



NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY 2011–2016



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

EASY TO READ

Easy to Read Version produced in October 2013.

Thanks to Christina Burke for permission to use her painting on the front cover.

Interior illustrations: © www.changepeople.co.uk and Donal Burke: donalgburke@gmail.com



Foreword from the Minister for Housing and Planning

I am very pleased to introduce the Easy to Read version of the Government's National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability, 2011 – 2016. This Easy to Read document was developed in collaboration with people with disabilities, and with the assistance of Inclusion Ireland and the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Providing Services to people with Intellectual Disabilities.

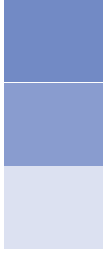
The document will inform people with disabilities about their housing options and how they can be supported to live as independently as possible within communities in line with individual choice. Having secure and appropriate housing is essential to helping people with disabilities integrate into local communities and to lead fully inclusive lives as valued citizens.

It is very important that all services are accessible for people with disabilities, including access to information. And, indeed, the development of this document is a key action under the Government's National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan.

I would like to thank all those involved in the development of this document and I hope you find it useful.



Jan O'Sullivan T.D.
Minister for Housing and Planning





This easy to understand guide tells you about The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016.

We hope that the images used are easy to understand.

We know there is no one set of images that work for everyone.

People with disabilities worked on making this guide easy to understand.

You can get the bigger copy of The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 in the Housing Department in your local Council.

If you want more information please contact your local Council.

1. What is this document about?



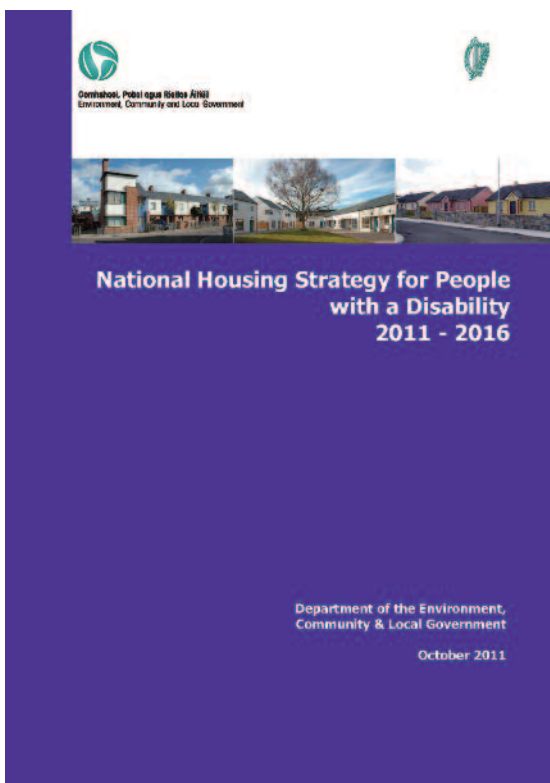
The Government has written a housing plan for people with disabilities.

The aim of the housing plan is for people with disabilities to live as independently as possible within the community.

This housing plan is called “The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011–2016.”

This Easy to Read document explains the housing plan.

In this document we will call the plan “The Housing Strategy”



2. Who wrote the Housing Strategy?



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Two Government Departments wrote the Housing Strategy:

the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government

and the Department of Health.

The two departments had help from

the Health Service Executive

the Councils and

other organisations that support people with disabilities.

3. Who is the Housing Strategy for?



The Housing Strategy is for people with all kinds of disabilities.



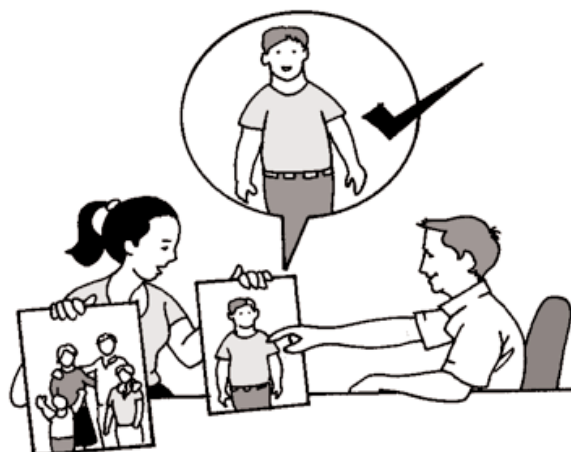
Sometimes people with disabilities need extra support to find the right home.

