

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR HOMELESS SERVICES

2010-2013 in The South West Region

Incorporating HSE South (South-West) Region
& Local Authorities of County Cork • County Kerry • Cork City

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1. Introduction

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) has introduced measures designed to provide a working framework, including guidelines, for the implementation of the National Homeless Strategy. The measures, which have been enshrined in legislation, the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, places all aspects of the national and local approach to addressing homelessness on a statutory footing, and are designed to achieve uniform approaches and outcomes which are client-focused, efficient and structured. The planning and delivery of Homeless Services is directed by the provisions of part 2, chapter 6 of the [Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009] and the Housing Act 1988 and is supported by the National Partnership Agreement Towards 2016, the National Development Plan and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

The Local Authorities in the South West, Cork City Council, Cork County Council and Kerry County Council, in conjunction with HSE South (South-West) commissioned an independent Review of Homeless Services in 2009, the recommendations of which have been in implementation since December 2009.

The Local Authorities in the South-West rely on the services of the community and voluntary sector to provide many residential and homeless services for people who are homeless and have good relationships throughout the Region. There are approximately sixteen voluntary organisations which deliver thirty-two residential and other services on a contractual basis with HSE South, Cork City Council, Cork County Council and Kerry County Council.

The Local Authorities have dedicated personnel for Homeless Services including Homeless Services Officers, Outreach Workers and Co-ordinators, while HSE South provides health and welfare services including a dedicated team in the Region.

Cork City Council was invited to be the lead Local Authority Agency for the Strategic Management Group which comprises of Kerry County Council, Cork County Council and Cork City Council and the HSE South (South West). The Local Authorities and the HSE welcomed the initiative to put their relationship regarding homeless services on a statutory footing and are keen to ensure that it will lead to co-operative and co-ordinated practices and protocols to address homelessness in the Region.

The perspective of HSE South, whose Social Inclusion Team line management structure is Region wide, regards the initiative as a key opportunity to further streamline its homeless services and to pursue greater uniformity throughout homeless service provision.

The Strategic Management Group has met a number of times to put in place the additional arrangements for the formation of the South West Joint Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum itself and to prepare the Regional Action Plan.

Membership of the Management Group is set out in Table 1 below.

Member	Agency
Director of Services, Housing & Community	Cork City Council
Tadhg Keating, S.E.O. Housing & Community	Cork City Council
Director of Services, Housing Department	Cork County Council
Director of Services, Housing Department	Kerry County Council
Denis Hickey, Project Manager	Health Service Executive, Southern Region

Table 1 Management Group Membership SWJHC Forum 2010

2. Strategic Context

Definition of Homelessness

For the purposes of this Homeless Framework Plan the definition of homelessness is that as has been defined in the Housing Act of 1988 as:

A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purpose of this Act if:

- (a) there is no accommodation available which in the opinion of the authority, he together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of; or
- (b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter, or other institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a).

This definition includes:

- persons living in temporary unsecure accommodation,
- persons living in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation and
- hostels/health board accommodation because they have nowhere else available to them,
- rough sleepers and
- victims of domestic violence

2.1 National Policy Framework

In drawing up this Regional Homelessness Action Plan, the Management Group of the South West Joint Homeless Consultative Forum took particular consideration of homeless and housing policies published over the past two decades. The policy framework incorporates the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government National Housing Strategy Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, the 2008 National Homeless Strategy The Way Home and the subsequent 2009 National Implementation Plan, the 2002 Homeless Preventative Strategy, the 2001 Youth Homeless Preventative Strategy and the 2000 National Homeless Strategy.

In particular, the Regional Action Plan will also take full account of recent (2010) DoEHLG directives and information contained in DoEHLG circulars regarding the expectations of homelessness strategies requiring the prioritisation of returning people who become homeless to permanent, independent housing with supports where required and thereby reducing the dependency on emergency and other types of temporary accommodation. The implementation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme and the introduction of the Supported Living Initiative (SLI) are the policy reference points here.

