

Pre Budget Submission

August 2020



About Respond

Respond, a not-for-profit housing association and service provider, has been working all around Ireland for over 38 years. Our vision is that every family and individual in Ireland will have high-quality housing as part of a vibrant and caring community. We are proactively responding to the housing and homelessness crisis providing real 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 4,481 homes across the 26 counties in Ireland where 9,480 tenants live.

We provide emergency accommodation with support for families who are homeless in six Family Homeless Services where our goal is to support families to move into secure homes as quickly as possible leaving homelessness behind. We provide 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 Childhood Care and Education services, Family Support and Refugee 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 that 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.

About Approved Housing Bodies

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) are not-for-profit organisations that have a social purpose; providing for people's housing needs by working in close co-operation with the Government, local authorities and relevant agencies. In particular, we work in partnership with local authorities to support the provision of housing and, in many cases, additional supports. The Government has recognised that AHBs are central to the meeting of Ireland's social and affordable housing needs, recognising that AHBs will deliver one-third of the 50,000 additional social homes needed.

Introduction

The impact of Covid-19 has been felt most severely by those who were already vulnerable; people without secure homes, older people and people with pre-existing health conditions. It has been shown all too clearly how having a safe, secure place to call home as part of a vibrant, diverse community is critical to the quality of life and wellbeing of individuals and families. Having learned from the mistakes of the last recession we must now adopt a counter-cyclical investment approach; maintaining and increasing investment in social and affordable housing. This will support the economy to recover quickly and allow for the continued provision of housing to those who urgently need it.

Never has it been more important to have a secure home. It is important to recall that prior to the arrival of Covid-19 to our shores the issues which dominated General Election 2020 were housing, homelessness and health. The Ipsos MRBI exit poll conducted on behalf of The Irish Times, RTE, TG4 and UCD indicated that health was the major issue for a third of all respondents while housing and homelessness was the main issue for 26%¹. Covid-19 has shone a light on these issues showing clearly just how critical housing and health are to a resilient and thriving society and economy.

In Respond, we see the devastating impact that homelessness, insecure housing and exclusion have every day, in our work with individuals, families and children. Consequentially, we believe that every person must have the right to a secure, affordable home that meets their needs throughout their lifetime. Respond's vision is that every family and individual in Ireland will have high-quality housing as part of a vibrant and caring community.

This time last year, nobody could have foreseen the global pandemic and the impact it would have on all of our lives. The formation of the new Government and the publication of the *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020* was very welcome with ambitious commitments relevant to the work of Respond as an Approved Housing Body (AHB) and a service provider providing Family Homeless Services, Early childhood and Education Services, Day Care Services for Older People, Family Support and Refugee Resettlement Services.

Budget 2021 presents an opportunity to match these ambitions with the resources and implementation to deliver better outcomes for people, communities and the economy. In the context of Covid-19, we have identified three key areas under which are a series of measures that we believe should be included in Budget 2021.

1 Financing and building more social homes

2 Providing affordable homes

3 Improving lives in our communities

¹ Irish Times 09.02.2020 'Election 2020: Exit poll confirms health, housing and homelessness of most concern to voters'.

10 Priority Actions for Budget 2021

We call on the Government to consider the following recommendations for Budget 2021



Financing and building more social homes

01

Maintaining construction in the Covid-19 crisis

while recognising the primacy of public health concerns and ensuring guidelines are followed. Having learned from the mistakes of the last recession, we need to adopt a counter-cyclical investment approach; maintaining and increasing investment in social and affordable housing. This will support the economy to recover quickly and the continued provision housing to those who need it.

03

Reverse the classification of Approved Housing Bodies

The commitment in the *Programme for Government* for the Government to work to move Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) off Government balance sheet is welcome. We now urgently need the Government to set out the approach to achieving this reversal.

02

Increase Capital Investment budget for social housing

building specifically for Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) allocation and the associated Payment and Availability (P&A) allocation to ensure the scheme keeps pace with demand. This is essential to meet the *Programme for Government* commitment to increase the social housing stock by more than 50,000 in the next five years, with an emphasis on new builds. We are happy to play our part, along with other AHBs, to deliver on the target of delivering one third of those homes.

