



Invitation to submit a research tender

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1. Invitation to tender

Respond wishes to contract a researcher or team of researchers to conduct an evaluation of its national Family Hub/Supported Temporary Accommodation services. This is an open invitation to tender, seeking tenders from suitably qualified and experienced researchers or teams of researchers.

2. About Respond

Respond believes that every person has the right to a secure, affordable home that meets their needs throughout their lifetime. Our vision is that every family and individual in Ireland will have high-quality housing as part of a vibrant and caring community. Respond, a not-for-profit housing association, has been working all around Ireland for over 36 years. We are proactively responding to the housing and homelessness crisis by providing on-the-ground solutions and we are working hard to identify ways to support people to move out of homelessness into secure homes quickly. We own and manage 4,502 homes with approximately 9,000 tenants across the 26 counties in Ireland.

In Respond, we place emphasis on acute need and on the provision of support for tenants to lead fruitful lives in vibrant communities. We provide emergency accommodation with support for families who are homeless in six Family Hubs, funded by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, Limerick City and County Council and the Health Services Executive, where our goal is to support families to move into secure homes as quickly as possible, leaving homelessness behind. Our experience to date indicates that families experiencing homelessness often need ongoing, wraparound support in relation to access to housing, mental and physical health services, family or parenting support and a range of other issues. We also continue to work with families once they have moved on to ensure the sustainability of these exits. In addition to housing and related work, we also provide Day Care Services for Older People, Early Education, Childcare, Family Support and Resettlement services.

As per our Strategic Plan 2019-2023 our Guiding Principles are:

A Human Right to Housing: Respond believes that every human being is equal in rights and dignity and has the right to a secure, affordable home which meets their needs throughout their lifetime. Respond will strive to ensure that the services we provide are inclusive, empowering and value the human rights of the people we work with and support.

Social Justice: All our initiatives will focus on creating a more just and equal society. We will seek to identify the root cause of social problems and, where we can, seek to address these through the deployment of our resources, expertise and energies. As a not-for-profit organisation, Respond will be measured by the positive impact we have on the lives of the individuals, families and communities we serve and our wider contribution to the well-being of Irish society.

In our work with families and children we have committed to supporting households and individuals experiencing homelessness on their journey back to independent living and providing safe and secure housing in the short-term in the form of supported temporary emergency accommodation (*Strategic Goal 3: Homeless Services*).

Specifically:

- To continue to manage Family Hubs in an efficient, professional and person-centred manner.
- To develop a number of additional Family Hubs between 2019 and 2023 with a particular focus on urban centres.
- To strive towards ensuring that families and individuals stay in Respond Family Hubs and other Respond emergency accommodation projects/centres for the shortest possible period of time prior to moving on to more long term secure homes.

- To develop wrap-around and progressive supports which will involve a holistic and integrated range of supports for people living in Family Hubs and other emergency accommodation projects and which will also seek to involve residents progressing from Respond Family Hubs to Respond long-term housing schemes.
- To collaborate and work with other Approved Housing Bodies and homelessness organisations to coordinate activities and projects in the best interests of homeless families and individuals.
- In addition to Family Hubs, Respond will also seek to identify other ways in which it might support people to move out of homelessness and into more permanent and secure accommodation e.g. Housing First.
- To promote means of avoiding the repossession of homes due to mortgage default.

3. About Family Homelessness and Family Hubs

3.1 Family Homelessness

Homelessness in Ireland is a major crisis. The reduction in social house building and the rapid rise in rents, particularly in urban areas, has taken its toll with huge pressures on housing affordability. As of May 2019, there were 10,253 men, women and children in emergency accommodation, including 1,700 families with 3,749 children¹. However, these figures do not include rough sleepers and those who are living in 'hidden homeless' situations staying with friends or family as they have no other choice. They also do not include adults and children in domestic violence refuges, those in direct provision, hospitals or prison.

