



ACCESS FOR ALL

A REPORT ON ACCESSIBILITY
IN CO. KERRY

Foreword

ACCESS FOR ALL



PJ CLEERE

Coordinator of the
DFI Community Development Team

IMAGE
OF PJ

DFI has had the privilege to work in partnership with Kerry PPN to run the Access for All – Disability Awareness Workshops in Co. Kerry. Strategies and action plans which are framed by people in their communities, for their own communities are always the most effective. But to achieve this requires insight and leadership. It also requires direct participation and engagement by local stakeholders in a process which is accessible, and where local stakeholders recognise that their input and experiences are heard.

The Secretariat of Kerry PPN has demonstrated this kind of leadership and DFI is proud to have been involved as a partner in this project. I would like to thank our colleague Aine O Sullivan for her work and commitment to this project on behalf of DFI and I would also like to thank Caroline Toal, Resource Worker with the Kerry PPN.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the people who participated in the workshops. It is through their participation most of all that real change can take place. Change must be felt where people live, train, work and participate in leisure and other activities. This is not the task of any single agency. This project demonstrates that agencies and communities working together can and will deliver real change where it matters most.



ÁINE O'SULLIVAN

Community Development Worker for
Disability Federation of Ireland

IMAGE
OF AINE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kerry Public Participation Network secretariats and their fantastic resource worker Caroline Toal who Disability Federation of Ireland have worked alongside to run the Access for All – Disability Awareness workshops in Co. Kerry as part of the Local Economic and Community Plan.

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation for (120+) voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions. DFI also acts as an advocate for people with disabilities across the country and supports organisations to improve their services

The Access for All – Disability Awareness workshop initiative started in early January 2017 where DFI were asked to come on board and work in collaboration on a common goal looking at:

High level goal 3.7 of Kerry Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021 states;

'To create an environment where people with disabilities can participate in communities with equal rights to live life to their full potential'

The workshop offered people with a disability, their families and people working in the area of disability to have their voice heard in their local area and County for the first time. It hosted a space where people could network and encourage people to understand issues and then solve those problems using their unique, first-hand experience. This is important we gave the expert, people with lived experience of disability a chance to come up with their own solutions.

The workshop is very relevant to people with a disability today as we seen on April 19th 2018 the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified in Ireland. This has not given people with disabilities additional Rights but it underpins the Rights already in existence which are internationally monitored. It also presents the potential for sanctions where nations are found to be in contravention of the convention

The following articles below would be very relevant to the workshop:

- **Article 9** - Accessibility – To enable persons with a disability to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life on an equal bases as others.
- **Article 19** – Living independently and being included in the Community – To live in the community, with choice equal to others.
- **Article 30** – Participating in Cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport – to recognise the right of persons with disability to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life.

The requirement for Public Bodies to adhere to these Articles, Public Sector Duty and Equality Legislation is at the heart of every action being carried out in all communities

Having being involved throughout the development and roll out of the workshop in Killareny, Tralee, Listowel and Killorglin it has opened many doors for people with a disability.

None of this ground breaking work would have been possible without the support of Kerry County Council which we are very grateful for. Working closely with the council has had a huge effect throughout the county and we are looking forward to support a joint up thinking ***'To create an environment where people with disabilities can participate in communities with equal rights to live life to their full potential'***.

Executive Summary



The 'Access for All' Accessibility Report was commissioned by the Kerry County Council and the Disability Federation of Ireland as an analysis and evaluation of accessibility for those with disabilities in County Kerry.

The purpose of this report is to identify the current level of accessibility and inclusion in Kerry services for those with disabilities. The report is based on the 'Access for All - Disability Awareness Workshop' devised by the Kerry Public Participation Network that acted as a physical access audit throughout the four municipal districts of Kerry.

A broad range of individuals such as those with disabilities, different support agencies, Kerry PPN Representatives, as well as Kerry County Council (KCC) staff from several departments, attended and fully contributed to the discussions of the workshops. The round-table, thematic format, facilitated people to actively participate and cover all Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) themes.

Across all discussions it was clear that there had been a void in providing a basic discussion forum to begin exploring the issues of accessibility in Kerry. The workshops were a positive start to addressing the need for discussion in access reform.

The themes examined by the participants at the workshops and the feedback from the roundtable discussions has provided valuable information. The workshop participants are now keen to see the issues raised turn to actions taken. The actions identified as necessary for progress during the workshops need to be pursued to make Kerry a more disability-friendly county. The PPN can now begin to engage with the SPCs to plan for incorporating the proposed actions into work plans.