Also people with disabilities may need extra support to live in their home.

4. What does the Housing Strategy say?



The Housing Strategy says people with disabilities should have a choice about where they live.



People with disabilities should choose who they live with.

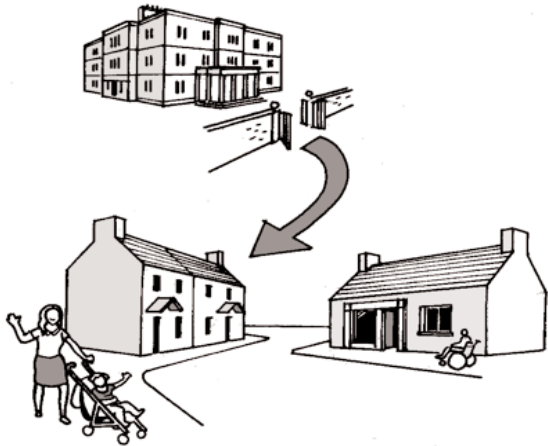


A lot of people with disabilities live in institutions.

An institution is a big care home where people are cared for by care staff.



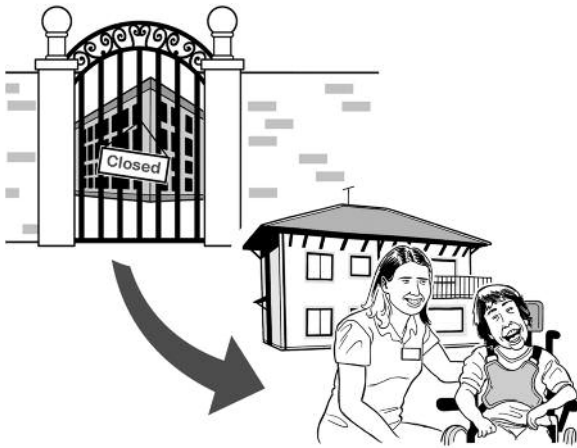
Research shows that people have a better quality of life when they live in ordinary homes in the community compared to when they live in institutions.



The Housing Strategy will help the Government support people living in institutions to move into ordinary homes.



There are other Government reports that say that people with disabilities should live in ordinary homes in the community and not in institutions.



Some people have already moved into their own home.

The remainder of the people living in institutions will move into their own home in the next few years.



The Government want the people who move from institutions to have a choice about where they live.

5. Who can have a Housing Assessment



The Housing Strategy says every person with a disability can have a housing assessment.

A housing assessment will find out what your housing needs are.

You can have a housing assessment if you:

- live in a group home
- live in an institution
- live on your own
- live with your family

The Council can work with other services to help find the house that is right for you.

The council can work with the the Health Service Executive and other organisations that support people with disabilities.

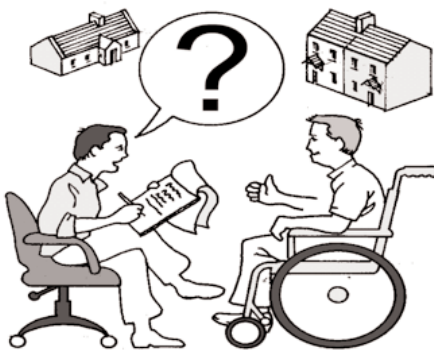
6. What is a Housing Assessment



The aim of the Assessment is for you to get the right support to live where you want.

