



# PRIORITISING PREVENTION

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

JUNE, 2026



**DEPAUL**

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Homelessness has no place

# ABOUT DEPAUL

Depaul is a charity supporting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Established in 2002 in Ireland and 2005 in Northern Ireland, it is now a leading cross-border organisation. Our focus is on those experiencing homelessness and marginalisation, who need vital support and an opportunity to realise their true potential.

Our mission is to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it. We offer support and guidance to break the cycle of homelessness and assist our service users in making positive choices for their future. Depaul believes homelessness has no place. Depaul currently manages 44 specialised accommodations and outreach services for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness, providing over 800 bed spaces per night.

For more information, visit: [ie.depaulcharity.org](http://ie.depaulcharity.org) or [@depaul\\_Ireland](https://www.instagram.com/depaul_Ireland)



# SUMMARY

As homelessness in the Republic of Ireland stretches past the 17,500 mark, including more than 5,500 children, we are constantly reminded that every one of those numbers represents a person whose life is being put on hold by something which we believe is preventable.

Depaul, as one of the largest providers of homeless services on the island of Ireland, providing 44 specialised services, is only too familiar with the hardship faced by this vulnerable cohort of people. Throughout 2026 we have seen continued increases in homelessness, with more and more people experiencing the intense trauma and hardship of living in temporary accommodation services around Ireland.

Depaul believes that budget 2026 must work to move us decisively beyond short-term emergency responses toward a structural, rights-based approach to ending homelessness.

Budget 2026 is critically important to the lives of those supported in the homeless system in Ireland. It is a chance to work, to build, and promote integrated communities and prioritise vulnerable groups. Overall, in Budget 2026 - Depaul would like to see a comprehensive, well conceived budget plan grounded in sustained investment in homelessness prevention, and long-term housing solutions, rather than continued reliance on short-term and temporary accommodation and emergency measures.



# DEPAUL'S SIX BUDGETS ASKS INCLUDE:

**1. Housing** - at its core homelessness is driven primarily by the lack of access to affordable and suitable social housing. Prioritise increasing funding for **Public, Affordable, Social Housing** and fund a state-led plan to reverse the **over-reliance on temporary accommodation**.

**2. Mental Health** - Increase funding for **homelessness services** focusing on **addiction, drug and alcohol interventions and mental health** – with more focus on harm-reduction measures as well as a national network of specific mental health services for those in temporary accommodation.

**3. IPAS** - Provide more solutions to the **critical accommodation crisis** in **International Protection and Direct Provision**. Increased funding provided to the Department of Housing to ensure that those in IP who have secured leave to remain are able to access accommodation on a like for like basis with others.

**4. Prioritise a Housing First approach.** Accelerate the delivery of supported and independent housing and ensure that healthcare, particularly mental health and addiction services, are embedded and budgeted for within our housing system planning.

**5. Staff** - Provide adequate and sustainable **funding for staff** in the voluntary and social sector. That will ensure capacity to both benchmark salaries and index them against public sector contemporaries and any public pay agreements that are negotiated. Ensure that the right affordable public and social housing is built in the right place that meets the needs of the population.

**6. Funding** - Provide multi-annual funding to the homeless sector that reflects the **full cost of service delivery**.



# DEPAUL'S SIX KEY PRIORITY AREAS

## **1. HOUSING – PRIORITISE INCREASING FUNDING FOR PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND A STATE-LED PLAN TO REVERSE THE OVER-RELIANCE ON TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION. ALIGNED WITH THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FRAMEWORK BEING DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING.**

The lack of housing is identified as the greatest barrier for people trying to exit homelessness. Depaul remains incredibly concerned that the lack of housing options continues to exacerbate homelessness in 2026. The escalating homelessness crisis is driven by a severe lack of affordable housing and an over-reliance on temporary solutions. The housing market is not working for those most vulnerable, and the gap between supply and demand is only widening.

Depaul supports a housing-led approach. We need a budget commitment to increase public and affordable housing supply in the right places and right configuration that meets local needs, including housing-first tenancies. The State must increase its role and investment. The Government must put in place robust plans, prioritising the desperate need of those most vulnerable.

### **Our Budget 2026 Housing asks:**

- A plan to fully resource the Homelessness Prevention Framework being developed by the Department of Housing.
- A plan to ensure that the temporary accommodation that is provided is of a high standard meeting the needs of those who utilise it. To include a significant increase in wheelchair accessible units.



