

NOVAS

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Pre-Budget Submission 2027

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Who We Are

NOVAS is a voluntary organisation and Approved Housing Body (AHB) working with families and single adults who are disadvantaged and socially excluded, primarily those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We provide a range of services and accommodation supports for marginalised households throughout Ireland and work with approximately 6,000 people annually through the lens of Trauma Informed Practice (TIP).

NOVAS is a member of the Dublin Homeless Network, the Irish Homeless Policy Group (IHPG), the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness (ICEYH), and FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with People Experiencing Homelessness.

Introduction

In April 2026, the number of people experiencing homelessness in the State, as recorded by the Department of Housing, was 17,548¹. These figures do not include individuals in 'own door' temporary accommodation, those residing in domestic violence refuges, people sleeping rough, asylum seekers, or those experiencing 'hidden homelessness', including involuntary sharing in overcrowded or substandard accommodation.

Homeless figures surpassed 17,000 for the first time in January 2026 and have continued to rise at an alarming rate. This reflects growing pressure across the housing and homelessness system and underscores the persistent challenges in addressing homelessness effectively.

Monthly homelessness figures have followed an upward trajectory since the cessation of the eviction moratorium in March 2023 and subsequent changes to tenant protections and the

¹ April 2026 Monthly Homelessness Report

rental sector in March 2026. In the first quarter of 2026 evictions increased by 50%, in large part due to legislative changes ². While we welcome the additional security of tenure and rent certainty these changes provide for some renters, it does little to tackle the issue of affordability.

We welcome the new Housing Strategy, *Delivering Homes, Building Communities* published late last year, committing to the highest public housing targets and financial investment ever. Increasing housing supply remains central to ending homelessness but is not sufficient in isolation. The right type of housing needs to be built in the right locations, with targeted allocations for households experiencing long-term homelessness. Increased housing supply in not sufficient to solve the crisis on its own, we must create pathways from long-term homelessness to new public housing, for households who have spent years in emergency accommodation. An overhaul of the CAS model of funding to reflect the long-term maintenance costs of building is required to make is a viable option for Approved Housing Bodies. Homelessness will not begin to fall until new exit pathway are created. Each month, the number of households entering homelessness is greater than those exiting. Policy must reverse this trend. NOVAS welcomes the commitments outlined in the revised National Development Plan 2026– 2030 to increase housing targets, expand housing supply and invest in enabling infrastructure. We also welcome the prioritisation of homelessness measures and support in Budget 2026. The budget allocated €563 million to support the provision of homeless services including emergency accommodation, homelessness prevention initiatives, tenancy sustainment supports, and transitional accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. This represented a significant increase of €328 million from the previous year's allocation and more closely reflected the actual cost of homeless provision in the state. ³ This is most welcome.

NOVAS recognises the considerable pressures facing budgetary decision-makers, given the uncertain international climate and the competing demands across multiple sectors. However, the Government must act decisively to reverse the current trajectory of homelessness.

² RTE [50% rise in evictions as new rent rules came into force](#)

³ [Budget 2026: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage announces record budget package of over €11 billion](#)

Budget 2027 must reflect the scale and urgency of the crisis, ensuring that adequate cross departmental funding and coordinated policy measures are in place to deliver a meaningful reduction in homelessness and ultimately end long-term homelessness.

Ireland's upcoming European Presidency provides a significant opportunity to shape the EU's emerging housing agenda at a moment of acute crisis across Member States. With the appointment of the first EU Housing Commissioner and a growing consensus on housing affordability and homelessness as cross-border challenges, Ireland is well positioned to lead a Presidency defined by social ambition, practical cooperation and evidence-based innovation.

NOVAS Recommendations

NOVAS' 2027 Pre-Budget Submission outlines key recommendations to address housing supply, homelessness prevention, child and family homelessness and the need for sustained investment in homelessness services and housing supports.

Overview of NOVAS recommendations

Recommendation	Estimated investment	Outcomes
Public housing investment	€9 million public capital	Deliver government targets
Restore Tenant in Situ	Restore 2024 allocation	Prevent Homelessness
Increase HAP annual rent adjustment	€100 million	Reduce homelessness
Child Homelessness measures	Dedicated funding	Reduce child and family homelessness & the trauma attached
Homeless Services	Full cost recovery	Sustainable sector

Increase Housing Supply

The Government's housing strategy, *Delivering Homes, Building Communities*, represents a significant commitment to addressing housing shortages and homelessness. The strategy

aims to deliver 300,000 new homes by 2030, including 72,000 social homes and support for 90,000 starter homes⁴.

