

ANNUAL
REPORT
2004



**HOME
LESS**
agency

making it home

welcome

to the Homeless Agency's inaugural
Annual Report for 2004.

The Homeless Agency is a partnership body that was established as part of the Government strategy on homelessness in May 2001. It is responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the delivery of quality services to people who are homeless in Dublin.

The Homeless Agency co-ordinates homeless services in Dublin, provides training and other supports, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of services, carries out research, and administers statutory funding to homeless services.

The Homeless Agency comprises voluntary and statutory agencies, who are working in partnership to implement agreed plans for the delivery of services to people who are homeless, assisting them to move rapidly to appropriate long term housing and independence. A Consultative Forum advises the Board of management.

Our vision is that by 2010, long-term homelessness and the need for people to sleep rough will be eliminated in Dublin. The risk of a person or family becoming homeless will be minimal due to effective preventative policies and services. Where it does occur, homelessness will be short term and all people who are homeless will be assisted into appropriate housing and the realisation of their full potential and rights as citizens.

Acknowledgements

This is the Homeless Agency's first Annual Report and we would like to acknowledge the generous and invaluable support of voluntary and statutory service providers and funding agencies who made the achievements outlined in this report possible. Thanks are due also to members of the Homeless Agency Board, Consultative Forum, to the members of the working groups, networks and advisory groups, the Department of Health and Children and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Cross Departmental Team on Homelessness, all of whom contributed their time to the work of the Homeless Agency.

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Foreword



Kathleen Holohan - Chair, Homeless Agency Board

I am delighted to welcome the Homeless Agency's inaugural Annual Report.

The picture of homelessness in Dublin in 2004 is much changed compared to when the Homeless Agency was established three years ago. At that time, homelessness was a growing problem, with increasing numbers of rough sleepers, families and young people out of home. Today, the numbers of people using homeless services has stabilised, and in the case of young people and those sleeping rough has reduced. Improvements in the range and quality of services, in the understanding of homelessness, and in the development of partnership working to address it have also marked 2004.

The next three years are crucial to the achievement of our vision. Continued implementation of this current action plan will result in a further reduction in homelessness – and as a consequence a reduction in the number of services – the Homeless Agency is continuing to work hard to put itself out of a job.

Thanks are due to those working in the statutory services, homeless services, and to the Government in relation to the significant progress made to date in tackling homelessness, both in terms of policy development and the allocation of necessary resources.

I also wish to acknowledge the support, assistance and co-operation of the members of the Homeless Agency Board and Consultative Forum, both voluntary and statutory, for all their work in 2004. In particular, Mr Brendan Kenny, Assistant City Manager, Dublin City Council who passed over the post of chair to me earlier this year.

I wish to thank the Director of the Homeless Agency, Mary Higgins, who will leave her post in early 2005, for her great effort and commitment to eliminating homelessness in Dublin.

Finally, I would also like to welcome Dr Derval Howley who will take up the post of Director of the Homeless Agency in March 2005, and who I am positive will make a significant meaningful contribution.

Message from the Chair of the Consultative Forum



Sinead Hanly · Chair, Homeless Agency Consultative Forum

The role of the Consultative Forum is to act as the 'strategic planning forum' for homeless services in Dublin. Members of the Forum worked closely with the Board to develop the *Action Plan on Homelessness in Dublin 2004–2006: Making It Home*. The Forum continues to work with the Board in monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan from a service delivery and operational perspective and the Forum will propose the next action plan to the Board.

During 2004 the Consultative Forum continued to meet every two months. There are 23 members on the Forum, consisting of a wide range of representatives at operational and managerial level across the statutory and NGO sectors. A full list of the members on the Forum is included in Appendix One of this report.

In addition to its specific brief in relation to the Action Plan, the Forum has played a critical role in developing partnership by facilitating exchange of information and discussion of emerging issues. The Forum and its working groups will continue to be significant in the ongoing development of local community responses to homelessness in Dublin.

We warmly welcome this first annual report of the Homeless Agency and look forward to continuing our partnership to eliminate homelessness by 2010.

Introduction

The Homeless Agency launched its Strategic Plan – *Making it Home 2004-2006* in July 2004. This followed the Homeless Agency's first action plan on homelessness in Dublin '*Shaping the Future*' which covered the period 2001-2003.

Shaping the Future set out a bold vision for the future – that long-term homelessness and the need for people to sleep rough would be eliminated by 2010. It envisaged that in the future the risk of a person or family becoming homeless will be minimal due to effective preventative policies and services. Where it does occur, homelessness will be short term and all people who are experiencing homelessness will be assisted into appropriate housing and the realisation of their full potential and rights as a citizen.

During this period significant progress was made on a number of fronts including the quality, range and focus of services available to people who are homeless.

However, much more needs to be done before we can realise our vision.

2004 saw the first phase of implementation of the new Homeless Agency Action Plan *Making it Home 2004-2006*.

Making it Home was launched by the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, Noel Ahern TD, on 28th July 2004. The launch was attended by over 200 people from homeless services countrywide, as well as representatives from government departments, other public bodies and from the voluntary, community and private sectors.

Key Strategic Aims

The key strategic aims of the Action Plan are to:

- ❖ **PROVIDE** effective leadership and coordination in the implementation of the plan
- ❖ **REDUCE** the number of households who become homeless
- ❖ **ENSURE** that services are effective in addressing the needs of people who become homeless
- ❖ **INCREASE** housing options for single people who are homeless
- ❖ **ENSURE** that each local area develops effective responses to homelessness
- ❖ **IMPROVE** information available on homelessness and responses to it



The Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, Noel Ahern, TD, Mary Higgins, former Director, Homeless Agency and Michael Conaghan, former Lord Mayor at the launch of the action plan 'Making it Home' 2004–2006.