- An outlined objective that seeks to **phase out the use of Private Emergency Accommodation** as a major source of temporary accommodation as more housing stock becomes available.
- Increase in **funding for single people accommodation** - currently not fit for purpose.
- Adequate funding to ensure that there are sufficient emergency beds so that **no one ever has to rough sleep**.
- Provision of a specific budget to support AHBs to have in place **adequate sinking funds** to provide accommodation for more complex individuals.
- **A review of CAS and CALF funding** - including access to increased budget being made available to Local Authorities - who are currently not adequately funded in order to have in place adequate sinking funds to provide accommodation for more complex households.
- Continued **investment in Housing-First and housing led initiatives**.
- Allocate funding for a **Housing-First for Families programme**.
- When we look at the fallout from the recently introduced rental legislation there is a need to **make sure that small landlords are supported in this budget** to remain in the market. There is an intensifying pressure on the rental market which is leaving a shortage of homes available to rent.
- Adequately budget for the **current review of the HAPS system**, particularly in light of the changes to rental legislation. This is crucial in long term housing planning and improving current stock.
- **Boost capital investment in local authority and Approved Housing Body-led housing construction**, particularly for one-bed units and cost-rental housing, with transparent annual targets.



- Increase **social and cost rental housing supply**, and resource local authorities to support the Tenant in Situ scheme.
- A **national plan to reverse the over-reliance on temporary accommodation and prioritise those households that are longest in temporary accommodation** for any new social housing. The plan requires strong commitment to increasing public and affordable housing supply and adequate funding that reflects the true cost of delivering services.
- Allocate **dedicated funds for early intervention**, rent arrears support, legal aid for tenants, and a national homeless prevention strategy.



## 2. MENTAL HEALTH – FUNDING FOR HOMELESSNESS SERVICES FOCUSING ON ADDICTION, DRUG AND ALCOHOL INTERVENTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Homelessness is fundamentally unhealthy, and many service users present with complex needs, including issues with physical health, mental health, and addiction. Evidence is very strong for the prevalence of poor mental health outcomes for those experiencing homelessness. Depaul's research on this topic in 2025 highlighted this - with almost 40% reporting mental health difficulties and 1 in 2 service users struggling with depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

Depaul believes there is a need for a comprehensive review of mental health services, particularly focusing on drug and alcohol interventions and mental health support - with more focus on harm-reduction measures. This includes improving access to treatment programs, understanding the need for stabilisation services like Housing-First, and the need for the development of more specialised accommodations for people with enduring mental health needs.

### Our Budget 2026 Asks:

- Increase funding for **homelessness services** focusing on **addiction, drug and alcohol interventions and mental health** – with more focus on harm-reduction measures.
- A commitment to a **national network of specific mental health services** for those in temporary accommodation.
- A plan to adequately resource the **National Drugs and Alcohol Strategy** 2026-2029.
- Increased focus, and funding for **Inclusion Health and Social Inclusion programmes**.



- Significant increase in **health budget particularly related to social inclusion** to support homeless people with mental health, physical health, addiction, and homecare needs.
- Increased budget for **harm reduction interventions** for people experiencing addiction - such as medically supervised injection centers, and consumption rooms in areas outside of Dublin.
- A focus on funding for the development of **specialised accommodations for people experiencing homelessness with enduring mental health needs**. For those presenting with multiple complex support needs, including any combination of physical health, mental health and addiction issues - single-unit housing solutions are key. Shared accommodation is not the answer for someone with significant mental health concerns.
- More focus on **funding for trauma support**, including Child Support Workers and therapeutic interventions in particular for children experiencing homelessness.
- Prevention and early intervention: **funding to facilitate early intervention programmes** in communities, reducing the risk of homelessness for individuals struggling with addiction. This proactive approach can lead to better outcomes and lower long-term costs.
- Access to treatment: **Improve access to vital drug and alcohol treatment programs**, including detox facilities, rehabilitation services, and ongoing support for recovery among those experiencing homelessness.
- **Stabilisation and support**: understand the need for stabilisation services, such as Housing-First initiatives, that provide secure housing alongside addiction support, which can significantly improve recovery rates.



### 3. IPAS – INCREASE FUNDING AND PROVIDE MORE SOLUTIONS TO THE CRITICAL SITUATION IN INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND DIRECT PROVISION.

Urgent political attention is required to address the thousands of people stuck in Direct Provision with permission to remain in Ireland. As of early 2026, there were approximately 33,000 people living in State-provided international protection accommodation in Ireland, including more than 9,500 children. The vast majority in emergency accommodation. Many people seeking international protection in Ireland live in Direct Provision centres, often in cramped conditions with limited privacy and there seems to be no clear solution in sight.

**It is critical that there is a focus on this group in Budget 2026.**

#### **Our Budget 2026 Asks:**

- Increased funding provided to the Department of Housing to ensure that those in IP who have leave to remain are able to **access accommodation on a like for like basis with others**. This requires Housing Plan budgets to be well thought out and adequately funded and take into consideration the full needs of all those who have a right to access.
- A fundamental **cross departmental review** of how housing will be delivered for people with permission to remain in Ireland with an **increase in funding towards adequate services and housing** for those in IP and the establishment of a tenancy sustainment service for those who have moved on from DP to support the prevention of homelessness.



- Longer-term solutions to the challenges facing Ireland's international protection system, including **sustainable funding for integration programs, better coordination across government departments,** and ensuring that protections align with Ireland's commitments under international law.
- A recognition that **tented accommodation is not an adequate response** and funding to find a solution to the use of this type of accommodation.
- **Increase in budget for state departments to train and educate local authority staff** engaging with those coming through the IP system in particular in relation to understanding permissions, rights and stamps and entitlements.



