

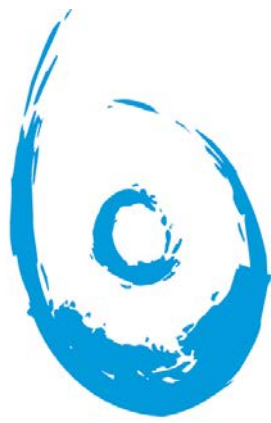
Working for More Accessible Council Services in Offaly for People with an Intellectual Disability Offaly County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 Submission October 2020

About Inclusion Ireland Established in 1961, Inclusion Ireland is a national, rights-based advocacy organisation that works to promote the rights of people with an intellectual disability. The vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights. Inclusion Ireland’s work is underpinned by the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy and we use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to guide our work.

Introduction In late 2019 and early 2020 Offaly County Council worked with Inclusion Ireland and the Midlands Conversation Group on a project to improve access to services for people with an intellectual disability. The Midlands Conversation Group is a forum for adults with intellectual disability that meets in Tullamore every month. Offaly County Council was the first county council to complete the Inclusion Ireland accessibility training and review of services. The project raised awareness of the services provided by Offaly County Council and the successes and challenges experienced by people with intellectual disability in accessing services. The project also supported the council in meeting several priorities and objectives set out under the Offaly County Council Service Delivery Plan and the Offaly County Development Plan. The project report “Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020” was presented to Offaly County Council in February 2020. For people with intellectual disability an accessible service is a service that is easy to use, with information that is easy to read and understand. We are making this submission to Offaly County Council to ask that the “Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020” recommendations in relation to

- service planning,
- accessible information,
- responsibility for the public sector duty and
- reporting on progress

are considered priorities and objectives of the Offaly County Council Development Plan 2021 -2027. The “Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020” Report is attached. The recommendations are presented on pages 11-13. The report is in easy to read format. For more information contact: Inclusion Ireland’s Tullamore office is at 12 O’Carroll Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Telephone - [REDACTED]. Email – info@inclusionireland.ie



**INCLUSION IRELAND**

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

**Working for More  
Accessible Council  
Services in Offaly for  
People with an  
Intellectual Disability**

**Offaly County Development Plan  
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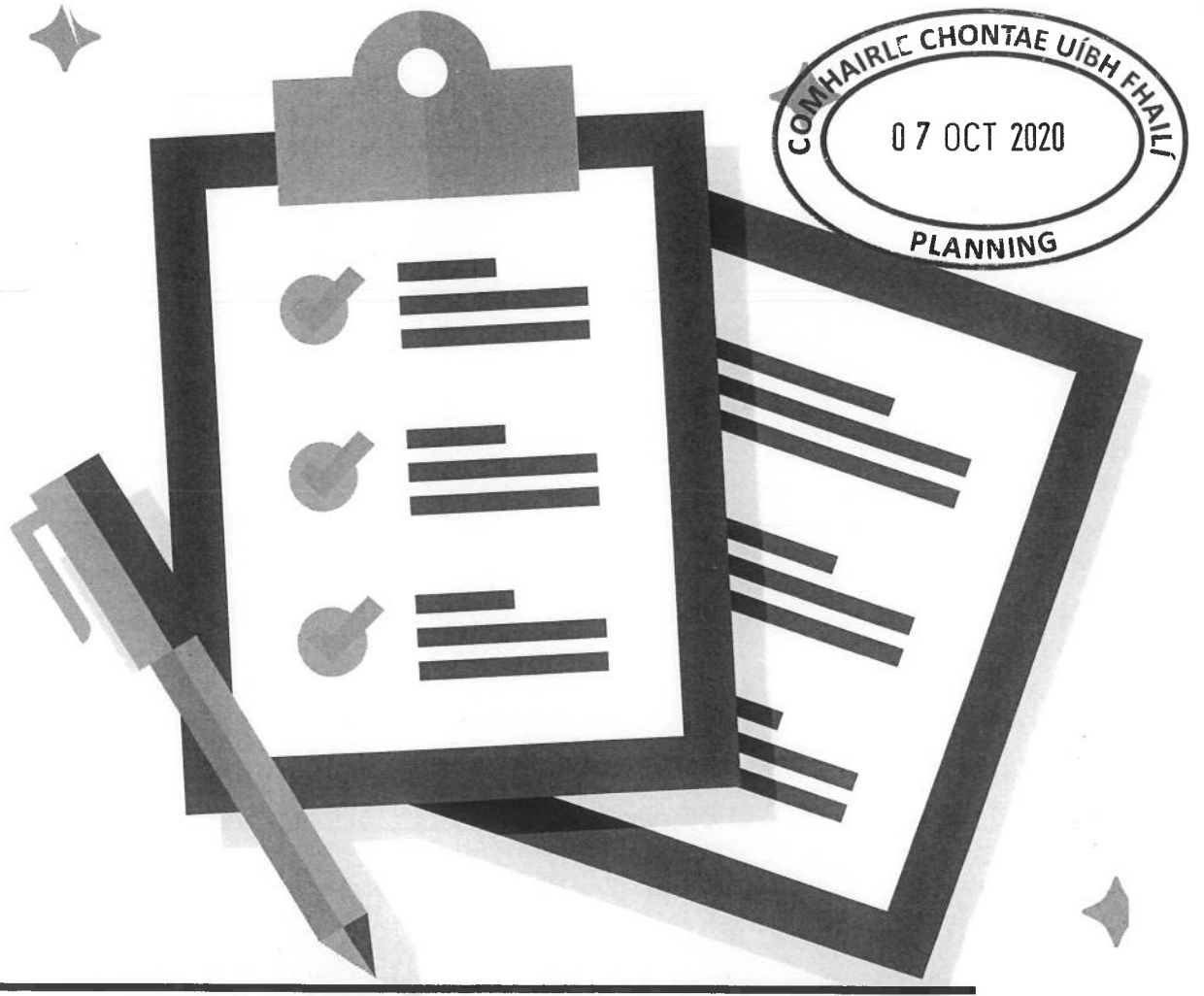
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# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020

