

# BUDGET 2023 SUBMISSION



## BUDGET 2023 MUST **BREAK THE CYCLE** OF HOMELESSNESS

Depaul have a unique insight into the current housing challenges in Ireland, supporting people living in hotels, B&Bs, homeless hostels and those living in the private rented sector at risk of becoming homeless. Our emergency accommodation centres are facing extraordinary demands and we are sadly seeing more single women and men, as well as 18-25 year old's being referred.

This pre budget submission will lay out the recommendations of Depaul for Budget 2023. While we welcomed last year's increased funding of €194m for emergency housing provision, more resources are needed to get people into own-door accommodation. **Homeless people are bearing the brunt of Ireland's housing crisis.** The number one goal for this budget must be to get people into homes.

It is Depaul's belief that the most viable and long-lasting way to give people the solid foundation to build a decent life is through the increased role of and investment by the State. Radical action is needed to respond and deliver. It's not going to be a quick fix but there are actions we can take.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Budget 2023

### **Housing**

- Increased provision of one bed units in residential developments, interspersed with larger units, in line with local Social Housing Needs Assessments.
- Increase in homeless HAP and HAP payments in line with market rent.
- One bed units as part of social housing rollout, to house high numbers of single people entering homelessness.

### **Full cost of service delivery**

- Provide adequate and sustainable multi-annual funding to the homeless sector that reflects the full cost of service delivery and is flexible to account for increasing need and inflation.

### **Homeless specific health budget**

- Provide a ring-fenced homeless-specific health budget, ensuring adequate funding and resources for physical health, mental health and addiction support.
- Maintenance of HSE budget for COVID health related services to support health shielding units.
- An immediate uplift in the value of Section 39 service level agreements of 10 % to cover inflationary costs and requirement to uplift salaries due to the retention and recruitment crisis.

### **Incentives for homeless sector workers**

- Assess the impact of pension auto enrollment on the Voluntary and Community sector and begin a process of building a provision in statutory service level agreement levels for the employer's contribution.
- Covid Recognition Payment to Homeless Sector Workers.

### **Implementing alternatives to direct provision**

- The capital budget for the introduction of buildings required for the alternative to direct provision needs to be arrived at, with clear goals and objectives over a set period in order to commence the transition process.



# Housing and Homelessness

A lack of housing is the greatest barrier homeless people in Ireland are facing when trying to step out of homelessness. Social housing should be designed in the most integrated and sustainable way possible. When planning a development, due consideration must be given to the type of households in need of social housing in a given local authority area. By way of example, in all 4 Dublin local authorities, single adults are the predominant group in need of social housing, so this must correlate with the development of one bed units

While the private rental market does not offer the best security of tenure, it is the most readily available option we have for moving people out of homelessness as more social housing is developed. This is evidenced by 69% of exits in 2021 being through HAP/ private rental market nationally. However, about 90% of the market is unavailable to those on HAP, resulting in people paying top-ups that can quickly become unmanageable.

HAP rates must be reflective of market rent to offer the best chance of a sustainable exit. We are asking for an increase for HAP and HHAP rates in the immediate term to reflect market rents. However it is understood that the answer to rising rents is not purely a rise in HAP levels and there is a need to conduct a fundamental view of the PRS examining issues such the role of taxation in supporting smaller landlords, the need for a rent freeze for a prolonged period and the effectiveness of rent pressure zones.

Prevention is understood as the most effective way of avoiding the extensive human and financial cost of homelessness. We now need to place a greater emphasis on prevention and ensure that all have access to secure and affordable homes, within sustainable communities so that they can live with dignity and respect.

It should be considered with respect to those who are at risk of entering homelessness, but also ensuring that those who move on from homelessness do so sustainably and thereby preventing a return to homelessness. Over 2021 in Dublin, the vast majority (80%) of Section 10 funding has been allocated to the provision of emergency accommodation, while approximately only 5% was allocated to prevention/ tenancy sustainment. In order for prevention to become a core pillar of our response to homelessness, sustained dedicated investment in prevention is urgently required.

## **Recommendation 1**

Increase in HAP and HHAP rates in the immediate term to reflect market rents

## **Recommendation 2**

Create a dedicated funding line for homelessness prevention in each local authority, amounting to 20% of all homeless expenditure

## **Recommendation 3**

Increased provision of one bed units in all residential developments, interspersed with larger units



# Full Cost of Service Delivery

The homelessness crisis has continued to worsen over the last decade and is most acutely experienced in Dublin. Despite this, the homeless sector has consistently responded with resilience, agility, and a determination to achieve the best outcomes for the people we serve.

As figures in emergency accommodation near their 2019 peak, we are now facing unique challenges of 2022; the aftermath of a pandemic, a chronic housing shortage, an excessive cost of living and a spiraling inflation rate. **The sector is carrying an enormous burden resulting from years of underfunding and this must be addressed in Budget 2023.** In order to continue to play our role as partners in ending homelessness, we must be properly funded at full cost to deliver quality, safe services.

It is imperative that we can recruit and retain the highly skilled workers that are needed to support society's most vulnerable, all while adhering to the extensive regulatory requirements we are subject to.

