

# NOAC Exemplars of Good Practice in Customer Service

Offaly County Council Library Service

3D Virtual Tours and Social Stories

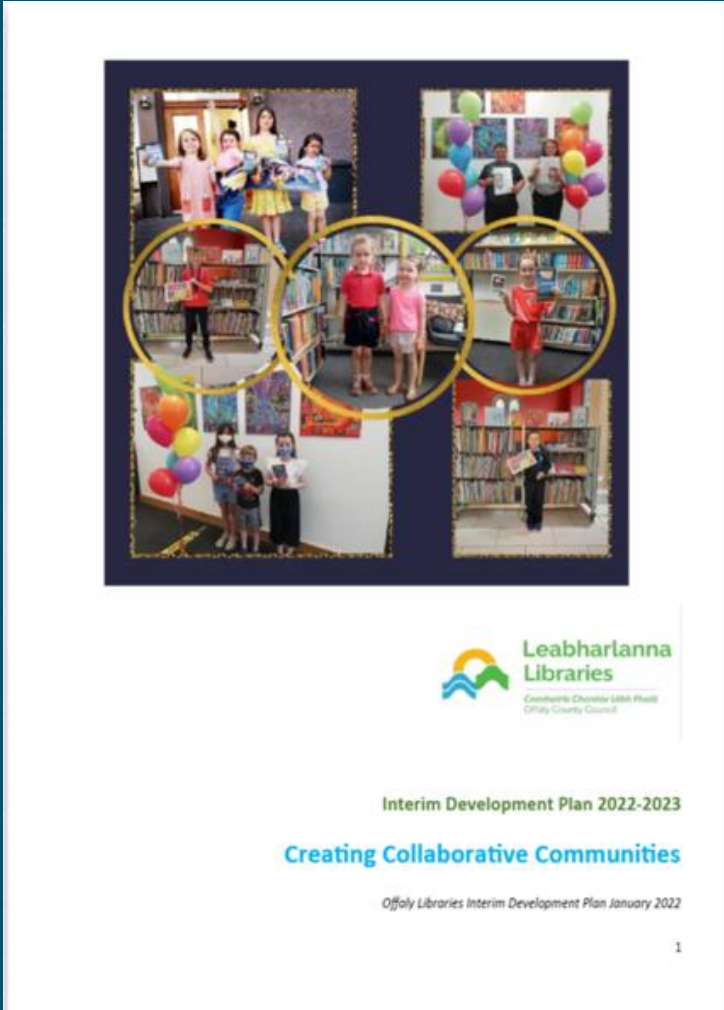
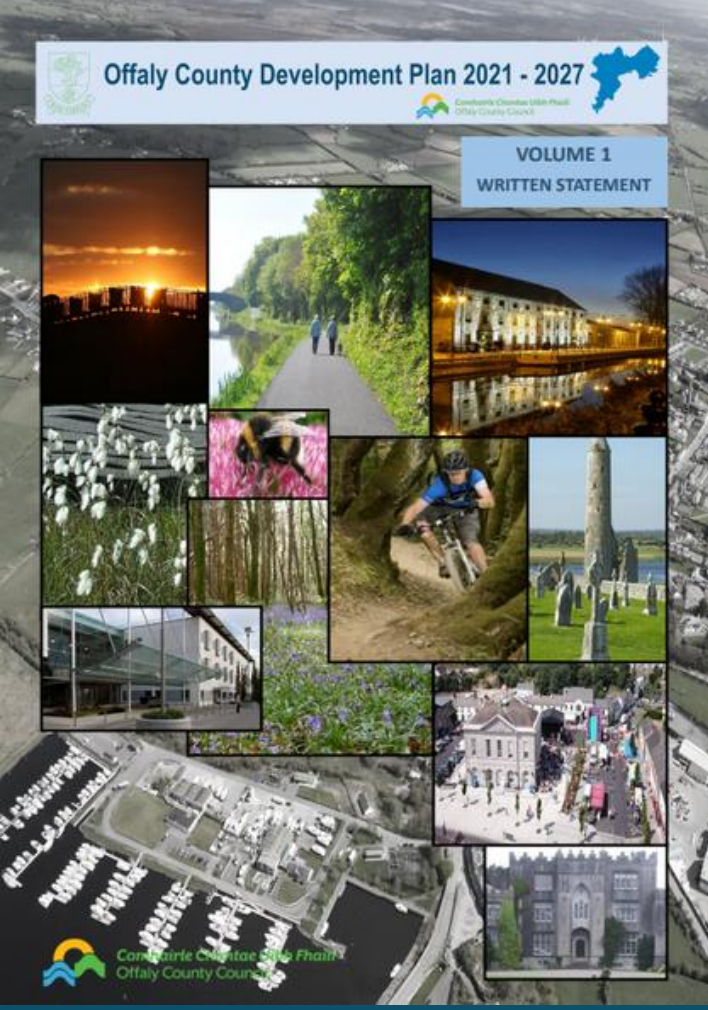