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## Project Participants



Liam Cornally  
Jimmy Dooner  
Sandra Edge  
Mary Foot  
Cronan O' Meara  
Rita Quirke  
Mary Stones  
Brigid Walsh

## Thank you



Thank you to the members of the Midlands Conversation Group and the staff and members of Offaly County Council.

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020

## Introduction to the Accessibility Project



Offaly County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

This is a project about access to Offaly County Council services for people with intellectual disability.

### The Public Sector Duty

Eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and protecting human rights  
August 2016

The project looked at how access to council services can be supported by the Public Sector Duty.

Members of the Midlands Conversation Group and Offaly County Council Staff organised and took part in the project.



The Midlands Conversation Group is a forum for adults with intellectual disability that meets locally every month.

Group members work together to build confidence in speaking in a group and in advocacy and leadership roles.



**INCLUSION IRELAND**  
National Association for People  
with an Intellectual Disability

Inclusion Ireland helped organise and provided support for the project.



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta  
an Duine agus Comhionannas  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Inclusion Ireland got money from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission for this Project on the Public Sector Duty.

## Aims of the Project

### Raise Awareness



To raise awareness of

- the services provided by Offaly County Council and the benefits of access to those services
- the challenges experienced by people with intellectual disability when they access services

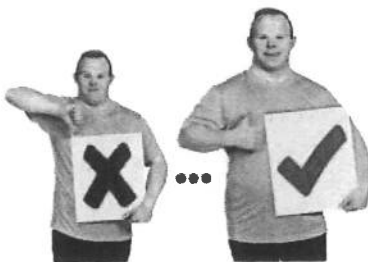
### Build Capacity



To develop the skills of people with intellectual disability to

- meet with council staff
- share their experience of living independently and with support in the community
- review council services for accessibility

### More Accessible Services



To challenge Offaly County Council to improve access to services for people with intellectual disability.



# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020

## The Project

The Public Sector Duty Project involved:



The Midland Conversation Group meeting to prepare and train.

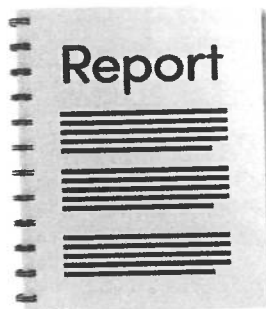


A training workshop on the Public Sector Duty, led by members of the Midland Conversation Group.

## The Public Sector Duty

Eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and protecting human rights  
2008-2011  
August 2008

A review of 4 council departments, by people with intellectual disability, for accessibility under the Public Sector Duty.



A report on the project work and the department reviews, put together by Inclusion Ireland.

## The Public Sector Duty Training Workshop. Tullamore, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020



The Public Sector Duty Training Workshop was attended by Offaly County Council and members of the Midlands Conversation Group.

