

REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

SOUTHWEST REGION 2025-2028



Cork
County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council



Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
Kerry County Council



Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Glossary	5
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	8
South-West Region Management Groups	9
Legislative Basis	11
Lisbon Declaration	12
Housing for All ¹	13
Housing First National Implementation Plans 2022 - 2026	15
National Quality Standards Framework (NQSf)	16
Department of Health	17
South-West Region - Homelessness Action Plan 2025-2028.....	18
Public Sector Duty	19
Regional structure	20
Objectives.....	21
Analysis and Emerging Trends	23
Learnings from Covid and Impact of Ukrainian Crisis	25
Partnership and Communication	26
Targets.....	27
Prevention.....	28
Protection.....	31
Progression	35
Governance	38
Conclusion	43
Appendix 1	47
Appendix 2	48
Appendix 3	50

Abbreviations and Glossary

DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DSP	Department of Social Protection
Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)	HAP is a national scheme and a form of social housing support provided by all local authorities. Under HAP, local authorities can provide housing assistance to households with a long-term housing need, including many long-term Rent Supplement recipients.
HHAP (Homeless HAP Assistance Payment)	The Homeless HAP scheme provides additional financial and related supports to tenants and landlords, along with all the benefits of the national HAP scheme. The local authority must have determined that the household is homeless and has no alternative accommodation options prior to approval of a HHAP payment.
HF - Housing First	Housing First, is a person-centred approach which provides permanent, secure accommodation for people with a history of rough sleeping or long-term use of emergency accommodation, and complex needs. Intensive health and mental health supports are provided as required to help people maintain tenancies.
HSE Health Service Executive	Health Service Executive is responsible for the provision of healthcare and social supports for homeless persons managing a significant annual budget for direct homeless services.
NTQ Notice to Quit	If a landlord or tenant wants to terminate the tenancy of a house let for rent or other valuable consideration, a valid written notice of termination must be served.
PASS (Pathway Accommodation and Support System)	PASS is the shared client support and bed management system for homeless services. PASS is the shared system in operation across statutory and voluntary homeless services. It is coordinated by the National PASS Office in the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE).
PEA - Private Emergency Accommodation	This may include hotels, B&B's and other residential facilities that are used on an emergency basis.
RAS Rental Accommodation Scheme	This is a form of social housing support provided by local authorities.
RPZ - Rent Pressure Zones	A Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) is a designated area where rents cannot exceed general inflation, as recorded by Harmonised Index of the Consumer Price (HICP), or 2% per year pro rata, where HICP inflation is higher. This applies to new and existing tenancies (unless an exemption is being applied).
SMG	Statutory Management Group of the SW Regional Forum is responsible for the co-ordination of funding in the Region, the preparation of a Statutory Homeless Action Plan, the implementation of same and the effective delivery of homeless services in the Region.
STA	Supported Temporary Accommodation, including hostels, with onsite professional support.
TEA	Temporary Emergency Accommodation: emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) support.
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency. Dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.
CUAN	Domestic violence state agency

Executive Summary

The South-West Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2025-2028 represents a comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness in the region. The key components of this plan were developed through a consultative process involving key stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Government Departments, Healthcare Services, and homeless service providers. This ensured a holistic understanding of the challenges and needs related to homelessness in the region.

During the lifetime of the previous Action Plan, significant challenges were faced across the region, despite the efforts made, homelessness remains a persistent issue in the South-West region. This plan acknowledges the complexity and diversity of factors contributing to homelessness and the ongoing need for interventions.

Continual engagement and work with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the NGO sector and critical government agencies by way of weekly, fortnightly, and monthly meetings such as the Homeless Action Team, the Local Homeless Forum, Regional Consultative Forum and the Statutory Management Group (SMG) ensures core services are delivered to the most vulnerable individuals. Those strong collaborations between local authorities, NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders is highlighted as essential for effectively managing homelessness in the region.

Unfortunately, the backdrop to the development of the new Action Plan 2025-2028, remains the persistent level of homelessness in the region, despite the significant interventions undertaken to prevent homelessness in the first instance. The causes of homelessness are complex and diverse with the significant numbers presenting to Homeless Services, and the increase in placements in emergency accommodation, has continued throughout the duration of the previous Action Plan.

Despite the multifaceted challenges of homelessness and the provision of further extensive supports in 2024, to those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, the South-West is well placed, given the strong interagency collaborations and the NGO support, that the need and volume of homeless presentations in the region can be effectively managed. This will be helped by incorporating strategic projects which are specific to the identified cohort and their specific needs which will ensure that individuals and families are supported in their time of crisis.

The Southwest Regional Homeless Action Plan 2025-2028 provides a framework for service delivery built around three core objectives underpinned by good governance:



The Southwest Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2025 – 2028 aims to put a strategic framework in place for the delivery of homeless services at a regional level. This framework guides the implementation of specific actions aimed at achieving the stated objectives. The Regional Homelessness Action Plan will serve as a foundation for the development of Local Action Plans tailored to the specific needs of each administrative area within the South-West region. These local plans will outline detailed actions relevant to addressing homelessness at the County and City levels.

Introduction

The Local Authorities in South West Region, Cork City Council, Cork County Council and Kerry County Council together with our partners in the community, form the Homeless Consultative Forum. This forum is committed to working together to provide a range of services to address the scale of presenting homelessness in the South-West Region. These partners include.

- HSE Social Inclusion South West
- DCEDIY, Tusla, Aftercare Services
- IPS - Irish Prison Services
- Department of Justice - Probation Services, Garda Siochana
- Department of Social Protection
- Cork Foyer
- Cork Simon
- DePaul Ireland
- Focus Ireland
- Good Shepherd Cork
- Peter McVerry Trust
- Novas
- O'Connell Court
- Sophia Housing
- Tabor Group
- Threshold
- Wellsprings

The Strategic Management Group (SMG) has specific responsibilities for the operational co-ordination of this Homeless Action Plan, regional service provision and the disbursement of Section 10 funding for homeless services and in commissioning new service provision. The Local Authorities via Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage provide funding to 13 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) that deliver 42 services across the South-West Region. In addition, the Local Authorities co-ordinate and fund the provision of private emergency accommodation (PEA) for people experiencing homelessness. It also provides a range of shared services to the sector as well as Government Departments via the implementation of the National Shared Client Database, namely Pathway Accommodation Support System (PASS), and the development of a Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Service Providers.

The Local Authorities have dedicated personnel for Homeless Services including Homeless Service Officers, Outreach Workers, HAP Placefinder, and Assessment Officers, while HSE Social Inclusion South West provides health services including a dedicated Multi – Disciplinary Team in the Region.

HSE Social Inclusion fully supports this regional action plan and is keen to develop further integration across Homeless services.

South-West Region Management Groups

The SMG and the Management Group of the South-West Homelessness Consultative Forum play crucial roles in addressing homelessness in the region. The SMG assesses and makes decisions on funding applications for homeless services. It also submits proposed budgets for services to relevant budgetary authorities within statutory funding agencies. This ensures that funding is allocated effectively and efficiently to address homelessness.

SMG is responsible for developing effective, efficient, and integrated responses to homelessness, including the approval of three-year local homeless action plan and the commitment to seek adequate and appropriate resources for their implementation by coordinating efforts and resources, the group aims to address homelessness comprehensively.

The SMG for the South-West is chaired by the Senior Executive Officer of Cork City Council, with representation from other key stakeholders such as Cork County Council, Kerry County Council, HSE Social Inclusion Regional Manager, and Coordinator of Homeless Services. This regional approach allows for shared resources, knowledge, and strategies to tackle homelessness effectively across the South-West region.

South - West Homelessness Consultative Forum

The South-West Homelessness Consultative Forum plays a crucial role in addressing homelessness in the region, as mandated by legislation and Ministerial directions. The Forum was established in April 2010 in accordance with Circular HU 1/2010 issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government. Its primary purpose is to serve as a consultative mechanism for the preparation of statutory South-West Homelessness Action Plans. The establishment of the Forum is grounded in legislation, specifically sections 38, 39, and 41 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

A Management Group of the South-West Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in accordance with legislation, with the primary responsibility being the preparation of this statutory South-West Homelessness Action Plan. The management group make recommendations to relevant statutory bodies in relation to the services required to address homelessness in the region, on funding for services and on the ongoing operation of this Action Plan and subsequent plans.

The overarching aim of the Forum is to provide information, advice, and recommendations to address homelessness at both national and regional levels. It emphasizes preventative policies, relationship-building, procedural reviews, and service improvements to reduce homelessness across the South-West region.

During the period of the last plan the South-West Region Consultative Forum met on a bi-monthly basis and discussed matters including:

- Review of homeless presentations across the region
- National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services in Ireland
- Regional and Agency updates
- Covid-19 and impacts on homelessness and provision of services.

The membership of the South-West Homelessness Forum is drawn from sectors as outlined in Circular HU 1/2010.



Overall, the South-West Homelessness Consultative Forum plays an essential role in coordinating efforts, allocating resources, and implementing strategies to address homelessness effectively in the South-West region. Their collaborative approach ensures a comprehensive and integrated response to this complex issue.

Legislative Basis

In accordance with Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, each Housing Authority must prepare an Action Plan to address homelessness in the administrative areas concerned by the Housing Authorities, the Health Service Executive and other bodies providing services to address homelessness.

