



# Pre-planning Guidance for Residential Care Homes

June 2021





# Background

Ireland is following the international trend of population ageing. This means that the median age of the population is increasing because people are living longer. The number of older people in the country will in future make up a much greater proportion of the population. By 2051, the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 1.6 million in Ireland, while the number aged 80 and over will increase to over half a million. This demographic trend presents a challenge for how services are provided, especially health care and housing services.

Approximately 3.6% of the population aged 65 and over currently live in long term residential facilities. With population ageing, the numbers living in residential facilities in later life are likely to increase substantially, notwithstanding a range of measures currently being undertaken to support older people to remain living at home for longer.

Census 2016 indicated that 22,762 people were living in nursing homes.<sup>1</sup> There are 584 nursing homes of which 440 are private or voluntary nursing homes.<sup>2</sup>

Local Authorities are leading the change process that is developing Age Friendly Communities to support an ageing population.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp3oy/cp3/agr/>

<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel, Examination of Measures to 2021. Report to the Minister for Health



## Age Friendly Ireland

Age Friendly Ireland is the organisation responsible for the national Age Friendly Programme in Ireland, affiliated to the World Health Organization's [WHO] global age friendly network. The programme involves a multi-agency, multi-sectoral approach to age-related planning and service provision. Age Friendly Ireland supports cities and counties to be more inclusive of older people by addressing their express concerns and interests under the eight pillars of the WHO programme. Age Friendly Ireland operates as a shared service centre of local government hosted by Meath County Council. The shared service centre supports a network of 31 local Age Friendly Programmes which are led by local authorities and which involve many stakeholders from other public bodies, community, voluntary and private sector partners. These multi-agency Age-Friendly Alliances are supported by broadly representative Older People's Councils who are actively engaged as co-design partners. The Shared Service supports a number of strategic national structures and provides technical guidance to its networks.

## Policy Context

This Planning Guidance note for Residential Care Homes is prepared in response to the joint policy statement 'Housing Options for our Ageing Population' and specifically Action 4.12 which is to

'Issue planning guidelines for the development of residential care homes and primary care centres to ensure that they are appropriately designed and located in areas with access to transport and amenities'

Project Ireland 2040 published in 2018, contains two documents- The National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP). The NPF is a planning framework to guide development and investment. The NDP is a 10-year public investment strategy document. The NPF acknowledges that as people get older, they are likely to have increasingly complex healthcare needs thereby necessitating the provision of appropriately designed facilities. Government policy is to support older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

**National Policy Objective 30 states as follows:**

'Local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population along with the inclusion of specific projections, supported by clear proposals in respect of ageing communities as part of the core strategy of city and county development plans.'

The NDP sets out a number of major investment projects and programmes along with significant reform initiatives are planned for the health sector including:

- ▶ 'Replacement and refurbishment of 90 Community Nursing Units across the country.
- ▶ Replacement and refurbishment of long-term residential care units and housing in the community for people with disabilities at various locations across the country.
- ▶ 4,500 additional long term and short-term residential beds in Community Nursing Homes in the public system.
- ▶ Additional Primary Care Centres and Community Diagnostic Facilities so that people can receive better care close to home and avoid hospital unless it's necessary.'



The Programme for Government 'Our Shared Future' published in July 2020, outlines a vision for an Age Friendly Ireland and makes reference using the learnings from Covid-19 to inform future policy impacting on those residing in nursing homes. It committed to establishing a Commission to examine care and supports to older people. The Nursing Homes Expert Panel was established in May 2020 in response to a NPHEP recommendation to examine the complex issues surrounding the management of COVID-19 among this particularly vulnerable cohort.

**The Health Information and Quality Authority [HIQA] document on National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, (2009) states:**

*'High-quality, safe and effective services for people living in residential care should promote person-centred care, uphold the rights of people, respect privacy and dignity and protect people living in residential care from abuse and neglect'*

- ▶ HIQA standards which are most relevant at planning stage include:
- ▶ Standard 1.4 Each resident develops and maintains personal relationships and links with the community in accordance with their wishes.
- ▶ Standard 2.6 The residential service is homely and accessible and provides adequate physical space to meet each resident's assessed needs.
- ▶ Standard 2.7 The design and layout of the residential service is suitable for its stated purpose. All areas in the premises meet the privacy, dignity and wellbeing of each resident.
- ▶ Standard 3.3 Infection prevention and control practices achieve the best outcomes for residents.
- ▶ Standard 4.2 Each resident is offered a choice of appropriate recreational and stimulating activities to meet their needs and preferences.



The World Health Organization has produced infection prevention and control guidance for long-term facilities in the context of covid-19 (updated January 2021) which draws attention to consideration for physical distancing, ventilation, isolation, and facilities for care of the deceased.