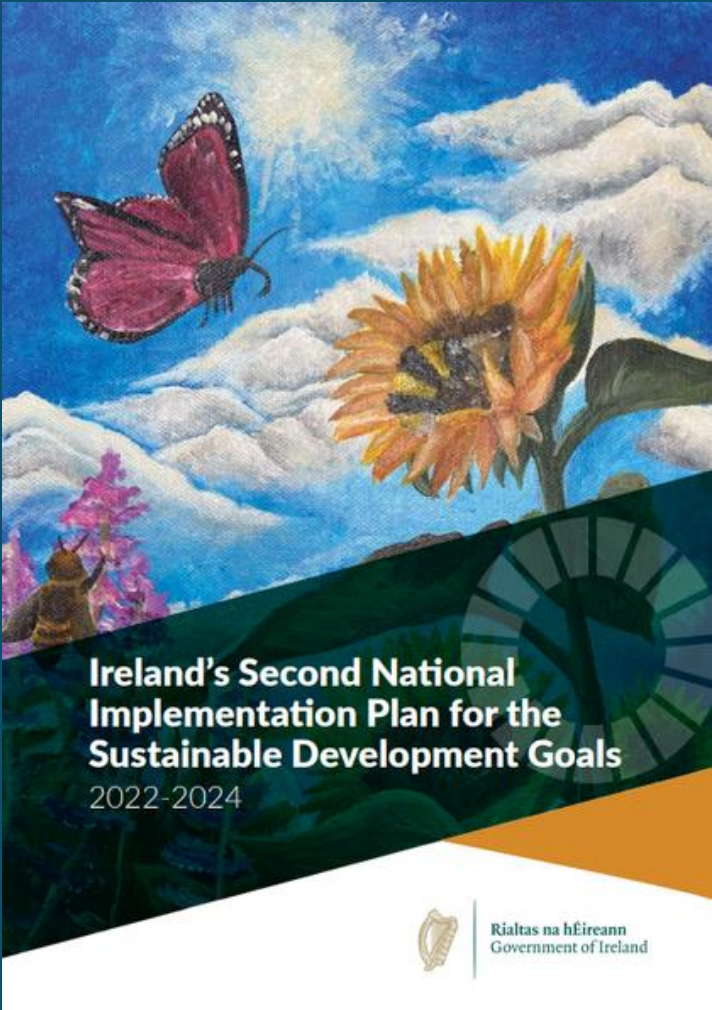
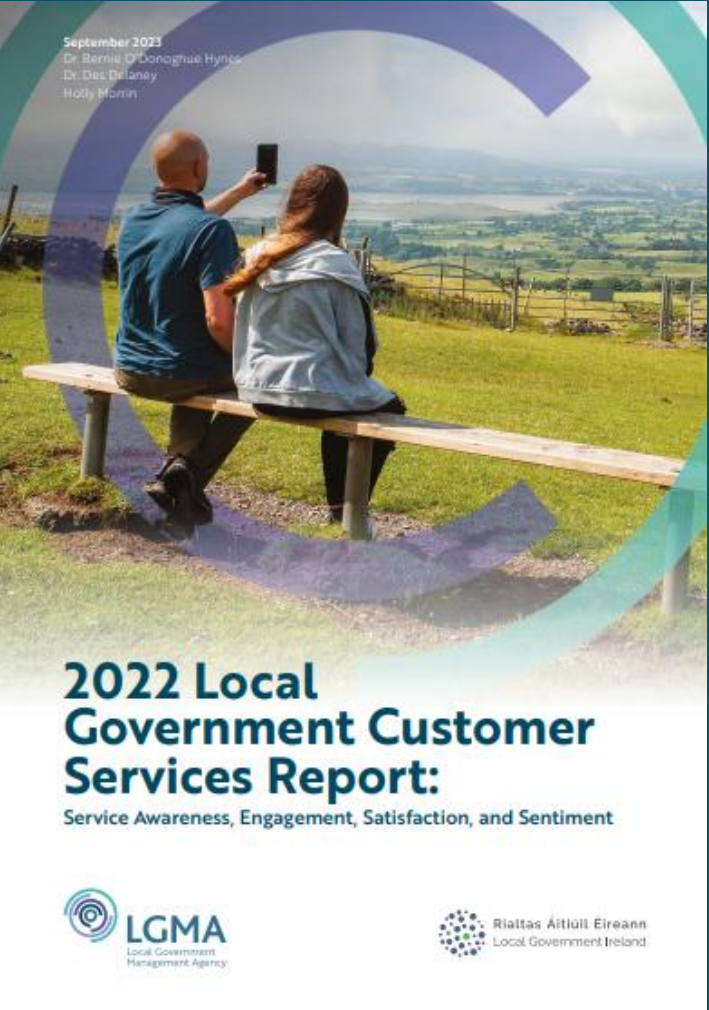
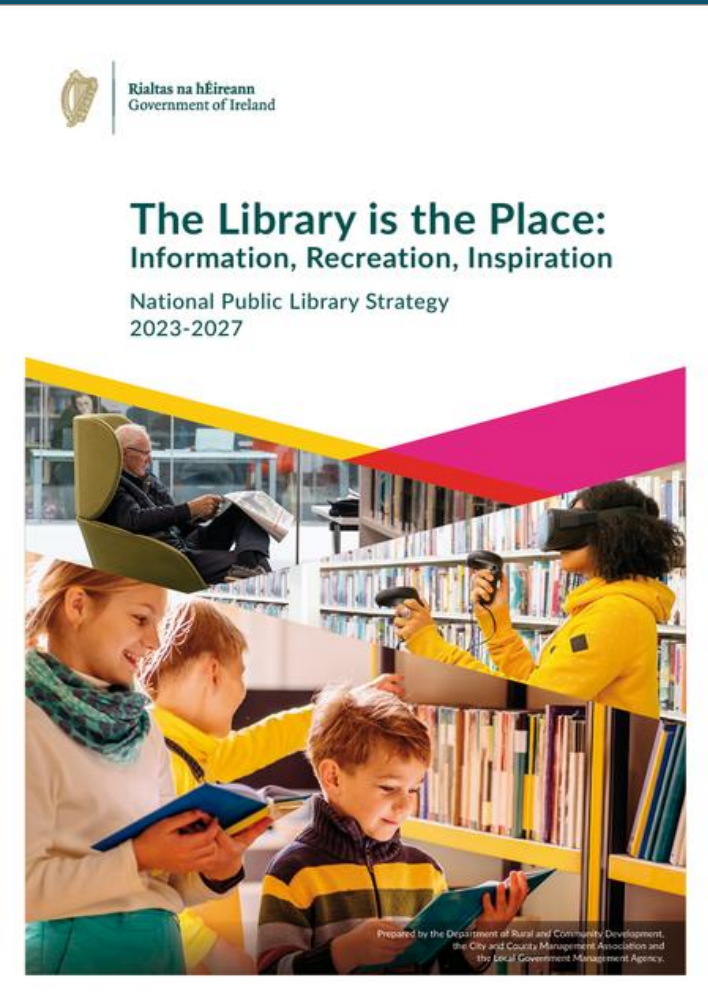