When considering the range of issues and actions highlighted in this report, it is important to bear in mind the effects of reduced opportunities for people with disabilities; i.e. community involvement is compromised, independence is limited, contributing to feeling excluded and to poorer mental health. It is now the responsibility of all concerned to take full advantage of the current opportunity to develop strategic relationships and plans to ensure the full inclusion of Kerry citizens with a disability.



Aims of the Report

Background and Objectives



BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

During the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022, Kerry County Council, recognised the importance of collaboration between all stakeholders – both private/public and organisational/individual. Kerry County Council acknowledged that in order to get support for actions to be taken and fulfilled, the Local Economic and Community Plan must mirror the collective socio-economic ambitions of all Kerry stakeholders.

This plan clearly sets out high level goals, objectives and actions required to promote and support local economic and community development within the county. This is managed through agreed; co-ordinated actions Kerry can advance as a prosperous, modern and forward-thinking region, with a high quality of life offering.

With this in mind, the Kerry Public Participation Network was tasked as the lead agency to support and facilitate some of the high goals and objectives under the section Community and Social Inclusion.

Following on from consultation with the Killarney Access Group and the Disability Federation of Ireland, it was agreed to host a pilot workshop in Killarney and to use the learning gleaned from this workshop as a template that could be replicated throughout the county.

High level goal 3.7 of Kerry Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021 states;

'To create an environment where people with disabilities can participate in communities with equal rights to live life to their full potential'

In order to achieve this goal the PPN identified the need for a consultative process in order to engage with people with disabilities, with organisations representing people with a disability, and with other agencies and Non Government Organisations.

The outcome of LECG Goal 3.7 will be a Disability Action Plan for County Kerry. ~~The PPN tendered for an independent community facilitator for this project and Paul O'Raw (O'Raw Consultancy) was chosen.~~

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

- To create an awareness of the challenges people with disabilities face.
- To strengthen links and improve communication between community, voluntary and statutory agencies.
- To support the involvement of people with disabilities in decision-making, through the Public Participation Network.
- To develop a disability representative group at county level linked to the PPN which represents people with disabilities in Co. Kerry.
- To hold workshops that would be strategically focussed around the work of the four Strategic Policy Committees of Kerry County Council.
- To have clear next steps built in so that at the end of the workshop, all participants would be aware of a feedback meeting.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The workshops took place in the four municipal districts of County Kerry:

- Tralee, The Meadowlands Hotel, 27th February 2018
- Killarney, The Dromhall Hotel, 5TH September 2017
- Listowel,
- South and West,

METHODOLOGY AND FORMAT OF WORKSHOP:

The format for the workshops was round-table; a variation of the World-Café format www.theworldcafe.com. This type of format allows for a lot of people to share information in a short timeframe. It also provides valuable networking of individuals, community and voluntary organisations and state agencies at each table. To ensure the most effective and efficient running for the afternoon, it was agreed to limit the number of tables to 8, with a maximum of 10 people per table, consisting of 6-8 participants, a table facilitator and note-taker.

Each table discussed questions relating to the work of the SPCS with 25 minutes per SPC. Notes were taken at each table and fed back to the facilitator.

The 5th round of discussions looked at the High-Level Goal 3.7 from the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022 –

"Develop a disability representative group at county level linked to the PPN which represents people with disabilities in Co. Kerry".

The participants of the workshops then evaluated, through a survey, the overall efficiency of the workshop in reaching its goals.

Strategic Context

Access for All



Below are the local, regional and national plans and strategies that support and implement the objectives of the 'Access for All' evaluation.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021 was adopted by the Elected Members of Kerry County Council on 16th February 2015 and is effective since 16th March 2015.

The County Development Plan 2015-2021 incorporates the aims, objectives, policies and guidelines to provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Kerry. The County Development Plan is a spatial planning framework that gives effect to the delivery of sustainable and planned economic and social development in a manner consistent with higher level plans and strategies such as the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and the South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.

This plan includes:

1.3.1. Public Participation

Consultation with the public is fundamental to the Plan making process. A number of consultation methods were used including publishing public notices (in newspapers and on the Council website) inviting written submissions; public meetings and drop-in sessions. The various issues arising from the consultation process informed the preparation of the Plan.

9.2 Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion aims to ensure that everybody should have the right to fulfil their potential, through access to high quality public services, education, employment opportunities and adequate housing in an attractive and safe environment. It is therefore important that our living, working and leisure environments are designed and maintained in a manner to ensure people

of all backgrounds and circumstances can achieve equality and access to the facilities and services needed to achieve their own potential in life. The Development Plan has an important role in promoting social inclusion in the County and includes a range of strategies to promote access to housing, community facilities and public transport.

