

DRAFT West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022



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GLOSSARY

AHB: Associated Housing Body/Bodies

HAP: Housing Assistance Payment

HAT: Homeless Action Team

HSE: Health Service Executive

LTL: Long term Lease Scheme

PASS: Pathway Accommodation and Support System

PEA: Private Emergency Accommodation (may include hotels, B&Bs and other residential facilities)

RAS: Rental Accommodation Scheme

RPZ: Rent Pressure Zones

STA: Supported Temporary Accommodation (including hostels with onsite professional support)

TEA: Temporary Emergency Accommodation (emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) support)

WHRAP: West Regional Homelessness Action Plan

WEST REGION HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2020 – 2022

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Regional Action Plan (WRHAP) 2020 - 2022 has been developed with regard to the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as it relates to homelessness. The Plan set out a strategic framework to address the prevention and reduction of homelessness; provision of services and assistance to those who are homeless; and the promotion of effective co-ordination by homeless service authorities and providers in the administrative areas of Galway City and Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. Responsible bodies for the delivery of actions in the Plan are the local authorities, the HSE, and relevant voluntary bodies operating in the west region. Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness prioritises the acceleration and expansion of housing across all tenures. This delivery of social units will progress in parallel to the actions outlined in this Plan, together with the provision of additional homeless facilities.

As with other regions in the country, since 2016 there has been a significant increase in the numbers of adults and children presenting as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the West Region. However, the West Region has seen the greatest increase in those presenting as homeless - a 153% increase in adult homelessness from March 2016 to August 2019 - 139 adults homeless in March 2016 and increasing to 351 adults homeless in August 2019(Section 2).

A clear message from analysis of homelessness in the region is that the West Region continues to face significant challenges in the delivery of homeless services due to the sheer volume and diversity of people seeking accommodation supports. Key findings from this analysis include:

- Since 2016 the West Region has experienced a 153% increase in the number of adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation. This is the highest increase of any region in the country.
- When examining a county breakdown of homelessness within the region, County Galway (including Galway City and County Councils) has the greatest number of adults (311 adults in August 2019) in emergency accommodation, with Galway City Council having the greatest number of homeless accessing accommodation.
- When accessing emergency accommodation, more people in the West Region access Private Emergency Accommodation than other forms of emergency accommodation.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of families accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation, with 17 families homeless in March of 2016, compared to 83 families in August 2019. This represents an increase of 388%.
- The number of children (referred to as dependents in Government reports) accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation, has increased from 47 children in March 2016 to 200 children in August 2019. This is an increase of 326%.
- When broken down by gender there has been a significant increase in the number of females accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation, growing from 41 in March 2016 to 141 in August 2019 (an increase of 244%).
- By age, the greatest percentage increases can be seen among 18 – 24 year olds and 65+ year olds accessing emergency accommodation.

- Rough sleeping is a concerning issue in Galway City with an average of 30 people sleeping rough at any one time.
- There is a noticeable increase in the number of Travellers experiencing homelessness in Galway City. Figures in May 2019 showed that there were approximately 68 adult travellers and 104 traveller children in homeless services – this number includes 34 families.
- The introduction of the Homeless HAP Placefinder service in 2018, which operates in both Galway City and County, has proven successful particularly in relation to the prevention of homelessness with over 200 families accommodated to date in Galway City and County.

With this in mind, the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) provides a framework for service delivery built around five core themes (further details on themes and associated actions can be viewed in Section 8). Themes include:

1. **Prevention:** Provide, consolidate and continue to develop early intervention practices for people at risk of homelessness
2. **Support:** Support the **needs of rough sleepers** to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the West Region
3. **Protection:** Protect people experiencing homelessness through emergency accommodation provision and targeted support
4. **Progression:** Identify and facilitate pathways to long-term housing solutions, providing the necessary support for homeless people
5. **Governance:** Ensure **appropriate governance** and funding structures are in place for the delivery of homeless services.

The West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022 aims to put a strategic framework in place for the delivery of homeless services at a regional level. Local Action Plans for each county area in the West Region will subsequently be developed in line with the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020-2022. Each of these Local Action Plans will outline detailed specific actions relevant to addressing homelessness at county level.

2. INTRODUCTION

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 (2020 – 2022).

The actions stated throughout this plan are developed in accordance with, *Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009*. Specifically the Act requires that a Homelessness Action Plan outline the measures proposed to be undertaken to address homelessness in the administrative area (in this instance the West Region) by the Housing Authorities, the HSE, and any other bodies providing services to address homelessness operational in the region. Taking direction from *Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2009 Act*, the plan adheres to the following objectives:

- 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
- the provision of assistance under Section 10(b)(i), as necessary, to persons who were formerly homeless
- the promotion of effective coordination of activities proposed to be undertaken by the bodies referred to in this subsection for the purposes of addressing homelessness in the administrative area or areas concerned.

The Action Plan will be in place from 2020 – 2022. As per *Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009*, three years represents the minimum duration of a Regional Homelessness Action Plan and therefore the duration of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan will be a minimum of three years but may be longer depending on the implementation timeline and the needs of the West Region. The previous Action Plan was adopted in 2013 and was extended to the current period pending the adoption of the new West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022).

Central to the Action Plan are issues relating to housing supply in the West Region. National Policy stemming from the *Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* (July 2016) provides guiding principles that support the increased delivery of homes across all tenures. Statutory provisions regarding homelessness are provided under *Section 2* and *Section 10* of the *Housing Act 1988* and subsequent provisions in the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009*. These, and subsequent provisions, frame the actions inherent in this plan.

Taken together, a person shall be regarded by a Housing Authority as homeless if:

- a. there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the Authority, the person, together with any other person(s) who normally resides with the person or who might be expected to reside with the person, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or,
- b. the person is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because the person has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and the person is, in the opinion of the Authority, unable to provide accommodation from their own resources.

Section 10 of the 1988 Housing Act states:

- a. A Housing Authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section:
 - a. make arrangement, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of Section 5 for the provision by that body of accommodation for a homeless person,
 - b. Provide a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority consider appropriate, or
 - c. Rent accommodation, arrange lodgings or contribute to the cost of such accommodation or lodgings for the homeless person.

(10) A Housing Authority may, while making enquiries to enable them to determine if a person is homeless, exercise the powers provided for in subsection 1.

The Housing Authority must form the requisite opinion, following an assessment of need, on whether the criterion as set out in Section 2 is fulfilled. The decision to provide emergency accommodation support(s) rests with the Housing Authority and is made within the context of available resources and competing demands on those resources.

2.1 Structure of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022:

For the purpose of this document, the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022 is divided into a number of sections. These include:

3. Extent of Homelessness in the Region: This section draws on reports produced by the PASS system providing a detailed analysis on the extent of homelessness in the West Region since 2016. The section explores the number of adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation and is examined in relation to other regions, age, gender, and type of accommodation accessed. The section also includes an analysis on the number of families and dependents in emergency accommodation in the region.

4. Policy Context: This section provides a brief summary of key policy and strategy documents relating to housing and homelessness at national, regional and local scale.

5. Regional Structure: Discussion in this section outlines the structures operational within the West Region to oversee, develop, maintain, consolidate and implement homelessness services (e.g. West Region Homelessness Management Forum). Included also is an analysis of funding and expenditure in the region between 2016 and 2019.

6. Background to Services in the West Region: This section points toward the outcomes of the previous plan, while highlighting some key challenges faced by the West Region in relation to housing supply. Discussion also provides details of the on-going work by each Local Authority; furthermore the role of Homeless Action Teams (or similar local arrangement) and the PASS system are also outlined in relation to the West Region.

7. Performance Indicators: The statutory obligation to report and measure the extent of homelessness is outlined in this section, providing details on what will be measured moving forward. The text here also points towards on-going developments in the reporting process, with an updated PASS reporting system due for release and implementation in 2020.

8. Themes and Actions for the West Region: The Actions of the plan are outlined in relation to five key themes. These include:

1. Prevention: Provide, consolidate and continue to develop early intervention practices for people at risk of homelessness
2. Support: Support the needs of rough sleepers to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the West Region
3. Protection: Protect people experiencing homelessness through emergency accommodation provision and targeted support
4. Progression: Identify and facilitate pathways to long-term housing solutions, providing the necessary support for homeless people
5. Governance: Ensure appropriate governance and funding structures are in place

9. Evaluation: This section outlines a blueprint for evaluating the plan's actions throughout the duration of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022).

10. Statutory Consultation, Revocation and Period of the Plan: Included here are the dates that each Local Authority adopt the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022), while revoking the previous plan.

3. EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE WEST REGION

Since 2016 there has been a significant increase in the numbers of people presenting as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the West Region. All figures referred to in this section have been taken from published reports produced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Further details can be seen here: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/housing>. The figures included below refer to adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation unless stated otherwise. Monthly reports have been published since January 2016 and provide a cross-regional snapshot of homelessness in Ireland. Regional snapshots are then examined by age, gender and type of accommodation accessed (see details below). These reports, produced through the current PASS system, also highlight the number of families accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation and details the number of children accessing emergency accommodation in any given month. For the purpose of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) data from the month of March in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 is used for comparative purposes. In comparing data from the region in this way, the extent of homelessness in the West is clear, demonstrating significant increases across multiple demographic cohorts year-on-year. At the time of writing the most up to date data-set stems from August 2019. As a result, this section calculates percentage increases based on March 2016 and August 2019 data, though the tables collate data from across the four year reporting period to date.

Adult Homelessness

The increase in the total number of adults accessing homelessness services through emergency accommodation in the West is not unique to the region. Every other region in Ireland has experienced increases in the numbers of people becoming homeless since 2016. Details are presented in Table 1. However, when compared to other regions, the West Region has experienced the greatest percentage increase in adults accessing homelessness services.

Table 1. Percentage Increase in Adult Homelessness by Region

Year / Region	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	August 2019	% Increase by Region
West	139	199	280	348	351	153%
North-East	73	113	60	173	179	145%
South-West	239	349	402	534	583	144%
Midlands	55	83	95	116	98	78%
Mid-East	202	226	319	283	327	62%
Dublin	2750	3299	4107	4315	4312	57%
Mid-West	212	318	361	347	323	52%
North-West	40	41	59	55	51	28%
South-East	259	281	352	313	266	3%

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

Table 2. outlines the percentage increase in adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation by county in the West Region since 2016. It is important to acknowledge that the extent of homelessness varies considerably by county within the region. Further to this, in reporting

by county, the Table 2 figures combine those reported by Galway City Council and Galway County Council. Since March 2016 there has been a 153% increase in the number of people accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation in the West Region.

Table 2. Total Adults Accessing Emergency Accommodation by County in the West Region

Year / County	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	August 2019	% Increase by County
Galway	127	185	259	309	311	145%
Mayo	5	6	21	32	33	560%
Roscommon	7	8	0	7	7	0%
Total	139	199	280	348	351	153%
Total Percentage Increase in West Region 153%						

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

Homelessness is a complex and multi-faceted societal issue with multiple contributing factors including (but not limited to):

- Failure to secure accommodation following Notice to Quit
- Substance misuse
- Mental health challenges
- Family breakdown
- Prison release
- Domestic violence.

It is important to note that the issues listed above are not mutually exclusive and a person or household may experience a number of underlying reasons that have resulted in their homelessness.

Types of Emergency Accommodation Accessed

Figures relating to the types of emergency accommodation accessed by service users are presented in Table 3. As can be seen there has been a move from Supported Temporary Accommodation being the main form of homeless accommodation in 2016. This was prior to the increase in homelessness experienced nationwide. The significant increases in presentations since 2016 is reflected in the table below which shows the demand for Private Emergency accommodation in the West Region has grown from 39 in March 2016 to 299 in August 2019. This is as opposed to an increase from 104 people in Supported Temporary Accommodation in March 2016 to 127 in August 2019.

Table 3. Percentage Increase in Adults Accessing Emergency Accommodation Type since 2016

	PEA ¹	STA ²	TEA ³	Other
March 2016	39	104	0	0
March 2017	70	115	22	5
March 2018	127	126	26	4
March 2019	215	127	0	6
August 2019	299	122	0	0
% Increase	487%	17%	-	-

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

Reflecting policy developments at a national level, the West Region is committed to a housing-led approach to homelessness. This approach is characterised by two elements; the first is the need for tenancy sustainment supports, crucial in supporting service users to maintain their tenancies and (sometimes) break the cycle of homelessness. The second element is a recognition of the importance of interagency wrap around supporting services. This is important particularly in the case of those living with mental health and/or substance misuse issues.

Families Experiencing Homelessness

Similar to other regions in Ireland, there has also been a significant rise in the number of families accessing homeless services, from 17 families in March 2016 to 83 families in March 2019. This represents a considerable shift in the West Region, where in the past homeless services were predominantly accessed by the single individual. The increasing numbers of families accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Percentage Increase in Families Accessing Homelessness Services (West Region)

	Total Families	Total Adults	(of which) Single Parent Families	Total Dependents
March 2016	17	22	12	47
March 2017	21	28	14	55
March 2018	82	125	39	218
March 2019	85	117	53	213
August 2019	83	121	45	200
% Increase	388%	450%	275%	326%

This rise continues to be a residual effect of recession and the subsequent housing crisis. It reflects a stagnant increase in housing supply, coupled with a market where rental costs (in parts of the West Region at least) continue increase significantly despite Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) legislation (in Galway City and County in particular). Compounding this issue further is a vibrant tourism industry where

¹ Private Emergency Accommodation – Hotel and B&B accommodation

² Supported Temporary Accommodation – Hostel and Hub accommodation

³ Temporary Emergency Accommodation – Non-Supported accommodation(e.g. hostel)

there is significant housing stock tied up with Airbnb and other short term letting agencies. As a result there have been increasing numbers of families presenting to Local Authorities as homeless mainly due to losing private rented accommodation or due to home repossession. Further to this trauma, families have faced great difficulties in securing alternative accommodation. As ever, the loss of home is sometimes underpinned by further life-challenges, and family requests to access emergency accommodation can also be as a result of domestic violence.

Traveller Homelessness

In the West Region, there has also been a significant increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness from the Traveller Community. This is mainly as a result of Traveller families losing private rental accommodation (due to Landlords selling properties or withdrawing properties from the rental market), and being unable to source alternative accommodation.

In Galway City in Q.3 2019 there were approximately 68 adult Travellers and 104 Traveller children in homeless services – this included 34 Traveller Families. All individuals and families within homeless services have a key worker who assists them with move on options.

Complimentary to actions to address Traveller homelessness in the West Region Homelessness Action Plan, is the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) being implemented in each Local Authority to meet the existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers in their administrative areas. Each Local Authority in the region adopted a five year TAP by Q.3 2019 for the period 2019 – 2024.

Female Homelessness

Traditionally, homelessness in Ireland has been associated with the single and often adult male. Given the diversity of experiences discussed already it is clear that this is certainly not the case in contemporary Ireland. In particular, there has been a marked increase in the number of individual adult women accessing homeless services in the West Region. A gender breakdown is outlined in Table 5, where there has been a 244% increase in the number of women accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation since 2016 (from 41 females in March 2016 to 141 in August 2019).

Table 5. Percentage Increase in Adults Accessing Homeless Services by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
March 2016	98	41	139
March 2017	133	66	199
March 2018	169	111	280
March 2019	206	142	348
August 2019	210	141	351
% Increase	114%	244%	153%

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

Homelessness by Age Cohort

There have also been changes in relation to the age cohorts accessing homelessness services in the Region, with increases associated with each age cohort. This necessitates an Action Plan that is

sensitive to the diverse needs of the community which it serves. Of particular note here, despite significant increases across all cohorts, are increases in the 18 – 24 cohort and those adults 65 and above accessing emergency accommodation homelessness services. These details are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Percentage Increase in Adults Accessing Homelessness Services by Age Cohort

	18 – 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65+	Total Adults
March 2016	10	75	50	4	139
March 2017	31	96	70	2	199
March 2018	42	155	73	10	280
March 2019	47	190	99	12	348
August 2019	49	195	95	12	351
% Increase	390%	160%	90%	200%	153%

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

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping predominantly occurs in Galway City and is addressed by Galway City and County Homeless Services. An estimated 30 people were identified as consistently or periodically sleeping rough in Galway City during the month of October 2019. On average six people per night were recorded by COPE Galway’s Fairgreen Hostel as having been provided with bedding at night time when sleeping rough; a further five people were recorded as also known to be rough sleeping in Galway City in the six month period between May and October 2019. A weekly early morning Street Outreach initiative by COPE Galway in the Galway City centre area, encountered between 5 - 13 people sleeping rough each week. In Q.4 2019 this initiative was further enhanced by the addition of a Specialist General Practitioner and Nurse for Homeless who will be focusing on health interventions for rough sleepers.

These figures reflect a steady increase in the numbers sleeping rough over the period since mid-2017 when street homelessness became much more visible in Galway City. The Cold Weather Response for Galway City, which focuses on providing additional emergency accommodation beds for people sleeping rough during the winter period, will run for the fourteenth consecutive winter in 2019-20. Galway City Council fund and facilitate the provision of these additional beds, c. 34 for the winter of 2019/20, with COPE Galway operating and delivering the service. During the winter period of 2018-19 a total of 199 individuals, both men and women, were accommodated and supported through this Cold Weather Response, with a further 38 people also engaged through the project.

A shortage of available emergency bed spaces, as a result of many remaining in emergency accommodation for extended periods of time (due to a shortage of move-on housing and accommodation and/or the unsuitability of hostel or shared living spaces), are among the contributing factors to the growth in numbers of people sleeping rough in Galway City. Other factors include

migrants travelling to Galway City, destitute as a result of being without an income source and/or being ineligible for social welfare supports. Also there is a cohort of rough sleepers living with addiction and/or subsistence misuse and/or poor mental health.

