



MID EAST REGION HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2021-2023



Printed on carbon balanced paper to reduce the impact of printed communications, reducing the carbon footprint and impacts on climate change.



MID EAST REGION
**HOMELESSNESS
ACTION PLAN
2021-2023**



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin
Wicklow County Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a national scheme and a form of social housing support provided by all local authorities. Under HAP, local authorities can provide housing assistance to households with a long-term housing need, including many long-term Rent Supplement recipients.
HHAP	Homeless Hap Assistance Payment. The Homeless HAP scheme provides additional financial and related supports to tenants and landlords, along with all of the benefits of the national HAP scheme. The local authority must have determined that the household is homeless and has no alternative accommodation options prior to approval of a HHAP payment.
HSE	Health Service Executive is responsible for the provision of healthcare and social supports for homeless persons managing a significant annual budget for direct homeless services.
NTQ	Notice to Quit. If a landlord or tenant wants to terminate the tenancy of a house let for rent or other valuable consideration, a valid written notice of termination must be served. The Emergency Period under the Residential Tenancies Act 2020 brought in temporary restrictions on ending tenancies when restrictions on travel outside a 5km radius of a person's home are in place. These restrictions were introduced in 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
PEA	Private Emergency Accommodation: this may include hotels, B&Bs and other residential facilities that are used on an emergency basis
RAS	Rental Accommodation Scheme is a form of social housing support provided by local authorities
STA	Supported Temporary Accommodation: accommodation, including hostels, with onsite professional support
TEA	Temporary Emergency Accommodation: emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) support
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency. Dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2023 was prepared by the local authorities of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow and the Health Services Executive (HSE), having regard to the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as it relates to Homelessness, and it set out the priorities for the region for the past three years. During the lifetime of the previous Action Plan, 2018-2020, significant challenges were faced across the region in dealing with the increasing numbers of individuals and families presenting as homeless to the local authorities. The development of relationships between the local authorities and homeless service providers in the region has been critical in dealing with the many and complex issues that have arisen, not least of which is access to accommodation, either through local authorities, approved housing bodies or the private rental market.

Unfortunately, the backdrop to the development of the new Action Plan 2021-2023 remains the persistent high level of homelessness in the region, despite the significant interventions undertaken to prevent homelessness in the first instance. The causes of homelessness are complex and diverse and the significant numbers presenting to Homeless Services, and the increase in placements in emergency accommodation, have continued throughout the duration of the last Action Plan.

The cycle of presentations, placements to and exits from emergency accommodation continues and the priority areas listed below will remain for the foreseeable future:





MID EAST REGION HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2021-2023

CONTENTS

Click content '[Titles](#)' below to view section.

Click the  icon to return to this 'Contents' page.

	PAGE
Introduction	5
Review of Homelessness Action Plan 2018-2020	8
Covid-19 and Impact on Homelessness	10
Policy Context	11
Regional Structure	19
Expenditure	23
Services in the Mid East Region	24
Extent of Homelessness	35
Performance Indicators	43
Key Findings and Future Objectives	45
Action Plan 2021-2023	49
Statutory Consultation	54
Appendix	55

INTRODUCTION: MID EAST REGION HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2021-2023

The local authorities of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow form the Mid East Region Homelessness Forum, together with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies. Kildare County Council has been designated as lead authority for the Mid East region.

The Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan was prepared having regard to the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 as it relates to Homelessness and sets out the priorities for the region for the next three years.

In accordance with Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 each Housing Authority must prepare an Action Plan to address homelessness. The Plan must specify the measures proposed to be undertaken to address homelessness in the administrative area(s) concerned by the Housing Authorities, HSE and other bodies providing services to address homelessness.

The Plan must include, but is not limited to, the following objectives:

The prevention of homelessness

The reduction of homelessness in its extent or duration

The provision of services, including accommodation, to address the needs of homeless households

The provision of assistance under Section 10(b)(i), as necessary, to persons who were formerly homeless

The promotion of effective co-ordination of activities proposed to be undertaken by the bodies referred to in this subsection for the purposes of addressing homelessness in the administrative area or areas concerned.

