

North West Regional Homelessness Framework Plan

June 2010 – June 2013

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Section 1
Introduction

This document presents the North West Homelessness Framework Action Plan 2010- 2013 which has been developed by the Management Group of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum.

This North West Homelessness Framework Action Plan precedes a more detailed blueprint of regional homeless services which will be carried out by the Group over the coming months. This subsequent blueprint will review existing services, address gaps in current data collection and analysis methods, address issues on a regional basis and agree protocols where services need to be delivered on a regional basis. The strategy will address six strategic aims as follows to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Eliminate need to sleep rough
- Eliminate long term homelessness
- Meet long term housing needs
- Ensure effective services
- Co-ordinate funding arrangements

The work of the North West local authorities, statutory organisations and voluntary housing bodies across the North West region will be crucial to the development of the Regional Homelessness Action Plan.

Section 2

Vision and Strategic Aims

This section outlines the long term vision for homelessness in the North West region which this plan will lay the ground for achieving. This section also outlines the mission or purpose of the plan and the values and principles which underpin it. Overall the plan reflects *The Way Home* the National Strategy to address adult homelessness in Ireland from 2008 – 2013 and is also guided by national policy on mental health and the National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2013.

Vision

The Way Home states that from 2010 long term homelessness¹ and the need to sleep rough will be eliminated throughout Ireland. The risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised and where homelessness does occur the experience will be short term and the aim will be to move the person in as short a time as possible into appropriate long term accommodation.

The North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum's vision is of a region without homelessness where appropriate preventative policies and services are available. The needs of people who are homeless will be met in a co-ordinated and planned manner and will offer a range of appropriate, affordable and supportive services aimed at the prevention and reduction of homelessness.

Mission

The purpose of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum is, in accordance with section 38 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, to provide information, views, advice or reports in relation to homelessness and in relation to the provisions of the draft homelessness action plan and the operation and implementation of the action plan. This requires the Forum to place an emphasis on strengthening preventative policies, procedures, working relationships and services to reduce levels of repeat homelessness, thus reducing the overall level of homelessness. In particular the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum aims to address the needs of the long term homeless currently resident in emergency facilities.

Values and principles

A number of values and principles have informed the development of this plan, and will underpin its implementation.

¹ *Towards 2016* requires the elimination of long term occupation of emergency accommodation by 2010, meaning that from that time no one should be in emergency accommodation for more than six months.

- Homelessness is solvable and preventable.
- Homelessness can only be addressed by relevant bodies working in partnership to agreed objectives.
- Homelessness has as much to do with appropriate support services as with bricks and mortar. Housing by itself will not solve homelessness in every case. There is also a need for interventions to assist people to move out of homelessness and support services to help them to maintain independent living.
- The co-operation of all relevant parties in providing co-ordinated service provision and integrated care planning is essential to eliminating long term homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Services and funding made available to tackle homelessness in the North West region must be used in the most efficient and effective way possible.
- Development of a case management approach to homelessness will ensure that a homeless person is treated uniquely and services and supports are tailored to meet individual needs.
- Services should provide continuing support to people to be as independent as possible and to move out of homelessness into a home of their own as soon as is practicable.
- The views and experience of homeless service users and front line providers will be used to inform the planning of regional and local policy and service responses to homelessness.

Strategic Aims

This North West Homelessness Framework Plan mirrors the six strategic aims as outlined in *The Way Home*:

1. To reduce the number of households who become homeless through the further development and enhancement of preventative measures – preventing homelessness.
2. To eliminate the need for people to sleep rough.
3. To eliminate long term homelessness and to reduce the length of time people spend homeless.
4. To meet the long term housing needs through an increase in housing options.
5. To ensure effective services for homeless people.
6. To ensure better co-ordinated funding arrangements and re-orientate spending on homeless services, away from emergency responses to the provision of long term housing and support services.

Key performance indicators

Key performance indicators will be developed to monitor the implementation of the North West Homelessness Framework Plan in line with the six strategic aims outlined above:

- Progress will be measured by collecting accurate data on the number of new homeless individuals presenting in the region and monitoring the primary reason for their presentation.
- People sleeping rough and the patterns of rough sleeping.
- People in emergency accommodation and the duration of stay in emergency accommodation.
- Homeless people presenting repeatedly as homeless and monitoring the reason for their presentation.
- People moved from emergency homeless accommodation to long term housing options.
- Progress will be measured by collecting accurate data on the number of homeless people who have a Homeless Action Team approved personal action plan in place.

Section 3
Definition and Causes of Homelessness

For the purposes of this Homelessness Framework Plan the definition of homelessness is ;
A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purpose of this Act if :

- (a) there is no accommodation available which in the opinion of the authority he together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of;
- or
- (b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter, or other institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a) and
- (c) he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

Causes of Homelessness

An understanding of the causes of homelessness is crucial to developing effective responses to people who are homeless and to developing strategies which will prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. While there is no universal consensus on why particular individuals and families become homeless there is an emerging convergence of opinion that it is likely to be due to the interaction of a range of factors, both personal and structural, which are examined here.

In the past, explanations for homelessness have tended to concentrate on it being an individual problem, due to personal difficulties and deficiencies. Now it is generally believed that structural issues such as poverty, unemployment and housing shortages cause homelessness. While these issues significantly affect the incidence of homelessness, not everyone who is unemployed or affected by poverty becomes homeless. Neither is the selection of who becomes homeless a random process, and there are a number of characteristics in the backgrounds of homeless people which are commonly held. These have been identified in a range of research work and can be usefully summarised as follows:

- physical or sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence
- family disputes or breakdown
- a background of institutional care
- offending behaviour and / or experience of prison

There are a number of general causes of homelessness, which include;

- Emergency homelessness due to fire, flood or storm damage
- Domestic violence
- Eviction, dis-inheritance
- Immigration
- Discharge from institutional care i.e. prisons, hospitals or hostels
- Lack of a social support network
- Debts especially rent or mortgage arrears
- Causing nuisance to neighbours
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- School exclusion and lack of qualifications
- Mental health problems
- Poor physical health
- Inadequate supply of temporary accommodation
- Short term working / redundancy

In addition to these risk factors, there is a range of events or crisis points which can trigger homelessness including:

- leaving the parental home after arguments
- marital or relationship breakdown
- widowhood
- leaving care
- leaving prison
- a sharp deterioration in mental health or an increase in alcohol or drug misuse
- a financial crisis of mounting debts
- eviction
- victims of anti-social behaviour

Understanding these characteristics which place people at risk of homelessness and the events which might then trigger homelessness is vital in informing the development of services for homeless people and strategies to prevent homelessness. Clearly many people who become homeless will have a range of support needs, which must be addressed alongside their need for housing. A recent Health Research Board report indicates that drug use, specifically heroin and cocaine, is increasing in areas outside Dublin. The report pinpoints the North West as one of the areas facing this growing problem. Experts predict that drug addiction will further increase in the future as a result of economic difficulties. To this

extent, greater challenges are faced by those working with homelessness, particularly over the coming years

Section 4

National Policy Framework

In drawing up this Homelessness Framework Plan the Management Group of the North West Homeless Forum took particular consideration of homeless and housing policies published over the past two decades. The policy framework incorporates the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government National Housing Strategy *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities*, the 2008 National Homeless Strategy *The Way Home* and the subsequent 2009 National Implementation Plan, the 2002 Homeless Preventative Strategy, the 2001 Youth Homeless Preventative Strategy and the 2000 National Homeless Strategy.

