

Carlow County Development Partnership: Invitation to Tender - Assessing Disability Access & Service Gaps **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/115741>)**



Research Brief: Assessing Disability Access and Service Gaps in Carlow County

1. Introduction

Carlow County Development Partnership CLG (CCDP), established in 2009, is responsible for managing and delivering various economic and social development programmes for communities, enterprises, and individuals in Carlow Town and County. This research is being funded under the Carlow SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme), supported by the County Carlow LCDC (Local Community Development Committee).

The aims of the SICAP Programme are to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment. It does this through a community development approach, and through targeted supports and inter-agency collaboration, underpinned by the values of equality, inclusion and social justice.

Context

People with disabilities represent a growing cohort in Ireland. They are also among the population cohorts that are specifically named as a SICAP target group.

The county has a population of 61,968, of which 23% (more than 14,000) live with some form of disability. Carlow County Development Partnership is committed to conducting research to better understand the needs and gaps in services for individuals with disabilities including hidden disabilities. The findings from this research will help inform improvements in services and infrastructure for those with disabilities in Carlow County, ensuring their access to opportunities and support systems.

The findings will be used to advocate for improving access to services and increasing community engagement for this demographic. A steering group will be developed to inform the direction of the research and will comprise of individuals with lived experience, as well as service providers.

2. Research Assignment

The researcher (or team) selected for this assignment will be tasked with conducting primary research with individuals with disabilities and frontline service providers to:

- Identify Challenges & Barriers: What are the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in Carlow? This includes identifying gaps in services and infrastructure.
- Examine Existing Good Practices: What current practices or programmes have proven successful and should be developed or mainstreamed?
- Identify Effective Service Models: What national and international service delivery models could be adapted and implemented in Carlow?
- Person-Centered Solutions: What tailored, person-centred approaches could help eliminate or reduce barriers, particularly in areas where there are gaps in service provision?
- Develop a Service Network: Identify suitable service providers to create a network for sharing knowledge, best practices, and advocating for people with disabilities.

3. Methodology

The research will employ a combination of data collection methods including face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher will work with agencies and participants to ensure full accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The research will involve:

- Individuals with disabilities, including their families and carers, to assess how they access services and information.
- Frontline service providers such as health professionals, disability service organisations, and advocates who assist individuals with disabilities.

Sample size Requirements: The sample size will include:

- No less than 20 individuals or families.
- At least one senior representative from no less than 8 different frontline service organisations working with people with disabilities.

Data Collection: A questionnaire/guide will be developed, with Carlow County Development Partnership's input, to ensure the focus is on relevant areas such as service access, challenges, and solutions. This will be informed by secondary research and data.

4. Budget

The total budget for this research, covering all associated costs, is up to a maximum of €18,000 (excluding VAT). The researcher will also be required to work with a Plain English/literacy service to ensure the final report is accessible and clear to a broad audience. The cost of this service will be borne by Carlow County Development Partnership CLG.

5. Timeline

The research project is expected to begin in July 2025, with the final report to be delivered by 30th of November 2025 at the latest. Tender submissions proposing a completion date after this deadline will not be considered.

6. Profile of the Selected Researcher

The selected researcher should demonstrate:

- Comprehensive Knowledge: An in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, both physical and intellectual, and those with hidden disabilities.
- Research and Reporting Skills: Experience in conducting high-quality research and delivering comprehensive reports.
- Experience with Disability Services: Proven experience working with people with disabilities and an understanding of the local Carlow context and policies.
- Policy Knowledge: Awareness of national policies and frameworks related to disability rights and inclusion.

7. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the tenders:

- Understanding of the brief - 10 Criteria Marks
- Knowledge/experience working with people with disabilities and understanding the Carlow context - 30 Criteria Marks
- Researcher's understanding of the policy context - 20 Criteria Marks
- Track record in delivering quality research within deadlines - 30 Criteria Marks
- Fee/value for money- 10 Criteria Marks
- Total - 100 Criteria Marks

8. Conflict of Interest

Any potential conflict of interest between the researcher and Carlow County Development Partnership CLG or its staff, including relatives, must be fully disclosed in the tender response. If such a conflict arises after submission but before the contract award, it must be immediately communicated.

9. Freedom of Information

Carlow County Development Partnership CLG will protect the confidentiality of any information provided, subject to obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 1997 and FOI (Amendment) Act 2003. If any tendered information is considered sensitive, the tenderer must clearly identify this and specify the reasons for the sensitivity.

10. Application Process

Interested parties should submit their tender response and a competency statement to Annette Fox, Chief Executive Officer, at afox@carlowdevelopment.ie (mailto:afox@carlowdevelopment.ie) no later than 5pm on Wednesday the 4th of June 2025.

Late submissions and tenders exceeding €18,000 (excluding VAT) or with completion dates after 30th of November 2025 will not be considered.

Proof of tax compliance will have to be submitted as part of the application for tender.

The copyright of the final research report and findings will remain with Carlow County Development Partnership.

Queries regarding the research will be taken up to 5pm on Wednesday the 28th of May.

This research aims to build a solid foundation for improving the quality of life and access to services for individuals with disabilities in Carlow County. By engaging with the community and service providers, we seek to make informed, strategic recommendations for long-term, sustainable change.



Region

Co Carlow

Date Entered/Updated

20th May, 2025

Expiry Date

4th Jun, 2025

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