



Housing Strategy 2024–2027

Enhancing Housing Access & Supports:
A Comprehensive Strategy





Introduction

We are delighted to present this Housing Strategy for Gheel Autism Services, covering the period 2023–2027.

The strategy aims to outline a comprehensive plan for the provision of supported living options for the people we support. It focuses on improving access to suitable housing options and providing the necessary supports to enhance the overall quality of life for the people we support.

The strategy addresses the specific needs of the autistic population and acknowledges the importance of creating inclusive and supportive communities.

This housing strategy is informed by the Gheel Strategic Plan 2023–2027 and specific strategic pathway: **Choosing your own home: supporting people to make informed decisions about where they live and who they live with.**

This housing strategy aims to provide a comprehensive framework by focusing on housing accessibility and individualised supports. The plan seeks to enhance the quality of life, independence, and community integration for citizens supported by Gheel. Through partnerships, advocacy, and a citizen-centred approach, we will enhance access to suitable housing and provide for increased security of tenure for the people we support.

Johnny Lynch
Housing & Strategic Business Partner



Process of Development



Research

Research was completed into the local, national and international policies that influence housing for autistic people and key agencies, authorities and departments identified and integrated into the formulation of this strategy

Assess

Assessments were completed on the current housing need across Gheel, property inspections and age friendly assessments were completed on the current housing stock in Gheel. The requirements of Gheel as an AHB under the current regulations were also assessed in relation to property maintenance

Analyse

Surveys were sent out to key stakeholders for feedback. The will and preference of people supported was also assessed. A family focus group was also facilitated. Data from all of these information gathering exercises was analysed and compiled

Evaluate

All of the information was evaluated to identify emerging themes for consideration, challenges and risks presenting, and specific areas that require action

Prioritise

Operational Priorities were developed and a list of focus areas and targets created to address these areas

CHALLENGES & RISKS IDENTIFIED

The responsibility of the Board to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA)



Inappropriate placements and critical safeguarding issues requiring the provision of more suitable accommodation and a move away from group living



To provide a range of community-based housing options that support the will and preference of the people supported



The increasing utilisation of the private rental market resulting in a lack of security of tenure and increasing risk of unmet rising costs



The provision of age friendly accommodation as identified in the Gheel Autism Services Ageing in Place Report (May 2021).

CHALLENGES & RISKS IDENTIFIED (CONTINUED)

Annual funding arrangements creates uncertainty and makes future planning difficult



The lack of dedicated financial, people & operational resources to manage the regulatory requirements and develop the range of required housing options



The significant underfunding of planned maintenance and facilities management regarding our housing stock resulting in the deterioration of the properties



The increasing demand for supported living options to meet the needs of the people whose families have indicated a future housing need



The fact that there is no one national body that is responsible for overseeing housing for people with disabilities, leads to issues with the sharing of information across departments and agencies.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT (AGENCIES)

1. Local Authorities

Hold statutory responsibility for the provision of housing for people with disabilities and its related services

2. Department of Housing

Responsible for the provision of national policy, legislation and funding relating to housing

3. Department of Health

Responsible for the funding to ensure that people with disabilities receive the appropriate supports to enable them to live in housing that is appropriate to their needs

4. Health Service Executive (HSE)

Responsible for the provision of healthcare and social care supports for people with disabilities, alongside a service budget allocated to the Organisation