The planning and delivery of homeless services is directed by the provisions of Part 2, Chapter 6, of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and the Housing Act 1988 and is underpinned by National Partnership agreement, the National Development Plan and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

This section identifies significant developments in responses to the problem of homelessness over the past two decades. Overall it is evident from policy that homelessness has moved from the direct provision of accommodation, to a more co-ordinated approach that enables homeless people to access long term accommodation and prevents homelessness from occurring and re-occurring. The key policies and legislation affecting the delivery of this strategy are outlined below;

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 provides a comprehensive statutory framework for the operation of statutory Homelessness Consultative Fora and Management Groups and the making and adoption of homelessness action plans within specified time periods, publication and circulation of the adopted plans and procedures for undertaking a review of a plan or preparing a new plan are outlined.

These new provisions will help to make homelessness a more central element of the housing authority functions, promote a more planned approach to homeless services throughout the country and help housing authorities to ensure that decisions on services are based on criteria of evidenced need, value for money and achieving the best outcomes for homeless people.

2009 Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan

Implementation of the Homeless Strategy will be carried out primarily through the local homeless action plan process, which has been put on a statutory basis through the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. The 2009 National Implementation Plan provides a framework to guide the action required at national level to promote and support effective implementation locally. It sets out a sequence of strategic aims, key approaches, priority actions, constituent/supporting measures necessary for implementation of the overall Homeless Strategy. The implementation plan indicates appropriate lead roles, timelines, key performance indicators and linkages to relevant local action. The plan also brings to bear on the implementation process important considerations such as efficiency, value for money, organisational and financial streamlining and the roles of various agencies, particularly in the context of the changed economic context

Priority areas highlighted for attention, particularly those focused on the elimination of long-term dependence on emergency homeless services, include the following:

- Action to provide effective long-term solutions for people leaving homelessness, including development of a new scheme of supports and homes through leasing or equivalent accommodation supply arrangements.
- Re-orientation of investment to support a significant increase in suitable accommodation and support for people leaving homelessness.
- New arrangements and procedures for funding of homeless services based on needs, priorities and maximising efficiency, quality and value for money.
- Urgent follow up to the reports published by the Homeless Agency in December 2008 on homeless services in Dublin.
- Engagement between the relevant Departments and the HSE to identify ways of enhancing effectiveness and best value nationally from resources in relation to homelessness.
- Co-ordination of guidance to local authorities, homeless fora and health services, particularly in the context of formulation of homeless action plans.

2008 – 2013 *The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland*

The Way Home was launched in 2008 and is informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2006 Fitzpatrick report. The emphasis of the new strategy is to prevent people from becoming homeless or if they should become homeless this would be short term. The ultimate intention is that persons who have accessed homeless services will be assisted out of homelessness and into long term housing in as short a time as possible.

The strategy sets out six strategic aims around three core objectives:

- Eliminating long term occupation of emergency homeless facilities.

- Eliminating the need to sleep rough.
- Preventing the occurrence of homelessness as far as possible.

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016

The NAPS I sets out a comprehensive programme of actions and goals to address poverty and social exclusion. It places the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery and offers a framework for implementing a streamlined, cross cutting and visible approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion.

The National Development Plan 2007-2013

The NDP incorporates measures agreed in “Towards 2016” and the social inclusion priority is of most relevance to homelessness. This priority outlines measures to address barriers to social inclusion by improving access to health care, education, training and employment and high quality housing. The main objective is to provide a coherent approach to social inclusion by improving co-ordination across central and local government, better monitoring and evaluation of interventions and consultation with stakeholders.

2007 Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities

The 2007 National Housing Strategy, *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities*, places emphasis on the interagency approach to combating homelessness. It also places emphasis on the use of a case management approach in meeting the needs of homeless households. The strategy prioritises actions aimed at the inclusion of special needs groups within services that are focused around homelessness.

Towards 2016

Towards 2016 is part of a series of national social partnership agreements. It makes particular reference to homelessness and makes proposals in relation to improved co-ordination of service provision and joint approaches at local level. The aim of this national agreement is to facilitate a holistic response to the needs of homeless persons through the further development of a case management approach based on needs assessment and access to multiple services by all the key stakeholders. Other features include the elimination of long term occupation of emergency accommodation by 2010. By 2010 it is expected that no individual should remain in emergency accommodation for longer than six months.

An Independent Review of Homeless Strategies (2006)

Undertaken by Fitzpatrick Associates, and commissioned by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the review focused on Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy (2000) and the Homeless Preventative Strategy (2002). It also carried out a review of local action plans. The review made 21 recommendations around 7 key themes. The Government has accepted the broad thrust of the recommendations including, a more

concentrated focus on development of long term accommodation options, an improvement of co-ordination of funding, the development of a case management approach to addressing the needs of homeless people based on key workers and the development of preventative strategies, appropriate local services and supports, and better data on the extent, nature and causes of Homelessness.

The Homeless Preventative Strategy (2002)

The 2002 strategy focused on ensuring that no one is discharged or released from state institutional care without the appropriate measures in place to ensure they have a suitable place to live. The aim of the strategy is to target adult and young offenders, people leaving mental health residential facilities, people leaving hospitals and young people leaving care. It highlighted that an effective preventative strategy would help break the cycle of homelessness.

The Youth Homeless Preventative Strategy (2001)

The 2001 strategy was published by the Department of Health and Children. It aimed to eliminate homelessness amongst young people under the age of eighteen years. A key element of this strategy is the prevention of homelessness among young people leaving care through the implementation of education, training, information, awareness, care and aftercare supports. The Health Service Executive South established a Regional Youth Homelessness Forum in early 2003. This forum has responsibility for implementing the HSE SE Youth Homelessness Strategy.

