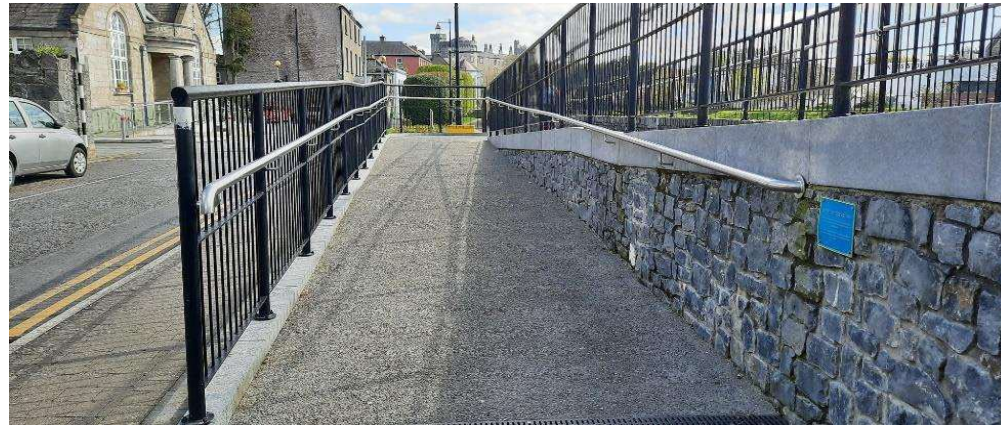


KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL DISABILITY INCLUSION STRATEGY 2023-2026



UPDATED Document – SEPTEMBER 2025

What is our objective	What will we do	Sections Responsible	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2025
Communication, Information & Services			
Appointment of an Access Officer.	Kilkenny County Council are committed to assigning a new Access Officer.	Corporate	An Access Officer has been appointed. This is not a dedicated post, therefore the role is as a point of contact for the organization.
To achieve compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard as outlined by the European Union Accessibility Directive. This objective is part of Kilkenny County Council's ongoing commitment to ensuring equal access to our digital services for all users, including those with disabilities.	Tender presently being developed for professional accessibility services for six of the Kilkenny County Council core websites. The tender will include; • Comprehensive audit of six of our primary websites. • Reports and guidance on issues discovered and follow up re-audits. • Specific audit	IT Department	A draft Request for Quote (RFQ) has been prepared outlining the scope, objectives, and technical requirements for professional accessibility services across five core websites. The draft is currently under internal review and pending final managerial approval. The RFQ includes: • Accessibility audits for each site to meet EN 301 549 v3.2.1 and WCAG 2.1 AA standards. • Accessibility statements tailored to each website. • Training for non-technical staff and content owners. • Strategy for legacy PDFs remediation. • User journey analysis and template reviews for each site. Websites Covered • Kilkennycoco.ie – 40,000+ pages, pTools CMS

			• KilkennyLibrary.ie – 1,200 pages, pTools CMS • Visitkilkenny.ie – 1,050 pages, WordPress • Kilkenny.ie – 20 pages, WordPress/Drupal • Investkilkenny.ie – 60 pages, WordPress
	Publish a staff accessibility guide based on the National Disability Authority's (NOA) advice and make it available to our staff and partners.	IT Department	The staff accessibility guide is currently being developed. It is based on advice from the National Disability Authority and public sector best practices. The guide draws on NDA training materials, monitoring guidance, and events like the June 2024 “From Compliance to Excellence” session. It will include practical advice on using plain language, designing accessible documents, communicating inclusively, using assistive technologies, and preparing accessibility statements. Internal audits and document remediation efforts are also informing its content. Once finalized, the guide will be shared with Kilkenny County Council staff and partners through the intranet and linked from the Council's website accessibility pages.
Provide accessibility proactively	Provide an aid or service that will be effective, given the	All Sections	The LECP and Age Friendly Strategy provided in accessible format on the Website

