

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate Release

Dublin Simon Community call for the Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Cross Departmental Team on Homelessness to respond to the crisis of the Homeless Agency's Action Plan.

Today the Dublin Simon Community responded to the announcement that the HSE would not be providing any additional funding to the homeless sector. Both statutory bodies and NGOs have signed up to both a national and greater Dublin area specific action plan to combat rough sleeping and homelessness. Dublin Simon Community is concerned and worried that genuine much needed additional services for rough sleepers, people suffering from drug and alcohol addictions and adequate accommodation will not be funded this year, hence the current action plan will not be fulfilled.

Specifically, Dublin Simon Community submitted 12 requests for development funding for new projects related to the expansion of our Drug and Alcohol Detox services, Supported housing accommodation for vulnerable men and women, and additional Emergency Shelter accommodation. Our research shows these projects are vital if Government policy to end long-term homelessness is to be fulfilled. These projects are also vital to support the identified needs of those experiencing homelessness. The HSE has no plans to fund or support developments regarding the Homeless Agency Action Plan.

In addition the cost of living funding has been frozen for the Dublin Simon Community and we believe for all other organisations in this sector. This cost is related to inflation, increase of wage, food etc. We estimate this to be a 3% decrease in funding. This will have an immediate effect and make it extremely difficult for us to maintain our current services.

The lack of funding will also reflect on the current lack of capacity for rough sleepers. According to Sam McGunniess, CEO, "the HSE, as well as local councils in the greater Dublin area, are dragging their heels in providing additional emergency accommodation and long-term housing solutions".

For every €1 Dublin Simon spend on their services, 50c of this comes from members of the public, 25c from the HSE and 25c from Local Authorities. Sam McGunniess added, "the HSE and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Authority have a responsibility to intervene through the Cross Departmental team, and the Minister himself, to resolve the deficit impact. We should not accept that we have homeless people and rough sleepers on the streets of our city centre every day. There is currently a crisis of ownership regarding the action plan to end homelessness".

Additional Information:

- In order to fulfil government policy of ending long term homelessness by 2010 over 60 additional Expressions of Interest were submitted to the Homeless Agency from NGOs this year. These projects aim to alleviate blocks and barriers in the homeless sector. The HSE have confirmed that none of these will be receiving funding.
- Dublin Simon wonders how government policy to end long term homelessness by 2010 can be fulfilled when there appears to be no funding available for additional, much needed service supports.
- *Pathways to Home* is a Homeless Agency Partnership response to the independent evaluations of emergency and transitional housing and support services in Dublin.
- The Dublin Simon Community provides 14 services for those experiencing homelessness in Dublin. These stretch throughout the continuum of care and range from the Soup Run and Rough Sleeper Team to Emergency Accommodation and Addiction Services, Housing for those with special support needs, Resettlement and Tenancy Sustainment.

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