

South-East Region Homeless Action Plan

2023-2026



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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 requires that a Homelessness Action Plan which outlines the measures proposed to be undertaken to address homelessness in the administrative area (in this instance the South East Region) by the Housing Authorities, the HSE, and any other bodies providing services to address homelessness operational in the region be developed. Taking direction from Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2009 Act, the Plan adheres to the following objectives:

- ▶ the prevention of homelessness
- ▶ the reduction of homelessness in its extent or duration
- ▶ the provision of services, including accommodation, to address the needs of homeless households
- ▶ the provision of assistance under Section 10(b)(i), as necessary, to persons who were formerly homeless
- ▶ the promotion of effective coordination 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

For the purpose of this Homelessness Action Plan, the South East Region consists of Waterford City and County Council, Wexford County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Carlow County Council, and Tipperary County Council.

Waterford City and County Council is the designated Lead Local Authority for the South East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2023-2026.

The Action Plan will be in place from 2023 – 2026. As per Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, three years represents the minimum duration of a Regional Homelessness Action Plan and therefore the duration of the South East Region Homelessness Action Plan will be a minimum of four years but may be longer depending on the implementation timeline and the needs of the South East Region.

Statutory provisions regarding homelessness are provided for under Section 2 and Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988 and subsequent provisions in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. These, and subsequent provisions, frame the actions inherent in this plan.

Section 10 of the 1988 Housing Act states that:

A Housing Authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section:

- a. make arrangement, 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 the 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.

The Housing Authority must form the requisite opinion, following an assessment of need, on whether the criterion as set out in Section 2 is fulfilled. The decision to provide emergency accommodation support(s) rests with the Housing Authority and is made within the context of available resources and competing demands on those resources.

A person shall be regarded by a Housing Authority as homeless if:

- a. there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the Authority, the person, together with any other person(s) who normally resides with the person or who might be expected to reside with the person, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or,
- b. the person is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because the person has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and the person is, in the opinion of the Authority, unable to provide accommodation from their own resources.

2. BEST PRACTICE IN THE SOUTH-EAST

In 2018 the South-East Region commenced a systematic review of its homeless services. The review was conducted by the Local Authority and HSE Homeless Leads, in conjunction with relevant homeless services and local authority staff. It led to six significant changes in the region's structures:

- ▶ A new role of a dedicated Homeless Lead, for the South-East region was introduced. This role is the coordinator and main driver for the homelessness activities in the region. Situated in Waterford City and County Council this role works closely with the HSE Homeless Lead
- ▶ The expansion of the Waterford Integrated Homeless Service (WIHS)
- ▶ The Homeless Strategic Management Group was restructured to include Housing Directors of Services from each local authority in the region
- ▶ A Homeless Coordinator was appointed in each of the 5 local authorities in the Southeast Region
- ▶ Social Care Workers were employed in the new role of Homeless Prevention & Support Workers to focus on homelessness prevention and provide key working support to households living in private or unsupported emergency accommodation
- ▶ A Care and Case Management Support Framework was introduced

Dedicated Homeless Lead Role

A dedicated Homeless Lead role (Grade VII) for the South-East region's local authorities was created. This role reports into the lead authority's Director of Services. The Homeless Lead is the coordinator and main driver for the homelessness activities in the region.

This person works closely with the HSE Homeless Lead to address gaps and blocks in the system. The dedicated Homeless Lead role is crucial as it provides a full-time focus on improving homelessness services. This is achieved by building relationships and collaborations with relevant stakeholders, implementing the region's homelessness strategy, and developing innovative solutions to address homelessness.

Waterford Integrated Homeless Service

The Waterford Integrated Homeless Service (WIHS) is a partnership between WCCC, the HSE, Focus Ireland and the South-East Simon Community. This centre employs staff from across the participating organisations and provides a streamlined, centralised resource for people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. The integrated service was in existence in Waterford from 2017 at Waterside in Waterford City. Work was ongoing since that time to develop the services, and this culminated in opening of WIHS in Parnell Street in 2019; where the existing services were further enhanced with the marrying of all agencies, including the Local authority, within the integrated homeless services model in Waterford.

As statutory bodies, mandated by the Housing and Health Acts, Local Authorities and the Health Service Executive are jointly responsible for homeless services. It is acknowledged and recognised that neither of these statutory bodies would be able to achieve quality outcomes in isolation. Evidence shows that an integrated approach yields better housing and health outcomes for service users.

Adopting the above as a core belief, a significant level of integrated and collaborative working has been promoted, and facilitated in the Southeast by the Local Authority and HSE Homeless Leads with jointly agreed regional priorities to include:

- ▶ Review of the Local Authority Homeless Lead role to ensure dedicated leadership, collaborative, and proactive solution focused approach to homelessness in the Region
- ▶ Reviewing and improving Homeless Action Teams structures and operations in each county to ensure efficient and effective operations
- ▶ Reviewing and improving the quality of homeless service provision by aligning workplans of HSE and LA leads to ensure an integrated approach and to give support and sustenance to achieving priority objectives
- ▶ Introducing measures to allow thresholds to be reduced in homeless services, to minimise the number of discharges back into homelessness. To ensure each client has opportunities to link in with identified supports and services while in homeless

services and on exit which would improve their chance of sustaining a tenancy long term. Care and Case Management model (support plans) was rolled out to all services, including Local Authority staff who support clients in Emergency Accommodation.

- ▶ Reviewing base line job descriptions to include qualifications and competencies which would allow above measures to be implemented in homeless services
- ▶ Reviewing funding of services to ensure adequate funding in place to implement above measures and to ensure clarity on funding streams and usage as well as the reallocation of funding where possible
- ▶ Review of Regional Homeless statutory and non-statutory structures, including homeless teams within each Local Authority to ensure commitment from all stakeholders and to ensure adequate resources are in place for the implementation of initiatives and to achieve regional and local homelessness objectives. This review resulted in Directors of Services from each Local Authority having representation on the Strategic Management Group
- ▶ The introduction of a Homeless Coordinator in each Local Authority with responsibility for Homeless Services
- ▶ Introduction of Homeless Prevention & Support Project to each Local Authority – details of same provided further on

The South East Region are leading the way and are cited as best practice nationally on their integrated approach to managing homelessness and a full commitment has been given by the Regional Local Authorities, the HSE and the Homeless Services to continue working together in providing the best quality homeless service to all homeless clients within the South East Region and to prioritizing homeless prevention, exits and tenancy sustainment measures.

Restructured Homeless Strategic Management Group (SMG)

The role of the strategic management group is to promote an integrated and collaborative approach to managing and preventing homelessness within the South-East region. Following the review in 2018 this Group was restructured to include Directors of Housing. Attendance and membership of this group by Directors of Housing ensures the senior level support that can achieve national and regional objectives. It also facilitates a consistent approach to addressing and

managing homeless service provision across the Region. The SMG also includes the Regional Homeless Leads (local authorities & HSE), representatives from HSE South-East Community Healthcare (Social Inclusion & Mental Health Services) and representatives from Tusla.

The full list of members of the SMG is listed below:

- ▶ Lead Authority, Director of Housing, Waterford City & County Council, Chairperson
- ▶ Lead Authority Regional Homeless Lead
- ▶ Directors of Housing, Carlow County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Tipperary County Council, and Wexford County Council
- ▶ HSE South-East Community Healthcare
- ▶ Regional General Manager, Social Inclusion
- ▶ General Manager, Mental Health,
- ▶ HSE South-East Community Healthcare
- ▶ HSE Homeless Lead, Social Inclusion
- ▶ TUSLA

Appointment of A New Homeless Co-ordinator Role

A Homeless Coordinator was appointed in each of the 5 local authorities in the South East Region. The role was created to manage the homeless teams and report on homelessness levels. The Homeless Co-ordinators are typically Administrative Officers (Grade VII) in the local authorities. The Homeless Co-ordinator is the main point of contact in each local authority for all stakeholders. They are responsible for the implementation and management of agreed homeless protocols and processes delivering consistency throughout the South-East Region.

The core duties of the Homeless Co-ordinator role are outlined below;

- ▶ Coordinator of Homeless Action Plan objectives locally
- ▶ Chair/Coordinator HAT & Monthly Review Meetings
- ▶ Oversee Care & Case Management S10 Finance: Monitoring & certification of S10 claims
- ▶ PASS: Timely & accurate usage of PASS in LA & service providers and Certifying Dept reporting
- ▶ Implementing SLAs, NQSF, KPI monitoring and applications

Homeless Prevention & Support Worker Role

The fourth significant change is that each local authority recruited Homeless Prevention & Support workers, with social care qualifications. This is a Social Care Worker grade. The Homeless Prevention and Support Workers are responsible for carrying out prevention and mediation work when people present as homeless. They also provide care and case management support to households living in own front door emergency accommodation.

Their role is to:

- ▶ Conduct homeless assessments
- ▶ Carry out prevention and mediation work with those presenting due to family or relationship breakdown
- ▶ Arrange temporary accommodation
- ▶ Provide care and case management key working and supports to households in emergency accommodation
- ▶ Identify support needs and ensure linkage with required services
- ▶ Provide settlement support moving into a new tenancy
- ▶ Make referrals to the Tenancy Sustainment & Support Service where longer supports are required.

Care and Case Management Framework

The final significant change brought about as a result of the systematic review in 2018 was the introduction in the South-East region of the Care and Case Management Framework. This is an inter-agency case management tool used to help identify homeless service users support needs and help identify and address issues that may have caused or contributed to somebody becoming homeless in order to be able to put the necessary supports in place.

To receive homeless accommodation the client engages with a key worker and completes a care and case management support plan. This plan aims to address the issues that may have caused or contributed to the individual's homelessness, and which may potentially affect their ability to maintain a new tenancy. This framework is embedded in every homeless service provided across the South-East Region.