The homelessness crisis is concentrated both geographically and demographically. Dublin's homeless population is by far the highest in Ireland, which is similar to the situation in most other countries where homelessness is concentrated in capital cities. This is attributable to the high population of capital cities and the fact that people often migrate to cities when in housing difficulties seeking a change in opportunities and/or services and supports. Homelessness is not randomly distributed across the population but is more likely to impact those on low incomes and living in poverty and those in vulnerable populations, with non-Irish national families being three times more likely to be homeless². People who have disabilities are twice as likely to be homeless³ and those from a travelling background are nine times as likely as the general population.⁴

However, the starkest demographic trend, and indeed that which most clearly characterises the current crisis, is the increase in family homelessness since 2014. Whereas the official figure for those in emergency accommodation has increased by 218% since July 2014, that of family homelessness has

¹ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, *Homelessness Report April 2019* (2019). Available at: https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/homeless_report_-_april_2019.pdf

² Dublin Region Homeless Executive, *A Report on the 2016 and 2017 Families who Experienced Homelessness in the Dublin Region* (2018), p. 11. Available at: <https://www.homelessdublin.ie/content/files/A-report-on-the-2016-and-2017-families-who-experienced-homelessness-in-the-Dublin-Region.pdf>

³ Central Statistics Office, *Census 2016 Results: Profile 5 – Homeless Persons in Ireland* (2016). Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile-5-homelesspersonsinireland/>

⁴ Grotti, R., Russell, H., Fahey, É., Maître, B., *Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland* (IHREC and ESRI, June 2018), p.ix. Available at: <https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/Discrimination-and-Inequality-in-Housing-in-Ireland..pdf>.

increased by 400% in this same time period, from 344 to 1,729⁵. Apart from the demographic variations already mentioned, two thirds of homeless families are headed by a single parent⁶.

3.2 Family Hubs/Supported Temporary Accommodation

The initial government response to the crisis in family homelessness was to re-purpose hotels, B&Bs and hostels as emergency accommodation. However, the limitations of this approach quickly became clear and hotels were criticised for failing to provide basic facilities for cooking and washing, as well as being an unsuitable environment in which to raise children. A report released last year by the Children's Rights Alliance found that homelessness has profound impacts on the basic needs, social and emotional development, and school life of children⁷. The government had hoped to phase out hotels as a means of short term accommodation by mid-2017⁸, but this did not occur as the number of people becoming homeless continued to grow.

It was in this context that Family Hubs emerged in late 2016 as an alternative form of supported temporary accommodation for families. Family Hubs are tailored for use by families and their main feature is that they contain more facilities for cooking, washing and family and communal space. There is a general consensus that Family Hubs provide a better alternative to hotels and B&Bs in the context of the housing and homeless crisis. However, Family Hubs are run by a number of different providers, some of which are NGOs and others of which are private companies. Consequently, consistent service provision can be an issue. The National Quality Standards Framework is currently being rolled out across homeless services, including Respond's services. The supports for families range from intensive wraparound services to brief intervention visiting services model. Some Family Hubs provide child and adolescent support staff and arrange activities, classes, outings, etc., for children⁹. It is not always clear in commentary on Family Hubs which model of service is being assessed and commented on.

Respond's first Family Hub was opened in November 2016, and by the end of 2018 there were 26 Family Hubs operating nationally, with a total capacity for over 600 families¹⁰. However, this still leaves hotels and B&Bs as the dominant means of accommodation for homeless families. Both Family Hubs and their alternatives are designed to be short-term emergency accommodation, with 69% of families spending less than twelve months in emergency accommodation and 44% staying for less than six¹¹. The longer people are homeless the greater the impact on their overall health and wellbeing. Move on

⁵ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, *Breakdown of Homeless Persons in Emergency Accommodation* (2014). Available at: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/breakdown-homeless-persons-emergency-accommodation-during-week-22-28-december-0>

⁶ Dublin Region Homeless Executive, *A Report on the 2016 and 2017 Families who Experienced Homelessness in the Dublin Region* (2018), p. 11. Available at: <https://www.homelessdublin.ie/content/files/A-report-on-the-2016-and-2017-families-who-experienced-homelessness-in-the-Dublin-Region.pdf>

⁷ McKenna, G., Scanlon G., *Home Works: A Study on the Educational Needs of Children Experiencing Homelessness and Living in Emergency Accommodation* (2019) p. 46. Available at: https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/Home%20Works%20Study%20on%20the%20Educational%20Needs%20of%20Children%20Experiencing%20Homelessness%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf

⁸ Government of Ireland, *Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* (2016), p.34. Available at http://rebuildingireland.ie/Rebuilding%20Ireland_Action%20Plan.pdf.