A Homeless Action Plan shall specify the measures proposed to be undertaken to address homelessness in the administrative area or administrative areas concerned by the housing authorities, the Health Service Executive, specified bodies, or approved housing bodies or other bodies providing service to address homelessness, or the performance of whose functions may affect or relate to the provision of such services. The relevant legislation is set out in the appendices to this document. The relevant statutory provisions regarding the definition of homelessness and funding are provided under Section 2 and Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, which are also outlined in the appendices.

Joint Statutory Responsibility

The need for an Integrated Statutory response from the two sets of agencies with responsibility for the homeless has been recognised since 2000. (Housing Act, 1988 and Health Act, 1953) *“Local authorities will have responsibility for the provision of emergency hostel and temporary accommodation for homeless persons as part of their overall housing responsibility. Health boards [subsequently replaced by the HSE] will be responsible for the health and in-house care needs of homeless persons.”* (Homelessness - An Integrated Strategy, 2000, p.30)

Policy Context

In addition, the 2025-2028 Action Plan sets overarching targets to be achieved over the lifetime of the plan through the combination of actions set out under the prevention, protection, and progression themes. This is in recognition of the national commitment to end homelessness in Ireland.

The ambition to end homelessness depends on there being a sufficient supply of housing accessible to people on low and moderate incomes, effective measures in place to prevent homelessness, and appropriate support available to meet the health and care needs of people experiencing homelessness, including where necessary specialist accommodation and accommodation with wraparound support provided through Housing First.

The need for additional housing to prevent and alleviate homelessness is also specific in terms of property size. The lack of smaller property sizes is the most acute with the increased level of single homelessness being partly due to the lack of 1-bed and 2 bed properties. The short supply of 4- and 5-bedroom properties contributes to long-term homelessness of large families.

LISBON DECLARATION

The 2021 Lisbon declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness commits Ireland and other signatory countries to work towards the ending of homelessness by 2030 so that:

- No one sleeps rough for lack of accessible, safe, and appropriate emergency accommodation.
- No one lives in emergency accommodation longer than is required for successful progress to a permanent housing solution.
- No one is discharged from any institution (e.g., prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing.
- Evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no one is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution, when needed.
- No one is discriminated against due to their homelessness status.

The European Platform on Combatting Homelessness will promote policies based on a person-centred, housing-led, and integrated approach.

- Regional and local authorities, will:
- promote the prevention of homelessness, access to permanent housing and the provision of enabling support services to the homeless.
- welcome the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of these policy measures.
- support our policy measures with adequate funding and, when appropriate, make use of EU funding as a lever to improve the way we address homelessness.
- share our good practices in combatting homelessness.

<https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/news/lisbon-declaration-on-the-european-platform-on-combatting-homelessness/>



Housing for All¹

Housing for All – A Housing Plan for Ireland, published in September 2021, is the government’s 10-year housing plan with 5-year targets and a funding commitment of €4 Billion per annum to deliver over 300,000 new homes including 90,000 social and 54,000 affordable houses. The scale of the plan reflects the nature of the housing crisis and deals with social housing, cost rental, affordable purchase, and private housing. Housing for All includes commitments to end homelessness by 2030 and to implement specific policies to assist with special needs housing provision.

The Housing for All plan aims to increase new housing supply nationally to an average of at least 33,000 new units per year over the next decade. This will include over 10,000 social homes each year over the first five years, with 9,500 of these being new-builds, and an average of 6,000 affordable homes for purchase or rent. The build targets for the Southwest Region under Housing for All, as set out by the DHLGH, are included below. Each local Authority has a Housing Delivery Plan that considers the demand and need for housing in its functional area.

Cork City Council’s Action Plan provides for the delivery of up to 5,671 social and affordable homes across the city from 2022-2026, in accordance with the targets as set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, with 3,934 social homes and 1,737 affordable homes to be delivered in that timeframe.

Cork County Council has published its Housing Delivery Action Plan which sets out targets to build up to 3,880 social and affordable homes across the county by both the Council itself as well as approved housing bodies over the next five years. The plan aims to deliver 3,198 social housing homes and 682 affordable homes through direct build, turnkey and Part V arrangements. The plan will be subject to ongoing review to ensure it reflects changing needs as they arise.

Kerry County Councils Housing Delivery Action Plan provides for the delivery of 1423 Social Homes and 31 Long Term Leased properties over the period of the plan 2022-2026.

There is a firm commitment to ending Homelessness by 2030. The overall aim of the new housing plan for Ireland is that:

“Everyone in the State should have access to a home to purchase or rent at an affordable price, built to a high standard and in the right place, offering a high quality of life.”

Housing for All provides four pathways to achieving four overarching objectives:

- Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability
- Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion
- Increasing New Housing Supply
- Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

¹ Housing for All * There may be a new program for government at the time of publishing

The Housing for All pathway on “Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion” commits to:

- Through an updated ‘Housing First National Implementation Plan, 2022 - 2026’, provide 1,200 tenancies over the next five years for people with a history of rough sleeping, or long-term use of emergency accommodation and who have complex needs. (DHLGH, HSE, LAs)
- Strengthen the Mortgage to Rent scheme to ensure it meets the needs of those in long-term mortgage arrears. (DHLGH)
- Make improvements in the quality and quantity of Traveller-specific accommodation. (DHLGH, LAs, AHBs)
- Provide continued capital funding for housing for specific vulnerable cohorts, such as housing for older people and people with a disability, through the Capital Assistance Scheme and other social housing schemes. (DHLGH)
- Provide capital funding to develop further supported emergency accommodation for households experiencing homelessness and publish guidelines with standards for the development and refurbishment of emergency accommodation. (DHLGH)
- Support the DRHE to pilot a scheme to convert Local Authority and AHB owned emergency accommodation facilities to own-door permanent social housing tenancies. (DHLGH)
- Continue to increase access to health supports and protections for homeless individuals, with an individual health care plan to be provided for all homeless individuals that need one and improved access to mental health services. (HSE)
- Finalise a model of health care for people experiencing homelessness, including health and support needs assessment tool to assist in determining suitability for Housing First and level of support needed. (HSE)
- Strengthen integrated care pathways for people who are homeless with chronic health needs based on an inclusion health model, to achieve better health outcomes and to reduce the incidence of premature death and expand the case management approach for homeless people living with drug or alcohol addiction and enhance treatment options. (HSE)
- Enhance family support and prevention and early intervention services for children and their families through a multiagency and coordinated response and disseminate innovative practice. (DCEDIY, Tusla, DHLGH, LAs)
- Identify and provide enhanced tenancy sustainment supports to families experiencing long-term homelessness to help them exit from homelessness and maintain their homes. (DHLGH, LAs, DCEDIY, Tusla)
- Continue to support households through the HAP and RAS Schemes while levels of social housing stock are increased and examine whether an increase in the level of discretion available to Local Authorities under HAP is required to maintain adequate levels of HAP support. (DHLGH)
- Build upon the existing Dublin based pilot Housing First scheme aimed at those from the criminal justice system by expanding the scheme nationally, recognising that prisoners and other persons convicted before the courts frequently present as homeless with high and complex support needs and that homelessness poses a significant risk for many post release. (LAs, HSE, DJ)

Housing First National Implementation Plans 2022 - 2026

It is widely recognised that many people who sleep rough, and who are frequent users of emergency accommodation and shelters, have complex needs around mental health and addiction and require individualised supports to successfully move from homelessness to a sustainable tenancy.

The Housing First approach has been Government policy for a number of years. With Housing First, the priority is to support a person who has experienced homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, without any preconditions around sobriety or mental health treatment and to continue working intensively with them on these issues once they are housed.

Housing First recognises that a stable home provides the basis for recovery in other areas. The alignment of housing and health supports means that Housing First is very much a joint initiative of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive, the criminal justice sector (the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service), Local Authorities and NGO providers. The South-West Region has a target of 105 tenancies for the lifetime of the plan.



National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF)

The South-West Region commenced the implementation of the new and comprehensive national standards for homeless services. The objectives of the standards are to:

- Promote safe and effective service provision to people experiencing homelessness
- Support the objectives of the National Homeless Policy, i.e. enabling people to move into and sustain housing with appropriate levels of support
- Establish consistency in how persons experiencing homelessness are responded to across different regions and models of service delivery. The NQSF will be applicable to all homeless service provision in receipt of funding, whether the service is statutory, voluntary, or private. It applies to homeless services for single adults, adult couples and for adults with dependent children.



Department of Health

It is recognised in the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future that promoting positive mental health and reducing the burden of mental illness can have benefits for everyone and this is particularly notable in the area of homelessness.

- Sharing the Vision – a Mental Health Policy for Everyone (June 2020) The vision embodied in this policy is to create a mental health system that addresses the needs of the population through a focus on the requirements of the individual.
- Sharing the Vision recognises that many vulnerable groups, including those who are homeless, have specific needs, which the mental health services should be equipped to meet.

There is a recognised need to ensure that those with complex mental health difficulties are in receipt of multi-disciplinary supports from health professionals to improve their quality of life. Service users also require assistance to sustain tenancies and live independently. As a result, there must be effective liaison between mental health services and local authorities in the provision of supported, social housing.