The Care and Case Management approach adopted within Waterford Homeless Services originates from the HSE National Drug Rehabilitation Framework 2010.

National Drugs Rehabilitation Framework explain Care Planning and Case Management

This rehabilitation pathway is based upon shared care planning and the development of an integrated care pathway model. This means that if a service user has a range of needs that cannot be met by one service alone, several key workers from different services (collectively known as the care team) will need to work together to provide a more holistic package of support for the service user.

Case management will be an essential part of the integrated care planning process; the development of integrated care pathways and the facilitation of services and supports to meet service user needs. A key element of the service user's rehabilitation (including treatment and aftercare) is the assurance that an integrated approach will be taken in the provision of services across HSE and all other statutory and voluntary sectors. To facilitate this all services involved with a service user's rehabilitative care plan and pathway will be required to adhere to overarching governance standards. Inter-agency feedback and accountability mechanism linked to the funding bodies.

What were the outcomes?

The restructuring in the South-East created a highly effective and collaborative Strategic Management Group that resulted in streamlined service provision. It enabled the local authorities to develop strong relationships with local stakeholders, including service providers, estate agents, the HSE and approved housing bodies.

The review of homeless services in the South-East region maximised the resources available to improve the delivery of services and prevention of homelessness. The region also introduced new innovative and collaborative programmes following the review and restructure of its homeless services.

Below are two examples of this collaboration in the South-East region;

Waterford Emergency Family Service (Own Front Door Emergency Accommodation)

The Waterford Emergency Family Service (WEFS) was established in 2018 as an alternative to B&B accommodation. It involved several social housing homes being allocated to homeless families in need of emergency accommodation.

By mid-2019 WCCC had made nine homes available for use. Seven of these were in Waterford City (three apartments and four houses) and two were in Waterford County (two houses). A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Focus Housing Association for management of the accommodation. The first family moved into the accommodation in August of 2019, and one month later the WCCC ended its use of B&Bs and hotels entirely.

Between the period of August 2019 and December 2019 there were 13 families, which encompassed 53 individuals accommodated under the Waterford Emergency Family Service scheme. Seven of these families were single-parent families. Five of the 13 families subsequently found permanent accommodation under the HAP scheme. The average stay of these families in the emergency accommodation was 24 days. The six families who remained in situ had an average stay of 118 days, as a result of COVID-19 postponing the transition to permanent accommodation for several months.

In April 2020, the service was broadened to include provision for single persons during the Covid-19 restrictions and seven WCCC apartments were allocated for this. In September 2020 Tinteán Housing Association provided a further two emergency units and intensive supports for families with higher complex needs. Tinteán had already been delivering on OFD Emergency Family Accommodation since 2016. To date, twenty family and seven single accommodation units have been allocated to the project by the local authority and service providers in Waterford.

Each family receives support from the Homeless Prevention and Support Worker/Key worker and tenancy supports from landlord to assist with move on.

When a family arrives at the Waterford Integrated Homeless Service the Homeless Prevention & Support worker is assigned to them immediately and remains their contact until they secure long-term accommodation.

The Homeless Prevention & Support worker registers the

family as homeless, assesses the level and nature of need and draws up a code of conduct agreement. Included in this agreement is a commitment to engage with the Homeless Prevention & Support worker and agencies as required.

The tenant also agrees to actively participate in seeking accommodation and to move on from the emergency accommodation when this has been secured.

The introduction of the WEFS own front door emergency accommodation service also resulted in savings of over €350,000 per annum being spent on B&B accommodation in Waterford. The service has since been adopted by the other local authorities in the South-east Region which has resulted in over €1.07 million less being spent on B&B/Hotel provision in 2020 than in 2019. The local authority's 10% contribution that had been spent on B&B accommodation is now being spent on the maintenance of the accommodation.

Approved Housing Bodies requirement for CAS funding

In Waterford, to increase resources for preventing and managing homelessness it is a policy objective of WCCC that all AHBs seeking Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funding commit to providing accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. They can meet this obligation in two ways:

- ▶ Providing a unit to Waterford City and County Council for use as emergency accommodation
- ▶ Providing permanent accommodation to a family currently living in transitional or emergency accommodation and with required time on the housing list.

This arrangement sees AHBs partnering with local authorities to tackle and prevent homelessness.

Lessons learned

The changes made to homeless services and management in the South-East region of Ireland have demonstrated the positive impact of collaborative working and dedication to quality homeless service provision and a focus on homeless prevention and tenancy sustainment. Learnings for other local authorities taken from the working model in the South-East region are:

- ▶ A dedicated Homeless Lead is very beneficial in improving homeless services in the region. The role could be focused full-time on improving homeless services, building relationships with

relevant stakeholders, implementing the region's homelessness strategy, and developing innovative solutions to addressing homelessness.

- ▶ Nominating a Homeless Coordinator can assist with meeting homelessness responsibilities as well as improving communications and consistency in homeless service provision across the Region.
- ▶ Establishing clear processes and regional homeless structures can promote change and improvements. Involvement at senior level (i.e., Directors of Housing) is crucial to achieving support and delivering results at Strategic Management Level. A term of reference for regional structures should clearly establish the regional framework and define roles and responsibilities. The South-East Regional Homeless Structures Framework is a good example of this (available upon request).
- ▶ Social Care workers can contribute significantly to the work of homeless management teams. They utilise the care and case management framework to identify the needs of people experiencing homelessness and work with clients to ensure these needs are met.
- ▶ Relationship building is crucial. Developing strong working relationships with health services, homeless service providers, Approved Housing Bodies, letting agents, and other key stakeholders in the region is essential to achieving a more collaborative and integrated approach to homeless service provision and securing supported move-on accommodation for people in emergency accommodation.



The Next Step, a new programme developed by Tinteán Housing Association, to train in all areas related to managing a tenancy, such as ASB/rent payment/how to manage your front door. This is delivered in house to all residents prior to move on to long term housing. It is also delivered to those in our family emergency housing

3. POLICY CONTEXT

The South-East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2023 – 2026 is informed by several key policy documents. The guiding principles of these documents, past and present, drive the associated Actions.

These key policies include:

Housing for All: A new Housing Plan for Ireland

Housing for All is a multi-annual plan which sets out to ensure every citizen has access to a good quality home to purchase or to 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, one of which sets out the objective of Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion. The plan specifically commits to ending homelessness by 2030 which will be achieved by: the delivery of 10,000 social homes with a strong focus on new builds each year to 2026, an additional 1,200 Housing First tenancies over the same period, strengthen Mortgage to Rent assistance, increase quality and quantity of Traveller specific accommodation, provide targeted CAS funding, strengthen integrated care pathways for people who are homeless, expand the case management approach for homeless people, develop a Youth Homelessness Strategy, and provide enhanced tenancy sustainment supports to families experiencing long-term homelessness to help them exit from homelessness and maintain a permanent tenancy.

Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2021

The National Implementation Plan for Housing First 2018 – 2021 underpins the Government’s commitment to provide permanent and lasting solutions to rough sleeping and long-term homelessness in Ireland. Key to Housing First is providing direct access to long-term housing and then supporting the person in their home with intensive housing and health supports. Through the policy’s explicit focus on addressing homelessness, this implementation plan responds to several Pillars of the Rebuilding Ireland document. Core principles of the Housing First Approach include:

1. Immediate Access to Housing without Preconditions
2. Choice and Control for Service Users

3. Separation of Housing and Treatment
4. Recovery Orientation
5. Harm Reduction
6. Assertive Engagement without Coercion
7. Person-Centered Planning
8. Flexible Support for as long as is required

Implementation of the National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) for Homeless Services in Ireland Guidance for NGO Homeless Service Providers (May 2019)

The National Quality Standards Framework for homeless services strives to inform service users as to what they can expect from homeless services, in addition to assisting service providers to ensure they are clear about their responsibilities to deliver safe and effective services that ultimately result in the prevention and/or reduction of time spent in homeless services. The aim of the NQS is to ensure that the services the State provides to individuals and families experiencing homelessness are well organised, coordinated, integrated, and focused on moving people out of homelessness into sustainable housing solutions as quickly as possible. The Framework will ensure greater consistency in the national response to homelessness. All organisations in receipt of Section 10 funding will be required to implement the NQS.

There are 8 themes in the NQS, the first four focus on the provision of person centred services which are safe and effective, the latter four focus on the organisational capability and capacity to deliver high quality services. The NQS contains both qualitative and quantitative elements. Each Local Authority is responsible for implementing the NQS structures in their region.

Residential Tenancies Board Legislation (January 2017)

Brought into effect in 2017, revisions to the Residential Tenancies Act (2004) established Rent Pressure Zones (RPZ) in a variety of areas across Ireland. These RPZ operate as a means of controlling the evident increase in costs in private rented accommodation and capping such increases to a maximum of 4% per annum. To date, in the South-East Region, there have been several RPZ identified. These include Kilkenny LEA, Waterford City East LEA, Waterford City South LEA, Gorey LEA, Co. Wexford, Carlow LEA, Piltown LEA, Co. Kilkenny. This legislation aims to provide greater security

for tenants and provides the capacity to penalise those operating counter to the RPZ rent levels. This legislation is revised and updated periodically, the South-East Region Homelessness Action Plan (2023 – 2026) aims to engage with any such changes during the Action Plan.

Policy and Procedural Guidance for Housing Authorities in relation to Assisting Victims of Domestic Violence with Emergency and Long-Term Accommodation Needs (January 2017)

Circular Housing 2/17 dated January 2017 provides guidance for Housing Authorities to ensure effectiveness and consistency across responses to assist victims of domestic violence. These guidelines provide a summary of good practice highlighting procedural pathways to be operational within the Region and within the Local Authority. The policy points towards organisational responsibility of key stakeholders and advocates for effective partnerships between statutory agencies and organisations involved locally in the delivery of domestic violence services. The most recent strategy: Third national Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence 2022 -2026 highlights the need to interdepartmental working between all agencies to include Local Authorities, AHBS, and Domestic Violence refuges.

