

Galway City Council on behalf of West Region Homelessness Management Group

West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2025-2027



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Abbreviations and Glossary

AHB	Approved Housing Body
API	Application Programming Interface
CBH	Community Based Housing
CCMA	City and County Managers Association
CHW	Community Healthcare West
CMHTs	Community Mental Healthcare Teams
CVS	Community and Voluntary Sector
CWR	Cold Weather Response
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DSP	Department of Social Protection
FEANTSA	European Observatory on Homelessness
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HAT	Homeless Action Team
HF	Housing First
HHAP	Homeless Housing Assistance Payment
HSE	Health Service Executive
LA	Local Authority
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
MHS	Mental Health Services
NQSF	National Quality Standards Framework
NTQ	Notice to Quit
PASS	Pathway Accommodation and Support System
PEA	Private Emergency Accommodation
RAS	Rental Assistance Scheme
RPZ	Rent Pressure Zone
RTB	Residential Tenancies Board
SOLO	Sex Offender Liaison Officer
STA	Supported Temporary Accommodation
SVP	St Vincent de Paul
TEA	Temporary Emergency Accommodation
VCS	Voluntary and Community Services
WRDTF	Western Region Drugs Task Force
WRHAP	West Region Homelessness Action Plan

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The West Region Homeless Action Plan will cover the period 2025 to 2027 and will replace the previous Action Plan for the Region which initially covered the period 2020-2022 but was extended to cover 2023 & 2024. There are five Objectives outlined in this plan which will seek to implement at the Regional Level the strategic goal and the fourteen actions outlined in Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland, which sets out the Government’s national strategic policy and action plan for housing to 2030.

The five objectives outlined in the new plan, and the more detailed actions underpinning them, reflect the Region’s implementation of the 14 actions outlined in Housing for All.

1. **Prevention** of Homelessness – including early intervention to prevent loss of tenancy,
2. **Protection** of those who are Rough Sleeping and those who are particularly vulnerable, suffering from complex multifaceted needs and
3. Tackling **Youth Homelessness** – prevention of youth homelessness, early intervention to support young people leaving care, development of age-appropriate accommodation and supports, research into the impacts on young people of their experiences of homelessness and different modes and models of emergency and transitional accommodation.
4. Creation of **pathways for transition** from emergency accommodation into long term tenancies – including provision of community based “shared” housing, housing-led approaches to support individuals and families and post tenancy supports.
5. Review of **governance**, interagency and intra-regional collaboration and oversight and management to effectively deliver homeless services in an equitable and transparent manner.

1.2 Background to the West Region Homelessness Action Plan

For the purpose of this Homelessness Action Plan, the West Region consists of Galway City Council, Galway County Council, Mayo County Council, and Roscommon County Council, together with the HSE and other relevant statutory and voluntary organisations operational within the boundary of the region. Galway City Council is the designated Lead Local Authority for the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2025 – 2027.

The West Region is one of nine administrative regions for the purpose of administration and coordination of services to address homelessness across the Counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. Located on the Western Seaboard of Ireland, the three counties comprise four statutory Local Authorities with a combined population of 485,966.

1.3 Legislative Basis for the Plan

In accordance with Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 each local authority must prepare an Action Plan to address homelessness in the administrative areas concerned by the Housing Authorities, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other bodies providing services to address homelessness. This homeless Action Plan shall specify the measures proposed to be undertaken to address homelessness in the administrative areas of each local authority in the West region, the Health Service Executive, specified bodies, or a approved housing bodies or other stakeholders providing services to address homelessness, or the performance of whose functions may affect or relate to the provision of such services. The relevant legislation is set out in the appendices to the document. The relevant statutory provisions regarding the definition of homelessness and funding are provided under Section 2 and Section 10 the Housing Act 1988, which are outlined in the appendices.

1.4 Joint Statutory Responsibility

The need for an integrated strategy from the Local authorities and HSE with responsibility for homeless has been recognised since 2000. (Housing Act, 1988 and Health Act 1953).

“Local authorities will have responsibility for the provision of emergency hostel and temporary accommodation for homeless persons as part of their overall housing responsibility. Health Boards

(subsequently replaced by the HSE) will be responsible for the health and in-house care needs of homeless persons” – An Integrated Strategy, 2000 P.30

The 2024 – 2026 Action Plan sets out a number of overarching targets to be achieved over the lifetime of the plan through a combination of actions set out in prevention, protection and progression themes. This is in recognition of the national commitment to end homelessness in Ireland and that this is a commitment given up to 2030.

The ambition to end homelessness depends on there being sufficient supply of housing accessible to people on low and moderate incomes, effective measures in place to prevent homelessness, and appropriate support available to meet the health and care needs of people experiencing homelessness, including where necessary specialist accommodation and accommodation with wraparound support provided through Housing First (HF).

The need for additional housing to prevent and alleviate homelessness is also specific in terms of property size. The lack of smaller properties is acute with the increased level of single homelessness being partly due to the lack of one-bed units. The short supply of 4 bedroom plus properties contributes to long-term homelessness of large families.

1.5 Lisbon Declaration

The 2021 Lisbon declaration on the ‘European Platform of Combatting Homelessness’ commits Ireland and other signatory countries to work towards the ending of homelessness by 2030 so that:

- No person sleeps rough due to lack of accessible, safe and appropriate emergency accommodation;
- No person resides in emergency accommodation long than is required for successful progression to a long-term housing solution.
- No person is discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing.
- Evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution when required.
- No person is discriminated against due to their homelessness status.

1.6 Housing for All

Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland published in September 2021 is the government’s 10 year action plan with 5 year targets and a funding commitment of €4 billion per annum. The scale of the plan reflects the nature of the housing crisis and deals with social housing, affordable purchase and private housing options. It also includes a commitment to end homelessness by 2030 to implement specific policies to assist with special needs housing provision.

The Housing for All plan aims to increase new housing supply nationally to an average of at least 33,000 new units per year over the next decade. This will include 10,000 social homes each over the first 5 years of the plan, with 9,500 of these being new builds. The build targets for the West Region are set out below only for the lifetime of this plan. Targets were set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for each Local Authority’s Housing Delivery Plans.

Table 1: Building Targets for New Social Housing in the West Region 2024-2026

Year	2024	2025	2026	Total
Galway City Council	224	241	246	711
Galway County Council	258	385	393	1,036
Mayo County Council	154	166	169	489
Roscommon County Council	48	52	53	153
TOTAL	684	844	861	2,389

Source: - *Housing delivery plans DHLGH*

Table 2: New Social Housing Delivery in the West Region 2020-2023

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Galway City Council	198	128	150	181
Galway County Council	115	117	224	225
Mayo County Council	77	30	89	61
Roscommon County Council	3	89	3	67
TOTAL	393	364	466	534

Source: - Social Housing Delivery by Local Authority DHLGH

The Housing for All pathway on “Eradication Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion” commits to:

Through an updated ‘*Housing First* National Implementation Plan’, provide

1,200 tenancies over the next five years for people with a history of rough sleeping, or long-term use of emergency accommodation and who have complex needs;

- End long-term leasing of social housing by Local Authorities and AHBs through phasing out new entrants and focusing on new-build to provide social homes;
- Strengthen the *Mortgage to Rent* scheme to ensure it meets the needs of those in long-term mortgage arrears;
- Make improvements in the quality and quantity of Traveller-specific accommodation (DHLGH, LAs, AHBs)
- Provide continued capital funding for housing for specific vulnerable cohorts, such as housing for older people and people with a disability, through the Capital Assistance Scheme and other social housing schemes (DHLGH);
- In addition, continue to target new Housing First tenancies 2022 to 2026;
- Housing first will be underpinned by the delivery of additional one-bed social housing homes;
- Provide capital funding to develop further supported emergency accommodation for families and individuals experiencing homelessness;
- Continue to increase access to health supports and protections for homeless individuals, with an individual health care plan to be provided for all homeless individuals that need one and improved access to mental health services;
- Finalise a model of health care for people experiencing homelessness, including a health/vulnerability assessment tool to assist in determining suitability for Housing First and level of support needed;
- Strengthen integrated care pathways for people who are homeless with chronic health needs based on an inclusion health model, to achieve better health outcomes and to reduce the incidence of premature death;
- Expand the case management approach for homeless people living with drug or alcohol addiction and enhance treatment options;
- Develop a Youth Homeless Strategy;
- Enhance family support and prevention and early intervention services for children and their families through a multiagency and coordinated response, and disseminate innovative practice;
- Expand Street Outreach Services to engage with rough sleepers in other key urban areas outside Dublin;
- Identify and provide enhanced tenancy sustainment supports to families experiencing long-term homelessness to help them exit from homelessness and maintain their homes.

The West Region Action Plan 2025-2027 will operate for a three-year period commencing in 2025, with a provision to extend for a further year. It will replace the previous plan, and will be adopted formally when complete by the West Region Homelessness Management Group, and the Local Authorities of Galway City, Galway County, Mayo and Roscommon.

The plan will be subject to review from time to time and will be accompanied by an annual implementation or business plan during its period of operation as recommended in the guidance. The key strategic aims which were set out in the previous plan will be continued in this plan. Namely:

- The prevention of homelessness;
- The reduction of homelessness in its extent or duration;
- The provision of services, including accommodation, to address the needs of homeless households and individuals;

- The provision of assistance under Section 10(b)(i), as necessary, to persons who were formerly homeless; and
- The promotion of effective governance and co-ordination of activities including ensuring financial oversight and funding is in place.

1.7 Mission and Vision for Homelessness in West Region

Mission

Our mission is to provide comprehensive support, resources and advocacy to individuals and families at risk of homelessness. Through collaborative effort working to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping and provide a coordinated response to the needs of households (families and individuals) experiencing homelessness.

Vision

To work towards the eradication of homelessness in the West through:

- the provision of sufficient appropriate affordable and social housing
- a focus on preventing homelessness
- and supporting those who are most vulnerable to empower them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation which meets their needs with a holistic, compassionate and proactive approach.

Action Plan Aims

The 2025-2027 plan is designed to support the deliver and support the actions under “Housing for All” within the West Region. It is recognised there is no easy solution to eliminate homelessness. Since coming out of the Covid 19 Pandemic there has been upward pressures on homelessness, specifically the lack of sufficient social and affordable homes and the decreasing availability of private rented accommodation in the current housing market. It is envisaged that this plan will build on the foundations laid during the lifetime of the two previous Regional Homeless Action Plans. This plan aims to further prevent and reduce homelessness by 2027 and work towards eradicating homelessness by 2030.

1.8 Extent of homelessness in the West Region

In preparing the new West Region action plan, it has been important to review the objectives and activity over the period of the previous plan, and to consider what action has been effective, and should be continued into the period of the new plan, and what additional action is required, taking into account the unprecedented pressure on housing, and increases in homelessness nationally, including in the West.

1.8.1 Adult Homelessness

Table 3: Percentage change in adult homelessness 2020-2024 by Region

Year / Region	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024	% Increase by Region
West	343	277	331	325	409	19%
North-East	112	85	84	147	219	96%
South-West	550	486	570	562	543	-1%
Midlands	97	67	105	157	148	53%
Mid-East	317	338	385	440	469	48%
Dublin	4515	4093	4886	6137	6999	55%
Mid-West	331	284	330	412	478	44%
North-West	69	80	77	111	172	149%
South-East	218	184	246	225	282	29%

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

Looking at the picture of the percentage increases in homelessness during the period of the last plan, gives a sense of the extent of the homelessness problem needing to be addressed over the next few years, and of the challenges to be met.

Early identification of potential housing loss through the advisory and advocacy services of Threshold Ireland also ensured that non valid Notices to Quit (NTQs) were identified and provided advance notice to Local Authorities to allow interventions by HAP Placefinders and Tenancy Sustainment Officers for earlier signposting to alternative solutions.

A focus on active case management and early intervention to prevent people becoming homeless has had a positive effect in slowing the rate of increase in numbers entering emergency accommodation, in contrast with the earlier trends in the West Region (153% growth over a three-year period) and in contrast with concurrent levels of growth in other regions, despite the upwards pressure caused by a continuing lack of affordable housing supply.

A number of other initiatives and schemes introduced by government during the period of the last plan, under Housing for All, have provided additional tools to local authorities to aid them to prevent homelessness. Schemes such as the Tenant in Situ Scheme (transboundary arrangements) being operated by each of the local authorities have also begun to make an impact as initial targets for these have started to be met.

However, there is considerable variation in these trends across the Region, and this is highlighted in figures for those accessing emergency accommodation by County over the period.

Table 4: Adults accessing Emergency Accommodation by County 2020-2022

Year / County	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024	% Increase by County
Galway	314	231	280	260	288	-8%
Mayo	28	37	47	57	110	293%
Roscommon	1	9	4	8	11	1000%
Total	343	277	331	325	409	19%
Total Percentage Increase in West Region 19%						

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

These figures illustrate how increases in homelessness have been greatest proportionally where they have started from a lower base, and also reflect a lower level of early intervention services, and dedicated homelessness prevention services in those Local Authority areas during much of the period of operation of the previous plan.

Over the period of the last plan, funding was received to continue with a number of services that had been long established, as well as to extend them, particularly in Galway City and County, either in terms of staffing or in geographic scope.

To address the need to prevent the increasing number of homeless presentations in the other Local Authority areas, a number of proposals to expand numbers and skillsets of staff within the Local Authority Homeless Teams have been submitted, with additional staff members being added to teams during 2023. A number of new proposals and expansions of existing actions will comprise part of the new plan, and will aim to increase levels of expertise and ability to act early to prevent tenancy loss or find better solutions to periods that have to be spent in emergency accommodation. A key element of the extension of these services will be the collaboration of the Local Authorities and HSE with experienced community and voluntary sector providers to provide them with key wrap around services, particularly when looking to sustain certain vulnerable people in tenancies to prevent tenancy loss.

This has been particularly so in relation to developing additional facilities for Community Based housing (CBH), as an alternative to the use of private emergency accommodation (PEA), and to facilitate creating shared houses for young people in the 18-24 age range.

Table 7: Duration of Single and Family Households in Emergency Accommodation on the last night of the Quarter in the West Region

Duration in Emergency Accommodation	Qtr. 2	Percentage of total singles	Qtr. 2	Percentage of total families
	2023		2023	
	Single		Family	
0-6 months	111	57.8 %	38	34.8 %
6-12 months	24	12.5 %	13	10.1 %
12-18 months	16	8.3 %	11	10.1 %
18-24 months	10	5.2 %	17	15.5 %
24+ months	31	16.2 %	30	27.5 %
TOTALS	192	100 %	109	100 %

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

Homelessness by Gender

Table 8: Percentage Increase in Adults Accessing Emergency Accommodation by Gender in the West Region 2020-2023

	Male	Female	Total
March 2020	190	153	343
March 2021	168	109	277
March 2022	197	134	331
March 2023	175	150	325
March 2024	232	177	409
% Increase	22%	16%	19%

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

Homelessness by Age Cohort

Table 9: Percentage Increase in Adults Accessing Emergency Accommodation by Age Cohort in the West Region 2020-2023

	18 – 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65+	Total Adults
March 2020	51	186	91	15	343
March 2021	44	145	77	11	277
March 2022	63	166	88	14	331
March 2023	65	158	91	11	325
March 2024	80	198	115	16	409
% Increase	57%	6%	26%	7%	19%

Source: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>

As can be seen from Table 9, the greatest increase in homeless presentations by Age Cohort over the period of the last Action Plan has been in the 18-24 year age cohort, which is a similar trend to the increase at a national level. Many young people are entering homelessness before ever having had any opportunity to exercise their independence, and they may have never held a tenancy at all.