Sustainable resourcing based on identified need for tenancy-related/independent living supports for patients with complex mental health difficulties must be considered for service users moving from HSE supported accommodation to independent living and for individuals in hospital or homeless services identified as having a housing need. Sharing the Vision includes an implementation roadmap, with outcome indicators, and allocates ownership of the recommendations to lead agencies, with time-bound implementation targets against each action. To deliver on this vision, it is essential that the close connection between healthcare supports, and housing options is recognised.

National Drugs Strategy: Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017- 2025

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery sets out the Government's strategy to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Ireland up to 2025. It identifies a set of key actions to be delivered between 2017 and 2020 and provides an opportunity for the development of further actions from 2021 to 2025 to address needs that may emerge later on in the lifetime of the strategy.

The following goals are detailed in the document:

1. Promote and protect health and wellbeing.
2. Minimise the harms caused by the use and misuse of substances and promote rehabilitation and recovery.
3. Address the harms of drug markets and reduce access to drugs for harmful use
4. Support participation of individuals, families, and communities
5. Develop sound and comprehensive evidence informed policies and actions

Regarding homelessness, the importance of homelessness services and substance misuse services working together in a collaborative way is highlighted under Goal 2, as is the need to improve the range of problem substance use services and rehabilitation supports for people with high support needs who are homeless, together with the availability of drug and alcohol, mental health and community integration services.

South-West Region - Homelessness Action Plan 2025-2028

TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, a progressive piece of legislation with children at its heart and families viewed as the foundation of a strong healthy community where children can flourish. Partnership and co-operation in the delivery of seamless services to children and families are also central to the Act. Under the Child and Family Act 2013 the Child and Family Agency is charged with:

- Supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families.
- Offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the Agency is required to maintain and develop the services needed in order to deliver these supports to children and families and provide certain services for the psychological welfare of children and their families.
- Responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing educational welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation, and retention in education.
- Ensuring that the best interests of the child guide all decisions affecting individual children.
- Consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency's policies and services.
- Strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services responsive to needs.
- Undertaking research relating to its functions and providing information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions; and
- Commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services.

Public Sector Duty

There is a requirement on public bodies to promote equality, protect human rights and prevent discrimination in accordance with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. The Local Authorities of the South-West Region are committed to addressing equality and human rights concerns for all in the delivery of housing, including Traveller accommodation, by the promotion of the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy, and autonomy.

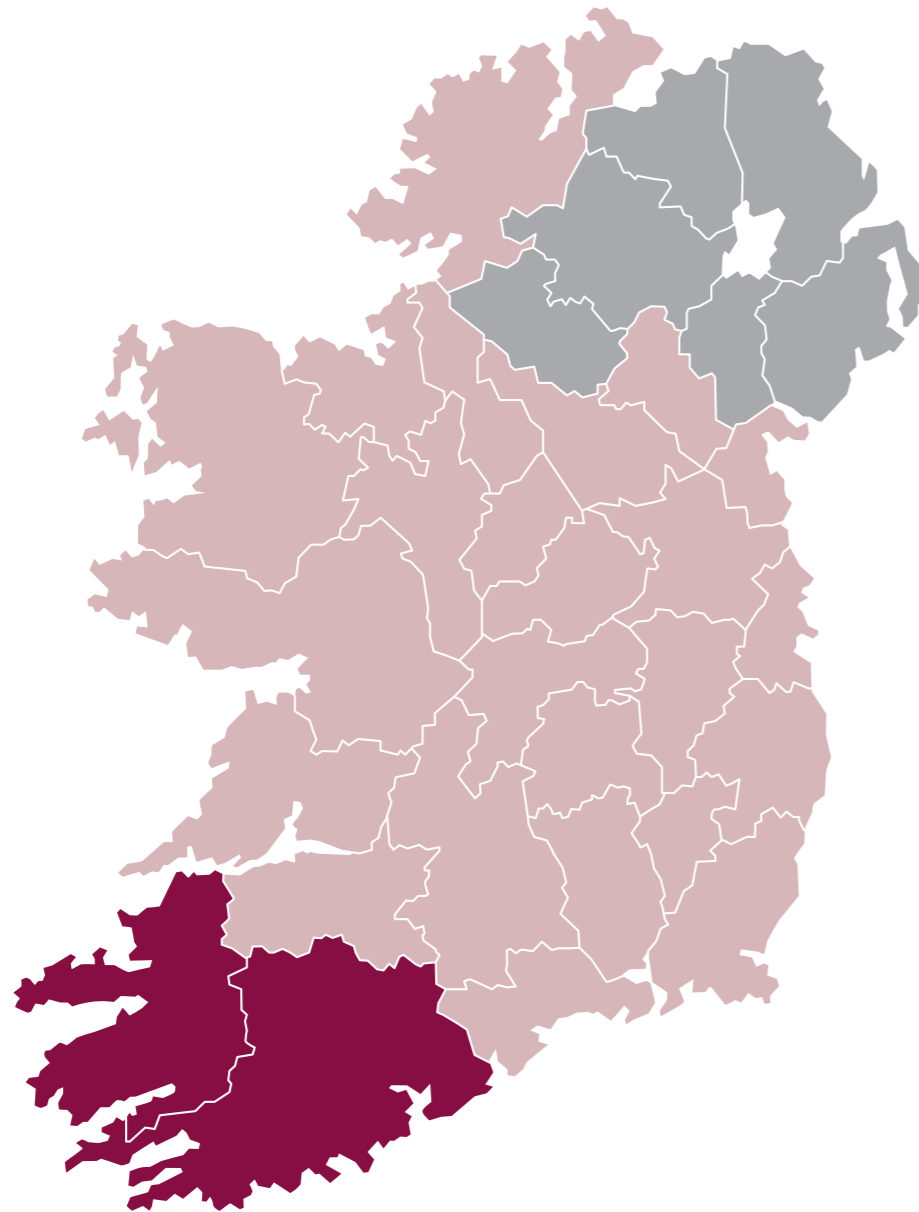
The South-West region will endeavour to develop a human rights focus into the work of the Regional Action Plan, in accordance with our Public Sector Duty as set out in Section 42(1), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. The South-West Region is committed to eliminating discrimination, achieving equality, and fulfilling human rights for all service users and in doing so recognises the diversity of people across the identified groups for the Duty.

The identified groups are those covered by the nine grounds under the equality legislation, including gender (including gender identity); civil status; family status (including lone parents and carers); age (young and older people); disability; sexual orientation; race (Black and minority ethnic people); religion and belief; and membership of the Traveller community. In addition, groups encompassed on the grounds of socio-economic status and who are at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion are also included under the Public Sector Duty. It is accepted that people may hold more than one identity and be part of more than one of the identified groups. Accordingly, the South-West Region will keep a focus on intersectionality in its implementation.

The South-West Region will continue to monitor and assess the Plan under the Duty enabling the tracking of its current responses to the issues and to further develop and expand these responses as found to be necessary, thereby advancing equality and human rights.

The Duty monitoring process as outlined will form part of the review of the Action Plan by the South-West Region, which will be conducted on an annual basis. In fulfilment of our Public Sector Duty, a specific objective on the Duty has been included in the Table of Actions.

Regional structure



Cork City Council, under a shared service arrangement, is the lead housing authority for the South-West Region with regards to homelessness. This role includes overseeing the Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum and Statutory Management Group as provided for in Sections 38 and 39 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

Cork City Council is also responsible for managing the region’s administrative relationship with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The coordinating role of the lead housing authority does not impinge on any of the statutory functions of the other housing authorities in the region, including those with regard to arrangements for the provision of accommodation for persons considered homeless.

Objectives

The 2025-2028 Homelessness Action Plan has been designed to help deliver, support, and complement the Housing for All objectives within the Southwest Region.

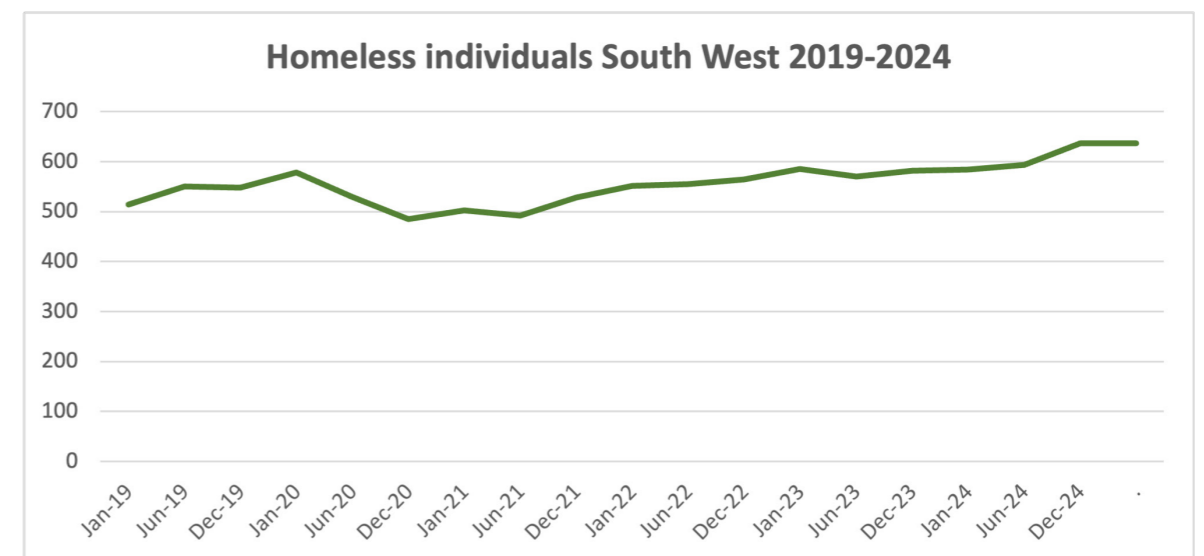
It is recognised, that ending homelessness by 2030 will require a great amount of work and cooperation. In fact, coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic there are some upward pressures on homelessness, specifically because of the lack of sufficient social and affordable homes and decreasing availability of private rented accommodation in the current housing market. While it is important to recognise that the immediate imbalance between the supply and demand for homes means that homelessness may not significantly reduced in the earlier years of this plan, this plan plays a crucial role in laying the foundations, which will bring new housing stock which will be coming on into lasting reductions in homelessness towards 2030.’