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# Context and Background

## Informing documents



# Creating Space: Offaly Libraries Development Plan 2024-2028

## Vision, Mission and Values



Offaly Libraries will provide welcoming and accessible spaces and services to support the people of Offaly in their pursuit of knowledge, culture, skills and recreation.



Offaly Libraries will enrich the lives of our diverse communities by providing free and equitable access to quality information, resources, education and creative and cultural opportunities.



Intellectual Freedom;  
Universal Accessibility;  
Civic Participation;  
Quality and Excellence;  
Trustworthiness and Integrity; Equality;  
Inclusivity and Diversity;  
Creativity, Innovation, Imagination and Wellbeing.



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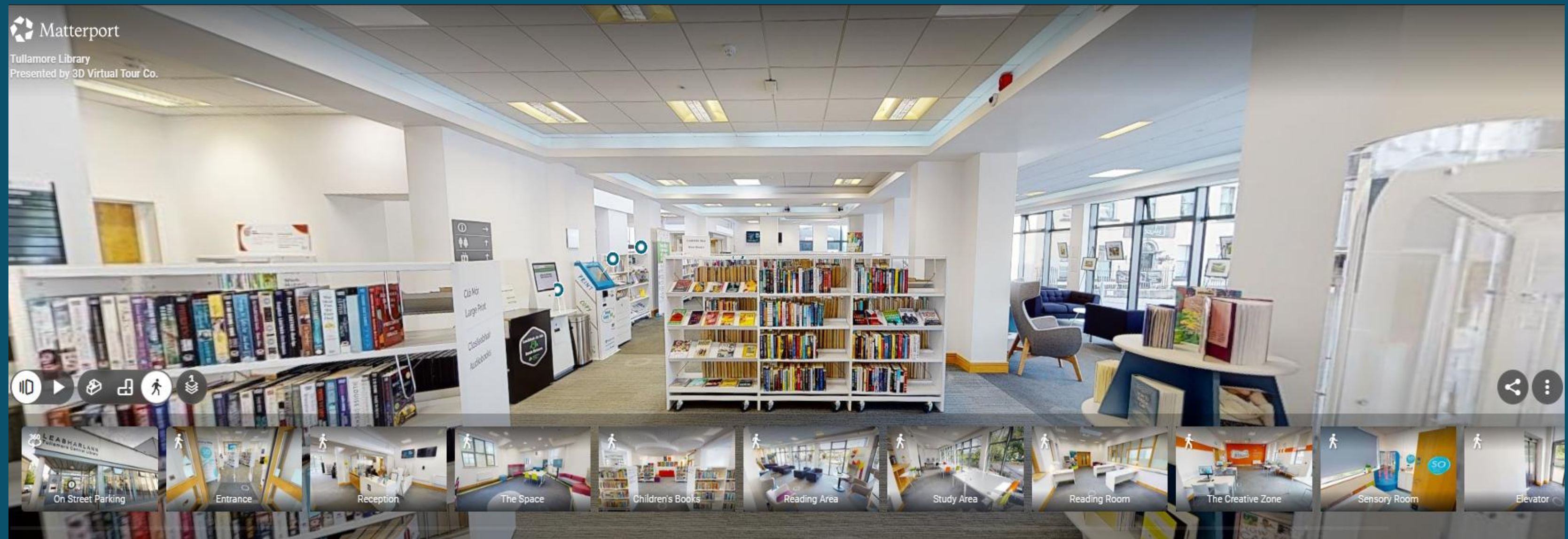
# Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

This project actively supports Offaly County Council's Public Sector Duty to provide equal access, support participation and inclusion for all library users