04

Create more regional balance in relation to the CALF and P&A model

Measures are needed to offset the regional imbalance in relation to CALF and the P&A model in areas where there is an established need and demand for housing and the market rents are insufficient to sustain the cost of new construction/acquisition. These measures could include the provision of a higher level of CALF (above maximum of 30%), longer loan duration, lower interest rates, regeneration funding and/or strategic infrastructure funding. Respond would welcome engagement with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on this.

05

Restore Part V

Restore Part V to at least 20% for social and affordable housing in any new private housing development. This is an effective way of ensuring some of the gains from an accelerating housing market go towards those at the lower end of the income distribution.



Providing affordable rental homes

06

National Affordable (Intermediate) Rental Scheme

The urgent rollout of a National Affordable (Intermediate) Rental Scheme would increase the availability of affordable homes for those who need them, with the engagement of AHBs and local authorities in delivery. A CALF-type payment for the duration of the loan, over approximately 40 years, is essential to such a scheme.



Improving lives in our communities

07

Housing for Older people

Funding to ensure the full implementation of the policy statement *Housing Options for Our Ageing Population* and that a full range of housing options as outlined in the *Programme for Government 2020* are available for the older population. This is particularly important in the context of Covid-19.

09

Childcare Ireland agency establishment

We support the *Programme for Government* commitment to establish the Childcare Ireland agency. This should happen as a matter of urgency especially given the significant impact Covid-19 has on the sector.

10

Early intervention and Family Support

The State must fully resource community based early intervention and family support services to improve the quality of life for all in our communities.

08

Homelessness

Prevention:

Continued and increased funding for primary and secondary homeless prevention services.

Quality of emergency accommodation:

Resource improvement in the quality of emergency accommodation including family homeless services. Own door accommodation is the preferable options to support autonomy, independence and family functioning.

Support for families and children:

Ensure there is funding available so that families and children who are homeless have support available to them as needed e.g. Trauma Informed Care, Child and Youth Support, Mental Health Support.

Housing First:

Ring-fenced resources for the rapid implementation of the National Implementation Strategy for Housing First.

Financing and building more social homes



The current housing crisis is, at its core, a crisis in social housing and it is having negative impacts on the overall housing market with wider impacts on health, transport and the economic sustainability of the country. As a key stakeholder in the new *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 20202 and Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness*³, we are committed to playing our part. Respond recognises that there is scope to improve and provide innovative solutions to structural challenges which can be implemented within the current frameworks to improve social housing supply.

According to the ESRI⁴ in the current context of Covid-19 the housing market is unlikely to play such a central role in the domestic recession as it did in 2007/2008 where the rapid increase in house prices leading up to the financial crisis and the expansion of private credit resulted in significant impacts for both the Irish financial sector and general economy (2020,p4).

However the impact of Covid-19 on the Irish economy will undoubtedly have implications for the Irish housing market⁵. Approximately 34,000 new dwellings are required per annum up to 2030 to keep pace with projected population growth alone⁶ with Lyons (2020) arguing that for 2020 to 2025 demand for housing nationwide is likely to be 47,000 per year⁷. However, recent output has been below this level indicating an expansion in supply is required⁸. A counter-cyclical investment approach which maintains and increases investment in social and affordable housing is required. This will support the economy to recover and deliver homes to individuals and families who urgently need them.

The most recent Social Housing Needs Assessment⁹ (2018) indicates that 68,693 households were assessed as qualified for housing support as of 24 June 2019. This represents a decrease of 4.4% (by 3,165

Approximately 34,000 new dwellings are required per annum up to 2030 to keep pace with projected population growth alone

households) compared to the previous assessment in June 2018. However Social Justice Ireland (2020¹⁰) have highlighted that there has been some debate surrounding the methodology used by local authorities in confirming household's remaining on the housing waiting list with an 'opt in' letter which, if not returned, results in automatic removal from the list.

Further exploration of the figures show some interesting trends including:

- **43.2%** of the total number are in the four Dublin Authorities.
- **Approximately 53%** of households who qualified for social housing support are currently in the private rented sector.
- **Almost 27%** of all households qualified for support have been waiting for more than seven years for social housing support.
- The number of households where the main applicant is aged 60 years or more increased by **4.4%** (277 households).
- **Over half** (37,339 households) were considered 'unemployed and in receipt of social welfare benefit'.
- **47%** (32,607 households) were one adult households, the largest household size type.