While these targets are welcome, important questions remain regarding the sector's capacity to deliver at the required pace and the extent to which the strategy addresses the structural drivers of the housing crisis.

Achieving these ambitions will require sustained capital investment, accelerated construction capacity and targeted measures to ensure timely delivery and equitable access to housing. Budget 2027 presents a crucial opportunity to strengthen implementation mechanisms and provide the necessary funding to translate these commitments into tangible outcomes for individuals and families experiencing housing need.

In addition to increasing supply overall, it is essential that the appropriate types of homes are delivered in areas of greatest demand. The development of social housing stock must reflect existing and projected need. In particular, greater emphasis must be placed on delivering one-bedroom units and larger family homes in urban areas experiencing the highest levels of housing demand and homelessness, especially Dublin and other major cities. Across all local authority areas, single people seeking one-bedroom accommodation represent the largest cohort on social housing waiting lists. At the same time, large families continue to spend prolonged periods in emergency accommodation due to a shortage of larger homes.

Recommendations

- Provide at least €9 billion in annual public capital funding for housing, consistent with the Government's commitment in *Delivering Homes, Building Communities*, to leverage approximately €20 billion in annual housing investment required to deliver over 60,000 homes each year.
- Ensure the Government delivers its commitment to provide an average of 12,000 new social homes annually over the lifetime of the strategy, with transparent annual reporting on progress.

⁴ Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025 - 2030

- Publish annual housing delivery targets and implementation milestones to demonstrate progress towards the delivery of over 300,000 homes by 2030.
- Prioritise the delivery of one-bedroom social housing units and larger family homes in areas with the highest levels of housing demand and homelessness.
- Ringfence housing allocation for households experiencing long-term homelessness, i.e. longer than twelve months.
- Overhaul CAS funding scheme of AHB's to consider long-term building maintenance.

Delivering Homes, Building Communities estimates that approximately €20 billion in annual housing investment is required to deliver over 60,000 homes each year. Government has committed to providing more than €9 billion, with the remainder expected from private finance. Budget 2027 should maintain this level of public investment to provide certainty to the construction sector and support delivery of the Government's housing commitments.

Prevent Homelessness

Preventing homelessness is critical. Until we stem the flow into homelessness, the numbers will not decline. Prevention is a far better outcome for people at risk and reduces the burden on the state. Its prioritisation is essential.

NOVAS welcomes the development of a Prevention Framework to support the coordination and assessment of relevant measures, ensuring a holistic cross-departmental approach and identifying gaps in provision, particularly for groups at greatest risk of homelessness⁵.

Supporting families to remain in their homes through rent supports such as HAP and HHAP, are a key prevention measure that have already helped many families avoid homelessness. However, the effectiveness of these measures is undermined if they are not regularly reviewed and adequately resourced to reflect changing housing market conditions. This section outlines key measures to prevent child homelessness, focusing on; adequate rent supports, resuming tenant-in-situ as a core prevention tool and providing early intervention supports.

⁵ [2025 Delivering Homes Building Communities](#)

Tenant-in-Situ Scheme

Since its introduction following the lifting of the eviction moratorium in April 2023, the Tenant-in-Situ Scheme has proven highly effective in preventing homelessness among households facing no-fault evictions. The scheme has enabled vulnerable households to remain in their homes while simultaneously increasing the supply of social housing available to local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies.

NOVAS played an active role in delivering homes through the TiS scheme in 2023 and 2024, working closely with local authorities to procure properties where landlords were selling and the household was at risk of homelessness. However, following changes to the scheme via *Circular 11/2025*, the number of households prevented from entering homelessness through the scheme declined sharply.

Restrictions introduced since 2025 including; reduced funding allocations particularly relating to renovations, tighter acquisition criteria and limitations on refurbishment funding, have significantly reduced the effectiveness of the scheme as a homelessness prevention measure.