Traveller Homelessness

The Local Authorities are currently preparing the sixth Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period January 2025 to December, 2029, which must be adopted by December 2024.

The Act requires that Housing Authorities consult with adjoining Housing Authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies (AHBs), the local Traveller Consultative Committee, other local Traveller representative groups, community and interest groups and the public in general. The aim of the *Traveller Accommodation Programme* is to identify and meet the accommodation needs of Travellers living within each Local Authority.

Rough Sleeping in the West Region

Rough sleeping is predominantly a feature of urban areas, and in the West Region this is most evident in Galway City, although small numbers of rough sleepers have been observed in some of the larger towns in County Galway, such as Tuam. Amongst this group are transient rough sleepers. Some rough sleepers are economic migrants who have no access to accommodation and asylum seekers who have not been found state accommodation will also not be accounted for as rough sleepers or registered on the Local Authorities homelessness system, PASS.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)s have also reported that they have supported a number of people who would be defined as “roofless” in areas across the Region into homes over the last couple of years. Definitions of rough sleeping will vary, with according to the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) as outlined in the 2005 toolkit devised by the European Observatory on Homelessness (FEANTSA), and should encompass not just those sleeping in the open air, but those in inadequate or insecure housing, who may end up from rough sleeping from time to time. While rough sleeping is more hidden in rural areas it still occurs, with single individuals being observed and reported to housing authorities outside of the City, with little access to support services, such as the outreach services available in Galway City. Others living in inadequate housing such as caravans, and sheds are much less visible, and difficult to document.

Housing First in the West Region

Galway City Housing First commenced in June 2019. Since 2020, it was extended to all local authorities in the West Region. The Housing First supports are provided by Galway Simon Community and COPE Galway. The aim of the project is to work with the single cohort who are deemed long term homeless with often complex mental health needs, addiction or combinations of both.

The second Implementation Plan for Housing First 2022 – 2026 is now active. Targets have been set for each Local Authority under this Implementation Plan, and the relevant targets for the Region are outlined in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Housing First Targets 2022-2026 for West Region Local Authorities

Local Authority	Target No of tenancies
Galway City	30
Galway County	18
Mayo	10
Roscommon	7
TOTAL	65

Source: Housing First Second National Implementation Plan 2022-2026

Pilot Housing Led Initiative for Families in the Galway Local Authorities

Funding has been provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for a new pilot programme for families with relatively complex needs which has been established in 2024. Four families (2 each) from both Galway Local Authorities are included in the pilot, and a Service Provider (COPE Galway) is in place to provide them with supports. Support is also provided by TUSLA, HSE, and Galway Traveller Movement, dependent on the needs of the families.

A Joint Oversight Group has been established to oversee the implementation and to monitor the progress of the initiative. An Implementation Group has been established to operate and manage the project and report back to the Oversight Group. The pilot will be monitored and evaluated as it progresses over its' eighteen-month lifespan.

Chapter 2

2.1 Policy Context of new Action Plan

In preparing this Plan, a number of policy documents were consulted which the Management Group of the West Region wished to take account of in drawing up its mission, strategic aims and in ensuring that the proposed activity over the three-year period are coherent with government policy and good practice in relation to tackling homelessness. The most relevant current and recent policy documents have informed this Plan and are outlined below and on following pages.

2.1.1 Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland, 2021 *Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage*

The Government launched its new housing plan for Ireland – Housing for All – in September 2021 with an update in December 2021. It is a multiannual programme setting out a wide range of actions to be delivered during the period 2022-2030 aiming to deliver 300,000 new homes and including 90,000 social and 54,000 affordable homes. The programme is organised into four pathways of which Pathway 2 identifies a number of specific objectives and targets aimed at eradicating Homelessness by 2030

The four pathways identified in Housing for All are:

- Pathway 1: Supporting home ownership and increasing affordability;
- Pathway 2: Eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion;
- Pathway 3: Increasing new housing supply;
- Pathway 4: Addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock.

Pathway 2 commits to comprehensive measures to support society's most vulnerable members, including those experiencing homelessness. A key driver in this Pathway is the government's commitment to eradicate homelessness by 2030 as underlined by the signing of the Lisbon Declaration in 2021. Amongst the steps outlined to be taken to achieve this goal are:

- provision of more than 10,000 social homes each year with an average 9,500 new-build social housing homes to 2026;
- provision of at least 1,200 tenancies under an updated "Housing First Implementation Plan" for those with a history of rough sleeping or a pattern of long-term use of emergency accommodation and who have complex needs;
- ending of long-term leasing of social housing;
- strengthening the mortgage to rent scheme to meet the needs of those in long-term mortgage arrears;
- improvement in quality and quantity of Traveller specific accommodation;
- continued capital funding for housing for vulnerable cohorts through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and other Social Housing schemes;
- establishment of a National Homeless Action Committee (NHAC);
- development of a Youth Homelessness Strategy;
- publication of a new National Housing Strategy for people with a disability.

2.1.2 Housing First Initiative

Housing First Implementation Plan 2018-2021 and 2022-2026 *Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage*

Housing First (HF) is an initiative that was first developed in the United States targeting individuals with long term experience of rough sleeping or use of emergency accommodation and who also had high levels of need for other health, psychological or social supports which often reduced their chances of exiting homelessness. HF is a housing-led approach which seeks to support this cohort of homeless individuals by

securing them tenancies and also organising wrap around supports to assist them to sustain these tenancies.

An initial implementation plan for Housing First was rolled out for the period 2018-2021 which also coincided with the Covid pandemic. Key to Housing First is a collaborative approach to delivering a client focused support package, geared at meeting whatever the range of needs of each individual. Uniquely, housing and health services co-fund the Housing First Initiative and there is also input from the Probation Service, Department of Social Protection and others.

Each Local Authority is allocated a target number of individuals to support and place in tenancies which they source. Where possible these will be Local Authority owned social homes, or ones provided by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs). The programme targets individuals and therefore attempts are made to source one bed accommodation, of which there is often a limited supply. The Housing First Initiative is overseen at a national level by the Housing Agency and a Housing First Team is established in each Local Authority area. Under the Second National Implementation Plan, 2022-2026, a national target is outlined with the objective of securing 1,319 tenancies by 2026.

2.1.3 Housing for All – Youth Homelessness Strategy 2023-2025 *Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage*

In November 2022, the Government published the first national Youth Homelessness Strategy, to meet a commitment undertaken in its housing plan, Housing for All. This strategy was also promised under the Programme for Government.

The strategy was adopted after an extensive programme of consultation, including with young people who had lived experience of homelessness, and with regard to international best practice in relation to tackling youth homelessness. It identified 27 specific actions to be undertaken during the three-year period of its implementation, and a steering group of the National Homeless Action Committee (NHAC) established under Housing for All has been established to oversee implementation. It also includes a headline action of Supported Housing for Youth.

The strategy supports:

- prevention of youth homelessness;
- provision of dedicated accommodation for young people with experience of homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness;
- support to exit homelessness.

Objectives and actions to tackle youth homelessness for the 18 to 24 year age cohort are to be included in each Regional Homelessness Action Plan as they are updated.

2.1.4 Residential Tenancies Board Legislation – January 2017 *Residential Tenancies Board*

Brought into effect in 2017, revisions to the Residential Tenancies Act (2004) established Rent Pressure Zones (RPZ) in a variety of areas across Ireland. These RPZ operate as a means of controlling the increased costs of renting private accommodation and cap such increases to a maximum of 4% per annum. Initially a number of areas in the West Region were designated as RPZ, including: Galway City East, Galway City West; Athenry-Oranmore and Gort-Kinvara in County Galway.

The legislation aims to provide greater security for tenants and provides the capacity to penalise anyone operating counter to the RPZ rent levels. The legislation is revised periodically and new areas added to the list, where significant rent pressure is identified.

2.1.6 Guidance for Assisting Victims of Domestic Violence with Emergency Accommodation Needs

Housing Circular 2/17 issued in January 2017 outlined policies and procedures for Local Authorities to ensure effectiveness and consistency in responses to assist victims of domestic violence. The guidelines provide a summary of best practice in this area and the procedural pathways to be followed when assisting this target group. Organisational responsibility is outlined between key stakeholders in terms of crisis response to domestic violence, emergency accommodation and long-term accommodation needs. The guidance emphasises the importance of partnership and interagency approaches with involvement from services involved locally in the delivery of domestic violence supports. This approach will continue to inform the implementation of partnership working in rolling out the West Region Homelessness Action Plan .

2.1.7 National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) for Homeless Services in Ireland – Guidance for NGO Homeless Service Providers (May 2019)

The aim of the NQSF is to ensure that services the State provides to individuals and families experiencing homelessness are well organised, integrated and focused on moving people out of homelessness into sustainable housing solutions as quickly as possible. The Framework is intended to ensure greater consistency in the national response to homelessness and across different regions and models of service delivery.

The NQSF is applicable to all homeless service provision in receipt of funding whether the service is statutory, voluntary or private. It applies to homeless services for single adults, adult couples and for adults with dependent children. Details of the criteria for ensuring that NQSF standards are met are maintained and updated on www.homelessdublin.ie

2.1.8 Connecting for Life: Ireland’s National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2024

Department of Health

Connecting for Life is Ireland's National cross-sector strategy to prevent suicide. Initially developed to cover the period 2015-2020, in 2020, this strategy was extended to 2024, and a new implementation plan was developed to cover the extended period. The plan aims to provide an opportunity to advance many already established locally based Connecting for Life implementation structures and actions to continue to reduce both suicide and self-harm rates in the whole population and among priority groups, including members of the Traveller community, people experiencing homelessness and LGBTQ+ people. As part of this strategy the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) oversees and coordinates completion of actions by individual organisations under the plan. Regional offices under this body support local initiatives such as the delivery of ASSIST training to support staff in statutory and voluntary organisations in dealing with persons at risk of self-harm or suicide.

2.1.9 Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone June 2020 *Department of Health*

Sharing the Vision, launched in 2020, follows on from **Vision for Change** published in 2006 and sets a high standard for the development of mental health policy in Ireland. It focused on continuing commitment to de-congregation and to identifying various pathways to support people suffering from mental health issues, advocating a greater emphasis on a community-based approach to care. It recognised the importance of a range of factors in contributing to mental health, and in particular to supporting positive mental health. Priority groups identified as being particularly vulnerable had been identified in **Connecting**

for Life (2015-2020) are members of LGBTQ+ community, Travellers, people who are homeless, drug users, people in contact with the criminal justice system, victims of domestic, institutional, or clerical abuse, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and sex workers. To this list it also added children in care, care leavers people with disabilities, people with severe to profound deafness and people with substance misuse problems.

The policy also outlines the various pathways to access mental health support services, including a pathway for self-referral. However, it also states that *“it should remain the case that all users of specialist mental health services...must be registered with a general practitioner.”*

The cornerstone of delivery is outlined as being through Community Mental Health Service Teams (CMHTs). The multidisciplinary nature of CMHTs enables a variety of professional perspectives to be combined in case formulation, care planning and service delivery. The composition of CMHTs outlined in the earlier *“A Vision for Change”* mandated inclusion of the core skills of psychiatry, social work, nursing, occupational health and clinical psychology. There is more of a focus on recovery-oriented outcomes and a recognition of the value of also drawing on a wider range of skillsets such as peer support workers and sessional workers with specific therapeutic skills. There is an increased focus on delivery in reimagined out-patient clinics, and in centres which can integrate support from CMHTs and Voluntary Community Services (VCS). The location of these centres in the community can reinforce the importance of community networks in supporting recovery. There should also be a plan prepared for the patient, and their own views, preferences and goals should be reflected in the plan. Lastly, as a number of different professionals may be interacting with the patient, they should be allocated a key worker who will have a role in coordinating services to the patient and communicating between the various professionals and the patient.

The new policy has reversed the previous policy which would have dictated that where a person had an addiction problem alongside a mental health issue that they should not be treated unless the mental health was the primary problem. Now, the person can be treated no matter which problem is the primary one, it is recognised that there is a significant overlap between these conditions, and that an individual with an addiction has a right to access relevant mental health supports within primary care.

Mental Health for Homeless People

The policy suggests that in the case of dealing with people who are homeless, a stepped approach to providing mental health care and access to specialist mental health services should be considered. Where possible individuals should receive support at the primary care level through their GP and if necessary be referred to the CMHT for their area. When those living in long-term emergency accommodation cannot gain access to the mental health services they require, homeless services should provide for their mental health needs. For the rough sleeping population, it proposes that a dedicated mental health service operating on an outreach basis is required for large urban areas.

The plan also provided a greater emphasis on the need for better links between housing authorities and mental health services, and a goal to prioritise finding opportunities for those living in HSE supported accommodation to move on to independent living in the community while still being able to access mental health supports in the community.

2.1.10 Sláintecare Report May 2017 Oireachtas All Party Committee on the Future of Healthcare in Ireland

In 2016 the Oireachtas established an all-party committee to review the future of healthcare in Ireland leading to the publication of Sláintecare a programme for reform of the healthcare system in Ireland to ensure that access to healthcare at all levels of service should be based on need rather than ability to pay. Following publication of their report in 2017, a Sláintecare Programme Implementation Office was established in late 2018 to oversee key reforms of the service. Updates on Sláintecare’s implementation and projects funded to support its rollout are contained in various implementation plans and reviews on an ongoing basis.

2.1.11 Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023 *Department of Health*

Through a process of research, workshops and engagement, the Implementation Office identified two Sláintecare Reform Programmes to be prioritised for focussed implementation over the following three years. These were:

- Reform Programme 1: Improving Safe, Timely Access to Care and
- Reform Programme 2: Addressing Health Inequalities – towards Universal Healthcare.

These reforms are to involve cross Departmental involvement as well as the Department of Health, their agencies, HSE, health and social care workers and their representative organisations, community and voluntary organisations, and the private sector. A number of these reforms, and the workstreams and projects outlined for implementation concern the health and wellbeing of individuals within their communities, the pathways for them to enter and be discharged from the formal healthcare system, and the supports that should be available for them in their communities. Healthy Ireland sets out a vision of an Ireland where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing.

2.1.12 Young Ireland: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Young Ireland, a National Policy Framework for Children and Young People is the follow on from Better Outcome, Brighter Futures 2014-2020 which was the first national children's policy developed by the Irish state. The new policy was launched at the end of 2023 and will build on the goals achieved under the previous national policy, as well as setting the direction for policy and practice for children and young people across government.

