West Framework Homelessness

Action Plan

Submitted to: Galway City Council
Galway County Council
Mayo County Council
Roscommon County Council
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................3
2. Vision and Strategic Aims .................................................4
3. Definition and Causes of Homelessness ..............................7
4. National Policy Framework ..............................................9
5. Regional Implementation Structures .................................13
6. Current Service Provision in the Region ............................15
7. Homeless Services Framework ..........................................23
8. Implementation Blueprint of Homeless Services ..................33

Appendices
WEST HOMELESSNESS FRAMEWORK PLAN MAY 2010

Introduction

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) has introduced measures designated to provide a working framework, including guidelines, for the implementation of the National Homeless Strategy. The measures, which have been enshrined in legislation, the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, place all aspects of the national and local approach to addressing homelessness on a statutory footing, and are designed to achieve uniform approaches and outcomes which are client-focused, efficient and structured.

This present document is a Framework Plan, which the West Management Group of the Joint Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum is recommending for adoption by the Local Authorities of Galway City & County, Roscommon and Mayo. Galway City Council was invited to be the lead authority for the West region and in conjunction with the HSE West has commissioned an independent review of Homeless Services for the West Region. This review will be completed shortly and the recommendations will feed into a blueprint for Homeless Services, which is to be completed later in the year. This subsequent blueprint will address gaps in current data collection & analysis methods, address issues on a regional basis and agree protocols where services need to be delivered on a regional basis.

The Local Authorities in the West rely on the services of the community & voluntary sector to provide many residential, accommodation and support services for people who are homeless and have good relationships throughout the region. It is envisaged that local structures which have brought homeless services to the current point will need to remain in place in a manner deemed locally appropriate and are in fact essential to ensuring the work of the West Homeless Forum is informed and relevant. The authorities welcome the initiative to put their relationship regarding homeless services on a statutory basis and are keen to ensure that it will lead to co-operative and co-ordinated practices and protocols to address homelessness in the Region.
Chapter 2 Vision and Strategic Aims

This section outlines the long-term vision for homelessness in the West region, (Galway, Mayo & Roscommon) which this plan will lay the ground for achieving. This section also outlines the mission or purpose of the plan and the values and principles which underpin it. In particular the plan reflects The Way Home, the National Strategy to address adult homelessness in Ireland from 2008 – 2013 and the National Implementation Plan for that strategy and is also guided by national policy on mental health and the National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2013.

Vision
The Way Home states that from end of 2010 long-term homelessness\(^1\) and the need to sleep rough will be eliminated throughout Ireland. The other core objective is the prevention of homelessness as far as possible where the risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised and where homelessness does occur, the experience will be short term and the aim will be to move the person in as short a time as possible into appropriate long term accommodation.

The West Joint Consultative Homelessness Forum’s vision is of a region without long-term homelessness and with effective preventative policies and services. The needs of people who are homeless will be met in a co-ordinated and planned manner and will offer a range of appropriate, cost effective and supportive services aimed at the prevention and reduction of homelessness.

Mission
The purpose of the West Joint Consultative Homelessness Forum is, in accordance with section 38 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, to provide information, views, advice or reports in relation to homelessness and in relation to the provisions of the draft homelessness action plan and the operation and implementation of the action plan. This requires the Forum to place an emphasis on strengthening preventative policies, procedures, working relationships and services to reduce levels of repeat homelessness, thus reducing the overall level of homelessness. In particular the West Joint Consultative Homelessness Forum aims to address the needs of the long-term homeless currently resident in emergency facilities.

Values and principles
A number of values and principles have informed the development of this plan, and will underpin its implementation. These include the following:

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\(^1\) Towards 2016 requires the elimination of long term occupation of emergency accommodation by 2010, meaning that from that time no one should be in emergency accommodation for more than six months.
• Homelessness can only be addressed by relevant bodies working in partnership to agreed objectives, which are strategically planned.
• The overall objective in planning and delivery of homeless services is to achieve the best outcome for homeless households by matching services to needs.
• Addressing homelessness involves availability of appropriate support services from a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies as well as “bricks and mortar”. Housing by itself will not solve homelessness in every case. There is also a need for interventions to assist people to move out of homelessness and support services to help them to maintain independent living. It is essential however that there is an adequate supply of housing options with related housing and health/care and related supports.
• The provision of homeless services will be underpinned by a commitment to achieve value for money, effective, efficient and timely access to services.
• The co-operation of all relevant parties in providing co-ordinated service provision and integrated care planning is essential to prevent homelessness occurring, eliminating long term homelessness and need for rough sleeping.
• Development of a case management approach to homelessness will ensure that a homeless person is treated uniquely and services and supports are tailored to meet individual needs.
• Services should provide continuing encouragement to people to be as independent as possible and to move out of homelessness into a home of their own as soon as is practicable.
• The views and experience of homeless service users and front line providers will be used to inform the planning of regional and local policy and service responses to homelessness.
• Health and Welfare Needs - adequate personal, social and community support services and accessible mental health and addiction services should be available to households vulnerable to homelessness
• There needs to be a shift from managing homelessness to its reduction and elimination.
• Homeless services may need to be reconfigured/rationalised to promote the objectives of the Homeless strategy and to promote the best interests of homeless persons.
• Ongoing quantitative and qualitative analysis of services is important to underpin the effective planning, operation and oversight of homeless services.
• Adequate access needs to be ensured to mainstream health services for people and households at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.

Strategic Aims
This West Homelessness Action Plan mirrors the strategic aims as outlined in The Way Home and as further developed in the National Implementation Plan, in particular:
• To reduce the number of households who become homeless through the further development and enhancement of preventative measures – preventing homelessness.
• To eliminate the need for people to sleep rough.
• To eliminate long term homelessness and to reduce the length of time people spend homeless.
• To meet the long term housing needs through an increase in housing options.
• To ensure effective services for homeless people.
• To ensure better co-ordinated funding arrangements and re-orientate spending on homeless services, away from emergency responses to the provision of long term housing and support services.
• To develop and maintain good quality data on homelessness including an evidence base for all homeless services.
• Effective arrangements for monitoring and implementation

Key performance indicators
Key performance indicators will be used to monitor the implementation of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan including the following:

• Progress will be measured by collecting accurate data on the number of:
  - new homeless individuals presenting in the region and monitoring the primary reason for their presentation.
  - 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 their presentation.
  - people moved from emergency homeless accommodation to long term housing options.
• Costs and other resources in different services relative to the numbers of households provided for.
Chapter 3  Definition and causes of Homelessness

For the purposes of this Homelessness Action Plan the definition of homelessness is that as has been defined in the Housing Act of 1988 as:

“A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purpose of this Act if-

(a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or

(b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter, or other such institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a)

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

Causes of Homelessness

An understanding of the causes of homelessness is crucial to developing effective responses to people who are homeless and to developing strategies, which will prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. While there is no universal consensus on why particular individuals and families become homeless there is an emerging convergence of opinion that it is likely to be due to the interaction of a range of factors, both personal and structural, which are examined here.