40 people attended the workshop. The workshop was led by Liam Cornally and Jimmy Dooner.

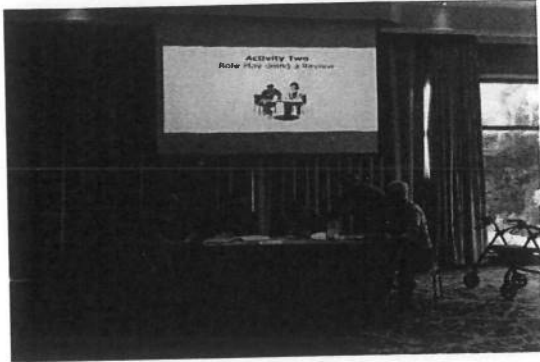
Many council sections were represented at the workshop.



- Community and Culture,
- Corporate Services,
- Finance Department,
- Housing Department,
- Human Resources
- Information Technology,
- Offaly Library
- Offaly Sports Partnership and
- Elected Councillors

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020

## At the Workshop



At the workshop we learned

- What public services are
- The steps public services must take to make services better for people with intellectual disability.
- How people with intellectual disability can use the Public Sector Duty to speak up for their rights



At the workshop -

We met new people with different experiences of life and work in the community



We had conversations and shared stories.

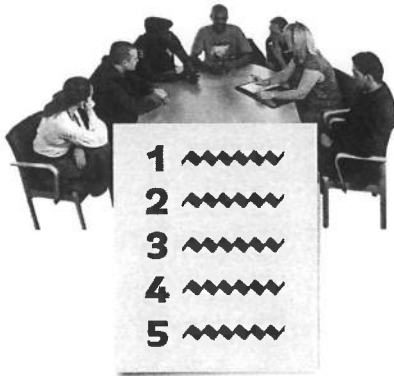
# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project 2020

## The Review: Checking Offaly County Council for Accessibility – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020



4 Sections of Offaly County Council offered to take part in a review of their service for accessibility:

- Community and Culture
- Human Resources
- Offaly Library
- Offaly Sports Partnership



A group of 8 people with intellectual disability carried out the review.

The group divided into 4 teams to interview the staff in each section.

The reviewers used the Public Sector Duty Checklist.

2 members of staff from each Council section answered questions about the work they do and accessibility.



The reviewers ticked the yes or no box when they answered.

For some questions, when there was more information, a support person took notes.

## Review Findings



### Accessible Buildings

The 2 council buildings (Aras an Chontae and Tullamore Library) are modern buildings.

Staff reported that physical access into and around the buildings is good.



When the buildings and surrounds were surveyed by a person with disability, overall access was good, but a number of difficulties were noticed.

Staff agreed that a planned review by people with disabilities would help improve accessibility.



### Accessible Services and Information

All staff are trained and expected to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Accessible services for people with an intellectual disability are not part of the planning, training or review of Council services.



Staff reported that the council information and policies are written in straightforward and clear English.

Most council documents are not available in easy to read or accessible formats.

## Review Findings

### Responsibility for the Public Sector Duty



Staff said that no one person has the job of putting the public sector duty into place.



Staff said they were happy to carry out work to support the public sector duty.

### Checking Services and Making Changes to Support the Public Sector Duty



Staff said that change often happens in response to a problem for a person with disability or when there is a complaint.



But there is no checking or planning to make sure that services or information are easy to use for a person with intellectual disability.

## Review Findings

### Inclusion of People with Disability



**Employment:** There are people with disability working in Offaly County Council.

The number of people with disabilities working in the service meets the current target for the public sector duty.



**Consultation:** Offaly County Council has recently consulted with Offaly Disability Equality Network for Make Way Day and for disability awareness training.

The Public Sector Duty Project was also an opportunity to consult with people with an intellectual disability.

Staff were positive about more consultation with people with disability to help improve services.

## Recommendations

### Check your Service



Ask is your service or information easy to use for people with intellectual disability?

Talk to people with intellectual disability about their experience of the service.



Look at the complaints received by your service from people with intellectual disability, to see what the main problems are.

Ask is your feedback and complaints policy easy to read and easy to use?

### Plan



Meet with people with disabilities to hear their ideas on how to fix any problems.

Write a plan on how to fix the problems. The plan should be easy to read.



Provide information, education and training on accessibility for all staff.

Work to steadily to introduce the changes needed.