9.2.1 Access

Physical access is key to creating a socially inclusive community. It has been common practice to address physical access by focusing on 'special needs' of the elderly or the disabled. This has resulted in policies and objectives that segregate access and therefore people by making provision for different groups in different ways – for example by providing steps for the able bodied and ramped access for wheelchair users. Kerry County Council is committed to contributing to the development of a more inclusive public realm which allows all people to use space in the same way – and on equal terms.

LOCAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP) 2016 -2022

The Local Economic & Community Plan is an integrated plan to guide the development of Co. Kerry from an Economic, Community, Cultural, Sporting and Recreation perspective from 2016 to 2022. This plan will be used to focus the role of Local Government, State Agencies, Community Sector, Local Development Groups and other bodies that are involved in the development of County Kerry. This plan is being guided by the Local Community Development Committee in co-operation with the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee of Kerry County Council.

Within the LECP, the Kerry County Council includes:

Chapter 6: Quality of Life

2.3 To devise practical locally appropriate responses to address difficulties in accessing services in consultation with stakeholders.

2.3.3 Support initiatives that improve access for people with disabilities.

2.4 To ensure that inclusive citizen engagement is promoted and supported at all levels so that people and communities affected by a decision or a policy are part of the decision-making process.

Chapter 7: Community and Social Inclusion

3.7 To create an environment where people with disabilities can participate in communities with equal rights to live life to their full potential.

3.7.1.1 Draw up a Disability Action Plan for County Kerry in consultation with all of the stakeholders and the Local Disability Consultative Forum.

3.7.1.2 Ensure that people with disability can participate fully.

3.7.2.1 Carry out a baseline physical access audit through- out the county to identify barriers to services and facilities.

3.7.2.2 Disability proof all new policies. Disability proofing aims to make sure that people with disabilities and their requirements are included from the start in the development of all structures, policies and practices. It is the basic tool of inclusion. Education and awareness raising of the needs of people with disabilities is the starting point for this process.

3.7.2.3 Promote Kerry as a "disability friendly" county through the development of "Disability Friendly" Flag Award.

3.7.2.4 Work in partnership with communities and other state agencies to establish Kerry as an international hub of good practice for its holistic approach to inclusion for people with disabilities.

Methodology

Access for All



Strategic Policy Committees



BACKGROUND TO THE SPC'S

Kerry County Council's Strategic Policy Committees for the next five years have been finalised. The committees, also known as SPCs include elected councillors and representatives of several sectors including business, farming, social inclusion groups and the community and voluntary sector. The number of Strategic Policy Committees has been reduced to four, following changes in local government structures. The committees include:

1. Economic Development and Enterprise;
2. Operations;
3. Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation;
4. Quality of Life.

The committees meet regularly to discuss policy issues which are often referred to them by a full council meeting. They also give several sectors in the county like trade unions and commercial groups an input on the formulation of council policies on a range of issues.

THE FOUR COMMITTEES COVER THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Economic Development and Enterprise	Operations	Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation	Quality of Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and sustainable development • Capital infrastructure • Business Support • Economic Planning • Promoting Kerry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Policy • Service delivery plan • Bye laws • Casual trading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Culture/Heritage • Arts • Irish Language • Commemorative events • Recreation policy • Libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing policy • Social supports • Environmental protection • Rural transport • Emergency services

Tralee

Economic Development and Enterprise



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC it was recognised that there is a lack of inclusion and opportunity in employment, building and planning and in the promotion of Co. Kerry.

When considering employment, attendees agreed that proper training or education for the workplace is not available for people with disabilities and employers have no external incentive to employ those with disabilities, leaving the majority unemployed. Community Employment

schemes were deemed problematic as they need to adapt to the capabilities of those with disabilities more effectively.

It was also found that Tralee has excluded those with disabilities in the general planning and building of Tralee. A universal access consensus has not been implemented and key issues mentioned were that ATM machines and counters in banks and post offices are too high for those in wheelchairs, that public events have limited suitable spaces and general access to some businesses are not inclusive.

It was identified that when promoting Kerry, those with disabilities should be considered more and maps and signposting highlighting places with universal access.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Tralee economic development and enterprise.

EMPLOYMENT

- A clear pathway should be made between employers, support groups and people with disabilities. Make those with disabilities ready for employment.
- The Chamber Alliance could introduce a programme regarding disability awareness.
- Help Entrepreneurial start-ups with regards to disabilities.
- Future plans for the county should show specific projects for disability employment.
- The role of the Local Authority should be clarified in the area of education, training and employment.
- Self-assessments and audits should be undertaken by businesses.

BUILDING AND PLANNING

- The planning department must include universal design across the board and incorporate the needs of people with disabilities.

PROMOTING KERRY

- To promote Kerry as a disabled friendly county, any facilities that are accessible such as hotels, venues etc. should be listed.
- The KCC could introduce an Access Officer with a dedicated team to drive accessibility.