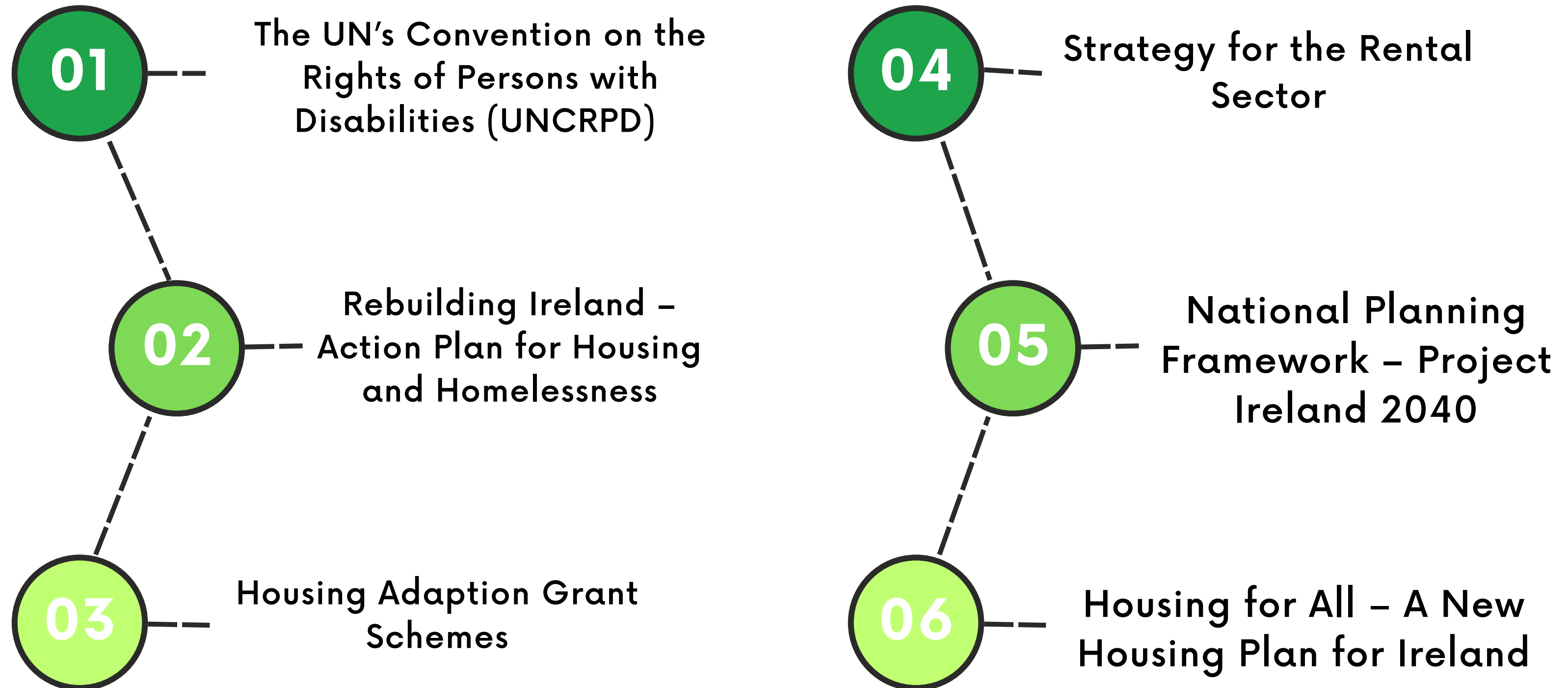
5. The Housing Agency

Responsible for overseeing the implementation process for housing for people with disabilities