It is clear the Private Rental Sector is not working for many private renters or those in receipt of Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance Payment (RS/HAP) payments. While rent inflation slowed in 2019, rents have risen for 29 consecutive quarters and are 35% higher than the previous peak¹¹. The Government's projected 2020 spend on HAP was revised downwards from €502.7 million to €497.7 million in December 2019¹².

In 2018 the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform queried this provision of social housing support (HAP) on a value for money basis¹³. A further report by that Department in October 2019 concluded that due to the relative cost of HAP and rent inflation that the best way to meet housing need in a sustained way is to increase new housing stock in line with projected targets¹⁴. This point is supported by Lewis who argues that changes to HAP are a necessary part of the 'recalibration' of the existing model of social housing because the current arrangements results in a residual build-up of significant long term financial commitments for the state and any move to limit access to new applicants risks creating segments of the population with different (and difficult to control) entitlements not available to the next generation (2019, pp148-149).

2 Gov.ie (2020) Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020.

Available online at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8040b7-programme-for-government-programme-for-a-partnership-government/>

3 Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness (2016) Available online at <https://rebuildingireland.ie/>

4 Allen-Coughlan, M and McQuinn (2020) Property prices and Covid-19 related administrative closures: What are the implications? Working Paper No:661 May 2020 ESRI. Available online at https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/WP661_0.pdf

5 ESRI, 2020 Ibid.

6 Conefrey T. and D. Staunton (2019). Population Change and Housing Demand in Ireland, Central Bank of Ireland Economic Letter No. 14. Available online at [https://www.centralbank.ie/docs/default-source/publications/economic-letters/vol-2019-no-14-population-change-and-housing-demand-in-ireland-\(conefrey-and-staunton\).pdf](https://www.centralbank.ie/docs/default-source/publications/economic-letters/vol-2019-no-14-population-change-and-housing-demand-in-ireland-(conefrey-and-staunton).pdf)

7 Lyons, R (2020) Ireland's Housing Need & Policy Options: An Overview. For Property Industry Ireland.

Available online at <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/4065c16c/files/uploaded/Identify%20Consulting%20Full%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

8 Conefrey T. and D. Staunton (2019) Ibid.

9 Housing Agency (2019) Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2019. Available online at <https://www.housingagency.ie/sites/default/files/SHA-Summary-2019-DEC-2019-WEB.pdf>

10 Social Justice Ireland (2020) Time to set a new Social Housing target. Available online at <https://www.socialjustice.ie/content/policy-issues/time-set-new-social-housing-target>

11 Lyons, R (2020) Ibid

12 The Journal 12.02.2020 'FactCheck: Will the government spend more on HAP than on new social housing this year?'

Available online at <https://www.thejournal.ie/factcheck-spend-rent-subsidies-social-housing-5004540-Feb2020/>

13 O'Callaghan, D and Kilkenny, P (2018) Current and Capital Expenditure on Social Housing Delivery Mechanism.

Available online at: <https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/19.-Current-and-Capital-Expenditure-on-Social-Housing-Delivery.pdf>

14 Kilkenny, P (2019) Trend Analysis: Housing Assistance Payment (2014-2019)

It is clear that while meeting temporary housing need HAP is expensive, insecure and brings little long-term benefit to the tenant or the State in terms of return in the form of assets. Offering lifetime social and affordable housing tenancies is the best way to address the significant levels of housing need and are more cost-effective offering better value for money for the State. The State must reduce the reliance on the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and leasing and invest in social and affordable housing as long term assets. Funding Approved Housing Body housing projects is more cost effective delivering long term homes for families and individuals who need them.

In 2018, Eurostat and the CSO deemed 14 of the largest Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) to be part of the General Government sector and, as a result, reclassified on the Government's Balance Sheet^{15,16}. This means all capital spending will be on the government balance sheet, even if funded from the private sector. AHBs will be competing with other government priorities: health, education, etc. This presents a significant threat to the delivery of social homes by AHB's where there are expectations the sector will deliver one third plus of social housing targets.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Part V) provides for social and affordable housing obligations for developers. The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 included a number of changes to Part V to increase the supply of social housing available and to provide for transparency in the Part V process¹⁷. Part V housing units in developments are an effective way of ensuring some of the gains from growing private housing supply go towards those at the lower end of the income distribution¹⁸. There should be no option for developers to buy-out or in any other way secure a derogation from this obligation. The focus on expanding Part V in the *Programme for Government* is welcome but the inclusion of affordable purchase and cost rental units should be in addition to the existing social housing requirement not instead of it.