The policy identifies a number of vulnerable cohorts, who are most likely to face challenges, and the policy aims to focus on how to address these challenges. Amongst the vulnerable cohorts of children and young people identified in the framework are those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, young people with mental health issues, children and young people with disabilities, families in emergency accommodation, young people in care, those leaving care, and Traveller children and young people.

The policy takes puts the needs of children and young people at the centre of policy. Adopting a human rights approach, it cites the United Nations Convention on the Rights (UNCRC) which Ireland ratified in 1992, and which articulates the rights of children and young people up to the age of 18. However, while young people aged between 18 and 24 are classed as adults, the Government recognises that they may have specific difficulties accessing their rights, as they face transitions into further education or employment, leaving care or moving from child to adult health or mental health services. As new adults they are also covered by this framework. A key part of this policy includes recognising children and young people as *full* participants in society, listening to their voice in decisions which affect them, and appreciating that they are experts in their own lives.

2.1.13 National Drugs Strategy: Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025 *Department of Health*

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery sets out the Government's strategy to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Ireland up to 2025. It outlines a number of goals to be attained during the lifetime of the strategy:

Goal 1 Promote and protect health and wellbeing.

Goal 2 Minimise harms caused by use and misuse of substances and promote rehabilitation and recovery.

Goal 3 Address the harms of drug markets and reduce access to drugs for harmful use.

Goal 4 Support participation of individuals, families and communities

Goal 5 Develop sound and comprehensive evidence informed policies and actions.

The importance of homeless services which are usually under the direction of Local Authorities and substance misuse and addiction services which come under Health Services working together in collaboration is emphasised in Goal 2. The need to improve access to and addiction support services and rehabilitation supports for those who are both homeless and have high support needs are also highlighted, as is the importance of community integration services and drug, alcohol and mental health supports.

2.2 Governance Structures and Management

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has specified various aspects of governance and administration in relation to any Section 10 expenditure and in the development and adoption of a Regional Action Plan.

The housing authority which acts as the Lead authority with responsibility for the Homelessness Action Plan has responsibility for convening a Homelessness Management Group to oversee the creation of an Action Plan, ensure that it is subject to any necessary consultation and to see to its adoption.

2.2.1 Homelessness Management Group

A Homelessness Management Group was established in the West Region in accordance with the legislation and comprises representation from each of the four Local Authorities in the Region and the Health Service Executive. It is chaired by the Director of Housing of Galway City Council and usually attended by each of the respective Directors of Housing or their representative. A representative from HSE Community Healthcare West Social Inclusion Section has been representing the HSE on the group. Meetings are held regularly, as and when required to carry out the following:

- Assess and make decisions in principle on all funding applications for homeless services.
- Submit proposed budget for services to the funding authorities in any relevant Departments.
- Be responsible for developing effective and integrated responses to homelessness, including the approval of three-year Local Action Plans and the commitment to seek adequate and appropriate resources for their implementation.
- Maintain active links with similar groups in neighbouring counties to develop a high-level regional focus on homelessness.

2.2.2 West Region Joint Consultative Forum

A West Region Joint Consultative Forum was established in 2010 following Ministerial direction provided in Circular HU 1/2010 and updated in Circular 44/21. The Joint Consultative Forum for the West has met periodically over the last thirteen years, with some interruption during Covid19. The membership of the consultative forum is extensive, and in addition to wider representation from officers from all the local authorities, there is also a broad level of participation of approved bodies which are involved in the delivery of homeless services or supports in any of the four local authority areas.

The functions of a homelessness consultative forum are to provide opportunities to share information, to provide views and inputs or to hear presentations or reports that will add to the knowledge of members of the Joint Forum about how best to address homelessness in the West. The Forum offers a diverse perspective and range of experience, including that provided by people working directly with homeless persons on the front line and those with roles in providing supports directly to individuals facing housing and other challenges.

Meetings are convened regularly, and each Local Authority takes it in turns to host and chair a Consultative Forum meeting, consulting over the agenda and circulating minutes and any presentations. The Consultative Forum is also involved in the consultation and provision of views and inputs into the West Region Homelessness Action Plan.

2.2.3 Other Structures in the Region

Local Consultative Fora

In addition to the Region wide consultative forum, Galway City has a local consultative forum, known as the Galway City Consultative Steering Committee, which meets regularly online. It allows members to meet briefly to focus on issues coming up that primarily concern services in the City, and where the sharing of

topics at the local meeting may prompt a need to share these more widely at the Region wide Joint Consultative Forum. This meeting is convened and minutes taken by a Galway City Council housing officer.

Mayo County Council have a similar local forum, for purposes of harnessing inputs from outside organisations which may not be dedicated homeless services providers but can act as valuable supports in smaller more rural communities.

Staff in all the local authorities also participate in a wide range of other specific purpose meetings which are useful for sharing knowledge improving the service provided to homeless clients but are not integral parts of the governance and administration of the West Region Action Plan. Examples include regular meetings with other agencies. A number of these are joint steering committees established to oversee or monitor implementation of specific projects or actions and therefore it will be important to keep an account of these interactions during the course of the implementation of the Plan.

Each Local Authority in the West is now rolling out Housing First in their area in conjunction with the HSE and has therefore now established a Homeless Action Team (HAT) which acts as a case management and referral interagency group in respect of homeless individuals being considered for Housing First tenancies. The HAT group meets regularly in each of the Local Authority areas and constitutes a fixed group, with additional representatives being invited to attend meetings as needed on an ad hoc basis. These meetings are convened by an officer from Homeless Services and also include representatives from HSE, DSP and Simon Community or Cope Galway who are the support delivery bodies selected by tender to provide the wrap around supports for the Housing First Initiative in the Region.

2.3 Homeless Services Expenditure

2.3.1 Section 10 Funding

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage supports Housing Authorities by providing funding up to a maximum of 90% for homeless services through its Section 10 funding. These services may be provided either directly by the Housing Authority or through contracts or grants to voluntary sector or other specialist providers for delivery of services within the Authority's area, or with the private sector in the case of Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA).

The lead Authority for the West Region is Galway City Council which takes on the responsibility for submitting a budget for expenditure based on a multiannual Action Plan, and subsequently for submitting claims and drawing down funds on behalf of the other Local Authorities within the Region. As Lead Authority, Galway City Council is responsible for ensuring that the West Region's expenditure programme, which has been approved by the Homelessness Management Group, is allocated to the various actions and is disbursed to the relevant Local Authority for expending on services in their own area. The lead authority is also responsible for submitting an annual application for funding and for any adjustments to the budget which may be made during the implementation of the Plan.

Expenditure on homelessness has increased consistently over the period of the plan, and in line with the increase in homelessness figures. It is expected that the budget for the plan for 2025-2027 will rise during the course of the Plan. Expenditure is expected to increase during the course of the new plan, with a number of investments in new staff and additional projects.

Table 11: Section 10 Funding in the West Region from 2019 to 2023

Category Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Homeless Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment and Resettlement Supports	895,587	1,027,085	1,242,910	1,843,677	3,188,662
Emergency Accommodation for Families	7,323,998	7,489,103	6,666,228	8,065,573	9,747,966
Long-Term Supported Accommodation	233,593	315,475	295,570	476,712	483,589
Day Services	170,162	170,162	170,162	202,016	210,246
Housing Authority Prevention Services including Administration	266,742	323,769	454,810	576,081	645,325
Total Section 10 Funding	8,890,082	9,325,594	8,829,680	11,164,059	14,275,788

Source: Galway City Council, December 2023

2.3.2 Health Service Executive (HSE) Homelessness Funding

In addition to Section 10 funding for homelessness supports, a substantial amount of funding goes into the region from the HSE in particular. It has provided approximately 4.3 million euros per annum for a range of homelessness projects over the period of the plan.

Funding support from HSE, through the Community Healthcare West Social Inclusion Section comes largely through Section 39 funding in the form of grant aid. While some funding goes to provide dedicated

staff within HSE to work with Homeless people, a range of voluntary groups are also funded on an ongoing basis for services which bolster and complement Section 10 funding within some of the same organisations. HSE funds Galway Simon, in particular the Health and Wellbeing Team, as well as COPE Galway, Threshold, No 4 Youth Services, Cuan Mhuire, Teach Mhuire and Mayo Domestic Violence Support.

HSE is a partner in the Housing First Initiative at both national and regional levels and has invested in health and mental health services which are available to support those in Housing First Tenancies. Services range from psychology supports, to addiction, and community mental health supports. A number of projects have also secured some additional funding leveraged through Health Services from Genio, such as an upcoming pilot project to support Traveller Women and Children facing or at risk of homelessness.

Chapter 3

3.1 Review of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2023 Methodology

- Interviews with key stakeholders.
- Focus groups with each Local Authority and key homeless services voluntary organisations.
- Review of PASS data and reports on targets, outputs and achievements during the plan.
- Consultation with individuals with lived experience of homelessness.
- Consultation with groups working with young people at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness.
- Participation in Joint Consultative Forum, local consultative fora and presentation to Homeless Management Group.
- Direct consultation with young people with lived experience of homelessness.
- Visits to projects funded under Section 10.
- Selection of case studies as illustrations of planned activities.

Findings from the review of the West Region Action Plan 2020-2022 - extended to end of 2023 - has provided a context in which to set the priorities, and to build on the strengths and achievements of that plan to inform the next plan. Conversely, respondents consulted were asked to identify weaknesses or gaps in services and identify challenges as well as opportunities to introduce new services.

Where concerns or challenges identified by respondents arose from issues outside the competence of the West Region to change without national policy or regulatory change these will necessitate actions to lobby or influence government policy or implementation. An example of this is the need to amend the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) rules and thresholds, which will require lobbying for change at national level.

The following sections highlight a range of the findings from the plan, and these will be used to inform the proposed actions and targets proposed for the new plan, in Chapter 4.

3.2 Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

3.2.1 Strengths and Achievements

- 6% drop in numbers accessing emergency accommodation between 2019 and 2022.
- 2 Family Hubs were established in Galway City.
- Learnings from Covid19 integrated into homelessness provision
- Street outreach extended post Covid19, and best practice protocol put in place.
- Multidisciplinary Health and Wellbeing team established, supporting a range of homeless initiatives across region.
- Housing Action Teams (HATs) established in all four Local Authority areas meet regularly.
- HAP Placefinder positions filled in all four Local Authority areas
- Additional support and top-up available with Homeless HAP has facilitated placements where rent limits are appropriate. RAS is required in most cases for single people exiting homeless in order to sustain a tenancy in Roscommon.
- Housing First demonstrates impacts of harnessing health supports in concert with intensive case management by support workers.
- Implementation of Housing First throughout West Region with 57 tenancies created by end of 2023
- Increased focus on prevention and tenancy sustainment in all four Local Authorities.
- “My Home” pilot scheme in Galway County and Roscommon evaluated and mainstreamed.
- Community Detox pilot service evaluated and continuing.
- Dedicated Homeless Community Mental Health Team “Slí Nua” established in Galway City with strong HSE input and close interagency model underpinned by Local Authority and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)
- “My Home” extended to operate in Galway City and Mayo.
- Initial take-up of schemes such as the Tenant-in-situ scheme making a positive contribution to prevention of homelessness and targets likely to be met.
- Greater use of Community Based Housing in Galway City and County as transitional housing providing experience of tenancy on licence to homeless with middle to low level support needs.
- Community Based Housing Plus initiative extended and then mainstreamed to provide support for medium need levels of individuals who otherwise would continue to occupy spaces in STA and who would not be eligible for Housing First.
- Facility secured to provide Cold Weather Response to meet likely demand for Galway City with some places for County rough sleepers.
- Youth Homelessness team and activities expanded in Galway City and additional properties secured for youth housing.
- Dedicated Youth focused shared housing based on CBH model rolled out to County Galway with 4 houses in place by end of period.
- Innovative approaches to training collaboratively across sectors in areas such as Trauma Informed Practice.
- Stabilised number of young people accessing emergency accommodation

3.2.2 Challenges

- Limited availability of rental supply in all categories of housing
- Limited availability of one and two bed properties in every County.
- Limited availability of four beds and larger properties appropriate for larger families and extended families.
- Difficulties with finding HAP supported properties in each area due to soaring demand and limited supply and different HAP limits across County boundaries
- Increasing numbers of Notice of Termination tenancies across region.
- Increasing demand for private rented accommodation resources such as between Ukrainian refugees, IPAS clients and homeless clients.
- Landlords exiting the market.
- Inconsistent access to Mental Health Services (MHS) across region.
- In some case delays in accessing Additional Needs Payments can slow down homeless clients leaving PEA to take up new tenancies.

- Increase in homeless presentations mean that resources are challenged and struggle to provide sufficient support or follow-up post tenancy.
- Increased levels of “active” addiction in clients looking for support making it difficult to place them in accommodation due to increased challenges of polysubstance abuse and availability of new substances such as nitrazene.
- Increase in homelessness of those with mental health issues who cannot find private accommodation, placing increased pressures on the limited local authority or AHB housing and impacting on LA waiting lists.
- Need for better links with education providers to get placement opportunities offered flexibly and in modes accessible to those in homeless services.
- Issue of early family formation (at 18 years or younger), amongst young Travellers in particular, with no waiting time established on housing list.
- Limited services appropriate to meet the accommodation needs of homeless nonbinary persons.
- Difficulties in meeting the needs of couples who become homeless, as many homeless services are provided on a single sex basis.
- Difficulties in adapting or expanding services from urban to more rural or dispersed communities.
- Additional time and resource required to service medium and high support clients of homeless services in dispersed locations
- Need for training for staff on a continuing basis in the PASS system to make best use of its potential for reporting.
- Challenges in addressing new issues such as planning for services for transgender homeless.
- Challenges in gaining accreditation for experience with registration of prior experience within homeless sector for purpose of CORU registration and allowing for continuing professional development within sector.

3.2.3 Opportunities

- To share learning between sectors and between local authority areas about what works and what doesn't.
- To build on governance structures established during the previous plan period and strengthen
- To commission formal reviews or evaluations of specific initiatives which have worked for clients, especially to demonstrate the value of prevention work in tackling rising homelessness.
- Increased national focus on issue provides potential to pilot novel approaches and alternative solutions, providing funding and flexibility to experiment are available.

3.2.4 Threats

- Risk to organisations providing support services in expanding scope of services to meet region wide demand.
- The risk of breakdown in system caused limited availability- of appropriate social housing solutions to meet demand, and other shocks to supply of housing.
- Labour shortages in the social care sector pose a risk to expansion of support services to meet growing needs of homeless services.
- Over reliance on, and insecurity of, PEA.
-

3.2.5 Process Outcomes arising from the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020-2022

- Facilitated development of strong relationships between Local Authorities and homelessness organisations delivering services directly to clients on the ground.
- Improved and strengthened relationships between sectors delivering homeless services
- Improved communication and understanding about different roles within organisations delivering homeless services
- Increased understanding in homeless organisations in voluntary sector of the constraints on Local Authorities in responding to homelessness
- Built trust between organisations.
- Changed focus in tackling homelessness from provision of crisis emergency accommodation towards prevention of homelessness initiatives and providing longer term solutions.
- Improved collaboration between partners.