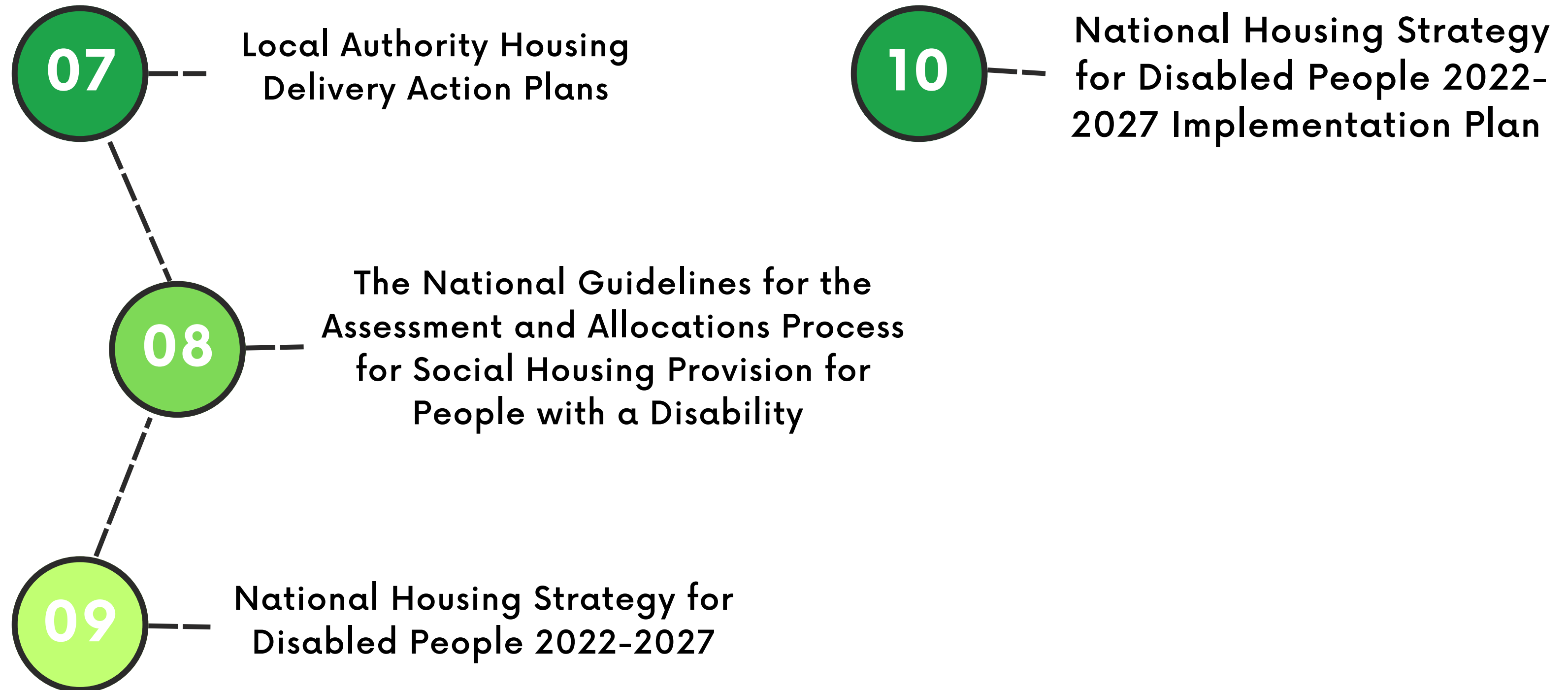
6. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Tasked with coordinating wider disability policies that inform housing policies.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT (POLICIES)