In the past, explanations for homelessness have tended to concentrate on its being an individual problem, due to personal difficulties and deficiencies. Now it is generally believed that structural issues such as poverty, unemployment and lack of housing options contribute to homelessness. While these issues significantly affect the incidence of homelessness, not everyone who is unemployed or affected by poverty becomes homeless. Neither is the selection of who becomes homeless an entirely random process, and there are a number of characteristics in the backgrounds of homeless people which are commonly held. These characteristics and general causes of homelessness are summarized as follows:

♦ Physical or sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence
♦ Family disputes or breakdown
♦ A background of institutional care
♦ Offending behaviour and / or experience of prison
♦ Emergency homelessness due to fire, flood or storm damage.
♦ Domestic violence.
♦ Tenancy termination; dis-inheritance.
♦ Immigration.
♦ Discharge from institutional care i.e. prisons hospitals or hostels.
♦ Lack of a social support network
♦ Debts especially rent or mortgage arrears.
♦ Causing nuisance to neighbours.
† Drug or alcohol misuse.
† School exclusion and lack of qualifications.
† Mental health problems.
† Poor physical health.
† Inadequate supply of temporary accommodation.
† Employment factors

In addition to these risk factors, there is a range of events or crisis points which can trigger homelessness including:
† leaving the parental home after arguments
† marital or relationship breakdown
† widowhood
† leaving care
† leaving prison
† a sharp deterioration in mental health or an increase in alcohol or drug misuse
† a financial crisis of mounting debts
† victims of anti-social behaviour

Understanding these characteristics, which place people at risk of homelessness and the events which might then trigger homelessness is vital in informing the development of services for homeless people and strategies to prevent homelessness. Clearly many people who become homeless will have a range of support needs, which must be addressed alongside their need for housing.

A recent Health Research Board report indicates that drug use, specifically heroin and cocaine, is increasing in areas outside Dublin. Experts predict that drug addiction will further increase in the future as a result of economic difficulties. To this extent, those working with homeless persons particularly over the coming years face greater challenges.
Chapter 4 National Policy Framework

In drawing up this Homeless Framework Plan the Management Group of the West Joint Consultative Homelessness Forum took particular account of homeless and housing policies published over the past two decades, including:


The framework also notes other policy documents which, while focused on specific issues, e.g. Mental Health, Drugs Strategy, etc, have, however, a particular reference to homelessness.


This section identifies significant developments in responses to the problem of homelessness over the past two decades. Overall, it is evident from policy that homelessness has moved from the direct provision of accommodation, to a more co-ordinated approach that enables homeless people to access long term accommodation and prevents homelessness from occurring and reoccurring.

The key policies and legislation affecting the delivery of this strategy are outlined below.

**Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009**

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 provides a comprehensive statutory framework for the operation of statutory Homelessness Consultative Fora and Management Groups and the making and adoption of homelessness action plans within specified time periods, publication and circulation of the adopted plans and procedures for undertaking a review of a plan or preparing a new plan are outlined.

These new provisions will help to make homelessness a more central element of the housing authority functions, promote a more planned approach to homeless services throughout the country and assist housing authorities to ensure decisions on services are based on criteria of evidenced need, value for money and achieving the best outcomes for homeless people.
2009 Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan
Implementation of the Homeless Strategy will be carried out primarily through the homelessness action plan process, which has been put on a statutory basis through the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and Ministerial directions.

The 2009 National Implementation Plan provides a framework to guide the action required at national level to promote and support effective implementation locally. It sets out a sequence of strategic aims, key approaches, priority actions, constituent/supporting measures necessary for implementation of the overall Homeless Strategy. The implementation plan indicates appropriate lead roles, timelines, key performance indicators and linkages to relevant local action. The plan also brings to bear on the implementation process important considerations such as efficiency, value for money, organisational and financial streamlining and the roles of various agencies, particularly in the context of the changed economic context.

Priority areas highlighted for attention, particularly those focused on the elimination of long-term dependence on emergency homeless services, include the following:
- Action to provide effective long-term solutions for people leaving homelessness, including development of a new scheme of supports and homes through leasing or equivalent accommodation supply arrangements.
- Re-orientation of investment to support a significant increase in suitable accommodation and support for people leaving homelessness.
- New arrangements and procedures for funding of homeless services based on needs, priorities and maximising efficiency, quality and value for money.
- Urgent follow up to the reports published by the Homeless Agency in December 2008 on homeless services in Dublin.
- Engagement between the relevant Departments and the HSE to identify ways of enhancing effectiveness and best value nationally from resources in relation to homelessness.
- Co-ordination of guidance to local authorities, homeless fora and health services, particularly in the context of formulation of homeless action plans.

The Way Home was launched in 2008 and is informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2006 Fitzpatrick report. The emphasis of the new strategy is to prevent people from becoming homeless or if they should become homeless this would be short term. The ultimate intention is that persons who have accessed homeless services will be assisted out of homelessness and into long term housing in as short a time as possible.

The strategy sets out six strategic aims around three core objectives:
- Eliminating the need to sleep rough.
- Preventing the occurrence of homelessness as far as possible.
Youth Homelessness Strategy 2001
The Government’s Youth Homelessness Strategy published in 2001 provides a framework within which youth homelessness is tackled on a national basis. The Strategy places lead responsibility for the implementation of the strategy on the HSE however the need for collaboration between the HSE and local authorities is highlighted. The Strategy requires the development of an aftercare protocol to ensure each young person leaving care is appointed a designated person to provide aftercare support and devise an aftercare support plan to enable young persons effect a successful transition to independent living, return to family or other appropriate arrangements. The responsibility for meeting the needs of homeless young people under the age of 18 lies solely with the HSE.

The Housing Act 1988
The 1988 Act defined homelessness for the first time in legislation and expanded the role of Local Authorities in addressing Homelessness. It resulted in improvements in funding available to voluntary bodies for accommodation for homeless persons. It also resulted in greater awareness of homelessness as an issue and in development of additional responses to it.

Health Related Strategies
There are a number of strategies relevant to the development of homeless services as health needs and addiction issues are often a contributory factor to a person becoming homeless. The National Health Strategy Quality and Fairness A Health System for You (2001) has a specific aim of improving the health and well-being of homeless people and an overall aim to improve the operation and quality of health services generally.

The 2006 Vision for Change report by the Mental Health Expert group recognises that homeless people with mental health problems have more difficulty meeting their accommodation needs with a specific chapter dedicated to addressing the mental health needs of homeless people. The HSE Hospital Integrated Discharge Plan identifies homeless people as an at risk group when discharged from hospital care and places an obligation on HSE acute hospital services to ensure, through protocols for discharge, that patients who are homeless are notified to relevant local homeless services. The Interim National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2016 focuses on the needs of specific groups in accessing services. The strategy recognises the complex needs of homeless people and prioritises further engagement with homeless people and the provision of drug treatment and prevention measures at national, regional and local level.

County/City Development Plans 2007-2013
Each Local Authority has a County/City Development Plan which seeks to develop and improve in a sustainable manner the social, economic, cultural and environmental assets of the county/city. The purpose of the plan is to inform the public, statutory authorities and service providers, developers and other interested parties, of the policy
framework that will guide development decisions within the county/city over the plan period.

Each County/City Development Plan includes a **Housing Strategy** which seeks:
- to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for residential use and made available to meet the requirements of all sectors of the population.
- to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income, particularly those in need of social housing.
- to ensure a mixture of house type is developed to match requirements of different categories of households, particularly vulnerable households.
- to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different backgrounds.