- Provided opportunities for Local Authorities in areas with lower homeless presentations to learn from local authorities and NGO service providers in areas with higher volumes of homeless presentations about practical solutions to these issues.
- Brought social care qualified professionals into homeless services establishment in Local Authority Housing Units.
- Facilitated expansion of Community Based Housing transitional housing arrangements rather than increases in PEA.
- Housing First ensured a more formal partnership arrangement between HSE and Local Authorities and their respective staff on the ground than had previously existed.
- Housing First promoted formal structures for interagency case management and sharing of information through the establishment of Homeless Action Teams (HATs) in all LAs within the Region.

Chapter 4

4.1 Scope of the new plan 2025-2027

The process of reviewing the Homeless Action Plan for the period 2020-2022/2023 and analysis of homelessness data illustrating trends and shifts in demand for and provision of types of emergency accommodation and supports for increasing levels of homeless presentations. All four Local Authorities face increased pressure from new homeless presentations, while at the same time, it is proving difficult to move people out of emergency accommodation swiftly due to a continued limited supply of appropriate social housing supply. Shortage of affordable private rental accommodation is also a significant factor. In this context, prevention of homelessness and continued and enhanced efforts in tenancy sustainment will form core elements of the plan.

4.2 Reducing dependence on Private Emergency Accommodation

Despite an aspiration to reduce dependence on the use of private emergency accommodation, this too has risen, although numbers in PEA now are constrained by a lack of supply of this type of accommodation in all areas. The proposals to source alternate sites and services to provide local authority or agency managed emergency accommodation with provision of greater supports will be a trend in the new plan. This will involve some initial investment in leasing or purchasing of sites, some of which can be provided by creative use of the range of other schemes and programmes available to housing authorities under Housing for All. Rather than securing additional emergency accommodation sites, the emphasis is on housing households as outcomes are more positive than relying on emergency accommodation options. Managing temporary emergency accommodation is very resource intensive and costly.

4.3 Providing quality services to the most vulnerable.

Housing First (HF) is a successful initiative offering a housing led solution to a limited number of individuals with highly complex needs with a promise of support that will continue into the medium to long term if needed. However, there are also many homeless people who do not fit the criteria for Housing First, with moderate or less complex needs but ongoing vulnerabilities who could benefit from a similar programme of wraparound supports. As HF expands, and, as it is delivered in more rural areas, with more extensive travel challenges for both clients and service providers, there is a need to look at how scarce services such as mental health supports, psychological services and similar can be accessed successfully as the programme expands and disperses.

New approaches to delivery may need to be tried, and it will be necessary to influence how the impacts will be measured compared to delivery of HF in more dispersed rural situations where services are more difficult to access than in an urban centre.

The housing led pilot for families proposed for Galway City and County will help inform broader housing led approaches and will influence the outcomes of this initiative.

4.4 Development of Transitional Housing with realistic moving on options

The development of additional numbers of transitional housing in the community-based housing model, with shared housing provided on licence is being expanded across the region. However, although this is a much preferable model to other types of emergency accommodation, there are risks attached to not having strategies to move people on from these transitional arrangements, if they are ready. This will require a continuing supply of one bed properties within the social housing stock and that these can be made available to an equitable proportion of homeless applicants.

4.5 Need for services for women who have experienced domestic violence or sexual abuse.

While refuge services have now transferred to Túsla for their core funding, there are still ongoing needs for accommodation for women moving out of temporary refuges, of which there are only two in the Region. There is already good collaboration between housing officers and the Managers of the existing centres, but the demand for places in these refuges is way beyond the level of current provision, and there is a need to

review how women who have faced family breakdown but may not be accessing refuge supports currently can be supported to survive in the interim, and to make long term progress into longer term housing. Investigation of the best way to meet some of these outstanding needs will be undertaken during the new plan period.

4.6 Development of Youth specific housing and supports.

Like the transitional housing model, the Youth specific housing model with supports is being rolled out and is proposed to extend under the new plan. This type of provision is in line with the National Youth Homelessness Strategy and international research evidence. There is also a need to develop more diverse forms of youth housing, which would be able to cater for young couples, and young people who are also parents as well as non-binary and transgender young adults.

A consultation undertaken with young people who are currently in transitional shared youth housing, highlighted their concerns and worry, that because of their youth, they do not have enough priority to access social housing. They worry that they will reach the age of 25 – as some have already – yet their chances of progressing to a social housing tenancy are limited. All those who have come into youth housing with previous experience of going into emergency accommodation in hostels dread going back into that environment, but worry about slow progress in transitioning from their current housing on to permanent tenancies. All welcome being supported by youth workers and being able to have some elements of normalcy in their young adult experience, but feel that restrictions on visiting and other limitations mean they still lose out on some of the freedoms their peers who are not homeless enjoy.

4.7 Strengthening capacity in Tenancy Sustainment and other supports.

With an increased focus on prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment it will be a huge challenge to reverse or slow the trends so that figures are moving in the direction of the goal of eradicating homelessness

The West Region has been successful in reducing the rate of increase in homelessness from that in the previous period, although presentations are now climbing most in the areas that started from a lower base. The growth in female homelessness, the duration that families are occupying homeless accommodation and the increased proportion of younger adults facing into homelessness are all concerning trends.

4.8 Increasing targets and delivery for new social housing.

Living in hostels, or even in Family Hubs are always a temporary solution to homelessness, but they nonetheless play an important part in facilitating access by support organisations to meet with and provide supports and advice to the homeless clients accommodated within them. Inevitably, the current levels of homelessness will persist unless more social housing becomes available, no matter how effective staff are in tenancy sustainment and tenancy loss prevention work. This also means making particular efforts to secure larger size accommodation for families as well as one bedroom housing. As fewer apartments are built in more rural areas, there is a need to look creatively at how larger premises that are vacant could be imaginatively repurposed to provide quality own door accommodation for single units.

4.9 New Project Proposals

Local Authorities, and NGOs, which deliver many of the services on the ground on their behalf, are also seeking additional staff resources to fill identified skills gaps, and to address management and coordination needs. Increased capacity in these organisations will allow staff to be more proactive and supportive in engaging with clients who may have multiple and/or complex needs. The success of the model of proactive involvement of the Social Work team in Galway City Council where the team have specialisms and strong involvement across the homelessness spectrum, show the value of having specialist staff input to effect positive outcomes. This is particularly so when engaging on their client's behalf with other professionals such as with medical and mental health staff and other specialist agencies.

The bids for additional staffing proposals to take on new models of emergency provision in the Region will contribute to increasing the scope of the Section 10 funded plan for the next three years. Adding value to

the plan, there are also complementary initiatives proposed or in the course of implementation, which will be funded outside of Section 10, such as those with HSE or other funding. If feasible, the contribution of these actions, and inclusion of key promoters of these actions could be included in the consultation processes for the implementation of the plan.

4.10 Examples of new projects being funded outside of Section 10 funding:

An advocacy support project for Traveller Women and Children who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness to be piloted in Westside in Galway City and Tuam in Galway County for an 18-month period starting in 2024. This pilot project is being funded by Genio, a philanthropic fund, and is led by the Health Service Executive through its Traveller Health Programme with involvement from Galway Traveller Movement and Western Traveller and Intercultural Development.

Programmes such as the My Home project, which was piloted and extended under the last Action Plan period will be continuing during the new Action Plan period and will continue to be funded through the Homelessness fund within HSE/ CHW.

The new plan will also address the issue of Youth Homelessness in a more focused manner. In line with the objectives in the recently adopted National Youth Homelessness Strategy, there will be a separate objective to provide specific and appropriate accommodation and support models will be outlined. The need to monitor progress on assisting this cohort to move on from Youth specific housing into full tenancies will also be important, as this forms a crucial stage in their developing as young adults and in grasping independence.

The West Region is fortunate that there were already a number of well-established programmes for support of homeless youth prior to the new national strategy being developed such as Galway Simon Community's Youth Homelessness team and No 4's support for homeless and at-risk youth. Access to Túsla's supports for young people leaving care can also potentially be leveraged to support new innovations identified.

New partners may need to be involved in progressing the rollout of the strategy locally, and examples of practical solutions to youth homelessness from other jurisdictions studied as approaches to tackling the increasing trends in youth homelessness are considered for implementation in the West Region.

4.11 Building on Interagency collaboration and enhancing communication.

Lastly, the rollout of the new plan will provide an opportunity for the stakeholders who have been integral to previous plans and who are critical to the successful implementation of the new plan, to consider how to improve on communication and to look at consolidating governance and management structures, including consultative structures for the plan's rollout as well as to give oversight to a process of monitoring and evaluation of the Plan. The guidance for the plan which proposes the submission of annual plans or business plans will need to be reviewed by the Homeless Management Group to consider how best to achieve this, in particular by identifying a small number of key indicators or targets which could be reviewed and compared on an annual basis as the plan evolves to showcase progress on moving in the right direction towards eradicating homelessness.

4.12 Key Performance Indicators

At present key performance indicators for measuring progress in addressing homelessness is derived from two key indicators which comprise

KI. 1 The number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation

KI 2 The number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation as a percentage of the total number of homeless adults in emergency accommodation as of 31st December each year.

This would provide one basic key indicator of progress that is already being collected and therefore would be easy to monitor.

However, given that there is an issue in the West, with families in particular, being more likely to remain in emergency accommodation for longer, it would be beneficial to monitor how the percentage of families remaining in homeless emergency accommodation is impacted during the course of the plan. As these figures are entered regularly into PASS, it would be possible to identify a similar key performance indicator in relation to the percentage of families remaining in Emergency Accommodation (EA) for greater than six months as a percentage of families, and if wished to also produce figures for the number of families remaining in EA for over 2 years as a percentage of total families in EA,

The Homeless Management Group will review and consider a small number of key performance indicators to apply to assessment of progress on the plan, and this should also include provision for using some qualitative key performance indicators, such as degree of confidence of individuals that they can retain a tenancy, or sense of wellbeing of those who have been supported into tenancies or prevented from losing tenancies, to assess the benefit of the tenancy sustainment roles. In the case of qualitative assessment, the costs and effort to implement a valid tool and to repeat over the period of the plan would be greater than the costs of using quantitative indicators based on figures that are already being collected.

Chapter 5

Strategic Vision of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan

To work towards the eradication of homelessness in the West through:

- the provision of sufficient appropriate affordable housing
- a focus on preventing homelessness
- and supporting those who are most vulnerable to empower them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation which meets their needs with a holistic, compassionate and proactive approach.

1. Prevention of Homelessness – Measures to include early intervention, advice and information, prevention of tenancy loss and tenancy loss reduction, and customised support for vulnerable groups.

Objective Action	Prevention of Homelessness	Targets	Responsible Bodies	Timeframe
1.1	Continue to advocate for homeless households within the parameters of the Scheme of Allocation of each Local Authority.	Continue to allocate appropriate social housing to homeless households in emergency accommodation.	Local authorities	Ongoing
1.2	Ensure all homeless households including those at risk of homelessness engage with Choice Based Letting (CBL) systems.	Support staff in NGOs to be familiar with CBL process in each local authority. Local authorities to provide training on CBL.	NGOs/ LAs.	Q1 2024
1.3	Increase capacity to provide legal and advisory support to deal with Notice to Quit.	Additional staff time – West Region	Threshold	2025
1.4	Continue Tenant in Situ scheme including Transboundary Schemes to address NTQs.	Number of NTQs dealt with under Tenant-in-situ Scheme.	LAs – Galway City/ Galway County/ Mayo/ Roscommon	Ongoing
1.5	Alignment of prevention services and activities to sustain existing tenancies diverting household from experiencing homelessness.	PASS training to be rolled out to all local authorities for reporting purposes.	LAs and delivery agencies	Q 1 2025
1.6	Continued operation of Homeless Placefinder Service across Region.	Number of Homeless clients securing HAP supported tenancies.	LA Homeless Units	2025-2027
1.7	Rollout continuing information campaign/ promotion to increase no of landlords / estate agents offering HAP tenancies.	Information / communication campaign(s) across region.	LA Homeless Units lead / all members of Homelessness Consultative Group	Ongoing
1.8	Each LA to review the rents payable under the HAP scheme. Amend for discretion to reduce to affordable level in context of prevailing rents in each LA.	Additional discretion applied to targeted cases on HAP. Engage with Department Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) regarding HAP rates and top ups to landlords.	Consultative Forum DHLGH / LA Housing Departments	Annual review

		Seek to have discretionary rate of up to 50% similar to Dublin LA.		
1.9	Liaise with AHBs re construction/ acquisition of appropriate properties to meet Homeless priority needs, particularly in respect of 1 beds and larger properties – 4 beds plus	Nos of 1 bed and 4+bed properties developed/ acquired including through Part Vs.	LAs/ AHBS	Ongoing
1.10	Pursue opportunities for households not eligible for Social Housing to access Cost Rental Scheme	Nos of households accessing Cost Rental Scheme	LAs / AHBS	Ongoing
1.11	Ensure that better quality data reflecting work done on prevention of homelessness is collected and is represented on the PASS system. In order to deliver this, it is proposed that work be reinstated to create an appropriate Application Programming Interface (API) to link other platforms with the national PASS system.	API developed to reflect tenancy prevention work on PASS system	DHLGH/ LAs / VCS partners/ DHRE	2025

2. Protection of homeless people – including measures to support rough sleepers, provision of hostel and night shelter supports, day services and outreach support, Cold Weather Response and co-ordination of interagency supports for those in crisis or dealing with unpredictable emergency events, those leaving prison, discharged from hospitals and psychiatric care, provision of appropriate emergency accommodation for those at risk of homelessness, and assessment and key worker support for vulnerable individuals, health and wellbeing supports, and access to social and welfare, mental health and psychological services.