There have been significant developments in response to the problem of homelessness over the past two decades. Overall it is evident from policy that homelessness has moved from the direct provision of accommodation, to a more co-ordinated approach that enables homeless people to access long-term accommodation and prevents homelessness from occurring and re-occurring. The key policies and legislation affecting the delivery of this strategy are outlined below

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 provides a comprehensive statutory framework for the making and adoption of homeless action plans within specified time periods, publication and circulation of the adopted plans and procedures for undertaking a review of a plan or preparing a new plan.

2009 Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan

Implementation of the Homeless Strategy will be carried out primarily through the local homeless action plan process, which has been put on a statutory basis through the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. The 2009 National Implementation Plan provides a framework to guide the action required at national level to promote and support effective implementation locally. It sets out a sequence of strategic aims, key approaches, priority actions, constituent/supporting measures necessary for implementation of the overall Homeless Strategy. The implementation plan indicates appropriate lead roles, timelines, key performance indicators and linkages to relevant local action. The plan also brings to bear on the implementation process important considerations such as efficiency, value for money, organisational and financial streamlining and the roles of various agencies, particularly in the context of the changed economic context. Priority areas highlighted for attention, particularly those focused on the elimination of long-term dependence on emergency homeless services, including the following:

- Action to provide effective long-term solutions for people leaving homelessness, primarily in mainstream housing but including cluster or sheltered supported housing schemes for very difficult-to-place people who are homeless.
- Re-orientation of current resources to support a significant increase in suitable accommodation and support for people leaving homelessness.
- New arrangements and procedures for funding of homeless services based on needs, priorities and maximising efficiency, quality and value for money.
- Engagement between the relevant Central Government Departments, Local Authorities and the HSE to identify ways of enhancing effectiveness and best value nationally from resources in relation to homelessness.
- Co-ordination of guidance to local authorities, homeless fora and health services, particularly in the context of formulation of homeless action plans.

2008 – 2013 the Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland

The Way Home was launched in 2008 and is informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2006 Fitzpatrick report. The emphasis of the new strategy is to prevent people from becoming homeless or if they should become homeless this would be short term. The ultimate intention is that persons who have accessed homeless services will be assisted out of homelessness and into long-term housing in as short a time as possible.

The strategy sets out six strategic arms around three core objectives;

- Eliminating long-term occupation of emergency homeless facilities.
- Eliminating the need to sleep rough.
- Preventing the occurrence of homelessness as far as possible.

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 - 2016

The NAPS I sets out a comprehensive programme of actions and goals to address poverty and social exclusion. It places the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery and offers a framework for implementing a streamlined, cross cutting and visible approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion.

The National Development Plan 2007 - 2013

The NDP incorporates measures agreed in ,Towards 2016. And the social inclusion priority is of most relevance to homelessness. This priority outlines measures to address barriers to social inclusion by improving access to health care, education, training and employment and high quality housing. The main objective is to provide a coherent approach to social inclusion by improving co-ordination across central and local government, better monitoring and evaluation of interventions and consultation with stakeholders.

2007 Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities

The 2007 National Housing Strategy Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities places emphasis on the interagency approach to combating homelessness. It also places emphasis on the use of a case management approach in meeting the needs of homeless households. The strategy prioritises actions aimed at the inclusion of special needs groups within services that are focused around homelessness.

Towards 2016

Towards 2016 is part of a series of national social partnership agreements. It makes particular reference to homelessness and makes proposals in relation to improved coordination of service provision and joint approaches at local level. The aim of this national agreement is to facilitate a holistic response to the needs of homeless persons through the further development of a case management approach based on needs assessment and access to multiple services by all the key stakeholders. Other features include the elimination of long-term occupation of emergency accommodation.

An Independent Review of Homeless Strategies (2006)

Undertaken by Fitzpatrick Associates, and commissioned by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the review focused on Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy (2000) and the Homeless Preventative Strategy (2002). It also carried out a review of local action plans. The review made twenty-one recommendations around seven key themes. The Government accepted the broad thrust of the recommendations including a more concentrated focus on development of long-term accommodation options, an improvement of co-ordination of funding, the development of a case management approach to addressing the needs of homeless people based on key workers and the development of preventative strategies, appropriate local services and supports, and better data on the extent, nature and causes of homelessness.

