

**PRESS RELEASE****Changing Places Ireland calls for changes to the Building Regulations****23 July 2020**

Changing Places Ireland is calling on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, to follow the example of the UK and change the Irish Building Regulations to make it mandatory for new public buildings to include Changing Places Toilet Facilities. New regulations come into force in the UK from 2021.

Changing Places Toilet Facilities are different from standard disabled toilets. They include additional equipment such as a hoist and changing bench as well as space for carers.

In Ireland there are less than 15 registered Changing Places Toilet Facilities that are open to the public. While building regulations require standard disabled toilets in public buildings they do not include a Changing Places Toilet Facility.

The lack of Changing Places Toilet Facilities greatly restricts people's everyday lives. Karen Smith, an adult with a physical disability and member of Changing Places Ireland Steering Group, said 'Not being able to go anywhere because of the lockdown is not new to me, it's my everyday experience. I have the same needs and aspirations as everyone but I am unable to reach my full potential due to toilets not having the additional equipment that I need. The Government need to pass laws like England to allow people with disabilities to be included in society.'

The UK has over 1,400 Changing Places Toilet Facilities, Northern Ireland has over 40 and this number will now increase with the new building rules. This will see such facilities in shopping centres, transport hubs, supermarkets, hospitals, sport stadiums and entertainment venues.

Aaron Daly, parent and member of Changing Places Ireland Steering Group commented "during lockdown there was plenty of news coverage on the lack of open public toilet facilities. This is the constant reality for our family and thousands more who care for a family member. We are restricted in what we can do, where we can go and often have no choice but to stay close to home. Ireland is seriously failing the disability community and their carers by failing to provide adequate toilet facilities'.

**ENDS****Note to Editor:**

1. Changing Places Ireland consists of parents, and organisations working in the disability space including the Disability Federation of Ireland, Irish Wheelchair Association, Inclusion Ireland, Central Remedial Clinic, Enable Ireland and Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland.
2. Spokespeople are available on request.
3. For further information contact Nóirín Clancy, Changing Places Ireland, Mobile: 083 8236126

BBC news Changing Places Uk

**GOOD NEWS for LIMERICK!** In April 2020 a new Changing Places Toilet Facility has opened at Dunnes Stores, Jetland Shopping Centre, Ennis Road, Limerick. V94 364H

The toilet facility is open Monday – Saturday 8.00am – 10.00pm and Sundays 8am – 9pm. It is located on the Lower Ground Floor, beside other toilets, baby-changing area & sensory room. There is an automated door with access control. Press the buzzer at intercom to contact security for access.

Well done to Dunnes Stores, hopefully this is the first of many Changing Places in their stores.



## **Marley Park Changing Places**

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13th May 2019 – Marlay Park Courtyard, Rathfarnham – Pictured at the official opening of the Changing Places Accessible Facility in Marlay Park which provides many additional features and equipment that makes it more accessible and comfortable than standard accessible bathrooms were, left to right, Gary Morris, Enable Ireland. Councillor Ossian Smyth, Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. John Nolan with his service dog Scully. Aidan Shannon, Architects Department, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. Dolores Murphy, Irish Wheelchair Association. Photo by Peter Cavanagh Must Credit No Reproduction Fee

The Changing Places Ireland campaign was first established in 2014.

Changing Places facilities are different from standard accessible toilets. They have many features and additional equipment that make them even more accessible than the standard accessible toilets we are all familiar with. Changing Places facilities provide 12m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, and include both a full room coverage ceiling track hoist, a centrally located toilet bowl with space either side for transfers or assistants, and a height-adjustable adult sized changing bench.

Changing Places facilities are designed to enhance the health, safety, comfort and dignity of someone who may need extra support and additional equipment during personal care tasks. Changing Places facilities also offer added safety and support features for assistants.





Changing Places at Áras an Uachtaráin

Standard disabled accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with complex disabilities. For example, individuals with conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, and older people with physical disabilities may need extra equipment facilities to enable them to use the toilet, maximising independence and comfort.

Sadly, many people with disabilities have to go through the indignity and unhygienic option of being changed on the floor of a public toilet as the correct facilities are not available in public places.



Changing Places at the National Gallery of Ireland

Changing Places Ireland is a welcome addition to many Irish people with disabilities and their families. The aim of our campaign is to promote the inclusion of changing places facilities in public places nationwide. Thousands of people need Changing Places facilities to enable them to get out and about and enjoy the day-to-day activities that many of us take for granted.