Each Local Authority is required to prepare a Development Plan for its functional area every 6 years. These plans must be consulted as specific requirements relevant to a local area will be set out in these documents.

Trinity Haus is currently leading a rapid review of long.

# Planning Considerations

Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000-2020 sets out the formal procedure for prospective applicants seeking planning advice. Planning Authorities actively encourage pre-application discussions prior to the submission of any planning application.

Set out overleaf are considerations which should be taken into account when planning the development of long-term residential care facilities for older people.

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

## The following should be considered:

- ▶ The Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted);
- ▶ The Health Information and Quality Authority [HIQA] National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, 2009;
- ▶ Sustainability, is the location served by good public transport links, pedestrian and cycle facilities close to local services and facilities;
- ▶ Availability of services;
- ▶ Suitability of the size and scale of the proposal having regard to the site constraints and the area in which it is located;
- ▶ The degree to which the residential amenity of surrounding properties is protected;
- ▶ The requirement for a high standard of design and external finishes;
- ▶ The adequacy of off-street car parking;
- ▶ High quality open space proposals with comprehensive landscaping plans prepared by a fully qualified landscape professional.





## 1. Site Location

Proposals for residential accommodation for older people should be located in existing settlement areas well served by social infrastructure and amenities such as footpath networks, public transport (where possible) and local facilities and services to allow for better care in the community, independence and access and ensure that residents are not isolated.



## 2. Site Accessibility

Where possible, sites chosen should be easily accessible by public transport, served by footpaths, pedestrian crossings from bus stops etc.

On site car parking should be enough and located in an accessible location particularly for visitors.

Development Plans set out car parking standards required for developments.

All car parks should include the provision of necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future Electric Vehicle charging points.

### **HIQA Standard 1.3.9**

Each resident has opportunities for recreation, travel and leisure outside of the designated centre, in line with the resident's will and preferences

### 3. Amenity Space

The provision of external amenity space at a suitable scale and in a good location within the development site is essential. This space can take the form of, for example, formal/informal garden spaces.

Seating in these areas should be provided to allow for rest stops and to encourage social interaction. Age Friendly seating incorporates arm rests and back supports as an aid to older people and all seating provided should comply with this requirement.

Where possible, any existing trees and hedgerows should be retained as part of the scheme, to encourage wildlife and biodiversity. This will also be of benefit to the wellbeing of residents.