PROVIDE effective leadership and coordination in the implementation of the plan

Overview

The Homeless Agency was established as part of the Government strategy on homelessness and is responsible for the planning, coordination and management of services for people who are homeless in Dublin and for leading those services in the implementation of agreed action plans.

In 2004 the Homeless Agency continued to:

- promote partnership working among homeless services at Board and Consultative Forum level as well as through the hosting and development of new networks and working groups
- develop and advise on public policy on homelessness in particular on the habitual residency condition.
- provide training, information and other supports to homeless services through its learning and performance programme
- manage the provision of funding for existing and new services as well as the monitoring and review of homeless services
- collect, analyse and disseminate information on homelessness
- undertake research and evaluations

Achievements and Activity

The Homeless Agency gained the commitment of Government and the homeless services sector to the second action plan for Dublin *Making it Home* 2004–2006.

There was an increase in the Homeless Services budget from €29.3 million in 2003 to €34.9 million in 2004.

In 2004 – 62 services were funded including 13 Emergency services, 4 Street Outreach services, 9 Day, Food and Advice and Information services, 4 Settlement services, 21 Transitional services, 9 Long-term supported services and 1 Detox and Rehab service.

In addition, over €4m was allocated for direct health services such as access to nursing, GP, dental and psychiatric services and for services for families in private emergency accommodation.

Homelessness Directory 2004/2005

The third edition of the Homeless Agency's Homelessness Directory was published in July 2004.

The Directory contains up to date information on all services for people who are homeless in Dublin including specialist homeless services (eg hostels, transitional housing, health, food, and other day services) for adults, families and young people as well as relevant information on mainstream and generalist services. The Directory is a valuable resource for anyone working with homeless people. Copies are available free of charge from the Homeless Agency and can be downloaded from <http://www.homelessagency.ie/research/publications.asp>.

Homeless Agency Training and Development Programme 2004

It is a fundamental belief of the Homeless Agency that people who use homeless services deserve to be served by staff that are skilled and trained for the work they do. In order to support the vision of meeting the needs of homeless people by building a quality workforce the Homeless Agency offers an annual programme of training and development for all staff working in homeless services in the Dublin region.



Maria Fitzpatrick
Learning and Performance

The Homeless Agency launched its sixth Training and Development Programme in January 2004. The Programme included training courses, free best practice seminars and information days which aimed to promote good practice and organisational development. The Programme was intended, as part of a wider strategy to support staff working in homeless services in their role, to facilitate partnership within and across organisations in the homeless services sector and to enable all organisations to work effectively together to quality standards.

A total of 44 training courses were offered over 2 cycles and 10 best practice seminars and information days took place in the months February – June and September to December. Some of the courses run in 2004 were Addictions and Homelessness, Bereavement and Loss, Mental Health Issues, Streetscene First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, Active Listening, Facilitation Skills, Managing Human Resources, Building Effective Teams and Policy Development, Implementation and Evaluation to name but a few. Participants attended free best practice seminars and information days on topics such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection, Employment Legislation for Managers, the Role of the Homeless Persons Unit, the Social Welfare System and the Health Service Payments and Appeals System.

A total of 456 staff, of which 381 were Project Workers and 75 were Managers / Project Leaders, from 105 organisations, participated in the Training and Development Programme for 2004. The programme is an integral element of the action plan and the work of the Homeless Agency partnership.



REDUCE the number of households who become homeless

Achievements and Activity 2004

A number of pilots were operated in 2004 to prevent unplanned discharge from institutions in line with the objectives in the Action Plan to address this issue.

Pilot Inreach Service to Mountjoy Prison

The following services worked in partnership to implement a thorough care policy for people in care and to develop a planned process for discharging each person into the community.

Probation and Welfare Service, Homeless Persons Unit and the Irish Prison Service

The Homeless Persons Unit has worked in partnership with the Probation and Welfare Service and the Irish Prison Service to benefit a total of 257 prisoners.

Key services provided as a result of this pilot include:

- Provision of information relating to accommodation options and broader entitlements to offenders presenting as homeless
- Direct provision of various accommodation types to homeless prisoners based on cross agency assessment.

The key benefit of the pilot has included an enhanced reintegration service for prisoners through:

- Direct access to the statutory service responsible for emergency accommodation for homeless people
- Improved communication between all relevant agencies
- More responsive service delivery and more efficient use of resources.

Access Housing Pilot Inreach Service to Mountjoy Prison

The Access Housing Unit also ran a pilot in 2004. The purpose of this inreach service is to make private rented accommodation available to people either on discharge from prison or near the end of their sentence as an alternative to temporary homeless accommodation. This is currently done by providing direct access to private rented accommodation and accompanying support to enable the prisoner to maintain the tenancy.

The partners to this pilot are the Irish Prison Service, Probation and Welfare Service, Access Housing Unit, Homeless Offenders Strategy Team and the Homeless Persons Unit.

The following table provides a breakdown of presentations to the Homeless Persons Unit in 2004, in relation to people who have been discharged from institutions. The increase in respect of the Prison Inreach Service means that prisoners are increasingly accessing information and advice services prior to release.

