



Galway  
**Simon**  
Community

# Youth Service

*A preventative service for those at risk of homelessness*

## CONTENTS

<b>Service Concept</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Benefit Analysis</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Added Value</b>	<b>6</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psychology</li><li>• Occupational Therapy</li><li>• Addiction &amp; Relapse Prevention Counselling</li><li>• Community Detox</li><li>• Health Supports</li><li>• Meaningful use of time</li><li>• Access to respite or alternative accommodation</li><li>• Estate Management</li></ul>	
<b>Appendix 2: Back up Supports</b>	<b>8</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On call support</li><li>• Policies &amp; Procedures</li><li>• Health &amp; safety</li><li>• Property Management and Maintenance</li><li>• Human Resources</li><li>• Staff Support</li></ul>	
<b>Appendix 3: How the Service Works</b>	<b>9</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referrals</li><li>• Allocations</li><li>• Support plans</li><li>• Residential</li><li>• Resettlement</li><li>• Tenancy Sustainment</li></ul>	
<b>Appendix 4: Service Overview</b>	<b>11</b>

## Service Concept

Galway Simon Community (GSC) operates a dedicated Youth Service, working with 18-25 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Galway Simon Community have worked in partnership with Galway City Council and Tusla to develop and expand the Service.

The current service, established in late 2016, has the capacity to work with up to 30 clients at any one time, a key feature of which is access to 12 units of accommodation which can be used for those requiring transitional housing supports or respite, as part of their overall support plan. The accommodation is provided in partnership with Galway City Council with staffing costs funded by the Housing Department.

In addition, the project supports young people who are at risk of homelessness with a prevention service, providing them with practical support and assistance to hold on to a tenancy or find private rented accommodation as appropriate. Where young people who have been referred to the Service secure accommodation, either in the Private Rental Market or a Social Housing Tenancy, they are provided with an assertive Tenancy Sustainment Service, for as long as they need it.

Referrals for the Service come from a variety of sources. Most referrals are from Túsla, either from Aftercare, or Social Work. Clients are also referred by Galway City Council, the HSE, Probation Services, Youth Services and Homeless Services. The project was developed in response to concerns about the escalating numbers of young people presenting to Emergency Homeless Services. The project has a mission to minimise the risk of young people requiring Emergency Homeless Accommodation. All the clients of the Youth Service are young people who have suffered multiple disadvantage in their young lives, indeed many have been in the formal care system and have aftercare support. It is also noteworthy that clients of the Service who do not have aftercare support, are often those who grew up in families where there were welfare concerns, and to whom family support was delivered, but after turning 18 they are outside of their family of origin without aftercare supports. These young people can be extremely vulnerable to homelessness, and often have significant difficulties with emotional regulation, have had difficulties completing education, and experience significant challenges building stability in their lives.

The service works with young adults, male and female, aged 18-25 who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness in Galway. The young people with whom the Service works are supported to develop and enhance their skills so that they can live independently and avoid falling into a cycle of homelessness. A key focus of the service is to support young people in accessing education, employment and training opportunities. GSC work closely with the individual to develop a support plan towards their identified goals. The Service works in conjunction with existing community supports to achieve this aim.





### Tui Bhriain

As part of an innovative approach to reducing youth homelessness, Galway Simon Community Youth Service has access to four two-bedroomed apartments (Tui Bhriain) for identified young people. The apartments do not have staff located on site, but support staff link with the individual on a weekly or needs basis.

This type of support enables the individual to live independently, while at the same time having access to support staff if any difficulties arise. All clients accessing Tui Bhriain are required to engage in our Six Level Transition Programme, and engage with their key worker.

The Outcomes for young people who have accessed Tui Bhriain have been positive and the ongoing provision of Tenancy Sustainment Services to all clients resettled has meant young people accessing the Service have avoided Emergency Homelessness. The majority have secured accommodation in the Private Rented Sector. The Service has also accepted referrals from Emergency Services. Young people in Tui Bhriain have also been nominated for long term accommodation available to clients of Galway Simon as part of a Housing Led initiative, particularly where parents had previously been known to Homeless Services.

### Fana Burca

In 2020 the number of accommodation units available to the project increased by 4. The units of accommodation are at Fana Burca, across two properties that were previously managed by Tusla. Tusla have met the capital costs of refurbishing the properties.

### Tusla CAS

Galway Simon Community have partnered with Tusla and Galway City Council to purchase properties under the Tusla CAS Scheme. This programme gives priority to meeting the accommodation needs

of young adults who have been linked with Tusla Aftercare. Three properties have been purchased to date.