Tralee

Operations



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Operations SPC it was recognised that there is a lack of consideration with regards to housing, general access around Tralee and casual trading for those with disabilities.

In the area of housing, those with disabilities find there are restrictive limitations and a lack of information on housing grants and as the threshold for grants is too high this forces families to fund raise. It was also found that there are no opportunities for people with disabilities who want to move out and live independently meaning their quality of life is compromised.

With regards to the general access of tralee, including footpaths and walkways, numerous issues were raised that restrain those with disabilities from equally accessing the Tralee area. These issues include a lack of considerate street cleaning as footpaths are covered in dog fouling, rubbish, chewing gum and broken glass which is a major problem. Footpaths are uneven and constantly obstructed by parking on footpaths, wheelie bins and signs which creates a serious issue for the visually impaired as well as those in wheelchairs. Areas with non-slip surfaces are fading and wearing away. Finally, pedestrian crossings were identified as non-friendly for those intellectual disabilities.

Under general access, the town park and casual trading were mentioned to be creating problems for those with disabilities. The town park was said to limit access as the pathways are too narrow and the public toilets are difficult to access, as they are small and this makes it hard to move a wheelchair in and out. The playground could also be more considerate, as it lacks equipment for children with disabilities. Casual trading can then cause obstruction and make access difficult, in the park and other areas of the town.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Tralee operations.

HOUSING

- Grants need to be looked at on a case by case basis.
- More funding is required for accessible and independent housing.

GENERAL ACCESS

- Footpaths and potholes should be fixed in a more timely manner and there should be more regular checks of footpaths.
- Bins and signs should be taken off footpaths and out of way.
- Toilets and car spaces need to be improved so there is more space to move around or room ramps.
- Make all pedestrian crossings accessible for all disabilities by adding a clear button and sound to let those know when it is safe to walk and allow more time for crossing.
- Wider pathways are needed.
- Specific equipment such as seating or playground facilities are needed in the park.
- Advance notice of events or casual trading and areas involved would allow for better planning.



Tralee

Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation SPC it was recognised that there is significant change needed in transport, tourism, recreation and libraries.

Transport in Tralee has been identified as seriously limited and non-accessible for those with disabilities. Within the town there are only three accessible taxi's which means advanced planning is needed or there is simply no availability. Train spaces are also low and rural transport is very disjointed, there is a lack of choice or no choice at all. It was also considered that the Tralee Peoples Bus needs to be rejuvenated for access. Abuse of disability parking discs was also mentioned as an obstacle for those with disabilities, meaning overall general transport for those with disabilities is difficult and highly unavailable.

The main issues mentioned were that there is a lack of visual aids in tourism displays for the hearing impaired, that historic sites and heritage house are difficult to navigate, and that accessible tourism accommodation is limited. Specifically, Siamsa Tire was also mentioned as having very little space for wheelchair users.

Recreation, including libraries, in Tralee could also make some changes to fully include those with disabilities within the community. It was found that there is a need for more trained personnel specific to disability as people need to accompany those with intellectual disabilities, which can make it hard for those with disabilities to participate and take up classes. Loop systems for the hearing impaired are also not always available at large events and this can be dangerous. Within libraries, more material with braille or audio books should be available for those with visual impairments as well as more material for those with intellectual disabilities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in tourism, culture, arts and recreation.

TRANSPORT

- More taxis are needed for those with physical disabilities around Kerry.
- Look at grants available for transport for people with disabilities for example for more accessible taxis.
- An authority figure, such as a disability inspector should be introduced to monitor, report and control disability spaces.
- Transport in the area needs an audit. A local audit could then inform a regional audit.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

- Bring access issues to the attention of hotels, restaurants and bars.
- Have a loop system available at events for the hearing impaired.
- Tourism Ireland or Fáilte Ireland should undertake up to date research on the numbers of people with disabilities visiting Kerry

- A locally based direct policy for recreation should be devised.
- Computers should be available in the library for people with disabilities.
- The library could provide someone that can help people with disabilities.
- Libraries should be made fully accessible, not just physical access but include more audio books etc.
- The library could go into partnership with other voluntary bodies doing excellent work.



Tralee

Quality of Life



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

The quality of life of those with disabilities is affected by the the issues raised in all of the SPCs. Under the Quality of Life SPC the common topics identified in Tralee were a lack of awareness around disabilities, accessibility to emergency services and transport.

Participants acknowledged that those with disabilities are being viewed as disadvantaged and although they have the same rights as everyone else, must fight for everything and are frequently marginalised. Lack of awareness has led to limited access both physically and interactively which means that those with disabilities have less opportunities for inclusion and a poorer quality of life.