Presentations to the HPU Assessment Centres from Institutions: 2003–2004		
Source of Referral	2003	2004
Ex Prison	197	181
Prison Inreach (HPU Inreach)	99	212
Ex Hospital	53	46
Ex Treatment (substance abuse)	2	40 *
Ex Care	3	5
Ex Mother & Baby Home	0	0
Total	354	484
<p>* The reason for the increase in people presenting from ex treatment centres from 2 to 40 over the period 2003–2004 is as a result of a tighter recording of clients by the Homeless Persons Unit; this includes clients that have been treated for substance abuse issues in treatment centres and psychiatric hospitals.</p> <p>Source: Homeless Persons Unit (HPU)</p>		

Dublin City Council Pilot and the Probation and Welfare Service

This pilot enables prisoners to make an application to local authority housing, nine months before their expected release date. At present there are 24 applicants from the prison service on Dublin City Council's housing list.

Tenancy Sustainment

A Tenancy Sustainment Service is the provision of support required by an individual to enable them to maintain their tenancy where there is an identified risk that they may, without the provision of support, be in a position where they risk losing it. Tenancy Sustainment should seek to engage the individual with existing mainstream and community based services which can continue to provide the support required after the tenancy sustainment service has concluded.

A two year pilot programme on a Tenancy Sustainment Service was agreed by the Board of the Homeless Agency in 2004. This pilot service, which will assist tenants to sustain their tenancies long term will be evaluated within a two-year period and will be centrally organised and locally delivered. The service for Dublin city centre will be put to tender in 2005 and the service for the other three local authorities will be developed in consultation with local area forums.

❖ ENSURE that services are effective in addressing the needs of people who become homeless

Overview

The provision of a health service is a critical factor in the successful delivery of support to people out of home. The Health Strategy together with *Making It Home – An Action Plan on Homelessness in Dublin 2004–2006* form the cornerstone of the Homeless Agency partnership strategy to develop a range of responsive services to meet the needs of homeless persons.

The Action Plan acknowledges the work that has been accomplished on an inter-partnership basis to reduce the number of people who are homeless and to reduce those sleeping rough and some key achievements and activities are set out below.

Achievements and Activity 2004

In 2004 the Health Services provided a range of health care initiatives in partnership with the voluntary sector. These included;

- **Homeless Persons Unit**, which, as the first point of contact for homeless people, provides a placement service into emergency accommodation on behalf of the local authorities. It also provides a payment and welfare service on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs and identifies people with health needs and links them with appropriate medical services.
- **The GP and Nursing Service** available in MQI, Crosscare, Cedar House.

Total Cases: Access to Specialist Homeless Primary Healthcare Services				
Consultations 2004	Doctor	Chiropodist	Nurse	Counselling Sessions
Cedar House	317	131	1,583	62
Crosscare	228	0	312	0
MQI	27	95	2,841	59
Total	572	226	4,736	121

- **Multi-disciplinary Primary Care Teams** are responsible for linking people with mainstream health services and ensuring access to services. The teams also provided feedback on gaps and barriers in services to service providers and fast-tracked medical cards.

- **Psychiatric Services for Homeless Persons – ACCES – (Assertive Community Care Evaluation Service)** is directed at people having difficulties linking with local, mainstream mental health services and those with severe and enduring mental health issues. The team works with people between the ages of 18 and 65 and provides a walk-in clinic as well as an assertive outreach component.
- **Psychiatric Team in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Area**
The Ciudad Project was established in June 2003 as a distinct response for adults with mental illness who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council area.
- **Dental Service for Homeless People**
The dental service for people affected by homelessness was established in May 2003. The service commenced in the Cornmarket Dental Clinic and also in a surgery in MQI's day centre. Clinics run three times a week in MQI and four times a week in the Cornmarket clinic.

The Number of Clients and Nature of Dental Treatment Received

Number of attendances	Exam	Emergency	Restorations	Extractions	Dentures	Endodontics
1,011	467	309	382	671	117	13

Direct Provision by HSE of Services to Homeless People

Multi-Disciplinary primary care teams	800,000
Psychiatric services for homeless people	1,450,000
Dental service for homeless people	200,000
Homeless persons unit – welfare services	1,800,000
	4,250,000

Care and Case Management in Homeless Services in Dublin

In 2004 the Homeless Agency worked with street outreach teams and emergency accommodation providers to pilot a care and case management initiative that targeted people sleeping rough in Dublin, with challenging behaviours.

The objectives of the pilot were to test the effectiveness of working together, to co-ordinate services to include management, and to use any learning to inform the development of a model of care and case management to be applied in the homeless sector in the future.

The evaluation found that in the main the pilot was effective in terms of its objectives. It found that all the people sleeping rough who engaged with the service were in a better position following their engagement with the pilot.

The limitations of the pilot were also raised in the evaluation which included its duration, the number of rough sleepers involved, project management arrangements, specific performance indicators and the involvement of accommodation providers.

In 2004, the Homeless Agency worked with the Emergency Network which includes representations from services that provide emergency accommodation for people who experience homelessness, to conduct a survey of rough sleepers in Dublin more generally. This project culminated in a report which found that approximately 120 people are known to be sleeping rough for 4–7 nights a week.

This work will continue to provide a key focus for the Homeless Agency's voluntary and statutory partners in moving towards the goal of eliminating long term and street homelessness in Dublin.

Networks and Working Groups 2004

The Homeless Agency continued to support partnership in 2004 by the establishment of worker networks, advisory groups and working groups. These groups have ensured the involvement of people involved in the sector in the planning, review and development of services.

INCREASE housing options for single people who are homeless

Settlement Services

A key aspect for increasing housing options for single people who become homeless includes settling people into accommodation. Settlement services work alongside people who are homeless to enable them to optimise their independence and obtain appropriate accommodation and supports. The following table illustrates the trends in the provision of available local authority housing units for homeless households through local authorities in 2004.

