Action 4.3.2 Louth County Council will put in place a central point of contact for disabled people.

Action 4.3.3 Put in place a central point of contact for disabled people for housing related supports in CHO8 area.

Action 4.3.4 Louth County Council will review Choice Based Lettings (CBL) as a method of allocating housing for disabled people to ensure where it is used that it is accessible and address any issues highlighted.

Note: Louth County Council operates a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system to enable qualified housing applicants to exercise greater choice and involvement in selecting a new home. In order to be considered as a tenant of a CBL property applicants must express interest in the CBL website. Louth County Council Customer Service team provide assistance 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 housing 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.

Outcome 4.5 Better sharing of data to produce more collated data.

Action 4.5.5 Housing and Disability Steering Group will conduct mapping exercise of county wide services under housing, health, and community.

Note: The HDSG will explore methods for a mapping exercise of the county wide services under housing, health and community and collation of the information in an accessible format and conduct the mapping exercise.

Theme 5 Knowledge, Capacity, and Expertise

This theme puts forward measures to increase awareness and understanding of disability and housing within the relevant organisations. It also places emphasis on increasing awareness regarding disabled people's effective participation and inclusion in their communities.

Outcome 5.1 Louth County Council, the HSE and Approved Housing Bodies have the knowledge base, expertise, and capacity to provide services and relevant information to disabled people.

Action 5.1.5 Housing and Disability Steering Group will organise "shared learning" days in their local authority where representatives from Louth County Council and Disability Services share learning with members.

Outcome 5.4 Louth County Council and Approved Housing Body staff implement the changes required to meet their obligations under the Assisted Decision-making Act 2015

Action 5.4.3 Louth County Council will incorporate the principles of Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 into all awareness campaigns.

Theme 6 Strategy Alignment

This theme places focus on ensuring that all Government Strategies and policies from a housing perspective promote the rights of disabled people, in line with UNCRPD. This theme will also place a focus on aligning other strategies and policies, such as Housing for All, the new Housing Delivery Action Plans established under its framework, and the Public Sector Duty.

Outcome 6.2 The Government strategies such as Sharing the Vision, A Time to Move on from Congregated settings complement and feed into the new National Housing Strategy for Disabled People and associated implementation Plan.

Action 6.2.1 Allow people transitioning from congregated settings to be placed on the transfer list outside of the current transfer rules of the local authority requirements if such a move is requested due to a change in the individual's will and preference, where the original will, and preference was articulated without full knowledge or understanding.

Action 6.2.2 Louth County Council will work with the HSE and disability and mental health service providers around housing to accommodate people transferring from congregated settings.

Note: The close co-operation between Louth County Council and the Saint John of God regarding provision of supported housing in the community for the residents in Saint Mary's Campus will continue. In respect of residents in Saint Bridget's Complex and other mental health residential units the collaboration between Louth County Council and the Mental Health Services will continue and be strengthened. Provision of supported housing in the community, with 24 hour supports, for those who have significant support needs will be progressed. However, it is essential that the provision of relevant support services is agreed at the planning stage of the supported housing delivery.

Action 6.2.4 Louth County Council will be positively open to offering transfers to disabled people where the current accommodation including location is no longer appropriate.

Note: Tenants of Louth County Council and Approved Housing Bodies can apply for housing transfer on disability, overcrowding, downsizing, or exceptional grounds, providing that they meet the criteria for housing transfer.

Action 6.2.8 Louth County Council and the HSE will conduct an internal review of their policies and procedures to ensure that they are aligned to these Strategies.

Outcome 6.3 The implementation Plan for this strategy will take cognisance of the Disability Capacity Review to 2032 and Wasted Lives

Action 6.3.4 Coordination between Louth County Council and the HSE when individuals are being supported to transfer from unsuitable nursing home placements to the community.

Section 10 Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

- 10.1 The Housing and Disability Steering Group drives and monitors the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People.
- 10.2 Louth County Council will provide an update on the disabled people on the housing list, social housing allocations to disabled people and the Housing Delivery Programme.
- 10.3 The HDSG will report quarterly on the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for disabled people to the Chief Executive and the Strategic Policy Committee.
- 10.4 Louth County Council will provide quarterly reports on the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for disabled people to the Housing Agency, which will be responsible for reporting at the National level.