When considering contact with emergency services it was a concern that those with visual or hearing disabilities did not have adequate access to emergency services. It was also a concern that were a critical event or a catastrophe to happen that there was no national or local plan to secure the safety of those with disabilities, leading to fear of safety.

Transport has impacted the quality of life of the disabled community , especially those in rural areas as the limited availability of disability access buses or taxis has created rural isolation and an inability for participation. Transfer from one transport to another in the county can also be difficult although necessary which hinders the ability to travel freely.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Tralee quality of life.

TRANSPORT

- Authorities need to work with Bus Eireann and other transport companies towards inclusion.
- Public transport should be seen as a right and should be honoured and provided for disabled people.
- A sharing of private cars scheme would benefit people with disabilities.

AWARENESS

- Accountability is needed for a change in accessibility and quality of life and there is a need to be proactive rather than reactive.
- More creative planning is required.
- More joined up thinking between organisations would be beneficial.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- A specific plan needs to be developed for people with disabilities. An action plan that ensures an equal opportunity to get to safety.
- More campaigns are needed to ensure people feel safe in their own home.



Killarney

Economic Development and Enterprise



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC it was recognised that there is a lack of inclusion and opportunity in employment, building and planning, accessibility to services and in the promotion of the area.

When considering employment it was felt that people with disabilities had few opportunities for employment and that there is a fear in the private business sector around employing a person with a disability. Yet it was acknowledged that there are some examples of businesses making changes to facilitate employment and this change of culture is required for development.

With regards to building and planning, fire safety was the main issue as concern was expressed regarding fire safety in buildings such as bars and night clubs which are often overcrowded. It was felt that regulations are not being enforced and safety is compromised.

Questions were also raised regarding Kerry County Council plans for promoting Kerry as an accessible destination due to the need for more means of opportunity and access in the county.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Killarney economic development and enterprise.

EMPLOYMENT

- The SPC should lead, facilitate and incentivise employment of people with disabilities in all business markets in the county.
- Employers should work in partnership with disability organisations in the county.
- A target should be met that one third of staff in public offices should be people with a disability.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

- The Access Officer position should be a whole-time position and this representative should work across all SPCs, KCC policies and Development Plans to ensure strategies and targets are achieved. The role would also have responsibilities to liaise with disability agencies about issues including housing, transport and services and ensure information provision is accessible.



Killarney

Operations



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Operations SPC it was recognised that there is most need for reformation and inclusion in transport and access to the roads and footpaths.

Lack of transport is a barrier to participation for people with disabilities. There is only 1 accessible taxi in Killarney, with very little availability outside the town. While it was acknowledged that the CIE has an accessible bus it is not in use because the infrastructure is not in place. This means accessible public and community transport is limited, especially for rural areas.

For Killarney town there is also no direct connection between the bus station and the train station even though they are side by side. It was also a concern that parking spaces for people with disabilities are also actively abused which restricts general access to the town. Even when transport is available, certain access needs to be improved, for example it was felt that there needs to be a better system for providing ramps for trains.

For people with hearing difficulties, they are unable to hear public announcements at bus and train stations and there is a need for signage and technology can be better used.

The other most prominent issue was access along roads and footpaths. The biggest obstacle being wheelie bins, especially on refuse collection days as traders tend to block the footpath. This is a weekly occurrence causing regular inconvenience for people. Casual street traders can also cause inconvenience by the location of their stalls. It was felt there is not enough regard for people with disabilities in this areas. People would also like advance information on road works and street closures to allow for ease of access.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Killarney operations.

TRANSPORT

- Conduct a review of transport policy in the county in relation to Accessible Taxis.
- Develop a countywide transport policy to include taxi, public and community transport availability and accessibility for all. SPCs should feed into the development of this plan. Include Rural Transport, Public Transport in consultation with LLK, Bus Eireann, and NTA. This plan should look at Public and Rural transport and also look at the development of initiatives that support tourism in County Kerry.
- Kerry PPN should examine transport for people with disabilities.
- Connect the bus station and railway station in Killarney for disability access.
- Make better use of technology for communications at bus stations and train stations for those with hearing disabilities.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS

- Should be regulated enforcement of existing by-laws regarding disability parking spaces, parking on footpaths, street furniture, wheelie bins and any other obstacles.
- Dishing of footpaths needs to be part of the design brief.
- Provide disability parking spaces at the playground.
- Trader's licences should include responsibility for their street frontage, including not allowing it to become blocked.
- Create a greater awareness in towns of the access needs of people with disabilities. Develop partnership arrangements with traders, chamber groups etc.

Killarney

Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation SPC, the key issues identified were mainly in relation to tourism and recreation.

