

PRESS RELEASE: Feb 15th 2011

New Homeless Outreach Service Launches Today

- Dublin Simon Community and Focus Ireland Implement New Outreach Service for People Sleeping Rough in Dublin

Today (15.02.11), we welcomed the launch by Mr. Michael Finneran, Minister for Housing and Local Services, of the Regional Contact and Outreach Service in Civic Offices, Wood Quay.

Dublin Simon Community and Focus Ireland have developed a regional model of outreach provision which will act as a single, integrated service covering the greater Dublin area to meet the diverse needs of people sleeping rough.

This jointly run service, managed by Dublin Simon Community, is based on the Pathway to Home Model and builds on prior experience of collaboration between homelessness organisations such as the implementation of the cold weather initiative.

According to Sam McGuinness, CEO Dublin Simon: “The new Regional Contact and Outreach Service will utilise skills and experience of both Dublin Simon and Focus Ireland and will work to ensure that the needs of those sleeping rough are responded to. We have a huge amount of experience in working with people in these circumstances and will deliver vital help to people who need it most.”

The Regional Contact and Outreach Service uses assertive outreach, and involves proactively engaging service users, building relationships and assessing needs. The team will engage with anyone presenting to the service regardless of age or nationality and will target all adults, youth, children and families who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.

Joyce Loughnan, CEO Focus Ireland said: “This new service is an important development as the staff are supporting people sleeping rough and working with them to bring them in away from the cold and hardship on the streets. The service is also playing a vital prevention role in working with people who are at risk of sleeping rough in supporting them to gain access to accommodation.”

The values and principles of the team engaging in the service include a service user centred approach, respect, partnership and quality.

Sam McGuinness said: “As with every service provided, a person centred approach, quality and respect are fundamental to success. We are confident that the partnership will provide positive results for people experiencing homelessness and our ultimate goal is to help more people access accommodation and move out of homelessness.”

The Regional Outreach and Contact Team are currently engaging with over a hundred people who access emergency accommodation on a regular, but not nightly, basis. To access the services of the team please call (01) 8720185.

Ms. Loughnan added that the new joint service between Dublin Simon Community and Focus Ireland shows how organisations are working together to make sure the most effective response is in place to help end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough.

Focus Ireland and Dublin Simon maintain that the next Government must move quickly to set a new deadline to achieve the target of ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough. Both charities said it is vital for this core target to be included in any new Programme for Government – no matter which parties form the next government.

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