	nature of what is being communicated and the person's method of communicating. Staff training for frontline staff for assisting people with disabilities and making them aware of requirements for communicating effectively with people who have communication disabilities.	HR Training	No training provided to date. Training Section will liaise with Corporate Section to provide appropriate training.
Engage with Organisations/Leaders in the Disability Community	Feedback Surveys to understand their needs.		The LECP and Age Friendly Strategy provided in accessible format on the Website
Accessible Documents	Create documents accessible by screen readers. Provide training for staff in making documents accessible.	All Sections HR Training	No training provided to date. Training Section will liaise with Corporate Section to provide appropriate training.
Inclusive Communications Policy	To develop an Inclusive Communications Policy. Having a policy will define how we will commit to providing inclusive communications.	HR Training	Communications Policy is provided by Corporate Section.
To provide artists with disabilities to access information & support	To provide online information regarding accessing documents	Arts Department	
Designated point of contacts to be identified in relevant Local Authority Departments and these contacts to be represented on the Disability Inclusion Team.		All Departments	Designated point of contact Lianne Kelly.

Website – Improved and ongoing website design and content creation for accessibility using plain English guidelines, accessibility tool and language translator.	Audit completed and recommendations applied.	Library	Training provided to staff in plain English, current website being revamped and upgraded with improved design incorporating all accessibility requirements.
Social media – Ensure accessible publicity materials are used both on social media and in all print media incorporating plain English guidelines	Staff training on content creation and plain English guidelines with regular monitoring of same.	Library	Training completed and all material reviewed regularly.
Services – Ensure a wide range of accessible formats of books, reading and other relevant materials are available as resources allow.	Allocate budgets to a variety of formats and further develop sensory services across the network	Library	Budgets are allocated annually to relevant accessible formats. All libraries have been accredited Autism Friendly by AS I Am with sensory resources available across the network.
Continue to provide an accessible service to those who cannot access a physical branch	Support the door-to-door service and engagement with nursing homes as part of the mobile schedule.	Library	Mobile library route provides scheduled visits to nursing homes and door to door service when requested.

What is our objective	What will we do	Sections Responsible	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2025
Buildings & Infrastructure⁶			
Achieve age friendly library status in all libraries using adjustable tables, book trolleys and suitable signage.	Assess all libraries and introduce recommended age friendly improvements to ensure we meet the criteria for age friendly library status.	Library Department	All libraries have achieved Age Friendly status.
Age friendly parking spaces.	Expand access to other library branches - Castlecomer and Urlingford are complete	Library Department	Plans in place for age friendly parking at the Mayfair library.
Ensure all libraries are accessible externally and internally.	Review signage and ensure all new shelving adheres to recommendations re accessibility and existing disability guidelines.	Library Department	All signage and shelving adhere to accessibility requirements
Embed accessibility in our procurement process when purchasing equipment/furniture.	Ensure accessibility is included in purchasing procedures	Library Department	Ongoing as part of purchasing procedure.
To support people with a disability to actively be able to use our outdoor recreational facilities and trails.	At suitable locations, develop trails that are fully accessible to wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility. Continue to seek funding to	Project Office & Parks	
	deliver fully assessible play equipment, age friendly seating, wheelchair accessible picnic benches and enhanced trail surfacing across the city and counties outdoor recreational amenity offering.		

Kilkenny County Council will work towards implementing the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027 that was published on 14 January 2022. It is a joint publication of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; the Department of Health; and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Strategy sets out how the Government will put in place the frameworks to ensure that the housing and support needs of disabled people are comprehensively addressed. The Housing Agency is preparing a detailed implementation plan for the Strategy.	Implement the Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027. The overarching vision of the Strategy is to facilitate disabled people to live independently and be included in their communities. The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027 aims to build upon the work achieved through the previous National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 (extended to 2021). It documents the framework for the delivery of housing for disabled people through mainstream housing policy. The Strategy has been developed under the guiding principles of Housing for All -	Housing Department	A Draft Housing & Disability Strategy has been prepared which will align with the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027. This is to be adopted by Kilkenny's Housing & Disability Steering Group over the coming weeks.
	A new Housing Plan for Ireland.		
Adhere to Universal Design Principles where feasible when developing new amenities and community spaces.		All Sections	Universal design imbedded in New Age Friendly Strategy and in Community Development projects.