Objective Action	Protection of homeless people	Targets / Outputs	Responsible Bodies	Timeframe
2.1	Continue outreach supports for Rough Sleepers in Galway City.	No. of Rough Sleepers engaged with services.	Galway City Co/ COPE Galway	Ongoing
2.2	Review and consider expansion of supports to address needs of Rough Sleepers in Galway County/ Mayo and Roscommon, including identifying emergency provision in each area in cases of severe weather/ weather warnings.	No of Rough Sleepers observed / counted in each of the LA areas. Facility identified for local use for CWR in severe weather/ as need arises.	LA Homeless Units – Galway Co/Mayo/ Roscommon	2025
2.3	Continue the provision of Cold Weather Response service in Galway City for Rough Sleepers.	Availability of CWR facility secured for future winters.	Galway Local authorities / COPE Galway	Winter 2025-2027
2.4	Galway County to identify appropriate premises for a Cold Weather Response facility in the county for Rough Sleepers.	Availability of a CWR facility identified and developed for service within Galway County.	Galway County Council	Winter 2026/27
2.5	Feasibility of short-term facility for Cold Weather Response for Galway County to be sourced in the interim to be examined.	Temporary facility for CWR in Galway County investigated.	Galway County Council	Winter 2025/26
2.6	Provision of structured street outreach service seven days per week in Galway City utilising best practice protocols.	No. of hours of street outreach provided.	COPE Galway	Ongoing
2.7	Examine the possibility of rolling out an outreach service outside of the city to the region.	Target rough sleepers in the Region.	LAs/Service Provider	Q2 2025
2.8	Provision of Health and Wellbeing supports to Rough Sleepers in conjunction with Street Outreach and in day centre provision, linking up across voluntary homeless Services.	Engagement of Rough Sleepers with health and wellbeing team. Nos of Rough Sleepers availing of other health services.	HSE / CHW / Slí Nua/ NGOs.	Ongoing

2.9	Identify appropriate premises and repurpose for use as temporary day centre for Rough Sleepers and Homeless in Galway City during redevelopment of Teach Corribe Day Centre.	Temporary Day Centre identified. Temporary Day Centre opened. No. of users of Temp. Day Centre.	Galway City Council Galway City Council / COPE Galway. COPE Galway.	2024/2025
2.10	Redevelopment of Day Centre to provide holistic services to meet the needs of homeless households.	Re-opening of redeveloped Day Centre. Additional capacity created for day-time services to homeless in Galway City. No. service users of Day Centre. No. services meeting clients in Day Centre.	Galway City Council/ / COPE Galway	Qtr 4 2026
2.11	Develop an LGBTQI+ strategy to include an examination on the establishment of LGBTQI+ friendly accommodation.	Strategy to be finalised by end of 2025. Number of placements into appropriate accommodation.	DHLGH/LAs/ AHBs/ HSE/ Túsla	Qtr 4 2025
2.12	Implement national policies and processes to anticipate the needs of those vulnerable groups who are assessed as Homeless, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison discharges (including sex offenders); • Young people exiting care; • Hospital discharges; • People exiting Direct Provision Centres; • Domestic Violence (in line with national policy). 	Number of discharges to homeless accommodation. Prisoners to have an active housing application on discharge.	Department of Health/ HSE/ Prison Service/ Túsla/ LAs LAs/ IPS/ HSE	Ongoing Ongoing
2.13	Carry out a review of Tenancy Sustainment Service in the Region with a view to ascertaining best practice and best model. Following review implement any recommendations.	To avoid duplication of service Number of tenancies supported and sustained. Number of qualified staff required in situ.	LAs /NGOs/DHLGH	Qtr4 2025 2025
2.14	Expansion of Tenancy Sustainment services in Local Authority Homeless Teams. Review of requirements and appropriateness of posts within Homeless Teams as circumstances change.	1 additional Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSO) Galway City Council 2 new TSO posts established in Mayo County Council and 1 Homeless Unit Clerical Officer Support. 1 new TSO post, 1 Social Worker in Roscommon County Council. Ongoing review of posts	LAs/DHLGH/DPER	2025 2025-2027

		New post for Project Coordinator & 1 additional TSO in Galway County Council.		
2.15	Expansion of support services in NGOs to provide key worker/ project workers supports to vulnerable clients and those with low/ medium and high support needs in Community Based Housing from Rough Sleeping / PEA/ Hostels as per expansion of services in Local Authorities.	Key working & case management support staff Galway Simon Community for Roscommon CoCo	NGOs and relevant LAs.	2025
2.16	Review and continue to improve quality of services available in Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) to households.	Number of PEA properties that meet national quality standards.	LAs/NGOs	Continuous monitoring
2.17	Continued review of provision of PEA in Galway City and County with a goal of long-term reduction use of PEA. Short-term securing additional properties in Galway City and County to meet current backlog// demand.	Additional 8 bed unit in City Additional properties in County - 4 2 bed apartments & 1 4 bed house. Duration of stay in PEA/ exists to tenancies.	COPE Galway for Galway City Council and Galway County Council	2025-2027
2.18	Securing new facilities for short term temporary accommodation in Mayo County for homeless households.	Facility secured for large scale emergency accommodation provision. Occupancy of new facility in Mayo. Phase 1 - 19 rooms Phase 2 - 13 rooms Duration of stay in facility/ exists to tenancies.	Mayo County Council.	2025-2027
2.19	Identification and procurement of an 8 to 10 bed unit for provision of emergency accommodation for single homeless persons in Roscommon County with supports to be provided by an NGO. Service to make provision for Rough Sleepers and potentially Cold Weather Response.	8-10 bed unit secured NGO support service secured Nos of homeless accommodated. Duration of stay in unit.	Roscommon County Council/ NGO	Qtr. 1 2025 Ongoing

2.20	Development of Domestic Violence (DV) Refuge and associated medium term housing solution for families exiting situations of domestic violence.	12/14 bed facility to be developed. Identify suitable location, negotiating with relevant bodies, sourcing funding, and develop accordingly.	Galway County Council/ DHLGH/ Túsla/ Cuan / NGOs	Ongoing
2.21	Allocation of properties for transitional units on licence for households exiting DV Refuge.	3 units to be identified in the County.	Galway County Council	2026
2.22	Continuation and expansion of Threshold Tenancy Protection Service (TPS) for Galway through provision of additional Housing Advisers to team.	2 additional Housing Advisers in post. Nos of tenancies protected. Reduction in NTQs issued.	Threshold Galway/ Galway City Council/ Galway County Council	Ongoing

3. Tackling Youth Homelessness – prevention of youth homelessness, early intervention to support young people leaving care, development of age-appropriate accommodation and supports and researching the impact on young people of dedicated youth homelessness and housing provision.

4.

Objective Action	Tackling Youth Homelessness	Targets	Responsible Bodies	Timeframe
3.1	Continuing and building on dedicated models for provision of Youth (18-24 years) shared housing with supports from key workers to prevent young people from falling into a cycle of homelessness in the Region.	Sustain existing provision for shared Youth accommodation with appropriate supports.	Galway Simon Community/LAS	Ongoing
3.2	Expansion of Youth Homelessness programme provided by Galway Simon Community in Galway City including additional housing accommodation.	Additional properties to be secured.	Galway Simon Community/ Galway City Council	Ongoing
3.3	Expansion of Youth Homelessness programme provided by Galway Simon in various towns in Galway County.	2 additional properties secured, and 1 further property to be secured.	Galway Simon Community/ Galway County Council	2025/2026
3.4	New programme to support dedicated Youth Housing support programme – accommodation and key workers support from Galway Simon in Mayo County.	6 apartments secured for shared Youth accommodation. 2 HSO & 2 HAS workers employed.	Mayo County Council/ Galway Simon Community	2025/2026
3.5	Pilot a Housing First type approach for youth with specifically targeted supports provided by appropriate agencies.	Examine feasibility of pilot	DHLGH/ Local partners	By end 2026
3.6	Improve collaboration and early intervention to prepare young people leaving care to find appropriate accommodation and to access supports in the community post care.	Preparation of After-care support plan for every 17year-old in year prior to leaving care.	Túsla	Ongoing
3.7	Early liaison with Housing Authorities re housing needs of Young Care Leavers to avoid mainstream homeless services. Extend Túsla CAS scheme to source housing for young homeless people.	No of interagency after care meetings held. No of young people provided with youth specific solutions for housing need.	Túsla/ LAs, Social Work/ Social Care support LAs Túsla /	2025

3.8	Continue after care working groups with Túsla/ Local Authority and other agencies to support young people who have entered homelessness or are presenting as potentially homeless.	Case management plan for each young person.	Túsla/ LAs/ Relevant youth and community services in LA area.	Ongoing
3.9	Continued drop in and day support service for vulnerable young people, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness at No4 Youth Services.	No of young homeless people accessing service / supports. Identification of vulnerable cohorts/ no of targeted supports. No of young people accessing career guidance / employment supports.	No 4 / NGOs/ Túsla / GRETB	Ongoing
3.10	Research best practice models in other EU countries for youth homeless housing project.	Pilot models/ approaches identified.	LAs/ Túsla/ Galway Simon/ No 4/ DHLGH	Timescale to be confirmed.
3.11	Develop and pilot of models/ approaches to address difficulties young people face in competing for social housing because of their age.	Number of youth homeless housed as proportion of overall homeless.	All partners	Ongoing
3.12	Identification of long-term housing solutions for young homeless, to ensure that they do not enter a cycle of homelessness.	Number of Social Housing Supports.	All partners	Ongoing
3.13	Work with LTACCS to consider and put in place any additional supports at a local level to assist young Travellers who are at risk of experiencing homelessness.	Include in Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029.	LAs/ LTACC/ GTM/ Bru-Bhríde	2025 / 2026
3.14	Review of provision to ensure that needs of pregnant young people, transgender young people and young couples can be addressed while needing to access emergency accommodation.	No of targeted supports provided for young pregnant mothers. Access to Homeless HAP with discretionary payments and targeted allocations	LAs/ HAP Placefinders/ Homeless support organisations/ Túsla	By end 2025

Creation of pathways for transition from emergency accommodation towards long term tenancy – including provision of community based “shared” housing on licence, housing led approaches to support individuals and families to gain skills to maintain tenancies, integration and resettlement supports, identification of needs to target services for specific populations, and follow up support and case reviews for settled clients on a longitudinal basis.

Objective	Pathways for progression	Targets	Responsible Bodies	Timeframe
4.1	Continue to allocate homes to homeless households in line with the Local Authority strategy (i.e. Schemes of Letting Priorities) and prioritise as appropriate.	Reduction in numbers of individuals spending > 6 months in PEA. Reduction in number of families spending > 6 months in PEA.	Local Authorities	Ongoing
4.2	Continue to source housing for use as Community Based Housing (CBH) to provide supported licenced housing as a pathway to long term tenancy for individuals and families with specific needs throughout the Region.	Nos of homeless accommodated in CBH in each County / LA.	Local Authorities/ NGOs	Ongoing
4.3	Expansion of CBH in Galway County for single homeless sharing and appropriate support services.	3 additional properties secured & 5 further to be identified and secured in 2025. Existing support service to be expanded.	Galway County Council/ NGO	2025/2026
4.4	Expansion of Supported Housing in Galway County for an extended family group with appropriate support services provided by NGO.	3 additional properties to be identified and secured. Support service provided by PMVT.	Galway County Council/ NGO	2025/2026
4.5	Creation of 24/7 medium term supported shared housing property in a County Town in County Galway for complex vulnerable homeless individuals.	Property secured. 24/7 support service to be developed and provided- proposal submitted to Department for consideration.	Galway County Council/ NGO	2025-2027
4.6	Creation of Cold Weather Response facility in County Town in County Galway	Proposal submitted to Department for Consideration	Galway County Council/ NGO	2025-2027
4.7	Creation of CBH programme in Mayo by County Council in collaboration with Galway Simon Community. Properties to be	Properties sourced by Council. Support services provided by Galway Simon Community.	Mayo County Council/ NGO	2025 Ongoing

4.8	<p>sourced by Council and provided on licence to Simon who will provide appropriate support services.</p> <p>Creation of a Resettlement Service in Roscommon with support services provided.</p>	Properties sourced by Council. Support services provided by Galway Simon Community.	Roscommon County Council/ Galway Simon Community	2025 Ongoing
4.9	Continued roll out of Housing First (HF) Implementation Plan 2022-2026 in all Local Authority areas, through regular meetings of HATs in each area and proactive sourcing of appropriate accommodation for eligible Housing First clients, particularly single bedroom accommodation.	<p>Achieving target number of HF Tenancies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galway City 30 Galway County 18 County Mayo 10 County Roscommon 7 <p>Quarterly reporting on targets achieved.</p>	Local Authorities / HSE CHW/ HSE Community Mental Health /HATs / Housing Agency	Ongoing
4.10	Participation as Local Authority Representative on National Housing First Implementation Group by Galway City Council nominee.	Participation at quarterly meetings.	Galway City Council	Ongoing
4.11	Identification of issues/ problems arising with HF and ensuring that these lessons are embedded into practice for other Housing Led approaches.	Evaluation of HF in Region.	University of Limerick Evaluation Team	Ongoing
4.12	<p>Implementation of a Housing Led Supported Housing for Families Pilot programme. Comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> four homes licenced to an NGO to provide supported housing; Túsla and HSE providing care supports to the families; Oversight group and implementation group supporting pilot and reporting on outcomes. 	<p>Terms of reference developed for implementation group.</p> <p>Establishment of implementation group for pilot.</p> <p>Families identified and properties secured.</p> <p>4 families housed with supports. (2 in Galway City, 2 in Galway County).</p> <p>Oversight and reporting on pilot</p>	LAs/NGOs/TUSLA/HSE/DHLHG	Ongoing
4.13	Procurement of a suitable service provider for the Housing First	New Service Level Agreement for Housing First Project in Region	Housing First Office/LAs/HSE	Ongoing Qtr. 1 2025

5, Governance and interagency working - including measures to ensure compliance and value for money, strengthen and enhance governance and consultative structures for interagency working and delivery of the goals of Housing for All and the West Region Homeless Action Plan and to increase participation and consistency in communication and co-operation at all levels of delivery of homelessness services.

Objective Action	Governance and Interagency Working	Targets	Responsible Bodies	Timeframe
5.1	<p>Ensure a value for money approach for all services be provided with all expenditure and recoupments made in line with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular and Department of Housing protocols.</p> <p>Ensure a Memorandum of Understanding between Local Authorities in the West Region continues to operate effectively.</p>	<p>Full compliance delivery with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds • Charities Regulator Governance code • National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services. • General Data Protection Regulations • Freedom of Information • Service Level Agreements • Licence agreements • All regulatory requirements. 	WRHMG/DHLGH	Ongoing
5.2	Continue to convene West Region Homeless Management Group.	Number of meetings held – at minimum twice yearly and report on PASS.	Homeless Management Group	Ongoing
5.3	Continue to convene the Homelessness Consultative Forum.	Number of meetings held minimum twice yearly and report on PASS.	Galway City Co Region Lead	
5.4	Ensure clarity over governance processes and structures and adherence to governance best practice.	<p>Upload meetings data as part of reporting from LAs and providers.</p> <p>Number of Regional Consultative Forums held/ No. HAT meetings held.</p>	Galway City Lead/ LAs	<p>Qtr 1 2025</p> <p>2025</p>

5.5	Review of participation of representatives of vulnerable groups / representatives of specific target groups in consultative fora and on HATs	HAT reviews completed/ No of consultations with target groups. Implement results of review.		By end 2025
5.6	Continue to use PASS system appropriately and ensure information is kept up to date and relevant. Training needs identified and PASS recording to be standardised across region.	Training needs reviewed. Training programme delivered. PASS recording standardised across region	Galway City Lead/ DHRE/ All Stakeholders	Ongoing Annual review Ongoing
5.7	Compile and submit annual estimate of expenditure for homeless service provision within the timeframes specified by the DHLGH. Ensure the following steps are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders submit all business proposals within the requested timeframe to the lead authority. • The Estimate and new business proposals must be assessed and agreed with WRHMG prior to submission. • All NGOs to be met in advance of submission prior to agreeing their priorities for the coming financial year. • All recoupments to be submitted by the lead authority within the appropriate timeframes. • All recoupments with supporting documentation to be submitted to the lead authority by the appropriate timelines. 	Timeframes set out by DHLGH adhered to.	Galway City Co LAs/NGOs Galway City council LAs/NGOs. Galway City Council LAs	Qtr. 1 each year Qtr. 1 each year Qtr. 1 each year Quarterly
5.8	Participate in all reviews of homeless services as requested including value for money reviews.	Number of reviews undertaken and completed.	DHLGH / LAs/ NGOs.	Ongoing
5.9	Future proof the provision of homeless services by undertaking or commissioning research into homelessness trends and factors affecting homelessness for specific target groups e.g. older people facing NTQs, young people leaving care, Travellers and ethnic minorities.	Research commissioned/ undertaken.	Homeless Management Group/ Regional Consultative Forum/ DHLGH	Ongoing

The Regional Homeless Action Plan 2025 - 2027 is dynamic and will be reviewed and updated regularly in response to the needs of those presenting for homeless services, and in line with national and international best practice in addressing homelessness.