Respond, as a national organisation operating in all 26 counties in the Republic of Ireland, are anxious to work all across the country in urban and rural communities. The Capital Advanced Loan Facility (CALF) and Payment and Availability (P&A) model backed by market rents allow for enhanced delivery in areas where rents are high. However, this methodology can act as a disincentive to investment in areas where rents are lower e.g. outside cities and commuter belt areas. We welcome the commitments in the *Programme for Government* 2020 to balanced regional development to revitalise and reboot our cities, towns, villages and rural areas. This is reinforced by commitments elsewhere see Project Ireland 2040, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, the National Planning Framework, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme etc.

15 Eurostat and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) deemed 14 of the largest Tier 3 Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to be part of the General Government sector and, as a result, on the Government's Balance Sheet.

16 CSO Classification of Approved Housing Bodies. Available online at <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/governmentaccounts/classificationdecisions/classificationofapprovedhousingbodies/>

17 Beauchamps (2017) Social housing – complying with Part V obligations. Available at online at <https://beauchamps.ie/publications/464>

18 National Economic and Social Council, (2011). "Approaches to Land Management, Value, and Betterment" Housing in Ireland: Background Paper 7. Available online at: http://files.nesc.ie/nesc_background_papers/NESC_112_bg_7.pdf

Recommendations



Maintain construction in the Covid-19 crisis

while recognising the primacy of public health concerns and ensuring guidelines are followed. Having learnt from the mistakes of the last recession, we need to adopt a counter-cyclical investment approach; maintaining and increasing investment in social and affordable housing. This will support the economy to recover quickly and the continued provision housing to those who need it.



Increase Capital Investment budget for social housing building

specifically for Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) allocation and the associated Payment and Availability (P&A) allocation to ensure the scheme keeps pace with demand. This is essential to meet the *Programme for Government* commitment to increase the social housing stock by more than 50,000 in the next five years, with an emphasis on new builds. We are happy to play a part, along with other AHBs, to deliver on the target of delivering one third of those homes.



Reverse the classification of Approved Housing Bodies

The commitment in the *Programme for Government* for the Government to work to move Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) off Government balance sheet is welcome. We now urgently need the Government to set out the approach to achieving this reversal.



Create more regional balance in relation to the CALF and P&A model

Measures are needed to offset the regional imbalance in relation to CALF and the P&A model in areas where there is an established need and demand for housing and the market rents are insufficient to sustain the cost of new construction/acquisition. These measures could include the provision of a higher level of CALF (above maximum of 30%), longer loan duration, lower interest rates, regeneration funding and/or strategic infrastructure funding. Respond would welcome engagement with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on this.



Restore Part V

Restore Part V to at least 20% for social and affordable housing in any new private housing development. This is an effective way of ensuring some of the gains from an accelerating housing market go towards those at the lower end of the income distribution.

Providing affordable rental homes



The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) found that 16% of households spend more than 30% of their net income on housing, with this figure rising to 70% for the lowest quartile of the income distribution¹⁹. In January 2020 the average cost of buying a home was €267,000, with the cost in Dublin approximately €374,000²⁰. However, under macroprudential rules to secure mortgage of €267,000, a purchaser (or joint purchasers) would need a deposit of between €26,700 and €53,400 and an annual income in the region of €76,000²¹.

The lack of affordable housing, whether renting or buying, has the greatest impact of those in low incomes and living in poverty. It is critical to provide a more affordable rental option for people who do not qualify for social housing, but will never be able to afford to purchase their own home. This will also provide more housing options allowing for greater choice. Currently there is no funded model to provide affordable rental housing. The rollout of such a scheme would increase the availability of social and affordable homes, with the engagement of AHBs and local authorities in delivery.

How would this work?

- The 'Affordable Rental Scheme' proposed would involve the provision of discounted rental housing by Approved Housing Bodies and Local Authorities by way of acquisition and construction of housing developments.
- Eligibility would be based on defined minimum and maximum household eligibility limits.
- These homes would be provided at approximately 70% of prevailing market rents. Rents must cover repayments on the loans used to pay for the construction of the homes, the cost of ongoing management and maintenance of the properties and insurance.
- A Capital Advanced Loan Facility (CALF) type loan of 30% minimum of the capital cost of the project over a duration of approximately 40 years will be essential. In addition, senior debt would need to be provided over a long duration at low interest rate.
- Long-term security of tenure would be offered to tenants in these homes.