Arising from the Housing Act 2009, a **Housing Services Plan** will be developed by each local authority which will outline the provision of housing services of Galway City & County, Mayo & Roscommon housing authorities having regard to the requirements of the housing strategy. The Housing Services Plan will outline the demand for affordable housing, and will have regard to the Traveller Accommodation programme, the Homeless Action plan, the Anti-Social Behaviour strategy, Scheme of Letting Priorities and the Sustainable Neighbourhood Strategy.

**Earlier Homelessness strategies and other relevant policy Documents**

The current Homeless strategy was developed partly through building on earlier strategies developed locally within the West Region. These strategies and other relevant policy documents, which help underpin the homeless strategy in a wider context, are referenced in Appendix A.
Chapter 5  Regional Implementation Structures

West Homelessness Forum

The West Forum was established in May 2010 arising from Ministerial directions issued by 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 the West Homeless Forum is to provide a consultative mechanism in relation to homelessness, particularly in the context of the preparation of this statutory West Framework Plan.

West Management Group

A Management Group of the West Homelessness Forum was established in accordance with legislation with the primary responsibility for the preparation of this statutory West Homelessness Framework Plan and to make recommendations to relevant statutory bodies in relation to the services required to address homelessness in the region, on funding for such services and on the ongoing operation of this Homelessness Framework Plan and subsequent blueprint for Homeless Services.

Membership of the West Homeless Forum

The 22 members of the West Homeless Forum are drawn from sectors as outlined in Circular HU 1/2010 and will work together over the next five years. The membership is drawn from the following sectors as set out in the table below.

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<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
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<th>MEMBERS</th>
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<td>Approved Voluntary Bodies*</td>
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**Total Joint Regional Homeless Forum**  **22**

In addition to the Regional Homeless Forum, local Homeless Fora have been in place for some time in the West Region, and if it is considered appropriate at local level, these fora will continue to operate, and to assist in ensuring that local needs are addressed.

**Approved Housing & Other Bodies in the Region**

COPE Galway  
Galway Simon  
St Vincent de Paul  
Threshold  
Galway Diocesan Youth Services  
Teach Mhuire  
Mayo Women’s Support Service  
Roscara Housing Association
Chapter 6 Current Service Provision in the Region

Services to Homeless people in the West Region (Galway City & County, Mayo & Roscommon) are currently provided by HSE West, the four local authorities in the West and the Voluntary service providers. The West Management Group comprises of HSE West, Galway City Council (as appointed lead authority) and a representative on behalf of the other local authorities in the West, in accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. This group established the need for a comprehensive review of homeless services in the region. The review was guided by the Government’s 2008 strategy to address homelessness *The Way Home* and the 2009 National Implementation Plan. Murtagh & Partners were appointed consultants to carry out this review and recommendations/actions will inform a blueprint of regional services, which, will be undertaken during the summer, and autumn of 2010.

The Table below outlines in summary the range of services that are provided to those who present as homeless, or are considered to be at risk of homelessness. However, it should also be acknowledged that there are services in the region, such as mental health, estate management, tenancy sustainment, youth diversion, and other services which are making an important contribution to the prevention of homelessness in the region, and, in the context of achieving the objectives in this Plan, it is important that those services which have proven to be successful remain in place.

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<tr>
<th>Emergency Accommodation Galway City</th>
<th>Service Provider</th>
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<th>Capacity</th>
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<td>Osterley Lodge</td>
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*Homeless Services in the West Region*
GALWAY CITY HOMELESS SERVICES

COPE Galway
COPE Galway is a Galway based voluntary organisation that that provides services to the most isolated in the community including a refuge for women and children affected by domestic violence, accommodation for those experiencing homelessness and sustenance and social supports for older people at home.

Fairgreen Hostel
Fairgreen Hostel provides emergency accommodation for men and has a capacity of 26 single bedrooms. It also provides a range of support services including meals, information, laundry and access to a GP.

Osterley Lodge Service
Osterley Lodge service provides emergency accommodation for homeless women and has a capacity of 13 single bedrooms. It also includes provision to accommodate a family of one woman and up to three children. Osterley Lodge provides a range of support services including meals, information and laundry etc.

Towards Independence Project
The ‘Towards Independence Project’ at Ruislip Manor provides step down accommodation for single men who are homeless moving on from the Fairgreen Hostel. The project is focused on moving people onto independent living with referrals accepted based on a level of motivation and capability to live independently and allocation of a bedspace in the project is conditional on participation in a programme focused on preparation for independent living and the active pursuit of independent accommodation.

Resettlement
COPE Galway Resettlement service assists and supports men and women moving from emergency accommodation from the point they take up accommodation and are resettled in the community. The aim of the work of the resettlement service is to help ensure that people retain their independent accommodation and move out of homelessness.

Winter Initiative in conjunction with Galway Simon
The Winter Initiative is a night time accommodation service operated over the winter months for people who would otherwise sleep rough. The project is jointly run by COPE Galway and Galway Simon Community and has operated over each of the past four winters from different accommodation units in Galway City. The project has had a capacity each winter to accommodate between 10 and 12 people each night.

Waterside House & Outreach service
Waterside House is a refuge that caters for women and their children who are experiencing domestic violence. The refuge can accommodate six women and 15 children.
High Support Residential Services
These projects provide accommodation and social care in a shared residential setting with 24/7 staff cover. The houses are designed to provide long term accommodation and care to those who need it but service users who choose to more on to more independent accommodation are fully supported to do so.

Continuing Care Service
This is a shared supported housing and social care service for men who have been long term in emergency accommodation. Residents remain in the house for as long as they need and are supported to move on to more independent accommodation should they wish to do so.

Medium to Low Supported Services.
These projects provide accommodation and social care in a shared residential setting with peripatetic support. Residents remain in the houses for as long as their stabilisation needs require and are then supported to move on to more independent accommodation.

The Women’s Project
This project provides shared supported accommodation with 24/7 staff cover where women are enabled to enter a stabilisation programme in preparation for moving on to more independent accommodation.

Tenancy Sustainment
This programme is designed to provide move on and ongoing support services to people who have moved on from emergency, from shared supported accommodation with different levels of support and to individuals and families who have been referred by other organisations as being in need of the services.

Resettlement Service
This is a residential resettlement service with 24/7 staff cover where residents are supported to work on the issues which have previously affected their opportunities of obtaining and remaining in secure accommodation.

Specialist Services
Multidisciplinary Team in which there are 2 nursing posts – one is a Community Mental Health Nurse and one is a Registered General Nurse in addition to a Substance Misuse Counsellor and a Relapse Prevention Counsellor. In addition GSC provides Chiropody Services at the Day Centre.
**Threshold**

**Advice and Advocacy Service**
Threshold has been providing a housing advice and advocacy service for those in housing difficulty in Galway and the surrounding region since 1988. They work with clients who are in danger of homelessness and advocate on their behalf in order to prevent homelessness. They also assist people who have become homeless to access secure accommodation.

**Tenancy Sustainment Project**
This project provides tenancy sustainment for 25 individuals and households who have experienced homelessness. The objective of this project is to sustain the current tenancies and to assist the tenant to move on to independent living.