The local authorities play a key role in the settlement process through their provision of housing for individuals and families registered on their homeless list.

In 2004, Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and South Dublin County Council set targets for the allocation of units of accommodation to people experiencing homelessness.

The following table sets out the targets as well as the actual provision of housing.

Trends in the Provision of Available Housing Units for Homeless Households Through Local Authorities in 2004					
Local Authority in Dublin	Total no. of houses allocated	Total target no. of houses allocated to homeless households	Target percentage of houses allocated to homeless households	Actual no. of houses allocated to homeless households	Actual percentage of houses allocated to homeless households
Dublin City Council	722	238	33%	168	23%
Comments The outcome is 10% less than the original target of 33%. There was also a drop in the number of houses allocated.					
Fingal County Council	273	0	0%	9	3%
Comments Fingal set no target for housing homeless. In 2004, 3% of the total allocations made were to homeless households.					
South Dublin County Council	333	33	10%	29	9%
Comments South Dublin County Council allocated 9% to homeless households					
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	199	20	10%	26	13%
Comments Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has exceeded its target of 10% of the total lettings to homeless households. In 2004, there were 199 allocations in total. The Council also sourced private rented accommodation for 27 homeless and at-risk households.					
Source: Local Authorities					

Access Housing Unit

The Access Housing Unit is a unique government funded accommodation agency established to make it easier for landlords to rent properties to people who are currently experiencing homelessness.

In 2002, the Homeless Agency commissioned and established the Access Housing Unit through which tenancies in the private rented sector are made available to people referred by homeless services in Dublin.

The Access Housing Unit works as a specialised accommodation agency to assist homeless people living in temporary or emergency accommodation to find and sustain private rented housing.

The following table sets out the number of tenancies created in 2004, by applicant type.

Access Housing Unit: Number of Tenancies Created by Applicant Type	
Applicant Type	2004
Couple	3
Family	4
Lone Parent	16
Single Female	12
Single Male	45
Total	80

The Access Housing Unit extended in 2004 to include a Tenancy Sustainment Service which works in partnership with community and resettlement teams of homeless services in Dublin.

The challenge for the Access Housing Unit in 2004 was to establish itself among referral agencies, and the accessing of suitable and appropriate accommodation. Threshold has continued to monitor the availability of accommodation in the private sector, on an ongoing basis.

Settlement services provided by four organisations in Dublin and the following table shows the outcomes from the Dublin City Council, Focus Ireland, Merchants Quay Ireland and Dublin Simon's Services in 2004.

The re-settlement and community settlement teams continued to support people experiencing homelessness to secure and maintain their tenancies in 2004.

The individual outcomes for people engaged with re-settlement and community teams in 2004 are set out in the table below.

Outcomes from the Dublin City Council, Focus Ireland, Merchants Quay Ireland and Dublin Simon Settlement Services: 2004					
Outcomes	Dublin Simon	*Focus Ireland	Dublin City Council	Merchants Quay Ireland	Total
Housed by Local Authority	9	48	21	2	80
Housed in Private Rented	17	44	25	12	98
Housed in Other (Housing Associations)	0	7	0	0	7
Housed in Permanent Supported	4	0	7	3	14
Moved to Transitional Project	11	0	7	8	26
Moved to DCC Transitional Accommodation	0	0	12	1	13
Moved to designated short term resettlement support	12	0	35	1	48
Returned home	0	0	3	0	3
Ongoing cases at Year End	60	0	43	12	115
Deceased	2	0	5	0	7
Disengaged from Service	6	0	22	7	35
Total	121	108	180	46	446
* Accommodation is not sourced by the Focus Ireland Community Settlement Team. They provide post settlement/tenancy sustainment support.					

Service Evaluations

The Homeless Agency is responsible for the administration of statutory funding to homeless services and for the monitoring of those services. It has a commitment to review and evaluate new services within 12 months of establishment and to implement a rolling programme of evaluations of all services.

The evaluations conducted in 2004 were the first completed under these arrangements and were undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in the Homeless Agency's funding guidelines, *'A Clearer Future: New Funding Arrangements for Homeless Services in Dublin'*. The principles state that homeless services are to be monitored and evaluated within a context of improved accountability for the expenditure of public funds on homeless services, both in terms of value for money and in relation to the effectiveness of homeless services in addressing the needs of people homeless.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluations completed in 2004 included the following:

- Effectiveness of the services in meeting targeted needs
- Relevance of the services to the current needs of people who are homeless
- Cost-effectiveness of the services, and
- Recommendations for the continuation of the services.

The services evaluated in 2004 included:

1	Focus Ireland Street Outreach	Outreach
2	Dublin Simon Street Outreach	Outreach
3	DePaul Trust Clancy Night Shelter	Emergency
4	Focus Ireland Aylward Green	Emergency
5	Sonas Housing Association Ballymun	Transitional
6	Sophia Housing Association Ballyrnan	Transitional
7	Merchant's Quay Ireland Fáilteú	Day Service
8	Focus Ireland Open Access Coffee Shop	Day Service

The evaluations showed that these services continue to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness and recommendations were made to improve the services, provided, under the Homeless Agency arrangements. The Homeless Agency met with each service provider to consider the conclusions and recommendations in the report, a copy of which is available on the Homeless Agency's website.

Some key themes raised in the recommendations included refining decision making models for developing and expanding services, streamlining outreach services, providing long-term, supported and appropriate accommodation, providing access to meaningful day time activities, fast-tracking access to detox programmes, implementing a care and case management approach to client care, refining the financial reporting process and revisiting use of the LINK client database.