The Homeless Preventative Strategy (2002)

The 2002 strategy focused on ensuring that no one is discharged or released from state institutional care without the appropriate measures in place to ensure they have a suitable place to live. The aim of the strategy is to target adult and young offenders, people leaving mental health residential facilities, people leaving hospitals and young people leaving care. It highlighted that an effective preventative strategy would help break the cycle of homelessness.

The Youth Homeless Preventative Strategy (2001)

The 2001 strategy was published by the Department of Health and Children. It aimed to eliminate homelessness amongst young people under the age of eighteen years. A key element of this strategy is the prevention of homelessness among young people leaving care through the implementation of education, training, information, awareness, care and aftercare supports.

Homelessness - An Integrated Strategy (2000)

The 2000 strategy set out a new policy approach to homelessness. It involved a whole Government approach to ensure that homelessness is addressed and prevented. It recognized that homelessness would not be solved by housing or shelter alone. It focused on the need for a holistic approach involving health, care, welfare, education, training and support to enable people who experience homelessness to re-integrate into society and prevent it from happening. It made Local Authorities and Health Services jointly responsible for homelessness, with Local Authorities charged with a lead role to prepare three-year action plans on homelessness. It led to the establishment of Local Homeless Fora.

The Housing Act 1988

The 1988 Act defined homelessness for the first time in legislation and expanded the role of Local Authorities in addressing homelessness. It resulted in improvements in funding available to voluntary bodies for accommodation for homeless persons. It also resulted in greater awareness of homelessness as an issue and in development of additional responses to it.

County / City Development Plans 2009 - 2015

Each Local Authority has a County/City Development Plan which seeks to develop and improve in a sustainable manner the social, economic, cultural and environmental assets of the county/city. The purpose of the plan is to inform the public, statutory authorities and service providers, developers and other interested parties, of the policy framework that will guide development decisions within the county/city over the plan period.

Each County/City Development Plan includes a Housing Strategy which seeks:

- to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for residential use and made available to meet the requirements of all sectors of the population.
- to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income, particularly those in need of social housing.
- to ensure a mixture of house type is developed to match requirements of different categories of households, particularly vulnerable households.
- to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different backgrounds.

Equality Legislation including Equality Status Acts of 2000

The Equal Status Act 2000, which came into operation in October 2000, compliments the Employment Equality Act 1998. The Equal Status Act is based on the principle that everyone has an equal right to participate in our society. People should not be denied access to services, facilities or amenities because of race, age, disability or membership of a traveller community – everyone should be seen as being of equal worth and entitlement. Each person should be treated on his or her own merits and not on the basis of a prejudice or stereotype.

The Act provides comprehensive legal protection against discrimination in the delivery of goods and services, whether provided by the State or private sector – this will be of particular benefit to people from marginalised groups and those vulnerable to discrimination.

3. HSE Specific Responsibilities regarding Homelessness

The aim of the Department of Health and Children Health Service Executive Social Inclusion Services is to improve access to mainstream services, target services to marginalised groups, address inequalities in access to health services and enhance the participation and involvement of socially excluded groups and local communities in the planning, design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of health services. Substantial research evidence demonstrates the links between socioeconomic status and health status and has resulted in a better understanding of the determinants of health that impact on access to health services. In Ireland evidence of health inequalities by socioeconomic status shows a sharp class gradient in mortality and morbidity.¹

The main policy and legislation that underlines HSE Social Inclusion Services and determines the delivery of timely, responsive and person-centred health services to Homeless people include the following;

- Quality and Fairness (the National Health Strategy);
- Towards 2016 Partnership Agreement;
- National Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- Homelessness - An Integrated Strategy;
- National Drugs Strategy;
- National Travellers Strategy, Equality legislation and
- National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR);
- A Vision for Change – Mental Health Policy

The following come within the remit of the HSE Social Inclusion services:

- Homeless Services;
- Services for Minority Ethnic Communities;
- Traveller Health Services;
- Drug and Alcohol Services;
- Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender Communities;
- Community Welfare Services;
- HSE RAPID and CLAR Programmes;
- HIV/STI Services;

¹HSE Social Inclusion Fact File November 2009

The HSE believes that the homeless service provision is best served by successful partnership with the HSE being a principal partner alongside the Local Authorities.