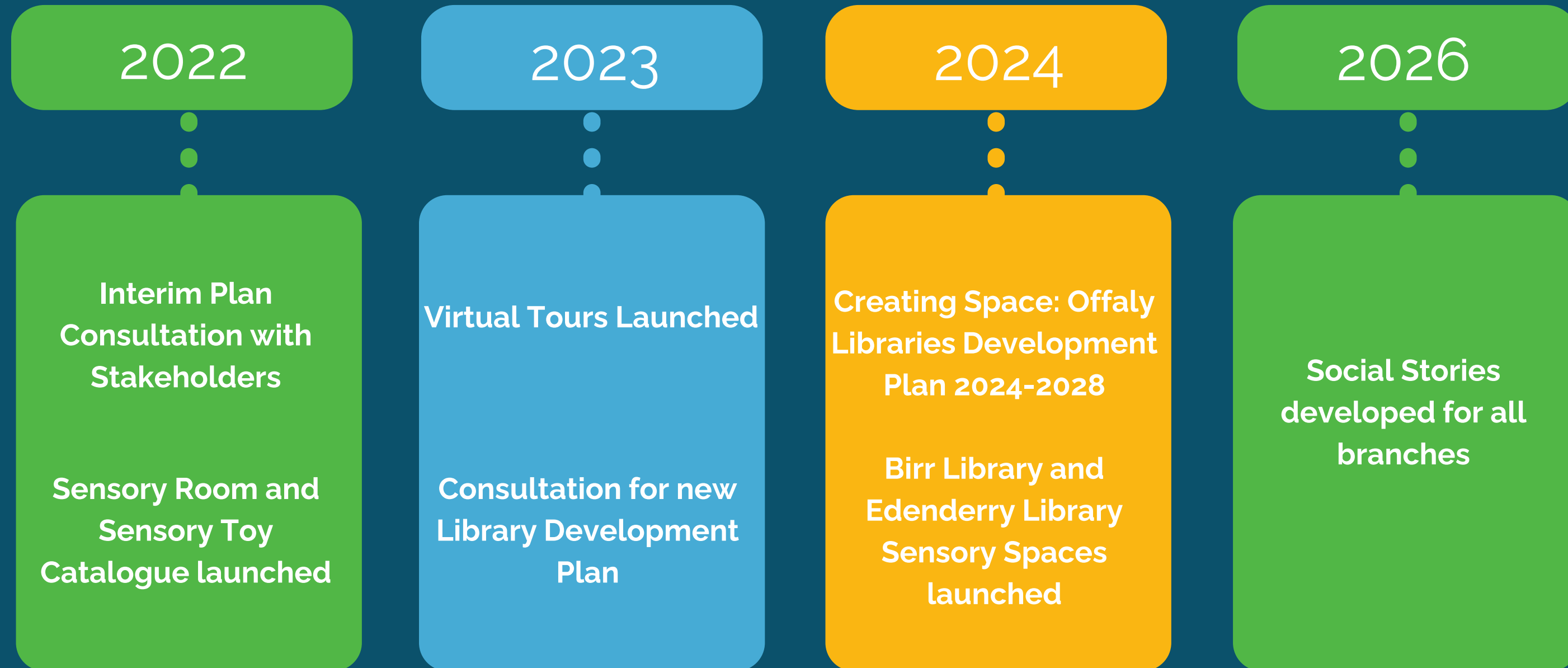


# Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

- Offaly County Council Library Service identified a need to make library spaces and services more accessible for children and adults with additional needs
- Project ensures that library environments are not only physically accessible but also predictable, welcoming, and easy to navigate
- Reflects a commitment to equality, diversity, and human rights by recognising differing needs and enhancing independence



# Timeline of Project



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- Sensory Offaly Toys and Equipment Collection
- Sensory Offaly Book Collection
- Assistive Technology
- Sensory Backpacks



# Sensory Spaces

- Sensory Rooms in Tullamore and Edenderry Libraries
- Magic tables available in Banagher, Birr, Clara, Edenderry, Ferbane, and Tullamore libraries
- Sensory Space in Birr Library launched 2025



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# Sensory Programme

- Sensory Offaly Programme with support from Laois Offaly CYPSC
- Created to support children and young adults with disabilities, additional needs, and learning challenges, along with their families