ENSURE that each local area develops effective responses to homelessness

Overview

The importance of local responses in tackling homelessness cannot be overstated. Evidence clearly indicates that the majority of people who become homeless are from a small number of geographic areas in the region, all areas of high deprivation. At the point where people are imminently at risk of homelessness, local and early interventions are the most effective way of preventing them from becoming homeless.

Achievements and Activity 2004

The Homeless Agency is focused on ensuring the continued operation of the local area forums in all local authority areas and ensuring that each local area develops effective responses to homelessness.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council and South Dublin County Council will continue to operate their homeless forums. Under the Action Plan each local authority agreed to organise forum meetings and continue the general activities of the forum and ensure its input into the development of new structures and policies in their region. The Homeless Agency attends each local area forum meeting and addresses issues as they arise. The following provides an insight into the work of the local authorities in the local areas.

Dublin City Council

- Operation of three transitional and long-term hostels directly run by the Council providing a total of 82 beds
- Management of private emergency accommodation providing 1,254 beds in 51 properties.
- Support to two properties providing 14 units of permanent accommodation
- Provision of one outreach worker and operation of night bus service providing support and transportation for nightly accommodation for 25 / 30 rough sleepers
- A team of resettlement officers providing one-to-one support to enable people to move out of homelessness. A total of 180 individuals were supported by the Resettlement Team in 2004
- A dedicated homeless services section and a dedicated 'homeless officer' dealing directly with homeless applicants and liaising with other support services
- Sleeping bags were distributed throughout the year as needed.

Fingal County Council

- Five homeless households who had been supported by a transitional programme operated on an outreach basis in partnership with a voluntary housing association, progressed to permanent tenancies with the Council during the year.
- Eight standard tenancies with the local authority / voluntary housing bodies were allocated to persons experiencing homelessness. One further homeless person took up occupation of a council dwelling under the outreach programme towards the end of 2004.
- Construction of 21 units for the accommodation of homeless persons / households in partnership with Sophia Housing Association was substantially completed by the year-end at Hazel Grove, Donabate.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

- Three year Action Plan on Homelessness 2004–2006 adopted by the Council in 2004.
- Operation of 15 family transitional housing units managed by voluntary housing associations. Support service provided by Settlement / Welfare from the Housing Department in conjunction with the Voluntary Housing Associations. These units are used for referrals for families who require support and who have been homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- In total, 26 homeless people were housed in local authority housing and private rented accommodation was sourced for a further 27 homeless households. Seven homeless were housed by Voluntary Housing Associations in permanent unsupported housing.
- The Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown area night shelter and day centre continued to operate in 2004, providing services to approximately 21 persons. These services included:
 - County Council outreach service
 - Psychiatric care and
 - Medical treatment
 - Food, washing and laundry facilities.
- Sleeping bags were dispensed all year as needed to occasional rough sleepers.
- The development of a 24x7 homeless service incorporating the current day and night service and 13 apartments was approved in May 2004.
- The Local Homeless Forum met bi-monthly.

South Dublin County Council

- Three year Action Plan on Homelessness 2004–2006 adopted by the Council on 8th March 2004.
- Operation of nine family transitional housing units in Kilcunan, Clondalkin by Sonas Housing Association in partnership with South Dublin County Council.
- Operation of supported housing units in Kilcunan, Clondalkin by Hail in partnership with South Dublin County Council.
- Work commenced in Russell Square, Fortunestown, Tallaght on the development of a further 17 units of transitional accommodation to be managed by Sonas and Sophia Housing Associations.
- Property acquired in Tallaght by South Dublin County Council for proposed use as a women's refuge.
- 29 homeless applicants were allocated permanent housing accommodation.
- The Homeless Forum met bi-monthly and also held a homeless information seminar in Jobstown, Tallaght with a view to raising awareness of homelessness issues within the locality.
- Continued funding of the information and advice service provided by Tallaght Homeless Advice Unit for homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness.
- Participated in implementation of the Cold Weather Strategy for homeless rough sleepers in the Tallaght and Clondalkin areas.



IMPROVE information available on homelessness and responses to it

Overview

Access to and generation of accurate and timely information on the extent and nature of homelessness is crucial to understanding and developing effective responses to it. Data is also important to measure the impact of factors such as policy changes and service developments on the scale and complexity of homelessness.

The Homeless Agency continues to build upon improvements made in the past few years on the availability and quality of the information available on homelessness.

Achievements and Activity 2004

LINK

The LINK system was introduced in 2002 and is a client based central database system, accessible to Service Providers via a secure internet connection and web browser. The aim of LINK is to improve services to homeless and other disadvantaged people by providing accurate client information.

There are currently 30 Service Provider Projects using the LINK system:

- Acces Mental Health Team
- Beech House Dublin City Council – E & LT Housing
- Cedar House Emergency Hostel
- Centrecare Information, Advice and Day Services
- Conrath House
- Crosscare Dun Laoghaire
- Crosscare Longford Lane
- Depaul – Aungier Street
- Depaul – Back Lane Hostel
- Depaul – Clancy Night Shelter
- Depaul – Street Outreach
- Dublin City Council Settlement Service
- Dublin Simon – Middle Abbey Street
- Dublin Simon Detox Unit
- Dublin Simon Low Support Accommodation – Canal Road
- Dublin Simon Settlement Service
- Dublin Simon Shelter
- Dublin Simon Street Outreach Team
- Dublin Simon Women Support Team
- Fáiltiú Information, Advice and Day Services
- Focus Ireland Coffee Shop
- Focus Ireland Crisis Intervention Team
- Focus Ireland Settlement Service
- Focus Ireland Street Outreach
- Maple House Dublin City Council – E & LT Housing
- Merchants Quay Settlement Service
- Oak House Dublin City Council – Long term
- Rendu Apartments
- Threshold Access Housing Unit
- Tus Nua Apartments



Aine Behan
LINK Co-ordinator

The new LINK Bulletin was launched in 2004. This is a quarterly newsletter and its purpose is to give an overview of the information LINK can provide regularly to the homeless sector, to reflect the level of usage of the system and to provide an opportunity for any difficulties to be identified and addressed. The Homeless Agency also convenes a routine meeting of LINK users which provides another mechanism for monitoring this key information tool.