These changes have constrained the capacity of local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to prevent homelessness through acquisitions, despite clear evidence that the scheme provides both social and economic value. Reduced use of the scheme has contributed to increased pressure on homelessness services at a time of exceptionally high demand.

Recommendations

- Restore the Tenant in Situ Scheme to its original preventative function, including funding for essential refurbishment works.
- Reverse the restrictions introduced under Circular Housing 11/2025 which have reduced the scheme's effectiveness as a homelessness prevention measure.
- Restore at least 2024 funding levels for the scheme.

Introduce a streamlined national approvals process to enable acquisitions before Notices of Termination expire. Restoring the Tenant in Situ Scheme should be viewed not solely as a housing measure but as a cost-effective homelessness prevention intervention. Preventing a household from entering emergency accommodation avoids significant expenditure on hotel accommodation, family hubs, homelessness services and associated health and social care supports. Investment in prevention represents better value for money than responding after homelessness has occurred.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) remains the primary exit route from homelessness in Ireland, with 52,367 active HAP tenancies nationally at the end of April 2025⁶. However, the scheme is no longer adequately meeting the needs of many low-income households in the current rental market. Rising rents and a chronic shortage of rental accommodation have significantly reduced its effectiveness.

HAP limits have not kept pace with market rents, leaving many low-income renters exposed to housing insecurity and making it increasingly difficult for households to secure and sustain accommodation. While discretionary enhancements and Homeless HAP (HHAP) provide some flexibility, many households continue to face substantial barriers in accessing accommodation within existing thresholds.

NOVAS welcomes the Department of Housing's commitment to review the HAP scheme and encourages consideration of the recommendations arising from the Ombudsman's 2025 investigation. Given ongoing pressures in the rental market, changes to tenant protections and the increase in eviction notices during the first quarter of 2026, this review should be completed as a matter of urgency.

NOVAS supports a long-term policy direction that reduces reliance on HAP through increased delivery of public housing. However, until housing supply is sufficient to meet demand, HAP is a critical homelessness prevention and exit measure.

⁶ [executive-report-april-2025_0.pdf](#)

⁷ Ombudsman Investigation of HAP scheme

NOVAS welcomed the Government's Budget 2026 commitment of over €570 million for HAP and the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), recognising the important role these schemes play in preventing homelessness and supporting low-income households. However, despite this significant investment, statutory HAP rent limits were not increased. The growing gap between HAP rates and market rents increases the risk of housing insecurity and homelessness among low-income households. Budget 2027 should therefore ensure that HAP support levels are aligned with prevailing rental costs and that the recommendations of the HAP review are adequately resourced and implemented.

Recommendations

- Increase HAP and Homeless HAP (HHAP) limits to reflect prevailing market rents. Budget 2027 should provide dedicated funding to implement the recommendations arising from the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) review and ensure that rent supports reflect the realities of the current rental market.
- Given cumulative rent inflation and the growing disparity between current HAP thresholds and prevailing rents, an investment of at least €100 million will be required to bring HAP and HHAP limits to an adequate level.
- Increase HAP funding by approximately €9.75 million to meet the maximum allowable annual rent review for existing HAP tenancies. This estimate is based on approximately 53,000 supported households and should be reviewed annually to reflect changes in tenancy numbers and rental costs.
- Introduce automatic indexation of HAP and HHAP limits so that support rates increase in line with rental market trends, preventing future divergence between assistance levels and actual rents.
- Standardise and simplify access to HHAP nationwide, removing administrative barriers, inconsistencies, and delays that can contribute to tenancy loss and homelessness.

Budget 2027 should also provide additional funding to expand Housing First nationally, ensuring sufficient tenancies and multidisciplinary supports to meet increasing demand among people experiencing long-term homelessness.

End Child and Family Homelessness

The continued rise in the number of children experiencing homelessness remains a matter of profound concern. NOVAS welcomes the commitment to develop Ireland's first Child and Family Homelessness Action Plan and urges Government to ensure that it delivers meaningful, measurable and adequately resourced actions to prevent and reduce child homelessness. Earlier this year, NOVAS had the opportunity to submit our recommendations to the action plan, which are grounded in evidence from frontline services and align with the State's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ending child homelessness is not only a housing objective but also a commitment arising from Ireland's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Budget 2027 should ensure that all policy and funding decisions affecting homeless children are guided by the principle of the child's best interests.

