



## **Integrated Homeless Services Centre to open in Waterford**

Waterford City & County Council, in partnership with the HSE/South East Community Healthcare, Focus Ireland and South East Simon Community are to operate an Integrated Homeless Services Centre in Waterford City.

Located at 28 Parnell St. (the former Bank of Ireland branch premises), the agencies will be working as a resource providing a range of support services to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The Waterford initiative follows the success of an integrated and joint approach to delivering and supporting homeless services here in Waterford by the HSE/South East Community Healthcare and Waterford City & County Council. The initiative is an expansion of the multi-agency service being provided currently at Waterside and has an overall objective of improving homeless services in relation to access, quality, service user satisfaction and efficiency.

This initiative augments key objectives for addressing homelessness within the national strategy “Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2016- 2021)”. The Waterford Integrated Homeless Services Centre begins operation on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February and will be open from 9.30am-12.30pm and 2-4pm each week day (with the exception of Thursday mornings’ later start times of 10.30am).

Ms. Sinéad Breathnach (Regional Homeless Lead, Waterford Council) said “It is a significant venture for the housing authority and we are pleased to be pooling resources at one location with South East Community Healthcare, Focus Ireland Waterford and South East Simon Community to provide a co-ordinated and integrated response to delivering homeless services to people in need of it”.

ENDS

Waterford City & County Council Media Statement  
18<sup>th</sup> February, 2019



Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge  
Waterford City & County Council

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## **A summary of services that will be provided at Waterford Integrated Homeless Services Centre follows:**

### **Waterford City and County Council:**

The centre will be a new administrative base for the Waterford City and County Council Homeless Services Team. This will be inclusive of the local housing authority's Homeless Action Team and Homeless Prevention & Support Workers. Staff will be in place at the centre to manage homeless presentations and will operate the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Place Finder service from there.

The centre will also incorporate the South East region's Homeless Leads, the Local Authorities Homeless Lead and the HSE's Social Inclusion Homeless Lead. Regional collaboration and management of homeless services will be led from the Integrated Homeless Services Centre in Waterford.

### **Focus Ireland**

Focus Ireland staff will be present to advise and provide information to people who are homeless or at risk due to housing difficulties. The service offers clear advice on rights and entitlements in the areas of housing, the Residential Tenants Board (RTB), support with applying for social welfare entitlements and referrals to appropriate services.

Focus Ireland's Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service (TSSS) provides dedicated support to households, to help them to secure



housing or to continue to sustain their tenancy in their current accommodation. This involves support and home visits by a Focus Ireland TSSS worker. Referrals from both statutory and voluntary agencies can be made through the Waterford Homeless Action Team.

Focus Ireland's Child Support Service will provide support to children and their families who are experiencing homelessness. Focus Ireland can provide visiting supports to families at their accommodation, targeting one to one work and group work with children and parents. Referrals are made through the Waterford Homeless Action Team.

### **South East Simon Community**

South East Simon Community's "Housing First" service in Waterford aims to house people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible. Once housed, South East Simon will continue to provide visiting support for as long as is necessary, so that people have every opportunity to maintain their tenancies. South East Simon's Housing First service aims to make sure people's experiences of homelessness are as short as possible and to reduce repeat episodes of homelessness.

South East Simon Community staff work in the belief that providing a person with the security of their own home, along with visiting support, will enable that person to address much more effectively all of the issues that pushed them into homelessness in the first place. South East Simon's Housing First team seeks out tenancies in self-contained independent housing units for each person it supports.

### **HSE/South East Community Healthcare**

South East Community Healthcare (SECH) provides primary care and community healthcare, mental health, social (elderly and disability) care and health and wellbeing services in counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. Housing has a large influence on health. People without a home often experience complex and chronic health conditions including mental health and addiction issues and face barriers in accessing appropriate health care.



A Community Mental Health Nurse at the centre will focus on addressing the mental health needs of adults over 18 years who are homeless. The nurse will support homeless services that provide accommodation to service users with mental health issues, in maintaining a relationship and access to Mental Health Services in Waterford City and County. This office will collaborate with homeless services to streamline recovery focused mental health supports for this client group on leaving hospital and ensure the appropriate mental health interventions are delivered to these clients as required in the community.

A Substance Misuse and Homeless Street Outreach Worker will be based in the centre, whose aim is to proactively engage with people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping within Waterford City – in particular, those who are experiencing substance misuse issues and through early intervention strategies to reduce the level of harm experienced and linked them into existing services and supports.