Library

The Homeless Agency developed and launched its new library as a centre of excellence library in 2004. The library is based in the offices of the Homeless Agency on Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 and can be accessed during normal working hours. The library is a unique information resource providing homeless services, researchers and the public with access to electronic and hard copy documentation on all aspects of homelessness. A full catalogue of the collection is available on line at www.homelessagency.ie/research/library.asp and is updated on a regular basis.

Homeless Agency Website www.homelessagency.ie



Sorcha Donohoe
Project and Systems Officer

The Homeless Agency launched its website early in 2004. The site gives comprehensive information about homelessness in Dublin, the work of the Homeless Agency and services available for people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Homeless Agency research, policy, information and other publications are available to download. Information on the Homeless Agency's funding arrangements is also available and bookings for the Learning and Performance Programme can be made via the website. The website also has a Noticeboard section, which provides a service for agencies in the sector to publicise job vacancies, tenders, events and daily news.

In September 2004 the Homeless Agency began monitoring visits to the website and the following statistics represent the activity for September – December 2004.

Homeless Agency Website Statistics 2004

Month	Visits to Site	Total Pages Accessed
September	1,732	6,611
October	2,533	6,981
November	3,226	11,715
December	3,686	8,326

The pages that were accessed most frequently during this period were as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 The Home page | 4 The main Noticeboard page |
| 2 The main Services and Resources page | 5 The main About Us page |
| 3 The Research and Publications page | |

Resource Database and Systems Development

The Homeless Agency developed a new stakeholder database that includes over 2,000 individuals from the voluntary and statutory sectors. The Homeless Agency reviewed its operational and administrative systems and also developed a staff manual of policy and procedures.

Focus for 2005 and Beyond

• The Commission will continue to work closely with the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers to ensure that the Commission's proposals are consistent with the overall objectives of the EU and the principles of the Treaty of Rome.

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Periodic Assessment of Homelessness

Under the Housing Act, 1988 local authorities are required to carry out periodic assessments of the number of households who are homeless in their areas. In an effort to ensure that these assessments are as accurate and comprehensive as possible, the Homeless Agency developed a robust methodology for assessing homelessness which has been applied in the last two assessments – in 1999 and 2002 and the next assessment due in March 2005. The methodology is based on a weeklong census of everyone who is in touch with a homeless service and/or who are registered as homeless with a local authority. This information is then de-duplicated, analysed and presented in a report, which is widely disseminated.

Comprehensive Preventative Strategy

The Homeless Agency will develop a comprehensive strategy to prevent homelessness in Dublin. The five-year strategy will be comprehensive and holistic, addressing the policy and other factors causing or contributing to people becoming or remaining homeless. It will also address the housing, care, support and other needs of people who are potentially at risk of homelessness by identifying these groups, forecasting future needs and proposing comprehensive responses to addressing those needs. The strategy will be based on consultation with relevant bodies and on evidence of effective interventions in preventing homelessness.

Communications Strategy

The action plan requires that the Agency agree a communications strategy, which will aim to improve the understanding of homelessness and solutions to it among policy makers and the general public. This strategy will be implemented over 2005–2006.

Care and Case Management

The Homeless Agency has agreed to implement a case and care management model of service delivery. This will improve the interventions made with people who are homeless and will require a change in the approach of service delivery. This research is due for completion in Spring 2005 and will review the Homeless Agency's proposals for care and case management and assess the capacity of personnel in homeless services to deliver on this model.

Review of Temporary Accommodation

The Homeless Agency will complete a review of temporary accommodation for homeless people in Dublin and make recommendations on its future composition and operation. In this context temporary includes emergency and transitional accommodation. Specifically the review will assess the range and type of existing accommodation and skills of staff against the current and emerging needs of people homeless.

Review of the Needs of Children and Families in B&Bs

There are an estimated two to three hundred children of families who are homeless living in temporary accommodation in Dublin at any one time and there are many concerns about the inadequacy of general health, welfare and education services available to those children. The Homeless Agency will research and propose a plan for meeting the needs of children of homeless families in the future.

Review of Funding and Unit Costings

One of the responsibilities of the Homeless Agency is the management of statutory funding to services for people who are homeless in Dublin. To assist in the assessment of funding applications the Agency will establish unit costs for homeless services. This research will take account of best practice in other areas, the cost of administration, management and other headquarter costs to service delivery and the views of funders and service providers.

Review of Food and Food Centres

The Homeless Agency will complete a review of food services in Dublin and make recommendations on their future purpose, funding and operation. Specifically the review will profile the food centres in Dublin in terms of food and other services offered and the people who use them, assess the nutritional value of food served in food centres and accommodation for homeless people, elicit the views of a sample of service users on food centres, assess the role and potential role of food centres in addressing the needs of people who are homeless and other groups.