Homelessness- An Integrated Strategy (2000)

The 2000 strategy set out a new policy approach to homelessness. It involved a whole Government approach to ensure that homelessness is addressed and prevented. It recognised that homelessness would not be solved by housing or shelter alone. It focused on the need for a holistic approach involving health, care, welfare, education, training and support to enable people who experience homelessness to re-integrate into society and prevent it from happening. It made local authorities and health services jointly responsible for homelessness, with local authorities charged with a lead role to prepare three year action plans on Homelessness. It led to the establishment of Local Homeless Fora.

The Housing Act 1988

The 1988 Act defined homelessness for the first time in legislation and expanded the role of Local Authorities in addressing Homelessness. It resulted in improvements in funding available to voluntary bodies for accommodation for homeless persons. It also resulted in greater awareness of homelessness as an issue and in development of additional responses to it.

Health & Drug Strategies

There are a number of strategies relevant to the development of homeless services as health needs and addiction issues are often a contributory factor to a person becoming homeless. The National Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness A Health System for You* (2001) has a specific aim of improving the health and well-being of homeless people and an overall aim to improve the operation and quality of health services generally.

The 2006 *Vision for Change* report by the Mental Health Expert group recognises that homeless people with mental health problems have more difficulty meeting their accommodation needs. The report makes seven recommendations relating to data collection, the role of housing authorities in meeting the accommodation needs of people with mental health problems, the need for affordable and suitable housing options and the identification of a Community Mental Health Team in each catchment area.

The National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2016 focuses on the needs of specific groups in accessing services. The strategy recognises the complex needs of homeless people and prioritises further engagement with homeless people and the provision of drug treatment and prevention measures at national, regional and local level.

County / City Development Plans 2007- 2013

Each local authority has a County / City Development Plan which seeks to develop and improve in a sustainable manner the social, economic, cultural and environmental assets of the county/city. The purpose of the plan is to inform the public, statutory authorities and service providers, developers and other interested parties of the policy framework that will guide development decisions within the county/city over the plan period.

Each County / City Development Plan includes a Housing Strategy which seeks to:

- ensure that sufficient land is zoned for residential use and made available to meet the requirements of all sectors of the population.
- ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income, particularly those in need of social housing.
- ensure a mixture of house type is developed to match requirements of different categories of households, particularly vulnerable households.
- counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different backgrounds.

Arising from the Housing Act 2009, a Housing Services Plan will be developed by each local authority which will outline the provision of housing services of the Council having regard to the requirements of the housing strategy. The Housing Services Plan will outline the demand for affordable housing, and will include the Traveller Accommodation Programme, the Homeless Action plan, the Anti-Social Behaviour strategy and the Sustainable Neighbourhood Strategy.

Section 5
Regional Implementation Structures

North West Management Group – North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum

A Management Group of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in accordance with legislation with the primary responsibility for the preparation of this statutory North West Homelessness Framework Plan and to make recommendations to relevant statutory bodies in relation to the services required to address homelessness in the region, on funding for such services and on the ongoing operation of this Homelessness Framework Plan and subsequent Blueprint for Homeless Services.

North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum

The North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in April 2010 arising from Ministerial Directions issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in Circular HU 1/2010 in accordance with the provisions of sections 38, 39 and 41 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. The role of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum is to provide a consultative mechanism in relation to homelessness in the context of the preparation of this statutory North West Homelessness Framework Plan 2010 - 2013.

Membership of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum

The 18 members of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum are drawn from the sectors as outlined in Circular HU 1/2010 and will work together over the next five years. The membership is drawn from the following sectors:

North West Local Authorities	Sligo County Council – Lead Authority Donegal County Council Leitrim County Council
Statutory Agencies	FÁS Department of Social Protection The Probation Service Vocational Education Committee HSE North West
Approved Housing & Other Bodies	NW Regional Drugs Task Force Cluid Housing Association FOCUS Ireland SVdP Donegal DVAS /DDVS North West Simon

Section 6

Monitoring, Evaluation and Progress Reports

In developing this Homelessness Framework Plan, the Management Group of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum is aware of the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the actions outlined in the plan and the subsequent blueprint for homeless services. The ultimate responsibility for the monitoring and review of the Homelessness Framework Plan lies with the Management Group in consultation with the North West Homeless Forum.

However the Management Group recognises the need to work in partnership with the voluntary service providers to develop a systematic process which will provide an accurate picture of the trends, issues, challenges and opportunities which may emerge in the implementation of the plan and ongoing monitoring and assessment of performance relative to targets, reporting and assessment of outcomes for service users and assessment of barriers to performance. The Management Group will also work to ensure that service provision maximises effectiveness, efficiency, quality, value for money and cost minimisation and is meeting evidenced need in the most effective way. Appropriate performance management and unit costing arrangements will be operated for this purpose.

This will be achieved through the following monitoring and evaluation processes:

- An **annual county progress report** will be provided by each housing authority to the Management Group outlining the information relating to homeless services provided at a local level, an analysis of users of homeless services and funding received. The format of the data collection process will be agreed as part of the development of the blueprint for homeless services.
- In accordance with Priority Action 8.2 of the National Implementation Plan, regular (e.g. quarterly) reports will be submitted by service providers to the Homelessness Consultative Forum. The Forum will provide information, views, advice and reports in relation to homelessness and the operation and implementation of the Action Plan². Having regard to these, the Management Group will provide reports and recommendations to the housing authorities, the HSE and where appropriate, other bodies specified in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, in relation to the operation of the Action Plan. The housing authorities will, in turn, provide progress reports in relation to the Action Plan to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on a quarterly basis.

² See section 38(2) and 39(4)(b) of the 2009 Act

- In accordance with Priority Actions 6.3 and 8.4 of the National Implementation Plan for the Homeless Strategy, housing authorities will ensure adequate information and evaluation in relation to service providers and their services, plans, finances and other inputs, structures, cost composition and performance, including requirements of accountability, transparency and controls, particularly with regard to utilisation of public funding.
- **Lead Agencies** will be assigned to ensure actions are implemented and annual reports will be submitted to the Management Group on progress achieved. The measurement of progress on performance indicators will be a key feature of the progress report.
- An **annual review and planning meeting** of the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum will focus on the reports submitted and inform the Regional Homelessness Framework Planning process.
- **Local implementation structures** will need to be agreed locally to ensure participation and consultation with voluntary service providers and key local statutory staff implementing homeless services.