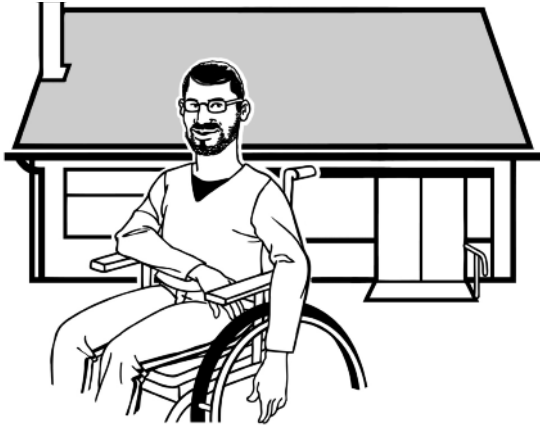


It is the job of the Housing Department in the Council to do your Housing assessment.



You will be asked questions about your housing needs.

The questions help the Council understand the type of housing you need.



For example, if you use a wheelchair your home should not have steps.



Your new home may need to be near accessible public transport that you can use.

7. What Housing Choices do I have?



People can live in houses, apartments, cottages.

People can live in villages, towns, cities or in the countryside.



Some people may want to live alone or with friends.



Some people may want to live near or with their families.

8. What happens if I'm approved for council housing?

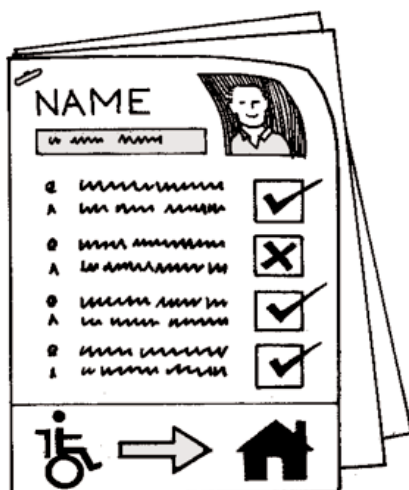


When the assessment is finished you will be told if you have been approved for council housing.



You may have to wait some time before you get a house.

If approved you will be given a document with the results of your housing assessment.



This document is called a "Statement of Accommodation Need"

It says the type of house you need and the type of support you may need.



If you need support it will be given by

- The Health Service Executive
- organisations that support people with disabilities
- people and services in your community



The Council may say you do not need support to find a new house at the moment.

But you may need support finding a house in the future.

9. What is tenancy?



If you get council housing you will be given a tenancy agreement.

A Tenancy is a written agreement between the owner of a house and the person renting it.

A Tenancy tells you your rights and your responsibilities in your home,

and the responsibilities of the owner of the house and the council.

10. What support can I get in my new home?



If your application is approved, you may need some supports to live in your new home.

The Council can provide training to help you be a tenant.



This training is called Tenancy Sustainment Training.

You can get supports from the Health Service Executive or disability services if you need them.



You can get personal supports to help you stay healthy. The supports can help you be part of your community.



Each person will have different support needs.

11. Can I get help when applying for council housing?



If you have problems when you are dealing with the Council or with the support services, you can have a person called an advocate to help you.

You can ask someone you trust to be your advocate.

You can ask for an independent advocate from an advocacy service.

12. *What information will be available?*



It is important for people with disabilities to have good information so they will get a house that is right for them.



Having good information on housing rights will give people with disabilities the same chance for good housing as all Irish citizens.



The Housing Strategy says that information will be available so everyone can understand it. People will have information on the type of houses that can meet their needs.

Conclusion



It is very important for different parts of the Government and services to work together to make sure that people with disabilities live in homes of their choice that meets their needs.



The two Government Departments that wrote the Housing Strategy will be checking to make sure it happens.



They want to make sure that people with disabilities get to live in places that meet their choices and needs.

Acknowledgments

This easy to read document was produced in collaboration with Inclusion Ireland, using best practice guidelines for producing easy to read information.

Thanks to Martin Dooher, Marie Wolfe, Paul Alford, Phil Davy, Martin Rowan, Dermot Lowndes, Bernard Doyle, Jimmy Pender, Bernadette Keogh, Patrick Santry, Mary Seymour and Alan Burke who participated in focus groups and the facilitator of the Co-Action focus group, Denise Cronin.

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