Review of Participation Structures

The participation of people involved in the delivery of services to people who are homeless in Dublin in the review and development of responses is a primary goal of the Homeless Agency. To this end, a number of issue based working groups, forums and networks have been established over the last three years. The Homeless Agency will review the effectiveness of these structures and to make recommendations for future mechanisms to promote partnership and participation. In particular this review will look at previous assessments of structures, seek the views of members of the various bodies, examine best practice in partnership and participation in other areas and take account of the need to develop responses in areas outside the city centre.

Review of the Habitual Residency Condition

The Accession States joined the EU in May 2004. On Accession, only Ireland, Britain and Sweden allowed Accession State Nationals freedom of residence and the right to take up work. This condition will require a claimant for social assistance to be habitually resident in the State or the rest of the Common Travel Area (Britain, the Channel Island and the Isle of Man) for a substantial continuous period (two years).

Between May 2004 and end of December 2004 – 53,582 Accession State Nationals were allocated PPS numbers and between 1 and 2% attempted to access social welfare payments. Service providers in the homeless and migration sectors have identified that large numbers of Accession State Nationals are coming to Ireland with little or no supports in place in advance.

Consequently, the homeless sector has seen an increase in Accession State Nationals seeking to access services.

The Homeless Agency identified in 2004 the increasing use of homeless services in Dublin including emergency accommodation and food services by EU Accession State Nationals. A piece of research has been commissioned by the Agency into the impact of the Habitual Residency Condition on the homeless services sector in order to gather more specific information on this issue with a view to informing the development of appropriate responses. This research is due to be completed in 2005.



Tadhg Kenehan
Research Officer

Funding Allocations 2004

Overview

The Homeless Agency's first Action Plan *Shaping the Future – an Action Plan on Homelessness 2001–2003* set as an objective the introduction of a new funding scheme for homeless services, to apply from January 2002. Decisions on funding are based on the need for specific services and the ability of organisations to deliver those services. The Homeless Agency administers the funding arrangements in consultation with the funding bodies. Applications for funding are assessed by the Homeless Agency in conjunction with a panel of representatives from the four local authorities and the Health Service Executive in Dublin. Applications for funding are assessed in accordance with established criteria as set out in the funding guidelines, *A Clearer Future: New Funding Arrangements for Homeless Services in Dublin*.

In 2004, the Government allocated €34m in funding for homeless services in Dublin and a brief summary of the range and variety of services now available to people who experience homelessness are listed on the following page.



Jo Ahern

Former Head of Finance and Funding. Presently Head of Policy and Service Delivery and also Deputy Director

Street Outreach

Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland, Merchants Quay and the Dublin City Council Night Bus service provide street outreach services. These services contact people who sleep rough and work to link them into accommodation and other services, with a view to helping them off the streets and eventually into long-term accommodation. The Dublin City Council Night Bus service links rough sleepers to emergency accommodation at night. The health service's multi-disciplinary team works to link rough sleepers with health services.

Emergency Accommodation

Anyone who is homeless is entitled to shelter and assistance under the Housing Act 1988 and the Health Act, 1953. Emergency Accommodation is provided by local authorities, voluntary housing associations, voluntary bodies and private emergency providers.

Transitional

Many homeless people are able to move directly from emergency accommodation into long-term housing. Others may need more time to prepare for independent living. Transitional housing provides individuals with accommodation, with supports to help them develop the skills and capacity to live independently. Accommodation in transitional housing is intrinsically linked to supports and the needs of residents. Stays in transitional housing are time limited and average between 6-18 months. Rental assistance is available to people in transitional housing. Help in applying for this is available in each project.

Settlement

Settlement services aim to provide support and other interventions to people who are in temporary accommodation with a view to supporting them and enabling them to settle successfully into long-term housing. Support includes help to addressing issues that may prevent someone from settling successfully as well as practical assistance with finding and settling into accommodation. Some settlement services are provided in temporary accommodation, some like the service provided by Dublin City Council are not attached to specific accommodation. Focus Ireland provides a community settlement service that supports people for a period after they have moved into long-term housing. Funding has been secured for the development of other tenancy sustainment services over the coming year.

Long-term

Long term supported housing is provided for those who have difficulty in living independently and need some level of support on an ongoing basis. There are no time limits on how long someone can stay in long-term supported housing.

Advice/Information/Food

Nine voluntary sector organisations provide advice, food and information services for people who are homeless in Dublin. Several offer a wide range of other services and activities in day centres, including information and referral to other services as appropriate.