Other Types of Homelessness

There are, of course, limits to the data included above. The data is taken from the *PASS* system, and reported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. It reports the number of people accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation and does not capture the prevention work that is on-going. It also does not capture those who are considered the hidden homeless (including people living in squats, couch-surfers and those staying with parents/friends). The figures also exclude rough sleepers. Furthermore, there are groups that face significant challenges in relation to securing suitable housing. For example, people living with a disability are affected as it is often difficult to source suitable alternative accommodation to meet the needs of the service user. Each Local Authority has a Housing and Disability Steering Group with a Strategic Plan for housing persons living with disabilities. There are also challenges housing people who are exiting direct provision, institutional care facilities and prison. It is also important to note that there are a number of service users who remain unwilling to engage with services or who may have breached tenancy conditions and conditions for use of services; though limited in number, this results in continued homelessness, despite agencies' best efforts and attempted interventions.

Conclusion

The varying degrees of prominence of homelessness experiences in the West Region provides a challenging context for the development of the current Action Plan. As a result, the plan is, and subsequent actions are, sensitive to local contexts and mindful to the fact that some actions will be more relevant to certain Local Authorities than others. Furthermore, the plan also considers the current (and changing) policy context. Taken together these elements have informed the development of key themes and actions for the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022.

Central to the Action Plan is a commitment to homelessness prevention in the West Region. Despite significant increases in the numbers of people experiencing homelessness, work continues to prevent emergency accommodation placements in the first instance. This has involved the development and consolidation of systems, protocols and good working relationships with a range of stakeholders, and is particularly important in the prevention of homelessness among priority groups (e.g. those over 65; those living with disability; or those exiting Direct Provision to mention but three examples).

Regardless of the work undertaken to date, the percentage increase in the number of adults accessing homeless services through emergency accommodation, as in Table 3, clearly demonstrates that it has not been possible to prevent homelessness in the West Region. The provision of emergency accommodation has become a necessary intervention and there is a clear need to ensure sufficient availability of quality emergency accommodation across the various models of provision. This includes provision for general supply, to interventions tailored specifically for the diverse homeless communities and experiences, sensitive to case needs. This guiding principle is in-keeping with the National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) for Homeless Services in Ireland.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

The West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) is informed by a number of key policy documents. The guiding principles of these documents, past and present, drive the associated Actions.

Key policies include:

a. *Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2016)*

Rebuilding Ireland was conceived as a means of accelerating the delivery of housing supply in Ireland to dramatically increase the number of homes nationwide. Central to the plan is a commitment to address the needs of homeless people and families currently accessing emergency accommodation through the increased provision of social housing, the utilisation of vacant homes and improvements to the rental sector. The plan is future-focused, suggesting a range of measures to ensure stability in the housing sector moving forward.

The plan is built around five pillars:

- *Pillar 1 Address homelessness:* Provide early solutions to address the unacceptable level of families in emergency accommodation; deliver inter-agency supports for people who are currently homeless, with a particular emphasis on minimising the incidence of rough sleeping, and enhance State supports to keep people in their own homes.
- *Pillar 2 Accelerate social housing:* Increase the level and speed of delivery of social housing and other State-supported housing.
- *Pillar 3 Build more homes:* Increase the output of private housing to meet demand at affordable prices.
- *Pillar 4 Improve the rental sector:* Address the obstacles to greater private rented sector delivery, to improve the supply of units at affordable rents.
- *Pillar 5 Utilise existing stock:* Ensure that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible - focusing on measures to use vacant stock to renew urban and rural areas

b. *Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2021*

The National Implementation Plan for Housing First 2018 – 2021 underpins the Government's commitment to provide permanent and lasting solutions to rough sleeping and long-term homelessness in Ireland. Key to Housing First is providing direct access to long-term housing and then supporting the person in their home with intensive housing and health supports. Through the policy's explicit focus on addressing homelessness, this implementation plan responds to a number of Pillars of the *Rebuilding Ireland* document. Core principles of the Housing First Approach include:

1. Immediate Access to Housing without Preconditions
2. Choice and Control for Service Users
3. Separation of Housing and Treatment
4. Recovery Orientation
5. Harm Reduction
6. Assertive Engagement without Coercion

7. Person-Centred Planning
8. Flexible Support for as long as is required

c. *Implementation of the 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 the services the State provides to individuals and families experiencing homelessness are well organised, coordinated, integrated and focused on moving people out of homelessness into sustainable housing solutions as quickly as possible. The Framework will ensure greater consistency in the national response to homelessness. All organisations in receipt of Section 10 funding will be required to implement the NQSF. The National Quality Standards Framework for homeless services strives to inform service users as to what they can expect from homeless services, in addition to assisting service providers to ensure they are clear about their responsibilities to deliver safe and effective services that ultimately result in the prevention and/or reduction of time spent in homeless services. There are 8 themes in the NQSF, the first four focus on the provision of person centred services which are safe and effective, the latter four focus on the organisational capability and capacity to deliver high quality services. The NQSF contains both qualitative and quantitative elements. Each Local Authority is responsible for implementing the NQSF structures in their region.

d. *Residential Tenancies Board Legislation (January 2017)*

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 evident increase in costs in private rented accommodation and capping such increases to a maximum of 4% per annum. To date, in the West Region, there have been a number of RPZ identified. These include: Galway City Council; Galway City East; Galway City West; Athenry-Oranmore Galway County and Gort-Kinvara Galway County. This legislation aims to provide greater security for tenants and provides the capacity to penalise those operating counter to the RPZ rent levels. This legislation is revised and updated periodically, the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) aims to engage with any such changes during the course of the Action Plan.

e. *Policy and Procedural Guidance for Housing Authorities in relation to Assisting Victims of Domestic Violence with Emergency and Long-Term Accommodation Needs (January 2017)*

Circular Housing 2/17 dated January 2017 provides guidance for Housing Authorities to ensure effectiveness and consistency across responses to assist victims of domestic violence. These guidelines provide a summary of good practice highlighting procedural pathways to be operational within the Region and within the Local Authority. The policy points towards organisational responsibility of key stakeholders and advocates for effective partnerships between statutory agencies and organisations involved locally in the delivery of domestic violence services.

f. *Action Plan to Address Homelessness (December 2014)*

In December 2014 a summit was hosted by the then Minister responsible for homelessness, to reaffirm the Government's commitment to ending involuntary homelessness by the end of 2016. The plan focused on actions which constituted an immediate response to the issue of rough sleeping (in Dublin in particular) and secondly actions to tackle the more systemic issues classified under three central categories of a housing-led approach; these include: Prevention, Accommodation and Supports.

g. *Traveller Accommodation Programme*

Under the provision of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, Local Authorities are required to prepare and adopt a five year Traveller Accommodation Programme to meet the existing and projected needs of Travellers in its administrative area. Under Section 10 of the Act, the Minister directed that the most recent programme expired on June 30th 2019 and the new programme will cover a five-year period. This new Programme will run until June 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.

Other relevant housing policies include:

- ***West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2013 – 2016:*** This Plan is the current regional framework for service provision in the West. This Plan was extended and will be revoked upon the adoption of the Action Plan outlined in this document.
- ***Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness (2014):*** This statement emphasises a housing-led approach which is about accessing permanent housing as the primary response to all forms of homelessness.
- ***Homeless Policy Statement (2013):*** Published in February 2013 this statement makes a commitment to ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by implementing a housing-led approach. This approach recognises that long-term secure housing is the best outcome for people affected by homelessness and advocates for a move away from expensive emergency or shelter type accommodation.
- ***The Way Home (2008 – 2013):*** This Strategy addressed adult homelessness in Ireland between 2008 and 2013. The policy marks an important departure in Government policy on homelessness. It set out a five year vision that was underpinned by a detailed programme of action. These actions incorporated 3 core objectives; these included: eliminating long-term occupation of emergency homeless facilities; eliminating the need to sleep rough; and preventing the occurrence of homelessness as far as possible.

Relevant Policy on Health:

h. *National Drugs Strategy: Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025*

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery sets out the Government's strategy to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Ireland up to 2025. The Strategy identifies a set of key actions

to be delivered between 2017 and 2020 and provides an opportunity for the development of further actions from 2021 to 2025 to address needs that may emerge later in the lifetime of the plan. The following goals detailed in the document include:

GOAL 1: Promote and protect health and well-being

GOAL 2: Minimise the harms caused by the 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

With regards to homelessness, the importance of homeless services and substance misuse services working together in a collaborative way is highlighted under GOAL 2, as is the need to improve the range of problem substance use services and rehabilitation supports for people with high support needs who are homeless, together with the availability of drug and alcohol, mental health and community integration services.

i. A Vision for Change (Report from the Expert Group on Mental Health) 2006

A Vision for Change is a strategy document which sets out the direction for Mental Health Services in Ireland. It describes a framework for building and fostering positive mental health across the entire community and for providing accessible, community-based specialist services for people with mental illness. Homelessness is referenced extensively in the report, along with the risks associated with mental health which can result in or contribute to homelessness.

j. Connecting for Life 2015 - 2020

Connecting for Life is Ireland's National Strategy to reduce suicide (2015-2020). The development of the Strategy was a collaborative and inclusive process.