Appendix A

A 1.1 Galway City

The vast majority of support services for those facing homelessness are located in Galway City, the largest urban centre in the West Region. With a population of over 86,000, and a student population of almost 30,000, Galway City is also a popular year-round tourist destination, as well as a centre for pharmaceutical and biomedical industries. These factors combine to explain why rents in the Region are highest in the city, and in areas close to the City within the County area. High levels of demand for housing from all these factors, coupled with a lack of supply of new housing has led to upward pressure on prices and rents, making affordability of housing a key issue contributing to increased levels of homelessness. Between 2016 and 2022, rents rose significantly with the average weekly rent for a home paid to a private landlord in Galway in 2022 being 241 which was a 41% increase on the average rent paid in 2016. (Source: Galway City LECP 2024-2029)

Galway City Council

Staffing comprises an Administrative Officer, Senior Staff Officer and an Assistant Staff Officer. All of the staff in the unit are wholly or partly funded under Section 10. A Tenancy Sustainment Officer and a Social care worker have been recruited due to the complex nature of many homeless presentations in recent years. These roles are critical in the current climate and in attempting to limit the numbers entering homelessness.

The Homeless HAP Placefinder operates the Homeless HAP Service and focuses on securing accommodation under this scheme and identifies available private rented accommodation in the City and County areas for homeless households.

The Homeless Unit is supported by a team of three Social Workers, led by a Senior Social Worker, who each take on specific areas of responsibility within the homelessness field, and are particularly active in relation to collaborative working, and supporting clients with additional social or health needs in addition to their housing need. The Senior Social Worker chairs the Homeless Action Team which is an integral part of the Housing First Initiative in Galway, as well as being the designated Sex Offenders Liaison Officer, (SOLO) while the other two members of the Social Work team works with individuals and families availing of homeless emergency accommodation.

Galway City Council is the lead local authority for the West region. The City Council is responsible for managing funding and PASS reporting arrangements on behalf of the Region and works closely with state agencies and homeless service providers in the provision of services.

Interagency work in Galway City

There is a strong history of interagency work within the City Council area within the field of tackling homelessness. The Council has had a working relationship with two major NGOs with specific expertise and experience in homelessness.

The two main NGOs which have provided homeless services are COPE Galway, and Galway Simon Community. Increasingly they are also supporting projects in conjunction with the other Local Authorities including a number of services across the County, and more recently in the wider Region.

Homeless services and facilities in Galway City Council area.

Abbey House

Abbey House is a facility run by Galway Simon Community which caters for between 14 and 15 individuals and was originally intended as short-term emergency accommodation, but now has individuals staying for longer periods of time due to a lack of appropriate one bed accommodation for them to move on to. It is

planned to build units beside Abbey House to provide an additional 10 units appropriate for older people and individuals with impaired mobility.

Bridge House – COPE Galway

Bridge House is a shared accommodation service provided by COPE Galway as part of the “Towards Independence Project “. It has provided step down accommodation for single men who have been homeless and in residence at the Fairgreen Hostel. It provides a “moving on” transitional opportunity for them, and while there, they have access to supports to prepare them for a greater amount of independent living which provides them with skills and an insight into what is involved in maintaining a future tenancy. Accessing the service is conditional on the client being prepared to engage fully in the process of developing those independent living skills.

Cold Weather Response

The Cold Weather Response (CWR) initiative is funded each year by the DHLGH to provide additional bed nights for rough sleepers during the winter months and can commence from November 1st to end of March the following year. Galway City Council is responsible for sourcing additional bed capacity to provide indoor shelter for the CWR period. Each year, this facility is staffed and managed on behalf of Galway City Council by COPE Galway, which is also the organisation managing a day centre drop in facility used by many rough sleepers.

To meet the demand for a Cold Weather Response for the winter period 2023-2024, Galway City Council secured a lease for a property adapted to provide shared rooms for rough sleepers, with space for meals, from November 2023 through to March 2024. This service is being run by Cope Galway on behalf of the City Council, with a number of bed spaces being allocated to rough sleepers whose centre of interest is in the County area and on a humanitarian basis, to those who are not from Galway. The new facility is providing space for 19 individuals to be accommodated each night, with 3 further bed spaces being provided within Fairgreen Hostel. There is also a contingency for severe weather events when there is a red weather warning pending or in force or when there are sub-zero temperatures for consecutive days.

Community Based Housing Services

For those leaving emergency homelessness accommodation, many may not yet be ready to take on and sustain a permanent tenancy. Transitional housing options are sometimes provided to those in emergency accommodation, to provide an interim solution to their housing needs, while waiting on an appropriate permanent accommodation offer. In Galway City a number of these are provided by the City Council and managed by COPE Galway on their behalf, with COPE providing a range of supports to those in the community-based housing. Galway Simon Community has also been providing 39 beds in Community Based Housing in the City. These properties are usually provided on a licence basis, and allow the residents to gain some experience of the skills and responsibilities needed to become a tenant. They also provide an environment in which those with a continuing need for health or social supports to help them maintain a positive experience of independent living can do so.

Teach Corribe Day Centre, Seamus Quirke Road

Teach Corribe Day Centre is a drop-in Day Centre offering a range of services for individual men and women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including interventions to prevent someone becoming homeless, referral to emergency accommodation and other support agencies, assistance in securing welfare payments and other entitlements, assistance with the housing application process, with searching and applying for jobs, help with accessing training and skill development opportunities and practical life skills and budget support. Regular street outreach visits focus on contacting and signposting people sleeping rough to support services are also operated by COPE Galway from the Day Centre. Working in close cooperation with colleagues in Fairgreen Hostel, staff and volunteers call to identified places in Galway City centre where people are known to sleep rough and link with people, providing information on how to access services and distributing snacks and water. These outreach visits take place both early morning and in evenings after the Day Centre closes its doors. In addition, the outreach team are accompanied by a medical team comprising a General Practitioner (GP) and a Nurse once a week early

morning to check on the health and wellbeing of the rough sleepers and, if necessary, refer on to further medical, psychological or addiction services. This team is provided by Galway Simon Community working in collaboration with COPE's staff and volunteers.

A range of practical supports including access to food, laundry and showering facilities are also available. The Multi-disciplinary health and welfare team for homeless can be accessed at Teach Corrib Day Centre by way of a weekly GP and nursing clinic, a monthly chiropodist clinic, a weekly substance misuse counsellor clinic and access to a member of the mental health as required. The centre is also a social space for users of the service to meet other people and grab a coffee, tea, soup or sandwich.

Table 12: Day Centre Opening Hours and Outreach Team Weekly Schedule 2023

DAY CENTRE			OUTREACH		
			Morning	Evening	
Monday	8.30am	4pm	7-8.30am		Staff onsite until 5pm
Tuesday	8.30am	7pm	7-8.30am	8 - 10pm	Staff onsite until 8pm
Wednesday	8.30am	4pm			Staff onsite until 5pm
Thursday	8.30am	7pm	7-8.30am *	8 - 10pm	Staff onsite until 8pm
Friday	8.30am	7pm		8 - 10pm	Staff onsite until 8pm
Saturday	8.30am	2.30pm	7-8.30am		Staff onsite until 3pm
Sunday	2pm	7pm		8 - 10pm	Staff onsite until 8pm

**also includes morning outreach visits with Medical Team*

Source: COPE Galway Homeless Services April 2024

New Build Day Centre

Plans are well advanced for the building of a new Day Centre on the existing site. This will involve temporarily relocating the existing service while building work goes on. Plans developed by Galway City Council are for a new three storey building which will have a better standard of all of the services currently being provided within the footprint of the building, as well as some bedrooms in the upper storey which can be used for future Cold Weather Response or other temporary emergency accommodation in the future. It is hoped that the construction of the new build centre will be able to commence during 2024 and be completed and open by 2026.

Fairgreen Hostel

Fairgreen Hostel is a Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) hostel for men, run by COPE Galway, catering for up to 26 single men. It is staffed on a 24hour, 7 day a week basis. Each person has a single room with shared facilities. It has been in operation in its current building since 1997. It is intended that clients would be in the hostel on a short-term basis, however due to the shortages of appropriate accommodation and the highly complex level of need of many of the clients, finding appropriate pathways for them to move on into more permanent housing has proved difficult. Typical pathways to accommodation would be for clients with levels of need meaning that they will require ongoing support to move into Community Based Housing with either COPE Galway or Galway Simon Community providing the necessary ongoing support, post tenancy, for those with medium or high levels of need. In the past, some would have been able to move out into HAP supported tenancies, but that is becoming increasingly difficult given the current rent levels in Galway City.

Table 13: Breakdown of clients in Fairgreen Hostel by duration of stay at December 2023

No of clients	Duration of stay in Fairgreen
1	> 2 years
3	1year – 18 months
6	6 - 12 months
16	< 6 months

Source: COPE Galway, December 2023

Family Hubs

There are two Family Hubs located in Galway City. One is Corrib Haven, run by COPE Galway, located in a converted bed and breakfast purchased for use as a short-term facility for ten families. The facility provides accommodation for up to 10 lone parent families, usually with one or two children. Although rooms are ensuite, they may be cramped for families comprising a mother and two children, with all their belongings. There is a reasonable sized kitchen with individual fridges and storage cupboards for each family. There are some communal rooms, an education room, laundry facilities and an outdoor play area for children. Corrib Haven staffing is provided by a Manager, two project workers and four support workers on a 24 hour/ 7 days per week basis.

A second Family Hub, Garraí an tSionnagh, Westside, was provided as part of a national initiative put in place by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage and managed by Peter McVerry Trust. (PMVT). This accommodation comprises a rapid build modular construction providing own door, two and three-bedroom units for families. It was opened in May 2020 and was the first such modular built hub in Ireland. By end of 2023, PMVT had withdrawn from operating this hub and Galway City Council has been in the process of rehousing the remaining families from the hub with support from Galway Simon Community and COPE Galway.

Health and Wellbeing Team

Within Galway Simon, a multidisciplinary team (MDT) health and wellbeing team, funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE) offers access to health supports to various initiatives, and to other organisations involved in delivering homeless services, in the City, and to a lesser extent in the County.

The team comprises a part-time General Practitioner (GP), two nurses and a nurse manager, a psychologist, and a substance misuse service. This team is available, to support other teams of key workers and project workers within Simon who are supporting clients across the various medium and higher-level support projects they run, including those in Community Based Housing, and in hostels and emergency accommodation. With the exception of the GP, who is part time and has his own practice on other days, staff can visit clients or facilities at times arranged with support staff. Nurses will also call in to check whether clients are taking medication, and following up with post hospital routines if concerns are raised about their ability to do so independently. The team provides specific support to the Housing First initiative.

Once a week, members of the team participate in a street outreach visit to rough sleepers accompanied by outreach or day centre staff from COPE visit early morning. The GP attends these and will try and engage with rough sleepers to see if they are at any specific health risk, need to attend hospital or visit their own GP or register with one if they do not have one. Once the team has visited rough sleepers in the City Centre and other sites, they relocate to the Day Centre and carry out medical clinics there. There is huge demand for these clinics as many clients are not registered with GPs or have other health issues. Galway Simon also offers a community detox programme. The Slí Nua community mental health team (CMHT) for homelessness in Galway City is also co-located with this team at premises provided through Galway Simon Community. This facilitates greater interagency collaboration, and referral supports directly to homeless clients throughout the City.

Osterley Lodge Women's Hostel

Osterley Lodge is a hostel for single adult women run by COPE Galway on a 24 hour 7 day per week basis. It caters for up to 12 single women. It's services are always oversubscribed due to factors including family and relationship breakdown, mental health and addiction. Staffing comprises 5.35 whole time equivalent (WTE) project workers with 1.2 WTE support workers providing cleaning and cooking services. Core staffing costs are mainly funded through Section 39 from HSE through its annual support for Homeless Services. Upkeep of the building and ancillary workers are funded through Section 10.

Resettlement Team Supports

Both Galway Simon and COPE Galway have Resettlement Teams which offer supports to those moving from various types of temporary accommodation – Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA), Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) into tenancies. The Resettlement Teams provide ongoing post-tenancy support to those who need it, and this is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Social Integration Service – Galway Simon

A social integration service has been developed by Galway Simon Community in recognition of the impact that having been homeless will often have on severing networks and isolating clients who may have been estranged from family or moved out of their community. For those who have experienced other traumas such as having been in addiction or faced mental health difficulties, there may be additional barriers to reintegrating into society, and to making connections in a new community even when their immediate homelessness situation is apparently solved. It is now recognised that providing support to those in tenancies. to sustain them in those tenancies, is a critical aspect of reducing the likelihood of re-entering into homelessness. Some of this support comes from external agencies, but the provision of a key worker support provides a lynchpin to support referral for referral to those supports. However, in the longer term, the key to settling them successfully into a tenancy involves the tenants developing networks for support within the local community if possible and in accessing opportunities for social contact, uptake of formal or informal education or work, or engaging in sports, leisure or other social activities.

In 2022, Galway Simon invested in developing their Social Integration Service to provide such support. This service co-ordinates the delivery of a wide range of social and creative activities as well as pathways to training, further education and training. It also provides a “Learning Studio” giving clients access to online training courses. It has also provided access to an allotment space for clients to enjoy access to outdoor growing space which has proven therapeutic benefits as well as offering opportunities to grow some of their own food.

Table 14: Galway Simon Community Social Integration Service Adults accessing services in 2022

156 people engaged with the allotment
130 people engaged with the Galway Simon Choir
41 people engaged with one-to-one coaching sessions
26 people participated in work experience sessions
5 people secured part-time employment
2 people secured Community Employment Scheme employment
3 people secured a QQI Level 3/4/5 qualification

Source: Galway Simon Community Annual Impact Report 2022

Threshold Galway

Threshold provides an advice and information service, including legal advice, supporting those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Threshold can be contacted by anyone whose landlord informs them of a notice to evict them or serve them with a notice of termination of tenancy due to an intention to sell the property, renovate or hand it to a family member. Threshold will check to see whether this is a legal and valid notice to quit, and also negotiate with a landlord on a tenant’s behalf and see if it can prevent the termination or find an alternative tenancy. It can also help with liaising with the relevant local authority, and provides a service to Tenancy Sustainment staff within the Homeless Units, by following up for them if they are querying whether a notice to quit is a valid one.