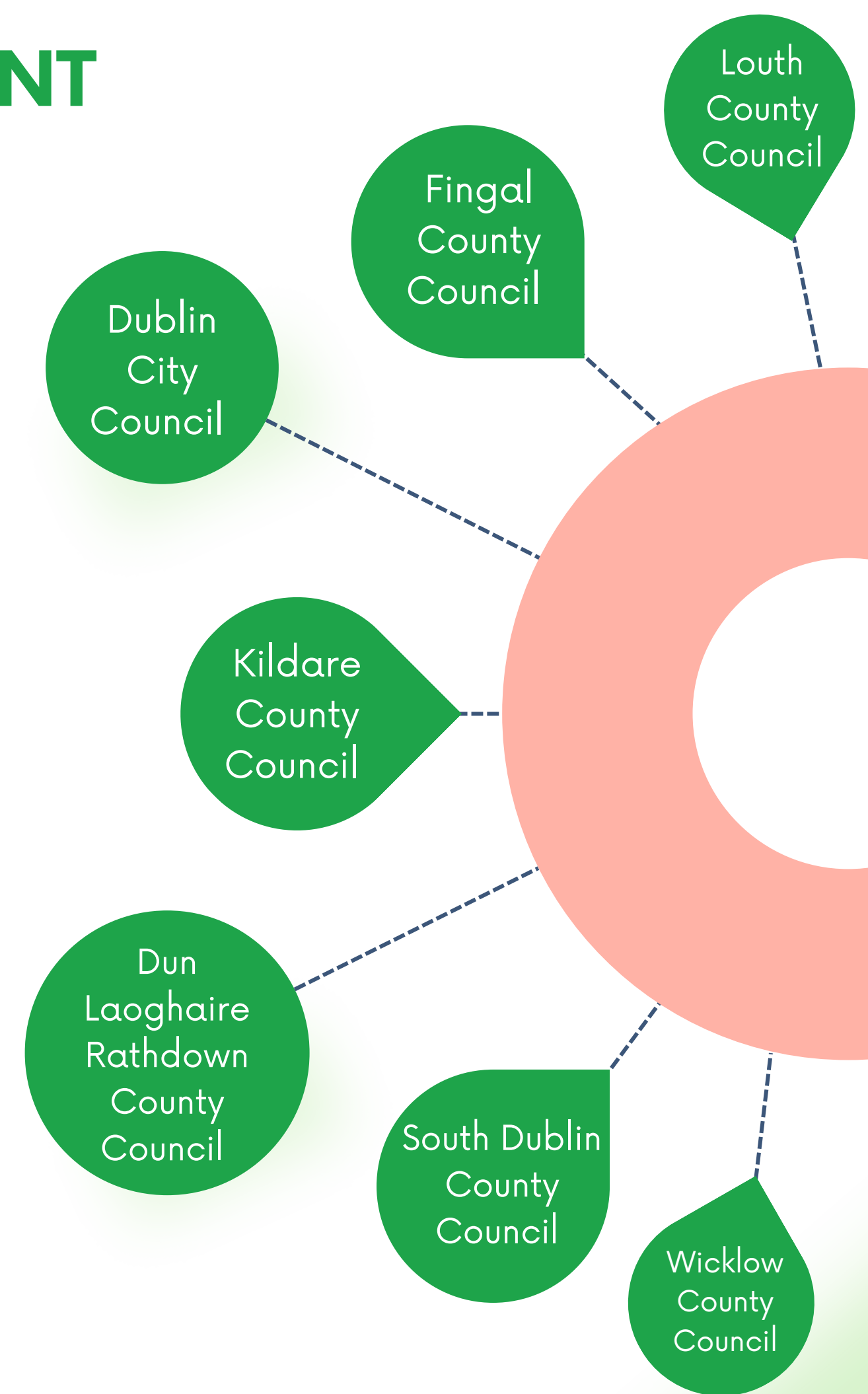
