



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Time to move on from congregated settings

A strategy for community inclusion



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Introduction



For many years people with disabilities have been cared for in **residential institutions** or **congregated settings** away from local communities.



We now think that people would have a chance for a better life if they lived as independently as possible in their local communities.



A **residential institution** or **congregated setting** is where a lot of people live together in one place.



The staff provide all their care and food. The staff arrange everything for them.

Living in their local communities people will have a chance to:



- Take part in things like everyone else



- Plan their own lives



- Choose things for themselves



- Get the support they need to live a more independent life



This report looks at what we have to do to help people with disabilities live more independently and be more involved in local communities.

What has happened so far



Before people can move to live in the local community we have to think about all the different things that have to happen.

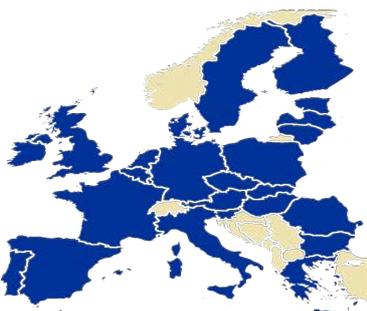


We have had a group of people who did a lot of research to make a plan.



They looked at:

- Old and new residential institutions
- Who was living in them
- Ways of living in the local community
- What is happening in other countries



Residential institutions or congregated settings



They found that about 4000 people with disabilities are living in residential institutions or congregated settings.



They looked at the costs of supporting people to live in these places.



They also looked at the costs for people to be supported in their local community.

They saw that:



- People have better lives if they live in homes that are spread out in ordinary neighbourhoods in the community



- Living in the community is better than in old or new residential institutions



- Supporting people to live in the local community doesn't cost more



- Organisations that support people to live in the community need to:
 - Be set up and run well
 - Have good quality support staff

Living in the community

There are different ways that people can live in their local community.

They can:



- Live on their own



- Share their home with people who do not have a disability



- Share with friends who do have a disability



- Live with a family

There are different ways of supporting you depending on how much support you need.



You can have:

- Support to live in your home



- Support to help you get involved in your local community



- Help to get a job or go to college

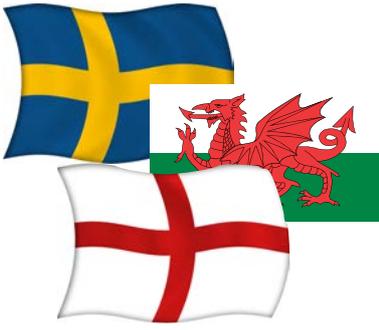


People will be involved in planning their own life, which includes things they want to do and what support they need.



People should be able to have an advocate. This is an independent person who will help you to speak up for yourself, and be heard.

Other countries



The working group visited people with learning disabilities in Sweden, Wales and England.



They also talked to experts in Norway and the United States of America.



They learned that everyone can live in the community.



The people with the most severe disabilities get the most out of community living.



They also learned that you have to make good plans.

What we should do



Moving to live in the local community

The working group thought about what we should do about people moving to live in the local community. They said:



- The Department of Health and Children should say that everyone who is living in a residential institution will move to live in the community



- The government should make plans to make sure there are plenty of houses spread throughout local communities which are good for people with a disability



- The government should make a plan to make sure we have enough good quality staff to support people to live in the community



- The different parts of the government should all work together to help people move to live in their local community



Support in the community

The working group thought about what we should do about support in the local community. They said:



- People should be able to choose who they live with, or if they want to live on their own



- Where people want to share with others - there should be no more than 4 people with a disability living together



- People will need different sorts of support:



- Help with making plans
- Advocacy and help to speak up
- Help to get involved in their local community



- Support at home
- Support to keep healthy
- Support with a job or college



- Local health services may need to change so they can work with people with a disability



- Support for people should be organised locally



- The government should look at ways that local organisations can be given the job of supporting certain people

Paying for it

The working group thought about how we should pay for it. They said:



- We should use the money that we spend on residential institutions to pay for support in the local community



- The houses in the local community should come from housing authorities and housing associations



- We may have to buy or rent houses. We may also have to build some new houses. We would sell the land that has been used by the residential institutions to help pay for this



- Local Councils, Health and Housing should work together locally to find the right places for people to live

How we do it

The working group thought about how it should be organised. They said:



- It will take 7 years to close all the residential institutions and for everyone to move to live in their local community



- The residential institutions should work closely with the government during this time



- We will pick a few places where we will move people soon. We will learn from these examples



- There should be some funding to help the move to community living



- The government should check that it's all going well



- We need to make sure that there is enough support



- We need good independent **advocates**



Advocates help people speak up and say what they and their families want



- There should be a plan to look at the training or support staff might need