**Galway Diocesan Youth Services**
No 4 is a city based, drop in centre catering for the daytime needs of young people including those who are either homeless, or who have been identified as high risk. The project offers basics such as showering facilities, breakfast, dinner, laundry facilities and a change of clothing. Staff engage in one to one interaction when necessary, for instance if a young person is in crisis, combined with group work and a range of programmes designed to provide tangible support, emotional support, advice and guidance, and esteem and belonging.

**Tithe na nOg** is a pilot project that is advocating a new way of working in a preventative manner, as a response to youth homelessness. It evolved out of the recognition amongst statutory and voluntary services that there was a cohort of 18 to 21 year olds who were falling between services. There were concerns that this age group were presenting at adult homelessness shelters exposing them to additional dangers, in addition to the probability that they would get caught up in the cycle of homelessness.

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul**
The provision of practical support and friendship is at the core of the Society’s work. This support is not simply about providing shelter but also about providing people with the appropriate support they need to make a home where they can live fulfilled lives.
**Madeira Court, Mill Street**

Madeira Court comprises 18 Apartments for elderly and vulnerable adults. The residents are long term and supported by the recently opened Resource Centre on the same site.

**Rendu Court, Merchants Road**

As part of the Safe-Home programme, Rendu Court provides a safe and secure home for the repatriation of elderly Galway emigrants. The project comprises 4 Apartments.

**St. Anthony’s, Market Street**

This project provides accommodation for 12 elderly men. It can be long or short term depending on needs of the individual.

**HSE WEST (Galway, Mayo & Roscommon)**

**Mental Health Services**
These services are available in each of the counties and are open to all, especially homeless or marginalized persons.

**Community Welfare Services**
This service offers liaison between homeless people and the general Community Welfare Service.

**Specialist Services**
The HSE provides funding to Galway Simon for a Multi-disciplinary team. This team comprises of 2 nursing posts, Community Mental Health Nurse and a Registered General Nurse in addition to a Substance Misuse Counsellor (funded through Regional Drugs Task Force) and Social Worker (Galway City Council)

**West Local Authorities**

All four local authorities, through the use of the Housing, Social Workers, RAS and Homelessness/Tenancy Sustainment services are responsible for the provision of accommodation for homeless people.

**Social Work Service**
The Social work service offers emergency assessment and referral for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless. The service endeavours to provide solutions to individuals and families before they become homeless through direct intervention or liaison with other service providers such as MABS and Community Welfare.
Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
RAS has provided accommodation for Homeless People since 2006. In September 2007 RAS established a pilot project with COPE Galway *Towards Independent Living* and this projected has accommodated 42 individuals from Fairgreen Hostel. In addition a Tenancy Sustainment Project was established in 2008 with Threshold providing support to 25 households.

ROSCOMMON

Emergency accommodation is organized by Roscommon County Council through a network of Bed and Breakfast arrangements in the main towns in the County. In general emergency accommodation is provided for two or three nights for any one individual and that person is assisted by the Council in sourcing private rented accommodation should they wish to remain in Roscommon. Periodically the Housing Liaison Officer gives a talk to prisoners from Castlerea prison as part of their release programme.

Prevention of homelessness is a key strategy and discharge protocols have been developed in County Roscommon with the General and Psychiatric Hospital Services. Tithe na gCarad is a Hostel run by the Roscommon Mental Health Services, HSE West, at Castlerea. It has 16 full time residents and also caters for day patients. It offers respite and a step down service, when required, for patients discharged from the Psychiatric Unit of Roscommon Hospital. Roscommon County Council work in partnership with the Mental Health Services and has provided six houses near by in a social housing scheme, that are specifically allocated to tenants, who are capable of living independently with support, and who are moving from the Hostel accommodation.

Roscara Housing Association is a voluntary Housing Association, attached to the Brothers of Charity. They have provided forty-nine units of accommodation, at various locations throughout the County that cater for the housing needs of people with intellectual disabilities and are capable of living independently, with support from the Brothers of Charity.

MAYO

Mayo Women’s Support Service is a project of the Society of St.Vincent de Paul. M.W.S.S. provides refuge accommodation in Castlebar. The refuge has 4 family units and a single unit. The service also provides Transitional Supported Housing, for women and their children who were homeless due to domestic violence. There are 4 units of accommodation in Ballina and 2 units in Castlebar. Mayo Women’s Support Service also provides an outreach service in 11 locations throughout the County.
Galway County Council deals with persons from the county area that present as homeless. The majority of cases present at the main offices in the City but a number also present at regional offices. After assessment the Council provides emergency accommodation through a mixture of social housing where immediately available in a small number of cases, private hostels and budget hotels and occasionally in B & B. The Council also avails of the services and facilities provided by Cope in the city in many cases and would acknowledge the co-operation of Galway City Council in facilitating this as these types of services and supports are unavailable in the County. The County Council is examining the feasibility of developing some model of accommodation in the County area to provide appropriate services in association with the voluntary sector.
Chapter 7 Homeless Services Framework

The Homeless Services Framework Plan, seeks to outline a comprehensive model, at a generic level, of the various components of homeless services and arrangements required. This will constitute an overall policy framework for homeless services at local/regional level, providing a comprehensive model for effective homeless services and arrangements designed to achieve the aims of the Government’s Homeless Strategy in the area/region. As this is the first regional plan, it is intended, during the period of the plan, to examine the extent to which services are meeting local or regional needs, and to assess the extent to which services could provide a regional response to specific needs.

Following compilation and analysis of more detailed data and completion of a rigorous review of homeless service requirements, the Action Plan will be supplemented by a detailed Implementation Blueprint of homeless services, which will provide the necessary detail to give effect to the framework model, with more specific identification of the nature and extent of homeless services, facilities and arrangements required during the life of the plan and necessary details such as location, quantification, operational arrangements, service provider involvement, etc. In tandem with the recommendations from the review the blueprint will also incorporate those actions from existing Housing Action Plans in the region which are considered to be relevant in achieving the objectives as set out in this plan.

General principles relating to homeless services

Key principles, which will be applied in decisions relating to homeless services include:

The overall objective in planning and delivery of homeless services is to achieve the best outcome for homeless households by matching services to needs. It is essential to maximise effectiveness and value for money in homeless services and make the best possible use of available resources to pursue the core objectives of the Homeless Strategy, particularly ending long-term homelessness.

Homeless services in certain areas may need to be configured to promote the objectives of the Homeless Strategy and National Implementation Plan, having regard to needs and priorities in the area and available resources. The nature and extent of homelessness is fundamentally different between Galway City, and the rural areas in the region. Equally, homelessness outside Galway City manifests itself primarily in urban areas in the region. This is reflected in the existing pattern of service provision, and will also influence the actions to be undertaken in the implementation blueprint. The scope for greater rationalisation and improved organisation of all aspects of homeless services (especially in centres of greater

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2 Note: Specific issues in this regard are dealt with under Strategic Aim 5 of the National Implementation Plan for the Homeless Strategy, while related matters regarding appraisal and funding of services are dealt with under Strategic Aim 6.
concentration of homeless persons e.g. Galway City) will be examined with a view to avoiding or eliminating any duplication, maximising effectiveness and efficiency and ensuring that scarce resources are only used for services which make a significant contribution to addressing homelessness. As well as examining the match between supply of and need for different categories of accommodation, this will include critical examination of elements (where relevant) such as the operation of any placement services, outreach services, information services, other possible daytime services and various types of support services. All existing support type services and resources, however termed (e.g. housing support, tenancy support, social work, tenancy sustainment, settlement, re-settlement, housing welfare, etc) will be identified and taken into account in determining service requirements.