It was felt that Kerry is not accessible as a tourist destination. It was noted that when trying to find tourist accommodation that although some accommodation is advertised as being accessible, in many instances it is only partially accessible and that there are inconsistent standards which makes staying in Kerry difficult. People with a disability are also not able to travel The Ring of Kerry in tour buses, even if the transport is accessible, the sites are not.

Certain tours are not accessible otherwise as sign-language, interpreters, Braille and large text are needed for universal access.

With regards to recreation, certain issues with the Killarney library were mentioned. The toilets are not wheelchair accessible and a query was raised as to the accessibility of all Kerry public libraries. It was commonly agreed that there are not enough books for people with an intellectual disability.

The beach wheelchair initiative was complemented and should be pushed to expand.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Killarney tourism, culture, arts and recreation.

TRANSPORT

- A suggestion was made to refer organisers to the Universal Transformational Management Framework, which is felt to be an excellent tool to inform people of what is needed before holding any event.
- Pursue total accessibility in all hotels and guesthouses, as well as food and drink outlets to ensure Kerry is to the fore for people with disabilities. This must have full support of KCC.
- Develop initiatives to encourage accommodation providers to ensure greater accessibility in their premises e.g. visual fire alarms, vibrating alarm clock, subtitles on TV and accessible bathrooms.
- Provide more seating in the National Park, path surfaces need to be more wheelchair friendly.
- Publish a map of Killarney with a specific logo identifying disability friendly sites.

RECREATION

- Enforce regulations ensuring every recreation centre is accessible.
- KCC Community Support Fund 2018 should support a theme of greater access.
- A Community Support Fund should report on level of funding received by disability groups.
- Community Fund and other funds for facilities and initiatives to ensure access and inclusion are included in all form of funding. This requirement needs to be followed up on to ensure compliance, and if not, to withdraw funding.
- Ensure full accessibility of the Glenbeigh - Renard Greenway e.g. the surface, seating, information and signage (audio, Braille).



Killarney

Quality of Life



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

The quality of life of those with disabilities is affected by the the issues raised in all of the SPCs. Under the Quality of Life SPC the most prominent topic identified in Killarney was housing.

It was commonly felt that there is a huge lack of accessible housing for people with a disabilities. With this, the processes of applying for social housing and for applying for the Housing Adaptation Grant are lengthy and complicated especially for some people with a disability who may require additional supports in accessing services.

It was reported that information and forms are not available in print format, and not everyone is IT literate, so the on-line applications are not accessible to all.

A lack of communication between KCC Access Officer and support groups was noted, with some groups not being aware until the workshop of the existence of the Officer position.

Regarding the design of houses; minimum standards were deemed no longer acceptable, equipment and chairs are now bigger and this should be taken into account in the design process. The idea of provision of housing also needs to be readdressed as not just simply building units but including a range of housing supports.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Killarney quality of life

HOUSING

- Develop a county housing policy with universal design
- Develop greater links between KCC and disability agencies.
- Enhance the role of KCC Access Officer. It should be a full-time position with a clear role and responsibility towards people with a disability.
- Improve the social supports for people with a disability to access KCC services.
- Simplify the application process and provide easy-to-read accessible information for housing grants.
- Identify the percentage of housing available to people with a disability in the county.
- Ensure all housing meets emergency evacuation regulations.
- Ensure social housing is included in new housing by developers.



Listowel

Economic Development and Enterprise



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC general planning, employment and the promotion of Co. Kerry were discussed.

Participants felt that there is a lack of business support in Kerry and that employment is not equally accessible to the disabled. It was noted that there is no access group in Listowel to support those with disabilities in any way.

It was identified that there was little awareness of those with disabilities when initiating any projects for the community.

Kerry is not known to be as accessible as other counties. It was suggested that by making the council website accessible for those with visual impairments, it would make the site fully accessible to all of the community and better promote Kerry as disability friendly.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Listowel economic development and enterprise.

GENERAL

- Revision of current economic planning is needed.
- Greenways should be funded.
- Awareness training around disability must be prioritised by the council as a matter of urgency.
- More of a focus is needed on North Kerry access.

EMPLOYMENT

- Reduce employment barriers for the disabled by giving business training, education and employment.
- Provide more information on becoming employed with a disability.
- Local Employment Office CEO's should have targets for disability start-up businesses.

- Business owners and workers should be upskilled in disability awareness.
- Mentoring support would be highly beneficial.

PROMOTION

- Needs more groundwork in improving and promoting Kerry accessibility.



Listowel

Operations



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Operations SPC the main issues addressed were housing and general access around the town.

Similarly to other towns, the visually and physically impaired are obstructed on the streets due to carelessness with street cleanliness (dog fouling and glass) and obstacles such as sandwich boards and bins.