Section 7
Regional Trends
Regional Development Gaps/Action Planning
Resource/Funding Requirements

This section will deal with the regional dimension in relation to homelessness and action and arrangements needed at a regional level to address homelessness effectively. This initial statutory homelessness action plan involves, in effect, a transition from (non-statutory) city or county plans to a regionally based plan. Accordingly, this is a framework plan in which the local elements feature significantly but, in this section, the regional aspects of homelessness are set out and analysed and proposals to address them outlined. The following is a profile of current homeless services and current data relating to homelessness in the region.

Donegal;

This report is presented by Donegal County Council as an overview of current homeless services and statistics for Donegal, to assist the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum in the preparation of a Draft North West Regional Homelessness Framework Plan.

The report outlines the following:

- approach to providing accommodation for homeless persons,
- what support services are available, and
- what projects are planned.

Some statistics for 2009 are also included in the report.

Accommodation Provision

Each of the Housing Authorities within the County is responsible for dealing with homeless persons over 18. The HSE, through the Community Welfare Officers, assist local authorities in dealing with homeless persons outside office hours and at week-ends, with accommodation costs being met by the housing authority. The HSE is charged with the responsibility for homeless persons under the age of 18 years.

Each homeless person presenting themselves as homeless is assessed in a thorough and sympathetic manner. The relevant agency must assess how genuine each case is, giving consideration to such factors as age, economic background, household profile, previous accommodation, efforts to obtain accommodation etc. Having ascertained the critical details, a decision must be made by the agency involved in conjunction with the homeless person, regarding the most appropriate form of assistance / accommodation applicable in each case.

This assistance / accommodation would generally fall into one of four categories in order of preference / suitability to meet the needs of homeless applicants: -

1. Assistance with deposit for Private Rented Accommodation.
2. Hostel Accommodation.
3. Bed and Breakfast Accommodation.
4. Re-housing by the relevant housing authority.

1. Assistance with deposit for Private Rented Accommodation:

This form of assistance is the first option offered to homeless persons with the relevant local authority assisting by paying a contribution towards a deposit to secure private rented accommodation.

2. Hostel Accommodation:

This form of emergency accommodation would be provided on a short term basis and would generally be identified as the first option if the homeless person could not obtain private rented accommodation. Hostel accommodation is used as a means to achieving interim accommodation while the homeless person obtains suitable private rented accommodation.

Two bodies provide hostel type accommodation in the county, as follows:

- Colmcille Hostel, Letterkenny.
- Womens Refuge - Donegal Womens Domestic Violence Service.

Colmcille Hostel, Letterkenny.

At present Donegal has one hostel in Letterkenny, (Colmcille Hostel), which was assisted with funding under the Capital Assistance Scheme, and was opened in 1997. The Colmcille Hostel comprises of 5 No. single units and 6 No. double units. There are 2 persons employed, a Hostel Manager and an Outreach Worker.

Referrals are taken from County Council and Town Councils, HSE, Gardai, Clergy, Community Welfare Officers, Voluntary Organisations and people who present themselves as being homeless and fit the relevant criterion. An outreach service is also provided by the Hostel. The Hostel also assists with referrals from the Women's Refuge in Letterkenny when that facility is full.

The Hostel is funded by Donegal County Council and Letterkenny Town Council under Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, the Health Services Executive and by local fundraising.

Womens Refuge - Donegal Womens Domestic Violence Service.

The Donegal Womens Domestic Violence Service (DWDVS) is a voluntary organisation providing information, support and temporary refuge to women victims of domestic violence and their families. A 3 bedroomed house owned by the HSE in Letterkenny and managed by DWDVS, and is the only refuge accommodation available to women in this region.

The DWDVS is funded from a number of sources including Donegal County Council under Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, the HSE and fundraising.

3. Bed and Breakfast Accommodation:

This form of emergency accommodation is provided on a very short term basis and is normally utilised when alternative options have been exhausted. Having assessed the relevant facts of the case and the means of the homeless person, the Housing Authority decides on the level of assistance to be provided and may in some cases, request the applicant to make a part payment for the accommodation. Only a small number of homeless persons are being assisted via this mechanism in limited circumstances.

4. Housing by the relevant Housing Authority:

Under its Scheme of Letting Priorities, each Housing Authority gives the highest priority to applicants seeking re-housing who are deemed homeless. It is not possible however, for housing authorities to have a ready supply of vacant houses to deal with homelessness and therefore in most cases, homelessness is dealt with by the provision of financial assistance to the homeless person to secure private rented accommodation, or via hostel accommodation.

Other Support Services.

In addition to the above, various other services are in place for persons who are at risk of being homeless. The HSE provides services to meet health care and social needs, hospital discharges and so forth.

Other services provided include the following:

- Whiteoaks Rehabilitation Centre
- Tenancy Sustainment Service provided by North West Simon Community.

The Whiteoaks Rehabilitation Centre.

The Whiteoaks Rehabilitation Centre, is located at Derryvane, Muff. While this centre is primarily an addiction recovery centre it also assists on an on-going basis homeless persons who do not fall within this category.

The Centre is a 60 bed purpose build complex dedicated to the healing and reconciliation of those who suffer from the abuse of alcohol and drugs. A broad range of services are provided at the centre where there is an in-house 30 day primary care treatment programme,

followed by a secondary care programme (aftercare) which consists of meetings held in a variety of locations in the North West over a two year period. The Centre is funded from a number of sources including Donegal County Council under Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, and the HSE.

Tenancy Sustainment Service provided by North West Simon Community.

This service is provided by North West Simon, and is in place for those already in accommodation but having difficulties in sustaining their tenancy. The aim of the service is to focus on practical ways to enable people to remain in their own home and prevent homelessness. This service is particularly useful for those with multiple needs and those requiring assistance with linkage to mainstream services. While the initial focus was on local authority tenants, the service has also been used for some clients in private rented accommodation. This service complements the outreach service provided by the Colmcille Hostel. Donegal County Council makes a contribution to this service.

Key statistics - 2009.

The Donegal local authorities made over 100 payments in 2009 in respect of homeless deposits and emergency B&B accommodation. The following statistics are also available for 2009.

St Colmcille Hostel, Letterkenny.

Details of homeless persons accommodated in 2009.

- Bed Nights 2,511
- Adults accommodated 158
- Children accommodated 36
- Total No. accommodated 194

The Hostel was unable to assist other persons due to unsuitability or lack of space – details as follows:

- Adults 37
- Children 14

Womens Refuge - Donegal Womens Domestic Violence Service.