Traveller Accommodation Programme

Under the provision of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, Local Authorities are required to prepare and adopt a five-year Traveller Accommodation Programme to meet the existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers in its administrative area. The current Traveller Accommodation Programmes cover the period 2019 to 2024.

South-East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2013 – 2016

This Plan is the current regional framework for service provision in the South East. This Plan was extended and will be revoked upon the adoption of the Action Plan outlined in this document. A working action plan was agreed in 2021 – 2022 to update and take account of the significant changes in practice across the region following the adoption of a focus on housing led delivery across the region in 2018.

Implementation Plan on the State’s Response to Homelessness (2014): This statement emphasizes a housing-led approach which supports accessing permanent housing as the primary response to all forms of homelessness.

Homeless Policy Statement (2013): Published in February 2013 this statement makes a commitment to ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by implementing a housing-led approach. This approach recognises that long-term secure housing is the best outcome for people affected by homelessness and advocates for a move away from expensive emergency or shelter type accommodation.

The Way Home (2008 – 2013)

This Strategy addressed adult homelessness in Ireland between 2008 and 2013. The policy marks an important departure in Government policy on homelessness. It set out a five-year vision that was underpinned by a detailed programme of action. These actions incorporated 3 core objectives; these included: eliminating long-term occupation of emergency homeless facilities; eliminating the need to sleep rough; and preventing the occurrence of homelessness as far as possible.

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 and social care 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, Approved Housing Bodies 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 recognized and developed. The recommendations of particular relevance to homelessness include:

The recommendations of Sharing the Vision relating to housing and homelessness are outlined below;

- Recommendation 58: In order to address service gaps and access issues, a stepped model of integrated support that provides mental health promotion, prevention and primary intervention supports should for people experiencing homelessness.
- Recommendation 59: Assertive outreach teams should be expanded so that specialist mental healthcare is accessible to people experiencing homelessness.
- Recommendation 69: In conjunction with supports provided by the HSE including Intensive Recovery Support teams, sustainable resourcing should be in place for tenancy-related/independent living supports for service users with complex mental health difficulties.

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.

National Drugs Strategy: Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 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. The Strategy 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 in the lifetime of the plan. The following goals detailed in the document include:

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

With regards to homelessness, the importance of homeless 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.

Time to Move on from Congregated Settings: A Strategy for Community Inclusion (June 2011)

This Strategy proposed a new model of support in the community. The model envisaged that people living in congregated settings would move to dispersed forms of housing in ordinary communities, provided mainly by Housing Authorities. Those affected would have the same entitlement to mainstream community health and social services as any other citizen, such as GP services, home help and public health nursing services. Some challenges in relation to wrap around supports remains a gap in the South East.

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy is a cross-departmental initiative to improve the lives of the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. The strategy was developed under the EU Framework for the Implementation of National Roma integration Strategies up to 2020. In that context, Member States were invited to prepare, update, or develop their national Roma inclusion strategies taking into account their specific circumstances with particular reference to the key priority area – access to quality education, employment, healthcare, housing, and anti-discrimination. As part of the EU Framework, Ireland reports annually to the European Commission on progress made regarding implementing the national strategy.



Happy new tenant moving into Long Term Supported housing with Tintean

4. EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE SOUTH-EAST REGION

The South-East region is one of 9 regions established under the Housing (Misc. Prov) Act 2009 and comprises of 5 Local authority areas, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, and Wexford. Under Homeless Services, a large and varied range of services are provided by voluntary and statutory agencies including advice and information, street outreach, accommodation, settlement, education training and healthcare. Homeless Services provide specific support for people who are homeless, according to their need or age.

Since the last South-East Homeless Action plan 2013-2016 there has been a significant increase in the numbers of people presenting as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the South-East Region. All figures referred to in this section have been taken from published reports produced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Further details can be seen here: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/housing>.

The data captured below refers to adults accessing homeless services emergency accommodation unless otherwise stated. Monthly reports on homeless figures have been published since 2016 and provide a cross regional analysis of homelessness in Ireland. These reports, produced through the current Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS), also highlight the number and families and details of children accessing emergency accommodation in any given month. Drawing on this statistical data we can then inform the strategic development of Homeless Services in the South-East Region for the period 2023-2026.

A summary of the key data pertaining to presentations, emergency accommodation placements and exits from emergency accommodation is outlined below in respect of 2020-2022 (current figs.).

Adult Homelessness

The increase in the total number of adults accessing homelessness services through emergency accommodation in the South-East from 2019 to 2022 is not unique just to

this region. Every other region in Ireland has experienced increases in the numbers of people becoming homeless since 2019. This section Details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Total Adult Homelessness by Region

| Year / Region | March 2019 | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | Dec. 2022 |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| South-East | 313 | 218 | 184 | 246 | 231 |
| North-East | 173 | 112 | 85 | 84 | 148 |
| South-West | 534 | 550 | 486 | 570 | 564 |
| Mid-lands | 116 | 97 | 67 | 105 | 153 |
| Mid-East | 283 | 317 | 338 | 385 | 441 |
| Dublin | 4,315 | 4,515 | 4,093 | 4,886 | 5,793 |
| Mid-West | 347 | 331 | 284 | 330 | 419 |
| West | 348 | 343 | 277 | 331 | 327 |
| North-West | 55 | 69 | 80 | 77 | 114 |

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

Table 2. outlines the increase in adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation by county in the South-East Region since 2019. It is important to acknowledge that the extent of homelessness varies considerably by county within the region.

Table 2. Total Adults Accessing Emergency Accommodation by County in the South-East Region

| Year / Region | March 2019 | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | Dec. 2022 |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Carlow | 31 | 39 | 37 | 40 | 32 |
| Kilkenny | 61 | 49 | 33 | 42 | 42 |
| Tipperary | 49 | 31 | 38 | 63 | 41 |
| Waterford | 106 | 68 | 57 | 74 | 74 |
| Wexford | 66 | 31 | 19 | 27 | 32 |
| Total | 313 | 218 | 184 | 246 | 231 |

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

Homelessness is a complex and multi-faceted societal issue with multiple contributing factors including (but not limited to):

- ▶ Failure to secure accommodation following Notice to Quit
- ▶ Substance misuse
- ▶ Trauma/Health
- ▶ Mental health challenges
- ▶ Family breakdown
- ▶ Prison release
- ▶ Domestic violence

It is important to note that the issues listed above are not mutually exclusive and a person or household may experience several underlying reasons that have resulted in their homelessness.

Types of Emergency Accommodation Accessed

Figures relating to the types of emergency accommodation accessed by service users are presented in Table 3. As can be seen there has been a move from Supported Temporary Accommodation being the main form of homeless accommodation in 2020. The increased presentations since 2020 is reflected in the table below which shows an increased in trend towards the demand for Private Emergency accommodation in the South-East Region; 51 in March 2020 to 80 in March 2022. This is as opposed to an increase from 164 people in Supported Temporary Accommodation in March 2020 to 166 in March 2022.

Table 3. Total Adults Accessing Emergency Accommodation Type in the South-East Region since 2020

| Type of EA/Year | PEA1 ¹ | STA2 ² | TEA3 ³ | Other |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| March 2019 | 110 | 184 | 3 | 0 |
| March 2020 | 51 | 164 | 0 | 3 |
| March 2021 | 52 | 132 | 0 | 0 |
| March 2022 | 80 | 166 | 0 | 0 |
| December 2022 | 57 | 164 | 0 | 0 |

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

1 Private Emergency Accommodation – Hotel and B&B accommodation
 2 Supported Temporary Accommodation – Hostel and Hub accommodation
 3 Temporary Emergency Accommodation – Non-Supported accommodation (e.g., hostel)

The South-East Region is committed to a housing-led approach to homelessness. This approach is characterised by two elements; the first is the need for tenancy sustainment supports, crucial in supporting service users to maintain their tenancies and (sometimes) break the cycle of homelessness. The second element is a recognition of the importance of interagency wrap around supporting services. This is important particularly in the case of those living with mental health and/or substance misuse issues.

Families Experiencing Homelessness

Like other regions in Ireland, there has also been a significant rise in the number of families accessing homeless services in the South-East Region, from e.g., 12 families in March 2020 to 28 families in March 2022. This represents a considerable shift, where in the past homeless services were predominantly accessed by the single individual. The increasing numbers of families accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Total Families Accessing Homelessness Services (South-East Region)

| Family Composition/ Year | Families Total | Adults (of which) Single | Parent Families | Total Dependents |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| March 2019 | 37 | 52 | 22 | 65 |
| March 2020 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 18 |
| March 2021 | 16 | 9 | 23 | 30 |
| March 2022 | 28 | 23 | 33 | 50 |
| December 2022 | 14 | 17 | 12 | 24 |

This rise continues to be an effect of cost-of-living increases and the subsequent housing crisis. It also reflects a stagnant increase in housing supply, coupled with a market where rental costs continue to increase significantly.

There have been increasing numbers of families presenting to Local Authorities as homeless mainly due to losing private rented accommodation. Further to this trauma, families are facing great difficulties in securing alternative accommodation. As ever, the loss of home is sometimes underpinned by further life-challenges, and family requests to access emergency accommodation can also be as a result of domestic violence.