Paths with no lamps are also problematic for access.

It was felt that there are not enough footpaths and some poor footpath surfaces. It was also commonly agreed that sound and light for the deaf and the blind need to be introduced at pedestrian crossings.

Abuse of disability parking is considered to be a barrier for access in the town and the graveyard is not accessible for those with disabilities.

Casual trading was also mentioned as street traders can create obstacles. Busy times such as Listowel Races can be non-inclusive as they make it difficult for those with disabilities to access the town.

Yet, it was agreed the access is usually fair and an example of good access was Listowel Farmers Market.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Listowel operations.

GENERAL

- More building consideration and universal design is recommended.
- Footpaths need to be cleared of obstructions and considerate street cleaning should be implemented.
- Access to more grants and funding are necessary for access.
- Awareness should be raised of street access in the area.
- Strict criteria for buildings should be followed up.



Listowel

Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation SPC, recreation and tourism presented the most prominent issues.

Access to tourism is restricted as hubs for services, culture and recreation do not have suitable infrastructure and facilities. Signing is limited for those with hearing disabilities and places are not suitable for certain hidden disabilities – such as those who can't cope with loud noise and bright lights. Some bus tours do not describe accessibility of tour destination and on arrival involvement and inclusion is not possible.

With recreation, leisure centres are not accessible to those with physical disabilities as there are no ways of accessing pools or other facilities. Access to beaches are also limited by difficult terrain and no provided alternatives.

Equipment in playgrounds have also not been adapted to suit children with disabilities.

In addition, libraries can be non-inclusive to those with disabilities as there is not enough necessary information on services available or no aid is provided for those with intellectual disabilities or visual disabilities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Listowel tourism, culture, arts and recreation.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

- More signers should be introduced for hearing disabilities.
- Make beaches more accessible by placing ramps and introducing tailored beach chairs.
- There should be more focus from organising committees with regards to people with limited mobility.
- Tourism accommodation needs to be more accessible.
- Information on accessibility should be available for those with disabilities before travelling.
- It was agreed trial and error action is needed to proceed as there is no black and white solution.
- The general public should be educated about hidden disabilities, that if you can't see a disability it does not mean one is not present. e.g someone walking out of a car in a disabled spot does not mean they do not have another condition. Educate young children.
- Leisure centres need to be made inclusive by introducing chairs and ramps for swimming pools.

GENERAL

- A study should be undertaken to address sensory issues in public areas like has already been addressed in Lidl.



Listowel

Quality of Life



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

The quality of life of those with disabilities is affected by the the issues raised in all of the SPCs. Under the Quality of Life SPC the topics indentified as most impacting were housing, public awareness and access to emergency services.

Housing is lacking in accessibility as there is a lack of support for independence and integration through insufficient funds for housing adaption. People with disabilities can then outgrow houses and have accidents and are forced to stay in nursing homes. Housing applicants are also being offered unsuitable properties and some adapted houses can be in unsuitable locations such as areas with little accessible transport or footpaths.

Respite services were mentioned as they are limited in Kerry and few have availability. These services were identified as key for both carer and those with a disability but that funding has been cut. This puts more pressure on the carer and the person with a disability and can restrict feelings of independence.

It was acknowledged that a lack of public awareness in the community and through out Kerry has lead to poor integration of those with disabilities.

In addition, emergency services were mentioned as those with disabilities felt more vulnerable and it was agreed that those with visual or hearing disabilities had less access to these services.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in Listowel quality of life.

GENERAL/AWARENESS

- Organise for those with disabilities to be able to avail of the Local Link transport.
- Consider and find a better term to describe people with what we call a "disability", for social integration.
- Respite centres need to become more available or the buddy system should be introduced, as these systems aid the quality of life of both the carer and the those with a disability.

HOUSING

- Housing adaption funding needs to be increased.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Pendant alarms should be available.
- Emergency services should be aware of location difficulties and accessibility regarding some calls for people with a disability.
- There needs to be more consideration of those with hearing disabilities with regards to ability contacting the emergency services.



South & West

Economic Development and Enterprise



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC employment and building and planning were the two areas detailed as affecting those with disabilities.

It was commonly agreed that opportunities for employment such as training and education, need to be implemented in the county. The issue arose that those with a disability who are able and decide to be self-employed can lose certain disability benefits such as the medical card and others and may not be able to proceed with any entrepreneurial endeavours due to this.

This and a general lack of encouragement and business support for those with disabilities restricts their opportunities within local enterprise. Social service providers also do not have or provide access to resources for job coaching for those with disabilities.