During the drafting of this plan, we continue to face the situation of where thousands of displaced persons from the Ukrainian war were granted Temporary Residence in Ireland. There will be an unprecedented demand on emergency accommodation, which provides further urgency to the need to reduce our dependence on such accommodation for accommodating homeless households. Any longer-term housing response to Ukrainian refugees will be additional to the commitments in Housing for All and the existing Housing Delivery Plans.

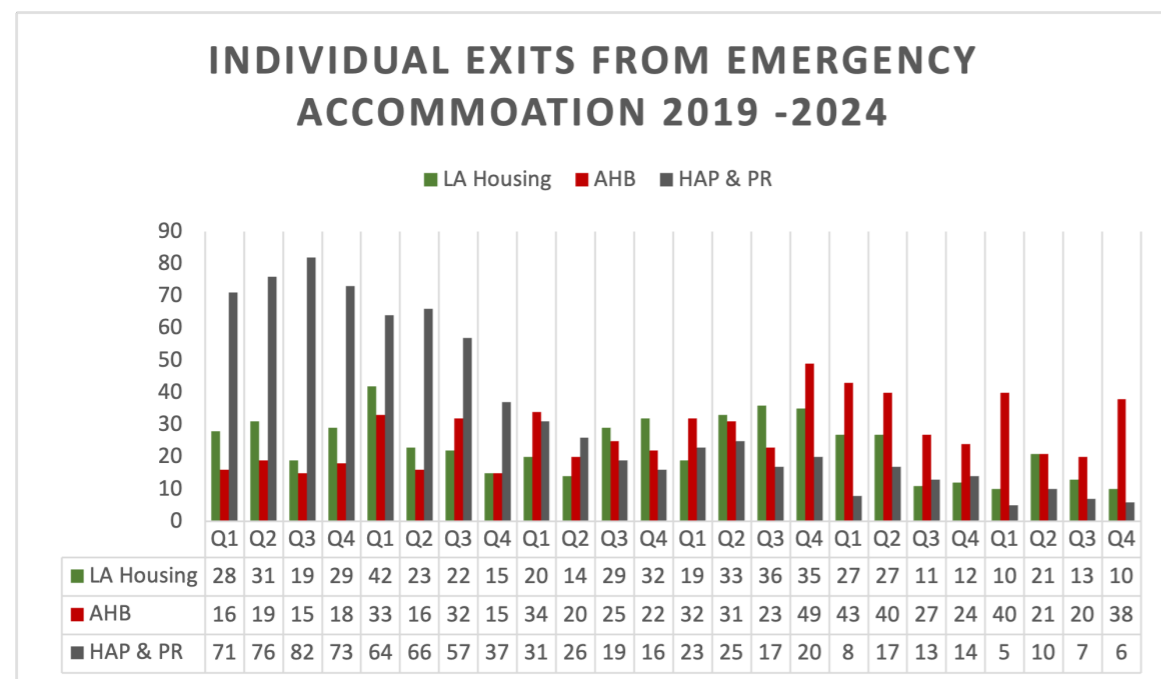
Within this context, the aim in the current action plan is to make concrete progress towards ending homelessness and build the foundations, which will enable the vision of Housing for All to be fully achieved by 2030. This is principally by increasing the focus on homelessness prevention, improving the quality and consistency of the accommodation and support available to people experiencing homelessness, and ensuring as far as possible that any time spent in emergency accommodation is short.

The plan also includes important objectives to make better use of data to understand the causes of homelessness and the outcomes achieved for distinct groups and to address inequalities within service provision.

Considerable effort from Local Authorities and NGOs has maintained relatively stable homeless numbers despite a shortage of suitable long-term exit; particularly shortage in one bed accommodation and accommodation with varying levels of supports.



Although private rented accommodation availability increased temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic, this has reversed more recently, and availability has continued to decline. In the absence of sufficient supply of social housing, the availability of private rented accommodation is critical to reducing the number of households living in emergency accommodation.



There is still a heavy reliance on the PEA emergency sector in providing emergency accommodation, the availability and cost of same has increased following the end of Covid restrictions and the influx of beneficiaries of temporary protection due to the invasion of Ukraine. While there was a reduction in expenditure during Covid, these figures do not include the significant expenditure to allow for social distancing and isolation in homeless services. PEA provides a necessary service; however, STA remains the preferred type of accommodation for the majority service users in helping to better outcomes.

Analysis and Emerging Trends

Presentations

In terms of presentations, each local authority reported considerable numbers of presentations, a high portion of which are repeat presentations. The main reasons for homeless presentations continue to be Notice to Termination from landlords and family circumstances including family / relationship breakdown, addiction, mental health and domestic violence, 18^{-year-olds} including care leavers.

Emergency Accommodation Placements

Similar to the trend in presentations, the number of households placed in emergency accommodation has also increased. However, when compared to the extent of presentations, the number of actual placements in emergency accommodation highlights the extent and importance of the preventative work that is carried out by the respective Homeless Services in avoiding the need to resort to emergency accommodation provision.

Exits from Emergency Accommodation

The trends in each county reveal a high number of preventions and exits from emergency accommodation in the last number of years has been via local authority and AHB-provided accommodation being the primary exit strategies. The Tenant in Situ scheme prevented a large quantity of households from entering homelessness. The continued increasing supply of new social housing delivery across the region is anticipated to continue over the duration of the 2025-2028 Plan.

The Tenant in Situ Scheme has allowed the Local Authorities to buy properties where tenants are facing eviction when the landlord is selling the property. The Scheme applies to tenants with a valid Notice of Termination, deemed at risk of experiencing homelessness and who qualify for social housing support, including those in receipt of Rent Supplement, Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), or in a RAS or long-term leased property. This scheme has been successful to date in the region in preventing individuals and families from entering Emergency Accommodation.

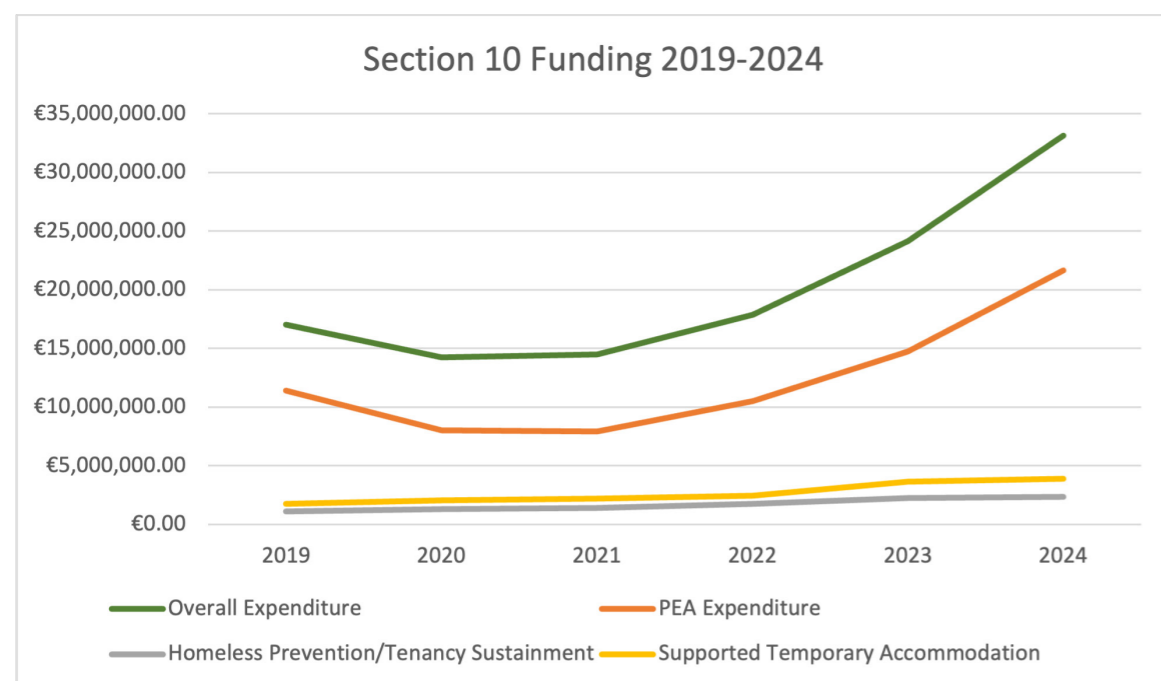
The number of family households with dependent children exiting emergency accommodation continues to increase and demonstrates the focus by each authority in assisting families. The challenge of securing one bed properties for single adult households will continue for the foreseeable future pending the increase in the construction and availability of such property. The need for 4-bed plus accommodation for larger families remains a challenge.