The GSC team have responsibility for the running of the service, including the referral process, the development of appropriate living skills and any additional programmes for each young person. Staff are skilled in providing key working support and in preparing the young people for independent living. All GSC services operate from a person centred perspective, and are delivered flexibly to meet the individual needs of our clients. All those accessing our services are supported to be empowered to take their own decisions and direct their own lives and support plans through engagement with our programmes and their key worker.

All at Galway Simon Community value and recognise the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach and foster close working relationships with all those involved in the care and support of our clients. We also implement proactive estate management practices to support the development of our services in the local community. We will carry out maintenance of the property and ensure it is kept to the standards required (reference lease).

## Benefit Analysis

Over the period of Rebuilding Ireland, the numbers of young people becoming homeless increased steadily.

Rationale	Benefit Analysis
Shortage of Accommodation for YP exiting the care system, or presenting to homeless services arising from family breakdown at early adulthood.	The expansion of the service in 2021 increased the potential to offer accommodation to those who need it. A further benefit is that there is an alternative to a more city centre location which can be problematic for some.
Ongoing increases in the numbers of young people presenting as homeless and at risk of becoming entrenched in homelessness.	An expanded Service of bespoke and targeted supports for young people keeping them out emergency homelessness, reduces the risk of long term entrenchment in Homeless Services.
There is an intergenerational element to homelessness, where young people whose parents have been known to adult services, and who have themselves been in care, have greater difficulties engaging with the aftercare pathways.	Since its inception the Youth Service has engaged with a number of young people who meet this criteria and have secured long term housing solutions for them.
Young people who are not formally in the care system prior to the their 18 <sup>th</sup> Birthday, but who are estranged from their families are particularly vulnerable to Homelessness and developing more complex support needs.	Intensive interventions promote and support harm reduction, and access to appropriate mental health and or addiction supports as required by more vulnerable young people.

<p>Young people who leave the care system and decide not to progress to education/ training or employment are not eligible to apply for the higher rate of JSA. However, this group of young people are at a distinct disadvantage within the current climate particularly with regard to PRA in Galway City and County due to competitive rental prices and shortage of accommodation within the rental market.</p>	<p>The expansion of the Service ensures that more young people are supported to engage in some form of education, training and employment thus creating positive relationships with others who are achieving and it breaks the cycle of homelessness and unemployment.</p>
<p>Young people in Homeless Services are more likely to be exposed to and participate in risk taking behaviour including behaviours that puts them at risk of prison, and further compounds the difficulties in finding longer term solutions to their housing need.</p>	<p>Galway Simon Community has a track record of intensive case management with young people who are engaged with the Probation and Prison Services to break the cycle of homelessness and prison and secure optimum longer term outcomes.</p>
<p>Galway Simon Community has demonstrated a capacity to engage effectively and responsively with vulnerable young people, providing appropriate Transitional Accommodation at a critical point in their lives and effectively reducing the risk of long term homelessness.</p>	<p>Tui Bhriain Project has reported on the benefits of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sense of family and community.</li> <li>• YP seeing their progress and achievements.</li> <li>• ‘Corporate parenting’ which includes structure and routine.</li> <li>• Engaging in some form of education, training and employment thus creating positive relationships with others who are achieving.</li> <li>• Support to break the cycle of homelessness and the need to avail of homeless accommodation eg: hostels etc.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 1: Added Value from Galway Simon Community

### Psychology Service

Galway Simon Community employs a Senior Clinical Psychologist who supports the work of the Service, as necessary assessments can be carried out. It is ongoing work to develop a fully trauma informed approach to the work with this client group.

### Occupational Therapy

All those accessing our services can avail of an assessment and individualised programme from our Occupational Therapist to address their needs.

### Substance Use

Galway Simon Community currently employs 2 addiction counsellors. They provide group counselling and supports, as well as one to one sessions to those who wish to address their substance use. They also engage with the WRDATF & HSE to support clients who wish to access residential treatment services.

### Community Detox

Galway Simon Community also operate a Community Detox Service for people with Benzodiazepine Misuse difficulties. This is one of the Services available to clients of the Youth Service who may require support in this area.