Housing supply is critical to dealing with homelessness. A key priority of the 2016 Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness was to accelerate and expand the delivery across all tenures, including social housing. This is a continuing priority in the 2020 Programme for Government - Housing for All and a new housing programme will be launched during 2021.

Each of the Local Authorities in the Mid East Region are advancing their respective housing capital programmes under the various delivery mechanisms (direct construction, vacant units, acquisition, leasing, Part V, and affordable housing), which are subject to ongoing liaison with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Furthermore, Approved Housing Bodies have also intensified their delivery of new social units in collaboration with the three local authorities concerned. The delivery of social units is progressing in parallel with the activities set out in this action plan.



STATUTORY PROVISION OF THE HOUSING ACT 1988

The relevant statutory provisions regarding homelessness are provided under Section 2 and Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, as outlined below:

SECTION 2 OF THE HOUSING ACT 1988 PROVIDES:

A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purposes 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 such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

SECTION 10 OF THE ACT OF 1988 PROVIDES:

- (1) A housing authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section:
 - (a) make arrangements, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of section 5 for the provisions by that body of accommodation for a homeless person,
 - (b) provide a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority consider appropriate, or
 - (c) rent accommodation, arrange lodgings or contribute to the cost of such accommodation or lodgings for a homeless person
- (10) A housing authority may, while making enquiries to enable them to determine if a person is homeless, exercise the powers provided for in subsection (1).

It is the Housing Authority that must form the requisite opinion, following an assessment of need, on whether the criterion as set out in Section 2 is fulfilled. The decision to provide emergency accommodation supports rests within the competence and expertise of the Housing Authority and is made within the context of available resources and competing demands on those resources.

REVIEW OF THE MID EAST REGION HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2018-2020

An annual review was carried out in 2018 and 2019 of the above Action Plan, and this final review sets out the roadmap for the new Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2023. The review documents the progress of the Mid East Region in meeting the objectives of the 2018-2020 Plan over the three-year period. Key outcomes at regional level include:

Progress on the reduction in the number of families/ children in emergency accommodation	Significant progress to date in homeless prevention and in assisting families/ individuals to move from emergency accommodation to HAP	Homeless HAP Placefinders established in Kildare, Meath and Wicklow and have played a key role during Covid-19
Housing First tender completed and awarded in Q4 of 2019 to the Peter McVerry Trust for a 3-year period	Significant progress in rolling out the Housing First programme with the 3-year Regional target of 64 and 14 placements achieved to date	Homeless Action Teams (HAT) successfully operating in each County
22 Isolation Units available in the Region in response to COVID-19 requirements	Mid East Prisoner Protocol agreed and advanced	Implementation of National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) commenced



At local level, key progress is set out below:



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara Kildare County Council

- ✓ Family Hubs in Athy and Prosperous in operation
- ✓ Tenancy Sustainment service established
- ✓ Homeless HAP Placefinder in operation
- ✓ STA facilities in operation in 3 towns
- ✓ 25 bed facility in operation at Kerdiffstown, Naas
- ✓ Cold Weather Initiative in operation with the PMV Trust
- ✓ Exits from Emergency Accommodation ongoing
- ✓ 8 COVID-19 Isolation Units provided
- ✓ 2,398 active HAP tenancies in place
- ✓ 246 Homeless HAP tenancies in place



comhairle chontae na mí *meath county council*

- ✓ Family Hub in operation in Navan
- ✓ Tenancy Sustainment Service established
- ✓ Homeless HAP Placefinder in operation
- ✓ Supported emergency accommodation (15 beds)
- ✓ Aftercare Unit provided in east Meath
- ✓ Exits from Emergency Accommodation ongoing
- ✓ Cold Weather Initiative in operation
- ✓ 7 COVID-19 Isolation Units provided
- ✓ 2,275 active HAP tenancies in place
- ✓ 431 Homeless HAP tenancies in place