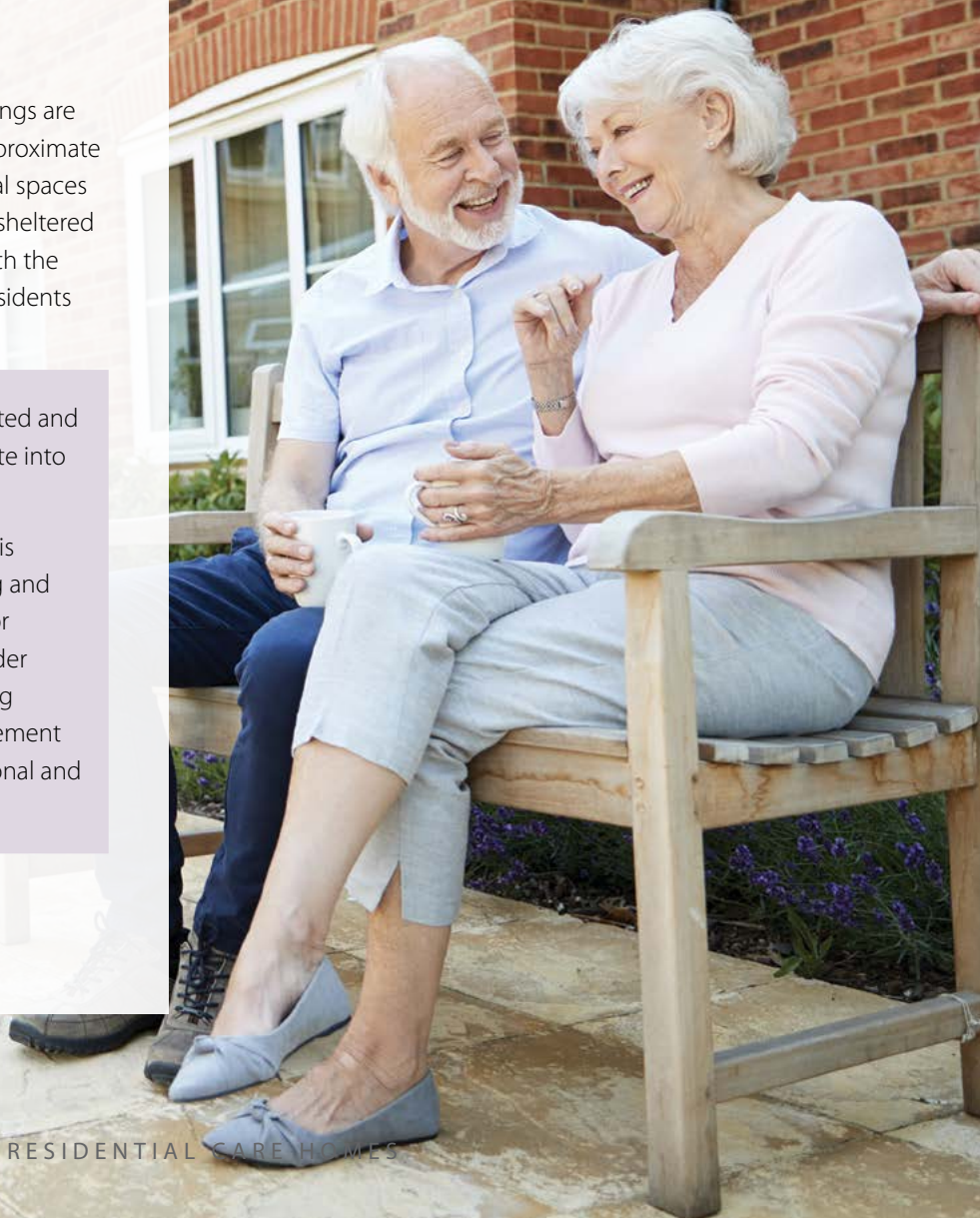
## 4. Co-location with other facilities

In order to ensure that residential care settings are at a heart of communities, sites should be proximate to existing community services, recreational spaces and other residential options (for example sheltered housing) thereby facilitating interaction with the wider community to the benefit of both residents and wider communities.

### HIQA standard 1.4.2

Each resident is facilitated and encouraged to integrate into their community.

The residential service is proactive in identifying and facilitating initiatives for participation in the wider community, developing friendships and involvement in local social, educational and professional networks.



## 5. Site Services

Availability of potable water, a means of waste water and surface water disposal is essential and should be considered in the initial pre planning phase of the development.

The availability of reliable broadband services is important for a variety of services including enabling the delivery of virtual services and ehealth measures. The ability of residents to avail of social connections virtually is essential.

### HIQA standard 1.4.5

Telecommunications and information technology devices are made available to residents, and they are facilitated to use them to support them to communicate and maintain contact with family, friends and others.

Regard should be had to the number and location of refuse bins required to serve the development at design stage and in particular the requirement for segregating waste for recycling and food waste should be planned.



## 6. Energy Efficiency

The importance of reducing energy requirements associated with the built environment is one of the challenges identified in the Climate Action Plan 2019.

All development proposals should maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.

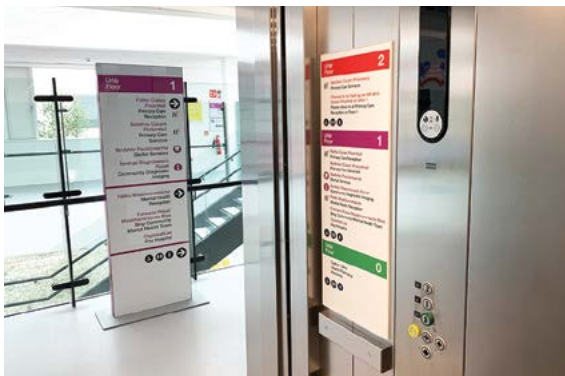
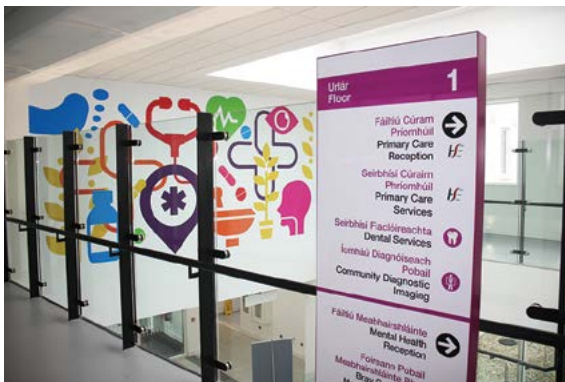
For example, green roof technologies, water conservation measures, provision of photovoltaic solar panels etc should be explored as part of the design process.

All building designs should maximise natural ventilation, solar gain and daylight, where possible.

## 7. Signage and wayfinding

Appropriately sized and sited signage and wayfinding supports easy identification of the nursing home location for visiting family and friends and in the wider community.

The use of a consistent format for display of information, colour coding, visual contrast, matte sign faces to absorb glare, easy to clean signage, 3D braille and tactile characters supports practice in good practice in wayfinding. This will result in a development easy to navigate for residents and visitors.