The varying degrees of prominence of homelessness experiences in the South-West Region provides a challenging context for the development of the current Action Plan. As a result, the plan is, and subsequent actions are, sensitive to local contexts and mindful to the fact that some actions will be more relevant to certain Local Authorities than others. Furthermore, the plan also considers the current (and changing) policy context.

Taken together these elements have informed the development of key themes and actions for the South-West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2025– 2028. Central to the Action Plan is a commitment to homelessness prevention in the South-West Region. Despite significant increases in the numbers of people experiencing homelessness, work continues to prevent emergency accommodation placements in the first instance. This has involved the development and consolidation of systems, protocols and good working relationships with a range of stakeholders and is particularly important in the prevention of homelessness among priority groups (e.g. youth (18-25), those over 65; those living with disability; Travellers and/or those exiting Direct Provision to mention but a few examples).

Regardless of the work undertaken to date, the percentage increase in the number of adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation, clearly demonstrates that it has not been possible to prevent homelessness in the South-West Region. The provision of emergency accommodation has become a necessary intervention and there is a clear need to ensure sufficient availability of quality emergency accommodation across the various models of provision. This includes provision for general supply, to interventions tailored specifically for the diverse homeless communities and experiences, sensitive to case needs. This guiding principle is in-keeping with the National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) for Homeless Services in Ireland.

The expenditure for 2019-2024 and the percentage that PEA expenditure accounts for is outlined in the below graph.



An objective within the new plan and subsequent plans is to reduce the proportion of expenditure on emergency accommodation particularly private emergency accommodation within the total and increase the proportion of expenditure on the other elements, especially on prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlement supports. Funding for services and initiatives to improve the health of those experiencing homelessness in Ireland is provided through HSE services and Section 39 agencies via HSE Social Inclusion South West and the HSE National Social Inclusion Office.

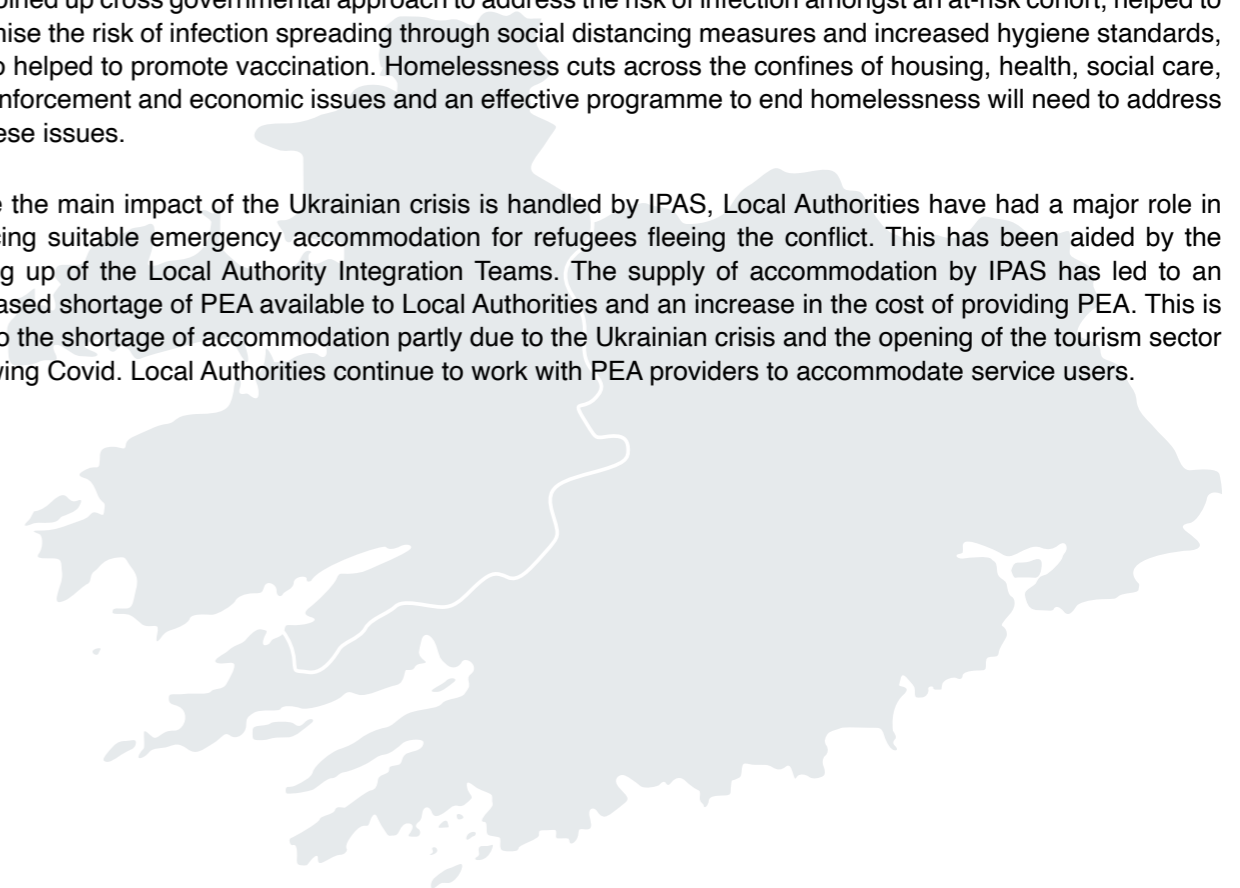
Learnings from Covid and Impact of Ukrainian Crisis

The Covid 19 pandemic brought serious challenges to all involved in homeless services, it also displayed the unified nature of homeless services and the ability to co-operate and work together with Local Authorities, NGOs, PEA providers and HSE Social Inclusion Team. Those working in homeless services continued to provide an excellent support to service users, in the most challenging of times and at significant risk to themselves.

All those involved in homelessness continue to work in a more cohesive manner with a greater level of communication between all.

The joined up cross governmental approach to address the risk of infection amongst an at-risk cohort, helped to minimise the risk of infection spreading through social distancing measures and increased hygiene standards, it also helped to promote vaccination. Homelessness cuts across the confines of housing, health, social care, law enforcement and economic issues and an effective programme to end homelessness will need to address all these issues.

While the main impact of the Ukrainian crisis is handled by IPAS, Local Authorities have had a major role in sourcing suitable emergency accommodation for refugees fleeing the conflict. This has been aided by the setting up of the Local Authority Integration Teams. The supply of accommodation by IPAS has led to an increased shortage of PEA available to Local Authorities and an increase in the cost of providing PEA. This is due to the shortage of accommodation partly due to the Ukrainian crisis and the opening of the tourism sector following Covid. Local Authorities continue to work with PEA providers to accommodate service users.



Partnership and Communication

Tackling homelessness in the South-West is very much a partnership approach between Local Authorities, the HSE, NGOs and other partners. The 2025-2028 Action Plan specifies the specific actions required to enable the achievement of the strategic goals, specifying the lead agency and key partners and measurement for the achievement of the action.

The plan is based upon consultation with all Statutory and NGO partners and their input into the actions that are specified. In many cases in this plan the statutory organisations are named as the business owner. However, it is NGOs, in many cases that are tasked with the delivery of services, funded by the Local Authorities, HSE, TUSLA or others. The annual business plans will break down the strategic goals and set out more fully the role of NGO partners in delivering the agreed actions. In the Southwest Region, the Local Homeless Fora nominates representatives to the Southwest Homelessness Consultative Forum and its sub-groups. The Regional Lead wishes to acknowledge the contribution of all its partners both Statutory and Voluntary in their work towards addressing the scale of the current homeless crisis to date and in the progression of this new Statutory Homeless Action Plan.



Targets

Targets to be achieved by the end of this plan.

The national ambition to work towards ending homelessness by 2030 requires that definite progress is made between 2025 and 2028.

Some of the steps required to end homelessness by 2030 will require a longer lead time to implement. This particularly applies to the steps being taken towards increasing housing supply and improving the affordability and availability of housing to those on lower incomes. The steps to be taken- over the course of this plan will be working towards our joint goal of ending homeless by 2030. Numerical targets towards achieving these objectives will be set and monitored through annual Business Plans.