There is a welcome commitment the Programme for Government to develop 'a cost rental model for the delivery of housing that creates affordability for tenants and a sustainable model for the construction and management of homes'. The rollout of such a scheme would increase the availability of social and affordable homes, with the engagement of AHBs and local authorities in delivery.

Recommendations



The urgent rollout of a National Affordable (Intermediate) Rental Scheme

The urgent rollout of a National Affordable (Intermediate) Rental Scheme would increase the availability of affordable homes for those who need them, with the engagement of AHBs and local authorities in delivery. A CALF-type payment for the duration of the loan, over approximately 40 years, is essential to such a scheme.

19 ESRI (2018) Exploring Affordability in the Irish Context (No WP593). Available online at <https://www.esri.ie/system/files?file=media/file-uploads/2018-06/WP593.pdf>

20 Myhome.ie (2020) Property Report Q1 2020. Available online at <https://www.myhome.ie/reports/2020/Q1>

21 Mortgages.ie (2020) Borrowing Limits Examples. Available online at https://www.mortgages.ie/go/first_time_buyers/how_much_can_i_borrow/borrowing_limits_examples

Improving lives in our communities



Housing does not exist in isolation but is part of a community impacted by the wider socio-economic context. Some areas, estates and communities around the country are significantly affected by poverty, inequality and disadvantage. It is vital that new housing developments, so badly needed, also have vital community infrastructure such as those that Respond provide – Early Childhood Care and Education Services, Day Care Centres for Older People, Refugee Resettlement Services and Family Support. We work to promote social inclusion, integration and self-sufficiency. Local services such as these can be the glue that creates and binds a community together.



Housing for older people

Respond has always had a particular focus on the housing needs and other support needs of older people within Irish society. As well as our housing work, we are also the providers of three Daycare Services for Older People. The housing and support needs of older people are often different to the housing needs of the general population. They may be seeking smaller accommodation, sometimes without stairs due to mobility issues. They often welcome the opportunity to be in a complex where they can meet with other older people.

Furthermore, Covid-19 has demonstrated the significant risks associated with nursing homes and the need to explore alternative options. The population of people over 65 years of age is set to increase according to CSO data in 2016 the population aged 65 years and over increased by 19.1% between 2011 and 2016 to 102,174. The need to provide a range of housing options for this cohort is going to become increasingly important.

The 2020 *Programme for Government* provides a welcome commitment to age-friendly housing for older people and to providing an appropriate mix of housing design types, including universally designed units, accommodation for older people and people with disabilities. This includes commitments to task local authorities to work with Approved Housing Bodies, co-operatives, private developers and Age Friendly Ireland on the development/redevelopment of older person housing.

Recommendations



Housing for older people

Funding to ensure the full implementation of the policy statement *Housing Options for Our Ageing Population* and that a full range of housing options as outlined in the *Programme for Government 2020* are available for the older population. This is particularly important in the context of Covid-19.

Homelessness

Homelessness is not randomly distributed across the population but is most likely to impact those on low incomes and living in poverty and those in vulnerable populations. People who have disabilities are twice as likely to be homeless²² and those from a travelling background are nine times as likely as the general population²³. A review of international evidence conducted by the Simon Communities (2019) suggests that prevention services work best when they are universally accessible and part of a broader homeless strategy that involves rapid rehousing services and a strong supply of housing²⁴.

The starkest demographic trend in relation to homelessness in Ireland has been the increase in family homelessness since 2014. Respond provide emergency accommodation with 24/7 wraparound support in six services, five in Dublin and one in Limerick. The impact of homelessness on families is increasingly well documented by qualitative research and as a provider of family homelessness services we see this every day. Research undertaken in Ireland indicates that homelessness has profound impacts on the basic needs, social and emotional development, and school life of children. That the effects on homelessness on children include feelings of low self-esteem and isolation leading to self-harm, to exhaustion and developmental delays and illness^{25,26}. With the advent of Covid-19 in 2020, the challenge of not having a safe, secure place to call home was even more pronounced. There were remarkable and successful efforts across statutory and voluntary sectors to prevent the spread of the virus amongst individuals and families who are homeless and huge efforts to provide housing options quickly.