## 4. HOUSING FIRST – INCREASE FUNDING AND PRIORITISATION OF HOUSING FIRST TO ENSURE MOST COMPLEX SERVICE USERS CAN LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

Depaul advocates strongly for investment in Housing-First initiatives to ensure the most complex service users can live with support, independently. Depaul knows that many individuals experience cycles of housing instability without sustained support. Preventing recurrent homelessness requires a focus on long-term solutions that go beyond initial emergency housing. Our experience shows that tenancy sustainment, trauma-informed care, and ongoing wraparound supports are critical to helping people maintain stable homes.

### Our Budget 2026 Asks:

- **Accelerate the delivery of supported and independent Housing First accommodation** and ensure that healthcare, particularly mental health and addiction services, are embedded and budgeted for within our housing system planning.
- Housing-First fails without housing supply - **provide additional funds for the development and purchase of accommodation specifically for the needs of Housing First type tenants.**
- **Full funding for multidisciplinary supports including mental health, addiction, primary care, and tenancy sustainment.** To include ongoing capital expenditure for the upkeep and maintenance of such units on a national basis.
- A dedicated **allocation of social housing units annually for Housing First** tenants.
- Recognise the need for and provide **funding provision for drug, alcohol, and mental health interventions** as part of a coordinated, wraparound approach to homelessness services.
- Recruitment and retention are major challenges in homelessness services. **Additional funding for professional training in trauma-informed care and Housing First practice.**



## 5. STAFF – PROVIDE ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR STAFF IN THE VOLUNTARY AND SOCIAL SECTOR. THAT WILL ENSURE CAPACITY TO BOTH BENCHMARK SALARIES AND INDEX THEM AGAINST PUBLIC SECTOR CONTEMPORARIES AND ANY PUBLIC PAY AGREEMENTS THAT ARE NEGOTIATED.

A critical issue is the need for an immediate increase in funding for staff pay and conditions in the voluntary and social sector and a link to any future public service pay awards. Resolving pay disparities for Section 10, 56 and 39 organisations is urgent to attract and retain skilled professionals, as many organisations have services at risk of closure due to a lack of staff.

In order to attract and retain talent, we must have the ability to offer competitive salaries to help attract skilled professionals and reduce turnover. High staff turnover can disrupt services and negatively impact those relying on support.

### Our Budget 2026 Asks:

- The **inclusion of all statutory funding streams** that support the provision of essential services on behalf of the state.
- **Funding that will ensure capacity to both benchmark salaries and index them** against public sector contemporaries and any public pay agreements that are negotiated.
- **Adherence to the WRC national pay agreement regarding section 10, 39, 56** - including implementation, adequate funding and resourcing - while also taking into account future alignment with public pay sector agreements.
- WRC agreement 9.25% - agreed on behalf of frontline staff. Depaul would like to see **an efficient mechanism for implementing and rolling this out for this and future rounds.**
- Implementation of the agreement in the WRC in terms of **pay parity for the voluntary and community sector** with an automatic link to the Public service award process.



## 6. FUNDING – AGREEMENT AROUND FULL COST OF SERVICE DELIVERY FOR HOMELESS ORGANISATIONS.

The homelessness sector requires adequate and sustainable annual funding that reflects the real full cost of service delivery in the ever changing climate we find ourselves in.

Funding needs to meet the ever evolving needs of the significant crisis we find ourselves in. This crisis – that has come about as a result of the chronic undersupply of housing in the market, the unprecedented levels of homelessness, and the persistent issue of the need for the provision of appropriate and quality accommodation for vulnerable groups such as those in IP and DP.

### Our Budget 2026 Asks:

- Provide **multi-annual funding** to the homeless sector that reflects the **full cost of service delivery**.
- **CCMA Section 10 review recommendations - to be funded and fully implemented** with the HSE fully reviewing its funding role of homeless services.
- **Funding that allows for inflation** and the increasing needs placed on services as the homelessness crisis continues to escalate with demands increasing on services daily.
- Recognition that once the process of engagement with the CCMA is completed - **increased funding will be needed for the additional recommendations** to ensure organisations are adequately funded.





# PRIORITISING PREVENTION IS KEY FOR BUDGET 2026

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE AND COMPLEX INDIVIDUALS MEANS TAKING ACTION TO TRANSFORM LIVES.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS REQUIRES MORE THAN TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS. WE KNOW THE STATE CAN DO MORE TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS AND REACH THOSE MOST IN NEED.

AS AN ORGANISATION, WE ARE ADVOCATING FOR MORE FOCUS ON KEY AREAS SUCH AS HOUSING, HEALTH - INCLUDING MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION.

**PRIORITISE THE WOMEN, MEN, AND CHILDREN OF IRELAND WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN BUDGET 2026.**



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## GET IN TOUCH

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Homelessness has no place

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