Decisions relating to the configuration of services will be based on rigorous analysis of relevant, comprehensive, accurate, and up to date information, particularly in relation to needs and existing homeless services, including aspects such as unit cost analysis, cost variations between services, usage of services, duration of homelessness and outcomes for service users.

In considering any new proposals in relation to homeless services, account must be taken of likely constraints on availability of capital and the likelihood that, for the foreseeable future, a significant proportion of any projects that may be warranted will need to be pursued through revenue based “leasing” type arrangements.

Main elements of homeless services
Homeless Services will be configured and operated to support the successful implementation at local/regional level of the Government’s Homeless Strategy and the National Implementation Plan for the Strategy, which contain the following main objectives:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Eliminating need to sleep rough
- Eliminating long term homelessness and meeting long-term housing need
- Ensuring that homeless services are effective and of adequate standard.
- Ensuring as far as possible timely progression of service users from transitional/emergency Homeless Accommodation towards more independent living.

The following is an outline of the main elements of homeless services to support achievement of these objectives:

*Homelessness prevention/intervention*
- Arrangements to ensure identification of and contact with and by, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including possible outreach services as warranted.
- Measures to help prevent homelessness due to loss of accommodation or to identify a route away from entering homelessness (e.g. provision or retention of housing, securing necessary income support to retain tenancy, etc).
- Effective arrangements for provision of clear information and advice on housing options, homeless services and other relevant services to prevent or address homelessness.
- Arrangements for early intervention in cases of risk of homelessness due to other factors, including securing relevant in-reach services e.g. to prisons, hospitals, or other relevant institutions.
- Prompt initial assessment to determine homelessness, applying appropriate and consistent operational criteria.
- Arrangements to ensure prompt access to or contact by the Community Welfare Service for people at risk of homelessness or actually homeless, both in relation to general social welfare entitlements and rent supplements and deposits.
- Arrangements for identification and preventative action, through relevant agencies, in respect of particular risk groups and risk factors such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, family breakdown, offenders (including sex offenders and ex-offenders, domestic violence (including possible removal of perpetrator).
- Liaison with HSE to address the potential risk of youth homelessness to act as a route to adult homelessness.
- One specific requirement relates to responding appropriately to the needs of foreign nationals who present as homeless, or who may be at serious risk of becoming homeless.
- Training and awareness raising for staff of relevant agencies in the interest of early identification of households and individuals at risk of homelessness.
- Training and awareness-raising among service providers and others who come into contact with those at risk of becoming homeless.

**Rough sleepers**
- Rough sleeper counts in areas where warranted.
- Consideration of possible “street outreach” requirements, where warranted, and compilation of information and implementation of arrangements to eliminate any need to sleep rough.
- Arrangements for access to, and appropriate admissions policies to, emergency homeless facilities.
- Arrangements for access by rough sleepers to drug, alcohol and health services, including adequate awareness by rough sleepers of available services.
- Availability of appropriate contingency arrangements for deployment to assist habitual rough sleepers in the event of severe weather or significant emergency.
**Temporary Homeless Accommodation**

- Provision of adequate supply of appropriate temporary accommodation where necessary.
- Implementation of effective “bed management” arrangements for operation of accommodation and placement of people.
- Minimise use of relatively expensive B&B accommodation and promote and plan for movement to mainstream housing as soon as possible.
- Arrangements to ensure adequate standards of accommodation.

**Assessment, health/care, case management/planning, service availability/quality**

- Prompt and effective follow up and support in relation to persons entering temporary accommodation, with a view to minimising duration of homelessness (target maximum duration of 6 months but less as far as possible) and the risk of recurrence of homelessness, including:
  - Proactive arrangements to ensure all eligible persons are “registered” for social housing.
  - Ongoing liaison with HSE, which is responsible for health/care aspects and related personal, social or community supports, including ensuring availability of any relevant specialist services, e.g. in relation to mental ill health, other disabilities, psychological, addiction or behavioural issues, ex-offenders, young people leaving care, etc.
  - Arrangements to ensure that people in homeless facilities have access to or are referred to relevant mainstream services e.g. in the health, welfare, education, employment and training sectors and have access to information and advice on such services.
  - Arrangements for adequate in-reach services to people in temporary accommodation e.g. by education, training, employment or other agencies with functions relevant to helping people to progress out of homelessness.
  - Full assessment (with involvement of relevant agencies) to determine housing, health/care and other needs (including complex and multiple needs) and determine most appropriate options: 1. housing and housing support needs. 2. health and care and related support needs. 3. other possible non-housing support needs; Needs relating to the foregoing to be specified in an accommodation/support plan
  - Arrangements for case planning and care and case management and ongoing case assessment, as appropriate, and action to implement an accommodation and support plan. A case management approach is considered beneficial in the delivery of homeless services. In particular, decisions to provide housing supports and the extent and duration of any such supports, must be based on rigorous assessment resulting in an accurate housing support plan for each individual.
  - Measures to ensure the quality and effectiveness of homeless services and that best practice and health and safety requirements are fully implemented.

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3 Information in that regard is available in various publications by the Homeless Agency, including *Pathway to Home*, published in June 2009 (available at www.homelessagency.ie).
• Arrangements to ensure adequate availability and appropriate localisation of homeless services.
• Implementation of arrangements to plan and deliver appropriate accommodation for households, ranging from homeless facilities to long term accommodation, including reconfiguration/adaptation of existing facilities for use as long-term accommodation.

**Long-term homeless accommodation**
• Action to ensure availability of an adequate supply of suitable long-term supported residential accommodation for homeless people who do not have capacity to progress to mainstream housing, having due regard to whether the needs of such persons are primarily of a health/care nature.
• The potential to provide long-term accommodation, as necessary, by adapting existing emergency or transitional facilities will be explored. There may be a requirement, in line with the national strategy, to provide more support for service users to live independently [eg tenancy sustainment] rather than in an institutional setting.

• Implementation of licence or tenancy agreements, as appropriate, in respect of long-term residence in homeless facilities or independent accommodation (in which case the households concerned will no longer be counted as homeless).

• Application of appropriate expertise -successful resettlement requires appropriate accommodation options, and also appropriate skills among key workers and outreach workers, etc.

• Audit/survey of existing premises (private, local authority or voluntary) used to accommodate homeless households to be undertaken to assess its potential suitability for use as long-term accommodation, in line with overall service re-configuration requirements, instead of emergency or transitional use, with adaptations where necessary, with emphasis on providing self contained mainstream accommodation units. Decisions to this effect would have regard to relevant factors such as the nature, size, capacity, condition, facilities, etc, of the existing accommodation, the requirements for use as long-term accommodation and the extent and cost of any adaptations required.

• Possible conversion of existing arrangements with private accommodation owners, where relevant, to leasing or RAS type arrangements [although it is acknowledged that not all RAS tenancies are long-term].