The HSE's Corporate Plan 2008 - 2011 espouses the values of respect, fairness and equity in the delivery of health services and this is particularly applicable to homeless people. It specifically commits to progressing the implementation of the National Homeless Plan 2008 and furthermore identifies the number of Local Health Officers operating a formal leaving and aftercare support service for young people leaving care as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

Other elements of the HSE approach, as developed by the Social Inclusion Services are:

- Funding of core staff in Voluntary Organisations and other services as per agreed template in “The Way Home”;
- HSE Multi-disciplinary Teams - Outreach Services/ Supports;
- Dedicated and enhanced CWO Service;
- Care and Case Management – a holistic response to homelessness involving the HSE ;
- The availability of client centred services is important and the application of the HSE Strategy on Service User Involvement “Your Service Your Say” is central to the action plans;
- The application of agreed quality and standards to all services;
- Multi-disciplinary teams where they exist will interact with emerging/ existing Primary Care Teams and Social Care Networks and Integrated Services Programme (ISP). The new model of service delivery is through Integrated Service Areas;
- Recognition that central to solving the issue of long term homelessness is the provision of housing options that afford people long term tenancies and a stable living environment;
- Mental Health – Vision for Change Programme and linkages with Community Mental Health Teams;
- Linkages to Addiction Services and Regional Drugs Task Forces;
- Awareness that increasing numbers from minority ethnic groups are becoming homeless and the reasons could include Habitual Residence Condition, loss of employment and welfare allowances, addiction, domestic violence etc;
- Integrated discharged planning including the implementation of acute / mental health and leaving care/aftercare protocols;
- Youth homelessness and the critical links to adult homelessness;
- Funding, Service Level Agreements, Performance Indicators, Value for Money and Quality Standards / Performance Measurement / Outcomes focused are fundamental to service provision;

3.1 HSE POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Health Strategy Quality and Fairness A Health System for You (2001)

There are a number of strategies relevant to the development of homeless services as general and specific health needs and addiction issues are often a contributory factor to a person becoming homeless. The National Health Strategy Quality and Fairness A Health System for You (2001) has a specific aim of improving the health and well-being of homeless people and an overall aim to improve the operation and quality of health services generally.

The 2006 Vision for Change report by the Mental Health Expert group recognises that homeless people with mental health problems have more difficulty meeting their accommodation needs with a specific chapter dedicated to addressing the mental health needs of homeless people.

It is acknowledged that Vision for Change was published five years ago and that it did not take account of local, homeless services delivery specification and configurations at that time and could not have foreseen the many changes in the interim period. The Vision for Change Implementation Plan published in late 2009 notes that future services for people at risk from homelessness as a result of a mental illness are confined to 'two Community Mental Health Teams based in North and South City Dublin (should) be provided and all Community Mental Health Teams (should) adopt practices to minimise the number of service users becoming homeless through discharge planning and better co-ordination of Voluntary and Statutory Services'. These changes are envisaged for 2011 at the earliest and plans for the South-West Region will be followed up by Management Group of the South West Joint Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum.

The HSE Hospital Integrated Discharge Plan identifies homeless people as an at risk group when discharged from hospital care and places an obligation on HSE acute hospital services to ensure, through protocols for discharge, that patients who are homeless are notified to relevant local homeless services.

The National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2016 (Interim) focuses on the needs of specific groups in accessing services. The strategy recognises the complex needs of homeless people and prioritises further engagement with homeless people and the provision of drug treatment and prevention measures at national, regional and local level.

HSE Primary Care Teams and Networks and Homeless Services

The National Health Strategy, 'Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You' (2001) sets out a new direction for primary care as the central focus of the delivery of health and personal social services. Primary care is the first of the six frameworks for change set out in the Strategy which rebalances the emphasis from secondary care to primary care. This policy direction is consistent with international best practice.

National Intercultural Health Strategy (2007-2012)

The strategy recognises that the issue of homelessness is a developing issue for service users from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Recent surveys of people sleeping rough show that while the overall numbers have decreased there is a significant increase in those presenting from countries both inside and outside the EC.

4. Strategic Vision and Mission

This section outlines the purpose of the plan and the values and principles which it contains. The plan is based on the Framework Action Plan for the South West Region which was approved by Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Kerry County Council and the Health Services Executive, Southern Region in June 2010. The Overall plan reflects The Way Home the National Strategy to address adult homelessness in Ireland from 2008 – 2013 and is also guided by national policy on mental health and the National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2013.

