

# What matters most

Key messages from the Áras Attracta Swinford Review Group



**Easy Read**

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# Introduction



In December 2014 **RTE Primetime** showed people with intellectual disabilities being abused and neglected in the Áras Attracta residential campus in Swinford, County Mayo.



The Áras Attracta Swinford Review Group was set up to:-



▶ Look at what changes need to be made at Áras Attracta



▶ Tell the **Health Service Executive (HSE)** about any more worries about care and safety



▶ Look at what caused the abuse at Áras Attracta



- ▶ Look at what needs to be done to make sure that nothing like that happens again



- ▶ Think about what needs to be done in all care organisations



## Our approach



We said from the start that we needed to listen to the voices of the people who lived at Áras Attracta.



# About Áras Attracta



Áras Attracta is a residential centre in Swinford County Mayo. 92 people live there.



It was built in 1988 to look after adults with intellectual disabilities.



About a third of people came from living at home, a third came from St Mary's Hospital in Castlebar and a third came from other institutions.



There have hardly been any new people since 1992. Half the people are now over age 60.



# Listening to people



## Residents

We listened to the residents in meetings at Áras Attracta.



We then asked **Inclusion Ireland** to meet with residents away from the Áras Attracta campus.



We asked the **National Advocacy Service for people with Disabilities (NAS)** to watch a day in the life of three residents to find out how they spent their day.



We asked some people to do a survey that looked at the quality of life of the residents.



## **Relatives**

We met with the relatives of some of the residents at 2 meetings. We also asked them to fill in a questionnaire.



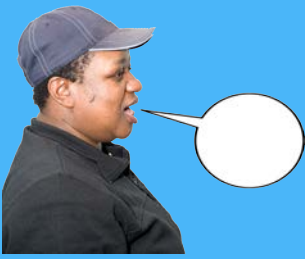
## **Staff**

We met with staff in group meetings. We also met with some of the senior staff team.



## **Managers**

We asked Managers to complete a long questionnaire so we could get a lot of information about what was happening.



# What people said



Residents mostly said they liked living at Áras Attracta but they hadn't lived anywhere else for a long time.



They would like to do more and to go out more.



People want to be safe. Also to be respected, to have privacy and to be able to meet friends.



Relatives were worried about Áras Attracta and had lots of sensible suggestions about how things could be better.





Staff had been shocked by the television programme. They felt hurt, angry and ashamed.

Staff had many criticisms of the service.



## The main problems

After talking to people at Áras Attracta we thought that the main problems were:-



- ▶ Residents didn't have enough interesting things to do
- ▶ They didn't meet people from outside the service enough. They didn't take part in activities in their local community.





- ▶ Residents weren't given enough dignity, privacy and rights.



- ▶ Some residents had to share their bedroom.

But there were some good points:-



- ▶ We saw staff provide a lot of kind, sensitive support.



- ▶ Staff and residents really liked each other.



- ▶ Residents forums were starting.



- ▶ They were starting to do things with the local community.



# What should happen now at Áras Attracta



We think that there should be changes at Áras Attracta.

1. The service should work for the rights of the residents.



2. Staff should support people to lead a normal life in their local community



3. The service should focus on each person's own needs or wishes. It should be person centred.



4. People should have the opportunity to speak up and to be listened to.



5. There should be more residents forums



6. Key workers should help individual people to get what they want.



7. Residents should know their rights.



8. The management needs to work with staff, residents and families on a new plan.



9. Managers need to be in touch with what is going on inside and outside the organisation.



# What the health services should do

Health services should:-



1. Work with people with an intellectual disability to set up a national training programme around keeping people safe.



2. Make sure that local organisations are following the government's plans



3. Hold regular assessments for people who live in large services to check that their service is right for them



4. Help people to move away from large services and live in small groups in the local community



5. Put new managers into any service that is bad

6. Help organisations to have their own plans to keep people safe



7. Set up a way for good ideas to spread around services.



8. Give more money to Advocacy services.



9. Make sure that health service disability managers talk with people with intellectual disabilities.



10. Set up a new training programme for managers of large residential centres.



# What residential services should do



1. Everyone who lives in a large residential service should get the opportunity to live in the community.



2. There should be money to make this happen.



3. The move to living in the community should be based on each person's own needs and wishes. Their family should be involved.



4. The amount of support that people need to live in the community will depend on their own needs.



5. We want everyone to move to live in the community within the next 5 years.



6. The government will decide what to do with the old campus land and buildings.



7. Staff will be offered jobs supporting people in the community.





# HSE Response



The Health Service Executive (HSE) has welcomed **What Matters Most** and thanks everyone who help to make the report.

Already they have made big changes at Áras Attracta:



▶ There is a new management team who are making the changes that are needed.



▶ They are looking at what people would need to move and live in the community.



▶ Eight residents have moved to houses in Áras Attracta to get ready to move to living in the community.

▶ The government is giving funding to buy homes in the community that would be good for the people to move into.



- ▶ All staff have had training in keeping people safe. Many staff have had other training which will help them to work in a better way.



- ▶ There is now a good complaints system that people can use



- ▶ There is a service user group called “**Voices and Choices**” that meet every week.



- ▶ There are weekly meetings in the houses that are helping people to move to the community



- ▶ There is now a family forum where family members can meet and talk about issues.



# More information

For more information please contact:-



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