

SECTION 4

Community Infrastructure, Facilities And Services



4.1 Childcare Facilities

The Planning Authority will have regard to Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001, the Child Care (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006, We Like This Place: Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities 2005, and the following in the assessment of proposals for childcare and educational facilities:

- Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed.
- Availability of indoor and outdoor play space.
- Local traffic conditions.
- Access, car parking and drop off facilities for staff and customers.
- Nature of the facility (full day care, sessional, after school, etc.).
- Number of children to be catered for.
- Intended hours of operation.
- Impact on residential amenity.

The indicative standard is one childcare facility, accommodating 20 children, for approximately 75 dwellings. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria that may be taken into account in such an assessment include the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

In new developments, childcare facilities should be purpose built, at ground floor level or as a standalone building. In established residential areas, the conversion to a childcare facility will only be considered where the dwelling house is detached, where there is adequate separation distances between the dwelling house and other dwelling houses in the vicinity, where the use as a childcare facility will not detract from the residential amenities of the estate, where the development will not give rise to a traffic hazard and where the car parking requirements and external play provision for the child care facility are provided in addition to the car parking requirements of housing estate.

4.2 Education Facilities

In accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009) and 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System' (DEHLG and DES, 2008) all applications for significant residential development shall be accompanied by an assessment of existing schools capacity. In this regard, applications for 100 or more residential units on zoned land must be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Audit (see Objective SC37 in Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy of Volume 1) which includes an assessment of school places.

Applications for new and extended primary and secondary schools must provide details of safe queuing and drop-off facilities, bicycle parking and recreational facilities as appropriate.

School travel plans should be prepared in accordance with the NTA document 'Toolkit for School Travel'.

4.3 Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare facilities will be considered on appropriately zoned lands in town and village centres. Small scale medical surgeries/practices (doctor/dentist/physiotherapist, etc.) are open for consideration in established residential areas, subject to appropriate safeguards to protect the residential amenity of the area. The applicant will be required to demonstrate a spatial rationale for the conversion of a full dwelling in the context of the availability of alternative sites in the area, the location of schools and employment and existing healthcare facilities.

Planning applications for medical surgeries/practices/centres should include details of proposed professional medical (commercial) activities, proposed number of practitioners and support staff, and intended hours of operation. In instances of partial conversion from residential to healthcare, the proposal shall be assessed as a Home Based Economic Activity.

4.4 Places of Worship

Development proposals for the habitual use of a building as a place of public worship or religious instruction will be considered in the context of the land use zoning and

the need to protect the amenities of established uses from impacts arising from traffic, noise or other disturbance. Planning applications for places of worship should be accompanied by details of the capacity of the facility (e.g. seating capacity), a traffic assessment and intended hours of operation.

4.5 Other Community Facilities

Planning applications for community facilities such as sports grounds, playing fields and community halls/centres will be considered based on:

- The need for the development and its role in the development of local facilities.
- The appropriateness of the site in terms of location, traffic, accessibility and the impact on amenities of properties in the vicinity.
- The potential for multi-use by other groups/members of the community.

4.6 Burial Grounds and Crematoria

Development proposals for new or extended cemeteries and/or crematoria will be considered in suitable locations with compatible land use zoning objectives. The applicant will be required to demonstrate a need for the development and that the proposal will not adversely impact on the amenity of adjacent existing residents or businesses, or give rise to a traffic hazard.

All proposals pertaining to cemeteries and/or crematoria should demonstrate compliance with appropriate legislative guidelines and provide details in relation to landscaping, storage, waste and groundwater. Hydrogeological surveys and monitoring of the groundwater may be required for cemeteries. The burial of bodies should be a minimum of 250m away from any borehole, spring or well used for the supply of drinking water.

4.7 Changing Places Facilities

As discussed in Chapter 15 Sustainable Communities and Social Infrastructure Strategy of Volume 1, Section 15.6.2 Universal Access and Design, standard accessible

toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places (CP) facilities.

The Planning Authority will require CP facilities to be provided in 'any large building development' where the public have access in numbers, and or where the public might be expected to spend longer periods of time. CP facilities will be required in addition to standard accessible toilets.

The type of large building developments to which the above refers includes:

- Major transport termini or interchanges, e.g. large railway stations and airports;
- Motorway services;
- Sport and leisure facilities including large hotels;
- Cultural centres such as museums, concert halls and art galleries;
- Stadia and large auditoria;
- Shopping centres and 'shop mobility' centres;
- Key buildings within town centres, e.g. town halls, civic centres and main public libraries;
- Educational establishments;
- Health facilities such as hospitals, health centres and community practices

The current standards for CP facilities are set out in the British Standards Publication BS 8300: 2009 + A1: 2010-Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of practice.

The recommended dimensions of the space are a minimum of 12 square metres (3m x 4m), with a ceiling height of 2.4m and should include, at minimum:

- Height-adjustable, adult sized changing bench
- Ceiling track hoist system
- Adequate space for the disabled person and up to two assistants
- Centrally located toilet with space both sides for assistance
- Privacy screen

- Washbasin, preferably height adjustable.
- Wide paper roll and large waste disposal bin.

In addition, while shower facilities are not required in all CP, these facilities are recommended for managed buildings such as leisure centres and transport hubs or for specific projects.

Designers/applicants are advised to contact the Planning Authority and the Council's Disability Access Officer for further information relating to CP facilities. Further information, design guidance and standards are available on www.changingplaces.ie