Vision

The Way Home states that from 2010 long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough will be eliminated throughout Ireland. The risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised and where homelessness does occur, the experience will be short term and the aim will be to move the person in as short a time as possible into appropriate long-term, independent accommodation. If supports are required for short or long-term periods, these will be provided to ensure that people, who move to independent living, retain their tenancy.

It is also acknowledged in The Way Home that not everyone who experiences homelessness will be able to move in to mainstream housing, even with supports and some will need housing with care provided on site. Those groups of people who are hard to place, such as sex offenders, individuals with challenging behaviour and severe mental health issues will require a tailored response to meet their needs.

The Way Home states that the homeless sector is not and should not be responsible for these groups but it often ends up being the only source of accommodation and assistance to them and it is appropriate that in the circumstances it is involved in securing more appropriate responses to those needs.

The South West Joint Homeless Consultative Forum's vision is of a region without homelessness where appropriate preventative policies and services are available. The needs of people who are homeless will be met in a co-ordinated and planned manner and will offer a range of appropriate, affordable and supportive services aimed at the prevention and reduction of homelessness.

Mission

The purpose of the South West Joint Homeless Consultative Forum is to place an emphasis on strengthening preventative policies, procedures, working relationships and services to reduce levels of repeat homeless, thus reducing the overall level of homelessness. In particular the South West Joint Homeless Consultative Forum aims to address the needs of the long-term homeless currently resident in emergency facilities and to reduce the dependency on these facilities in line with Government policy and directives.

5. Values and Principles

The following values and principles have informed the development of this plan,

Homelessness is solvable and preventable.

- Homelessness can only be addressed by relevant bodies working in partnership to agreed objectives.
- Homelessness has as much to do with appropriate support services as with bricks and mortar. Housing by itself will not solve homelessness in every case. There is also a need for interventions to assist people to move out of homelessness and support services to help them to maintain independent living.
- The co-operation of all relevant parties in providing co-ordinated service provision and integrated care planning is essential to eliminating long-term homeless and rough sleeping.
- Services and funding made available to tackle homeless in the South West Region must be used in the most efficient and effective way possible.
- Every individual/family is entitled to a place it can call home which is secure and appropriate to their needs and potential.
- Each person is unique and must be valued as such.
- People who become homeless have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to have their beliefs and choices respected.
- Services should pose a continuing challenge to people to be as independent as possible and to move out of homelessness.
- Services should pose a continuing challenge to people to be as independent as possible and to move out of homelessness.

This South West Homeless Regional Action Plan mirrors the six strategic aims as outlined in The Way Home:

- To reduce the number of households who become homeless through the further development and enhancement of preventative measures – preventing homelessness.
- To eliminate the need for people to sleep rough.
- To eliminate long-term homelessness and to reduce the length of time people spend homeless.
- To meet the long-term housing needs through an increase in housing options.
- To ensure effective services for homeless people.
- To ensure better co-ordinated funding arrangements and re-orientate spending on homeless services, away from emergency responses to the provision of long-term independent housing and support services.

6. Strategic Aims and Actions to Implement the Regional Action Plan

The following section outlines the Strategic Aims of the Regional Action Plan which have been identified as the main focus for the Region. Actions together with lead agencies and a time frame have then been put in place to ensure each objective is achieved.

The Strategic Management Group is committed to delivering on the Government Objective to eliminate long-term occupancy of emergency homeless accommodation and to end the need to sleep rough. To achieve this, service delivery must be kept under constant review and there must remain at all times, a constant awareness of how to best utilise and, where appropriate to reconfigure services as the need for emergency accommodation is reduced.

To assist people out of emergency accommodation, providers must proactively find accommodation and place and support residents in this accommodation. This action should be supported by Homeless Action Teams in each area in the region. This action will reduce dependency on temporary emergency accommodation, and the number of people in emergency accommodation. In the short-term, service providers will be required to shift resources towards the re-settlement element within existing provision. In time, it will reduce the number of people in emergency homeless services.