Youth Homelessness Services

A number of services specifically dedicated to the provision of services for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have been in operation in Galway over a number of years. Many young people leaving care, lack the support that most young people leaving home can avail of from family, to assist them with the transition into adulthood and independence. While some will have support from foster parents as they transition, others rely on what supports can be put in place by Túsła. They may also have suffered trauma in their childhood or youth, had more than one placement in care, or grown up away from friends or familiar communities. This trauma and destabilising life experience, adds to the difficulties many young people encounter in adapting to adulthood and an already challenging environment of finding somewhere to live. Becoming a tenant, with all the responsibilities that involves, and managing independently is a further challenge.

Túsła, the Child and Family Agency, is now the responsible body for children in care and offers an aftercare service to support these young people when they “age out” of the system. Prior to a young person in care turning 18, a key worker is appointed by Túsła to provide support to them in identifying their options on leaving care. They also have access to an aftercare support package which the young person can spend themselves, or it can be used to provide specific supports, such as Counselling if needed. Túsła also works with other agencies who may be supporting these young people as they turn 18.

In addition to young people leaving care, an increasing number of young people from all walks of life and situations are now becoming homeless and looking for support from service providers, as well as from Local Authorities. COPE Galway has noted increasing numbers in this age group availing of services in its Teach Corribe day centre. The Galway Simon Community has also had to increase its capacity, in terms of both staffing and management of properties, in its dedicated Youth Homelessness Service, to meet increasing demand. Staff from Galway Simon and No4 Youth Organisation have noted that there seem to be more young people sleeping in cars as they arrive in Galway City to work or study but fail to find affordable accommodation. A difficulty they may encounter in registering for support with homeless

services is that they are not identified as having a “centre of interest” within the City, as they may not have established a strong enough connection, either through work, family or previous residence to qualify as homeless in the City area, and may have a stronger connection with a previous place of residence. There are also increasing numbers of young people from the Traveller Community who have formed new families at a young age and are registering as homeless, some of whom may not yet be 18 years of age and therefore not able to go on the housing list.

Services providing Youth Homeless Supports in Galway

Galway Simon Youth Homeless Team

Galway Simon Youth Homelessness Service was established in 2016 in partnership with Galway City Council and Túsla to support young adults experiencing, and at risk of, homelessness, many of whom are care leavers. The service works with young adults, aged 18-25, to prevent them from falling into a cycle of homelessness. A team of specialist workers supports these young adults to develop their life skills so that they can live independently. Galway Simon has also developed dedicated residential accommodation including four apartments and two houses which provide a home for 12 young adults. In addition, Galway Simon Community partners with Galway City Council and Túsla to acquire properties under the Túsla Capital Acquisition Scheme (CAS) to provide tenancies which are ringfenced for young adults leaving care. All young adults supported by the Galway Simon youth team, have access to regular key worker staff support as well as access to a multidisciplinary team (MDT) which includes health, mental health, psychological and addiction supports. The team also supports young people to move from transitional services to live independently and continues to provide outreach supports as needed. In 2022, the Youth and Prevention Service support service supported 59 households. Across all Galway Simon services, 102 young adult households were supported, including 5 families. Young people from Galway Simon participated in the research leading to the preparation of the National Youth Homelessness Strategy, and a small number of young people living in transitional housing also took part in a consultation for the preparation of the new West Region plan. The Galway Simon Youth Homelessness team are now providing a service in Galway County and new services are planned for both Mayo and Roscommon under the new plan.

No 4 Youth Service

No4 Youth Service is a long-established youth service based in Galway City Centre, which was previously the Galway Diocesan Youth Service. It operates from a base on Augustine Street, from where it offers a five day per week drop-in service for young adults, with a particular focus on those with vulnerabilities, including young homeless, or those at risk of homelessness. The project is core funded through the Education and Training Board, and a team of youth workers provide supports such as life skills, supports for accessing education and training, provision of tents and hygiene products, access to showers and to meals and a kitchen in which to develop cooking and nutrition skills. The team also includes a careers guidance specialist who assists young people with all aspect of returning to education, or identifying appropriate options for accessing education, training or job opportunities. Young adults who are rough sleeping, or who are the Day Centre service run by COPE Galway, are often referred to No4, to access supports more appropriate to meeting the needs of young adult homeless, and to enable them opportunities to mix with their peers, while still accessing homelessness supports.

A 1.2 Galway County

Galway County Council covers an area which is extensive in its geography, being rural towards the periphery of the County, with denser population in towns and suburbs close to Galway City. The County area is bisected by the City with Lough Corrib providing a natural barrier, dividing the east and west of the County. It serves a population of 179,048 (Census 2016) many of whom work in the City, and the price and availability of housing in the County area is strongly influenced by its proximity to strong urban economy.

The staffing in Homeless Services in Galway County Council comprises an Administrative Officer, a Tenancy Sustainment Officer, a HAP Placefinder, a Homeless Support Officer and a Homeless Support Worker, supported by a Clerical Officer. The posts of Tenancy Sustainment Officer, HAP Placefinder and Homeless Support Officer are 90% funded under Section 10. The Homeless team work with the Social

Work team, consisting of a Senior Social Worker and two Social Workers. Social Work roles are funded through the Traveller Accommodation Unit.

Referrals for homeless services relevant to Galway County Council are received via telephone or via presentation at the Housing Section public counter. Referrals are also received through the Homelessness Non-Governmental Organisations – COPE Galway and Galway Simon Community. On completion of a homeless assessment, those deemed homeless are referred and progressed to the appropriate service. It is not a requirement to be an eligible housing applicant to access homeless services, however on assessment a person is requested to submit a completed housing application with supporting documentation to establish a local connection and their most appropriate housing solution.

There has been a significant increase in the presentation of people requesting access to the Council's homeless services. There are an increasing number of presentations of individuals and families with complex needs who require additional and multi-agency supports. For example, in one month a total of 25 presentations were made (September 2023) of which 19 were singles, 1 was a couple, and 6 were families.

The range of issues identified across the 25 homeless presentations were:

- 8 with mental health issues
- 4 with Notices to Quit (NTQ)
- 3 with alcohol issues
- 2 involuntary sharing
- 1 with drug issues
- 1 with mental and physical health issues
- 1 released from prison with high level mental/physical/ other issues
- 1 referred to City Council
- 1 with no right to reside
- 1 with no local connection (linked in to Dublin homeless services)
- 1 refused to finish assessment
- 1 unknown – withheld information

This profile of presentations illustrates the complexity of the presentations, and highlights some of the challenges in sourcing emergency accommodation and the support needs they have, as well as the challenges many will face in accessing longer term sustainable tenancies.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

Similar to Galway City, it is increasingly difficult to source affordable properties within the HAP limits. The additional top-up in HAP supports for those who are deemed homeless, including a deposit and a month's advance rent has offered some opportunities for affordable private rented properties in the County.

Table 15: Figures for Referrals to Homeless HAP in Galway County

Year	No of Referrals to Homeless HAP
2023 (10 month figure)	141
2022	104
2021	122
2020	113
2019	133

Source: HAP Placefinder, Galway County Council, 12th October 2023

In 2023 there were 169 active HAP homeless tenancies in the year 2023 ie number of tenancies created. The number of HAP homeless assisted was 269 from 1st November 2018 to 12th October 2023. 100 clients have exited HAP.

The maximum monthly rent limit for housing assistance under HAP in County Galway is set at €330 for one adult in shared accommodation and €360 for a couple in shared accommodation. For one adult it is €575, for a couple it is €650, for one adult or a couple with one child it is €850, and for those with 2 children it is €875 and for 3 children €900. DHLGH Circular 29/22 dated July 2022 sets out when it is appropriate to use the 20% or 35% additional HAP payment under Homeless HAP. These limits are making it increasingly difficult to source appropriate accommodation within affordability thresholds for anyone within the County.

Private Emergency Accommodation in County Galway

COPE Galway sources, arranges and pays for all the Private Emergency Accommodation provided for homeless clients of both the City and the County. Funds are then recouped from the relevant Local Authority. Some 90% of these costs are recouped from Galway City Council as the Regional Lead for Homeless Services and claimed from Section 10 funding, while the remaining 10% must be funded by Galway County Council.

There is limited availability of Private Emergency Accommodation operators providing homeless accommodation. COPE Galway actively seeks PEA operators to provide homeless accommodation in response to growing housing need. Services are regularly at capacity due to limited availability. Galway County Council has developed both short and medium-term housing solutions for homeless clients, as an alternative to Private Emergency and Supported Temporary Accommodation.

Community Based Housing in County Galway

Galway County Council has provided five Community Based Houses (CBH) in the County in which 11 homeless clients with varying support needs are housed in a shared environment in the short to medium term. It is intended to expand this service to meet the needs of an additional 14 individuals in seven houses, located in larger towns throughout the County. This will reduce the demand for Private Emergency and Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA). Through their Regional Support Team Galway Simon provides key worker and project worker supports to the tenants housed in the CBH to support them in becoming ready for long term tenancies when such housing becomes available.

Community Based Housing for Youth

Galway County Council has allocated four houses for the provision of supported shared housing for young people between the ages of 18 and 25. Intensive supports are provided by Galway Simon Community who liaises with external agencies to ensure support needs of the young people are met. All occupants are licensees of Galway Simon Community and are required to engage with an allocated key worker who supports them in the meaningful use of time, such as education, training, employment, sourcing longer term housing options etc. The houses are located in Loughrea, Tuam and Athenry. Three of the houses accommodate 2 males with the other property allocated to 2 females. It is intended to provide a maximum of two additional houses in the coming years in other areas of the County, as needs are identified in the Community.

Some of the occupants may have left care and may still be involved with the TUSLA after-care team. It is not a pre-requisite for a person to avail of after-care services to access the Youth Based Housing Scheme.

Only two young persons are placed in each house, as evidence suggests that the dynamic that can develop in a house with three people sharing can lead to conflict, or one person feeling excluded. This housing initiative is proving to be very successful, preventing young people from entering mainstream homeless services and minimising the impact of homelessness on them.

Community Based Housing for Families

Galway County Council has allocated seven houses to Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) for the provision of supported housing for families in Tuam. The families in question had a long history of failed tenancies, chronic homelessness, poor mental health and have ongoing extensive support needs. The properties are licenced to Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT). There is regular interaction with the families and it is anticipated that these supports will continue in the longer term. There has been a noticeable reduction of anti-social

behaviour within the local community following these housing allocations. It is expected to identify a further three families in this town and to provide them with similar housing supports.

Cuan Mhuire

Cuan Mhuire is a specialist residential addiction service which offers detoxification programmes lasting twelve or more weeks. Clients who are referred or apply for such services must be committed to abstain from their addiction and to fully engage with the supports available and take active part in the programme. Funding is provided annually from Section 10 homeless funding for places for homeless persons with serious addiction problems who are prepared to engage in a residential detox programme and can be referred by the Council or other agencies working with them.

Galway Simon Bridge Resource Centre and Regional Outreach Service

Since 2011, Galway Simon has supported a Resource Centre in Ballinasloe which sought to support rough sleepers, many with addiction and mental health problems, and over the years have been successful in getting many into tenancies. This provided the basis of an outreach service for East Galway, and South

Roscommon, which formed the basis of an expansion to provide a Regional Support Service, which now provides supports to a range of services in all the Counties in the Region, including some Youth Services, Community Based Housing and Housing First support staff. The centre operates as a hub for the services in East and South Galway and Roscommon, as further services are being put in place with new proposals from all the Local Authorities. In 2022, this service provided supports to 196 households including 96 families with 221 children.

Proposals for future development of services for homeless people by Galway County Council

- Expansion of Community Based Housing Scheme - twelve properties in total allocated to the scheme
- Expansion of Youth Housing Scheme – six properties in total allocated to the scheme
- Expansion of Community Based Housing for Families – ten properties in total allocated to the scheme
- Expansion of Housing Led - Family Support Scheme, on successful review of pilot programme
- Development of site in County town to provide co-located Cold Weather Response facility and supported medium term shared accommodation. This accommodation can be converted to own door apartments if deemed appropriate.
- Develop a family hub in a County town to provide supported temporary accommodation to families with complex needs. This facility will prevent families from entering emergency accommodation. It will be developed with particular consideration for accommodating larger families who face additional challenges in accessing rented accommodation.
- Development of Domestic Abuse (DA) refuge and associated medium term housing solution for families exiting Domestic Abuse.

A 1.3 County Mayo

Mayo is a large county located along the Atlantic Coast with a population at the time of the last census (CSO, 2022) of 137,970. Mayo County Council Housing services are operated in seven Area offices across four Municipal Districts (MDs). Applicants for housing services apply to their local office. A Central Housing Office is located in Swinford, which has responsibility for housing policy and is the location of the HAP and RAS units. Any household who is homeless, or at risk of homelessness, can present to their local office for Assessment for Homeless Services.

Where a household presents with a Notice of Termination this is sent to the Tenancy Sustainment Officer (TSO) for validation. Where a notice is deemed to be invalid the TSO engages with the landlord and provides a template copy of the correct notice required. Where appropriate, the household is advised to engage with Threshold. Every effort is made to prevent households entering emergency accommodation. utilising measures such as Tenant in Situ, Homeless HAP Placefinder support, AHB nomination or LA allocation. To ensure a consistent approach to the operation of homeless services an internal policy document is in place which is currently under review.

The Homeless Support Team which comprises the Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Homeless HAP Placefinder Officer, two Social Workers, Traveller Accommodation Officer and Traveller Accommodation Liaison Officer meet once a month to review all households in emergency accommodation and to identify exit routes to a secure tenancy.

A Homeless Action Team (HAT) was established in 2021. Core members are a Tenancy Sustainment Officer (TSO), Homeless HAP Placefinder Officer, two Mayo County Council Social Workers, Traveller Accommodation Officer, HSE Mental Health Social Worker, Galway Simon Housing First Manager, Galway Simon Support Worker and Sophia Housing TSO. An invitation to attend is extended to relevant agencies and Mayo County Council Housing personnel depending on the cases scheduled for consideration. The HAT meets monthly to discuss both referrals and active Housing First cases, referrals to the recently introduced (Q4 2023) Sophia Housing Tenancy Support Service and any possible solutions for referrals which do not fall within the criteria for either service.

Mayo has seen its homeless numbers increase consistently during the period of the last Action Plan. In common with many more rural counties there is a hidden homeless problem where people may be living in inappropriate dwellings such as unfit cottages or mobile homes having never applied to go on the housing list or registering their housing need. However, as is the pattern nationwide, increasing levels of rent and lack of housing supply, have meant that more people are approaching the Council for help, so that numbers presenting as homeless have increased over the years, particularly since 2021.

Table 16: Mayo County Council Homeless Presentations

Year	Number of Homeless Presentations
2020	100
2021	95
2022	134
2023	187

Source: Mayo County Council Homeless Unit, December 2023

Mayo County Council utilises a number of own stock properties for short term emergency accommodation. This mechanism prevents several households from going into Private Emergency Accommodation and allows them to have their own front door accommodation, short term, on a Temporary Emergency Accommodation Agreement. This has worked well, although as demand for places has risen, households have sometimes ended up in these “short life” properties for longer periods than intended. The Council had thirteen temporary emergency accommodation houses in use at the end of 2023.