**Care and supports and inter-agency protocols**
• Consideration of need for tenancy support services (i.e.visiting support) of appropriate duration and intensity for homeless households who move to mainstream accommodation.
• Co-ordination with HSE and other relevant agencies to ensure availability of necessary health/care and other services and personal, social or community supports through HSE for people who move from homeless facilities to mainstream housing.
• Appropriate protocols between the housing authorities and the HSE or other relevant agencies, in relation to the provision of the foregoing services and supports \(^4\) and other matters relevant to homelessness such as children leaving care, older people with care needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, discharge of people at risk of homelessness from health or other institutions.

• Another objective will be to ensure that all key agencies are engaged appropriately in supporting service users, and that the supports are organised and co-ordinated [e.g. in multi-disciplinary teams, case/care management] in such a manner as to maximise their effectiveness.

**Data and information**

• Production of comprehensive and accurate data and information in relation to homelessness (including numbers, flows, duration and other relevant characteristics) and homeless services (including capacity, adequacy, usage, staffing, cost, revenue and other relevant operational and other information).

• Specific arrangements to obtain relevant data on homelessness, including maximum participation in new national client database (PASS) which is to be rolled out on a nationwide basis, undertaking homeless counts/surveys as appropriate and ensuring adequate reports and information from service providers.

• Accessing relevant data available through other agencies such as CSO, hospitals, prisons, as appropriate, to underpin the effectiveness of policy and action to address homelessness.

• Provision of directories of homeless services, as warranted.

• Appropriate arrangements for sharing of data/information subject to ensuring compliance with data protection requirements.

**Organisational/resource aspects**

• Appropriate staffing, training, staff information, procedures and organisational arrangements to facilitate effective action to address homelessness.

• Adequate prioritisation of action to address homelessness relative to the incidence of homelessness.

• Accurate costing of the various elements of homeless services and accessing of all available sources of funding to prevent/address homelessness.

• The decisions on configuration of services will need to have regard to likely trends in funding allocations as well as ensuring that services are organised and operated on the principles of cost effectiveness, value for money and adequate standards, underpinned by appropriate arrangements for procurement and oversight.

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\(^4\) Housing authorities are responsible for tenancy supports, while the provision and funding of personal and social supports is the responsibility of the HSE, in addition to health/care services. A draft protocol in relation to support services in the context of the SLI initiative in Dublin is being developed.
• Appropriate balance between resources for accommodation and health/care functions. It is essential to ensure that the effectiveness of health/care and related services is not in any way diminished in the context of any possible reconfiguration of services and that adequate HSE funding for health/care elements, including personal, social and community elements of support services, will be available. It will, accordingly, be important to ensure that relevant savings arising to the HSE in any possible reconfiguration process are not lost to homeless services.

Ending long-term homelessness and providing long-term housing
In accordance with the Government’s Homeless Strategy, a core objective of the Action Plan is ending long-term homelessness and providing adequate long-term accommodation, as necessary, to achieve this and help homeless households to independent living. Homeless services will be organised and operated so as to promote this objective. This will involve appropriate arrangements to provide adequate supply of suitable housing, housing supports, where necessary, and policies and procedures to enable homeless households to move to mainstream housing as quickly as possible. This is likely to involve largely phasing out the use of transitional housing, which experience internationally has found to be relatively ineffective from a cost/benefit perspective, confining the supply of emergency accommodation to a level appropriate to meet short-term needs and decommissioning any accommodation that may not be fit for purpose. In this context the reference to transitional facilities relates to housing rather than any possible health/care facilities which might be warranted e.g. to provide for a step down approach to persons recovering from addiction, mental health issues etc which are the responsibility of the HSE.

Action to end long-term homelessness will be underpinned by arrangements to provide mainstream accommodation for people progressing from homelessness using the full range of relevant housing interventions, particularly the following:
- private rented accommodation, if people are assessed as not needing tenancy support and have prospects of being able to meet their own housing costs in due course.
- social housing (including RAS, which is considered appropriate for households assessed as having low or no housing support needs);
- housing authorities’ allocations policies to support the objective of ending long-term homelessness;
- use of additional sources of accommodation for the purposes of the SLI scheme.

SLI involves the provision of accommodation (utilising unsold affordable houses available to local authorities or units procured through any of the mechanisms available under the social housing leasing initiative), for people who can progress to independent living in mainstream housing with low to moderate visiting supports, where necessary, procured through open competitive tendering, with supports tapering off as a person progresses to independent living (expected to be generally within
6 months). Some key features of SLI are summarised for reference in Appendix C.

The provision of long-term accommodation of homeless households has now been further underpinned by a new Enhanced Programme\(^5\) which involves a combination of existing schemes and current and capital funding, largely through the social housing leasing initiative, but with a number of improved conditions to address the particular issues arising in sourcing accommodation for homeless people and streamlined processing arrangements, including detailed briefing and information for AHBs e.g. regarding type and location of units needed, sustainable communities issues, etc. People housed under the programme will be long-term homeless and consequential savings on the operation of homeless facilities must be identified.

The Implementation Blueprint will include details of overall estimates of long-term accommodation required in each of the constituent local authorities in order to achieve the aim in the Homeless Strategy of ending long-term homelessness (i.e. over 6 months) by the end of 2010.

A detailed programme for provision of long-term accommodation for homeless households will be drawn up in the context of the Implementation Blueprint, including:

- identifying numbers of households requiring different types of long term provision – mainstream housing without support; mainstream housing with visiting support; accommodation in facilities with on-site support; other (e.g. nursing home).
- setting specific targets, having regard to the profile of homeless households, for providing long term accommodation for homeless households, with particular emphasis on 2010, whether social housing (local authority and voluntary), private rented, RAS, or additional accommodation procured though social housing leasing.
- ensuring, through the HSE or other relevant agencies, availability of adequate health and social services to address health/care, personal and other non-housing needs.

**Role of relevant organisations and co-ordination of activities**

The overall system or model of homeless services to be provided for in the Implementation Blueprint will incorporate appropriate arrangements relating to the role of the various relevant agencies and service providers and co-ordination of their activities and functions, including the following matters:

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\(^5\) Some broad features of the programme include: procurement of accommodation by Approved Housing Bodies; leveraging of maximum units through leasing or purchase using private or HFA funding, with capital funding being contingent on a multiple of current funded units being procured or representing a proportion of total current funding (generally in a ratio of 4:1 current to capital); protection for housing bodies against letting voids; enhanced repair and replacement allowance per tenancy; increased flexibility in availability payments for apartments;
Housing authorities (responsible for accommodation aspects) must operate in partnership with HSE (responsible for health/care aspects) in planning, funding, delivery, monitoring and review of homeless services. Active involvement is needed on the part of all relevant public authorities, mainstream services/specialist services and any other relevant agencies, with effective inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration, including the implementation of relevant protocols, as appropriate. The Homelessness Consultative Forum will provide a vehicle for ensuring effective inter-agency arrangements and protocols to determine responsibilities, liaison, etc., between agencies and also co-ordination with adjacent/constituent local authorities. The DEHLG shares responsibility with the HSE for policy, legislation and funding to address adult homelessness, with housing authorities being responsible for accommodation and related services, including tenancy supports, as necessary, while the HSE has responsibility for health/care issues, including personal, social, or community supports, as necessary. The HSE has full responsibility in relation to child/youth homelessness. There is, however, clearly a need for adequate coordination in relation to people leaving child/youth services.

An inter-agency approach is particularly important to ensure effective measures for prevention of homelessness, with emphasis on maximising active participation locally of all relevant agencies (Strategic Aim 1 of the Homeless Strategy Implementation Plan).