What is our objective	What will we do	Sections Responsible	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2025
Employment & Training			
To continue to follow the 'Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024'. (NDIS Action 47).	Continue to report annually to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on this target. Prepare and carry out staff census on all staff employed in Kilkenny County Council.	HR SECTION	Part 5 Return for 2024 submitted to NDA. Staff Census to be carried out in December 2025/January 2026
Provide and encourage staff to complete disability awareness training. (NDIS Action 20)	All staff to complete the NOA eLearning module once updated version is available from NOA.	HR SECTION	This e-learning training module is not available. Training Section to secure appropriate training for employees.
Ensure that all training courses offered provide real value, are worthwhile and encourage and support accessibility. (NDIS Action 46)	Organise Plain English training and awareness for our website content coordinators and report and policy authors.	HR SECTION	This training will be rolled out early in 2026.
	Organise Literacy Awareness training for persons working in customer service front of house roles in Kilkenny County Council.		Literary Awareness Training was rolled out in 2023 to 27 staff. Training Section plan to schedule it again for 2026.

To ensure that our recruitment process is wholly inclusive.	Ensuring that all job vacancies are advertised on platforms that are accessible by all. Consulting with our online applications provider around providing accessibility toolbars on all application forms Ensure that all our interview locations are wheelchair accessible, have hearing loops and computer access for anyone who requires this assistance.	HR SECTION	Ongoing – looking for advancement that can be implemented. Ongoing – Upgrade of submit to be secured, this will result in increase in accessibility. Ongoing
---	---	------------	---

What is our objective	What will we do	Sections Responsible	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2025
Housing & Community			
To work closely with communities and the relevant agencies to identify specific needs when planning and designing future amenity facilities.	When delivering future playgrounds and amenity spaces we will engage with the local communities and schools etc., to identify particular needs within the community that will inform our design to make the delivered project more inclusive and welcoming for all.	Project Office & Parks	.
Continue to carry out activities in line with Kilkenny County Councils Local Economic and Community Plan.		Community & Culture Department	Actions in LECP:- Develop a Disability Inclusion Strategy for Kilkenny County Council (7a) Complete Undertake a registration / mapping exercise of Older Person's Groups / organisations in the City and County (9a) Ongoing

			Crokers Hill Community Centre to be inclusive and accessible (10a) Ongoing
Continue to support and resource the PPN which has a disability strand relevant to engagement and consultation processes.		PPN/Community & Culture Department	
We want to continue to deliver appropriate and relevant housing in keeping with the	Endeavor to include appropriate numbers of universally designed units	Housing Department	UD units are included in new direct build housing schemes. 19 such units were delivered in Crokers Hill housing scheme Kilkenny City. UD units are more difficult to deliver in turnkey units but some have come through Part V.

"National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027".	within new housing schemes, both direct build and turnkey.		
To continue to ensure that an appropriate percentage of acquired housing stock meets universal design standards where possible.	Engage fully with developers at pre-planning stage to ensure that Universally Designed units are included within new housing schemes under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.	Housing Department	Group homes are being delivered as Part V solutions in 2 housing schemes in Kilkenny City.
To continue to upgrade our existing housing stock to provide accessible dwellings where feasible.	We will review the suitability of houses to improve accessibility or upgrade to fully accessible houses as they become vacant.	Housing Department	This is being carried out where feasible. In 2024 €1,140,145.01 was paid towards Mobility Aid Grants, Housing Adaptation Grants & Disability Persons Grant for LA Houses. €720,743.28 has been paid towards these grants to date in 2025.