## Recommendations

### Accessible information



Write a plan for producing and sharing accessible information.

Consult with people with intellectual disability when writing and reviewing accessible information.



Make accessibility part of the way you produce and share information.

### Responsibility for the Public Sector Duty.



Make accessibility a goal for Offaly County Council.

Accessibility should be part of the planning and checking of each service.

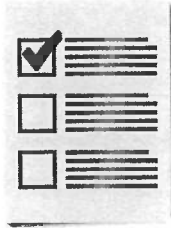


Make someone responsible for implementing accessible services and information.

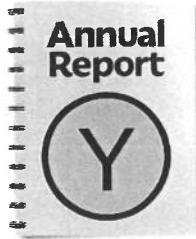
Give them the resources they need to do the job well.

## Recommendations

### Report



Look at your plan every year to see if all the actions were taken.



Write a report about the changes made for people with disabilities and how they are working. The report should be easy to read.



Check again with people with disabilities to see if there are other problems.

## Final Question - Changes staff would like to make



To check their service to see if improvements are needed.

To check the documents, they use to see if they are easy to read.



Signs that are easy to read and understand

Information and signs provided in braille.



Greater accessibility for people with deafness, hearing loss or communication difficulties











































A text to speech facility on the council website to make information more accessible.

































Training for staff to raise awareness of the Public Sector Duty.

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project - Review

	Part 1. Accessibility	Community and Culture	Human Resources	Offaly Library	Offaly Sports Partnership
	1. Is there disabled parking outside your building?				
	2. Can people using a wheelchair access your building?				
	3. Is it easy to move around your building if you are using a wheelchair?				
	4. Are the signs in your building easy for people to read and understand				
	5. Is it easy to move around if your sight is not good?				
	6. Have you trained your staff to talk to people in plain English?				
	7. Is the information about your service in easy to read?				
	8. Did any of your staff get training on how to make information easy to read?				

 Yes
  No
  We will find out
  We are working on it

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project - Review

	Part 1. Accessibility	Community and Culture	Human Resources	Offaly Library	Offaly Sports Partnership
	9. Is your feedback and complaints policy easy to read?				
	10. Do you check complaints to see if people with disabilities find it hard to use your service?				
	11. Do you have public toilets that are easy to use for people with disabilities?				
	12. Do your staff know that people have a right to be treated with dignity and respect?				
	13. Have you checked your service this year to see how easy it is for people with disabilities to use it?				
	14. Do you have a list of changes that need to be made to your service?				











































 We will find out  We are working on it

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project - Review

	Part 2 Public Sector Duty	Community and Culture	Human Resources	Offaly Library	Offaly Sports Partnership
	15. Are there people with disabilities working in your service?				
	16. Does the number of people with disabilities in your service meet the current target?				
	17. Do you train your staff about the Public Sector Duty?				
	18. Do any of your staff have the job of putting the Public Sector duty into place in your service?				
	19. Do you have a committee that checks your service for the Public Sector Duty?				
	20. Are there people with disabilities on this committee?				
	21. Do you ask people with disabilities to check your service to see how easy it is for them to use?				



Yes



No

































We will find out








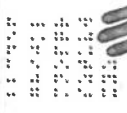
























We are working on it

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project - Review

	Part 2 Public Sector Duty	Community and Culture	Human Resources	Offaly Library	Offaly Sports Partnership
	22. Do you write down information about problems that people with disabilities have when they try to use your service?				
	23. Do you make changes so that it is easier for people with disabilities to use your service?				
	24. Have you written these changes down in a plan?				
	25. Would you like to involve people with disabilities in checking your service?				
	26. Do you think you need more changes to make it easier for people with disabilities?				
	27. Do you have policies on making your service easier to use for people with disabilities?				

 Yes
  No
  We will find out
  We are working on it

# Offaly County Council Accessibility Project - Review

	Part 2 Public Sector Duty	Community and Culture	Human Resources	Offaly Library	Offaly Sports Partnership
	28. Are your plans and policies easy to read and understand?				
	29. Do you put your plans and policies in braille?				
	30. Can people listen to your plans and policies?				
	31. Do you have an action plan on the Public Sector Duty?				
	32. Do you write a report every year on the changes that you need to make because of the Public Sector Duty?				
	33. Are there any changes to your service that you would like to make after meeting me today?				



Yes



No



We will find out



We are working on it



## **Inclusion Ireland**

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Website: [www.inclusionireland.ie](http://www.inclusionireland.ie)

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