Strategy goals include:

- Better understanding of suicidal behaviour
- Supporting communities to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour
- Targeted approaches for those vulnerable to suicide
- Improved access, consistency and integration of services
- Safe and high quality services
- Reduce access to means
- Better data and research

Ireland's homeless communities are identified as a priority group within this strategy.

Connecting for Life Galway, Mayo and Roscommon Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018-2020 sets out to reduce suicide and self-harm in this region. It has been developed in line with the goals, objectives and national actions in *Connecting for Life*.

k. *New Directions: Personal Support Services for Adults with Disabilities (2012 – 2016, in addition to subsequent reviews)*

This programme of actions represented an initial new approach to the delivery of adult day services. The document identifies a range of supports that should be available to people living with disability to enable this group to:

- make choices and plans to support personal goals
- have influence over the decisions which affect their lives
- achieve personal goals and aspirations
- be active, independent members of their community and society.

The focus of ***New Directions*** in any service delivery setting should take account of the capacities of service users and the diversity of their needs.

l. *Time to Move on from Congregating Settings: A Strategy for Community Inclusion (June 2011)*

This Strategy proposed a new model of support in the community. The model envisaged that people living in congregated settings would move to dispersed forms of housing in ordinary communities, provided mainly by Housing Authorities. Those affected would have the same entitlement to mainstream community health and social services as any other citizen, such as GP services, home help and public health nursing services, and access to primary care teams.

5. REGIONAL STRUCTURES & FUNDING

Homeless services in the West Region are provided and facilitated by the Housing Departments of the four Local Authorities: Galway City Council, Galway County Council, Mayo County Council and Roscommon County Council. Each Local Authority is responsible for delivering the goals of the Regional Action Plan, as applicable in their administrative area through the delivery of operational services. Galway City Council, through a Memorandum of Understanding with the other Local Authorities in the West Region, is the designated lead Housing Authority responsible for coordinating the work of the Regional Homelessness Management Group and the Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum (as provided for in Sections 28 and 39 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009). As Lead Local Authority, Galway City Council is also responsible for financial and performance reporting at regional level and to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The coordination role of the Lead Housing Authority does not impinge on any of the statutory functions of the other Housing Authorities in the region, including those with regard to arrangements for the provision of accommodation for persons considered homeless.

West Region Homelessness Management Group

A Management Group of the West Region Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in accordance with State legislation; a central responsibility of this group is over-seeing the preparation of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan. The Management Group make recommendations to relevant statutory bodies in relation to the services required to address homelessness in the West Region. This includes recommendations on funding for such services, the on-going operation of the Homelessness Action Plan and any subsequent blueprint for homelessness services. Members of the Management Group include the Directors of Service for Housing in each Local Authority in the West Region, and a representative from the HSE. The Management Group is chaired by the Director of Service for Housing in Galway City Council.

In particular the Management Group plays a lead role in the following:

- Developing effective, efficient 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
- Maintaining active links with similar groups in neighbouring counties and regions to develop a meaningful regional focus on homelessness
- Assess and make decisions on funding applications for homeless services (as applicable)
- Submit budget proposals for homeless services to the budgetary authorities within the relevant statutory funding agencies

West Region Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum

The West Region Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in 2010 and came to fruition following Ministerial directions issued by the then Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in Circular HU 1/2010 in accordance with the provisions of Sections 38, 39 and 41 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

The role of this Forum is to operate as a consultative mechanism in relation to homelessness in the West Region. This includes the need to consult throughout the preparation and the duration of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022). The central aim of the West Region Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum is to provide information, views, advice or reports in relation to homelessness and to encourage and assess implementation of objectives to address homelessness in both national and regional policies. The Forum places an emphasis on strengthening preventative policies, building relationships, reviewing procedures and improving services to reduce instances of homelessness across the West.

During the 2020 -2022 Plan the West Region Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum will meet on a regular basis to discuss matters relating to homelessness in the region. Topics include (but are not limited to):

- Preparation and monitoring of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan
- Review of homeless presentations across the region
- Housing Assistance Payments Scheme
- Discharge policy from hospitals and prison
- Impact of homelessness on Travellers
- National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services in Ireland
- Regional and agency updates
- Engaging new housing initiatives (especially policy at national level)
- Ensure timely research from the region is conducted and disseminated across stakeholders

Membership of the West Region Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum is drawn from sectors as outlined in Circular HU1/2010. Membership of the West Region Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum includes (but is not limited to) representatives from: Galway City Council; Galway County Council; Roscommon County Council; Mayo Co. Council; Department of Social Protection; Tusla; HSE (Social Inclusion and Mental Health); Cluid; Tuath; Co-operative Ireland; Respond; Castlerea Prison; Probation Services; Western Regional Drugs Taskforce; Brothers of Charity Services; Galway Simon; Cope Galway; Threshold; Teach Mhuire; St. Vincent De Paul; Cuan Mhuire; No. 4 Youth Services; and Mayo Women's Support Service.

Homeless Services Funding

As the lead Local Authority in the region, Galway City Council has responsibility for finalising the West Region's programme of expenditure on an annual basis. This programme of expenditure is developed in co-operation with the three other Housing Authorities; the regional allocation is delegated to Galway City Council and is disbursed appropriately across the Housing Authorities in the West Region. Funding for Homeless Services comes from the State (under Section 10 and Section 13). Also, on occasion, additional funding is secured through other sources. For example, the Social Reform Fund provides funding towards the implementation of Housing First in Galway City. In addition to the above, funding is provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to support the health and care costs of homeless services in the West Region.

Homeless services expenditure by Local Authorities includes: homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment, and resettlement supports. Emergency Accommodation expenditure includes: private emergency accommodation (PEA) (hotels and Bed and Breakfast accommodation), long-term supported accommodation, day services, and Housing Authority homelessness services provision (including Administration).

The total expenditure by Local Authorities in the West Region for the delivery of homeless services increased from €2,661,001 in 2016 to €5,888,769 in 2019; this is an increase of approximately 121% (see Table 7). The budget provision for 2020 has increased to almost €10m for the region. Within the same period, expenditure on Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) also increased significantly from €636,019 in 2016 to €3,153,355 (see Table 8). At the beginning of 2019 it was estimated that total expenditure on homeless services in the West Region would be €8,320,487 with PEA costs estimated to be €4,590,408. However, it now appears likely that PEA costs for 2019 may exceed this original estimate.

Table 7. Total Expenditure on the Delivery of Homeless Services in West Region 2016 – 2018

Expenditure/Year	2016	2017	2018
Homeless Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment, & Resettlement Services	€981,168	€1,061,051	€1,119,137
Emergency Accommodation	€1,244,228	€2,153,748	€4,151,516
Long – Term Supported Accommodation	€227,133	€251,593	€285,930
Day Services	€103,162	€117,196	€103,162
Housing Authority Homeless Services Provision including Administration	€105,318	€180,000	€229,024
Homeless Services Expenditure Total	€2,661,009	€3,763,587	€5,888,769

Source: Galway City Council, Lead Local Authority - West Region

Table 8. Costs of Private Emergency Accommodation

Expenditure/Year	2016	2017	2018
Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA)⁴	€636,019	€1,312,605	€3,153,355

Source: Galway City Council, Lead Local Authority - West Region

From its Revenue budget each Local Authority in the West Region contributes 10% towards the costs of homeless services, with the remaining 90% being funded by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government. Given the significant rise in expenditure since 2016 the local authority contributions have also increased significantly.

⁴ PEA included in Emergency Costs

In addition to the increasing expenditure outlined in Table 7, PEA costs also significantly increased between 2016 and 2018 (see Table 8). This has resulted in significant increases in the 10% contribution from Galway City Council in particular towards the cost of PEA.

6. BACKGROUND TO SERVICES IN THE WEST REGION

At a national scale, Ireland faces considerable challenges in relation to addressing contemporary homelessness. Taken collectively, the West Region has experienced an unprecedented increase in the numbers of individuals and families presenting as homeless to the Local Authorities (see Section 2 Extent of Homelessness in the Region). The increasing numbers of people presenting as homeless, coupled with a lack of housing supply, has been further compounded by the absence of a coherent building programme over the last 10 years across all sectors. The result has been increasing numbers of people, and in particular families, in the West Region accessing homeless services and remaining homeless for extended periods of time.