To ensure our application process for housing services is as accessible as possible.	We will investigate digital and plain English options for applications for housing services where feasible.	Housing Department	Continuing to use hard copy applications and to provide easy to read guides to assist people to complete applications. Easy to read guides are provided by the Housing Agency and are available on our website or from our office.
Programming – ensure our annual programming and event schedules continue to be inclusive of all including the elderly, people with sensory issues, those with autism and literacy difficulties	Include accessible programming across a range of ages and needs to ensure programmes, events, and workshops are accessible.	Library	Annual planning to ensure all programming throughout the year incorporates relevant and inclusive, accessible events/workshops etc. for ages.

What is our objective	What will we do	Sections Responsible	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2025
Transport & Connectivity			
Continue with active travel measures\enhancements to improve connectivity for all.	Work with the NTA (National Transport Authority) to secure funding for projects	City\Roads	Continuing to work with NTA in securing funding for projects. Approximately €3M per annum is being provided for Active Travel measures across the City and County. • Freshford and Granges Road including 9 new pedestrian crossings • Coote's Lane and Rose Hill Bridge • Widened footpaths and improved crossings at Outrath Road (Presentation Secondary School) • New footpath at Dunningstown Road • New footpaths and pedestrian crossings in Graiguenamanagh • New footpaths and pedestrian crossing in Freshford Village • New pedestrian crossings at Parnell St All schemes are delivered in line with universal design guidelines

Continue to review the City Bus service with a view to adding additional routes\services.	Work with the NTA to secure funding for projects	City	Additional late night and school service added.
			Kilkenny County Council continuing to progress Inclusive Cycle Hub at County Hall
			The Active Travel Section is managing a new NTA Programme – the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme whereby €500,000 is made available annually for Municipal Districts to upgrade existing rural Bus Stops.
Provide Mobility Hubs at locations that allow for switching to sustainable modes of transport.	Identify suitable locations	City\Roads\Planning	
Continue to work with the NTA on providing rural bus stops and shelters.	Work with the NTA to identify suitable locations	Roads	
Continue to ensure that all improvement\enhancement works are accessible to all where practicable.	Keep on agenda of all design team meetings	Roads	All projects and all interventions are designed based on the principle of universal design which in itself if integrated into the key design guidance documentation including the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges and the National Cycle Manual.
To work towards making our outdoor amenity spaces more accessible and inclusive for people with a disability.	Increase the number of fully accessible play equipment across our playground facilities. New and replacement picnic benches will be wheelchair accessible in appropriate locations.	Project Office & Parks	Fully accessible play equipment has been provided the following 11no. playgrounds: Ballyragget, Bennettsbridge, Bigwood, Gowran, Callan, Coan, Freshford, Graiguenamanagh, Kilmacow, Mooncoin and Woodstock. Under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, wheelchair accessible picnic benches were provided as part of trail enhancement works

			undertaken in Woodstock Gardens, Jenkinstown Wood, Millennium Forest, Ennisnag Loop Walk, Freshford Loop Walk, Abbey Meadows Walk in Callan and Castlemorris Woods. One was also installed in Kells playground.
	New or replacement seats will be age friendly in design. Increase the provision of dedicated disabled and age friendly parking spaces in carparks within our amenity grounds. Design and construct, where appropriate, new trails so that same are suitable for people with reduced mobility and wheelchair users. Where appropriate, continue to improve existing trails so that same are more suitable for people with reduced mobility and wheelchair users.		New age friendly seating has been provided in 13no. playgrounds and along 17no. walking trails. Dedicated disabled and / or age friendly parking has been installed in the following locations: • Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum • Millennium Forest • Jenkintown woods • Kilkenny Countryside Park This is a key consideration when developing new trails under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, some examples of improved amenities listed hereunder • Ennisnag Looped Walk • Lacken boardwalk – includes new wheelchair accessible ramp and 3.6m cross-section

			This is a key consideration when enhancing new trails under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, some examples of improved amenities listed hereunder: • Jenkintown Wood Trails • Abbey Meadows Callan • Millennium Forest – Accessibility Trail • Castlemorris Woodland Trail
--	--	--	--