Female Homelessness

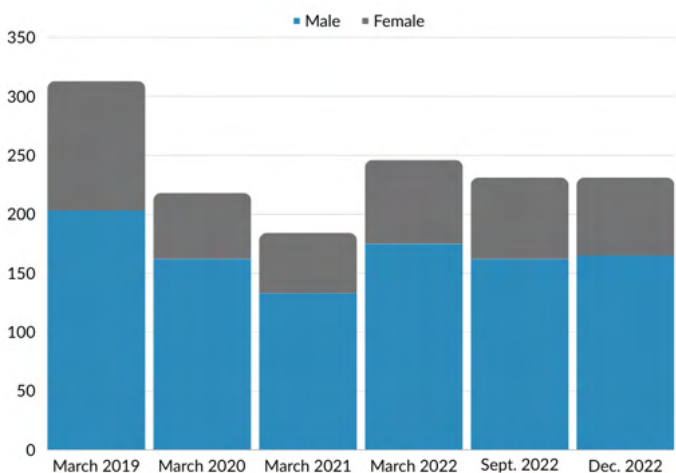
Traditionally, homelessness in Ireland has been associated with the single adult male. Given the diversity of experiences discussed already it is clear that this is certainly no longer the case in Ireland. There has been a marked increase in the number of individual adult women accessing homeless services in the South-East Region. A gender breakdown is outlined below.

Due to the changes in relation to Gender accessing homelessness services in the Region, this necessitates an Action Plan that is sensitive to the diverse needs of the community which it serves. Often women's homelessness is 'hidden.' Women have increased vulnerabilities while homeless, and so responses in Service Provision need to act to capture and address this. The issues for women accessing emergency/Transitional accommodation and separated from their children also needs to be considered.

Table 5. Total Adults Accessing Homeless Services by Gender

| Gender/Year | Male | Female | Total |
|----------------|------|--------|-------|
| March 2019 | 203 | 110 | 313 |
| March 2020 | 162 | 56 | 218 |
| March 2021 | 133 | 51 | 184 |
| March 2022 | 175 | 71 | 246 |
| September 2022 | 162 | 69 | 231 |
| December 2022 | 165 | 66 | 231 |

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>



Homelessness by Age Cohort

There have also been changes in relation to the age cohorts accessing homelessness services in the Region, with increases associated with each age cohort. This necessitates an Action Plan that is

sensitive to the diverse needs of the community which it serves. Despite increases across all cohorts, there is a significant increase in the 18 – 24 cohort accessing emergency accommodation homelessness services. These details are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Total Adults Accessing Homelessness Services by Age Cohort

| | 18-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| March 2019 | 61 | 161 | 82 | 9 | 313 |
| March 2020 | 33 | 121 | 55 | 9 | 218 |
| March 2021 | 30 | 94 | 52 | 8 | 184 |
| March 2022 | 43 | 134 | 60 | 9 | 246 |
| September 2022 | 32 | 139 | 49 | 11 | 231 |
| December 2022 | 36 | 131 | 57 | 7 | 231 |

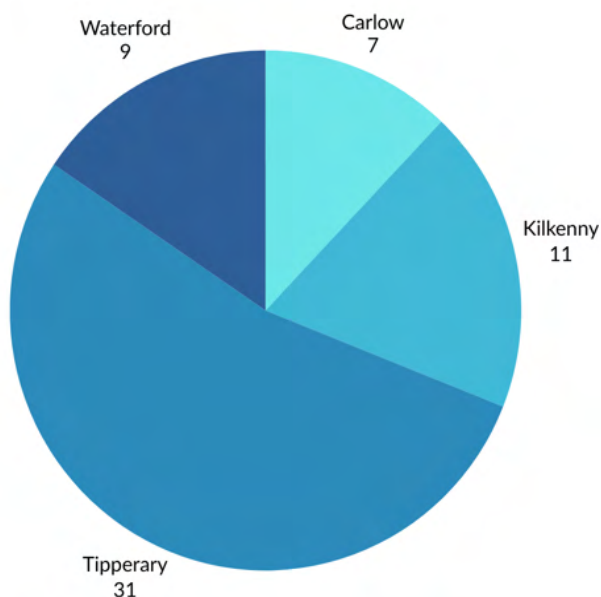
Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

Rough Sleeping

An estimated 86 people were identified as consistently or periodically sleeping rough across the South-East Region up to the end of Quarter 4 2022. The breakdown of this number as per local authority area is presented in Table 7. These figures may not include rough sleepers who have not presented. To ensure accurate numbers, we need to ensure these people are 'outreached' to link to services, to evidence the appropriate need for new housing led developments and supports.

Table 7. Number of Rough Sleepers in the South-East Region up to 31st December 2022

| Local Authority Area | Up to 31st December 2022 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Carlow | 7 |
| Kilkenny | 11 |
| Tipperary | 31 |
| Waterford | 28 |
| Wexford | 9 |
| Total | 86 |



The profile of the rough sleeper has changed significantly in recent times, traditionally it was predominantly males aged between late 20s to early 50s who due to, family breakdown, mental health issues, addiction issues, emergency accommodation breakdown etc. who were visible and bedded down primarily within the city/town Centre.

However, in recent times that has slowly begun to change, and Outreach is experiencing more young people (late teens/early twenties) who are presenting to homeless services and being identified on outreach as rough sleepers. A significant portion of these are young people who have left the care system and have for a multitude of reasons (primarily addiction / mental health issues) lost aftercare properties. A worrying indicator is that young females within that category are becoming more visible on the streets.

At present there are a small number of entrenched rough sleepers in the city/county and the rest usually experience periods of sporadic rough sleeping due to emergency accommodation breakdown, drug use, alcohol use, family breakdown.

Also, another trend is the emergence of the transient rough sleeper who present from other counties/ regions and do not due to policy qualify for a homeless service, in our experience these individuals do not return to their area immediately and rough sleep in the city for intermittent periods of time. However there have been cases when these individuals will rough sleep for longer periods. This can be challenging for outreach as we are often working in isolation with transient rough sleepers.

In a minority of service users, the issues and challenges that generally occur are due to challenging behaviours and an inability to function within the thresholds of

emergency services, this often ends with some individuals experiencing short periods of rough sleeping until alternative arrangements are made.

Other Types of Homelessness

The above data is taken from the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS system), and reported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. It reports the number of people accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation and does not capture the prevention work that is on-going. It also does not capture those who are considered the 'hidden' homeless (including people living in squats, Own Front Door, couch-surfers, and those staying with parents/friends).

There are also challenges housing people who are exiting institutional care facilities, hospital discharges and prison. It is also important to note that there are a number of service users who remain unwilling to engage with services or who may have breached tenancy conditions and conditions for use of services; though limited in number, this results in continued homelessness, despite agencies' best efforts and attempted interventions.

Roma community

The National Roma Needs Assessment found that 46% of Roma surveyed had been homeless at some point in Ireland. Roma communities face particular barriers to accessing housing and emergency accommodation. As a result of continually arising issues in relation to Roma and homelessness in the South East collaborative work between HSE and all Local Authorities has taken place in the last number of years. In the South East in 2022 HSE Social Inclusion (South East and Mid-West Departments) partnered with Tipperary County Council and Youth Work Ireland Tipperary on an innovative pilot programme aimed at:

- ▶ Working collaboratively to prevent homelessness through enhancing access to services by Roma living in insecure or unsafe accommodation
- ▶ Working collaboratively to develop integrated pathways of care to support Roma experiencing homelessness as well as those living in insecure or unsafe accommodation
- ▶ Provide targeted supports to Roma in insecure or unsafe housing to improve their access to health services and health information and
- ▶ Sharing learning, outputs and outcomes with other CHO areas and Local Authorities.

Over 78% of Roma families living in county Tipperary have been surveyed as part of the pilot Roma Accommodation Project. The following are some of the findings in relation to those surveyed:

- ▶ 79% of Roma families are living in insecure accommodation and are at risk of becoming homeless; 54% of these families have been issued an eviction notice
- ▶ 73% of the families interviewed are living in overcrowded accommodations with up to 8 or 9 people sharing a two-bedroom apartment or ten people sharing a three-bedroom apartment/house. Families frequently share accommodation with one or two other family unit sometimes in addition to single adults as well
- ▶ 45% of the Roma have been homeless at one point in Ireland
- ▶ 64% of those interviewed are in employment
- ▶ 86% of those interviewed feel their current living conditions negatively impact their everyday health, causing them to experience depression, anxiety, and severe stress. This project will conclude in Q1 2024, and learning will be shared in the South East and nationally.

Conclusion

Central to the Homeless Action Plan for the South-East Region is a commitment to homelessness prevention. 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.

The varying degrees of eminence of homelessness experiences in the South-East Region provides challenges for the development of the current Action Plan. As a result, the plan is sensitive to local contexts and acknowledges that some actions will be more relevant to certain Local Authorities areas than others. Furthermore, the plan also considers the current (and changing) policy context. Together these elements have informed the development of the aims, objectives, and actions for the South-East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2023 – 2026.

Despite the significant interventions undertaken to prevent homelessness in the first instance, the percentage increase in the number of adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation, (Table 2) clearly demonstrates that it has not been possible to prevent homelessness over the last South-East Regional Action plan period 2013-2016. The causes of homelessness are complex and diverse and the significant numbers presenting to Homeless Services and the increase in placements in emergency accommodation, have continued through the duration of the last Homeless Action Plan.

The provision of emergency accommodation has become a necessary and consistent 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.

Based on the above, the South-East Region is well placed to devise this Action Plan on an evidence-based approach, drawing on the statistical data available for the past 3 years, thereby, informing the strategic development of Homeless Services in the region for the period 2023-2026.





Service users and staff enjoying fun with Sailing Into Wellness in Dunmore East as part of their Transitional Programme with Tinteán Housing Association CLG

5. REGIONAL STRUCTURES & FUNDING

Waterford City and County Council, under a shared service arrangement, is the Lead housing authority for the South-East Region regarding Homelessness. This role includes overseeing the South-East Homeless Forum and the South-East Regional Management Group as provided for in Sections 38 and 39 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. Waterford City and County Council is also responsible for managing the regions administrative leadership 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 South-East region, including those regarding arrangements for the provision of accommodation for persons considered homeless.

