10 key actions on homelessness for new Government

By the Irish Homeless Policy Group

1 Develop collaborative structures to end homelessness

Solving homelessness is a complex issue requiring persistent Government attentiveness and will require shared problem solving. The next Government should agree on new collaborative structures, with Cabinet support, for developing and implementing a new homelessness strategy with local authorities, relevant State bodies and organisations at the front-line.

2 Build Enough Homes

Ensure that over 55,000 homes are constructed each year to meet housing need across Irish society, including at least 15,000 new social homes to tackle the housing crisis and address homelessness. Work towards the goal of 20% of housing being social and cost rental, in line with the recommendations of the Housing Commission Report, to meet both the deficit and future need. Build the right kinds of homes such as one-bed and two-bed homes for smaller households, and larger homes for families stuck in homelessness, Traveller families, and families with status trapped in Direct Provision for years.

3 End Long-Term Homelessness by 2030

Set the goal of making sure no one is homeless for longer than 6 months by the end of the next Government term (2030), by dedicating 10% of new social housing supply to already long-term homeless households. Use the Housing Commission report as a key driver and policy roadmap to help achieve this ambitious goal.

4 Prioritise Homeless Prevention Measures

Prioritise and adequately resource a comprehensive homeless prevention plan and early intervention measures to prevent homelessness from occurring and reoccurring.

5 Ensure that nobody has to sleep rough, regardless of legal status

Ensure that there are sufficient emergency beds so that no one ever has to rough sleep. In particular, ensure that everyone who seeks international protection in Ireland is provided with suitable accommodation while their claim is being assessed. Guarantee greater coordination between departments, agencies, and local government so that every person in Ireland is guaranteed decent shelter, regardless of nationality, gender, or legal status.

6 Develop strategy for Private Rental Sector

Devise and implement a strategy for the private rental sector, on foot of the previous Government's Private Rental Sector Review, setting out a clear vision for the sector and the role it will play in the wider housing landscape in the long-term. A well-rounded strategy, based on good-quality data, will ensure a balanced, fair and sustainable rental market that benefits all.

7 Fully implement the Youth Homelessness Strategy

Implement the current National Youth Homelessness Strategy (2023-25) and develop a new ambitious successor strategy from 2026 to eliminate youth homelessness.

8 Introduce range of measures to tackle issues facing homeless families

Commit to enacting the Homeless Families Bill (2017) which would ensure that local authorities place the best interests of the child at the centre of decision-making when supporting homeless families. Adopt a Housing First for Families approach to address the housing and support needs of families with more complex needs.

9 Improve Mental Health services for people experiencing homelessness

Improve mental health services for people experiencing homelessness – with more focus on harm-reduction measures and increased HSE funding for mental health, drug and alcohol interventions.

10 Improve the transparency of access to homeless services

Improve the transparency of access to emergency accommodation and homeless services, including the introduction of a new appeals system that would provide written reasons for any refusals to access emergency accommodation and social housing. Ensure that all local authority staff receive updated training to provide greater awareness of housing law.

About The Irish Homeless Policy Group

The Irish Homeless Policy Group is made up of organisations which work in the sphere of housing and homelessness. Our members include organisations providing direct housing supports, policy work, advocacy, and legal interventions for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Our organisations work to end homelessness every day and have come together to set out a number of proposals which we believe the next Government should take if it is serious about ending homelessness.

We believe that homelessness is solvable and that those who deliver homeless services are best placed to contribute to developing solutions to this issue with government. We urge the new Government to commit to the 10-key actions highlighted here in the next programme for government and urge the new Government to engage collaboratively with those of us who work daily with those experiencing homelessness.

cross care

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Homelessness has no place

FOCUS Ireland

Irish Refugee Council

NOVAS
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respond

Threshold
preventing homelessness

Mercy Law Resource Centre

COPE Galway

Simon Communities of Ireland