A core element of the previous West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2013 – 2016) was the development of working arrangements between Local Authorities and other homeless service providers in the region. In particular these integrated arrangements have been important in addressing the complex and diverse needs of multiple groups of people who present as homeless. This acknowledges the need for sensitivity in recognising that to be homeless is not homogenous, but represents a multitude of experiences across numerous demographics.

Similar to the national context, access to accommodation for people experiencing homelessness through Local Authorities, housing bodies, or the private rental sector, continues to pose difficulties. In the case of the rental sector, there are considerable challenges within the region itself, in addition to differences when considered in relation to other, often more urban, regions in Ireland (e.g. Dublin Region). In addressing homelessness, the service provision sector has also experienced considerable pressure due to a lack of housing supply and increased demand for housing. With rising property values across most of the West Region (especially from 2015 – 2019), more and more landlords are exiting the rental market and this is compounding the shortage of available housing stock for the West Region's homeless communities. Summary information is provided below on activities from each Local Authority in the West Region.

6.1 Galway City Council

Data for Q.3 2019 shows that there were 251 homeless adults in Galway City at this time, of which 146 were male and 105 were female. Within these numbers were 76 families – 34 couples with dependent children and 42 individuals with dependent children. The total number of dependents was 186. Monthly reports on homelessness in the region show that Galway City has the greatest number of homeless in the region.

Galway City Council works closely with various agencies in the city for the provision of homeless services. There is a strong co-ordinated approach across all stakeholders, including COPE Galway, Galway Simon Community, the Health Service Executive, St. Vincent de Paul, Brothers of Charity, Clúid, Respond, Tuath Housing, Corporative Housing Ireland, Threshold, and Cheshire Homes. The Council provides emergency accommodation through private hostels, budget hotels and Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Homeless services in Galway City include the Corrib Haven Family Hub which is a 12 bedroom facility with capacity for 10 -12 families. This facility commenced operation on 27th May 2019. Families residing in the facility have access to a degree of independence currently unavailable to those residing in private emergency accommodation. In this instance the hub provides access to cooking and laundry

facilities, in addition to a play area for children. The focus of the hub is to intensify work with families, who were previously availing of PEA, to develop supportive exit strategies from homelessness as early as possible. Galway City has also been selected as a pilot-site for modular housing, a scheme introduced to meet the needs of homeless families. 15 units are being developed on a site owned by the Council. Peter McVerry Trust will be the service provider managing the facility once operational in early 2020. The units will be a form of emergency accommodation, however the emphasis will be on exit strategies from the outset.

The Service Reform Fund (SRF) Housing First funding is being implemented through an integrated approach by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, Department of Health, Local Authorities, and the Health Service Executive. Funding for a three year Housing First project under the SRF has been approved for Galway City. This project commenced in June 2019. The target group are individuals who are long term homeless and have complex mental health needs. The project is targeted at developing and providing wrap around supports for 30 Housing First tenancies. Health service supports will be provided by the Health Service Executive. Galway Simon Community and Cope Galway will provide tenancy sustainment services. Galway City Council are committed to providing 30 units in the city over the 3 year funding period.

The Homeless HAP Placefinder Service was established in mid-2018 to identify and secure private rented housing through the use of HAP for those who are homeless. Since the commencement of the Homeless Placefinder Service, 153 households have been accommodated in total; 48 in 2018 and 105 between January and October 2019. This figure comprises both those accessing emergency accommodation and households that were prevented from entering homeless emergency services.

A Cold Weather Initiative targeting rough sleepers is operated by COPE Galway and Galway Simon Community in Galway City. The initiative runs over the winter months with the objective of minimising the risk of harm, due to the cold and inclement weather conditions over the winter period. The Cold Weather Initiative also works to identify progression routes out of rough sleeping and homelessness. The service operates on the site of the COPE Galway Day Centre for Homeless on Seamus Quirke Road in Galway City.

Additional facilities are being considered over the lifetime of this plan to accommodate homeless families and single adults including a review of services operating from the site at Seamus Quirke Road.

6.2 Galway County Council

Data for Q.3 shows that there were 55 homeless adults in Galway County at this time, of which 44 were male and 11 were female. Within these numbers were 8 families – 6 couples with dependent children and 2 individuals with dependent children. The total number of dependents was 10.

Galway County Council have explored multiple avenues to prevent persons from entering homelessness. This includes acquiring properties for sale with tenants who are in receipt of housing support through the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) or Long Term Lease Scheme (LTL), and are subject to a notice of termination. This has prevented a number of families entering emergency accommodation. The Homeless Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Placefinder works closely with people who have received a notice of termination to prevent them from becoming homeless by securing HAP supported tenancies in the private rental market. Since the commencement of the

Homeless HAP Placefinder Service in 2018, 52 households have been accommodated; five of these in 2018 and the remaining 47 from January to October 2019. These figures include those households who were accessing emergency accommodation and those that were prevented from entering emergency services.

Galway County Council affords priority to the homeless in the allocation of Local Authority or AHB units. A total of twenty-seven households deemed homeless were offered a permanent tenancy by Galway County Council during 2018. By September 2019, 27 households in the County were offered a permanent tenancy by the Council for 2019.

There are two central resources available in the County: Galway Simon Bridge Resource Centre (Ballinasloe) and Cuan Mhuire (Coolarne, Turloughmore). Galway County Council also avails of Galway City based homeless services including placement and support for families, singles and couples in need of emergency accommodation through PEA via COPE Galway Family Services and Day Centre and the provision of emergency accommodation in COPE Galway's Fairgreen Hostel for men, Osterley Lodge for women and the Cold Weather Response initiative (targeting rough sleepers).

6.3 Mayo County Council

Data for Q.3 shows that there were 33 homeless adults in County Mayo at this time with 15 males and 18 females. Within these numbers were 3 individuals with 11 dependent children.

In Q.3 2019 Mayo County Council had twelve units supporting the needs of the county's homeless community. Further to this, the Council relies largely on Bed & Breakfast and/or hotel accommodation. There are also a number of "boarding out" accommodation options in Castlebar which are used in the short-term to support the needs of elderly and vulnerable clients. The duration of time spent by people accessing homeless services across each accommodation type varies in the county; the average number of nights for an individual in Castlebar availing of homeless services is 45 nights, with 108 nights the average for families. This contrasts with Claremorris where the average for an individual is 3 nights, with 37 nights the average for a family. With regards the challenges faced by the County moving forward those identified include:

- Housing supply – making it difficult to move into secure tenancies, this results in the slow movement out of emergency accommodation.
- There has been a sharp rise in the number of Landlords requesting references and this is a difficult obstacle for people who may not have a rental history.
- Increase in the number of people admitted to hospital who are citing homelessness.
- Large families in need of support – there has been an increase in the number of Traveller families requesting support.
- Service users presenting who have multiple and complex needs (e.g. mental health challenges; substance misuse).
- HAP limits – increasing reliance on RAS/leasing contracts.

Mayo County Council also provides a Tenancy Sustainment Service where support is provided to those at risk of losing their tenancy.

6.4 Roscommon County Council

Data for Q.3 2019 shows that there were 9 homeless adults in County Roscommon at this time, of which 6 were male and 3 were female. This includes two individuals with 6 dependent children.

Homelessness in Roscommon tends to be the result of a temporary crisis and does not involve or result in rough sleeping. The vast majority of applicants on the social housing waiting list reside in private rented accommodation, with smaller numbers living with parents, friends or relations or some similar temporary arrangement. This latter group, together with unsettled single adults, tend to make up the majority of those presenting as homeless. There were 62 presentations by family units in the first six-month period of 2019, this accounted for 74 adults and 29 children (103 people). Most households progress from emergency accommodation to HAP in a relatively short time frame. Private rented HAP properties are still available in most parts of the county, with possible exceptions in Roscommon Town and the Monksland/Athlone area. Emergency accommodation options available in County Roscommon are limited and this limitation represents a significant challenge for the future delivery of services. Emergency accommodation options currently consist of a small but unregulated number of privately run B&Bs, a limited and unreliable supply of hotel B&Bs, and a number of Council houses that are reserved for emergency accommodation. RCC/Housing would also note that additional services and supports (tenancy support services, mental and other health support services provided via NGO's and/or speciality AHBs), which are often necessary if a homeless household is to have a reasonable chance of progressing from homelessness to supported independent living, are not available in the County. This is partly because the numbers requiring these services and supports are relatively small and partly because of the logistical challenges associated with providing such services and supports over a wide geographical area.

With the exception of those in need of the above referenced support services, duration of stay in emergency accommodation is usually less than one week and most homeless social housing applicants find suitable accommodation via the HAP programme. There is no rough sleeping within the county and a high percentage of households presenting as homeless were deemed not to be homeless and did not require emergency accommodation but were assisted in some other manner (preventions). 20 Syrian refugee families were successfully settled in the county in 2018. Support services consisting of a support worker and translator were provided by Roscommon Leader Partnership and funded by the Department of Justice. These integration/inclusion support services continued until Q3 2019.

