



Services to people with disabilities in the mainstreaming environment in Europe

EPR survey

The survey items are designed to gather information about services to people with disabilities in the mainstreaming environment offered by members of EPR. In this study we are interested in learning about programmes and good practices that support inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstreamed environment in any of the following areas: early intervention, education, vocational training and employment, housing services and social care. Please note that, for each of these areas, we are only looking for **practices that support inclusion**.

By 'mainstreamed environment' we mean the common society, that is, environments that are not segregated or targeted to special groups. A regular school, the open labour market or a community facility that is opened to the general public are examples of 'mainstreamed environments'.

If your organisation offers several of these programmes or services, please select the one you consider more innovative or most successful and complete the survey. If you would like to provide information about an additional programme/service you can also do it by completing another survey (maximum two programmes/ services).

There may be some items in the survey that are not applicable for the selected programme or service. In these instances, please indicate "not applicable".

Although the term "programme" is used in this survey, it can be replaced with "service" or "practice" in all occurrences.



Organisational Information

Name of the Organisation: Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA)

Country where the organization is located: Ireland

Title of the Programme/Service/practice: *Operation Sign-Up 2011- present*

Contact Information (Include the name and relevant contact data for the primary contact person who can provide technical expertise regarding this Programme):

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Study Criteria	Description of the Study Criteria
I. Programme Information	
I (a) Goal of the Programme/service	<p>Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) regards the availability of accommodation of a suitable design and type, in a fitting location, with the required personal supports, as a basic right. The availability of such accommodation directly supports people with a disability in participating in, and contributing to, the life of the community in which they live.</p> <p><i>Operation Sign-Up 2011 – the present:</i> is an Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) housing initiative, which encourages and supports people with disabilities who wish to live in their own homes, but are unable to do so from their own resources, to apply for mainstream social housing through City and County councils.</p>
I (b) Outcome Measures of the Programme	<p>The Outcomes Measures for the IWA Operation-Sign Programme included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operation-Sign Up Programme publicised nationally and locally both within IWA to IWA members and staff and externally to other disability, youth, community and health care organisations• Increased awareness among people with disabilities of the need to forward plan for their future housing• Increased awareness among people with disabilities of the potential housing opportunities that can be realised through being registered onto Social Housing Lists of their local City or County Council• Support given to people with disabilities to apply to local City and County Councils for a Housing Needs Assessment which on approval, places an applicant onto the local Housing List• Increased numbers of people with disabilities showing on City and County Council Housing Lists



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of people with disabilities showing on the National Housing Needs Assessment carried out every three years by the Department of the Environment • Ultimately a significantly increased supply of wheelchair accessible social housing tailored to meet individual need
<p>I (c) Theory used for the Programme</p>	<p>The theoretical principles that underline the Operation- Sign Up Programme include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with mainstream housing system • Person’s right to housing that is appropriate to need and within a reasonable and stated time frame • Self Direction with support available if required and requested to negotiate the social Housing System • Right to full and clear information that is easily located and grouped around the Housing theme
<p>I (d) Year Programme was initiated and milestones in development</p>	<p>Identify the date when the Programme started. It is widely recognised by the disability sector, the statutory housing sector and also by the Department of the Environment that the numbers of people with disabilities on Council housing lists is not representative of people with disabilities’ accommodation/housing needs</p> <p>When planning <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> the Programme was timed to bring the attention of people with disabilities to the ¹2011 Triennial Housing Needs Assessment and the upcoming National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability; both undertaken by the Department of Environment. The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 was launched by the Department of the Environment in October 2011</p> <p><i>The Operation Sign-Up</i> Programme was launched in Dublin City Council offices by IWA in partnership with three of the four Dublin based Councils on 30th March 2011. Since 2011 the Operation Sign-Up Programme has become part of the ongoing work and services within IWA; every three years prior to the National Triennial Housing Needs Assessment the Programme is again highlighted within and external to IWA to bring particular attention to the relevance of the Programme</p> <p>Milestones noted throughout the Programme included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Operation-Sign Up Programme and supporting materials which included posters, business cards, launch invitations, launch event guidelines, press releases, IWA housing specific microsite • One national and five countrywide launches of Operation Sign-Up largely hosted by City and County Councils in partnership with IWA in local Civic offices during March 2011 • The IWA Operation Sign-Up website was unveiled at the National and local launches www.iwa.ie/house • Significant media coverage of national and local launches • Targeted support available to people with disabilities to negotiate the social housing application process throughout the national network of IWA Resource Centres during March and April 2011

¹ Triennial Housing Needs assessment is a national count of households on all Council Housing Lists undertaken every three years by the Department of the Environment