⁹ Ombudsman for Children's Office, *No Place Like Home: Children's views and experiences from living in Family Hubs* (2019), p. 23. Available at: <https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2019/04/No-Place-Like-Home.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Dublin Region Homeless Executive, *A Report on the 2016 and 2017 Families who Experienced Homelessness in the Dublin Region* (2018), p. 11. Available at: <https://www.homelessdublin.ie/content/files/A-report-on-the-2016-and-2017-families-who-experienced-homelessness-in-the-Dublin-Region.pdf>

rates from Respond Family Hubs specifically are shorter, at approximately seven months¹². While there is no substitute for a secure home, the nature and extent of the supports made available during periods of homelessness have a meaningful impact on how quickly such a home can be attained.

Since we opened our first Family Hub, 253 families have been supported in our services. Historically, Respond has had some experience providing homeless services; in 2002, Respond set up Suaimhneas in Limerick City which, at any given time, provides emergency accommodation and a range of support services to 6 mothers who are experiencing homelessness and their children who were experiencing homelessness. In 2012, as part of an integrated development in Springfield, Tallaght, we opened up a facility named Cuan Álainn which provides accommodation for 9 families in a communal residential building and self-contained apartments.

In line with housing and health policy, Respond implements a model of care for homeless families with complex and multiple needs, as part of an integrated housing and health response. The Respond model places a huge emphasis on wraparound supports as our experience to date indicates that families in Family Hubs and emergency accommodation need ongoing support in relation to access to housing, mental and physical health support, family or parenting support and a range of other issues. We are currently running six Family Hubs, five in Dublin and one in Limerick.

4. Researching Family Hubs

We now wish to undertake an independent evaluation to deepen our understanding of the Respond Family Hub model and to see how the Family Hub based responses to family homelessness can be improved to lead to a better experience for families and children. For this we are proposing a mixed methods approach including consultation with families and children, key stakeholders, staff and experts. This research would be undertaken across all our Family Hub services and will help ensure our service delivery and advocacy work is underpinned with evidence and good practice.

In particular, we propose the evaluation does the following:

- Profiles and identifies the pathways into homelessness of families using the Family Hubs Services and the diversity of need.
- Identifies what is working well and identify any areas of refinement in service delivery.
- Defines and writes up the programme model including the different programme components.
- Identify the levels of consistency between different services in application of the model.
- Explore the national and international evidence base for service delivery approach(es) and models in relation to family and child homelessness.

5. Management of the research process

A Respond Advisory Group will oversee the research process. The group's role may involve discussing and approving aspects of the evaluation design and instruments, as well as advising and supporting the researchers as they carry out all aspects of the evaluation and implementation and monitoring of recommendations, as appropriate. Membership of the Advisory Group will include: Head of Advocacy and Communications, Head of Services, Homeless Services Coordinator and the Chief Executive Officer. Day-to-day management of the evaluation process/contract will be led by Respond's Head of Advocacy and Communications.

¹² Respond, *Annual Report 2017* (2017), p. 34. Available at: <https://www.respond.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Respond-Annual-Report-2017.pdf>

6. Format of tenders

Selection of a researcher or research team to carry out the evaluation will be made at the discretion of Respond. Applicants should submit a tender document which addresses the points listed below in the order given. The tender document should be no more than 3,000 words (excluding CVs, which should be added as appendices). Please find the information headings to be addressed in the tender document below.

General information

- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the applicant, who should be the principal investigator or leader of the research team.
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the person who will act as administrative contact, if not the same as the applicant.
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of any third parties, partners or collaborators involved in the tender, along with a description of their role or the element of the contract that they will fulfil.
- Confirmation of acceptance by the applicant and any third parties of the conditions of the tendering process as set out.
- A copy of the applicant's Tax Clearance certificate, or, in the case of a non-resident applicant, a statement from the Revenue Commissioners confirming suitability on tax grounds.

Previous relevant experience and expertise

- Outline of the qualifications and relevant professional experience of each member of the evaluation team. Please add a summary CV of each member of the research team as an appendix to the tender document. Each CV must not exceed two A4 pages.
- In particular, please describe how the team's expertise and competencies relate to the area of work described in the tender, substantiated with evidence such as published work if possible.
- Provide evidence to demonstrate the team's knowledge of current relevant national and international policy and practice.
- Outline your understanding of data protection legislation including responding to data access requests, sharing of information etc.