6.5 Support Structures in the Region

Homeless Action Team (HAT)

A Homeless Action Team (HAT) or similar local structures operate across the Region and provides a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the needs of homeless persons or homeless families and facilitates the proactive interagency case management of homeless households. The service is provided in close partnership with the Local Housing Authorities, HSE, Department of Social Protection, homeless service providers and associated housing bodies. HATs (or similar local arrangement) comprise the local decision-making expertise available to people who are homeless in

the specific locality and includes health, housing, homeless services and associated housing bodies who provide emergency, transitional or long term residential accommodation.

The purpose of the HAT (or similar local arrangement) is as follows:

- To respond to the needs of service users (those in emergency accommodation and those rough sleepers) holistically
- To reduce the duration of stay in emergency accommodation
- To reduce the cyclical nature of homelessness
- To ensure co-operation amongst agencies
- To identify at an early stage if a client has relapsed and put in place appropriate supports

A Homeless Action Team operates in Galway City with similar local arrangements in place in Mayo and Roscommon, all of whom meet periodically. A shared care and case management ethos is central to the success of the HAT (or similar local arrangement) process to ensure the completion of assessments and the implementation of appropriate interventions for service users. The West Region is committed to reviewing the operation of the HAT (or similar local arrangement) so as to further advance this ethos and ensure the necessary support framework is in place.

PASS System

The Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) is the online shared system utilized by every homeless service provider and all Local Authorities in Ireland. The system provides real-time information on homeless presentations and bed occupancy across the regions in Ireland. All of the information recorded on PASS produces the most recent statistics for the number of persons that are considered homeless and are in emergency and/or other homeless accommodation. The system assists in collating key information in terms of presentations to homeless services and service occupancy. The system generates information on the number of people presenting as homeless, in addition to managing access to accommodation.

The information recorded on the PASS system is also used to:

- Improve service delivery
- Monitor the delivery of services
- Coordinate services
- Planning and development of services

Appendix A outlines in summary the range of services that are provided to those who present as homeless, or are considered to be at risk of homelessness, in the West Region. However, it should also be acknowledged that there are services in the Region, relating to mental health, estate management, tenancy sustainment, and youth supports (among many others) that make an important contribution to the prevention of homelessness in the Region. In the context of achieving the objectives in this Plan, it is important that these proven successful services remain in place.

7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to monitor the implementation of this Action Plan. Current national performance indicators provide scope for monthly reporting and measures at regional level. This is included in a monthly release of details for the West Region and is in addition to the provision of data at county level, and quarterly reports from Local Authorities. Work is on-going to update and improve these reporting procedures at a national level, with an updated version of the PASS system is due for implementation in 2020.

Specifically the West Region will collect accurate data on the following:

- New homeless individuals presenting in the West Region and identifying the primary reason for their homelessness
- People sleeping rough and the patterns of rough sleeping
- People in emergency accommodation and the duration of stay in emergency accommodation
- Homeless people presenting repeatedly as homeless and monitoring the reason for presentation
- People moving from emergency homeless accommodation to long term housing options such as Homeless HAP, Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Long-Term Leasing (LTL), Local Authority allocations or an approved housing body allocation.

Since October 2019, Galway City Council as Lead Authority has been requested to provide weekly updates on homeless presentations and exits to the Department.

8. THEMES AND ACTIONS FOR THE WEST REGION

Actions throughout the duration of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) are categorised by the following themes (reflecting similar Regional Action Plans in Ireland, in particular Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and Mid-West Regional Action Plan):

1. *Prevention: Provide, consolidate and continue to develop early intervention practices for people at risk of homelessness*

This theme includes (but is not limited to) direct intervention to prevent presenting families and single individuals becoming homeless and the enhanced statutory interventions and community infrastructures to reduce the risk of people becoming homeless (particularly across identified vulnerable groups).

2. *Support the needs of rough sleepers to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the West Region*

This theme includes the provision of adequate support services to prevent and address the needs of those sleeping rough. It is acknowledged that rough sleeping is more prominent in urban centres.

3. *Protection: Protect people experiencing homelessness through emergency accommodation provision and targeted support*

This theme includes (but is not limited to) the provision of adequate and safe emergency accommodation and the provision of accommodation and support services to vulnerable groups.

4. *Progression: Identify and facilitate pathways to long-term housing solutions, providing the necessary support for homeless people*

This theme includes (but is not limited to) actions linked to the supply of affordable and secure housing, to ensure it meets the needs of the homeless community; in addition to ensuring that the correct supports are in place to facilitate an exit from homelessness.

5. *Ensure appropriate governance and funding structures are in place*

This theme includes (but is not limited to) ensuring that the services used by homeless people are effective in addressing their needs, in addition to ensuring consistency in the provision of information to local services and maintaining a robust system for monitoring and evaluating interventions. Given the changing legislative and budgetary context it is essential that appropriate governance and structures are in place for all stakeholders.

1. Prevention: Provide, consolidate and continue to develop early intervention practices for people at risk of homelessness

This theme includes (but is not limited to) direct intervention to prevent presenting families and single individuals becoming homeless; in addition to the enhanced statutory interventions and community infrastructures to reduce the risk of people becoming homeless (particularly across identified vulnerable groups).

	Action Description	Responsible Body	Timeframe
1.1	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) 	Local Authorities; HSE service providers	Immediate and ongoing
1.2	Seek to ensure adequate funding and resources are available to prevent increasing numbers of families becoming homeless	Local Authorities; Threshold; HSE Service Providers	Immediate and ongoing
1.3	Extend the HAP Placefinder Service as required across the West Region	Local Authorities; HSE service providers	Annual
1.4	Continue to support public awareness of homelessness services, highlighting the variety of services available within the West Region	Local Authorities; HSE service providers	Ongoing
1.5	Advocate at national level for continued improvements in policy and practice	Local Authorities; HSE service providers	Ongoing

2. Support the needs of rough sleepers to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the West Region

This theme includes the provision of adequate support services to prevent and address the needs of those sleeping rough. It is acknowledged that rough sleeping is more prominent in urban centres.

	Action Description	Responsible Body	Timeframe
2.1	Develop (where necessary), consolidate and maintain dedicated team(s) across the West Region to support the needs of rough sleepers	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
2.2	Continue to develop and consolidate processes and measures around the support needs of the region's rough sleepers in both urban and rural areas as necessary	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
2.3	Provide appropriate emergency accommodation types and supports to prevent the need for rough sleeping and where required support the movement of people out of emergency accommodation	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
2.4	Ensure cold weather and severe weather protocols/strategies are in place across the West Region to support emergency accommodation (e.g. hostels) in dealing with greater demand for service during cold weather months and during periods of Orange/Red Weather Alerts are in place	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
2.5	Where applicable implement Housing First to support the needs of rough sleepers and achieve accommodation targets as agreed with the Department	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing

3. Protection: Protect people experiencing homelessness through emergency accommodation provision and targeted support

This theme includes (but is not limited to) the provision of adequate and safe emergency accommodation and the provision of accommodation and support services to vulnerable groups.

	Action Description	Responsible Body	Timeframe
3.1	Continue to maintain and increase an adequate supply of housing options and supports across the West Region with an emphasis on Family Hub accommodation, Housing First approach, and HAP Placefinder support	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
3.2	Continue to adopt a person centred approach to meet the diverse needs of the West Region’s homeless communities, ensuring that progression is in line with the needs of the person and with particular sensitivity to vulnerable groups (for example (but not limited to): people living with disability, people living with dual diagnosis, families)	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	On-going
3.2	Continue, maintain and operate reporting mechanisms (e.g. PASS), to ensure accurate and consistent reporting of data relating to all homelessness in the West Region	Local Authorities, and Service Providers	Ongoing
3.4	Review and reconfigure existing resources within Homeless Services to address the changing needs of homeless communities in the region	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
3.5	Maintain and develop (where necessary) a consistent regional approach and standard for the delivery of homeless services	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing

4. Progression: Identify and facilitate pathways to long-term housing solutions, providing the necessary support for homeless people

This theme includes (but is not limited to) actions linked to the supply of affordable and secure housing, to ensure it meets the needs of the homeless community; in addition to ensuring that the correct supports are in place to facilitate an exit from homelessness.

	Action Description	Responsible Body	Timeframe
4.1	Expand housing stock options in the West Region to cater for a variety of service user needs to ensure individuals and families do not fall into homelessness in line with Rebuilding Ireland targets agreed with each local authority In addition, explore opportunities for diverse tenancy types (e.g. joint-tenancies; own-door options) as appropriate.	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
4.2	Develop the principles of a Housing First approach (in line with national policies), in particular enhancing wrap-around services to prevent people re-entering homelessness	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
4.3	Develop capacity across tenancy sustainment supports to increase the number of people exiting homelessness, including provision of local authority outreach resources	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
4.4	Continue to allocate homes to homeless households in line with the Local Authority strategy (i.e. Schemes of Letting Priorities) and prioritise as appropriate	Local Authorities	Ongoing
4.5	Consolidate and develop (where necessary) interagency supports for Travellers (individuals and families) experiencing and facing homelessness across the Region	Local Authorities	Ongoing
4.6	Maximise effectiveness of HATs (or similar local arrangement) to identify and secure pathways to long-term housing, in particular for vulnerable groups	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing

5. Ensure appropriate governance and funding structures are in place

This theme includes (but is not limited to) ensuring that the services used by homeless people are effective in addressing their needs, in addition to ensuring consistency in the provision of information to local services and maintaining a robust system for monitoring and evaluating of interventions. Given the changing legislative and budgetary context it is essential that appropriate governance and structures are in place for all stakeholders.