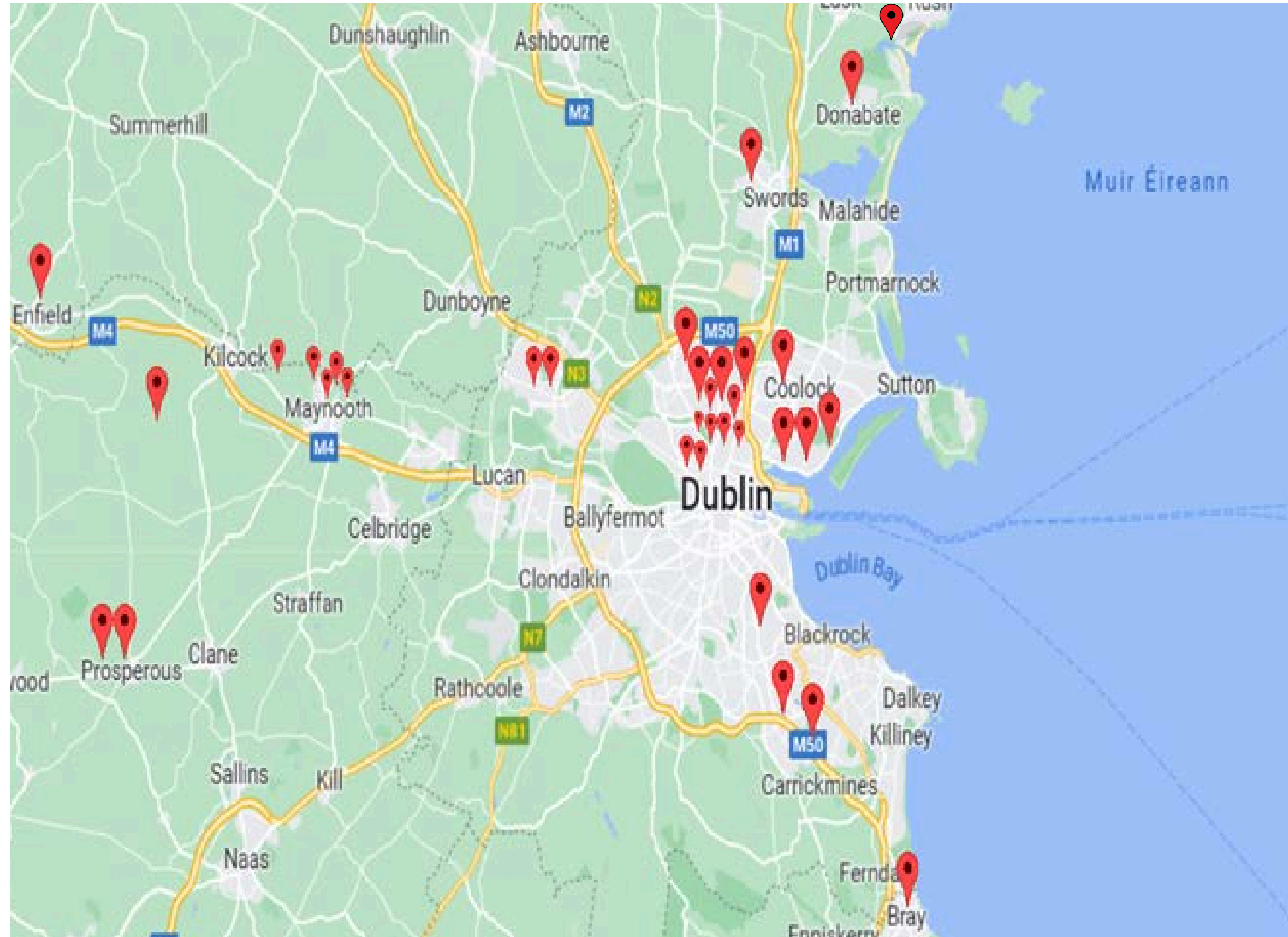


EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT (POLICIES CONTINUED)



STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Gheel's Supported Living Locations Map & Local Authority Areas



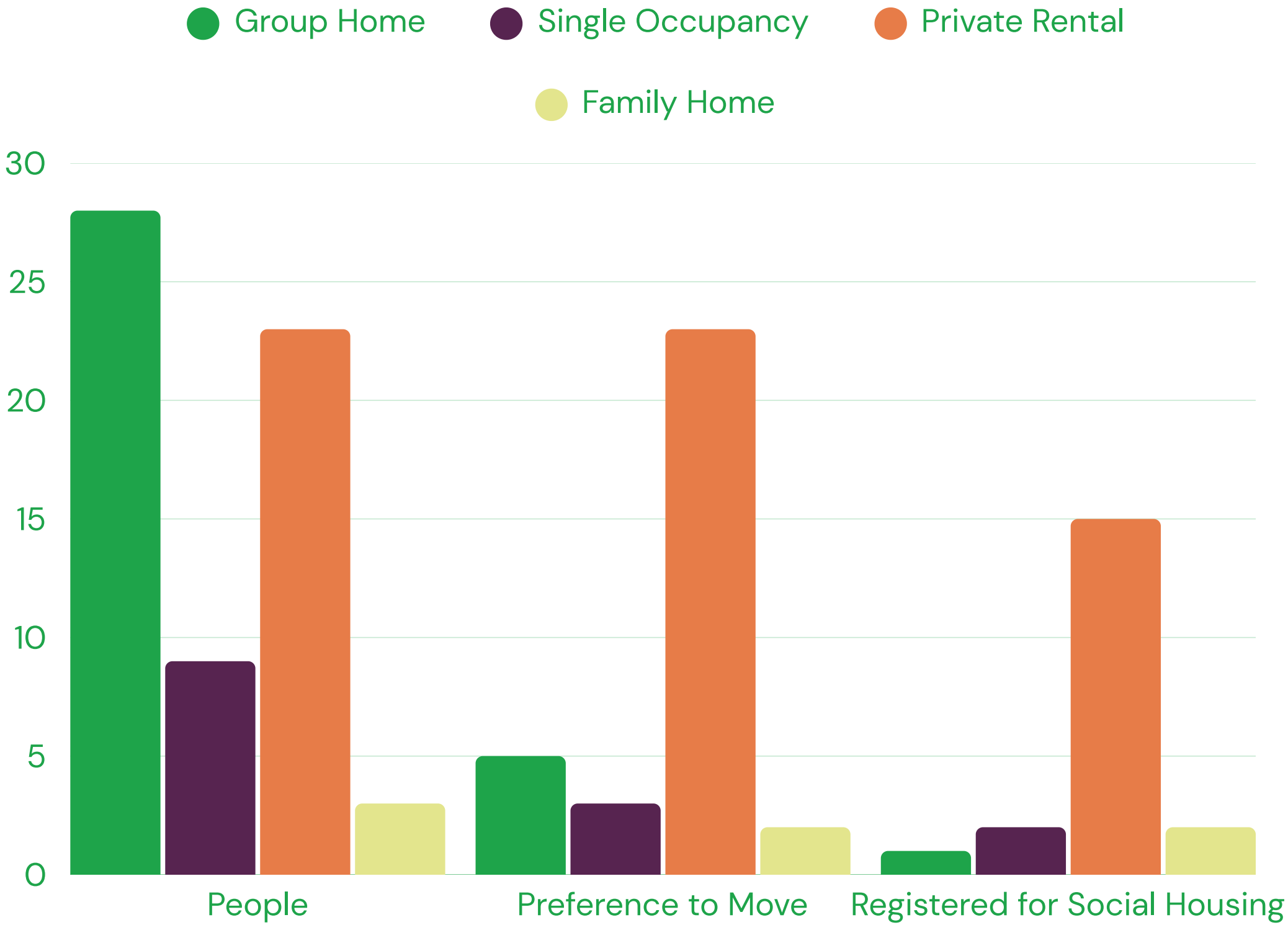
Living Options Support Overview

75
People Supported

44%
Would Prefer to
Move

26%
Registered for
Social Housing

30%
Living in Private Rental
Arrangements/Insecure
Tenancies



Day Supports & Transition Supports Overview

127

People Supported
