

Room to Share Scheme

Sisters of Charity of Jesus & Mary

- This scheme operates in Westmeath, Longford, Laois and Offaly.
- It offers permanent, long term care in a family setting to adults with a learning disability.
- The person placed and his/her family are active participants in the process of placement.
- There is ongoing monitoring of the placement.

Aims and Objectives of Room-to-Share: Long Term Scheme.

- The Task Force Report on Persons with an Intellectual Disability (1990) recommended that

“If an intellectually disabled person has to leave the family home either permanently or for a period of time, the substitute home should have all the characteristics of a good family home.”

- There are a variety of reasons which necessitate a person with an intellectual disability having to leave their home and for whom the Room-to-Share Scheme is a preferred option.

These include

- Death or illness of family member
- Wishes of person placed
- Difficulties in coping

- Since 1992, adults with an intellectual disability have been living with host families on a long term basis in Midlands Region (formerly the Midland Health Board) area.

Number of People Placed

- At present, 20 people live permanently with families under this scheme.
- Ranges of ability – moderate and lower regions of mild disability. Two people are wheelchair bound.

Duration of Placements

One person has lived with the same family for 19 years. Another for 15 and the duration of the other placements is from 2 – 15 years.

The Recruitment, Assessment and Placement involves the following stages.

Stage 1	Recruitment
Stage 2	Application
Stage 3	Assessment
Stage 4	Training / Preparation for Placement
Stage 5	Matching and Placement
Stage 6	Monitoring and Support

Stage 1: Recruitment

Advertising is by

- a) local newspapers
- b) church bulletins
- c) church announcements and
- d) local radio
- *Word of mouth very important*

Recruitment cont.

Many potential host parents may become interested from seeing a neighbour / friend successfully participating in the scheme.

Stage 2: Application

A social worker will meet the prospective applicant(s) in their home or at the social worker's office informing them of the procedure and operation of the Room-to-Share assessment process.

The social worker will answer any questions which they may have. Prospective applicants will complete a detailed application form.

Application cont.

This form will include

- a) the names of three prospective referees
- b) consent for Garda clearance from Garda Headquarters and
- c) authorisation to seek a social work check from the local Health Board
- d) information regarding family and applicants early history.

Garda clearance is sought on everyone in the household aged 18 years and over.

Stage 3: Assessment:

- Assessment involves a number of visits by the social worker to the prospective family. All the members of the family, including the children are involved in this process.

More detailed information is obtained outlining the host parents' motivation for wishing to participate in the Room-to-Share scheme.

The objective is also to establish their suitability to care for an adult with an intellectual disability and the level of understanding they have of adults with learning disability.

Assessment cont.

- During the assessment process host families are given the opportunity to share their anxieties, if any, regarding the scheme.

Practical issues regarding payment, insurance and contracts are also covered.

Assessment Panel

The completed assessment report and all the references are presented to the Assessment Panel.

In all cases where criminal convictions are recorded in relation to an application, they will be referred to the assessment panel for its consideration and opinion.

Assessment Panel cont.

- A decision will be made to approve / not approve the host family.
- Applicants are advised directly in writing as to the Placement Committee's decision in regard to their application. They may also be advised of the outcome verbally by their assessing social worker.

Stage 4: Training / Preparation for Placement

The preparation for placement involves personalised training relating to the needs of the adult with intellectual disability. This can involve the prospective host family visiting local centres and meeting people with disabilities.

Training may also include:

- Learning disability – philosophy of community integration. Information regarding specific syndromes / disabilities.

Training etc. cont.

- Behaviour Management / Challenging Behaviour
- Independence Training
- Communication Skills
- Abuse Guidelines
- The involvement of psychology may be elicited in some areas of training. The assessing social worker will co-ordinate the training.

Stage 5: Matching and Placement

- The social worker who is the key worker to the client and his / her family has the responsibility for the placement. Priority will be given to those people who are deemed to be in greatest need and there can be a waiting list of people.
- It is intended that the matching process will be sensitive to the needs of all the people involved. The needs of the person being placed will always be seen as paramount. The host family will be given as much information as possible about the person being placed.

Matching and Placement cont..

Contracts are signed and are valid for the length of placement. Where appropriate, contracts may be signed by the adult being placed

The adult's capacity to consent should be established. Following the matching process there will be a period of introduction to allow the person and the host family to get to know each other.

This will involve visits and overnight stays, gradually building up to longer stays.

Stage 7: Monitoring and Support:

It is recognised that support for the host family is essential to enable them to continue to offer a high quality service. The social worker will endeavour to provide whatever practical support may be necessary as well as advice, guidance and emotional support both for the service user and the host family where appropriate.

Monitoring and Support cont.

This will be provided by visits to the home, telephone contact and correspondence.

Should the host family or service user require short term respite, arrangements will be made.

This can be on a regular or occasional arrangement.

Payment

Most host families are paid €127.00 per week. Those placed contribute towards household costs. For those who were in foster care under the age of 18, the hosts are paid €292 per week and the person placed also contributes. This is an anomaly which needs to be addressed.