

## **Common Statement of Homelessness and Housing Related Asks**

### **from the Irish Homeless Policy Group**

#### **General Election 2024**

The Irish Homeless Policy Group (**IHPG**) is made up of a wide number of organisations which work in the sphere of housing and homelessness. Our constituent members include organisations providing direct housing supports, policy work, advocacy, and legal interventions in the sector. The leading voluntary organisations working to end homelessness have come together to set out a number of proposals which they believe should feature in the election campaign and inform the incoming Government.

We believe that homelessness is one of the problems that we actually can solve, and that those who deliver homeless services are best placed to contribute to the solution. We urge political parties and candidates seeking election to the 34<sup>th</sup> Dail to place our asks, outlined below, at the centre of your platforms and in the next programme for government and to engage collaboratively with those of us who work daily with those experiencing homelessness, to find a solution to the problem.

#### **Our Asks:**

- **Build enough homes** - Ensure that over 55,000 homes are constructed each year to meet housing need across Irish society, including at least 15,000 new social homes to tackle the housing crisis and address homelessness, in line with the recommendations of the Housing Commission Report. This will meet both unmet and future need. Ensure that 20% of housing is social and cost rental and build appropriate homes for those who need them such as one-bed and two-bed units for smaller households, larger homes for families trapped in homelessness and Traveller families.
- **End Long-Term Homelessness by 2030** Set the goal of making sure no one is homeless for longer than 6 months by the end of the next Government term (2030), by dedicating 10% of new social housing supply to already long-term homeless households. Use the housing commission report as a key driver and policy roadmap.
- **Prevent Homelessness:** Prioritise and adequately resource comprehensive prevention and early intervention measures to prevent homelessness from occurring and reoccurring. This should be part of an integrated approach to address family homelessness with a continued focus on the urgency of increasing the supply of social and cost rental homes.
- **Private rental sector-** Implement strategy for the private rental sector to include items such as a deposit protection scheme and a rent register.

- Homelessness – Ensure sufficient services so that no one has to rough sleep, including people seeking protection and improve reception conditions for International Protection Applicants.
- Youth Homelessness- Ensure full implementation of the National Youth Homelessness Strategy to help protect young people from experiencing this trauma in their lives.
- Family Homelessness- Commit to enacting the Homeless Families Bill (2017) which would ensure that local authorities place the best interests of the child at the centre of decision-making when supporting homeless families and adopt Housing First for Families or other measures to address the housing and support needs of families with more complex needs.
- Mental Health- Adopt a comprehensive review of mental health services – with more focus on harm-reduction measures and increase HSE funding for mental health, drug and alcohol interventions.
- Emergency accommodation- Stop legally unsound refusals by local authorities of access to emergency accommodation and create a transparent process for those accessing the service, providing written reasons for any refusals.
- Ensure that all local authority staff have updated training to provide greater awareness of housing law to prevent legally unsound decisions on access to emergency accommodation and housing being made.
- Establish an independent appeals system in respect of housing and homeless decisions made by local authorities.
- Ensure full pay and conditions alignment of the Community and Voluntary Sector with that of the Public Sector, along with funding on a full-cost recovery basis for Section 39, 10, 56 and now 40 organisations. This will ensure competitiveness in the recruitment and retention of workers and the continued ability to deliver essential services to the most vulnerable in our communities

We look forward to discussing these issues with you in further detail and working collaboratively with the next Government to end the housing and homelessness crisis.

**FOCUS**  
Ireland

Yours sincerely,

Mike Allen, Director of Advocacy, Focus Ireland

Dr. Sally Anne Corcoran,



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