Within the current plan the region aims, by the end of 2028, to:

- 1 Ensure all identified entrenched rough sleepers and long-term homeless individuals with complex needs, in the South-West are offered housing through Housing First during the lifetime of this plan.
- 2 Increase exits to tenancies for families with children living in emergency accommodation, identify the barriers to achieving exits and address those barriers where achievable.
- 3 Achieve a significant reduction in the number of individuals and families in emergency accommodation for longer than 12 months over the duration of the plan.
- 4 Increase the proportion of families and single individuals prevented from becoming homeless by support to sustain their existing tenancy or support to find a replacement tenancy.
- 5 Reduce the percentage of families in Emergency Accommodation living in commercial hotels.
- 6 The need to prevent and address youth homelessness and the delivery of longer-term housing options for this cohort in sustainable and supported accommodation solutions for homeless Youths.
- 7 Ensure that everyone assessed as needing care and support is offered an integrated care plan for those who remain in EA for greater than 14 days and thereafter are being supported to manage their physical / general health, mental health, and addiction issues as part of their plan.
- 8 Ensure that all those requiring support after moving out of Emergency Accommodation receive that support, and that lack of support does not present a barrier to progress from Emergency Accommodation.
- 9 The Local Authorities and the HSE will engage with relevant stakeholders in the provision of improved services for rough sleepers and users of homeless services in the day time hours.
- 10 Improve the understanding of the causes and solutions of homelessness in the Southwest by facilitating the sharing of relevant research through the homeless forums and other channels.
- 11 Devising strategies for accommodating single homeless adults in supported shared tenancy arrangements given the demand for and supply of one bedroom accommodation in the Southwest Region.
- 12 Have an identified pathway out of homelessness for each single person households including exits to single tenancies, shared tenancy arrangements, housing first tenancies, post-treatment housing or long-term supported accommodation as appropriate, with a view to ending or preventing long-term homelessness among this cohort.

PREVENTION

Strategic Goal Theme

Prevention – providing early intervention to people at risk of homelessness. This goal has two main components, the direct intervention to prevent presenting families, individuals and youths becoming homeless and enhanced statutory interventions and community infrastructures to reduce the risk of people becoming homeless.

Prevention actions in the context of this plan focus on sustaining the existing tenancy or diverting the household from homelessness.

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
1.1	Alignment of services and activities to sustaining existing tenancies to diverting the household from experiencing homelessness.	LAs/NGOs	Services aligned to outcomes i.e., preventing the household from experiencing homelessness.	PASS/NGO data
1.2	Target Prevention Supports at households in arrears in Private Rental, HAP, or Social Housing. Support advocacy and early engagement strategies for households with arrears.	LAs/NGOs	Prevention of homelessness through early intervention. Liaison with DHLGH and HAP SSC, MABS, DSP, AHBs, LAs.	Reduction in Notice of Terminations for arrears.
1.3	Earlier referrals to prevention services by local authorities. Those contacting local authorities for help because their home is at risk e.g. because they have a notification of termination will be referred to commissioned homelessness prevention services.	Threshold	Increased number of homelessness preventions. Reduced number of those contacting local authorities moving into emergency accommodation Accurate advice and information that directs the individual away from homelessness.	Local authority and NGO data. Record of referral and prevention actions

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
1.4	Enhance coordinated approaches to prevent homelessness following discharge from hospital. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued implementation and expansion of the existing Homeless hospital discharge programme/protocol. Continued engagement with HSE Complex Case Management Team (CCMT). Deliver and expand Inclusion Health Project. Deliver additional Homeless Health Peer Advocates. Identification of alternative supports/housing/specialised care e.g ‘Sundial House’ model of care Identification of leads within HSE to support prevention. 	HSE / Local Authorities/ NGOs	Prevention of homelessness for vulnerable persons. Cessation of inappropriate discharges into homelessness.	HSE data
1.5	Support the Governments National Youth Homelessness Action Plan and implement this in the Southwest.	LAs/HSE/ Tusla/NGOs	Strategy agreed and implemented. Reduced youth homelessness. Improved outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness.	LAs/HSE/ Tusla/NGOs.

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
1.6	Review and implementation of the current protocols and systems in place for identified vulnerable groups and their effectiveness in terms of preventing homelessness. In particular, the following target groups: 1. Discharges from Psychiatric units. 2. Those fleeing domestic, and gender-based violence. 3. Young People leaving care. 4. Prison Discharges. (including sex offenders) 5. Former Drug users leaving rehabilitation centres who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	LAs HSE / LA Cuan Lee/ CUAN TUSLA IPS, PS HSE / NGO	Protocols to address the needs of these groups. Reduced homelessness and emergency accommodation use among target groups. Policy proofing to prevent homelessness.	CUAN, TUSLA, IPS, PS, HSE data LA data on Reasons for Presentation.
1.7	Provide targeted prevention interventions for senior citizens presenting to homeless services. This should include prioritisation for available Older Person accommodation over other households.	LAs	Increased number of preventions and less EA placements for senior citizens.	LA data
1.8	Provide targeted prevention interventions for those experiencing domestic violence presenting to homeless services.	LA/NGO/ CUAN/DOJ	Prevention of homelessness for vulnerable persons. through implementation of barring/safety orders.	CUAN/LA data
1.9	Interagency collaborations focusing on Homeless Youths and sourcing medium to long term housing options to prevent homelessness.	LA/NGO/ TUSLA/HSE	Reduce incoming homeless. Create tenancies	LA / NGO data

PROTECTION

Strategic Goal Theme

Protection – protecting people experiencing homelessness through emergency accommodation provision and targeted support.

This goal has two main objectives - the provision of adequate numbers of safe secure emergency accommodation beds to prevent people having to sleep rough and a targeted approach and provision of such accommodation and support services to the identified vulnerable groups.

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
2.1	Provide sufficient emergency accommodation in STAs, Family Hubs and PEAs, to include accessible units to prevent rough sleeping.	LAs/NGOs	Prevent and reduce the risk of rough sleeping. Provide suitable accommodation for those with disabilities	The continuous monitoring of presenting need and the placement of people in suitable emergency accommodation
2.2	Alternative solution to One Night Only beds and Night light service.	LA/NGOs/ HSE	Sourcing stable supported STA	Local authority and-NGO data.
2.3	Continue proactively engaging with individuals sleeping rough in the Region, referring to the Housing First intake team when appropriate, and facilitating access to supports.	LAs/ NGOs/ HSE	Individuals sleeping rough will be supported into accommodation including Housing First where possible and the number of individuals sleeping rough will decrease.	Monitoring of rough sleeper numbers
2.4	Assess the scale and type of presenting need to measure the capacity of the existing emergency accommodation demand and to plan future emergency accommodation provision.	LAs/ NGOs/ HSE/ DHLGH	Ensure that an adequate number of STA beds are available to assist individuals transition through homelessness.	The continuous monitoring of need and the assessment of current capacity and future provision of emergency accommodation.
2.5	Continue to improve the quality of services available to families and single adults experiencing homelessness.	Las / HSE	Expand quality standards to all services including PEA	Monitoring of all accommodation types

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
2.6	Review and enhance the initial assessment process to include a full assessment of housing need at the point of entry.	LAs	Identify an exit from homelessness at the initial assessment	PASS
2.7	Given the continuous presenting scale of family homelessness, the LAs will work to place families in STAs, Family Hubs and PEAs with in reach supports, and only use commercial hotels when no other accommodation is available in the region.	LAs	Families will be given the most supported placement available to minimise the duration of their stay in emergency accommodation and to ensure that the quality of life of the child is prioritised	The continuous monitoring of need and the assessment of current capacity and future provision of emergency accommodation.
2.8	Facilitate the assessment of needs for children in emergency accommodation by Public Health Nurses and other health professionals	HSE/ TUSLA	The assessment of need and links to primary health care and education services are to be actively monitored and reported to SMG.	HSE/TUSLA Data
2.9	Provide early intervention supports for children in emergency accommodation, including supports to families to be able to access/maintain childcare and school placements.	NGOs/ TUSLA/ HSE	The assessment of need and links to primary health care and education services are to be actively monitored and reported to SMG.	HSE/TUSLA data
2.10	Develop a LGBTQI+ strategy, to include an examination on the establishment of specific LGBTQI+ friendly accommodation.	LAs	Strategy to be finalised by end of 2025, for implementation by end of Q2 2026.	No of dedicated LGBTQI+ placements per quarter into specific accommodation.
2.11	Continue to implement and evaluate the homeless hospital discharge programme and expand to include paediatric and maternity hospitals.	HSE/ NGOs/ Tusla	Improved care pathways and health and development outcomes for vulnerable pregnant women, new mothers, and their babies.	HSE data

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
2.12	Ensure that all households moving into EA have an assessment of their support, health, and care needs within two weeks of presenting as homeless.	LAs/NGO	All homeless households are to be assessed quickly to ascertain if they have support needs.	Support assessments and outcomes to be tracked by HSE / LAs for each household.
2.13	Case management to be available for all homeless households assessed as needing support within two weeks of the assessment. This includes households in PEA.	LAs/HSE/ NGOs	An individual health care plan will be in place for all households assessed as needing one. Each new presenting household will be met and have completed Initial Assessment within 2 weeks.	PASS Data
2.14	Develop a single integrated homeless case management for the Southwest for all single adults in PEA	HSE/LAs/ Mental Health services/ Drug and alcohol services/ NGOs	Clear lines of accountability and more effective case management	Team set up and fully staffed
2.15	Improve access to mental health and disability services for people experiencing homelessness, including a stepped model of mental healthcare in the Southwest.	HSE/ Mental Health services/ LAs	Better mental health services for people in EA or experiencing street homelessness. Stepped model in place by March 2025 HSE	HSE data
2.16	Approve and implement draft prison discharge policy in the Southwest Region. Early engagement between IPS, Probation Service. Prisoners and HSE to plan for care and support needs on release.	LAs/IPS/ HSE	Prisoners to have an active housing application on discharge to allow access to housing supports.	PASS, HSE & IPS data
2.17	Explore alternative arrangements, such as leasing, building conversion, recommissioning, to reduce the use of shared EA for families and dormitory style EA for singles and to spread temporary accommodation more evenly across the region	LAs/ AHBs/ NGOs	Understanding on the viability and cost benefit analysis of different options to reduce use of shared and dormitory accommodation	Worked up proposals to move from shared to self-contained accommodation