## Recommendation 1

Provide adequate and sustainable multi-annual funding to the homeless sector that:

- i) reflects the full cost of service delivery and is flexible to account for increasing need and inflation.
- ii) allows organisations to attract and retain staff that are highly skilled, qualified and experienced for the incredibly challenging work we carry out. Benchmarking salaries and benefits for homeless sector staff on par with local authority / HSE rates would have a significant impact on this issue.
- iii) recognises and provides for the necessary costs of back office support (e.g. HR, quality assurance) and compliance with governance/ regulatory requirements.



# Homeless Specific Health Budget

It has been widely acknowledged that homelessness is a fundamentally unhealthy state, with far reaching consequences for a person's physical, mental and social wellbeing. In one study across two Irish cities, 46% of the sample rated their physical health as being in a condition that prevented normal daily activity and 51.5% regarded their mental or emotional health as preventing normal daily activity.

From the perspective of Depaul, many of our clients (both individuals and families) present with multiple complex support needs, including any combination of physical health, mental health and addiction issues.

There is a high prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which, coupled with the trauma of homelessness itself, can have a significant impact on a person's day-to-day life. We welcome previous commitments on an interdepartmental approach to homelessness, involving the Department of Housing, Health and the HSE.

In order to effectively implement this approach, guaranteed multi-annual homeless-specific health funding is required, allowing the sector to invest in areas such as dual-diagnosis workers, trauma informed care, primary care, addiction treatment and recovery beds, accessible mental health services and end of life care.

## **Recommendation 1**

Provide a ring-fenced homeless-specific health budget, ensuring adequate funding and resources for physical health, mental health and addiction support

## **Recommendation 2**

The maintenance of the HSE budget for COVID health related services to support health shielding units

## **Recommendation 3**

An immediate uplift in the value of Section 39 service level agreements of 10 % to cover inflationary costs and requirement to uplift salaries due to the retention and recruitment crisis.

# Incentives for Homeless Sector Workers

## **Pension Auto Enrollment for Voluntary & Community Sector**

Government policy is to ensure that all workers subscribe to a pension scheme in order to provide security. Currently the government does not support the voluntary and community sector to fund pension costs through service level agreements. With the Government introducing a workplace auto enrollment pension scheme in 2024, there is a requirement to assess the impact of pension auto enrollment on the Voluntary and Community sector and begin a process of building a provision in statutory service level agreement levels for the employer's contribution.

## **Covid 19 Recognition Payment**

Depaul joins the call of the Homeless Network in urging the Irish Government to award over 3,000 homeless sector frontline workers in the Covid-19 Recognition Scheme. Our staff at Depaul made heart-breaking sacrifices to ensure that Ireland's homeless population were kept safe and well during the pandemic.

Many of our colleagues could not live with their vulnerable relatives or see their young children for long periods because of this essential work. Every single day they made the choice to risk their own health to come to work and safeguard the health of others.

We are appealing the government to recognise their heroic efforts with the same financial reward as other frontline works and award them with the Covid recognition payment in lieu of the work done.

Dr Austin O'Carroll commended our frontline staff in the homeless sector for swift and effective action that prevented an even bigger crisis in Ireland.

### **Recommendation 1**

Assess the impact of pension auto enrollment on the Voluntary and Community sector and begin a process of building a provision in statutory service level agreement levels for the employer's contribution.

### **Recommendation 2**

Payment of the Covid recognition payment to staff in the homeless sector, in recognition of their dedication and commitment on the frontline during the Covid 19 pandemic.

# Implementing Alternatives to Direct Provision

Whilst it is understood that the introduction of the proposals under the white paper for alternatives to direct provision have been delayed due to the Ukrainian war it is imperative that steps are taken to progress this major undertaking and that it is coordinated alongside the provision of housing needs for Ukrainian refugees and brought fully under the banner of Housing for All.

## **Recommendation 1**

The capital budget for the introduction of buildings required for the alternative to direct provision needs to be arrived at, with clear goals and objectives over a set period in order to commence the transition process.

# BUDGET 2023 MUST LAY THE FOUNDATIONS TO GIVE EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE



## Thank you

Thank you for considering Depaul's submission for Budget 2023. Together, our recommendations will ensure people who are homeless have access to decent, affordable, secure housing at a sustainable cost to the taxpayer, now and into the future. There is a real opportunity to break the cycle of homelessness in budget 2023. Our recommendations also have a role to play in delivering on other key government priorities, to reduce and prevent homelessness and underpin the State's plan to eradicate homelessness by 2030.



## Depaul

Our Vision is of a society in which everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community. Depaul was set up in Ireland in 2002 and was established in response to the deaths of two young people who died on the streets of Dublin in 2001. They were known active IV drug users and as a result although homeless they were not allowed to access homeless accommodation in the city. It was perceived as too risky to accommodate active drug users in services.

The Depaul group endeavours as part of this 400-year tradition to work with the most disadvantaged people who really need our help and support. Making sure that our work and service is addressing the needs of people who would otherwise be excluded or often turned away. What matters most is what we do and how we do it and that we strive to give the best quality service to the people who need our help.



# DEPAUL

Homelessness has no place

**OUR MISSION IS TO END  
HOMELESSNESS AND CHANGE  
THE LIVES OF THOSE  
AFFECTED BY IT**

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