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-emphasis of Operation-Sign every three years by viral e-mail and poster campaigns with on going personal support available through IWA Resource Centres, see at http://www.iwa.ie/information/locations/locations-map • The National Housing Needs Assessment figures published in early 2014 showed a dramatic 200% increase in the numbers of people with disabilities on City and Council Housing Lists; numbers went from 1,315 in 2011 to 3,919 in 2013
I (e) Staffing patterns of the Programme	<p>Staff involved in developing Operation-Sign Up included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWA National Director Community Supports • IWA Housing and Access Supports Coordinator • IWA National Housing Group comprising IWA staff from IWA Resource Centres across the country • IWA Publications Communications and Marketing Coordinator • IWA Coordinators and staff in the national wide network of IWA Resource Centres • IWA national Youth Development Officer & individual IWA Youth Workers • IWA office based staff in IWA Headquarters in Dublin <p>All of the above IWA staff involved in developing and delivering the IWA Operation Sign-Up Programme, particularly in bringing the Programme to the attention of people with disabilities. The activities and actions involved in the Programme are fully described below in Section 111</p> <p>On an on- going basis following the national and local launch/s and initial promotion of Operation-Sign Up, IWA staff in the nationwide network of IWA Resource Centres along with the IWA Housing and Access Supports Coordinator are mainly involved in supporting people around the Operation-Sign Up Programme on a day to day basis</p>
I (f) Physical location of the Programme	<p>Describe the Programme’s location(s). The locations of the Operation Sign-Up as follows;</p> <p>The Operation Sign-Up Programme was developed at national IWA level by the national IWA Housing Group. The Programme was and is largely implemented locally within the IWA Resource and Outreach Centres across the country; http://www.iwa.ie/information/locations/locations-map</p>
II. Client Information	
II (a) Targeted clients admitted	<p>Identify the admission criteria including age, gender, disability, and any other qualifying characteristics.</p> <p>The age range of people seeking support within the Operation Sign-Up Programme is from 18 yrs. upwards, men and women. There are no admissions criteria for IWA’s Operation-Sign Up only that a person makes an enquiry and requests support. It is difficult to calculate total numbers; the Operation Sign-Up microsite has a significant number of hits annually and then through the IWA Resource Centres additional people receive support on an ongoing basis on request</p>



II (b) Number of clients currently in the Programme	Identify the number of current clients in the Programme. See above
II (d) Involvement of the Family members	Describe how the family members are oriented to and involved in the Services provided. Not applicable; the Operation Sign-Up Programme was targeted at the individual person with a disability and not family members
III. Programme Activities, Services and Intervention	
III (a) Activities during the Programme targeted to the clients	Programme activities that are targeted to the clients. Within IWA a national housing working group was established, consisting of IWA staff and members involved and with an interest in housing, both with and without disability. In developing the <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> initiative this working group undertook consultation with staff and members at local IWA Resource Centre level. Contact was also made with the 34 local Authorities and their feedback was incorporated into the final <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> project What was very clear from the outset was that suitable social housing is very difficult to source, that people with disabilities often have very specific housing and accommodation requirements and that people with disabilities often require support to negotiate a successful housing outcome allied with the provision of easy to understand information on all aspects of housing and related matters The development of <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> involved taking account of all of the above including the ² different types of housing that people would be required, it also used real life experiences of many of the 20,000 IWA members to demonstrate some of the barriers that people encounter and also to showcase some successful social housing outcomes The IWA housing initiative included a new housing website www.iwa.ie/house which provides a step-by-step guide to applying for social housing. IWA has broken down the ten steps involved in the housing application process and has also listed all other relevant information an individual will require during and subsequent to the application process; such as contact details for local councils, information links to local health centres and tax offices, and also details of all local IWA centres. IWA endeavored to create knowledge and awareness of <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> through several mediums: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Poster Campaign with supporting Leaflets and Business Cards - These were distributed widely both in hard copy and by email to community groups, HSE offices and local health centres, partnership companies, community and advocacy groups and organisations, youth groups and organisation, disability groups and other community contacts • A Media Campaign through local/regional papers and Local Authority Publications & the IWA Spokeout

² Independent Living; Supported Independent Living; Group or shared accommodation