Details of women and children accommodated in 2009:

- Women 27
- Children 37

The figures for women and children who weren't accommodated due to unsuitability of lack of space are as follows:

- Women 28
- Children 42

557 individual clinics were held in 2009, and there were 2234 helpline calls.

Gaps in Service and Planned Projects.

A number of years ago the need for a new Womens Refuge was identified, as the current refuge was deemed to be unable to meet the demand. As a result, and in consultation with Donegal County Council, the Donegal Womens Domestic Violence Service set up the Donegal Womens Voluntary Housing Association (DWWHA) in 2006 in order to pursue a project of developing a womens refuge, and was granted approved status on 6th October 2006. The Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government has granted pre-tender approval this year for the construction of a purpose built womens refuge in Letterkenny. The project is at planning stage, and it is hoped that this project will proceed to construction in late 2010 / early 2011. The site for the project is being provided by Letterkenny Town Council and the project is being managed by Donegal County Council.

The Council proposes to re-examine the overall level and type of services available in conjunction with the North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum in the coming months.

Sligo;

Sligo County Council & Sligo Borough Council carried out a review of homeless services in Sligo in 2009. This picture of the people who are homeless is based on reports from the people interviewed and data supplied by homeless service providers. It shows a population of mostly single men, many of whom have mental health and/or addiction problems. There is significant direct movement from mental health to homeless services and some individuals using homeless services have particularly complex needs and challenging behaviours. While rough sleeping is not numerically a significant problem in Sligo there are a small number of people who are caught up in a cycle of rough sleeping, squatting, homeless services, tenancies, moving to another place and so on.

Homeless services in Sligo comprise three accommodation projects for single men and a placement service in commercial bed and breakfast for women and families. Tenancy sustainment services are also included. While such services may not generally be regarded as "homeless" they are currently categorised as such in Sligo on the basis that they help people to move out of homelessness and prevent homelessness from occurring or recurring. Statutory funding is provided to the hostels by the HSE and Sligo Borough Council and this is supplemented by income from charges to residents and in some cases fundraising. Local

authority funding is on the basis of “bed nights” (i.e. a hostel is paid a fixed amount for each bed available) and HSE funding is on the basis of care staff positions.

Ballytivnan Hostel

The Ballytivnan Hostel, which was established in 1983, is managed by Sligo Social Services and provides emergency accommodation for single men over 18. It was originally staffed by volunteers and funding for staff was first provided by the HSE in 1989. Ballytivnan Hostel provides overnight emergency accommodation and aims to address primary health and improve well being and personal development. The facility has 10 beds in shared rooms with access to showers and laundry facilities, personal hygiene products and clothing.

Ballytivnan Hostel also offers one to one support and advocacy services, behaviour management, assessment and referral and access to other services provided by Sligo Social Services.

Details of homeless persons accommodated in Ballytivnan Hostel during 2009.

- Bed Nights 1,519
- Adults accommodated 158

Maryville Hostel

Maryville Hostel is managed by Sligo Social Services. It opened in 1990 to respond to identified need for supported short term accommodation for single men. It aims to provide quality accommodation, support men to move on to appropriate secure accommodation and in personal development, independent living and social integration. The Hostel provides accommodation for single men over 18 and has 14 individual bedrooms (2 additional provided in the last year to respond to demand) with access to communal kitchen and living area where residents can make their own meals. The Hostel provides one to one support in achieving identified goals, independent living skills, behaviour management as well as social and personal skills development. It also provides follow up support to assist men settle when they move on.

Details of homeless persons accommodated in Maryville Hostel during 2009.

- Bed Nights 3,976
- Adults accommodated 63

Shalomar

Shalomar Hostel, which opened in 1997, was built and is managed by Finisklin Housing Association. It caters for single men over 18 and has 4 self contained units on its grounds. There are 17 beds in single rooms, whilst 1 bed is kept free for emergency placement by the

HSE. Residents have access to cooking and food and a laundry service is also provided. Shalomar provides 3 meals per week to ensure a basic level of nutrition for its residents, and breakfast is provided for some men who are asked to make a contribution to the cost.

Bed & Breakfast

Bed & Breakfast accommodation is provided in emergency situations by Sligo Social Services on behalf of Sligo Borough Council for women and families who find themselves homeless. It is part of a wider housing advice service which also pays rental deposits for homeless persons to secure private rented accommodation. The aim is to provide temporary accommodation as necessary for as short a time as possible. Alternative sources of accommodation are explored prior to the placement of homeless persons in to bed & breakfast accommodation. The cost of this service is funded by the Council.

Homeless persons will be encouraged to make alternative arrangements such as staying with friends and family while Sligo Social Services explores the opportunities in the private rented sector, including the payment of rental deposits. Where there is no alternative to Bed and breakfast homeless persons will be assisted to move out as quickly as possible.

In 2009, Sligo County Council funded the payment of 17 deposits for homeless persons in acquiring private rented accommodation. Sligo Borough Council also funded such deposits and assisted 140 adults and 74 children to secure private rented accommodation during the year. These payments are recoupable under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988.

Other Services / Supports

Citygate Supported Housing

Tenancy sustainment and support services are provided by Focus Ireland in partnership with Sligo Borough Council. Citygate is long term housing which consists of 23 high quality self-contained units for accommodating people who need support to live in independent accommodation. Citygate tenants are referred by Sligo Borough Council and taken from its housing list and are selected on the basis of providing a sustainable mix of tenancies.

Tenancy Sustainment Service

A tenancy sustainment service is provided by Focus Ireland to individuals and families requiring assistance settling in and/or sustaining tenancies. Referrals to the service come from the County Council, HSE and self. The service offers practical assistance and support to tenants with support needs, including mental health, addiction, rent and household management and budgeting.

Cranmore Estate Settlement

A tenancy sustainment service is provided by Focus Ireland on behalf of Sligo Borough Council to local authority tenants in the Cranmore Estate, Sligo. The service is targeted at prospective tenants in the regenerated estate who have been identified as having support needs and provides a settlement service to assist people moving into the regenerated Cranmore estate to ensure a mix and sustainability of tenancies.

Tenancy Settlement & Sustainment Services – Sligo County

This service is provided by North West Simon Community on behalf of Sligo County Council for local authority tenants in the County area of Sligo. It offers a settlement and tenancy support service to Sligo County Council tenants, based on assessment and care planning.

Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (DVAS)

DVAS provides a regional service (Sligo /Leitrim /West Cavan) for women experiencing domestic violence. The service provides crisis intervention, information, advice, advocacy counseling, support and court accompaniment and support to women experiencing domestic violence in the region on a one to one basis by phone or in person.