Funding Allocations 2004

Organisation	Health Board 2004 Allocation	Local Authority 2004 Allocation	Total 2004 Allocation
	€	€	€
Access Housing Unit (Threshold)	0	264,077	264,077
AIDS Fund	354,436	78,246	432,682
Arrupe Society	107,588	55,424	163,012
Cappuchin Day Centre	94,762	253,019	347,781
Crosscare	559,061	911,173	1,470,234
De Paul Trust	1,725,462	1,237,993	2,963,455
Health Board Service	4,050,000	0	4,050,000
Dublin City Council Services	439,233	2,150,441	2,589,674
Family Services in B&Bs	250,000	0	250,000
Focus Ireland	1,848,417	3,654,661	5,503,078
HAIL	130,410	106,502	236,912
Haven House	330,000	220,000	550,000
Legion of Mary Morning Star	36,552	0	36,552
Legion of Mary Regina Coeli	50,930	0	50,930
Little Flower	0	20,000	20,000
Merchants Quay Ireland – Fáiltiú Centre	572,925	923,552	1,496,477
Miss Carr's	36,950	47,817	84,767
Private Premises – Abbey Street	200,000	686,930	886,930
Private Premises – Sancta Maria	206,483	557,529	764,012
Respond	500,000	300,000	800,000
Salvation Army	1,110,046	3,097,444	4,207,490
Simon	2,376,994	1,807,253	4,184,247
Sisters of Our Lady	165,186	330,394	495,580
Sonas	420,529	389,231	809,760
Sophia Housing	297,843	358,145	655,988
Tallaght Homeless Advice Unit	0	108,675	108,675
Teach Mhuire	0	150,000	150,000
Tenancy Support Services	0	200,000	200,000
Vincentian Housing Partnership – Rendu	227,131	185,263	412,394
Subtotal Homeless Agency Funding	16,090,938	18,093,768	34,184,706
Local Authority Section 10 Funding			
Aoibhneas		201,135	201,135
Cherish		24,380	24,380
Daisyhouse		91,425	91,425
Iveagh Hostel		268,000	268,000
Life		42,665	42,665
Bru na bhFiann		121,900	121,900
Vergemount		36,570	36,570
Subtotal Section 10 Funding	0	786,075	786,075
Homeless Agency Total	16,090,938	18,879,843	34,970,781

€15.2 million was also allocated to the four Dublin local authorities for the provision of private sector emergency accommodation (mainly bed and breakfast accommodation) and other services in 2005.

Homeless Agency Expenditure 2004

Overview

The Homeless Agency managed its operations within a budget of €1,279,253 in 2004.

Expenditure 2004	€
Salaries and wages	481,685
Action Plan / Research / Consultancy	416,039
Running costs (eg postage, telecommunications, courier, printing, stationery, advertising, information technology, petty cash, office maintenance, rates, furniture, medical, memberships, subscriptions, library stock, periodicals, newspapers, electricity, fuel, cleaning etc)	290,371
Learning and Performance Programme for homeless sector employees	76,830
Conferences / Seminars	14,328
Total	1,279,253

Members of the Homeless Agency

❖ Board 2004

❖ Consultative Forum Members 2004



Back row (from left to right)

Don Comiskey, Dermot Kavanagh,
Patricia O'Connor, Pat Doherty,
Vincent Healy, Tony Geoghegan,
Pat Jennings, Patricia Cleary,
Muireann Morris, Vivian Geiran,
Martina O'Connor, Jo Ahern,
Orla Barry, Sinead Hanly,
Brendan Hynes, Gerry Duffy,
Lisa Cuthbert, Kathleen Holohan,
Leonie O'Neill, Claran Dunne

Front row (from left to right)

Sr Angela Burke, Frank Mills,
Liz Clifford, Alice O'Flynn,
Derval Howley, Eddie Matthews,
Teresa Dolan, Anne Helferty,
Mary Martin, Clare Schofield,
Eamonn Martin, Alan Carthy



Board 2004

Kathleen Holohan · Chair	Director of Housing, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Alan Carthy	Director of Housing, Fingal County Council
Pat Doherty	Homeless Network Representative (DePaul Trust)
Vivian Geiran	Assistant Principal Probation and Welfare Officer, Probation and Welfare Service
John Harkin	Manager, Community Services Unit, FÁS
Declan Jones	Chief Executive Officer, Focus Ireland
Dermot Kavanagh	Homeless Network Representative (Merchants Quay Ireland)
Brendan Kenny	Assistant City Manager, Dublin City Council
Greg Maxwell	Homeless Network Representative (Dublin Simon)
Donal McManus	Executive Director, Irish Council for Social Housing
Alice O'Flynn	Director of Homelessness, Eastern Regional Health Authority
Leonie O'Neill	Director of Social Inclusion, East Coast Area Health Board
Leonora O'Reilly	Adult Education Organiser, CDVEC
Philomena Poole	Director of Housing, South Dublin County Council
Martin Rogan	Assistant Chief Executive, South Western Area Health Board
Michael Walsh	Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Northern Area Health Board



Consultative Forum Members 2004

Sinead Hanly	Chair of Consultative Forum, Independent
Orla Barry	Director of Services, Focus Ireland
Sister Angela Burke	Director, Vincentian Housing Partnership
Patricia Cleary	Director, HAIL Housing Association
Liz Clifford	Homeless Co-ordinator, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Don Comiskey	Director, The Aids Fund
Lisa Cuthbert	Director, PACE
Teresa Dolan	Assistant Director, Capuchin Day Centre
Tony Duffin	Director of Services, DePaul Trust
Gerry Duffy	Superintendent Community Welfare Officer, East Coast Area Health Board
Sinead Hanly	Chair, Independent
Anne Helferty	Senior Housing Welfare Officer, Dublin City Council
Brendan Hynes	Homeless Co-ordinator, South Dublin County Council
Pat Jennings	Senior Probation and Welfare Officer, Probation and Welfare Service
Charlie Lowe	Senior Executive Manager, Dublin City Council
Maureen Lynott	Independent
Eddie Matthews	Director of Social Inclusion, Health Service Executive, Northern Area Health Board
Frank Mills	Director of Social Inclusion, Health Service Executive, South West Area Health Board
Muireann Morris	Director, Sonas Housing Association
Joe Murphy	Homeless Co-ordinator, Fingal County Council
Patricia O'Connor	Director, National Drugs Strategy Team
Declan O'Donoghue	Senior Employment Services Officer, FÁS
Jean Quinn	Joint Chief Executive, Sophia Housing
Clare Schofield	Education Co-ordinator, CDVEC
Maire Twomey	Senior Executive Officer, Dublin City Council



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