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin Wicklow County Council

- ✓ Family Hub in operation in Wicklow Town
- ✓ Tenancy Sustainment Service (Mental Health) established
- ✓ Homeless HAP Placefinder in operation
- ✓ Exits from Emergency Accommodation ongoing
- ✓ 20 bed STA facility provided in Bray (including emergency Cold Weather beds) with Dublin Simon
- ✓ 7 COVID-19 Isolation Units provided
- ✓ 2,108 active HAP tenancies in place
- ✓ 303 Homeless HAP tenancies in place

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: IMPACT ON HOMELESS/ VULNERABLE PERSONS



This Plan was reviewed during the Covid-19 public health emergency that required the urgent implementation of solutions to protect the most vulnerable in the community. Guidelines were issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) Guidance for Vulnerable Groups (including, in particular, homeless people) and Prisoner Releases during the crisis.

The Guidance document focussed on preventing the spread of COVID-19 and dealing with cases of COVID-19 in homeless settings and also for Travellers, Roma, international protection applicants (IPAS), refugees and other vulnerable groups.

New emergency measures were introduced into law to protect tenants during the COVID-19 emergency period to August 2020, directing that a notice of termination could not be served on tenants during the Covid-19 emergency period. All notices of terminations, which were served prior to the emergency period were paused, and tenants in general could not be required to leave their rented accommodation during this time. Furthermore, landlords were not permitted to increase the amount of rent payable during this period.

Local Authorities were also prohibited from issuing notices of termination or instigating legal action to evict unauthorised Traveller encampments.

SUMMARY OF COVID-19 CHALLENGES

- ▶ Significant increase in presentations of homeless individuals, many with complex needs
- ▶ Management of Cold Weather Initiatives to ensure compliance with Covid-19 health and safety requirements
- ▶ The identification of Covid-19 isolation units, fit out and furnishing, logistics and management of units, placed additional demands on staff and incurred additional unforeseen costs
- ▶ The ongoing retention of a total of 22 Covid-19 isolation units in the Region impacts on available units for social housing

Based on the above challenges, demand for funding will continue to increase to meet the level of required services and, consequently, applications for increased funding for homeless services will continue over the duration of the next Plan.



POLICY CONTEXT



POLICY CONTEXT

In drawing up this Action Plan, the management group of the Mid East Region Homelessness Forum had regard to homeless and housing policies, both current and past, and has been particularly informed by the following policy documents.



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT – OUR SHARED FUTURE (JUNE 2020) MISSION – HOUSING FOR ALL

Reducing and preventing homelessness is a major focus of the Government with priority given to reduce the number of homeless families and individuals and support them into long term sustainable accommodation. Funding for homeless services will be increased, including funding for drug-free hostels.

The expansion of the Housing First programme and prioritising funding streams within the HSE to deliver the necessary health and mental health supports, together with a focus on construction and acquisition of 1 bed units, will be significant in continuing to tackle homelessness for individuals with complex needs. This alignment of housing and health again reinforces the objectives of the Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018-2021.

Youth homelessness is prioritised with the development of a National Youth Homelessness Strategy. The long term plan is to move away from dormitory-style accommodation and to provide suitable tenancies and ensure that aftercare and transition plans and protocols are developed for vulnerable homeless people leaving hospital, state care, foster care, prison or other state settings.

HOUSING FIRST NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2018-2021

It is widely recognised that many people who sleep rough, and who are frequent users of emergency hostels and shelters, have complex needs around mental health and addiction and require individualised supports to successfully move from homelessness to a sustainable tenancy. The Housing First approach has been Government policy for a number of years. With Housing First, the priority is to support a person who has experienced homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, without any preconditions around sobriety or mental health treatment and to continue working intensively with them on these issues once they are housed. Housing First recognises that a stable home provides the basis for recovery in other areas.



The alignment of housing and health supports means that Housing First is very much a joint initiative of the Department of Housing, the Department of Health, local authorities, the HSE and NGO providers.