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# 3D Virtual Tours



Birr Library



Tullamore Library



Edenderry Library



Clara Library



Daingean Library



Ferbane Library



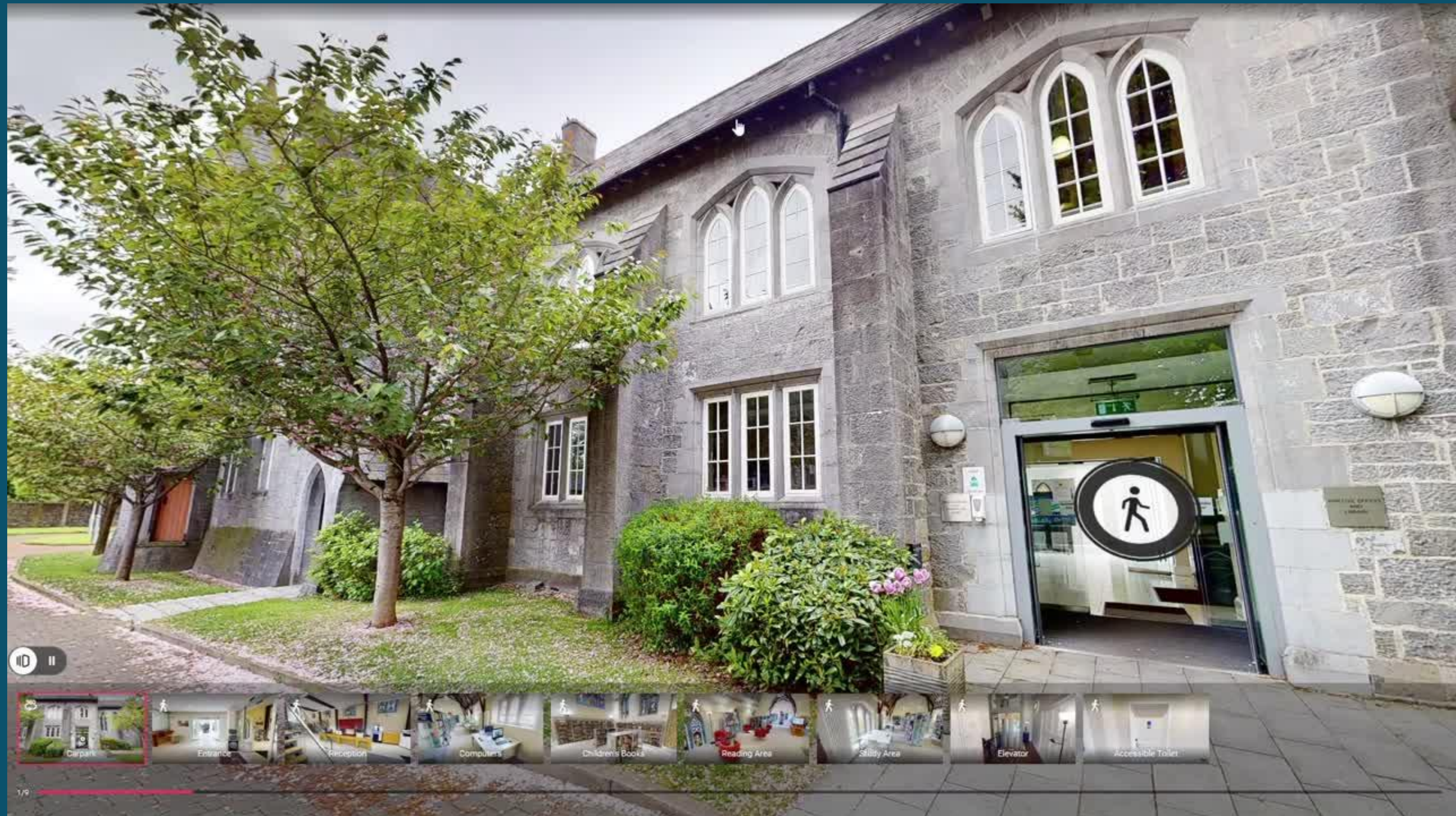
Banagher Library



Kilcormac Library

- Offaly Libraries 3D virtual tours help visitors become more familiar with the library space and services in preparation of a visit
- The 360-degree digital walkthroughs can be used to view branch layouts and explore facilities before an in-person visit
- Complements the sensory spaces and age friendly and accessible seating in our libraries