Housing authorities will not take responsibility for services that are appropriate to other agencies (e.g. of a specialist nature) or which involve duplication of services, as funding will not be available to them for any services that do not accord with these requirements, for example, “Section 10” funding will not be recoupable for any costs that may arise in contravention of that principle. All potential sources of funding relevant to addressing homelessness should be accessed as far as possible.

An appropriate assignment of responsibilities among relevant agencies needs to be maintained, with particular regard for the shared responsibilities of the housing authorities and the HSE as the lead agencies in addressing homelessness, but also taking account of other agencies that may have an important input to make. Equally where new types of services are being developed it is important to set appropriate boundaries. This is not detrimental to inter-agency action, which is critical to addressing homelessness. On the contrary, lack of clarity in relation to roles can militate against an effective and collaborative inter-agency
approach. This is very important in the context of the provision of support services to homeless persons.

All service providers will be required (subject to an appropriate lead-in period, where necessary), as a condition of funding, to enter service level agreements and to participate in a new shared client database (PASS) which is currently being developed and will be rolled out nationally, as appropriate (Priority Actions 8.4.4 and 8.4.5 of the Homeless Strategy Implementation Plan).

Appropriate procurement arrangements for the provision of services (e.g. visiting tenancy support), involving competitive tendering as far as possible/appropriate, will be operated in accordance with Government requirements/guidelines.

Engagement and operation of services will be subject to contract or service level agreement, as appropriate, setting out relevant requirements, responsibilities, etc, including performance requirements, targets, data provision, reporting, accountability, financial conditions, etc.

The Homelessness Forum Management Group, utilising the statutory and voluntary membership of the Forum, will promote cross cutting engagement with appropriate statutory, voluntary and community partners generally to address identified and emerging need.
Chapter 8  Implementation Blueprint of Homeless Services

An Implementation Blueprint will be formulated in accordance with the Framework provisions in chapter 7 by 30 September 2010 setting out the specific measures and detailed services and arrangements required to give effect to the Action Plan in accordance with the framework in chapter 7. This will, in effect, constitute a supplement to this Plan.

The Blueprint will, in particular:

- Determine the appropriate configuration of homeless services and any need for re-configuration of existing services.
- Provide a decision template for any proposals relating to homeless services.
- Inform decisions in relation to funding allocations for homeless services.
- Focus on maximising the extent to which service users can live either independently or with a low level of support.

The Implementation Blueprint will provide the basis for decisions relating to services and investment in that regard. All proposals relating to homeless services will be rigorously assessed by the Homeless Forum Management Group and the housing authorities by reference to the blueprint (with particular focus on the core objective of promoting availability of long-term accommodation) and decisions will be made on the basis of their compatibility with the blueprint and the criteria of efficiency and value for money, as set out in Priority Actions 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 of the Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan.

Estimated costs of services will be identified as accurately as possible in developing the Implementation Blueprint. As in all areas of public expenditure currently, the total level of resources available for the operation of homeless services will, inevitably, be constrained during the lifetime of the Action Plan. Accordingly, any new services or expansion of existing services that may be needed can only be funded from savings, which arise from the reorientation of services in accordance with the Implementation Blueprint. Cost reductions in the economy generally should also be reflected in homeless services.

The Implementation Blueprint will also facilitate implementation of Strategic Aim 6 of the Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan, which signalled an intention to introduce a more devolved system of funding allocations for homeless services, based on rigorous costings and assessment of needs and priorities. For this purpose, the Implementation
Blueprint will establish accurate costings and robust budgets for each housing authority’s homeless services. In the context of proposed devolved global allocations for homeless services, decisions in relation to funding of particular services will primarily be made at local level, based on needs and priorities in accordance with the foregoing principles. Decisions to provide new services would only be made where it is established that sufficient operational funding will be available, for accommodation elements for HSE health/care elements, or from any other relevant sources. Appendix B indicates a range of data requirements to inform the blueprint, which may vary depending on local or Regional circumstances.
Chapter 9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Progress Reports

In developing this Homeless Framework Plan the Management Group of the West Homelessness Consultative Forum is aware of the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the actions outlined in the plan and the subsequent blueprint for homeless services. The ultimate responsibility for the monitoring and review of the Homeless Framework Plan lies with the Management Group having regard to information, views, etc of the West Homelessness Consultative Forum.

However the Management Group recognises the need in work in partnership with the voluntary service providers to develop a systematic process which will provide an accurate picture of the trends, issues, challenges and opportunities which may emerge in the implementation of the plan and ongoing monitoring and assessment of performance relative to targets, reporting and assessment of outcomes for service users and assessment of barriers to performance. The Management Group will also work to ensure that service provision maximises effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and value for money and cost minimisation and is meeting evidenced need in the most effective way. Appropriate performance management and unit costing arrangements will be operated for this purpose.

This will be achieved through the following monitoring and evaluation processes:

- Each housing authority will provide an annual county/city progress report to the Management Group outlining the information relating to homeless services provided at a local level, an analysis of users of homeless services and funding received. The format of the data collection process will be agreed as part of the development of the blueprint for homeless services.

- In accordance with Priority Action 8.2 of the National Implementation Plan, regular (e.g. quarterly) reports will be submitted by service providers to the Homelessness Consultative Forum. The Forum will provide information, views, advice and reports in relation to homelessness and the operation and implementation of the Action Plan. Having regard to these, the Management Group will provide reports and recommendations to the housing authorities, the HSE and where appropriate, other bodies specified in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act

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[Note: See section 38(2) and 39(4)(b) of the 2009 Act]
2009, in relation to the operation of the Action Plan. The housing authorities will, in turn, provide progress reports in relation to the Action Plan to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on a quarterly basis.

- In accordance with Priority Actions 6.3 and 8.4 of the National Implementation Plan for the Homeless Strategy, housing authorities will ensure adequate information and evaluation in relation to service providers and their services, plans, finances and other inputs, structures, cost composition and performance, including requirements of accountability, transparency and controls, particularly with regard to utilisation of public funding.

- **Lead Agencies** will be assigned to ensure actions are implemented and annual reports will be submitted to the Management Group on progress achieved. The measurement of progress on performance indicators will be a key feature of the progress report.

- An **annual review and planning meeting** of the West Region Homelessness Consultative Forum will focus on the reports submitted and inform the Regional Homeless Framework Planning process.

- **Local implementation mechanisms** will need to be agreed locally to ensure participation and consultation with voluntary service providers and key local statutory staff implementing homeless services.
Appendix A

The NAPSI sets out a comprehensive programme of actions and goals to address poverty and social exclusion. It places the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery and offers a framework for implementing a streamlined, cross cutting and visible approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion.

The National Development Plan 2007-2013
The NDP incorporates measures agreed in “Towards 2016” and the social inclusion priority is of most relevance to homelessness. This priority outlines measures to address barriers to social inclusion by improving access to health care, education, training and employment and high quality housing. The main objective is to provide a coherent approach to social inclusion by improving co-ordination across central and local government, better monitoring and evaluation of interventions and consultation with stakeholders.

2007 Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities
The 2007 National Housing Strategy Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities places emphasis on the interagency approach to combating homelessness. It also places emphasis on the use of a case management approach in meeting the needs of homeless households. The strategy prioritises actions aimed at the inclusion of special needs groups within services that are focused around homelessness.