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
2.18	Provide a de-escalation service to reduce exclusions in all emergency accommodation settings.	LAs /HSE/ AHBs/ NGOs	Placement sustainment protocols will be enhanced, and complaints will be reduced.	Complaints & PASS v2. data
2.19	Ensure Multi-Agency Protocols in place for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Critical Incidents Review of Death in homeless services 	NGOs/ HSE	Identification of policies, practices and operational provision enhance safeguarding and wellbeing.	Formalise Critical Incidents reporting and review % of Death in Services. Implementation of learning in SLAs.
2.20	Adequate EA for homeless youths	LAs / NGOs/ HSE	Supported and suitable placement for youths	LA & NGO PASS
2.21	Implementing the Homeless Youth Strategies	LAs / NGOs/ HSE/Tulsa	Exits and prevention of Youths from Homelessness	LA & NGO PASS
2.22	Life Coach ensuring living skills	NGOs / HSE	Identification of practices and operational provision enhance safeguarding and wellbeing.	Sustained tenancies



PROGRESSION

Strategic Goal Theme

3. Progression – Identifying and enabling pathways to long-term housing solutions This strategic goal is key to reducing the current scale of homelessness. The critical issue is the supply of affordable and secure housing that can meet the housing needs of those experiencing homelessness and the current social housing waiting list. It is accepted that the supply of new housing will be from both the private rented and the social housing sectors. A targeted approach and provision of long-term supported housing will be needed for the identified vulnerable groups.

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
3.1	Targeted approach by all local authority and NGO support teams to create a culture of progression out of homelessness.	LAs /NGOs/ HSE	More moves from EA. Reduced dependence on EA	PASS/SLA Data
3.2	Review targets with each emergency accommodation provider quarterly to assess opportunities, blocks, and gaps.	LAs /NGOs	Less families in emergency accommodation and shorter duration of stay	PASS data per provider
3.3	Improve communications between partners, especially about evidence of what is working well, with a view to expanding good, evidence-based practice, e.g. facilitating the sharing of findings from relevant research and evaluation undertaken by or for homeless services in the region.	Southwest Homeless Consultative Forum and Statutory Management Group.	Better sharing of evidence and knowledge from services across the region. Expansion of services shown to be working well	LA data, research evidence NGO data.
3.4	Ensure access to resettlement to enable exits from homelessness	LAs/NGOs/ AHB	Better access to tenancy support services to remove blockages to exiting homeless services and prevent service users re-entering homeless services.	Number of tenants successfully supported to live independently. Number of Tenancy breakdowns where a visiting support service is in place.

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
3.5	Continued expansion of Housing First in the Southwest region.	LAs /NGOs/ HSE/AHBs	People with significant support needs living successfully in their own accommodation. Reductions in Rough Sleeping, EA use, repeat homelessness, and poor management of health conditions.	LA, HSE, NGO and AHB data.
3.6	Agree increased access to social housing support for households experiencing homelessness, especially families with support needs, including appropriate and targeted housing sustainment supports.	LAs/AHBs/ NGOs/HSE	Work towards exits exceeding/matching new presentation. Provision of supports to enable a prompt exit from homelessness and tenancy sustainment to prevent a re-entry.	LA/PASS data
3.7	Collect and share data with the DHLGH on the numbers of households in emergency accommodation who do not qualify for social housing support.	LA	Understanding of the barriers to households exiting homelessness	Clear policy on emergency accommodation provision for persons not qualified for social housing support
3.8	Review and report on difficulties with Social Housing Application Process and if required, recommend changes to the DHLGH	LA	Reduction in the number of incomplete or incorrectly completed housing applications submitted	LA data
3.9	Engagement with the HAP Shared Services Centre on the issues reported to Local Authorities/NGOs by the private rental sector, to reduce administrative barriers and incentivise landlords letting to tenants supported by HAP.	LAs	More landlords letting to tenants supported by HAP/ RAS. Reduced costs of EA.	PASS data

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
3.10	Implement National incentives available to landlords to let to both HAP/RAS tenants.	LAs/DHLGH	More landlords letting to tenants supported by HAP. Reduced dependence on EA	PASS data
3.11	Ensure local authority housing plans have regard for the assessed housing needs of homeless households	LA	Appropriate housing will be available for those to progress from EA Housing First targets will be met	LA data
3.12	Engage with Intreo and the local ETB to ensure suitable access to training and the labour market	LAs/DSP	Sustained progression from homelessness will be supported.	ETB/Intreo
3.13	Focus on homeless youths and identifying suitable accommodation exits	LAs /NGOs	Identification of policies, practices and operational provision enhance safeguarding and wellbeing.	LA Data



GOVERNANCE

Strategic Goal Theme

4. Proper Governance and Finance Oversight

The Local Authorities are responsible for the provision of homeless services and the disbursement of Section 10 funding. The statutory budget and expenditure continue to increase each year.

Accordingly, it is essential that appropriate governance and accountable structures are in place for all the agencies, statutory and voluntary, involved in delivering the range of homeless services.

Improved delivery, in line with stated outcomes and targets, in terms of prevention of homelessness, protection of those experiencing homelessness and successful progression from homelessness will inevitably give rise to additional costs. This will require an increase in levels of resourcing from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through Local Authorities, including to NGO/AHB partners. It will also require an appropriate level of resourcing and joined-up approach by HSE and other state bodies, including Tusla and Cuan, to activities that support the delivery of plan objectives and targets.

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
4.1	Cork City Council will co-ordinate an Annual Section 10 Homeless Budget for submission to the DHLGH, in line with Local Authorities annual estimates of expenditure. A key principle is ensuring a value for money approach for all the services being provided. All expenditure and recoupments to be made in line with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circulars and DHLGH's protocols.	Cork City Council	Timely preparation of annual budget and the timely recoupment of expenditure incurred from the DHPLG	Funding applications will be sent out and returns received by the end of Quarter 3. The Local Authorities will tender as required for new services or for services whose contract has expired.
4.2	The Local Authorities will document the process for new service and change of service requests to align with the budgetary cycle.	LAs	Services are funded and support the delivery of the objectives in the action plan. There will be adequate flexibility for emergency responses.	New funding or change of service requests will align with the budgetary cycle and will demonstrate alignment to the action plan, including specific actions, outcomes, and performance

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
4.3	The Local Authorities will require all funded organisations to have a Service Level Agreement in place which specifies the services, conditions, and funding of same. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Local Authorities will ensure timely payments to all service providers, subject to the availability of Section 10 funding. The Local Authorities will continue to audit funded organisations. As set out in the SLA's, funded organisations will submit quarterly and annual financial returns 	LA	SLA agreements in place and followed	The provision of quarterly reports by each service provider to the LAs. The formal annual review of the SLA and performance of the service provider by the DRHE, through KPIs.
4.4	Under the National Quality Standards Framework, it is the role of the Local Authorities to ensure that the specified quality standards of all service providers are monitored, and a plan of improvement is put in place by each service organisation.	LAs	Submission of Quality Standards and performance reports will form part of the discussion on finance.	A review of the progression of the Quality Standards will be carried out each year.



Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
4.5	<p>Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies in performing their functions to have regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate discrimination. • Promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services. • Protect the human rights of staff and service users. <p>In this regard, the Local Authorities will undertake the following actions in the Homeless Action Plan for the Southwest 2025 - 2028.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake a participative assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to the provision of homeless service, covering the nine grounds under the equality legislation and the socio-economic status ground. 2. Identify additional actions on foot of this assessment to address the issues identified and incorporate these into the framework for implementation 	LAs	<p>Assessment of equality and human rights issues and action plan completed and reviewed annually.</p>	<p>The actions identified will be monitored and reported as part of the annual reporting and business planning process over the lifetime of the Homeless Action Plan. An equality assessment will be commissioned for completion at 18 months into the lifetime of the Homeless Action Plan.</p>
4.6	<p>The Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that the legally binding General Data Protection Regulations are complied with by both the Local Authorities and all funded service providers. Policies and procedures are to be developed and implemented, including data breach systems.</p>	LAs	<p>Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Authorities and the Section 10 funded service providers</p>	<p>Any breaches of GDPR will be monitored, reviewed, and corrected</p>

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
4.7	<p>Ensure all staff are trained to support diversity in homeless services.</p>	HSE/ LAs/ NGOs	<p>Regular training and upskilling opportunities available to all staff to complete training in the areas of Equality and Diversity.</p>	<p>Each Service to Retain a record of Staff Training.</p>
4.8	<p>The Local Authorities will comply with Freedom of Information requirements.</p>	LAs	<p>FOI requests are responded to in line with the relevant legislation</p>	<p>LA Data</p>
4.9	<p>1) The Local Authorities will provide and publish reports on the scale of homelessness in the region.</p>	LA'S	<p>The scale and patterns of homelessness within the region are better understood, and this informs the delivery of this plan.</p>	<p>Published monthly and Quarterly and Department of Housing publications nationally.</p>
4.10	<p>The Local Authorities will be responsible for the continued development of PASS V2</p>	LAs	<p>The development of enhanced performance management and reporting tools.</p>	<p>PASS National Office</p>
4.11	<p>Local Authorities will continue to support training to statutory funded service providers, including short training informational inputs into key areas of work such as social housing application and HAP processes, etc.</p> <p>Staff in Local Authorities will be provided with appropriate training particularly relating to any changes in legislation.</p> <p>Frontline staff will be offered training on Trauma Informed Care.</p>	LAs/ NGOs	<p>Continue to provide training with annual reviews to meet training needs across the sector.</p> <p>Staff will deliver accurate advice and information to persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Staff will be aware of the impact of trauma on service users.</p>	<p>LA Data</p>