South-East Regional Management Group

A Management Group of the South-East Homeless Forum was established in March 2010, in accordance with legislation, with the primary responsibility being the preparation of this South-East Regional Homelessness Action Plan. The Management Group make recommendations to the relevant statutory bodies in relation to the services required to address Homelessness in the region, on funding for such services and the ongoing operation of the Homelessness Action Plan and subsequent blueprint for Homeless Services.

Specifically, the Management Group:

- ▶ Assess and makes decisions in principle on all funding applications for Homeless Services
- ▶ Submit proposed budget for services to the budgetary authorities within the relevant statutory funding agencies
- ▶ Is responsible for developing effective, efficient, and integrated responses to homelessness, including the approval of the four-year local Homeless Action Plans and the commitment to seek adequate and appropriate resources for their implementation.
- ▶ Maintaining active links with similar groups in neighbouring counties and regions to develop a meaningful regional focus on homelessness

South-East Regional Management Working Group

The Management Group of the South-East Homeless Forum mandated a Regional Management Working Group to come together to provide a forum for discussing and making recommendations to the SE Homeless Management Group in relation to the services required to address Homelessness in the South-East region, on funding of such services and the ongoing implementation of the Homelessness action Plan. Membership of the group mirrors the member organisations of the management group and is comprised of 6 local authority homeless practitioners and HSE Social Inclusion, Homeless Services staff.

South-East Region Homeless Forum

The South-East Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in 2010 and came to fruition following Ministerial directions issued by the then Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government in Circular HU 1/2010 in accordance with the provisions of Sections 38, 39 and 41 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

The role of this Forum is to provide a consultative mechanism in relation to Homelessness in the context of the preparation of this statutory South-East Regional Action Plan 2023-2026.

The aim of the South-East Homelessness Consultative Forum is to provide information, views, advice, or reports in relation to Homelessness and to encourage and assess implementation of objectives to address Homelessness in both national and regional policies.

The South-East Homelessness Consultative Forum meet to discuss matters including:

- ▶ Preparation and monitoring of the Homelessness Action Plan
- ▶ Review of homeless presentations across the region
- ▶ Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP)
- ▶ Discharge Policy from hospitals and prisons
- ▶ Impact of Homeless ness on Travellers
- ▶ National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services in Ireland
- ▶ Regional and Agency Updates

The membership of the South-East Homelessness Consultative Forum is drawn from the following sectors as outlined in Circular HU1/2010:

South-East Local Authorities

- ▶ Waterford Local Authority (Lead Authority)
- ▶ Wexford Local Authority
- ▶ Kilkenny Local Authority
- ▶ Tipperary Local Authorities
- ▶ Carlow Local Authority

Statutory Agencies

- ▶ Department of Social Protection
- ▶ The Probation Service
- ▶ Education and Training Board
- ▶ SOLAS
- ▶ HSE Social Inclusion
- ▶ HSE Mental Health Services
- ▶ TUSLA

Approved Housing and Other Bodies

- ▶ SE Regional Drugs task Force
- ▶ SE Regional Men's Hostels
- ▶ SE Women's Refuges
- ▶ Regional Homeless Service Providers

Homeless Action Teams (HAT)

Homeless Action Teams are in operation in each local authority and are comprised of Local Authority Housing Officials, HSE Social Inclusion, Homeless Services CHO area 5 staff, DSP Community Welfare staff and representatives from the Voluntary service providers. Each Homeless Action Team meets to co-ordinate and inter agency response to the support needs and case management of homeless people and individuals at risk of becoming homeless.

The role of the HAT is to;

- ▶ Carry out initial assessment of presenting homeless people
- ▶ Prepare and approve care and support plans
- ▶ Resettle homeless people into new permanent and emergency accommodation
- ▶ Regularly review the implementation and efficiency of plans To develop and implement local preventative strategies with other agencies such as hospitals, probation service, Gardai, and Voluntary agencies.

Homeless Services Funding

As the lead Local Authority in the region, Waterford City and County Council has responsibility for finalising the South-East Region's programme of expenditure on an annual basis. This programme of expenditure is developed in co-operation with the four other Housing Authorities; the regional allocation is delegated to Waterford City and County Council and is disbursed appropriately across the Housing Authorities in the South-East Region. Funding for Homeless Services comes from the State (under Section 10). In addition to the above, funding is provided by the HSE Social Inclusion, Homeless Services CHO area 5 to support the health and care costs of homeless services in the South-East Region.

Homeless services expenditure by Local Authorities includes homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment, and resettlement supports.

Emergency Accommodation expenditure includes private emergency accommodation (PEA) (hotels and Bed and Breakfast accommodation), long-term supported accommodation, day services, and Housing Authority homelessness services provision (including Administration).

The total expenditure by Local Authorities in the South-East Region for the delivery of homeless services increased from €3,940,044 in 2020 to current estimated expenditure for 2022 at €5,431,179; this is an increase of almost 38 % (see Table 7).

Within the same period, expenditure on Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) also increased significantly from €914,089 in 2020 to estimated expenditure for 2022 at €1,018,246 an increase of over 11% in (see Table 8).

Table 7. Total Expenditure on the Delivery of Homeless Services in South East Region 2016 – 2018

| Expenditure/ Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 Current Estimated |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|
| Homeless Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment, & Resettlement Services | €614,023 | €638,796 | €729,204 | €1,083,668 |
| Supported Emergency Accommodation | €1,091,110 | €1,485,407 | €1,766,297 | €2,133,269 |
| Long – Term Supported Accommodation | €626,779 | €206,490 | €206,490 | €206,490 |
| Unscheduled Emergency Accommodation (B&Bs) | €1,974,966 | €914,089 | €820,014 | €1,018,246 |
| Housing Authority Homeless Services Provision including Administration | €592,598 | €695,262 | €705,244 | €989,506 |
| Homeless Services Expenditure Total | €4,889,476 | €3,940,044 | €4,227,249 | €5,431,179 |

Source: Waterford City and County Council, Lead Local Authority – South-East Region

Table 8. Costs of Private Emergency Accommodation

| Expenditure/ Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 Current Estimated |
|--|------------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) ¹ | €1,974,966 | €914,089 | €820,014 | €1,018,246 |

Source: Waterford City and County Council, Lead Local Authority – South-East Region

From its Revenue budget each Local Authority in the South-East Region contributes 10% towards the costs of homeless services, with the remaining 90% being funded by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government. Given the significant rise in expenditure since 2019 the local authority contributions have also increased significantly.

6. BACKGROUND TO SERVICES PROVISION IN THE SOUTH-EAST REGION

At a national scale, Ireland faces considerable challenges in relation to addressing contemporary homelessness. As a collective region, the South-East has experienced an unprecedented increase in the numbers of individuals and families presenting as homeless to the Local Authorities. The increasing numbers of people presenting as homeless, coupled with a lack of housing supply, has been further compounded by the absence of a coherent building programme over the last 10 years across all sectors. The result has been increasing numbers of people, and in particular families, in the South-East Region accessing homeless services and remaining homeless for extended periods of time. These challenges are likely to continue over the duration of this Homelessness Action Plan 2023-2026.

A core element of the previous South-East Homelessness Action Plan 2013 – 2016 was the development of interagency working arrangements between the Local Authorities, HSE Social Inclusion, Homeless Services, and other homeless service providers in the region. These integrated arrangements have been very effective in addressing the complex and diverse needs of multiple groups of people who present as homeless. This acknowledges the need for sensitivity in recognising being homeless is not homogenous but represents a multitude of experiences across numerous demographics.

Similar to the national context, access to accommodation for people experiencing homelessness through Local Authorities, housing bodies, or the private rental sector, continues to pose difficulties. These sectors have experienced considerable pressure due to a lack of housing supply and increased demand for housing. With rising property values across most of the Region, more and more landlords are exiting the rental market, and this is compounding the shortage of available housing stock for the Region’s homeless communities. Summary information is provided below on activities from each Local Authority in the South-East Region.

Most recent data (Q4 2022) shows that there were 231 homeless single adults across South-East Region of which

1 PEA included in Emergency Costs



Child playing with case worker

165 were male and 66 were female. Within this same period there were 14 families consisting of 17 adults with combined 24 dependent children. Monthly reports on Homelessness in the region show that Waterford City has the greatest number of homeless in the region.

Waterford City and County Council works closely with various agencies for the provision of homeless services. There is a strong co-ordinated approach across all stakeholders, including the Health Service Executive, and Voluntary Service Providers and this is evident in the Integrated Services 'Hub' available in Parnell Street. In Waterford city many of the multi-disciplinary agencies on Homelessness work together under the same roof. This is not reflective however, across the region whereby, in most cases the multi-disciplinary teams would meet at HAT or to discuss specific cases.

Emergency/Temporary Accommodation

Emergency accommodation for men and women is provided by DePaul in Carlow, Waterford, and Wexford.

The Good Shepherd Centre provides emergency accommodation for both male and female Kilkenny.

The Thurles Lions Trust provide 6 units of onsite supported emergency accommodation for both male and female in Matthew Bourke House in Thurles Co. Tipperary.

Emergency accommodation for women and children is provided in the South-East by OASIS House in Waterford City.

Along with a combined delivery of emergency accommodation of Budget Hotels, Hostels and B&B across the region in the past, it is recognised that every effort is being made to reduce the use of this type of accommodation and this will continue to be a focus during the life of this Plan 2023-2026.

The transition from use of commercial B&Bs as emergency accommodation has already been substituted in full across the regional mainly using the 'Own Front Door' model.