Towards 2016
Towards 2016 is part of a series of national social partnership agreements. It makes particular reference to homelessness and makes proposals in relation to improved coordination of service provision and joint approaches at local level. The aim of this national agreement is to facilitate a holistic response to the needs of homeless persons through the further development of a case management approach based on needs assessment and access to multiple services by all the key stakeholders. Other features include the elimination of long term occupation of emergency accommodation by 2010. By 2010 it is expected that no individual should remain in emergency accommodation for longer than six months.
Undertaken by Fitzpatrick Associates, and commissioned by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the review focused on Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy (2000) and the Homeless Preventative Strategy (2002). It also carried out a review of local action plans. The review made 21 recommendations around 7 key themes. The Government has accepted the broad thrust of the recommendations including, a more concentrated focus on development of long term accommodation options, an improvement of co-ordination of funding, the development of a case management approach to addressing the needs of homeless people based on key workers and the development of preventative strategies, appropriate local services and supports, and better data on the extent, nature and causes of Homelessness.

The Homeless Preventative Strategy (2002)
The 2002 strategy focused on ensuring that no one is discharged or released from state institutional care without the appropriate measures in place to ensure they have a suitable place to live. The aim of the strategy is to target adult and young offenders, people leaving mental health residential facilities, people leaving hospitals and young people leaving care. It highlighted that an effective preventative strategy would help break the cycle of homelessness.

The 2000 strategy set out a new policy approach to homelessness. It involved a whole Government approach to ensure that homelessness is addressed and prevented. It recognized that homelessness would not be solved by housing or shelter alone. It focused on the need for a holistic approach involving health, care, welfare, education, training and support to enable people who experience homelessness to re-integrate into society and prevent it from happening. It made Local Authorities and Health Services jointly responsible for homelessness, with Local Authorities charged with a lead role to prepare three-year action plans on Homelessness. It led to the establishment of Local Homeless Fora.
Appendix B

Data requirements for development of Homeless Services Blueprint

- **Homeless numbers and profile** (analysed according to accommodation situation/type (rough sleeping; shelter, “B&B”, emergency hostel, transitional facility; long-term facility, etc): number; household composition; personal profile – age, gender, etc; need category e.g. capacity to move to independent tenure, support level if any required, special needs/disabilities. [Note: people in suitable long term facilities with security of tenure that is likely to remain their accommodation should not be classified as "homeless".]

- **Inventory/analysis of all homeless services (accommodation and other services e.g. outreach, resettlement, information services, etc) and resources employed (analysed by service provider/service):** category of service; service provider; capacity; cost per service per period; staff numbers per service; ratio of staff to service users (accommodation and other (e.g. outreach, resettlement, etc) services); occupancy rate (average and range); cost per service per period; cost per user per period. (Average costs over say a 3 year period, taking all costs into consideration).

- **Analysis of income for various services,** including: Dept/LA funding; HSE funding; other statutory funding sources; residents’ contributions (and rate of contributions); voluntary fund raising.

- **Homeless services usage/flows and profile (analysed by service):** numbers per period (e.g. month) – average, range; duration of stay – average and range/percentiles; source of entry; rate of assessments; outcomes for users, including where people leaving homelessness went; incidence of repeat usage; movement between different facilities.

- **Analysis of needs and potential needs:** suitability for - mainstream accommodation without support; mainstream accommodation with low to medium support; mainstream accommodation with high/on-site support; long-term residential supported accommodation; nursing home. Extent of health/care needs. Extent of individual needs assessment and support plans completed.

- **Homeless accommodation inventory:** location; capacity; category; age; condition; potential use – reconfiguration of surplus emergency/transitional facilities to self contained mainstream housing units, long-term supported accommodation, etc; estimated cost of repair/adaptation.
• **Support resources inventory:** Extent of staff available to provide housing support (however described e.g. settlement, re-settlement, sustainment, welfare, social work, homeless prevention, housing information/advice, etc)

• **Administration costs:** Analysed by service provider and relevant components and relative to cost of service to clients.

• **Risk of homelessness:** Numbers and profile as for actual homeless categorised by current accommodation situation. Relevant sources of information to be used, including information from statutory housing needs assessment and applications for social housing.

• **Other matters:**
  - Extent to which service users participate in shared database system and have entered into service agreements.
  - The above data elements should be capable of cross-tabulation as far as possible/where relevant (and stored in relational database format to facilitate this). Trends should be monitored over time.
  - Data sources: Statutory housing need assessment; *Counted in* survey; homeless counts; client database; national census; other services e.g. health/addiction services, prison/probation services; community welfare service; LA/AHB housing services.
Appendix C

Summary of key features of SLI scheme

The SLI scheme (see circular HU 03/2009 of 31 July 2009 and accompanying scheme details) is designed to secure additional accommodation for homeless households, primarily through either leasing suitable accommodation in the market (including through the Enhanced Programme announced in March 2010\(^7\)) or through the use of unsold affordable units, over and above what would otherwise be allocated through social housing lettings (including RAS). Some important extensions of the scheme are now being notified, as follows:

- Engagement of estate agents to source accommodation can be considered in agreement with the Department, subject to acceptable rates on the basis of competitive quotes.
- Where necessary, visiting housing support can be deployed, if necessary, for a limited period for homeless households who move to social housing or RAS, as well as unsold affordable/leased units. This might arise, for example, where a household initially assessed as having low or no support needs might need assistance for a period to avoid breakdown of a tenancy. It is essential, however, to ensure that support services are not used beyond what is warranted in each case or in circumstances where homeless households would normally be able to move successfully to mainstream housing with low or no support or where such support is already available from other sources.

SLI is designed specifically to enable long-term residents of homeless facilities with low to moderate housing support needs for a limited period, who would not otherwise have been likely to obtain social housing, to progress to independent living. It is envisaged that leasing proposals from Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) will be an important source of SLI accommodation, as well as supplementing the pool of general social lettings available for homeless households who can move to mainstream housing with no or low support. The role of AHBs in sourcing accommodation, either through purchase or leasing or a combination, for people moving from homelessness is a central element of the Enhanced Programme. It is essential that SLI is accompanied by a continued and where appropriate, increased level of general social housing allocations to homeless households. Other distinguishing features of SLI are:

- it is aimed particularly at accommodating long-term residents of homeless facilities, including “B&B”/temporary emergency accommodation;

\(^7\) See footnote 5
it involves provision of visiting supports at low to moderate intensity for a limited period to help the household make a successful transition from homelessness to independent living in mainstream housing, with supports, insofar as necessary, tapering off in line with that progression;

tenants will be selected by the local authority on the basis of needs assessment, and the level, duration and details of support will be determined in accordance with a support plan based on the assessment;

AHBs involved in leasing arrangements will be informed of tenanting of homeless households and housing support proposed;

households who can move to mainstream housing with no or only very low support will not be accommodated through SLI, but there will be flexibility to deploy tenancy support services procured for the purposes of the SLI scheme, to assist such households for a period should the need arise e.g. in the event of threatened tenancy breakdown;

the cost of accommodation and support will be funded by savings on the cost of homeless facilities;

SLI, by its nature, is not intended to cater for households who require higher level permanent supports which could not be addressed through visiting support services to mainstream accommodation.