	Action Description	Responsible Body	Timeframe
5.1	Initiate and manage timely review processes for homeless service supports (including elements of policy and practice)	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
5.2	Further develop service level agreement process for homeless service delivery	Local Authorities, HSE	Ongoing
5.3	Develop and provide sufficient training opportunities for service providers operating in the West Region	Local Authorities, HSE, AHBS and Service Providers	Ongoing
5.4	Develop improved and consistent capacity to identify those at risk of becoming homeless and provide relevant training where required	Local Authorities; Service Providers	Ongoing
5.5	Continue to use PASS system appropriately and ensure information is kept up to date and relevant	Local Authorities and Service Providers	Ongoing
5.6	Convene West Region Homelessness Fora and other relevant committees as appropriate	Local Authorities; HSE Service providers	Quarterly/Biannual
5.7	Clarify and strengthen governance and committee structures to ensure transparency (e.g. developing (where necessary) and making committee Terms of Reference available for each relevant group)	Local Authorities; HSE Service providers	Ongoing
5.8	Continue to engage with policy development around the National Quality Standards Framework and ensure that the guiding principles (e.g. care and case management protocols) are operational across the West Region	Local Authorities, HSE and Service Providers	Ongoing
5.9	Ensure a Memorandum of Understanding between Local Authorities in the West Region continues to operate effectively	Local Authorities	Ongoing

9. EVALUATION

In developing the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) Local Authorities and associated stakeholders in the sector are aware of the importance of on-going monitoring and evaluation of the actions outlined in the plan. Each Local Authority will develop a subsequent Local Homelessness Implementation Plan; this document will represent a blueprint for the implementation of actions and will be published within 12 weeks of adopting the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022).

Further to this, the following activities are required:

- Each Housing Authority will provide an annual County/City progress report to the lead.
- Lead agencies will be assigned to ensure actions are implemented and annual reports will be submitted to the Management Group on progress achieved. Progress will be measured in relation to the KPIs (see section 7 of this document) outlined in the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022).
- An annual review and planning meeting of the West Region Homelessness Consultative Forum will review the reports submitted, with the means to informing the Regional Homelessness Framework Planning process in the future.
- Implementation mechanisms will need to be agreed locally to ensure participation and consultation with voluntary service providers and key local statutory staff implementing homeless services.
- From time to time independent evaluation of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) will take place.

Local Homelessness Action Plans

In considering the extent of homelessness in the West, the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022 aims to put a strategic framework in place for the delivery of homeless services at a regional level. Local Action Plans for each county area in the West Region will subsequently be developed in line with the West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 -2022. Each of these Local Action Plans will outline detailed specific actions relevant to addressing homelessness at county or city level.

10. STATUTORY CONSULTATION, REVOCATION AND PERIOD OF PLAN

The West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) has been prepared by the West Region Management Group in consultation with the West Region Consultative Forum.

7.1 Revocation and Period of the Plan

On adoption of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022), the previous plan - West Regional Homeless Action Plan 2013 – 2016 - stands revoked. The West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) will remain in place until at least 2022 but can be extended if required in accordance with national policy and legislative guidelines.

7.2 Adoption

The West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022 was adopted by the relevant authorities on the following dates:

- Galway City Council: **TBC**
- Galway County Council: **TBC**
- Mayo County Council: **TBC**
- Roscommon County Council: **TBC**

11. APPENDIX A

11.1 HOMELESS SERVICES IN THE WEST REGION

Galway City			
Emergency Accommodation	Service Provider	Target Group	Capacity
Fairgreen Hostel	COPE Galway	Men	26
Osterley Lodge	COPE Galway	Women	13
Cold Weather Response(Nov. to April)	COPE Galway	Men & Women	23
Family Support Services – Emergency & Transitional Units	COPE Galway	Families	5 Units
Private Emergency Accommodation Placements	COPE Galway	Families, Couples and Single Person Households	Demand Led
Family Hub	COPE Galway	Families	10 - 12 Families
Modular Units, Westside	Peter McVerry Trust	Families	15 Families
Abbey House	Galway Simon	Men	13
Supported Accommodation	Service Provider	Target Group	Capacity
Galway Transitional Community Accommodation	COPE Galway	Men & Women	24
Fr. Griffin Road	Galway Simon	Men High Support	7
The Stables	Galway Simon	Men High Support	6
Knockrea House	Galway Simon	Men High Support	6
Hazel Park	Galway Simon	Women High Support	4
Teach Mhuire, St. Helen's Street, Galway	Cuan Mhuire	Transitional	9
Independent Housing with Floating Support	Galway Simon	Men & Women	15

Resettlement Services	Service Provider	Target Group	Capacity
Resettlement	COPE Galway	Men & Women	60
Resettlement & Community Housing	Galway Simon	Men	36
Community Support	Galway Simon	Men/Women/Families	Floating Support Caseload
Women & Families	Galway Simon	Women & Families	Floating Support Caseload
Youth Service	Galway Simon	Women & Men 18 - 25	Floating Support Caseload
Specialist Services	Service Provider	Target Group	Capacity
Multi-Disciplinary Team	Galway Simon	Men/Women/Families	Floating Support Caseload
Domestic Violence Refuge, Modh Eile House, Forster St.	COPE Galway	Women & Children	9 units
Teach Corrib Day Centre	COPE Galway	Men & Women	Demand Driven
Youth Service/Prevention	No. 4 - Youth Service	Supporting young people under 25	Demand Driven
Tenancy Protection Service	Threshold	Singles, Couples & Families	Demand Driven
Galway County			
Cuan Mhuire, Athenry	Cuan Mhuire	Addiction Recovery	120
Bridge House Resource Centre, Ballinasloe	Galway Simon	Men & Women	Drop-in Centre
Mayo County			
Women's Refuge, Mayo Women Support Services, Castlebar	St. Vincent De Paul	Women & Children	5 units

Roscommon			
Bed & Breakfast	Roscommon County Council	Men & Women	Demand Driven

11.2 HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS

11.2.1 Cope Galway

COPE Galway is a Galway based voluntary organisation that provides services to the most isolated in the community including a refuge for women and children affected by domestic abuse, accommodation for those experiencing homelessness and sustenance and social supports for older people at home.

Fairgreen Hostel

COPE Galway Fairgreen Hostel is a 24-hour emergency accommodation service in Galway City Centre for homeless men. The hostel has 26 single bedrooms. The service provides homeless men with a private bedroom, 3 meals daily and access to showers and laundry services. Each client is assigned a key worker who works with them to identify their individual needs and to support them in setting on a pathway out of homelessness and into appropriate long-term housing, including independent living. Fairgreen Hostel operates to a harm reduction approach in supporting men who are actively misusing alcohol and, or drugs. It also accommodates and support men with mental health challenges. The aim of the services is to provide a peaceful, safe, clean and friendly environment for everyone who lives and works in Fairgreen Hostel. The service responds to the needs of people sleeping rough in Galway City, providing harm minimisation packs (bedding etc.) at night time to those it is not possible to accommodate and works in close cooperation with Teach Corrib Day Centre in responding to the needs of identified rough sleepers.

Osterley Lodge Service

COPE Galway Osterley Lodge is a 24-hour emergency accommodation service in Galway for women who are homeless. The service has 12 bedrooms with the capacity to accommodate up to 12 women at any given time. Once someone is offered a bed in Osterley Lodge, an assessment of need is completed and work to support the person towards securing long-term accommodation and housing commences. Accommodation, meals, laundry facilities and one to one support with a key worker are provided to women in the service. The service strives to provide a safe and friendly environment for the women who stay in Osterley at any given time.

Teach Corrib Day Centre

Teach Corrib 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, information and assistance with the housing application process, assistance with searching and applying for jobs, help with accessing training and skill development opportunities and practical life skills and budget support.

A one/twice weekly early street outreach focused on contacting and signposting people sleeping rough to support services is 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 some information on how to access services and distributing snacks and water.

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.

Family Support Services

COPE Galway Family Support Service works with families in Galway who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This service works with families who are at risk of becoming homeless, families who need information and support in relation housing difficulties that could potentially put them at risk of becoming homeless and families who are homeless and have been assessed and registered as homeless by their local Housing Authority.