Women's homelessness can differ significantly to men's in terms of the causes, experiences and pathways out of homelessness²⁷. This is further complicated for women when they are pregnant with health concerns for both mother and child. In addition, there can be difficulty accessing healthcare and prenatal programs, which can result in potential prenatal complications going unnoticed²⁸. There are no figures currently available for the number of children born into homelessness in Ireland. Lone parents have a disproportionate experience of homelessness in Ireland, while they constitute around a quarter of all families in Ireland, they represent 60% families who are homeless²⁹ with the majority of these households headed by a female.

It is welcome to see the commitment to strengthen security of tenure and ensure that Rent Supplement and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) levels are adequate to support vulnerable households. However, the solution to homelessness is access to secure and affordable homes with support for those who need it so commitments to ramping up supply are key in this context.

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- 22 Central Statistics Office, (2016) Census 2016 Results: Profile 5 – Homeless Persons in Ireland. Available online at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile-5-homelesspersonsinireland/>
 - 23 Grotti, R., Russell, H., Fahey, E., Maitre, B., (2018) Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland (IHREC and ESRI). Available online at: <https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/Discrimination-and-Inequality-in-Housing-in-Ireland.pdf>
 - 24 Pleace, N. (2018) Preventing Homelessness: A Review of the International Evidence available online at <https://www.simon.ie/Portals/1/EasyDNNNewsDocuments/223/Preventing%20Homelessness%20-%20A%20Review%20of%20International%20Evidence.pdf>
 - 25 McKenna, G., Scanlon G., (2019) Home Works: A Study on the Educational Needs of Children Experiencing Homelessness and Living in Emergency Accommodation p. 46. Available online 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
 - 26 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, (2019) "Comments on Ireland's 14th National Report on the Implementation of the European Social Charter". Available online at: <https://www.ihrec.ie/documents/comments-irelands-14th-national-report-implementation-european-social-charter/>
 - 27 Mayock, P & Sheridan, S (2015) Simon Communities of Ireland. Available online at: <http://womenshomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Women-Homelessness-and-Service-Provision.pdf>
 - 28 Homeless Hub. Homelessness, reproductive health & pregnancy. Available online at: <https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/homelessness-reproductive-health-pregnancy>
 - 29 St Vincent Depaul (2019) Working, Parenting and Struggling? An analysis of the employment and living conditions of one parent families in Ireland. Available online at <https://www.svp.ie/getattachment/6cd5834e-a8cf-b14c-82227aa5bc61/Working,-Parenting-and-Struggling-Full-Report.aspx>

Recommendations



Prevention

Continued and increased funding for primary and secondary homeless prevention services.



Quality of emergency accommodation

Resource improvement in the quality of emergency accommodation including family homeless services. Own door accommodation is the preferable option to support autonomy, independence and family functioning. This is based on our experience and learning from providing family homeless services. Measures needed include quality standards, inspections and further investment in trained and qualified support staff. It is essential that funding is not diverted from other essential services such as homelessness prevention, Housing First etc.



Support for Families & Children

Ensure there is funding available so that families and children who are homelessness have support available to them as needed e.g. Trauma Informed Care, Child and Youth Support, Mental Health Support. The commitment in the *Programme for Government 2020* to the provision of relevant support services and dedicated funding line to deliver health and mental health supports for people who are homeless with complex needs is critical. This funding and support must be extended to families and children as required. 'Sharing the Vision'³⁰ the successor to 'A Vision for Change' will be important in this context.



Housing First:

Ring-fenced resources for the rapid implementation of the *National Implementation Strategy for Housing First*. We welcome the commitments in the *Programme for Government 2020* to expand the Housing First approach.





Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

As one of the largest providers of community based childhood care and education in the country we welcome the acknowledgment that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the sector and the commitment to continuing Government support to providers and their staff as childcare facilities re-open.

The provision of high quality and affordable early childhood care and education in community settings is critical to sustainable communities. According to Early Years Ireland our current early years and school aged childcare system is fragmented and there is currently no central body responsible for quality, information, programme delivery, financial management oversight or strategic planning³¹.