in Transition
Supports

57

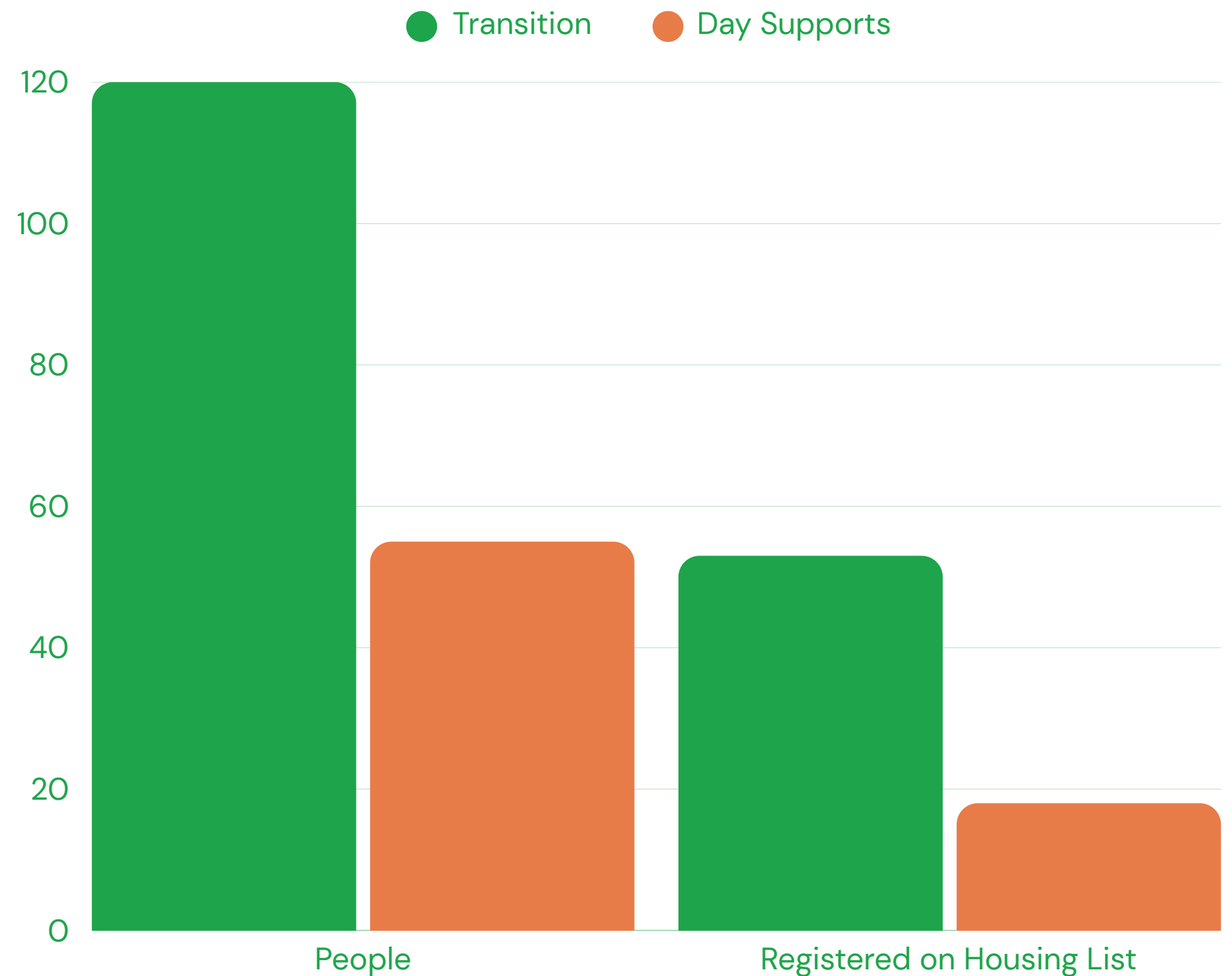
People Supported
in Day Supports

42%

Registered for
Social Housing in
Transition Supports

31%

Registered for
Social Housing in
Day Supports



BOARD OF DIRECTORS SURVEY FEEDBACK

Purpose

Are querying if it is Gheel's role is to expand our property portfolio and Approved Housing Body (AHB) Status

Partnerships

Are in favour of exploring partnership options with other AHB's for future Housing Opportunities.