However, whilst the OFD has been adopted and is effective across the region it does have its limitations also e.g. emerging trend would be families and children having to be displaced from previous area of residence which often results in major disruption to a child's schooling due to lack of suitable accommodation across wide geographical areas.

Transitional/Short term Supported Accommodation

Transitional housing provides a person with an opportunity to have secure, medium-term accommodation, with support to help them establish themselves in a home and provides them with support to address any issues which might make long-term housing unsustainable.

The length of time a person stays in transitional accommodation is time limited. It averages from 6 months to 2 years.

Providers specific to Waterford City are Tinteán Housing Association which delivers 11 individual supported units of accommodation to single women. Tinteán plans to move its complex needs Service for women to a new development. This will see the addition of 4 emergency beds as well as the option of 2 crash bed facilities. This gender specific Service will remain for women only, focusing on providing a trauma informed safe service, allowing women to decompress, and heal, while then focusing on developing life skills and dealing with trauma. Those in the emergency or crash beds will move seamlessly to a Transitional unit once one becomes available. Having emergency on site allows staff to begin building relationships allowing for ease of access to the Service. Where the Service is now based, plans to remain on a long-term lease with the Local Authority will allow for 10 units of long-term accommodation for single adults. Visiting support will still be available.

Focus Ireland delivers 6 family units and 10 single male transitional units.

In Tipperary Nova's delivers 5 units Mitchel Street. This is on site 24 hrs and based in Thurles. It also has 4 units at Prospect House in Nenagh which are off site support Monday to Friday. Both would be considered short term supported accommodation.

Both offer services to both male and female.

Permanent On-Site Supported Accommodation

Long term supported housing is provided for those who have difficulty in living independently and for people who need some level of support on an on-going basis. There is no specific time limit on how long a person can stay in supported housing. The type and level of support varies and is provided by the staff within the service and through linkages with mainstream community-based services. Focus Ireland provides 77 units of Permanent on Site supported accommodation in Waterford City.

Tenancy Support & Sustainment

Tenancy Support & Sustainment (TSS) services are available in each Local Authority area since 2012 and is operated by Focus Ireland in Carlow, Tipperary, Wexford, Waterford, and Kilkenny. The overall objective of the Tenancy Support and Sustainment service is to provide support to households that are at risk of becoming homeless, in order to assist them to occupy (or continue) to occupy their accommodation and progress from homelessness or potential homelessness towards independent sustainable living. This involves home visits by the Tenancy Support & Sustainment service Project Workers whose role will be to signpost and facilitate access to mainstream services. Current target delivery is between 60-90 tenancies per annum per region.

Housing First project

Housing First is a 'Housing led' approach founded on a recognition that having your own front door is a basic human right and can provide the platform for the development of personal resilience and recovery. As the name suggests, Housing First places the emphasis on housing before everything else.

Alongside the housing there is endless non-judgmental support that builds on individuals' strengths and aspirations and allows the time and space to develop self-directed support. This contrasts with the Private Emergency Accommodation, which often presents vulnerable people with complex needs with an endless series of measures to navigate, often set by agencies/organisations rather than the person themselves. It is an alternative to a system of emergency shelter/transitional housing progressions.

A Housing Led approach moves the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or emergency accommodation into their own accommodation and provides them with a high level of support until they are linked in with mainstream support services to ensure that they can sustain their tenancy.

The Housing First Project is delivered in each Local Authority area since 2019 and is operated by Focus Ireland in Carlow, Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny and by South-East Simon in Waterford.

Primary focus across the region is to embed the Care and Case Management within the Housing First model across the region. The immediate focus will be on the appointment of the MDT which will further enhance the model of delivery in terms of mobile case management and treatment services (mental health, health, and addiction services).

Much emphasis within the Strategic Plan under Housing First will be focused on ensuring the appointment of a strong Multi-Disciplinary Team to lead on the provision of the essential wrap around services that is needed particularly in terms of Mental health Services.

HSE Social Inclusion; Substance Misuse Outreach Services

Street outreach services across the region are funded by the HSE Social Inclusion, Homeless Services. The role of the service is to contact people who are sleeping rough and to work with them to link them into accommodation and other services, with a view to supporting them out of rough sleeping and into long-term accommodation

The primary objective of the outreach service is to identify and support individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless who are also experiencing substance use issues.

This is achieved through the following guiding principles, Assertive Outreach/ Support, Person Centred Approach, Harm Reduction, Assessment and Referral and Advocacy to emergency accommodation services and local authority Homeless Services. Responsibility for the coordination and management of the Substance Misuse Homeless Outreach Workers sits with the HSE Substance Misuse Coordinators.

The role of the Substance Misuse Homeless Outreach worker is:

- ▶ To provide support services to individuals who have addiction issues and are experiencing homelessness
- ▶ Provision of harm reduction interventions, overdose awareness, safer injecting information and provision of needle exchange both static and through outreach
- ▶ Undertaking screening and assessment to identify the level of need and support required and working in partnership with the service user to develop a corresponding support plan
- ▶ Core elements of the work involve assisting those who are homeless, because of their substance misuse to access Substance Misuse Treatment Services, Emergency Accommodation and any other support services required e.g., mental health and primary care services
- ▶ Providing training to staff within Homeless Services to raise their awareness of addiction and substance misuse issues so that they can recognise and engage more effectively with service users who present with substance misuse problems

- ▶ Key participant in all aspects of care and case management which is an interagency approach bringing several agencies together to work with the service user to address the drivers of homelessness for example addiction and mental health issues

HSE Social Inclusion – Traveller Health

The National Traveller Health Action Plan (2022-2027)
Working together to improve the health experiences and outcomes for Travellers, states;

“Inequality of access is embedded in our current system and creates barriers and perverse incentives that stand in the way of doing the right things for patients that need care. Moreover, wider health inequalities persist among some groups of the population.” SLÁINTECARE, 2018.

There are 4 Goals and Strategy Objectives;

- ▶ GOAL 1: Strengthen the governance, monitoring and structures to support the implementation of the Action Plan
- ▶ GOAL 2: Improve Traveller’s equality of access, participation, and outcomes in mainstream health services through a human-rights based approach
- ▶ GOAL 3: Address the Social Determinants of Traveller Health through targeted and mainstream measures
- ▶ GOAL 4: Enhancing Travellers’ access to culturally appropriate primary health care through investment in Traveller Health units and Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects

Under Goal 1, in 1.2.3 it states that Social Determinants of Health outcomes are not shaped or solely determined by genetic or biological processes, but are influenced by the social, political, and economic conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These influences are known as the ‘social determinants of health’. These ‘social determinants’ recognise that inequalities in social, political, and economic conditions give rise to unequal and unjust health outcomes for different groups, including Travellers.

One of the social determinants of health are factors that can impact on health and wellbeing. These factors are wide-ranging and include: Accommodation, and Traveller-specific accommodation and homelessness.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ The HSE’s Regional Social Inclusion service have developed a local Travel health plan
- ▶ The objective is to work closely with the Local Authority around on the area of accommodation in The NATIONAL TRAVELLER HEALTH ACTION PLAN (2022-2027) and incorporating it in regional service provision plan
- ▶ Joint work with HSE Traveller Health project and the 5 local authorities and the local authority lead and for 2023- Q4 2024 to provide quarterly report on the number of Traveller presentation to homeless services from the community
- ▶ Based on the findings/ presentations per county the Traveller Health lead in Social Inclusion will development of CHO 5 KPI’s



Roma

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth are preparing a new (second) National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy at present. At regional level HSE Social Inclusion funds Roma Health Advocacy Projects in Wexford, Waterford, and South Tipperary (Social Inclusion funds work in North Tipperary). These projects:

- ▶ Provide support to access health information and health services
- ▶ Provide health advocacy supports
- ▶ Facilitate the development of health programmes
- ▶ Assist in the delivery of key health messages
- ▶ Facilitate interagency work on the social determinants of health

HSE Mental Health Service provision; Homelessness

The UNCRPD (2006) articles 19 & 28d assert the rights of people with ongoing mental health difficulties to live independently, be included in the community and to have equal access to public housing programmes and to have a choice about where they live.

The HSE is not a housing provider and therefore cannot accommodate people indefinitely. It has a current policy of transferring the ownership of its low and medium support hostels to AHBs. The Transfer of Ownership project, mentioned in the 2016 Programme for Government, was developed to action and address this. High support hostels will continue to provide residential care as required, but any resident who can reach a point in their recovery to live independently with support will have a care plan detailing how this can be achieved. This is aligned to the NHSDP, Sharing the Vision, and the HSE local and national service plans.

In SECH, the START project was designed to provide and sustain secure tenancies with support for mental health service users with identified housing and support needs. Priority is given to those who can be supported to move out of institutional care. Many of those who would have been admitted to long stay wards or mental health hostels are now being referred to START. A number of these applicants are in emergency accommodation, homeless or at risk of homelessness.

WIT conducted an evaluation of this programme in 2022; the recommendations for its continued development included the development of a protocol to work in collaboration with

Housing First and other homeless services to help ensure that the most suitable programmes supporting housing for Mental Health Service Users are in place.

Summary of Current Resourcing of housing related services for people in the Mental Health Services:

- ▶ START programme: 4.5 social care workers provide a housing support service across the region. Approximately 55% of the total staffing costs is funded by the Local Mental health services. The Good Shepherd Centre provides 35% and Focus Ireland 10% approximately. Service provision is through NGOs (Focus Ireland and GSC/KVHA) with SLAs in place
- ▶ Mental Health Tenancy Support Officers: Funding provided by the Department of Health and Department of housing for 2 support workers across the region. Service provision through NGO (Focus Ireland and GSC/KVHA). Previously, these workers were dedicated to the work of the Transfer of Ownership Project only, but in 2023 their remit was widened
- ▶ Household support service (e.g. cleaning) provided to people who have been long term residents in Mental health residences and have transitioned to independent living. Strict criteria apply to the provision of this service, with six monthly reviews
- ▶ Homecare: This is a project designed to prevent eviction or desertion from properties when public health issues are presented due to lack of capacity to maintain reasonable living conditions. It is operational in Counties Carlow and Kilkenny via the GSC/KVHA. The staffing resource is currently 1.1 Social Care workers and 0.8 Health Care Assistants. with 50% funding from the GSC/KVHA and 50% from the Mental Health Services

Delayed Discharges in the Department of Psychiatry

Discharge teams work towards adhering to the National Homeless Hospital Discharge Protocol 2016.