In December 2023 Mayo County Council entered a five-year agreement with Charlestown Lodge for the provision of emergency accommodation. Charlestown Lodge has capacity for up to 100 bedspaces with shared cooking, laundry and living accommodation, initially taking up 15 bedspaces with a view to fully utilising during 2024.

Mayo County Council utilises 7 x 1 bed apartments in Castlebar for the provision of Private Emergency Accommodation. For vulnerable presentations boarding out accommodation is utilised in Castlebar town. If deemed necessary B&B/Hotel accommodation is provided. This can be in the form of the provision of an accommodation voucher whereby the household self-sources accommodation or the Assessing Officer secures a reservation. This is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Mayo Women’s Support Service provides support to women and children who have been victims of domestic violence and works closely with Mayo County Council in respect of accommodation needs – on an emergency and/or long-term basis.

There was a steady growth in the number of families entering private emergency accommodation (PEA) during 2023. A similar upward trend was also seen in respect of individuals in PEA.

Table 17: Number of Single Adults and Families using PEA in Mayo in 2023

Month	Number of families	Number of individuals	Total number of adults
January	10 (15 adults and 31 children)	38	53
February	7 (11 adults and 19 children)	35	46
March	8 (13 adults 24 children)	44	57
April	9 (13 adults and 25 children)	47	60
May	9 (12 adults and 25 children)	45	57
June	10 (13 adults and 27 children)	50	63
July	13 (17 adults and 32 children)	57	74
August	13 (19 adults and 36 children)	56	75
September	14 (22 adults and 39 children)	55	77
October	16 (26 adults and 41 children)	61	87
November	15 (23 adults and 37 children)	64	87
December	15 (25 adults and 41 children)	67	92

Source: Mayo County Council Homeless Unit, December 2023

The “My Home” Project

Work has commenced on a small-scale rollout of the My Home project which was piloted and then mainstreamed previously in Galway County and Roscommon. The project team is led by a Community Mental Health team member and 6 potential tenants to be supported on the programme have been shortlisted by Mental Health and Galway Simon.

Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland provides tenancies in Mayo for young people who have left care, as part of their aftercare programme, as well as other supports. Túsla also employs two after care workers who work with young people, once they have aged out of the care system.

Linking in with Community Supports

Mayo County Council hosts the Mayo Homeless Forum on a quarterly basis. The forum is made up of representatives from the HSE, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), Mayo Women’s Support Service, IASIO Resettlement Service, SVP, Galway Simon, An Garda Síochána, Department of Social Protection, Threshold and Mayo Mental Health Association. This forum provides an opportunity to further strengthen the links with agencies who can extend information, advice and support to households experiencing a housing crisis. There are eight Family Resource Centres in Mayo and five Citizens Information Offices with whom strong links have been established.

Future developments in County Mayo

Mayo County Council is exploring two new projects for 2024. A Business Plan has been submitted for consideration in respect of the introduction of Community Based Housing and a Youth Homeless Service. 2023 has seen an increase in the number of individuals not quite ready to enter a sustainable tenancy and equally not meeting the Housing First criteria or candidates for outreach support. To bridge this gap the provision of Community Based Housing is being explored.

During 2023 there was also a sharp increase in the number of Youth Homeless Presentations as highlighted in Table 18.

Table 18: Number of Youth Homeless Aged 18–25 supported in PEA in Mayo in 2023

Month	Number
January	6
February	6
March	11
April	13
May	13
June	12
July	13
August	12
September	11
October	13
November	14
December	15

Source: Mayo County Council Homeless Unit, December 2023

Mayo County Council Homeless Support Team visited Galway City to look at the operation of both Community Based Housing (CBH) and Galway Simon Community’s Youth Homeless Service and is proposing similar initiatives for Mayo for the period of the new plan.

Using the PASS system

All presentations and emergency accommodation bookings are recorded on PASS. Staff have availed of all training provided to date and will welcome any additional training made available.

A 1.4 County Roscommon

County Roscommon has the smallest population within the West Region, with a population of 69,995 according to the 2022 census.

The Homelessness team within Roscommon County Council comprises a Housing Officer, a HAP Placefinder, and a part-time Assistant Staff Officer. The HAP Placefinder plays a crucial role but due to rent fluctuations and the nationally set cap on levels for Roscommon, certain areas within the County are not feasible for HAP, even with supplemental support from the 35% discretion and the Homeless HAP.

Unlike Galway City, Roscommon lacks hostels and other dedicated services for the homeless. The incidence of homeless presentations in County Roscommon has seen a substantial increase, posing a threat to the emergency accommodation resources utilised by the Council, mainly consisting of hotels and B&Bs. Recently, some providers who previously offered accommodation have withdrawn, citing factors such as accommodating Ukrainian Refugees. In addition, the offer of a home for a Ukrainian is financially more attractive, leading to a reduction in available “moving on” accommodation. The overall surge in homelessness nationwide has prompted neighbouring Counties to vie for available beds in B&Bs in Roscommon, causing shortages and necessitating doubling up in accommodation in some cases, contrary to the previous norm of single room provision.

In 2019 there were only 62 homeless presentations in the entire year. In 2022, there were 66 presentations, of which 44 were deemed to be homeless, and 39 of these were accommodated in emergency accommodation – in PEA. Up to November 2023, there were 132 presentations as homeless in Roscommon of which 106 were individuals and 26 were families.

Support services for homeless individuals within the Roscommon community are limited. Sometimes, the Homeless Unit staff will refer families who are at risk of homelessness, or who are in precarious situations to the Family Resource Centre.

Many of those in entrenched homelessness have been discharged from the Mental Health Services, particularly from Roscommon Psychiatric Services. Despite efforts to emphasise the importance of advance notice and the preparation of a discharge plan, these do not consistently occur. Sometimes notification can come the same day as discharge. Instances have occurred where the Homelessness Unit was approached by hospital staff wishing to discharge four potentially homeless patients in a single day.

In terms of other resources, the Council has one Traveller/ Housing Liaison Officer who is currently dealing with tenants and Travellers and has little or no available capacity to deal with the homeless as well. The Council lacks the support of a Social Worker or Tenancy Sustainment Officer which places further strain on the services needed to address homelessness. The combination of these factors highlights the pressing need for comprehensive and sustained efforts and adequately funded supports to address the growing homelessness crisis in Roscommon.

Homeless HAP / HAP Placefinder

The HAP Placefinder plays an important role in trying to prevent people entering homelessness, or in assisting people stuck in PEA, but only so long as appropriate properties can be identified, even with the important support of an officer working on behalf of a client. Roscommon has used some of the Rental Assistance Scheme (RAS) type lease allocations for those existing homelessness. A total of 15 RAS type leases were provided in 2022 and 21 in 2023.

Limitations to HAP support arise from the amount of subsidy provided and the income levels of eligible clients when compared with growing rental prices in the County and the prevailing HAP limits for the County. Under HAP rules, the maximum HAP ceiling for properties within the Roscommon County area is 550 for a family with 3 children. If the house was in County Galway, the HAP ceiling would be up to 900 for the same size family. The Council works with landlords who have properties on both sides of the border and this has highlighted the influence of proximity to Galway and Westmeath on rental prices.

The discretionary additional payment of up to 35% available through HAP and HHAP creates a significant disparity in affordability between areas. For a single person in Roscommon, the HAP is €360 euros while it is much higher in Galway at €575 euros. While the possibility of using shared HAP can be an option, there are currently no appropriate properties available. As a result, there is an urgent need to increase the HAP rate for Roscommon. The DHLGH is reviewing the level of discretionary additional payment, which presently stands at a max of 35% outside of Dublin. However, concerns persist about potential unintended consequences, such as further rent increases and the remaining disparity across county boundaries. RAS is used for prevention solutions particularly for those at risk of, or already experiencing, homelessness. By the end of November 2023, the breakdown in homelessness figures for Roscommon was: 18 households in Hotels and B&Bs of whom 14 were singles and 4 were families.

Youth Homelessness

An after care Social Worker from Túsla contacts the Council when a young person in care is approaching the age of 18, in need of support and at risk of homelessness. There is no other specific youth homelessness support, or dedicated youth homeless provision in the County.

Targets in Housing for All

As part of Housing for All, the Council has a target to complete 250 new Social Housing units over 5 years. The primary obstacle concerning tenancy sustainment has been the overall shortage of properties, particularly those with one or two bedrooms. Additionally, families face challenges due to the insufficient availability of larger houses appropriate for families with more children. Consequently, families with greater numbers of children are experiencing prolonged stays in emergency homeless accommodation as a result of this housing shortage. The Council's capital team are mindful of these figures and tenancy requirements when developing new housing schemes and mixed types.

The My Home pilot programme supported by Galway Simon and Community Healthcare West (CHW) with assistance from Mental Health Services (MHS) was also successfully implemented in Roscommon.

Additional Challenges in Addressing Homelessness in Roscommon

One challenge is the uncertainty surrounding the uncertainty in obtaining timely and accessible support from some aspects of Health Services, particularly in the area of community mental health services. While HAT convenes monthly, regular collaboration is essential to ensure the participation of all relevant areas of the HSE to ensure HAT tenancies are successful.

Housing Led Services

A successful example of an outcome is of a single tenant in a housing led service is currently receiving support from psychiatric services while residing in the community. Overall, there is a recognised need to enhance relationships with the psychiatric hospital, specifically with the psychiatrist and staff. The issue of not receiving a discharge protocol has been raised, and there is a growing concern about strained relationships with the psychiatric team due to the hospital's internal pressure to discharge individuals with very short notice given to the homeless unit. This lack of pre-planning often results in the absence of support arrangements for the client being discharged into the community.

Housing staff perceive that the absence of a dedicated "professional" Social Worker function within the LA or supporting the Homeless Team diminishes effective negotiations with other services, especially concerning clients with mental health or behavioural issues. This weakness hinders the Council's ability to advocate for, and address, the unique needs of clients in these situations.

Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA)

The increasing challenge of securing bed spaces for PEA has led to more adults being presented with no option but to go into shared rooms, which is less than ideal. The escalating pressures on PEA provision in the County indicates a growing need for alternatives, potentially promoting the establishment of a hostel or a comparable solution to reduce reliance solely on PEA. Some individuals utilising homeless services face personal challenges affecting their tenancy retention, making them potential candidates for support as they transition out of homelessness and run the risk of entering a cycle of recurrent homelessness.

Going into the next plan stage, there is a need to explore the options to reduce the dependence on PEA, and to secure options for accommodation which allow for greater levels of tailored wrap around supports for those who need them.

Future Developments for Roscommon

Moving away from PEA accommodation, Roscommon will place an emphasis on the development of emergency accommodation through Local Authority or AHB owned facilities. Roscommon County Council has been actively exploring options for developing a hostel facility to provide supported homeless services within the county. As part of this effort, a suitable property has been identified that could accommodate 10–12 individuals. This facility would be designed to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, ensuring that appropriate supports are in place to promote stability and pathways toward permanent housing.

The proposed facility would also serve as a Cold Weather Response Unit for Roscommon, offering vital shelter and support during periods of severe weather. Recognising the complexity of such an initiative the development of this hostel provision would involve a comprehensive appraisal process, ensuring that the facility is designed with an appropriate level of wrap-around supports, including health, mental health, and social services. This integrated approach aims to address the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness. Should the project prove feasible, it would represent a significant step toward providing essential services and support for vulnerable members of the community.

In the meantime, Roscommon is developing Community Based Housing (CBH) which could be rolled out in the initial period of the upcoming plan, to relieve pressure on private emergency provision and provide pathways out of emergency accommodation for clients who are in need of supports.

Training Needs

Staff Training Needs

The Homeless Unit staff in Roscommon have explored an Induction Training model available in Longford for new tenants, delivered in two two-hour sessions. The team is considering implementing a similar initiative to run concurrently with future tenancies for homeless clients.

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Appendix C Consultations with Key Stakeholders

Galway City Council

Elizabeth Fanning	Director of Housing
Helena Martyn	A/Senior Executive Officer
Derek Healy	A/Administrative Officer
Cliona Clancy	Homelessness Officer/ Disability & Social Inclusion Officer
Catherine Fahy	Senior Social Worker
Louise Conneally	Social Worker
Peter Barnett	Social Worker
Alan Woods	HAP Placefinder
Kay Monaghan	Homeless Assessment Officer
Carmel Manfredi	Tenancy Sustainment Officer

Galway County Council

Michael Owens	Director of Housing
Nuala Heffernan	Administrative Officer
Deirdre O Connor	Tenancy Sustainment Officer
Mary Hughes	HAP Placefinder

Mayo County Council

Julie Ryan	Tenancy Sustainment Officer
Eileen Corcoran	A/Traveller Accommodation Officer
Derek Walsh	A/Traveller Accommodation Officer
Mary Bergin	A/HAP Placefinder
Orla Hughes	Social Worker
Bernie Rowland	Social Worker

Roscommon County Council

Fiona Ni Chuinn	Director of Housing
Ann McHugh	Senior Executive Officer
Patricia Cassidy	Administrative Officer
Carla Lennon	HAP Placefinder
Jackie Devine	Homelessness Support Officer
Siobhan Mullen	Homeless Assessment Officer

Housing Agency

Rob Louth	Housing First National Co-ordinator
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Health Service Executive

Michael Keady	Social Inclusion Manager CHO2
Thelma Birrane	Regional Traveller Health Co-ordinator
Gillian Crowe	Senior Social Worker, Team Co-ordinator Slí Nua Mental Health Team

Galway Simon Community

Karen Golden	Chief Executive Officer
Karen Feeney	Homeless Services Co-ordinator
Andrea Fitzgerald	Regional Co-ordinator Services Manager
Aisling O'Hara	Service Manager for Youth Services
Dr Kieran Coleman	GP Homeless Health and Wellbeing Team
Sarah McDonagh	Nurse Homeless Health and Wellbeing Team
5 Young homeless people in Galway Simon Youth Housing	

COPE Galway

Martin O'Connor	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Sinead Carey	Homeless Services Coordinator
Paul Walsh	Day Centre Manager/ Team Leader

Sandra Lyngmo Support Worker
Leah Ryan Outreach and day centre worker
Ruth Morvan PEA Coordinator
Colette Mangan Community Based Housing Coordinator

No4 Youth Services Galway

Natalie Coen Youth Work Coordinator
Joan O'Mahoney Youth Worker
Delia Careers Guidance p/time
Ellen Youth Worker
Emma Youth and Family Studies Student on placement

Túsla

Morgan Mee Children and Youth Services Committee Coordinator, Galway
Deirdre McHugh Aftercare Manager, Galway

Threshold Galway

Graham Higgins Regional Manager
Emma Keane Advice Services

Department of Social Protection

Vincent Gormley

Traveller Organisations

Margaret O'Riada Galway Traveller Support Group
David Collins Western Traveller and Intercultural Development