Planned Developments & Gaps in Services

Some new developments for homeless people are planned for the Sligo and the accommodation projects are dependent on the availability of capital funds. These are:

- The need for a Women's Refuge in Sligo town was identified. It is planned to source and develop a facility which will accommodate up to 7 families and serve the region.
- Sligo Social Services has applied for capital funding to extend Maryville Hostel so that it can increase its capacity from 14 to 23 and to refurbish the current building.
- Sligo Social Services has applied for capital funding to re-develop 'McAuley House' to provide four units of accommodation for families.
- Nazareth Housing Association (Sligo) Ltd has applied for funding for the provision of 48 units of accommodation for the elderly.

Leitrim;

Incidents of homelessness within County Leitrim are relatively small by comparison to other administrative areas. The provision of emergency homeless accommodation for homeless persons is predominately dealt with by the Council on a case by case basis. The standard procedure for assisting homeless persons who have demonstrated a bona – fidae housing

need is to provide one or two night's emergency accommodation. The accommodation is sourced locally by the Council in a bed and breakfast establishment.

The Council also provides assistance to homeless persons in sourcing and securing private rented accommodation and the payment of rental deposits. The management of homelessness is also co-ordinated with the local Community Welfare Officers. Leitrim County Council funded the payment of 11 deposits for private rented accommodation in 2009.

Tenancy Sustainment

North West Simon provides a tenancy sustainment service on behalf of Leitrim County Council. The remit of the service is to provide additional tenancy sustainment support to persons that are existing local authority tenants that may be at risk of homelessness.

Numbers of Homeless Persons in the North West Region

In accordance with S 9 of the Housing Act, 1988, Housing Authorities are required to carry out an assessment of housing need within their administrative area every three years. The Act provides that Housing Authorities shall have regard to the need for housing of persons who are homeless. The most recent assessment of housing need was carried out in 2008 and the numbers of persons categorised as homeless at the time in Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo are as follows; Donegal 3; Sligo County 0; Sligo Borough 15; Leitrim 0.

Section 8
Local Homeless Action Plans
County/City Homeless Services
County/City Data Analysis
County/City Trends & Development Gaps

Homeless Services Framework

This element of the Action Plan, the Homeless Services Framework, seeks to outline a comprehensive model, at a generic level, of the various components of homeless services and arrangements required. This will constitute an overall policy framework for homeless services at local/regional level, providing a comprehensive model for effective homeless services and arrangements designed to achieve the aims of the Government's Homeless Strategy in the area/region.

Following compilation and analysis of more detailed data and completion of a rigorous review of homeless service requirements, the Action Plan will be supplemented by a detailed Implementation Blueprint of homeless services, which will provide the necessary detail to give effect to the framework model, with more specific identification of the nature and extent of homeless services, facilities and arrangements required during the life of the plan and necessary details such as location, quantification, operational arrangements, service provider involvement, etc.

General principles relating to homeless services

Key principles which will be applied in decisions relating to homeless services include:

- The overall objective in planning and delivery of homeless services is to achieve the best outcome for homeless households by matching services to needs.
- It is essential to maximise effectiveness and value for money in homeless services and make the best possible use of available resources to pursue the core objectives of the Homeless Strategy, particularly ending long-term homelessness.
- Homeless services will be configured to promote the objectives of the Homeless Strategy, having regard to needs and priorities in the area and available resources. The scope for greater rationalisation and improved organisation of all aspects of homeless services will be examined with a view to avoiding or eliminating any duplication, maximising effectiveness and efficiency and ensuring that scarce resources are only used for services which make a significant contribution to addressing homelessness. As well as examining the match between supply of and need for different categories of accommodation, this will include critical examination of elements (where relevant) such as the operation of placement services, outreach services, information services, other

possible daytime services and various types of support services. All existing support type services and resources, however termed (e.g. housing support, tenancy support, social work, tenancy sustainment, settlement, re-settlement, housing welfare, etc) will be identified and taken into account in determining service requirements.

- Decisions relating to the configuration of services will be based on rigorous analysis of relevant, comprehensive, accurate, and up to date information, particularly in relation to needs and existing homeless services, including aspects such as unit cost analysis, cost variations between services, usage of services, duration of homelessness and outcomes for service users.
- In considering any new proposals, account must be taken of likely constraints on availability of capital and the need to pursue any projects that may be warranted, through revenue based “leasing” type arrangements.

Main elements of homeless services

Homeless Services will be configured and operated to support the successful implementation at local/regional level of the Government’s Homeless Strategy and the National Implementation Plan for the Strategy, which contain the following main objectives:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Eliminating need to sleep rough
- Eliminating long term homelessness and meeting long-term housing need
- Ensuring that homeless services are effective and of adequate standard.

The following is an outline of the main elements of homeless services to support achievement of these objectives.

Homelessness prevention/intervention

- Arrangements to ensure identification of and contact with and by, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including possible outreach services as warranted.
- Measures to help prevent homelessness due to loss of accommodation or to identify a route away from entering homelessness (e.g. provision or retention of housing, securing necessary income support to retain tenancy, etc).
- Effective arrangements for provision of clear information and advice on housing options, homeless services and other relevant services to prevent or address homelessness.
- Arrangements for early intervention in cases of risk of homelessness due to other factors, including securing relevant in-reach services e.g. to prisons, hospitals, or other relevant institutions.
- Prompt initial assessment to determine homelessness, applying appropriate and consistent operational criteria.

- Arrangements to ensure prompt access to or contact by the Community Welfare Service for people at risk of homelessness or actually homeless, both in relation to general social welfare entitlements and rent supplements and deposits.
- Liaison with HSE and Prison/Probation Services through the Forum in relation relevant matters, including inreach services, discharge protocols and arrangements for accommodation and other relevant services (e.g. health/addiction services) for persons approaching discharge.
- Arrangements for identification and preventative action, through relevant agencies, in respect of particular risk groups and risk factors such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, family breakdown, offenders (including sex offenders and ex-offenders, domestic violence (including possible removal of perpetrator).
- Liaison with HSE to address the potential risk of youth homelessness to act as a route to adult homelessness.

Rough sleepers

- Rough sleeper counts in areas where warranted.
- Provision of street outreach service, where warranted, and compilation of information and implementation of arrangements to eliminate any need to sleep rough.
- Arrangements for access to and appropriate admissions policies to emergency homeless facilities.
- Arrangements for access by rough sleepers to drug, alcohol and health services, including adequate awareness by rough sleepers of available services.
- Availability of appropriate contingency arrangements for deployment to assist habitual rough sleepers in the event of severe weather or significant emergency.