	<p>quarterly magazine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Sessions– A standard <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> presentation was developed and used throughout the country. These information sessions were shared with local authorities and/or held in local authority buildings. These sessions included; a person with a physical disability who had been through the housing application process speaking of their own personal experience; a Question & Answer session and a demonstration of the IWA housing microsite • Support to people with disabilities to complete the housing application process – through the IWA housing microsite and the availability of IWA Staff support at local IWA ³Resource and Outreach Centres
III (b) Activities involving the family members	<p>Describe the services and involvement of the family members and other close friends and support persons working with the client.</p> <p>Not applicable as the programme is targeted at the individual person, though family members would have attended Operation Sign-Up launch events</p>
III (c) Activities involving community partners	<p>Describe services or activities that involve community partners.</p> <p>A standard <i>Operation Sign-Up</i> presentation was developed and used throughout the country for the five local launches. Information sessions on Operation Sign-Up were shared with local authorities and/or held in local authority buildings. These sessions included; a person with a physical disability who had been through the housing application process speaking of their own personal experience; a Question & Answer session and a demonstration of the IWA housing microsite</p> <p>Operation Sign –Up posters with supporting Leaflets and Business Cards were distributed widely both in hard copy and by email to community groups, HSE offices and local health centres, partnership companies, community and advocacy groups and organisations, youth groups and organisation, disability groups and other community contacts</p>
III (d) Activities targeting community partners	<p>Describe services or activities targeting community partners.</p> <p>The main providers of social housing are City and County Councils and Approved Housing Bodies. To be in a position to take the experiences of IWA to a policy level IWA is represented on many of the developing Housing and Disability Steering Groups presently being established in City and County Councils. IWA is also a member of the National Advisory Group on the Implementation of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016. In promoting commonality in relation to</p>

³ IWA Resource and Outreach Centres



	housing issues for people with a disability across disability groups and organisations IWA is part of the Disability Federation of Ireland and Irish Council for Social Housing special needs Housing Groups
IV. Public Authority/Legislative Information	
IV (a) Legal Basis for the Programme	The ethos and rationale for the Operation Sign-Up Programme emanates from and is intended at a policy level to feed into; Disability Act 2005 and its national implementation structure; the Sectoral Plan of the Department of the Environment committed to establishing a Housing Strategy for People with a Disability National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 and its associated Implementation Plan which requires each City and County Council to set up a Housing and Disability Steering Group and to develop its own Strategic Plan for Housing and People with a Disability that is part of the Council's mainstream Housing Services Plan Social Housing 2020 – mainstream social housing Strategy which aims to incorporate disability specific actions and provisions
IV (b) Funding base	The Operation Sign-Up Campaign was developed and promoted in-house by IWA; expenses were and continue to be minimal mainly confined to printing and distribution costs of posters and supporting documentation
V. Programme Directions	
V (a) Challenges with the Programme	Challenges to develop the social participation and inclusion of your clients in mainstream society; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply issues - due to the economic downturn of the economy there has been no supply of social housing for the past eight years. Social Housing 2020 sets out the front loading of investment into social housing for the coming years • Supply issues - there has never been a known and predictable supply of wheelchair accessible social housing. Need to establish an annual funding stream to deliver housing appropriate to need • Design issues – need to establish and bed down an acceptance of social housing design briefs that include the deliverables in terms of wheelchair access from the outset • Housing Design Regulations and Guidelines need to develop to take account of specific housing design needs of those people with disabilities registered on Social Housing Lists • More people with disabilities to make their housing need known by making social housing applications • Lack of coordination between services. The funding to support the availability of Personal Assistant (PA) services to support independent living if required when an offer of social housing is received is not always available – need for a coordinated approach between housing and health/personal support services
V (b) Opportunities with the Programme	Opportunities that are available for the students and the organisation for developing and implementing the



	<p>Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWA is a national organisation with Resource Centres & staff located across the country therefore IWA is in contact with people with disabilities in cities, towns and villages nationwide • IWA is an approved Housing Body with experience in developing and delivering housing projects • IWA has the experiences of its 20,000 members who mandate its work • IWA has knowledge and design experience that is empirically based on the experiences and requirements of its members
<p>V (c) Suggestions for strengthening the Programme</p>	<p>Identify specific recommendations that will benefit other organisations that are replicating the Programme.</p> <p>This information may include “lessons learned”, practices that have applications for other Programmes, areas of change if replicating the Programme and changes in outreach, recruitment and services with the clients and their families and their community</p>
<p>V (d) Additional Programme comments</p>	<p>Please give additional information to explain what makes this practice/service/programme particularly interesting or successful.</p> <p>The Operation Sign-Up Programme is based on and builds from the IWA support given to people with disabilities to apply for and follow through with a social housing. The Programme allows IWA to take individual peoples’ experiences of trying to source appropriate social housing to a policy level within local City and County Council and to the Department of the Environment at national level to try to influence and improve policy and to integrate improved policy for people with disabilities within mainstream social housing policy</p>