REBUILDING IRELAND: ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS [JULY 2016]

The overarching aim of Rebuilding Ireland is to ramp up delivery of housing from its current undersupply across all tenures to help individuals and families meet their housing needs, and to help those who are currently housed to remain in their homes or be provided with appropriate options of alternative accommodation, especially those families in emergency accommodation.

The Action Plan contains 5 pillars as follows:

- Pillar 1: Address Homelessness**
- Pillar 2: Accelerate Social Housing**
- Pillar 3: Build More Homes**
- Pillar 4: Improve the Rental Sector**
- Pillar 5: Utilise Existing Stock**

Under Pillar 1: Address Homelessness, the key objective is:

To provide early solutions to address the unacceptable level of families in emergency accommodation; deliver inter-agency supports for people who are currently homeless, with a particular emphasis on minimising the incidence of rough sleeping; and enhance State supports to keep people in their own homes.

ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS [DECEMBER 2014]

In December 2014, a special summit was hosted by the then Minister on homelessness, in order to reaffirm the Government's commitment to end involuntary long-term homelessness by the end of 2016. The plan focussed on actions which constituted an immediate response to the issue of rough sleeping in Dublin, and secondly, actions which tackle the more systemic issues, classified under the three categories of the housing led approach, namely Prevention, Accommodation and Supports.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ON THE STATE'S RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS [MAY 2014]

The 2014 Implementation Plan sets out the actions/recommendations to be applied in implementing the findings of the Homeless Oversight Group, which reported in December 2013. This is a structured and practical plan, transitioning from a shelter-led to a sustainable housing-led response to homelessness. The plan emphasises a housing led approach as set out in the Government's Homelessness Policy Statement (February 2013).

HOMELESSNESS POLICY STATEMENT [FEBRUARY 2013]

This policy statement places the rapid provision of appropriate accommodation, with support as needed to ensure sustainable tenancies, as the key solution to ending homelessness. It aimed to explicitly set out a housing led approach to ending homelessness as the core policy in tackling homelessness, encompassing the following:

- **Supply** – availability and supply of secure, affordable and adequate housing
- **Prevention** – action to prevent, as far as possible, the occurrence or reoccurrence of homelessness
- **Support** – promoting independent living, with supports as appropriate

THE WAY HOME [2008-2013] – A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS ADULT HOMELESSNESS IN IRELAND [AUGUST 2008] AND THE SUBSEQUENT NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN [2009]

This strategy represented a further development in policy at the time to address the issue of homelessness, and was informed by the findings and recommendations for the Review of the Implementation of Homeless Strategies by Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants in 2006. The thrust of the strategy was to re-orientate efforts towards:

- Preventing homelessness
- Eliminating the need to sleep rough
- Eliminating long term occupation of emergency accommodation
- Providing long term accommodation solutions
- Ensuring effective services
- Better co-ordinated funding arrangements

POLICY AND PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES IN RELATION TO ASSISTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITH EMERGENCY AND LONG TERM ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

Circular Housing 2/17 dated 17th January 2017 outlined guidance for Housing Authorities to ensure effectiveness and consistency in responses to assist victims of domestic violence. The guidelines provide a summary of best practice in this area and the procedural pathways within which Local Authorities operate. Organisational responsibility is outlined between the key stakeholders in terms of crisis response to domestic violence, emergency accommodation and long term accommodation needs. Partnership working between statutory agencies and organisations involved locally in the delivery of domestic violence services is emphasised.



NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS FRAMEWORK (NQSF)

The Mid East Region commenced the implementation of the new and comprehensive national standards for homeless services. The objectives of the standards are to:

- Promote safe and effective service provision to people experiencing homelessness
- Support the objectives of the National Homeless Policy, i.e. enabling people to move into and sustain housing with appropriate levels of support
- Establish consistency in how persons experiencing homelessness are responded to across different regions and models of service delivery

The NQSF will be applicable to all homeless service provision in receipt of funding, whether the service is statutory, voluntary or private. It applies to homeless services for single adults, adult couples and for adults with dependent children.



