



INCLUSION IRELAND

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

Changing Places Ireland Submission

**Consultation on the Statement of Strategy for Transport,
Tourism and Sport 2017-2019**

August 2016

**This document is in font 12 Verdana in line with Inclusion
Ireland's plain English guidelines**

1. About Inclusion Ireland

Established in 1961, Inclusion Ireland is the national organisation working for the rights of persons with an intellectual disability.

Our membership is drawn from persons with an intellectual disability; parents and family members; and providers of services to persons with a disability, academics, policy-makers and others.

Inclusion Ireland uses a human rights-based approach to its work. This recognises persons with an intellectual disability as rights holders with entitlements, and corresponding duty bearers and their obligations.

Inclusion Ireland seeks to strengthen the capacities of persons with an intellectual disability to make their claims and of duty bearers to meet their obligations.

2. Changing Places Campaign

(a) Introduction

In Ireland today, many of our citizens are actively excluded from our towns, cities and our communities through a lack of fully accessible toilet facilities. Standard disabled toilets do not meet the needs of all people with disabilities – and, indeed, other mobility issues including multiple sclerosis and motor neurone disease and the elderly – as some people need extra facilities to allow them to use the toilet.

Changing Places facilities are different from mainstream accessible toilets in that they include both a hoist and a height-adjustable changing bench (See Table 1). They have been designed to put health, safety and dignity concerns of the person with a disability and the carer to the fore. Parents are currently being forced to change their loved ones on bathroom floors because adequate facilities are not available in public places.¹

The Changing Places campaign has flourished in the United Kingdom since it was established in 2007 and there are now over 850 installations in place, including installations in Northern Ireland. These facilities include facilities in tourist centres, airports and sporting arenas around. The provision of these facilities has proved a life-changer for thousands of families in the UK.²

(b) Changing Places in Ireland

Inclusion Ireland formed a Changing Places Ireland working group in 2014 – following consultation with Changing Places UK – with a number of like-minded individuals and organisations to drive the initiative forward.

The Changing Places Ireland campaign aims to align the Republic of Ireland with our counterparts in the UK and, over the coming five years, lobby for Changing Places facilities to be installed around the country.

The working group includes public representatives, an architect, an occupational therapist, family members and representatives from the disability sector including the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA).

¹ Frontline magazine Changing Places Ireland <http://frontline-ireland.com/changing-places-ireland/>
Accessed: 5th August 2016

² Searchable map of Changing Places toilets. www.changing-places.org/find_a_toilet/location_map_and_national_register.aspx
Accessed: 4th August 2016

As it currently stands, there are only three fully accessible toilet facilities in Ireland including Trinity College Dublin, Áras an Uachtaráin and The Lime Tree Theatre in Limerick.

(c) Transport, Tourism and Sport

Inclusion Ireland believes that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport should be aiming to make Ireland the most accessible destination in Europe to travel around, have a holiday and attend a major sporting event. The installation of fully accessible Changing Places toilets in key travel and tourist destinations is crucial to supporting this vision.

In the Improving the Lives of People with Disabilities section of the 'A Programme for a Partnership Government', which was published in May 2016, there is a commitment to "support people with disabilities in maximising their potential, by removing barriers which impact on access to services, education, work or healthcare." ³

Should these facilities be introduced across Ireland, carers and family members would be able to plan family trips and attend events that currently remain out of reach in the absence of such accessible facilities.

There are a number of prime locations that fully accessible toilets could be installed including railway stations and airports, motorway services, sport and leisure facilities, concert halls and art galleries, large auditoria, shopping centres, key buildings within town centres, e.g. civic centres and main public libraries, educational establishments and health facilities, such as hospitals, health centres and community practices.

There are numerous tourist destinations that could be considered for the installation of a Changing Places toilet including Guinness Storehouse (Dublin), Dublin Zoo, National Aquatic Centre (Dublin), Book of Kells (Dublin), Tayto Park (Meath), St Patrick's Cathedral (Dublin), Fota Wildlife Park (Cork), Blarney Castle (Cork) and Kilmainham Gaol (Dublin).

The Changing Places campaign in the UK is already fully integrated into the areas of transport, tourism and sports with installations in airports, family destinations and sports stadiums.

These facilities include installations at world-renowned football stadiums including Old Trafford (Manchester), Anfield (Liverpool) and the Emirates

³ Merrion Street website - Programme for Government.

http://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme_for_Partnership_Government.pdf Accessed 5th August 2016.

(London); airports such as Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, East Midlands, George Best Belfast City Airport, Leeds-Bradford and Newcastle; and major tourist destinations including Chester Zoo, Eden Project (Cornwall), Giant's Causeway (Co Antrim) and Blackpool Tower.

Some early work has already started at Government level around rolling out Changing Places accessible toilets in tourist centres around Ireland. The Office of Public Works (OPW) has made a commitment to carry out appraisals of tourist centres Farmleigh House, Dublin Castle, Glendalough Visitor Centre, the National Gallery and Clonmacnoise Heritage Centre to incorporate fully accessible toilets. However, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport should be coordinating the installation of numerous Changing Places facilities across Ireland.