Today, more than 5,500 children in Ireland are experiencing homelessness, while many more continue to live in overcrowded, insecure or otherwise unsuitable housing conditions⁸. Over the past five years, homelessness among families has increased by 187% and child homelessness⁹. The impacts of child homelessness are frequently associated with anxiety, instability, social exclusion and trauma, underlining the need for prevention and early intervention to remain central to Government policy. The scale and severity of this crisis require urgent, coordinated and sustained Government action across housing, health, education and child protection systems. Every child living in homeless accommodation should have access to a dedicated child support worker.

NOVAS welcomes the Government's acknowledgement that addressing long-term family homelessness is a key priority, particularly reducing the length of time children spend in emergency accommodation, as outlined in *Delivering Homes, Building Communities*¹⁰

There is increasing evidence that local authorities are operating waiting lists for emergency accommodation, while many families are being required to source accommodation independently through hotels and private providers. As a result, families are often forced to

⁸ March 2025 Monthly Homeless Report

⁹ [April 2020 Monthly Homeless Report](#); [April 2026 Monthly Homeless Report](#)

¹⁰ [Delivering Homes, Building Communities](#)

move repeatedly between locations, causing significant disruption and instability for children. This practice is unsuitable for children and families and should be phased out as a matter of urgency.

Recommendations

- Provide sustained funding for trauma-informed, child-centred supports within homelessness services.
- Sufficiently resource Child Support Workers at an estimated cost of 2 million per annum¹¹.
- Introduce a national target to end long-term child and family homelessness and reduce time spent in emergency accommodation.

Create a sustainable and robust sector

The rise in homelessness has placed unprecedented demand on homeless services at a time when the sector's ability to respond is hampered by its inability to attract and retain staff, combined with funding restraints associated with service delivery. Many not-for-profit providers are operating homeless accommodation services at a deficit. This is particularly the case for older services, where budgets have not been renegotiated for years, or even decades.

Full cost recovery should be provided for all homeless services, as recommended by the City and County Managers Association. This is vital for the sustainability of the sector. Multi-annual budgets that provide for inflationary increases also need to be agreed to promote medium-term planning for service delivery and growth.

We welcome the prioritisation of homelessness measures and support in Budget 2026. The budget allocated €563 million to support the provision of homeless services, including emergency accommodation, homelessness prevention initiatives, tenancy sustainment supports and transitional accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. This represented a significant increase of €328 million from the previous year's allocation and was a shift from mid-year supplementary budgets.

¹¹ [Focus Ireland Pre Budget Submission 2024](#)

Budget 2027 must protect this vital sector by committing to

- Recognise staffing crisis in budget allocations while taking into consideration inflation. State funding should provide incentives to retain staff in emergency shelters, to provide high-quality care and support to those experiencing homelessness. This will improve outcomes.
- Provide multi-annual budgets that reflect the full cost of operating homeless services.
- Bridge the gap between current funding and the actual costs of service delivery. An increase in base funding is essential. The actual cost of homeless service provision in 2025 was €480.01m (even though just €327.81 was earmarked for homelessness in the budget for that year)¹². There needs to be a significant uplift of the actual cost of delivering services

Conclusion

NOVAS thanks Government for considering this 2027 Pre-Budget Submission. NOVAS remains committed to working in partnership with Government, local authorities and statutory agencies to provide high-quality services and housing supports to people experiencing homelessness, addiction and social marginalisation.

Investment in homelessness prevention should be viewed as expenditure avoidance rather than expenditure growth. Every household prevented from entering homelessness reduces demand on emergency accommodation, health services, child protection, social work, addiction services and other public supports. Prevention measures including Tenant in Situ, Housing Assistance Payment, tenancy sustainment and Housing First deliver long-term savings while improving outcomes for households.

Budget 2027 presents a critical opportunity to strengthen homelessness prevention measures, increase housing supply and ensure that children and families experiencing homelessness receive the supports they need. Sustained investment and coordinated action across Government will be essential to achieving the shared objective of ending long-term homelessness by 2030.

¹² [Additional €152m sought this year to pay for accommodation for homeless – The Irish Times](#)

