Invitation to Tender: Research to Examine the Experiences of People with Disabilities in Accessing Housing in Ireland

Commissioner	Irish Wheelchair Association and Disability Federation of Ireland
Funded by	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
Contract value	€20,000
Project timeframe	January to September 2027
Closing date for applications	06 January 2027

1. Introduction

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) are seeking a suitably qualified individual(s) or organisation to undertake a co-designed research project examining the experiences of people with disabilities[1] in accessing housing in Ireland.

This project is funded by The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Grants Scheme 2026-2027, under Strand A - advancing rights protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The overall aim of this project is to generate robust, rights-based evidence on the experience of people with disabilities in accessing housing, including inclusive, affordable and accessible housing in Ireland. The project will assess housing pathways across social housing, private rental, affordable housing, cost rental, home ownership and home adaptation systems for people with disabilities, adopting a co-design approach.

The project speaks to Ireland's obligations under the UN CRPD, particularly Article 19 (independent living and inclusion in the community), Article 28 (adequate standard of living and social protection), and Article 9 (accessibility) by focusing on implementation of housing policy, Universal Design standards and service coordination.

A significant output of the project will be to produce actionable evidence to inform national policy development and IHREC's monitoring role as Ireland's Independent Monitoring Mechanism under the UNCRPD, with a focus on improving rights realisation in practice.

2. Project Description

The research will examine the experience of disabled people aged 18 to 65. The project is not limited to any one type of disabilities but will aim to include a broad spectrum of experiences across physical / sensory disabilities, neurological conditions, acquired disabilities, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.

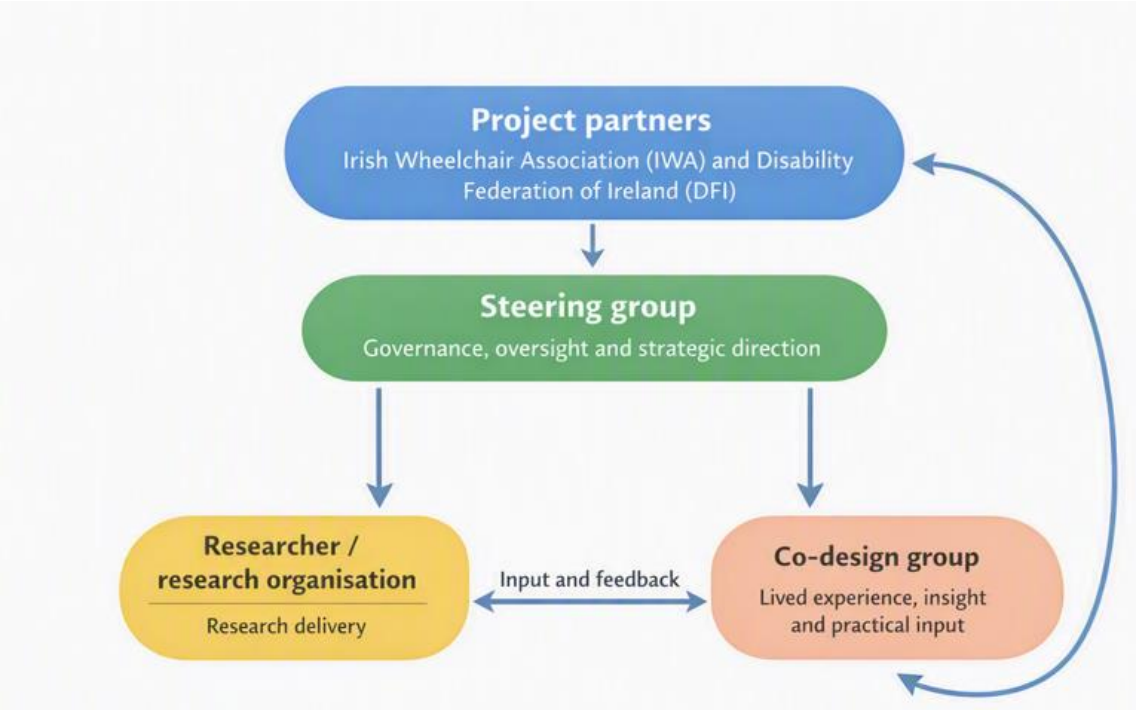
[1] Disabled people and people with disabilities are used interchangeably in this proposal, recognising the preferences of different people for identity-first or person-first phrasing.

This is a nine-month project, running from January 2027 to September 2027.

2.1 Project governance structure

The project governance structure includes the research commissioners and project partners, DFI and IWA; with an expert steering group guiding the project throughout its course. The successful researcher(s) will be required to work alongside a lived experience co-design group which is being established by the project partners.

Diagram 1: Project governance structure



The co-design group will have a particular role in shaping the interview questions, interpreting the findings and identifying priorities for the research recommendations. The project partners are committed to supporting the co-design group. They will establish this group and provide logistical and facilitation support to the group as required. They will also oversee compensation for co-design group members, recognising their time and expertise. This compensation is outside the project budget outlined below.