Individualised Homes

Are open to selling current properties to fund the purchase of more suitable individualised housing

Gheel Housing Stock

Are open to pursuing a merger and transfer of housing stock to another AHB so that Gheel's sole focus is on supports



FAMILY FEEDBACK DASHBOARD (SURVEY & FOCUS GROUP)

63% of respondents indicated that their son/daughter will require housing with supports in the next 5 years

'Gheel need to support the transition process'

88% of respondents would like more information and support on future planning for housing

'Private Rentals are not sustainable'

100% of respondents said Gheel should pursue options to enhance opportunities for long term housing based on the will and preference of their son/daughter.

'A wide variety of supported living options are required'

'Gheel should partner with one or more Approved Housing Bodies in order to get access to suitable properties for people'

'We need support with registering our son/daughter on the housing list'

44% of respondents have yet to explore the wishes of their son/daughter regarding where they live and/or who they will live with

81% of respondents intend to refer their son/daughter to Gheel for Supported Living in the future

94% of respondents indicated a willingness to support their son/daughter to register on the local authority housing list.

'Local Authorities & HSE need to be trained in Autism'

100% of respondents would like Gheel to have an internal future support planning framework that families can access

GHEEL HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2027 (AMENDED)

Targets

To deliver the outcomes, we need measurable targets to track our progress and ensure we are making a positive impact. The strategy sets out key targets for each focus area

Choosing your own home by 2027

Strategic Principles

- Facilitate informed decision making which is person centred, inclusive and community focused
- Support access and opportunities for housing in the community for people we support
- Ensure that housing meets peoples needs and security of tenure is established
- Achieve & Maintain compliance with the regulations for Approved Housing Bodies

Focus Area 1 Outcome: All people supported have a plan for secure housing

Focus Area 1 Targets:

- **By 2025**, Double the current social housing registration rates among people supported across all support models
- **By 2025**, Establish membership on relevant housing working groups to enhance opportunities to deliver housing for people we support i.e ICSH, NFVB, Housing Agency.
- **By 2026**, All private rental arrangements will be reviewed with a view to the person moving to secure social housing or having a medium term plan in place to move through registration for social housing in their area

Focus Area 4 Outcome: All People supported have homes that meet their needs now and in the future

Focus Area 4 Targets:

- **By 2024**, Create internal Grant Application Pack to support locations to avail of Local Authority Housing Adaption Grant Funding to meet any changing needs in locations.
- **By 2024**, A dedicated housing specific resource is implemented for the life cycle of the housing strategy and engaged with all relevant forums on housing.
- **By 2025**, Initiate plan to Redevelop the Fairview Campus as per and recommendations by Housing Agency through CAS Funding
- **By 2027**, Pursue opportunities for Gheel to deliver new bespoke housing through local authority funding schemes

Focus Area 1

Focus Area 2

Focus Area 2 Outcome: All stakeholders are informed, equipped and empowered to pursue housing pathways

Focus Area 2 Targets:

- **By 2025**, Ensure that future housing need is included in the Support Planning Framework for each individual.
- **By 2025**, Provide appropriate transition support via an internally designed engagement toolkit to all people who are moving into different living options.
- **By 2026**, Develop an accessible repository of information on all matters relating to housing options available to all stakeholders
- **By 2026**, Ensure our staff are trained to support individuals and families in the process of registering on the relevant local authority housing list.

Focus Area 3 Outcome: Our Housing Stock is managed and maintained to a high standard and our tenants are satisfied

Focus Area 3 Targets:

- **By 2024**, Enhance our current maintenance system
- **By 2025**, Ensure that resources are optimised to have a planned maintenance programme that is managed internally
- **By 2025**, Ensure that our housing stock is inspected and outstanding repair work is completed
- **By 2025**, Set up a tenants forum for tenant feedback and consultation
- **By 2027**, Create a funding stream for ongoing repairs & maintenance through tenancy agreements on all new property acquisitions
- **By 2027**, Engage with AHBRA towards full compliance

Focus Area 4

Focus Area 3