Research methodology

- Outline how the research would be tackled. This should start with a 200-word overview of your proposed approach, and then outline your approach to the following areas:
 - Formulation of research questions;
 - Identification of key stakeholders, staff and experts who should be consulted for this research;
 - Methods to be used to investigate research questions;
 - Types of data to be gathered;
 - Instruments to be used to gather data;
 - Methods for analysis of data;
 - Ethical issues to be addressed before, during and after the research process.

Timetable

- Proposal for a calendar/time-table of activities from start to finish.

Schedule of costs

- Quote costs in euro (€).
- The value of the tender should not exceed €25,000 exclusive of VAT.
- The budget must show the total costs of the research project, including any expenditure to third parties, collaborators or subcontractors.
- Use the following as main headings for the breakdown of costs, subdivided as required.
 - Salaries (include details for each person involved and note their role or position in relation to the project).
 - Data collection and processing costs, including IT.
 - Administration (explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
 - Overheads (give details of cost headings for overheads, and explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
 - Other costs appropriate to a project of this nature (which must be specified and defined).

7. Requests for further information or clarification

Requests for further information or clarification of any aspect of this process or expectations for this evaluation can be made by email to research@respond.ie. To ensure equitable treatment of prospective tenderers, where such additional information or clarification is provided, Respond will seek to make relevant information available to all. Therefore, please provide a contact email address with your tender to facilitate this information-sharing.

8. Terms and conditions

8.1 Ownership

Respond will remain the sole owner of all end-products including, but not limited to, research data, reports, manuals or other documentation, programmes, information, etc., irrespective of whether or not the project is completed. The contractor's work shall be acknowledged by Respond in materials produced and disseminated on the basis of work completed under this contract.

Proposals for scholarly/academic publishing under the name(s) of the researcher(s) arising from this research can be discussed with Respond, as owner of the data and other products of the research, and may be agreed to subject to prior approval in writing from Respond.

8.2 Conflict of interest

Any registered interest involving the contractor and Respond, their staff or relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this Invitation to Tender, or should be communicated to Respond immediately upon such information becoming known to the contractor. In any case, such information must be made available prior to the award of the contract. The terms "Registered Interest" and "Relative" shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the *Ethics in Public Office Act 1995*. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify a tenderer or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

8.3 Garda clearance

All researchers who may be required to work directly with children and families throughout this research process will be subject to Garda clearance. If any such researcher has been living or working outside Ireland in the past three years, Respond may also require equivalent clearance.

8.4 Freedom of information

Information supplied in respect of this tender may be disclosed by Respond under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, unless it is exempt from Disclosure under that Act (e.g. personal information or commercially sensitive information where the public interest in non-disclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure). Tenderers are invited to indicate if they consider any information supplied to be sensitive. Under Section 29 of the Act, any tenderer must be consulted by Respond before any decision to disclose such information.

8.5 Changes to invitation to tender

Respond reserves the right to update or alter the information contained in this document at any time, but not later than seven days before the closing date for the receipt of tenders. Participating tenderers will be informed as the need arises.

There is no obligation on Respond to accept the lowest cost or any tender, and it may be decided, following the review of the tenders, not to proceed or to proceed with a new invitation to tender or an amended version of the proposed research.

9. Submission of tenders

Tenders should be submitted by email attachment as a single PDF or Microsoft Word document (with researcher CVs as appendices) to research@respond.ie. Receipt of tenders will be acknowledged. The closing date for receipt of completed tenders is the 30.08.2019. Incomplete tenders, tenders that do not follow the format prescribed above, or tenders received after the closing date will not be considered.

10. Assessment of tenders and selection of researcher(s)

All tenders will be evaluated against set criteria as outlined below:

- Overall alignment with research brief.
- Experience of conducting similar research studies, preferably using mixed methods.
- Knowledge and experience of the subject area, specifically research with families and children, homelessness and interventions offered to families and children.
- Budget and value for money.
- Proposed time-frame and evidence of ability to meet deadlines.
- Capacity for project management, administration, and to develop and maintain relationships with the various stakeholders.
- Ethics and ethos.

Respond reserves the right to seek additional information and/or interview tenderers in connection with its assessment of their tenders. It is anticipated that a number of tenderers will be shortlisted for interview.

The principal investigator and other key members of the research team should be available to attend the interview. Respond will not be held liable for any costs incurred by tenderers in relation to the tender submission or the assessment/interview process.

Respond reserves the right not to award the contract in the event that no tender is found to be suitable.