The OPW unveiled the first of this series of installations at Áras an Uachtaráin in May 2016. In addition to the work being carried out by the OPW, Dublin Airport (DAA) will shortly be launching their Changing Places installation in Dublin Airport Terminal 1 (on the public side).

However, other airports could be considered for this campaign including Knock Airport and Cork Airport. This process could also see the rolling out of Changing Places facilities in a number of iconic sporting stadiums across Ireland including Croke Park and the Aviva Stadium. The tourism and sporting strategy could – through the incorporation of Changing Places toilets – provide strong tourist links between the Ireland and Northern Ireland the rest of the UK.

This vision would have widespread appeal in Ireland because Changing Places facilities do not just cater for persons with intellectual disabilities, but also for people with severe physical disabilities and mobility issues including multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease and the elderly.

There are 244,739 people with a condition in Ireland that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities across the country according to Census 2011.⁴

This figure represents a sizeable proportion of the overall population of Ireland.

⁴ CSO Figures for Persons with physical disabilities that limits physical movement. www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=CD803&PLanguage=0
Assessed: 29th June 2015

3. Changing Places Ireland – Locations

(a) Áras an Uachtaráin

The Office of Public Works (OPW) managed Áras an Uachtaráin unveiled a new fully accessible Changing Places toilet facility in May 2016. President Michael D Higgins announced that visitors to Áras an Uachtaráin will now be able to use these modern facilities that are inclusive of the needs of all citizens of Ireland.

Each year, some 20,000 people pass through the formal rooms and gardens at Áras an Uachtaráin, which are already fully accessible with step free access. The new Changing Places facility ensures that Áras an Uachtaráin leads the way in providing the necessary infrastructure to welcome all visitors.

(b) Trinity College Dublin

Trinity College has invested in a fully accessible Changing Places toilet as part of a €120,000 project that also included upgrading of all enabled toilets in the building. The new facility is situated at the entrance level into the Arts Building, adjacent to the college's respite room.

This is the first such facility in the heart of Dublin city centre. The Changing Places toilet is primarily for college staff and students – but is also available to be used by the many visitors to the university. The toilet facility gives more space and appropriate equipment for students who need the help of a carer to undertake their personal hygiene.

(c) Lime Tree Theatre, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

The Changing Places Ireland campaign is delighted to see that Mary Immaculate College has installed a fully accessible toilet at the Lime Tree Theatre in Limerick. The Theatre has a fully accessible toilet that includes facilities such as a height-adjustable wash-hand basin, peninsular WC, full room cover 250kg track hoist, height-adjustable bed trolley and accessible shower facilities.

Prior to the construction of the Changing Places facility, students had to leave the campus when they needed to use the sanitary facilities as the existing independent toilet facilities were not suitable for people with multiple and complex disabilities who have one or two assistants. The facilities were designed by Hugh Kelly Architects.

4. Irish Case Studies



(a) Ann and Ailis Healy, Co Wicklow

"The thing is that people don't realise how limiting it [not having Changing Places facilities in Ireland] is. People think anybody can use a disabled toilet but that's not the case. Some people can use the disabled toilets if they are able to transfer from the wheelchair to the toilet by themselves or with help. Ailis needs a hoist to use the bathroom so her life is limited. You couldn't go out for a weekend because the facilities aren't there. It does restrict life for both of us."



(b) Mary and Olivia Pyne, Co Meath

"My daughter Olivia is aged 17 years and has cerebral palsy, her physical disabilities are quite severe and she is a wheelchair user. However, she is a very sociable happy girl who loves to be out and about. As Olivia gets older however this has become more difficult due to the lack of accessible Changing Places toilet facilities. As these facilities are not available and she is obviously now too big to use the baby changing unit, her opportunities to socialise are becoming more and more curtailed which is very sad."



(c) Avril and Matthew Walsh, Dublin

"My son Matthew is 11 years old. He has a very rare genetic disorder which, among other problems, means he is a wheelchair user and incontinent. Matthew is a social, outgoing little boy. However, this has become a lot more difficult for him as he has got bigger. There are very few places with suitable bathroom, Changing Places facilities. We are very restricted with day trips as Matthew needs to be changed every three to four hours. I refuse the indignity of lying Matthew on a dirty toilet floor."

5. Changing Places Criteria



TABLE 1: The new Changing Places installation at Áras an Uachtaráin, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

Changing Places facilities are different from regular accessible toilets and include the following extra features:

- Height-adjustable, adult-sized changing bench
- Ceiling track hoist system
- Height-adjustable wash-hand basin
- Adequate space for disabled person and up to two assistants (12 meters squared)
- Centrally located toilet with space both sides for assistants
- Privacy screen
- Wide paper roll
- Large waste disposal bin

6. Campaign Contact Details

Cormac Cahill,
Communications & Information Officer,
Inclusion Ireland,
Unit C2,
The Steelworks,
Foley Street,
Dublin 1.

Phone: (01) 8559891

Email: cormac@inclusionireland.ie

Webpage: www.inclusionireland.ie/changing-places-ireland

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ChangingPlacesIreland

Twitter: @Cha_Places_Irl