The service offers support, advice, information, and interventions to prevent families from becoming homeless. It facilitates the placement of families in various forms of emergency accommodation including private emergency accommodation (B&B/Hotel/Self-Catering tourist accommodation) and in a very limited number of own-door self-contained accommodation units. Support is provided to families to help them move on from homelessness and secure new homes and as a post settlement stage to sustain their tenancies and avoid becoming homeless again.

Corrib Haven Family Hub

The Family Hub is a Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) service for homeless families in Galway City. It commenced operation in Q.2 2019 in a 12 bedroom facility on the west side of Galway City. The accommodation consists of ensuite bedrooms, shared self-catering kitchen facilities with food storage and dining room spaces, laundry facilities and communal spaces including play areas for children. The aim of the service will be to work with families who are homeless while living in STA, supporting them to working towards securing move on independent accommodation.

Transitional Community Accommodation for Singles

(Various addresses in Galway City including **Towards Independence Project**)

Transitional Community Accommodation for single person households is provided for men and women moving on from emergency accommodation who are assessed as requiring supported transitional accommodation in advance of moving to independent living. This is shared accommodation in three and four bedroom houses situated in residential estate setting across Galway City. Support including in the area of life skills development is provided on an in reach basis to each individual.

The 'Towards Independence Project' at Bridge House is the largest of these shared accommodation setting (six spaces). This provides step down accommodation for single men who are homeless moving on from the Fairgreen Hostel. The project is focused on moving people onto independent living with referrals accepted based on a level of motivation and capability to live independently and allocation

of a bed space in the project is conditional on participation in a programme focused on preparation for independent living and the active pursuit of independent accommodation.

Resettlement and Tenancy Support

COPE Galway Resettlement service assists and supports men and women moving from emergency and transitional accommodation from the point they take up accommodation and are resettled in the community. The aim of the work of the resettlement service is to help ensure that people retain their independent accommodation and move out of homelessness. Ongoing tenancy support is provided to those who are assessed as in need to such support to help sustain their tenancies and continued independent living in the community.

Cold Weather Response

The Cold Weather Response is a night time accommodation service operated over the winter months for people who would otherwise sleep rough. The project has operated from porta-cabin units temporarily erected adjacent to Team Corrib Day Centre, operational in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19, with capacity to accommodate up to 23 people each night. The aims of the project are to minimise the risk of harm from inclement weather conditions over the winter period to people who are sleeping rough by providing safe, clean and warm night time accommodation and to support people who are rough sleeping work towards moving out of homelessness. In addition to a bed at night time, those accommodated are also provided with a hot meal each night, access to shower and laundry facilities, access to clothing and other essentials and support to access health and welfare supports.

COPE Galway Domestic Violence Services - Waterside House Refuge & Outreach Service

COPE Galway Domestic Violence Services provide refuge accommodation for women and their children who need a place of safety from domestic abuse, one to one support on an outreach basis to women living in the community who are experiencing domestic abuse and therapeutic and other supports for children impacted by the experience and witnessing of domestic abuse in the home. The service is located at Modh Eile House, Forster St., Galway City and has 9 accommodation units.

Housing First

Galway Simon Community and Cope Galway are contracted to deliver a tenancy sustainment service and a number housing units under the Galway City Housing First Project.

11.2.2. Galway Simon Community

Supported Housing

Supported Housing is for people who have multiple needs, have a history of regular contact with homeless services or require long term support. This service is made up of 3 houses which cater for 19 single men and each house is staffed on a 24-hour basis. Issues of addiction and mental and physical health are dealt with by staff and specialist services.

Temporary Emergency Service

In 2018, Galway Simon Community provided 11 beds as part of the city's Cold Weather Response until April 2018 and as an emergency service from April to December. The Cold Weather Response aims to ensure that Rough Sleepers have a warm bed and a hot meal available to them each night between

the particularly tough months of November to the beginning of April. In addition, this service also actively engages with clients to find move-on accommodation.

Women and Family Service

Women & Family Service provides a dual service of residential housing as well as a Community Support Service working with women and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The women who are accommodated within the residential service have a history of long-term homelessness and multiple needs. In the residential service, staff focus on supporting and empowering clients to manage the issues that caused them to become homeless and to work towards moving on to living independently. This service restructured in early 2018 to expand from the residential Women's Service to also work with women and families in the Community. The residential service is staffed on a 24-hour basis and provides accommodation for 4, while the Community Support team has the capacity to work with up to 25 at any one time.

Youth Service

Youth Service works with young adults, aged 18-25, to prevent them from falling into the cycle of homelessness. Galway Simon Community works with the young person to develop their skills so that they can live independently. In addition to providing Outreach supports, the service also has 4 transitional apartments which provide a home to 8 young people who have access to regular staff support.

Community Housing & Resettlement

This service includes several houses located throughout Galway City which give people the opportunity to work towards living independently in the future. The service provides shared housing as well as individual apartments with access to staff support, based on the needs of those accessing this service. In 2018, this service supported 48 men and women to maintain a lifestyle of greater independence.

Independent Living

Galway Simon has several apartments and houses which provide people with the opportunity to live independently within the community. They are provided to people who require very little to no support to live on their own. These properties are located throughout Galway City and County.

Community Support Service

Community Support Service works with men, women and families to prevent them from becoming homeless. The Community Support team helps people to remain in their own home or to find a new home, and to continue to live as part of their local community. The service works closely with people to provide advice, support and practical assistance. This service also provides ongoing support to those who have successfully moved into their own accommodation in order to prevent them from re-entering homelessness.

Bridge Resource Centre, Ballinasloe

Bridge Resource Centre in Ballinasloe plays a vital role in preventing homelessness in the local community. The centre operates a drop-in service that offers people advice and practical support with a variety of issues including personal challenges, addiction and health issues. The service is available to anyone over the age of 18 who is experiencing homelessness or is at risk of homelessness. This service expanded to include an Outreach Worker in 2017 and delivers a service to those who are at risk of homelessness in East Galway.

Health and Well-Being Team

The Health and Well-being Team provides specialist support to people in areas including physical and mental health, addiction, life skills and access to training, education and employment. The team which comprises of a Registered General Nurse, Community Mental Health Nurse, Substance Misuse Counsellor and a Relapse Prevention Counsellor, provides services to people in all homeless services in Galway. Additionally, we also provide an Occupational Therapy service to our clients.

Housing First

Galway Simon community and Cope Galway are contracted to deliver a tenancy sustainment service and a number of housing units under the Galway City Housing First Project.

11.2.3 Threshold

Advice and Advocacy Service

Threshold has been providing a housing advice and advocacy service for those in housing difficulty in Galway and the surrounding region since 1988. Threshold works with clients who are in danger of homelessness and advocate on their behalf in order to prevent homelessness.

11.2.4 Galway Diocesan Youth Services & Tithe na nÓg

Based in the City Centre, **'No 4 Youth Service'** aims to enhance the quality of young people's lives by providing an effective and holistic response to a wide variety of issues pertaining to young people aged 13 – 25 years. Support is provided in areas including education, physical and mental health, homelessness prevention and employability.

'No 4 Youth Service' provides a safe space for young people to access the support that they need to progress such as:

- Support to work towards individual goals
- Help to find or sustain accommodation
- Access to computer/internet, daily meals and shower and laundry facilities
- Advocacy and accompaniment
- Assistance to complete applications and forms
- A qualified team of counsellors provide counselling to young people aged 15-25 years.
- Careers guidance to assist in making informed decisions and develop skills to enter education, training or employment
- Individual or small group tuition for those who have left or are at risk of leaving education
- Information on any topic of interest or concern

11.2.5 Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The provision of practical support and friendship is at the core of the Society's work. This support is not simply about providing shelter but also about providing people with the appropriate support they need to make a home where they can live fulfilled lives.

Madeira Court, Mill Street, Galway

Madeira Court comprises 18 Apartments for elderly and vulnerable adults. The residents are long term and supported by the recently opened Resource Centre on the same site.

Rendu Court, Merchants Road, Galway

As part of the Safe-Home programme, Rendu Court provides a safe and secure home for the repatriation of elderly Galway emigrants. The project comprises 4 Apartments.

11.2.6 HSE WEST (Galway, Mayo & Roscommon)

Mental Health Services

These services are available in each of the counties and are open to all, especially homeless or marginalized persons.

Community Welfare Services

This service offers liaison between homeless people and the general Community Welfare Service.

Specialist Services

The HSE provides funding to Galway Simon for a Multi-disciplinary Team. This team comprises of 2 nursing posts – a Community Mental Health Nurse and a Registered General Nurse - in addition to a Substance Misuse Counsellor (funded through Regional Drugs Task Force) and Social Worker (Galway City Council).

The West Region Homelessness Action Plan (2020 – 2022) was compiled by Irish Research Council Research for Policy and Society scholar Dr Kathy Reilly. Dr Reilly is a lecturer in Geography at the National University of Ireland Galway. Email: Kathy.reilly@nuigalway.ie