Temporary Homeless Accommodation

- Provision of temporary accommodation where necessary, including, as warranted, different types of accommodation to meet different levels of need, including complex needs requiring involvement of more “specialist” agencies.
- Implementation of effective “bed management” arrangements for operation of accommodation and placement of people. Minimise use of relatively expensive B&B accommodation and promote and plan for movement to mainstream housing as soon as possible.
- Arrangements to ensure adequate standards of accommodation.

Assessment, health/care, case management/planning, service availability/quality

- Prompt and effective follow up and support in relation to persons entering temporary accommodation, with a view to minimising duration of homelessness (target maximum duration of 6 months but less as far as possible) and the risk of recurrence of homelessness, including:

- Proactive arrangements to ensure all eligible persons are “registered” for social housing.
 - Ongoing liaison with HSE, which is responsible for health/care aspects, including ensuring availability of any relevant specialist services, e.g. in relation to mental ill health, other disabilities, psychological, addiction or behavioural issues, ex-offenders, young people leaving care, etc.
 - Arrangements to ensure that people in homeless facilities have access to or are referred to relevant mainstream services e.g. in the health, welfare, education, employment and training sectors and have access to information and advice on such services.
 - Arrangements for adequate in-reach services to people in temporary accommodation e.g. by education, training, employment or other agencies with functions relevant to helping people to progress out of homelessness.
 - Full assessment (with involvement of relevant agencies) to determine housing, health/care and other needs (including complex and multiple needs) and determine most appropriate options: 1. Housing and housing support needs, 2. Health and care needs, 3. Other possible non-housing support needs; Needs relating to the foregoing to be specified in an accommodation/support plan.
- Arrangements for case planning and care and case management and ongoing case assessment, as appropriate, and action to implement an accommodation and support plan. A case management approach is considered beneficial in the delivery of homeless services. In particular, decisions to provide housing supports and the extent and duration of any such supports, must be based on rigorous assessment resulting in an accurate housing support plan for each individual.
 - Measures to ensure the quality and effectiveness of homeless services and that best practice and health and safety requirements are fully implemented.
 - Arrangements to ensure adequate availability and appropriate localisation of homeless services.
 - Implementation of arrangements to plan and deliver appropriate accommodation for households, ranging from homeless facilities to long term accommodation, including reconfiguration/adaptation of existing facilities for use as long-term accommodation.

Long-term homeless accommodation

- Implementation of licence or tenancy agreements, as appropriate, in respect of long term residence in homeless facilities or independent accommodation (in which case the households concerned will no longer be counted as homeless).
- Action to ensure availability of an adequate supply of suitable long-term supported residential accommodation for homeless people who do not have capacity to progress to mainstream housing. The potential to provide such accommodation by adapting existing emergency or transitional facilities will be exploited.

- Audit/survey of existing premises (private, local authority or voluntary) used to accommodate homeless households to be undertaken to assess its potential suitability for use as long-term accommodation, in line with overall service re-configuration requirements, instead of emergency or transitional use, with adaptations where necessary, with emphasis on providing self contained mainstream accommodation units. Decisions to this effect would have regard to relevant factors such as the nature, size, capacity, condition, facilities, etc, of the existing accommodation, the requirements for use as long-term accommodation and the extent and cost of any adaptations required.
- Possible conversion of existing arrangements with private accommodation owners, where relevant, to leasing or RAS type arrangements.

Care and supports and inter-agency protocols

- Consideration of need for tenancy support services (visiting support - see SLI scheme circular and details) of appropriate duration and intensity for homeless households who move to mainstream accommodation.
- Co-ordination with HSE and other relevant agencies to ensure availability of necessary health/care and other services and personal and social supports for people who move from homeless facilities to mainstream housing.
- Appropriate protocols between the housing authorities and the HSE or other relevant agencies, in relation to the provision of the foregoing services and supports and other matters relevant to homelessness such as children leaving care, older people with care needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, discharge of people at risk of homelessness from health or other institutions.

Data and information

- Production of comprehensive and accurate data and information in relation to homelessness (including numbers, flows, duration and other relevant characteristics) and homeless services (including capacity, adequacy, usage, staffing, cost, revenue and other relevant operational and other information).
- Specific arrangements to obtain relevant data on homelessness, including maximum participation in new national client database (PASS), undertaking homeless counts/surveys as appropriate and ensuring adequate reports and information from service providers.
- Accessing relevant data available through other agencies such as CSO, hospitals, prisons, as appropriate, to underpin the effectiveness of policy and action to address homelessness.
- Provision of directories of homeless services, as warranted.
- Appropriate arrangements for sharing of data/information subject to ensuring compliance with data protection requirements.

Organisational/resource aspects

- Appropriate staffing, training, staff information, procedures and organisational arrangements to facilitate effective action to address homelessness.
- Adequate prioritisation of action to address homelessness relative to the incidence of homelessness.
- Accurate costing of the various elements of homeless services and accessing of all available sources of funding to prevent/address homelessness.

Ending long-term homelessness and providing long-term housing

In accordance with the Government's Homeless Strategy, a core objective of the Action Plan is the ending long-term homelessness and providing adequate long-term accommodation, as necessary, to achieve this and help homeless households to independent living. Homeless services will be organised and operated so as to promote this objective. This will involve appropriate arrangements to provide adequate supply of suitable housing, housing supports, where necessary, and policies and procedures to enable homeless households to move to mainstream housing as quickly as possible. This is likely to involve largely phasing out the use of transitional facilities, which experience internationally has found to be relatively ineffective from a cost/benefit perspective, confining the supply of emergency accommodation to a level appropriate to meet short-term needs and decommissioning any accommodation that may not be fit for purpose.

This will be underpinned by arrangements to provide mainstream accommodation for people progressing from homelessness using the full range of relevant housing interventions, particularly the following:

- private rented accommodation, if people are assessed as not needing tenancy support and have prospects of being able to meet their own housing costs in due course.
- social housing (including RAS, which is considered appropriate for households assessed as having low or no housing support needs); housing authorities' allocations policies to support the objective of ending long-term homelessness;
- use of additional sources of accommodation for the purposes of the SLI scheme.

SLI (Support to Live Independently) involves the provision of accommodation (utilising unsold affordable houses available to local authorities or units procured through any of the mechanisms available under the social housing leasing initiative), for people who can progress to independent living in mainstream housing with low to moderate visiting housing supports, where necessary, procured through open competitive tendering, with supports tapering off as a person progresses to independent living (expected to be generally within 6 months).