### Health Supports

All those accessing our services can also access our RGN and GP clinic which are provided for clients of homeless services. The clinic aims to treat the patient holistically addressing everything from acute medical complaints to advice regarding accommodation to medical card applications. The clinics provide general medical treatment as well as specialised services that are particularly relevant to marginalised patients including:

- Blood borne virus screening
- Naloxone prescribing
- Medical card application assistance
- Wound care
- STI screening
- Dental referral
- Podiatry referral (3 podiatry clinics per month operate within the homeless services)
- Minor surgery
- Flu vaccination
- Hepatitis vaccination
- Contraception

### Meaningful use of time

Galway Simon Community deliver a Social Integration Service that provides a range of activities and learning opportunities for our clients. Young people who are part of the project have access to support to develop skills and abilities as well as identifying socially valorised roles. There is a high success rate supporting young people to access employment, education and training.

### Access to respite or alternative accommodation

Should a young person fall into difficulty or require time away from the youth service GSC have the capacity to provide respite in one of our alternative services. We provide this in order to ensure, as much as possible, that clients will not have to access mainstream emergency homeless services.

### Estate Management

Issues arising in relation to neighbour complaints or anti social behaviour are dealt with by our Housing Services Coordinator, which ensures Housing Support is separate to Keyworking.



## **APPENDIX 2: Back Up Supports**

### **On Call Support**

There is access to an on-call service and support from staff working evenings and weekends and from our residential services. This ensures we have immediate back up when issues arise

### **Policies and Procedures**

Galway Simon Community have an employee handbook and full suite of policies and procedures in line with legislation and best practice which underpin and inform our work. Our Quality Manager & Policy Advisory group oversee the development, review and implementation of policies across all our services.

### **Health and Safety Policy**

We have an organisational Safety Statement in place and operate a comprehensive health and safety programme across all services in line with legislative requirements.

### **Property Management and Maintenance Services**

We have a Property Manager & Housing Officer in place to oversee all repairs and maintenance. All properties are regularly inspected to ensure that maintenance is kept fully up to date, and a team in place to respond to urgent issues that arise.

### **Human Resources**

Galway Simon Community has fully integrated the staff competency framework developed by the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive into its recruitment process. A comprehensive training programme is in place which is available to all staff members. This includes mandatory training as well as service or individual specific training in line with required needs.

### **Staff Support**

We operate an Employee Assistance Programme Service that gives free and confidential access to professional counselling for all staff. Teams are supported through team meetings and one to one supervision with their line manager. We also provide access to team and individual supervision; debriefing; and facilitation following incidents or as required, with an external provider.

### APPENDIX 3: How the service works

- Referrals:** Our typical minimum referral criteria are those who meet the age limit and at least one other element of the criteria below
- Clients aged 18-25
  - Homeless: Rough Sleeping; Sofa Surfing; in a Squat; or in Homeless Accommodation
  - At risk of homelessness: living in overcrowded or unsuitable accommodation; as well as with those whose tenancy or existing home are at risk; or have received a notice to quit
  - Identified support needs in the areas of lifeskills, education, training & employment
  - Young people leaving care who may be at risk of homelessness
  - Young people being discharged from Prison who may be at risk of homelessness
- Allocations:** GSC will interview referrals put forward by GCC, TUSLA, Emergency Services, Youth Services.
- We operate an allocation matrix. Clients answers are scored in interview to determine their level of need and allocations are based on the following mix per 4 units (1 high need; 2 moderate need; 1 low need). This model would be applied for all referrals. This mix of need is a key element in ensuring the success of the placement for the client.
- Support:** Support provided by GSC HSO & HSA staff in line with clients' individualised support plans
- Psychological, Counselling, OT support provided following referral by GSC staff to these services and based on client needs
- Residential:** The housing provided by GSC is delivered as a transitional service. It is for those clients who would benefit from living in a supported environment; can live in a shared environment; and who will engage with the service and support provided. A key aspect of the service is to engage in education, training or employment. Clients who are not in a position to agree to this at the outset will not benefit from the service provided. A typical stay can be anywhere from 6 to 18 months however stays can be extended beyond this dependent on a client's needs, and where they are in the overall programme.
- Resettlement:** GSC actively supports all clients and residents when moving to independent living for the first time, or to a new home. This support is again tailored to the client's individual needs and usually involves everything from sourcing and securing the

home, move in and house set up, and signposting and support to access local services.

Tenancy Sustainment For some clients they require ongoing support in one or two aspects of their lives to prevent a return to homelessness or the occurrence of avoidable crises in their lives. This support is again provided to those who have accessed the youth service in line with their needs and in some cases for up to a number of years in order to ensure they can sustain their home long term

## Appendix 4: Service Overview

### Galway Simon Community Youth Service