When considering building and planning, housing was considered an issue as houses built for those with disabilities are not in convenient locations for access to towns, causing isolation. General housing stock is also not suitable for people who are ill or had a stroke or who are incapacitated. It was recognised that footpaths and audible crossing (from traffic lights) are not the same in any two towns in Kerry and continuity in planning for this would be beneficial.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in South and West economic development and enterprise.

EMPLOYMENT

- The ratio of opportunities and equal access to employment could be surveyed and monitored.
- Employers should be encouraged to hire a certain percentage of disabled people.
- Information about employment should be more accessible for those with disabilities.
- The Board of Employment should take more responsibility for equal rights to job opportunities.

BUILDING AND PLANNING

- A certain percentage of houses should have to be built with disability accessibility.
- The Council planning department should audit what is necessary and insist on inclusion or new developments.
- Transport links should be introduced for the disabled to coincide with public events.
- Access screening should be statutory.



South & West

Operations



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Operations SPC the main issues addressed were general access and transport.

For general access to the area, parked cars, outdoor tables and chairs, signs and bins and a lack of street cleaning are obstructing footpaths. Footpaths are also considered too high and there is a lack of ramps for accessibility.

Transport in the area is very limited and isolates those in rural areas. Housing for people with disabilities should be located near town centres. Information about transport is also not accessible to the blind and braille should be considered.

For general consideration, some public lighting such as strip lighting and public events with speaker phones can affect people on the autistic spectrum and these disabilities should be included more in all areas.

Casual trading was also mentioned, similarly to the other municipal districts, as it can lead to limited access for those in wheelchairs.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in South and West operations.

GENERAL ACCESS

- Bye laws should include and be more critical of street furniture as obstruction of the footpaths is causing those to have to travel on the road dangerously.
- Transport and taxis with access need to be addressed.
- Council housing should be more accessible.
- Sensory issues with certain disabilities should be considered more during public events and in general building and services.
- A type of mat could be introduced to indicate stalls on the path and restrict accidents.



South & West

Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

Under the Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation SPC, the areas of hospitality, culture and heritage and general recreation and tourism presented the most issues.

Within the hospitality sector, accommodation can be difficult to find as they do not all have ramps or accessible toilets. There is also limited accessibility to hotels, bars and restaurants as they may have only steps to access the building, or the buildings do not have adequate space and/or their tables are too low for wheelchairs.

In general tourism and recreation, leisure centres and beaches are not access friendly. Cinemas are also not inclusive of any hearing disabilities.

Culture and heritage tourism presents problems as heritage sites are not fully accessible and talks that can sometimes be provided are not considerate of the hearing impaired.

An example of an inaccessibility to these forms of tourism is during Kerry Arts Week there is a lack of available information in Braille and a lack of inclusion or engagement of any of those with disabilities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in South and West tourism, culture, arts and recreation.

GENERAL

- Establish a Disability Access Strategic Policy Committee.
- Set up an Access Award for towns and financial support for improvements with relation to access.
- Increase parking spaces to 25ft to allow for wheelchairs to exit vehicles.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

- Improve building regulations for public buildings such as restaurants and bars etc.
- Include protocol for signage at libraries or heritage sites and tours.
- All Kerry County Council services, projects, events and initiatives should be disability proofed.
- Hi Low Changing facilities for adults should be installed in public conveniences.
- Introduce nights where there are screenings in cinemas that include subtitles for the hearing impaired.



South & West

Quality of Life



ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

The quality of life of those with disabilities is affected by the the issues raised in all of the SPCs. Under the Quality of Life SPC the impact of lack of access to housing and transport, services for young people or children and access to emergency services were discussed.

Rural transport was identified as not accessible and so limiting inclusion or access to daily life. Housing accessibility issues such as location and facilities, were recognised in this district as well as in the general Kerry area.

It was considered that children and teenagers with severe behaviour and mental health issues can be waiting a long time to be seen by the CAMHS and can then sometimes receive minimal service which causes a struggle for the parents and the child.

It is very difficult to access good public funded residential services for children or young people with severe mental health and behavioural issues. There is a limited access to funding and social support for very young children due to an age restriction.

There is a general worry about accessing emergency services, it is stated that emergency services sometimes find it difficult to find rural locations and that selecting options once the emergency services have been contacted is not accessible for all disabilities, which causes vulnerability and fear.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Below are the actions recommended by the workshop participants for the key issues found in South and West quality of life.

YOUTH

- Make early assessment of children and social support more accessible.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- It was suggested that there should be a register of those with disabilities for the emergency services and their needs and a panic button should be available for those people, where necessary. Carers or those with disabilities should be made aware of Eircodes and be encouraged to put Eircodes next to the telephone for the case of an emergency.

HOUSING AND TRANSPORT

- Housing was identified as an issue in all areas and needs to be addressed and adapted.