Action No.	Description of Action	Owner	Outcomes	Measurement
4.12	Implement and promote fair and objective complaints handling. The Complaints Officer will have regard to diversity and needs of complainants. The Complaints Officer will resolve complaints as early as possible. All complaints will be formally investigated in an independent and robust manner within defined processes and timelines.	LAs	Everyone will know how to make a complaint or find out easily and this information will be available in different languages. Complaints are recorded and information on the category of complaint. Learning from Complaints handling is fed back in the form of changes to policies or procedures and communicated appropriately.	LA Data
4.13	Ensure that the perspectives of persons experiencing homelessness are reflected in the governance of services and reviews.	LAs	The experience of persons experiencing homelessness is sought and informs the delivery of services.	LA Data

Conclusion

Addressing homelessness requires a coordinated, multi-sector approach that prioritises prevention, rapid intervention, and long-term support. This Regional Homeless Action Plan outlines strategic measures to enhance housing stability, improve access to essential services, and foster collaboration among government agencies, nonprofit organisations, and community stakeholders.

The successful implementation of this ambitious plan will depend on receiving an appropriate level of resourcing from the state. By implementing evidence-based solutions such as Housing First, the continuation of the Tenant in Situ program, strengthening social support networks, the provision of improved services for rough sleepers and users of homeless services in the daytime hours and investing in affordable housing, we can make meaningful progress toward reducing homelessness in our region. Additionally, ongoing data collection and evaluation will ensure that our strategies remain responsive to emerging challenges and evolving community needs.

Success will depend on sustained commitment, adequate funding, and a collective effort to address the root causes of homelessness. Together, we can build a more inclusive and supportive region where every individual has a safe and stable place to call home.



APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and Chapter 6 provisions as the basis for this Framework

Homelessness Action Plan Framework for the Southwest 2025-2028.

1. A Housing Authority shall, in respect of its administrative area, not later than 8 months after the coming into operation of this Chapter, adopt a plan (in this Act referred to as a “homelessness action plan”) to address homelessness.

2. A homeless action plan shall specify the measures proposed to be undertaken to address homelessness in the administrative area or administrative areas concerned by the housing authority or housing authorities, as the case may be, the Health Service Executive, specified bodies, or approved bodies or other bodies providing services to address homelessness or the performance of whose functions may affect or relate to the provision of such services, including but not necessarily limited to measures to achieve the following objectives –

- (a) the prevention of homelessness,
- (b) the reduction of homelessness in its extent or duration,
- (c) the provision of services, including accommodation, to address the needs of homeless households,
- (d) the provision of assistance under section 10 (b) (i), as necessary, to persons who were formerly homeless, and
- (e) the promotion of effective co-ordination of activities proposed to be undertaken by the bodies referred to in this subsection for the purposes of addressing homelessness in the administrative area or areas concerned.

3. A homelessness action plan shall be in writing and shall take account of –

- (a) any available information regarding the extent of the need for services to address homelessness, including, in the case of housing supports, any summary of social housing assessments prepared under section 21 in respect of homeless households,
- (b) the costs of the proposed measures referred to in subsection (2) and the financial resources that are available or are likely to be available for the period of the homelessness action plan to the housing authority or housing authorities concerned, the Health Service Executive or any specified body, as the case may be, for the purposes of undertaking those measures and the need to ensure the most beneficial, effective and efficient use of such resources,
- (c) such policies and objectives for the time being of the Government or the Minister in so far as they may affect or relate to the provision of services to homeless persons, and
- (d) such other matters as the Minister may specify in a direction given to the housing authority under subsection (4), including (except in the case of the first homelessness action plan) a review of progress made in the implementation of the homelessness action plan during the period of the previous plan.

4. (a) The Minister may, from time to time, give directions in writing to a housing authority for the purpose of either or both of the following –

- (i) providing guidance as to the form and content of a homelessness action plan, and
 - (ii) specifying the period for which such a plan is to remain in force, which period shall not in any case be less than 3 years
- (b) The housing authority shall comply with any directions given under paragraph (a)

APPENDIX 2

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 Sections 38 and 39 (Homelessness Consultative Forum and Management Group)

38.

1. Subject to subsections (3) and (4), as soon as practicable after the coming into operation of this

Chapter and having regard to section 37 (1), a housing authority shall establish a body to be known as the homelessness consultative forum and shall appoint its members.

2. The functions of a homelessness consultative forum are to provide information, views, advice, or reports, as appropriate, to the management group in relation to

- (a) homelessness and the operation and implementation of the homelessness action plan in the administrative area concerned,
- (b) the provisions of the draft homelessness action plan, and
- (c) any proposed modification of the draft homelessness action plan pursuant to *section 40*

3. Where either or both of the conditions specified in *subsection (4) (a)* are met or where the Minister so directs pursuant to *subsection (4) (b)*, a housing authority shall enter into an arrangement with any other housing authority whose administrative area adjoins the administrative area of the housing authority concerned or with any other housing authority, as appropriate, to establish a joint homelessness consultative forum which shall perform the functions specified in *subsection (2)* in relation to the administrative areas of the housing authorities which are parties to the arrangement.

4. (a) The conditions referred to in *subsection (3)* are that the housing authority considers that -
- (i) a joint homelessness consultative forum would further the objectives of a homelessness action plan because of the extent or nature of homelessness in its administrative area, or
 - (ii) a joint homelessness consultative forum and the sharing of administrative services relating thereto would ensure the most beneficial, effective, and efficient use of resources.

(b) The Minister may, where he or she considers it appropriate, direct housing authorities to enter into an arrangement pursuant to *subsection (3)* and the housing authorities shall comply with any such direction.

(5) In the case of an arrangement pursuant to *subsection (3)* for the establishment of a joint homelessness consultative forum, the housing authorities concerned shall, by agreement in writing, appoint one housing authority (in this Chapter referred to as the “responsible housing authority”) for the purposes of the performance, on behalf of the housing authorities concerned, of their functions under this Chapter.

(6) A housing authority or, in the case of a joint homelessness consultative forum, the responsible housing authority, in accordance with such directions as the Minister may give under *section 41*, shall appoint a chairperson of the homelessness consultative forum or joint homelessness consultative forum, as the case may be, from the membership thereof.

(7) The chairperson appointed under *subsection (6)* shall also be the chairperson of the management group.

(8) The membership of the homelessness consultative forum shall comprise the following persons:

- (a) one or more than one employee of the housing authority or, in the case of a joint homelessness consultative forum, one or more than one employee of each of the housing authorities concerned nominated by the housing authority or housing authorities concerned, as the case may be.
- (b) one or more than one employee of the Health Service Executive nominated by the Health Service Executive.
- (c) subject to such directions as the Minister may give under *section 41 (1) (a)*, persons nominated by specified bodies, and
- d) subject to *subsection (9)*, persons nominated by—
 - (i) approved bodies, and
 - (ii) any other bodies,

providing services to homeless persons in the administrative area or, in the case of a joint homelessness consultative forum, administrative areas concerned or the performance of whose functions may affect or relate to the provision of such services, as the housing authority or responsible authority, as the case may be, consider appropriate in accordance with such directions as the Minister may give under *section 41*.

(9) The number of persons referred to in *subsection (8) (d)* shall not exceed one half of the membership of the homelessness consultative forum or joint homelessness consultative forum, as the case may be.

(10) A homelessness consultative forum or joint homelessness consultative forum, as the case may be, shall regulate, by standing orders or otherwise, the meetings and proceedings of the forum.

(11) The housing authority or, in the case of a joint homelessness consultative forum, the housing authorities concerned, may provide such services and support relating to the operation of the homelessness consultative forum or joint homelessness consultative forum, as the case may be, as is considered necessary by the housing authority or housing authorities, in accordance with such directions as the Minister may give under *section 41*.

(12) The proceedings of a homelessness consultative forum or joint homelessness consultative forum, as the case may be, shall not be invalidated by any vacancies among the membership.

APPENDIX 3

The relevant statutory provisions regarding homelessness are provided under Section 2 and Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, as outlined below:

- 2.—A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purposes of this Act if—
- (a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or
 - (b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in *paragraph (a)*,

and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

Section 10 of the Housing Act provides:

- (1) A housing authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section—
- (a) make arrangements, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of *section 5* for the provision by that body of accommodation for a homeless person,
 - (b) provide a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority consider appropriate, or
 - (c) rent accommodation, arrange lodgings, or contribute to the cost of such accommodation or lodgings for a homeless person.
- (10) A housing authority may, while making enquiries to enable them to determine if a person is homeless, exercise the powers provided for in *subsection (1)*.