We support the *Programme for Government* commitment to establish the Childcare Ireland agency. It is proposed that this would assist in the expansion of high quality childcare, spearheading leadership, best practice and innovation and professional development in community and private settings. It will also be tasked with developing career paths for childcare staff and expanding *Síolta* (*Programme for Government*, p93³²). This should happen as a matter of urgency especially given the significant impact Covid-19 has had on the sector.

Recommendations



Establishment of the Childcare Ireland agency

We support the *Programme for Government* commitment to establish the Childcare Ireland agency. This should happen as a matter of urgency especially given the significant impact Covid-19 has on the sector. As one of the largest providers of community based childhood care and education in the country we would welcome engagement on this.

³¹ Early Childhood Ireland (2019) Rising to the Challenge Budget 2020 Submission. Available online at <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Budget2020Submission.pdf>

³² Ibid Available online at <https://static.rasnet.ie/documents/news/2020/06/draft-programme-for-govt.pdf>

Early Intervention and Family Support

In Respond, we are committed to developing vibrant and diverse communities empowering individuals, families and communities to reach their full potential and we provide Family Support and Refugee Resettlement Services working in communities around the country.

Increasingly, evidence supports an understanding that some people face severe multiple disadvantages all at the same time with poverty featuring as the significant background factor. The more extreme the severe and multiple disadvantage is the greater the role poverty plays³³.

The impact of austerity and the reduction in funding for the Community and Voluntary sector with the onset of the economic crisis has been well documented.^{34,35} The effect of these cuts and the reduction in support and community services have been significant with communities suffering multiple disadvantage and cohorts of people, especially young people, being left behind³⁶.

It is clear individual organisations dealing with the impact of these changes on a daily basis cannot solve these issues alone. A whole system approach is needed to address severe and multiple disadvantage in communities all round Ireland, with sustained collaboration and coordination at all levels. The people and communities impacted need to be involved in any, and all, such processes³⁷. Early intervention and prevention is key, research in Scotland, *Hard Edges Scotland*, documents the numerous 'missed opportunities' for preventative interventions³⁸.

It is welcome to see commitments on strengthening early intervention and family support services in the *Programme for Government*, working with families who are experiencing difficulties and may be struggling. This includes investment in community and voluntary family support services and youth work recognising their value in preventing harm and in responding to the needs of vulnerable families.

Recommendations



Early intervention and family support:

Community based early intervention and family support services must be resourced to improve the quality of life for all in our communities.

33 Fitzpatrick et al (2019) *Hard Edges Scotland*. Available online at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/resources/publications/hard-edges-scotland/>

34 Hearne, R (2015) *The Silent Destruction of Community Growth*.

Available online at: <https://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/the-silent-destruction-of-community-growth-345068.html>

35 Harvey, B (2014) *Sate Funding and dissent presentation at NUIM conference Local resistance, global crisis*, 13th June 2014.

Available online at: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Brian%20Harvey.pdf>

36 Ruane, L (2019) 'We need to change society radically from the ground up'.

Available online at: <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/opinion-lynn-ruane-argues-that-strong-communities-are-crucial-to-strong-democracies-4484364-Feb2019/>

37 Fitzpatrick et al (2019) *ibid*

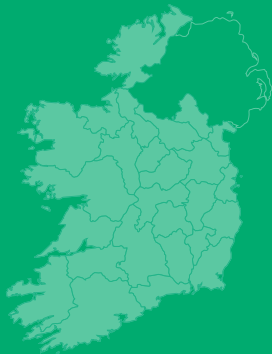
38 Fitzpatrick et al (2019) *ibid*

Respond in Numbers

Building homes

26

Homes in 26 counties
in the Republic of
Ireland



6,370

Properties built by Respond*



1,659

Homes commenced on sites**



€859.6m

Invested in social housing



2,500

Homes to be built 2019-2023



Improving lives



6

Family Homeless
Services

401 families supported



3

Daycare for Older
People Services

180 service users



17

Early Childhood Care and
Education Services

in 12 counties



4

Refugee Resettlement
Services

in 4 counties



3

Family Support
Services

54 families



4,250

Respond Social Housing
Tenancies

10,378 tenants on 163 estates

Information as of 30.06.2020

* This includes social housing, affordable housing for Local Authorities, Community Buildings and Group Homes ** Since 30.05.2018

Respond at a Glance





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