	Offer the services of a wheelchair accessible buggy within Woodstock Gardens.		Woodstock Gardens The wheelchair accessibility buggy is now available in Woodstock Gardens at scheduled times or upon request. The service transfers visitors from the carpark to the Tea Room and back. New accessibility ramps were installed as part of the roll out of the services.
Where feasible, parking spaces to be aligned with the most up-to-date specifications & additional signage to be incorporated where feasible in rural areas.			Dedicated disabled and /or age friendly parking installed in the following locations: - Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum - Millennium Forest - Jenkintown Woods - Kilkenny Countryside Park All spaces installed in accordance with the DoT Traffic Signs Manual.
To work closely with communities and the relevant agencies to identify specific needs when planning and designing future amenity facilities.	When delivering future playgrounds and amenity spaces we will engage with the local communities and schools etc., to identify particular needs within the community that will inform our design to make the delivered project more inclusive and welcoming for all.	Capital Delivery Office & Parks	We actively engage with stakeholders when preparing funding applications to identify specific needs within the community. This engagement informs our design process and some of the bodies we engage with are listed hereunder.: - Community Groups - Schools - Tidy Town Groups - The Irish Wheelchair Association - Age-Friendly Forum - The National Disability Authority - Coillte

To support people with a disability to actively be able to use our outdoor recreational facilities and trails.	At suitable locations, develop trails that are fully accessible to wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility. Continue to seek funding to deliver fully accessible play equipment, age friendly seating, wheelchair accessible picnic benches and enhanced trail surfacing across the city and counties outdoor recreational amenity offering.	Capital Delivery Office & Parks	Significant work has been completed across many of the key outdoor amenity spaces to make same fully accessible and more inclusive including: • Woodstock Gardens • Jenkinstown Woods • Millennium Forest. We have been very successful in securing funding under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and the Capital Play and Recreation Grant Scheme. This in turn has allowed us to undertake significant interventions across our amenity spaces and playgrounds to render same more accessible and inclusive.
---	---	--	---

Tourism & Local Economic Development

What is our objective	What will we do	Sections Responsible	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2025
We will continue to improve access to all visitor attractions throughout Kilkenny City and County	1. work in partnership with Kilkenny Tourism to carry out an audit of attractions to establish access issues both in their buildings and on web-sites 2. Investigate Virtual Reality experiences for visitors to inaccessible sites in the county and look at applying for funding opportunities to deliver these experiences (e.g. St Canice's Round Tower & Dunmore Caves) 3. Share any software upgrades used by KCC for their software accessibility with other tourism partners	Tourism	1. Failte Ireland as part of Kilkennys Destination experience development plan, are reviewing all visitor experiences and consider access issues for all as part of improving same. "Digital that delivers" programme also considers access to all attraction websites. 2. Not commenced ~ VR options on individual phones are becoming common and accessible to individuals. Review of action required. 3. Ongoing ~ www.visitkilkenny.ie site currently being updated with all accessibility software requirements included in upgrade.
We will ensure that all Festival and Events supported by KCC through the Festival Grants	1. Include assessment criteria in Grant Applications requesting applicants to	Tourism	1. Completed and ongoing annually as criteria for the annual festival and events grant scheme.

Scheme adhere to "Accessibility for All" principles	demonstrate how they aim to make their events accessible for all 2. Evaluation to consider the festival/events commitment to Accessibility for All principles in recommending grant approval to Council		2. Completed and ongoing as part of evaluation annually
To ensure the LEO First Stop Shop for entrepreneurs adhere to accessibility for all principles	1. Participate in the rolling out of National LEO targeted schemes to support all who are interested in starting their own business	LEO	LEO Kilkenny participates in the AIB and TU Dublin Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities Programme. The LEOs provide mentoring under this scheme. There were no Kilkenny based participants in 2024. LEO Kilkenny will also have a stand at the Inclusive Recruitment Fair taking place on 10th October in Kilkenny.