

Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage - Development in Homeless Provision

Tuesday 5th March 2024 2.15 – 4.15pm

1. Introduction

I am attending today in my capacity as Director of the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, which operates a shared service on behalf of the four Dublin Local Authorities and I am accompanied by John Durkan, Deputy Director.

2. 2023 at a glance

- a) Prevention – **1,395** households were prevented from homelessness through tenancy creation. 65% of prevention lettings were via the Homeless Housing Assistance Payment and 35% through LA/AHB. That is a 25% increase overall on 2022 figures, largely through additional Local Authority lettings including TIS. The LA figure also includes other prevention lettings, such as those to Older Persons at risk of homelessness. A range of NGOs are funded in the region to provide advice, advocacy and information services in addition to this.
- b) New Presentations – There was a 2% decrease in the number of new households presenting in 2023. **2,837** households entered homeless services in the year.
- c) Exits – There was a 6% increase in the number of households who exited to tenancy. **1,021** households left homeless services to move to a tenancy in the year.
- d) Overall Rise in Homelessness - given the lower rate of exits to tenancy relative to new presentations, there was an **overall rise of 12%** in households in emergency accommodation from January to December 2023. 45% were single adults and 55% of individuals were in families.

3. Standards & Care in Emergency Accommodation

In 2022, the implementation of a Quality Standards Framework to Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) commenced in response to the growing dependence on this form of accommodation in the Dublin Region and concerns raised by this JOC among others. ***The overall strategy is to align standards and service provision within PEA service to the NGO sector.***

The following has been achieved to date:

- a) Introduction of a care & case management team on an in-reach basis by NGOs funded by the DRHE and HSE. There is also a team of DCC Housing Support Officers working across the PEAs whose sole focus is promoting suitable move on options. With this in place, residents in both NGO's & PEA services can avail of supports focusing on health, addiction, employment, housing needs and so on.

- b) The DRHE introduced a set of 11 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for PEA's that are reported on a quarterly basis and cover areas such as fire safety, complaints, adverse incidents, training, exclusions & child welfare. The Monitoring & Standards team is currently working on updating the KPI's for NGO's, which will further align the standards and performance reporting for both types of service provision.
- c) A joint project between HSE Dublin North City & County Social Inclusion Team (HSE DNCC) and Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE) developed a baseline training programme for all PEA staff.

4. Inspection of Emergency Accommodation

As well as the KPI monitoring to ensure the robustness of the quality standards roll out, all emergency accommodation provision (NGO and PEA) is subject to the following:

- a) An appropriately qualified independent inspectorate examines and reports on:
 - Building
 - Onsite Facilities
 - Operational Systems
 - Staff
 - Health and Safety
 - Food Service
- b) Unannounced Inspections including Evening and Weekends by Property and Standards Staff
- c) Dublin Fire Brigade has a rolling schedule inspections of fire safety in hostels.

5. Rough Sleeping & Housing First

147 Housing First tenancies were created in the Dublin Region in 2023, slightly above the target of 141 for the year. The number of unique individuals in active tenancies with Housing First Supports as of 31/12/2023 was 519.

118 rough sleepers were identified through the count in the Dublin Region in November 2023.

6. Inter-Agency Work

a) HSE

The Private Emergency Accommodation Assertive Case Management Team (PACT) was established and is in operation since the 19th of September 2022.

- It is a jointly funded initiative from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive and HSE Social Inclusion team CHODNCC and works in conjunction with three Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Ana Liffey Drug Project, Coolmine and Focus Ireland.
- The PACT team is an integrated team that consists of Case Managers, Clinical Team and Specialised Case Managers (Dual Diagnoses, Domestic Violence Worker, Complex Case Manager), that operate across all PEAs in the Dublin Region.
- Homeless Healthlink Teams - The HSE also funds two Health-Link teams, Northside and Southside Dublin, to assist people in homeless services that have difficulty accessing healthcare services. These teams work closely with DRHE Placement Staff, NGO Services and the PACT team to support households access appropriate healthcare supports

b) Department of Social Protection

The Department of Social Protection has worked closely with the DRHE in the past year and a Welfare Officer is now embedded with homeless services and this has been very successful in the following areas;

- Expediting the move out of EA through prioritisation of move-in grants.
- Supporting vulnerable individuals who may experience income difficulties following an institutional discharge or other reasons.
- Resource to sector in terms of training and knowledge with respect to rights and entitlements for income support and employment activation.
- Support in the holistic assessment of complex cases.

c) TUSLA

TUSLA funds a small number of child support worker positions to work with families in PEAs specifically

d) Supported Housing for Youths (SHY)

As part of the National Youth Homelessness Strategy the DRHE is managing a pilot to provide temporary own door or shared accommodation and support services for 25 young people aged 18-24 who are currently experiencing homelessness. The 25 individuals will leave homeless services and take up temporary housing with tailored supports for young people. Two NGO's and an AHB will be participating in the pilot and will be monitored by the DRHE and evaluated independently with the assistance of the Housing Agency. The next phase of the pilot will commence in early April seeking applications from Homeless Support Services working with this cohort of individuals. The DRHE will be working with both HSE and TUSLA to ensure the appropriate supports are available to the young people.

7. Management Group & Joint Consultative committee

The Homeless Action Plan for the Dublin Region has achieved some of the work our partners, the NGO homeless services, the 4 Dublin Local Authorities, the HSE, Irish Prison Service, The Probation Service, TUSLA and CDETB set out as priorities. There is a genuine openness and collaboration between the partners and everything we do is underpinned by the support

Mary Hayes
Director DRHE
March 2024