



**10 Ways To
Construct A
More Lifetime
Adaptable
and Age
Friendly
Home**
March 2019





Research world-wide has shown that the inclusion of age friendly features in new homes or homes being renovated carry minimal additional cost. Yet such features have the potential to save thousands of Euro if and when the homeowner needs to adapt the home when his/her capacity becomes slightly more limited.

The recommendations below are based on universal design principles and follow consultation with the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) www.universaldesign.ie

They are informed by practitioners across the local authority system who have engaged in and provided feedback during the training programme rolled out nationally by Age-friendly Ireland and by the findings of the SLIOTAR report.

Should a desire exist to incorporate further features reference should be made to the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland (UD Homes) – Key features and elements - universaldesign.ie/built-environment/Housing

Further references are provided at the end of this leaflet

Universal Design Homes work well for everyone and look good. Such homes are designed to four key principles:

- That they are integrated into their local neighbourhood

- That they are easy to approach, access and move around internally

- That they are easy to understand, use and manage

- That they are flexible, safe, cost effective and adaptable over time

There are **10** important features to a universal designed home that if incorporated into the design of a new house or apartment will greatly enhance the product being offered to new and existing residents.

These are:

- 1 Provide level access at front and rear of house and include wider external and internal doors
- 2 Provide capped electrical points for future installation of a stair lift installation, front door illumination, adjacent to internal doors, above and beside window heads and at skirting level (for future automatic devices such as assisted door openings, ceiling hoists and automatic curtain/blind opening)
- 3 Insert sockets at the top and bottom of stairs, for future stair lift and include two-way or three-way switching. In addition, ensure sockets and switching (and window sills) are further than 500mm from an internal corner and are at levels that are within easy reach and view for everyone should be allowed.
- 4 Provide a minimum of CAT 5 Cabling and ducting to every room.
- 5 Consider easy control and use of systems and the capability to integrate smart technology, energy efficiency and security systems or assistive technology.
- 6 In the entry level toilet, ensure that it is sufficient for the future installation of a level access walk-in shower including walls of adequate wall strength to take future fittings such as handrails and a shower seat. Below floor drainage, level access, moisture resistant plasterboard and light fittings and tanking of floor and walls up to a height of 2000mm will also be necessary.

7 Locate the main bathroom immediately adjacent to the main bedroom with a “soft spot” for future installation of a door between them. Ensure that provision is made for future adaptation to a shower room including the features listed for the entry level toilet.

8 In the main bedroom, located beside the bathroom, provide “hard spots” in the ceiling for future hoist installation and a “soft spot” in the wall for a future door to create an ensuite.

9 Ensure that all fixtures and fittings are age friendly such as lever door handles and lever taps.

10 Provide a beam at ceiling level ground floor as part of the rear wall to allow for future extension in exceptional cases where design layouts cannot incorporate a future downstairs walk-in shower and/or a future room for conversion to bedroom.

For further information see:

www.fingal.ie/housing

www.universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Building-for-Everyone

www.universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Housing/Dementia-Friendly-Dwellings/

www.agefriendlyireland.ie