The successful candidate(s) will report directly to the project partner, with guidance provided by the steering group.

2.2 Project Objectives

The project aims to address four specific objectives, namely:

Objective 1: Analyse Irish housing policy*, building regulations, planning requirements, including Part M, and implementation of Universal Design, identifying gaps through desk-based research.

* A significant amount of policy analysis and research has already been undertaken in this field; the successful candidate(s) will therefore be required to collate the most up to date information and policy analysis, providing context for the other project objectives.

Objective 2: Capture disabled people's experiences accessing appropriate, affordable and accessible housing, focusing on adapted design, retrofitted adaptations, assistive technology, integrated health and social care supports, and spatial requirements.

Objective 3: Using a co-design approach, develop participatory evidence of lived experience across housing pathways, identifying barriers to rights realisation, including the lack of a legislative framework for Personal Assistance services.

Objective 4: Develop evidence-based recommendations to strengthen implementation of UNCRPD housing rights in Ireland.

2.3 Project outputs

Timeframe	Output
January 2027	Project commencement
March 2027	An initial policy and literature review report
May 2027	Presentation of progress to steering group
July/August 2027	Draft report for review, with presentation to steering group
September 2027	Report sign-off
September 2027	Research event**

**The successful candidate will also be required to present the research findings at an event, organised by IWA and DFI. This will be an invited roundtable event including key national stakeholders.

Reports will be required in accessible formats, in plain English. IWA and DFI will lead the production of an Easy Read version of the policy brief, setting out the key findings and recommendations of the final report. The researcher will work with the project partners and the lived experience co-design group to prepare the text, respond to feedback on its clarity and accessibility, and check that the final version accurately reflects the findings.

3. Intellectual Property

The final report will be published by the project partners, with the researcher as lead author. IWA and DFI will own the research outputs and may use the findings for advocacy and policy purposes.

The researcher will maintain professional independence in the analysis and reporting of findings.

4. Budget

The funding allocation for this project is €20,000 (inclusive of VAT). This covers researcher salary with all associated costs connected to data collection, analysis and report write-up.

Costs associated with publication of the report, the final research event, costs incurred by the co-design group (including compensation for their expert time) will be carried and administered by the project partners (IWA and DFI).

5. How to Apply

We are calling for proposals to answer the four named objectives set out above and to outline the following:

- Proposed methodological approach.
- Consideration of all ethical issues, with proposed approaches to address these.
- Suitably considered timeframe to allow for meaningful engagement with the co-design group to inform the methodology. As well as approaches to recruiting the research sample, data collection and write-up.
- Project costs, including researcher rates and any non-pay costs.

• A brief outline of two similar research projects and one sample of work from each, such as a research report or equivalent output - link to published output is sufficient. For jointly authored work, specify the contribution of the applicant or proposed team members.
• CVs of relevant personnel.
• Contact details of two professional referees.
• Please also give detail any relevant co-design experience.
• Please note that all applicants must hold a valid tax certificate.

5.1 Award Criteria

Applications to this tender will be reviewed and selected by the project partners and a representative group from the project steering group.

Marks will be awarded according to the criteria outlined below:

Reference	Criteria	Scoring	Minimum Mark Required
A	Cost	**300**	**150**
B	Technical Capacity and Relevant Experience	**250**	**150**
C	Proposed Methodology and Timeframe to deliver Project	**450**	**300**
	Total	**1000**	**600**

Following assessment of the written proposals, shortlisted applicants may be invited to a brief online interview to clarify aspects of their proposals. The panel will consider any clarifications against the published award criteria before making its final decision.

5.2 To Submit a Tender

Applications should be sent to **emerbegley@disability-federation.ie** by close of business on the **06.01.2027**. For queries about the research contact Dr. Emer Begley.

Appendix A: About the Project Partners

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is one of Ireland's leading representative organisations and service providers for people with physical disabilities. Founded on the belief that everyone should be able to live a life of choice and equality. We work with, and on behalf of, people with physical disabilities to drive positive change in Ireland through the influencing of public policy, the provision of quality services and enabling accessibility to all aspects of society. IWA has a vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities enjoy equal rights, choices and opportunities in how they live their lives, and where our country is a model worldwide for a truly inclusive society. IWA's services support people with physical disabilities to live independently and our campaigns demand equal rights and opportunities for people with physical disabilities, with 20,000 members, over 2,300 employees, 57 local community centres and c. 500 volunteers.

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is a federation of 106 organisations working across Ireland to drive full inclusion and equity for disabled people. As an advocacy organisation, we engage with members, disabled people, allies, and the state to advance human rights and equality. Our strategic plan focuses on driving accountability, championing inclusive communities, advancing disabled people's leadership, and influencing policy. We advocate for all government policies and practices to align with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), working locally, nationally, and internationally.