To effect this change a planned, re-settlement programme for all residents based on a comprehensive assessment of each individual and followed by a recommended placement type should be considered. In some areas accommodation is already configured as apartments/houses/housing units where residents have access to their own front door. This model should be extended throughout the region.

Where adequate emergency accommodation is available within the region, existing emergency providers should commence the process of reducing their level of residential provision and increase their space allocation to face-to-face and group client development and rehabilitation work.

However, it must be noted that where there is now capacity in the men's hostels, there still remains a shortage of emergency accommodation for families in the region and consideration should be given to the establishment of a small number of emergency units suitable for short-term family accommodation. Continuous assessment of vacancies within the emergency hostels is required to ensure optimal use of these facilities.

Facilities need to be in place for people who move from emergency accommodation and a combination of mainstream housing with floating supports, sheltered housing with floating supports, cluster housing with an on-site supervisor/manager should be considered to provide long term homeless accommodation for these clients. This action to support people in accommodation is vital in breaking the cycle of homelessness by ensuring that people do not return to emergency accommodation.

Transitional accommodation is based on a transitional programme which is specific to a client's needs and designed to prepare and return the person to independent living and permanent housing. Service provision which does not meet this criterion will cease intake and a resettlement programme will be implemented following a comprehensive assessment of each resident.

Each Strategic Aim has been identified on the principle of cross cutting themes for every Local Authority Area. The presentation of these actions follows the framework which has been taken from the Cork Homelessness Strategy, "Homelessness – An Integrated Strategy for Cork, 2009-2011.

The following are the Strategic Aims for the Regional Action Plan:

1. Data Collection – The collection of data on a local and regional basis to quantify the requirement of services for each area.

2. Housing and Support – The provision of adequate and appropriate housing and supports for the Region.

3. The Prevention of Homelessness – The implementation of Preventative Policies for the Region

4. Funding – To ensure better co-ordinated funding arrangement by ensuring all proposals have the prior approval of the Strategic Management Group for funding

STRATEGIC AIM 1 – DATA COLLECTION

Decisions relating to the configuration of services must be based on rigorous analysis of relevant, comprehensive, accurate, and up to date information, particularly in relation to needs and existing homeless services, aspects such as unit cost analysis, cost variations between services, usage of service, duration of homelessness and outcomes for service users.

The collection of accurate and up to date information is vital to plan for services and ensure the needs of all homeless persons in the region are catered for.

ACTION

LEAD RESPONSIBILITY

TARGET

The provision of accurate and up to date information on homeless persons in the region

1.	To monitor the primary reasons for homeless presentations in the region	LA + HSE + AHB + Prison + Probation	18 months
1.1	All Local Authorities will develop a real time data base for the region to ensure up to date information on the numbers of admissions to services and the reasons for the admissions is available		
1.2	Through the collection of accurate data, identify the people / households who are at risk of homelessness		
2.	To assess the numbers of people sleeping rough in the region.	LA + AHB	On going
2.1	To have current data on the numbers of people who are sleeping rough in the region and to identify the reasons for any rough sleeping	LA + AHB + HSE + Prison	On going
3.	Emergency Accommodation		On going
3.1	Monitor the length of time people remain in emergency accommodation ensuring that no one remains longer than six months in emergency accommodation		

<p>3.2 Have accurate data on the needs of people in emergency accommodation and on the outcomes for each person presenting</p>		<p>On going</p>
<p>3.3 Have up to date data on the numbers availing of emergency accommodation and the numbers of emergency beds occupied</p>		<p>On going</p>
<p>Referrals to other services</p>		
<p>4.1 Collect data on the referrals to other services, including accommodation referrals and the outcomes of these referrals</p>		

STRATEGIC AIM 2 - HOUSING AND SUPPORTS

Develop and practices and protocols in the South West of Region to ensure that Health , Housing and other vital Support Services for people accessing homeless services and widely available and accessible.