# Full Tour of Birr Library



# Tullamore Library Tour



# Information Points



# Social Stories

## Birr Library Social Story



**Welcome to Birr Library**

## Tullamore Library Social Story



**Welcome to  
Tullamore Library**

## Ferbane Library Social Story



**Welcome to Ferbane Library**

A short, personalised learning tool that uses text and pictures to explain a specific situation, skill, or event in a clear and supportive way

# Social Stories

- Carol Gray's Ten Steps to develop a Social Story used as a guide
- Using appropriate language, font and punctuation
- Staff identified key stages of a visit; arriving at the entrance, locating the service desk, finding collections, using seating areas, sensory rooms, public PCs and accessing toilets
- Pictures used to aid comprehension
- Social Stories can be accessed on the individual library branch pages [here](#)



# Social Stories

- Simple language and clear visuals to explain what happens during a library visit
- Set out routines, sensory expectations, introduce staff and highlight available supports in a step-by-step format
- Available online via library branch pages and can be accessed by families, schools, SNAs, therapists and support workers before a visit

**I can sit in the Sensory room  
I can play games on  
the magic table**



# Social Stories

- Reduce cognitive load, support executive functioning, and promote regulation by removing ambiguity
- Support inclusion by ensuring that essential information is available in formats that are accessible to a wide range of learners
- Can be used across home, school, healthcare, and community settings to support participation without demanding compliance or behavioural performance

**The staff in Tullamore library are friendly**



**Sometimes the library can be noisy**

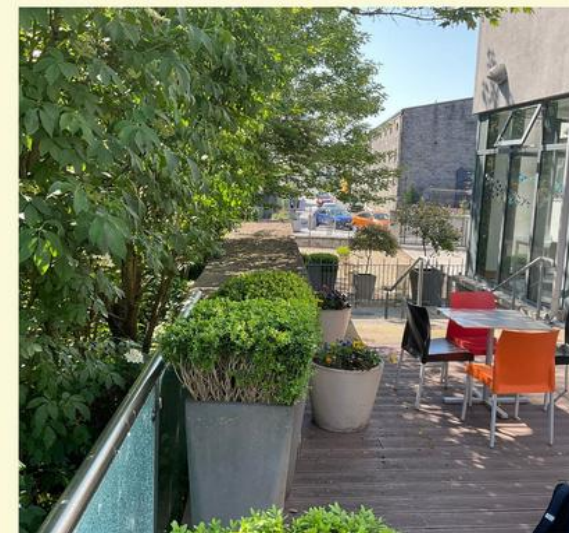
**That is okay**



**I can ask for ear defenders**



**I can sit outside**



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# Birr Library Social Story

## Birr Library Social Story



**Welcome to Birr Library**

Accessibility is not  
a problem to be  
solved. It is a  
culture to be built

# Benefits

- 3D Virtual Tours affordable and achievable
- 6,497 impressions since launch
- Social Stories can be achieved with minimal cost, using existing internal skill sets
- Both projects have contributed to increased visits from Autism Classes, adults with disabilities and increased use of sensory spaces
- Increased staff awareness and confidence



# Lessons Learned

- Accessibility is not only about physical access but also making experiences predictable and understandable
- Small interventions can make a big difference to customer confidence and participation
- Value of viewing services through the eyes of the customer
- By breaking down the library visit into clear steps staff could identify barriers allowing Offaly Libraries to embed continuous improvement ensuring services are more inclusive, responsive and welcoming for all

## Next Steps

- Professional Printing of Social Stories
- Refilming of some 3D Virtual Tours to reflect building upgrades



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