

PRESS RELEASE

[EMBARGO]

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LACK OF HOUSING HALTING HOMELESSNESS PLANS

DUBLIN SIMON WELCOMES NEW CONFIGURATION OF HOMELESS SERVICES AND WARNS ON URGENT NEED FOR HOUSING

The Dublin Simon Community today welcomed the release of news from the Homeless Agency highlighting how services are to be reconfigured to meet the Government target of *'ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by 2010'*. Dublin Simon however remains critical of the delivery and obstacles preventing this happening.

According to Sam McGuinness, CEO of Dublin Simon "Statutory and voluntary organisations have worked tirelessly to bring about these overdue changes and the reality of the situation is that without adequate housing coming on stream, we are faced with a failed government initiative. An additional 1200 units of accommodation were promised by the end of 2010. To date a limited amount has become available. We commend the plan which is innovative and acknowledge the efforts of all concerned. Failure cannot be considered at this point.

He added "Minister Finneran has introduced positive schemes but without housing availability these schemes are threatened with failure. There are currently no alternative plans in place; people need to move out of homelessness but there is no place to go. We all know there are empty houses in the city and county. It's like a housing famine in a land of plenty; a situation exists where those in need are not able to access what they require for survival.

The consequence of not halting this slippage with immediate corrective action will further affect service user's health and lives."

The reconfiguration of services is a fundamental part of the Government commitment to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by 2010. As part of this new configuration process Dublin Simon will be relocating services and working in collaboration with other voluntary agencies e.g. extending outreach services and providing Housing Support for the Government Support to Live Independently (SLI) scheme.

According to Sam McGuinness, "in one instance we have been providing essential services for years in an 'unfit for purpose' building so the fact that there is now commitment to

relocate this service to an appropriate building, providing proper standards, is very positive for all service users, staff and volunteers. It is vital that government support and resources are found not to be lacking to meet the 2010 deadline as promised.”

ENDS

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Notes to Editor

Dublin Simon Community is working with over 2,000 people experiencing homelessness every year and provide services ranging from rough sleeping support, emergency accommodation, supported housing and treatment services to resettlement and prevention services.

The Government commitment to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by 2010 is contained in:

- The Homeless Agency Partnership Vision 2010

‘By 2010, long-term homelessness and the need for people to sleep rough will be eliminated in Dublin...’

- National Partnership Agreement 2010

‘The situation of homeless persons who are currently in long-term emergency accommodation is of particular concern. The revised strategies will have as an underlying objective the elimination of such homelessness by 2010...’

- National Housing Strategy 2010

‘From 2010, long-term homelessness (i.e. the occupation of emergency accommodation for longer than six months) and the need for people to sleep rough will be eliminated throughout Ireland...’

- Renewed Programme for Government, Oct. 2009 (p.33)

‘We will end long-term homelessness by the end of 2010 through the implementation of “The Way Home”, Ireland’s strategy on adult homelessness 2008-2013’

Recent housing schemes initiated by Minister Finneran include:

- The Enhanced Leasing Scheme
- Capital Assistance Scheme for the provision of mainstream accommodation for people exiting homelessness