The provision of long-term accommodation of homeless households has now been further underpinned by a new Enhanced Programme which involves a combination of existing schemes and current and capital funding, largely through the social housing leasing initiative, but with a number of improved conditions to address the particular issues arising in sourcing accommodation for homeless people and streamlined processing arrangements, including detailed briefing and information for Approved Housing Bodies e.g. regarding type and location of units needed, sustainable communities issues, etc.³ People housed under the programme will be long-term homeless and consequential savings on the operation of homeless facilities must be identified.

A detailed programme for provision of long-term accommodation for homeless households⁴ will be drawn up in the context of the Implementation Blueprint, including:

- identifying numbers of households requiring different types of long term provision – mainstream housing without support; mainstream housing with visiting support; accommodation in facilities with on-site support; other (e.g. nursing home).
- setting specific targets, having regard to the profile of homeless households, for providing long term accommodation for homeless households, with particular emphasis on 2010, whether social housing (local authority and voluntary), private rented, RAS, or additional accommodation procured through social housing leasing.
- ensuring, through the HSE or other relevant agencies, availability of adequate health and social services to address health/care, personal and other non-housing needs.

Role of relevant organisations and co-ordination of activities

The overall system or model of homeless services to be provided for in the Implementation Blueprint will incorporate appropriate arrangements relating to the role of the various relevant agencies and service providers and co-ordination of their activities and functions, including the following matters:

- Housing authorities (responsible for accommodation aspects) must operate in partnership with the HSE (responsible for health/care aspects) in planning, funding, delivery, monitoring and review of homeless services. Active involvement is needed on the part of all relevant public authorities, mainstream services/specialist services and any other

³ Some broad features of the programme include:

- procurement of accommodation by Approved Housing Bodies;
- leveraging of maximum units through leasing or purchase using private or HFA funding, with capital funding being contingent on a multiple of current funded units being procured or representing a proportion of total current funding (generally in a ratio of 4:1 current to capital);
- protection for housing bodies against letting voids;
- enhanced repair and replacement allowance per tenancy;
- increased flexibility in availability payments for apartments;

⁴ Insofar as appropriate having regard to the extent of homelessness in particular areas.

relevant agencies, with effective inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration, including the implementation of relevant protocols, as appropriate. The North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum will provide a vehicle for ensuring effective inter-agency arrangements and protocols to determine responsibilities, liaison, etc, between agencies and also co-ordination with adjacent/constituent local authorities.

- An inter-agency approach is particularly important to ensure effective measures for prevention of homelessness, with emphasis on maximising active participation locally of all relevant agencies (Strategic Aim 1 of the Homeless Strategy Implementation Plan).
- Housing authorities will not take responsibility for services that are appropriate to other agencies (e.g. of a specialist nature) or which involve duplication of services as funding will not be available to them for any services that do not accord with these requirements. All potential sources of funding relevant to addressing homelessness should be accessed as far as possible.
- All service providers will be required (subject to an appropriate lead-in period, where necessary), as a condition of funding, to enter service level agreements and to participate in a new shared client database (PASS) which is currently being developed and will be rolled out nationally, as appropriate (Priority Actions 8.4.4 and 8.4.5 of the Homeless Strategy Implementation Plan).
- Appropriate procurement arrangements for the provision of services (e.g. visiting tenancy support), involving competitive tendering as far as possible/appropriate, will be operated in accordance with Government requirements/guidelines.
- Engagement and operation of services will be subject to contract or service level agreement, as appropriate, setting out relevant requirements, responsibilities, etc, including performance requirements, targets, data provision, reporting, accountability, financial conditions, etc.
- The Homelessness Forum Management Group, utilising the statutory and voluntary membership of the Forum, will promote cross cutting engagement with appropriate statutory, voluntary and community partners generally to address identified and emerging need.

Implementation Blueprint of Homeless Services

An Implementation Blueprint will be formulated setting out the specific measures and detailed arrangements required to give effect to the Action Plan and which will, in effect, constitute a supplement to this Plan.

The Blueprint will, in particular:

- Determine the appropriate configuration of homeless services and any need for re-configuration of existing services.
- Provide a decision template for any proposals relating to homeless services.
- Inform decisions in relation to funding allocations for homeless services.

The Implementation Blueprint will provide the basis for decisions relating to services and investment in that regard. All proposals relating to homeless services will be rigorously assessed by the Homeless Forum Management Group and the housing authorities by reference to the blueprint (with particular focus on the core objective of promoting availability of long-term accommodation) and decisions will be made on the basis of their compatibility with the blueprint and the criteria of efficiency and value for money, as set out in Priority Actions 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 of the Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan.

Estimated costs of services will be identified as accurately as possible in developing the Implementation Blueprint. As in all areas of public expenditure currently, the total level of resources available for the operation of homeless services will, inevitably, be constrained during the lifetime of the Action Plan. Accordingly, any new services or expansion of existing services that may be needed can only be funded from savings which arise from the reorientation of services in accordance with the Implementation Blueprint. Cost reductions in the economy generally should also be reflected in homeless services.

The Implementation Blueprint will also facilitate implementation of Strategic Aim 6 of the Homeless Strategy Implementation Plan, which signalled an intention to introduce a more devolved system of funding allocations for homeless services, based on rigorous costings and assessment of needs and priorities. For this purpose, the Implementation Blueprint will establish accurate costings and robust budgets for each housing authority's homeless services. In the context of proposed devolved global allocations for homeless services, decisions in relation to funding of particular services will primarily be made at local level, based on needs and priorities in accordance with the foregoing principles. Decisions to provide new services would only be made where it is established that sufficient operational funding will be available, for accommodation allocations, for HSE health/care elements, or from any other relevant sources. The shared responsibility with the HSE for addressing adult homelessness is a key element in the planning and delivery of homeless services, while the HSE has full responsibility in relation to child/youth homelessness.

Appendix 1
North West Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum
Membership

Local Authority-

Dorothy Clarke, Sligo County Council (CHAIR)
Margaret McConnell, Sligo Borough Council,
Mary Quinn, Leitrim County Council
Patrick McLaughlin, Donegal County Council

Health Services Executive-

Tony Quilty, HSE
Kieran Doherty, HSE

Probation Services-

Helena Morrin,

V.E.C.-

M Burke

F.A.S.-

A McGovern

Councillor

Sean MacManus

Department of Social Protection

Nominee to be confirmed by DoEHLG

Regional Drugs Task Force-

Sean O'Connor

Approved Bodies and Homeless Providers

NW Simon
Focus Ireland
Sligo Social Services
DVAS / DDVS
SVdP
Cluid Housing Association

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