



# We're failing the homeless, says Dublin Mayor

By **Cormac Murphy**

DUBLIN'S Lord Mayor has questioned whether the city's homeless resources are being spent in the best way.

Mayor Eibhlin Byrne told the *Herald* "report after report will not best guide resources in our city for homeless people".

"I have, on numerous occasions, questioned whether resources in the city are being spent in the most effective way to provide a suitable service for homeless people," she said.

The mayor was commenting in the wake of the opening of a new emergency homeless shelter in Dublin city centre.

## CAMPAIGN

The new facility was first suggested by Environment Minister John Gormley a number of weeks ago after he heard homeless campaigner Alice Leahy on the radio talking about people sleeping outdoors in below-freezing temperatures.

Mayor Byrne said she wished to make clear her view on the provision of the emergency cold weather shelter:

"I am aware that for some rough sleepers the questioning nature of Link and other systems may prove a difficulty, but I have been assured by officials that nobody would be refused a bed should they not wish to divulge information," she said.

"I called to the emergency shelter and was disappointed to find all entrances padlocked due to a need to protect property. I understand that a number of people have since accessed the shelter beds, despite the fact that there were vacant beds in established hostels".

And she added: "There is an important balance to be struck between offering people accommodation, and assisting people to move on from homelessness."

She asked: "The question remains unanswered as to whether we are best using the financial resources

available to us."

The new 21-bed shelter is being run by Dublin Simon Community in a Civil Defence building. Its location has not been identified to protect the clients' privacy.



**VIEWS: Lord Mayor**