ACTION

LEAD RESPONSIBILITY

TARGET

Refocus existing services with a view to ensuring all persons have accommodation and supports appropriate to their needs

1.	To ensure services are available and accessible to people finding themselves in a homeless situation.	LA + HSE + AHB	3 months
1.1	To identify specific central locations for homeless persons to present in each Local Authority Administrative area		6 months
2.	A common assessment procedure to be applied for all persons presenting as homeless in the region	LA + HSE + AHB	On going
2.1	A key worker to be assigned to each resident and personal action plans put in place to ensure access to health and social services is provided in a planned manner		On going
3.	To review the provision of emergency accommodation on an ongoing basis to ensure there are enough emergency beds in the region so that no one has to sleep rough.	LA + HSE + AHB	Annually
3.1	Access criteria to emergency provision should be reviewed and selectively adapted to be (socially) inclusive to clients with all challenging and complex needs.	LA + HSE + AHB	On going
4.	Homeless Action Teams	LA + HSE	on going

<p>4.1 Establish Homeless Action Teams in all areas which will comprise frontline personnel and work with a care and case management approach to provide client specific services</p> <p>4.2 Provide appropriate housing options and client specific actions to reduce long term stays in emergency accommodation.</p> <p>4.3 Provide appropriate housing options with adequate supports for people ready to move from other homeless residential accommodation</p>		
<p>5. Allocations Group</p> <p>5.1 To have in place an inter agency allocations group, to identify homeless persons for referral onto more long-term accommodation where appropriate</p>	<p>LA</p>	<p>On going</p>
<p>6. Tenancy Support</p> <p>6.1 The services in the South West region will maintain a focus on tenancy sustainment/ resettlement and further develop if required to ensure that no person remains in temporary accommodation for any longer than six months</p> <p>6.2 look at means of reconfiguring resources and increase the availability of tenancy support where it is established that the level of emergency accommodation can be reduced</p> <p>6.3 to provide outreach support to vulnerable groups i.e. ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, mental health issues and financial issues.</p>	<p>LA + HSE + AHB</p>	<p>On going</p>

7. Provide Long Term Sustainable Housing	LA + HSE + AHB	On going
7.1 To consider sourcing suitable accommodation for people with high support needs who are long term in emergency accommodation and have been assessed as not being able to live independently		
7.2 To identify and source housing for elderly and other people who may not be suited to mainstream accommodation		
7.3 Independent housing to be a priority where appropriate and floating support and tenancy sustainment to be available to resettled residents for an approved period.		
7.4 To identify long term housing options with RAS, Voluntary Housing Associations, Private Rented and Local Authority units		
8. Practices and Protocols		
8.1 To develop and agree practices and protocols throughout the South West Region which will ensure that health, housing and other vital support services, for people accessing homeless services are widely available and accessible.	HAT	18 months
9. Homeless Ex-Offenders		
9.1 To identify accommodation for people being released from prison and avoid the dependency on emergency accommodation for this client group	LA + Prison + Probation + AHB	12 months

<p>10. Quantify the Need for Emergency Family housing / accommodation in the region</p> <p>10.1 To quantify the need for emergency accommodation and step down accommodation for families in the region</p> <p>10.2 To determine the optimal level of refuge provision required in the region</p>	<p>LA + HSE + AHB</p>	<p>18 months</p>
<p>11. Young People Leaving care</p> <p>11.1 That the model for an interagency group, as operated in Cork City, be set up to look after the needs of the 18 to 25 year age group, in particular young people leaving care, would be considered on a regional basis.</p>	<p>LA + HSE + AHB</p>	<p>18 months</p>
<p>12. Interagency Response to the needs of specific groups</p> <p>12.1. To consider how the homeless sector can work with other agencies to ensure there is a response in place to meet the needs of specific groups such as sex offenders, individuals with challenging behaviour and severe mental health issues</p>	<p>LA + HSE + AHB</p>	<p>12 months</p>

STRATEGIC AIM 3 - THE PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

In order to combat homelessness, effective preventative policies need to be in place. This will assist in avoiding the crisis which results in a person becoming homeless in the first instance and preventative measures will also assist in breaking the cycle of homelessness. The South West Region will need to address the causes of Homelessness in an integrated and holistic manner.

ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure a range of supports are in place to prevent a person entering homelessness <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Provide a client-centred service for people accessing homeless services in each Local Authority area 1.2 Ensure there is accessible public information on available housing and housing options and this is literacy proofed 1.3 Provide referral to the appropriate debt advice service and negotiation for repayment schedule with landlord/lender. 1.4 Identify interventions and approaches that effectively prevent homelessness from occurring and explore ways of developing such services and approaches across the region 	<p>LA + HSE + AHB</p>	<p>on going</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Promote Collective Discharge Policy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 to ensure the National discharge policies regarding discharge from acute services , mental health services and care are implemented within the region 	<p>HSE + Probation + Prison + AHB</p>	<p>18 months</p>

2.2	Ensure discharge policies are in place for people leaving prison and that appropriate support is in place with the probation service		
3	Habitual Residence Condition	LA + HSE + AHB	12 months
3.1	To address the impact the Habitual Residence Clause (HRC) is having on homeless services and recommend a means of assisting those who are long term homeless as a result of failure to satisfy this clause.		
4.	Consultation with service users	LA + HSE + All Agencies	18 months
4.1	To explore the concept of obtaining feedback and comment from services users to assist in the planning and provision of appropriate services		
5.	Training and Education	FÁS + VEC + AHB	On going
5.1	Ensure people who are homeless have access to education, training and employment		
5.2	To examine what supports, financial or otherwise need to be in place to maintain young people when they access an education or training programme.		
6.	Best Practice	LA + HSE + AHB	On going
6.1	That models of Best Practice would be identified, and shared in the Region.		

STRATEGIC AIM 4 - FUNDING PROVISION

Funding - Co-Ordinate Funding Mechanism to ensure effective homeless Services in the region through the Strategic Management Group

To ensure homeless persons receive the most appropriate, effective and efficient services that will meet their needs co-ordinated funding arrangements need to be in place.

ACTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET
1. Co-Ordination of funding for services	LA + HSE	
1.1 To ensure best use of resources in the regions and avoid any duplication, all proposals for funding will be agreed by the Strategic Management Group.		
1.2 Any application for funding for services must have agreed capital and revenue sources as part of the proposal		
2. Service Level Agreements	LA + HSE + AHB	
2.1 Ensure Service Level Agreements are in place with all homeless service providers.		
2.2 Service Level Agreements to relate directly to the actual cost of the provision of each service.		

7. Evaluation and Review

The principle monitoring agencies for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan will be the Strategic Management Group. During the life of the plan, continual assessment will take place to identify the housing and support needs of persons accessing homeless service. This should take the form of regular updates and report to the Regional Homelessness Consultative Forum.

Indicators of the successful implementation of the Regional Action Plan will be developed and having particular regard to the current economic climate, achievements will be reliant on the availability of funding over the life of the plan.

Appropriate procurement arrangements for the provision of services (e.g. visiting tenancy support), involving competitive tendering as far as possible/appropriate, will be operated in accordance with Government requirements/guidelines.

Each Local Authority should show how the regionalisation of homelessness has impacted on services in their respective administrative areas. Possible indicators should include the numbers of people remaining in emergency accommodation, the number of people long – term homeless, the numbers of rough sleepers in each area, the extent to which support has been re-orientated towards tenancy sustainment, the extent to which complex needs have been addressed, the availability of appropriate housing options, the extent to which health and other vital supports, are accessible / available in the region.

A list of Key Performance Indicators will be agreed by the Strategic Management Group in consultation with the Joint Homeless Consultative Forum.

8. Specialist Services

Specialist services should be looked at on a regional basis and Agencies in all areas to be encouraged to make best use of these services and to avoid any duplication of services.

USEFUL LINKS

Cork City Council	www.corkcity.ie
Cork County Council	www.corkcoco.ie
Kerry County Council	www.kerrycoco.ie
Cork Foyer	www.corkfoyer.ie
Cork Simon Community	www.corksion.com
Health Service Executive	www.hse.ie
Homeless Cork	www.homelesscork.org
Society of St. Vincent de Paul	www.svp.ie
Threshold	www.threshold.ie
Good Shepherd Services	www.goodshepherdservices.ie
VEC	www.corkvec.ie
FÁS	www.fas.ie

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used within the document include the following:

LA	>	Local Authority
HSE	>	Health Service Executive
AHB	>	Approved Housing Body
CWO	>	Community Welfare Officer



Cork City Council



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- Cork County Council Cork County Development Plan 2009- 2015, Cork County Council
- Kerry County Council Kerry County Development Plan 2009- 2015, Kerry County Council