The Department of Psychiatry's admission and discharge policies reflect the need for early identification of homelessness or housing issues.

The Social Workers on the MDTs are proactive daily in addressing housing and homelessness issues as they arise for individuals in our services.

The Social workers' role involves the identification of housing and support needs, advocacy, working in partnership with AHBs, Local Authorities and other services, such as the Community Addiction and Dept of Social Protection services. They attend the Homeless Action Teams (HAT) in each county. They play a central and critical role in the operations of the START and Homecare projects.

The multi-disciplinary meetings regarding Delayed Discharges in the Approved centres in Waterford and Kilkenny also address the challenges presented by those with nowhere to live following discharge. It is essential for all invitees to attend to be able to effect positive outcomes where possible.

Youth Housing

Waterford is the first and amongst the only areas in the country to operate a Youth Housing –(Housing First for Youth). The project is delivered by Focus Ireland. However, there is a need to review the development of youth specific services in each local authority area as a key aspect towards ending youth Homelessness in the Southeast region.

Housing First principles apply with stable housing, social and emotional well-being and education and employment being the core outcomes. Under S10 funding covers the funding of key working with 14-15 tenancies for those aged 18-26 years old.

A key outcome of this service is the reduction in homelessness figures within this particular age demographic.

However, there has been sharp increases in the number of young people who have left the care system and due to complicating factors have lost their aftercare properties. From an aftercare perspective this is a significant concern to the HSE aftercare services. In addressing this trend strong links continue to be developed with all stakeholders and determined collaborative work will continue to address this specific cohort of young care leavers at risk of becoming homeless.

An extension of the Youth Homeless Model service operational in Waterford will be explored in so far as there are units available to make such a programme workable and sustainable.

The Department is currently keen to pursue a housing-led response to youth homelessness, and as such is intending to include an action on the development of a youth housing-based intervention in the strategy. Recognising, the importance that this distinct model is not conflated or confused with Housing First, it is being developed under the working name SHY – Supported Housing for Youth.



7. STRATEGIC AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS FOR THE SOUTH-EAST REGION

The experience of Homelessness in the South-East Region over the period of the previous Action Plan, in tandem with consideration of the current policy context, has informed the identification of key strategic aims and objectives.

1. The Reduction of Homelessness

Reducing and preventing Homelessness, includes direct interventions to prevent families and single individuals becoming homeless, reducing the number of homeless families and individuals, and supporting people experiencing homelessness into long term sustainable accommodations.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ Implement national policies and processes to anticipate and respond specifically to the needs of those who are assessed as homeless
- ▶ Maximise funding opportunities in the region from all relevant agencies to ensure maximum resources are available to prevent increasing numbers of people becoming homeless
- ▶ Ensure services are appropriately funded and staffed to ensure staff retention and effective performance in addressing homelessness
- ▶ Review the current HAP model which can lead to income poverty and to consider its effectiveness as an appropriate resource in the reduction of homelessness
- ▶ Extend the HAP Placefinder Service with additional resources to include HAP Payments/Arrears management. This role would operate similar the Rents officer with the current structure of the Local Authority Management System. This would indicate tenants experiencing difficulties before they get into huge HAP arrears and risk suspensions
- ▶ Have a full cohort of permanent/long term funded model to ensure that there are designated staff

assigned to Homeless Services- with a designated panel for Homeless services when recruiting for posts. Also, to consider a specified post from Homeless Presentations to allow Homeless Prevention and Resettlement office focus on the crucial elements of their roles

- ▶ To ensure National structures are in place to co-ordinate effective specialist and mainstream services
- ▶ To ensure South-East regional participation in relevant structures, to safeguard effective interagency partnerships between the relevant service providers and statutory services specific to Homelessness and to ensure effective coherence and co-ordination

Actions

- ▶ Carry out a Needs Analysis to assess the Homeless services available across all Local authorities so we can develop a benchmark standard for delivery of Homeless Services and a tailored service delivery across the region
- ▶ Carry out Needs Analysis to assess those with the highest needs and develop co-ordinated strategies to support those needs
- ▶ Maximise funding opportunities in the region from all relevant agencies
- ▶ Develop a permanent/long term funded model to ensure that there is a full cohort of designated staff assigned to Homeless Services and have specific Homeless services Staff panels for recruitment
- ▶ Extend the HAP Placefinder Service – to support tenants struggling with rent payments
- ▶ Create a designated post for Homeless Presentations and assessments
- ▶ Explore specific service supports for Travellers experiencing Homelessness and appropriate responses
- ▶ Explore and develop responses to ‘new’ homeless presentations e.g. Stamp 4 ‘Leave to Remain’ and families presenting in under reunification
- ▶ Standardise Housing Delivery across the region – e.g. CAS

2. Support for Rough Sleepers and Individuals with Complex needs

This includes the provision of adequate support services to prevent and address the needs of those sleeping rough. Comply with targets as set out in the 'Housing for All' the national plan to provide accommodation as well as the necessary and mental health supports required to assist homeless people with complex needs.

Strategic Objectives

Advocate at national level for continued improvements in policy and practice to anticipate and respond specifically to the needs of vulnerable groups including (but not limited to):

- ▶ Prison discharges
- ▶ Young People leaving care
- ▶ Hospital discharges
- ▶ People exiting Direct Provision
- ▶ People experiencing Domestic Violence
- ▶ Persons with disabilities
- ▶ Continue to develop, consolidate, and maintain Rough Sleeper Outreach teams across the South-East region
- ▶ Continue to address the support needs of rough sleepers across urban and rural locations.
- ▶ Continue to work to prevent the need for rough sleeping across the South-East region
- ▶ Provide and identify emerging or changing needs for appropriate emergency accommodations options and work with all service providers to ensure a timely move on for people in emergency accommodation
- ▶ Ensure adequate cold weather and severe weather protocols are in place regionally and can be stood up in the event of Orange/Red weather alerts
- ▶ Continued implementation of Housing First and explore alternative response models for tenants whose needs are so complex that housing first is not the appropriate response. Explore successful models of 'on site supported accommodation' for those who needs are so complex that housing first is not the appropriate response
- ▶ Pilot a transitional unit/step down unit in the region for settlement under Housing First where the tenancy is at serious risk of breakdown

Actions

- ▶ Provision of 'Out of Hours' services in each region with dedicated case managers
- ▶ Provision of a regional 'respite' unit for breakdown in Housing First Tenancies to allow for a period of settlement to ensure sustainment of tenancy
- ▶ Appointment of Dedicated Outreach workers e.g. Prison Discharges, Hospital Discharges, Aftercare etc.
- ▶ Review 'High Support' services for entrenched rough sleepers where even Housing First may not be an appropriate option
- ▶ Provision of gender specific homeless accommodation across the region
- ▶ Provision of 'Safe Houses' to co-ordinate work between Domestic Violence Refuge centers and homeless service
- ▶ Domestic Violence Training across all services
- ▶ Standardisation of 'Safe Home' model across the region
- ▶ Ensure Delivery of 'Trauma Informed Training' across the region for all those working within Homeless Services
- ▶ Co-ordinated policy and practices between DV refuge centres and Local Authorities
- ▶ Ensure Delivery of 'Care and Case Management Training' across the region for all those working within Homeless Services
- ▶ Developed well planned consistent responses to Cold Weather Initiatives
- ▶ Regional consistency in delivery and approach
- ▶ Standardise approach and delivery of the Housing First Programme across the region in line with the 'Housing First Implementation Plan 2022-206'

3. Provision of Appropriate Emergency Accommodation

This theme emphasizes the need to provide adequate and safe emergency accommodation and support services to vulnerable groups. This objective also provides for an ongoing commitment that no one is in emergency homeless accommodation for longer than 6 months.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ Continue to maintain and increase an adequate supply of housing options and supports across the region with a particular emphasis on “Family Hub” accommodation, Housing First approach and HAP Placefinder support
- ▶ Continue to adopt a person-centered approach to meet the diverse needs of homeless people and to ensure adequate supports are available to vulnerable people particularly when moving on from homelessness
- ▶ Monitor and manage the provision of accurate, consistent, and timely data records using the PASS system
- ▶ Undertake an annual review of Homeless Services to take account of changing needs and demands on available resources across the South-East region. Review annual budget requirements with DHLGH on the basis of changing and emerging needs
- ▶ Continue to maintain a consistent regional approach and standard for the delivery of homeless services

Actions

- ▶ Acquisition of more suitable emergency family accommodation through schemes e.g. Tenant in Situ Schemes and Cross Rental Tenant in Situ to prevent homelessness
- ▶ Acquisition of larger family units to accommodate larger families presenting e.g. reunification
- ▶ Provision Family HUBs with Homeless supports for move on
- ▶ Extended Family Emergency Houses to Male parents with access to children
- ▶ Extension of Family Transitional programmes across the region
- ▶ Development of Family Support Dedicated Teams to include representation from TUSLA, HSE Local Authorities and Service Providers to provide a co-ordinated and nurturing support system to families in emergency accommodation
- ▶ Additional Supports for ethnic minorities in emergency accommodation e.g. translation supports in accessing supports and in dealing with formalities of housing

