

There has been successful collaboration with Offaly Local Authority and HSE mental health services on the pilot transfer of ownership project. Following completion of the pilot, the project has since progressed to 5 other Community Health Organisation areas in the country. As described in the Discussion Paper Housing support options for people with mental health disabilities, Housing Agency 2010 'the central policy aspiration in relation to mental health and housing in recent years is for local authorities to assume the responsibility for accommodation provision that has traditionally been provided by mental health services.' It is welcome to see the specific inclusion and naming of the National Housing strategy for People with Disabilities and we await keenly the review of this policy. One of the key objectives is 'To address the specific housing needs of people with a mental health disability, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community, for people with low and medium support needs moving from mental health facilities, in line with good practice.' The mental health services are seeing an increasing need for single unit accommodation for individuals to live independently, units for shared accommodation and specialist housing in a continued move away from congregated settings. This includes service users of mental health services currently living in the community. It is important that we continue to work towards more permanent housing solutions for all housing needs identified. The establishment of the Housing Disability steering Group is a key aspect to the above objective. We look forward to being contributing members of this group and other fora necessary as we advocate and work together to address the housing needs of people with mental health needs.