## 8. Security Measures

The incorporation of passive surveillance measures at design stage is central to the provision of a safe, pleasant environment for all. Appropriately sited lighting is a necessary requirement.



## 9. Universal Design of the Built Environment

- ▶ Long term residential care facilities should be universally designed and provide equitable access to the services and facilities it offers.
- ▶ All facilities such as common room/day room, bedrooms and bathrooms should be accessible to residents and guests.
- ▶ External facilities, such as gardens and terraces, should be accessible and available for use by all residents and guests.
- ▶ Staff-only areas should be universally designed.
- ▶ Enough space to accommodate visiting services such as cultural services, physical activity programmes etc. should be provided.

### Compliance with the relevant HIQA Standards should be demonstrated:

<b>HIQA Standard 1.3.8</b>	Each resident is supported and facilitated to access safe and appropriate outside space.
<b>HIQA Standard 2.6.1</b>	The living environment is designed to promote the independence of residents, and the residential service adheres to evidence-based practice and national legislation in achieving and promoting accessibility.





## 10. Internal Layout

### Bedrooms

Bedrooms in residential accommodation should include a mix of single, twin, or double room formats to offer residents choice and meet individual preference.

The bedrooms should provide sufficient space for people to access all facilities and items of furniture and to manoeuvre conveniently around the room.

Rooms should be arranged to permit alternative bed positions, enabling both left- and right-hand transfer from a wheelchair to the bed.

The position of the window and height of the sill should enable people who are seated or confined to bed to enjoy an unobstructed view of the external environment. For further guidance on windows, refer to Building for Everyone, Booklet 6: Facilities in buildings, Section 6.10.

The location of all bedrooms should be carefully considered in relation to evacuation requirements and to sources of external noise such as traffic or noise from adjacent facilities.



**Compliance with the relevant HIQA Standards should be demonstrated:**

<p><b>HIQA standard 1.2.1</b></p>	<p>Each resident has a choice of a separate bedroom (where available), or to share a bedroom with another resident.</p> <p>The design of shared bedrooms ensures that there are private as well as shared spaces and the privacy and dignity of each resident are respected at all times.</p>
<p><b>HIQA standard 1.2.6</b></p>	<p>The door to single occupancy rooms are fitted with locks suited to each resident’s capabilities; it is accessible to staff in defined circumstances and meets fire safety regulations.</p> <p>The resident is able to secure their own personal accommodation; however, in defined circumstances the staff are able to access it.</p>

## Accessible Controls

The controls for heating, ventilation, lighting, curtains or window blinds, radios, and televisions, as well as sockets for phone chargers, hair dryers and electronic equipment, should all be reachable from a seated position. They should be simple and easy to operate.

## Access to Kitchen Facilities

**Compliance with the relevant HIQA Standard should be demonstrated:**

**HIQA standard  
1.3.7**

Each resident is supported to prepare their own food and drinks, outside of mealtimes, if they so wish and where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

## End of Life Care

Bereavement Suite should be included with tea station for families to spending time with their loved ones at end of life.

**Compliance with the relevant HIQA Standard should be demonstrated:**

**HIQA standard  
2.5.7**

The residential service has facilities in place to support end-of-life care so that a resident is not unnecessarily transferred to an acute setting except for specific medical reasons, and in accordance with their wishes.



## Considerations arising from the Covid 19 Pandemic

The measures set out in the COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel Examination of Measures to 2021 Report to the Minister for Health and any update thereof should be considered.

- ▶ Expert report 2.10. Management of entry and exit: Examine options for identifying zones within care homes so different entrances/exits can be used for different parts of the home.
- ▶ Isolation and quarantine: Facilities must have ability and space to isolate and cohort residents
- ▶ Social distancing facilities for residents and staff should be available
- ▶ Expert report 12.2. Infrastructural adaptations may be needed including visiting rooms that can facilitate visits from friends and family.

# References

Age Friendly Ireland (2021) Age Friendly Primary Care Centres

Age friendly Ireland (2019) Age Friendly Hospitals

Age Friendly Ireland (2021) Age Friendly Seating Guide

Age friendly Ireland/Cork County Council (2020) Age Friendly Parking Guide.

National Planning Framework

National Development Plan

Trinity Haus (2021) Residential Long-Term Care: Built Environment, Quality of Life & Infection Control from a Universal Design Approach Key Quality of Life Domains Working Paper 2 Draft March 2021

TrinityHaus (2018) Dementia Friendly Hospitals from a Universal Design Approach Design Guidelines 2018

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design "Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach"

The Irish Hospice Foundation: Design and Dignity Style Book (Lovegrove and Rose Roberts 2014).

HIQA National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland

COVID-19 Nursing Homes Expert Panel Examination of Measures to 2021 Report to the Minister for Health

# Notes



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