4. Supporting the Health needs of people who are Homeless

The primary objective to provide a commitment to a range of targeted health supports, including maintaining the consolidation of improvements in health care delivery, the continuation of increased access to health and mental health supports and to include the provision of a health care plan for all homeless individuals that need one.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ Provide the most appropriate Primary care, Addiction Services and Mental health services to those in homeless services and approve their ability to sustain a normal tenancy
- ▶ To ensure effective participation in all relevant regional structures by members of the HSE Primary care, Addiction Services and Mental health teams; the priority being integrated service delivery
- ▶ To continue to facilitate and support a holistic approach to ‘care pathways’ for people who are homeless and have chronic needs, based on the inclusion health model
- ▶ The Mental Health Services will identify homelessness and housing issues among those they engage with and work with other agencies to address the needs
- ▶ To continue to build on and expand existing relationships with the Local authorities and the NGOs in the region
- ▶ Consider business cases for further specialized posts to address the needs of those in the mental health services who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- ▶ To promote the voice of people with lived experience of the mental health services in the areas of housing, homelessness and independent living and Include people with lived experience in oversight groups
- ▶ To further develop existing housing related programmes for those connected to the Mental Health Services
- ▶ To promote research and training initiatives

Actions

- ▶ Extend Health Services supports to Homelessness – e.g. Dentistry and Podiatry not seen as priorities but can have devastating repercussions
- ▶ Develop strategies to address the limited options for on options available for those experiencing mental health challenges or even Mild ID
- ▶ Explore suitable support and accommodation options for the cohort of clients whose needs are so complex that Housing First is not the appropriate response
- ▶ Co-ordinated planning and supports to consider ‘Fair Deal’ scheme options as a move on for older persons experiencing homelessness
- ▶ Roll out the HSE funded ‘Healthy Lifestyle’ programme across the region in all services
- ▶ Consider the roll out of ‘Street Medicine’ symposium across the region. Support the facilitation of a network of health services working with homeless people care to ensure a coordinated approach and promote best practice
- ▶ To assist in the formation of a multi services forum re the case management of complex cases, where different services within CHO5/HSE require more collaboration for positive outcomes for those who are homeless. This will support mental health service users being accommodated via Own Front Door or Housing First

5. The need to prevent and address Family, Child, and Youth Homelessness

This theme emphasizes the need to provide targeted prevention and early intervention services for families and children who are risk of homelessness through a coordinated multi agency response. The overriding objective to provide homes to those households at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ Continue to deliver and develop targeted prevention and early intervention services for families and children who are at risk of homelessness through a coordinated multi agency response
- ▶ Continue to maintain and increase an adequate supply of housing options and supports across the region with a particular emphasis on ‘Family Hub’ accommodation
- ▶ Input and shape the development of a national Youth

Homelessness Strategy and develop regional and local protocols to support the national strategy.

- ▶ Informing policy and practice by the understanding that supporting young people at risk of becoming homeless through strategic interventions can help avoid a cycle of longer- term homelessness.
- ▶ Develop and expand the Youth Housing Programme/ Housing First for Youth Model currently operating in the Waterford area across the 4 other local authority areas within the region.
- ▶ Continue and develop enhanced tenancy sustainment and settlement supports to help families and children exit from homeless and to maintain their homes.

Actions

- ▶ Development of Family Support Dedicated Teams to include representation from TUSLA, HSE Local Authorities and Service Providers to provide a co-ordinated and nurturing support system to families who are at risk of homelessness
- ▶ Explore tenancy sustainment and settlement supports specific for those with complex mental health needs
- ▶ Continue with the Acquisition of family accommodation through schemes e.g. Tenant in Situ Schemes and Cross Rental Tenant in Situ to prevent families entering homelessness
- ▶ Roll out Youth Housing Programmes across the region
- ▶ Explore the need for Youth-Specific Accommodation Services

6. Strengthen and Improve Interagency collaboration in addressing Homelessness

The primary objective being the oversight of the implementation of Homeless Inter- agency measures. To ensure that the services provided to homeless people are effective in addressing their needs, in addition to ensuring coherence and co-ordination of homeless related services in delivery policy measures and addressing emerging homeless related issues. To ensure that the appropriate governance and structures are in place.

Strategic Objectives

- ▶ Further develop the Service Level Agreement process for homeless service delivery
 - ▶ Develop and provide sufficient training opportunities for service providers operating across the region
 - ▶ Ensure a Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Authorities across the South-East region to continue to operate in collaboration and effectively
 - ▶ Develop and improve policies and protocols to ensure that there is a consistent approach in the delivery of homeless services across the region e.g., Care and Case Management delivery
 - ▶ Continue to use the PASS system appropriately and ensure that the information entered is correct, accurate and of a timely manner
 - ▶ Coordinate and convene South-East Region Forum and other relevant committees as required
 - ▶ Clarify and strengthen governance and committee structures to ensure transparency and making terms of reference available for each group
- ▶ Increase networking and co-ordination of regular meetings between the regional Homeless Services co-ordinator's to align practices and have a standard approach to service delivery
 - ▶ Ensure continuous and consistent participation in PASS training nationally and regionally
 - ▶ Reconvene quarterly meetings of the South-East Region Forum, ensure appropriate membership and review/update terms of reference in line with S10 Housing Act protocol
 - ▶ Review and update practices and policies around roles and representation within homeless services structures to ensure transparency and strengthen governance
 - ▶ Roll out 'Critical Incident Response Training' across the region

Actions

- ▶ Redesign of the SLAs for both S39 and S10 to clearly identify the service delivery requirements for each agency and detail the appropriate level funding required from both the HSE and Local Authorities. Standardise Local 'Key Performance Indicators – KPIS' in line with the National Quality Standard Framework (NQS)
- ▶ Sharing of resources between organisations e.g. shared models of training etc. for all staff in homeless services regardless of employing organisation



Staff and service users work together to create a symposium for 2024 in issues related to women experiencing addiction/mental health issues (held in Kilkenny in Sep 2023, coordinated by Tintean, Better Together and SERDATF)



8. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to monitor the implementation of this Action Plan for 2023 - 2026. Current national performance indicators provide scope for monthly reporting and measures at regional level. This is included in a monthly release of details for the South-East Region and is in addition to the provision of data at county level, and quarterly reports from Local Authorities.

These reporting procedures are supported by the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) at a national level.

Specifically, the South-East Region in terms Section 10, we will continue to collect accurate data on the following:

- ▶ New homeless individuals presenting in the South-East Region and identifying the primary reason for their homelessness
- ▶ People sleeping rough and the patterns of rough sleeping
- ▶ People in emergency accommodation and the duration of stay in emergency accommodation
- ▶ Homeless people presenting repeatedly as homeless and monitoring the reason for presentation
- ▶ People moving from emergency homeless accommodation to long term housing options such as Homeless HAP, Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Long-Term Leasing (LTL), Local Authority allocations or an approved housing body allocation.

In terms of section 39 funding Social Inclusion (HSE Southeast Community Healthcare) the national KPI's/ Targets that will be reported on are the following.

- ▶ Number of service users admitted to Homeless emergency accommodation hostels / facilities during the quarter
- ▶ Number of individual service users admitted to Homeless emergency accommodation hostels / facilities who have a medical card on admission
- ▶ Number of service users admitted during the quarter who did not have a valid medical card on admission and who are assisted by hostel staff to acquire a medical card during the quarter.
- ▶ Number of service users admitted to homeless emergency accommodation hostels/facilities whose

health needs have been assessed and who are being supported to manage their physical/general health and addiction issues as part of their care/support plan

- ▶ Number of service users admitted to Homeless emergency accommodation hostels / facilities during the quarter, whose health needs have been assessed as part of a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) within two weeks of admission

Waterford City and County Council and Social Inclusion (HSE Southeast Community Healthcare) as Lead Agencies provide current data and reports for the South-East Region as and when requested by the relevant Departments.

9. STATUTORY CONSULTATION

A meeting of the South East Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum -took place as part of the

Statutory requirement to formally adopt the plan. This took place on TEAMS Monday 18th September 2023 at 2.30 pm

A meeting of the South East Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum -took place as part of the

Statutory Consultation on 29th March 2023 in New Park Hotel Kilkenny.

A meeting of the South East Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum -took place as part of the

Statutory Consultation on TEAMS Monday 27th February 2023 at 2.00 pm

Feedback was ongoing from all regional stakeholders including the regional Homeless Action Teams during the planning and consultation process

The forum is represented by the Following agencies/ Organizations;

Manager for Housing Coordination Mental Health Services CHO 5, HSE MHS Principal Social Worker CH05, National Domestic Sexual & Gender Based Violence Service, TUSLA, Waterford City and County Council, Carlow County Council, Wexford County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Tipperary County Council, HSE Social Inclusion, HSE South-East Community Healthcare, Tintean Housing Association, Novas Tipperary, PSW MHS Waterford/Wexford Focus Ireland, Respond, Department of Social Protection Waterford, GSC Kilkenny, DePaul and South East Simon.

10. GLOSSARY

- ▶ **AHB** Associated Housing Body/Bodies
- ▶ **HAP** Housing Assistance Payment
- ▶ **HAT** Homeless Action Team
- ▶ **HSE** Health Service Executive
- ▶ **LTL** Long term Lease Scheme
- ▶ **PASS** Pathway Accommodation and Support System
- ▶ **PEA** Private Emergency Accommodation (may include hotels, B&Bs and other residential facilities)
- ▶ **RAS** Rental Accommodation Scheme
- ▶ **RPZ** Rent Pressure Zones
- ▶ **STA** Supported Temporary Accommodation (including hostels with onsite professional support)
- ▶ **SRF** Service Reform Fund
- ▶ **TEA** Temporary Emergency Accommodation (emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) support)
- ▶ **SERHAP** South East Regional Homelessness Action Plan