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

It is recognised in the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future that promoting positive mental health and reducing the burden of mental illness can have benefits for everyone and this is particularly notable in the area of homelessness.

SHARING THE VISION – A MENTAL HEALTH POLICY FOR EVERYONE (JUNE 2020)

The vision embodied in this policy is to create a mental health system that addresses the needs of the population through a focus on the requirements of the individual.

Sharing the Vision recognises that many vulnerable groups, including those who are homeless, have specific needs, which the mental health services should be equipped to meet.

There is a recognised need to ensure that those with complex mental health difficulties are in receipt of multi-disciplinary supports from health professionals to improve their quality of life. Service users also require assistance to sustain tenancies and live independently. As a result, there must be effective liaison between mental health services and local authorities in the provision of supported, social housing.

Sustainable resourcing based on identified need for tenancy-related/independent living supports for patients with complex mental health difficulties must be considered for service users moving from HSE supported accommodation to independent living and for individuals in hospital or homeless services identified as having a housing need.

Sharing the Vision includes an implementation roadmap, with outcome indicators, and allocates ownership of the recommendations to lead agencies, with time-bound implementation targets against each action. To deliver on this vision, it is essential that the close connection between healthcare supports and housing options is recognised

NATIONAL DRUGS STRATEGY: REDUCING HARM, SUPPORTING RECOVERY – A HEALTH LED RESPONSE TO DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE IN IRELAND 2017-2025.

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery sets out the Government’s strategy to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Ireland up to 2025.

It identifies a set of key actions to be delivered between 2017 and 2020, and provides an opportunity for the development of further actions from 2021 to 2025 to address needs that may emerge later on in the lifetime of the strategy. The following goals are detailed in the document:

- Goal 1 - Promote and protect health and wellbeing
- Goal 2 - Minimise the harms caused by the use and misuse of substances and promote rehabilitation and recovery
- Goal 3 - Address the harms of drug markets and reduce access to drugs for harmful use
- Goal 4 - Support participation of individuals, families and communities
- Goal 5 - Develop sound and comprehensive evidence informed policies and actions

Regarding homelessness, the importance of homelessness services and substance misuse services working together in a collaborative way is highlighted under Goal 2, as is the need to improve the range of problem substance use services and rehabilitation supports for people with high support needs who are homeless, together with the availability of drug and alcohol, mental health and community integration services.



TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, a progressive piece of legislation with children at its heart and families viewed as the foundation of a strong healthy community where children can flourish. Partnership and co-operation in the delivery of seamless services to children and families are also central to the Act. Under the Child and Family Act 2013 the Child and Family Agency is charged with:

- Supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families;
- Offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs. In order to discharge



these responsibilities, the Agency is required to maintain and develop the services needed in order to deliver these supports to children and families and provide certain services for the psychological welfare of children and their families;

- Responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing educational welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education;
- Ensuring that the best interests of the child guide all decisions affecting individual children;
- Consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency's policies and services;
- Strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services responsive to needs;
- Undertaking research relating to its functions and providing information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions; and
- Commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services

PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY

There is a requirement on public bodies to promote equality, protect human rights and prevent discrimination in accordance with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. The Local Authorities of the Mid East Region are committed to addressing equality and human rights concerns for all in the delivery of housing, including Traveller accommodation, by the promotion of the values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy, and autonomy. The Mid East region will endeavour to develop a human rights focus into the work of the Regional Action Plan, in accordance with our Public Sector Duty as set out in Section 42(1), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014.

The Mid East Region is committed to eliminating discrimination, achieving equality, and fulfilling human rights for all service users and in doing so recognises the diversity of people across the identified groups for the Duty. The identified groups are those covered by the nine grounds under the equality legislation, including gender (including gender identity); civil status; family status (including lone parents and carers); age (young and older people); disability; sexual orientation; race (Black and minority ethnic people); religion and belief; and membership of the Traveller community. In addition, groups encompassed on the grounds of socio-economic status and who are at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion are also included under the Public Sector Duty.

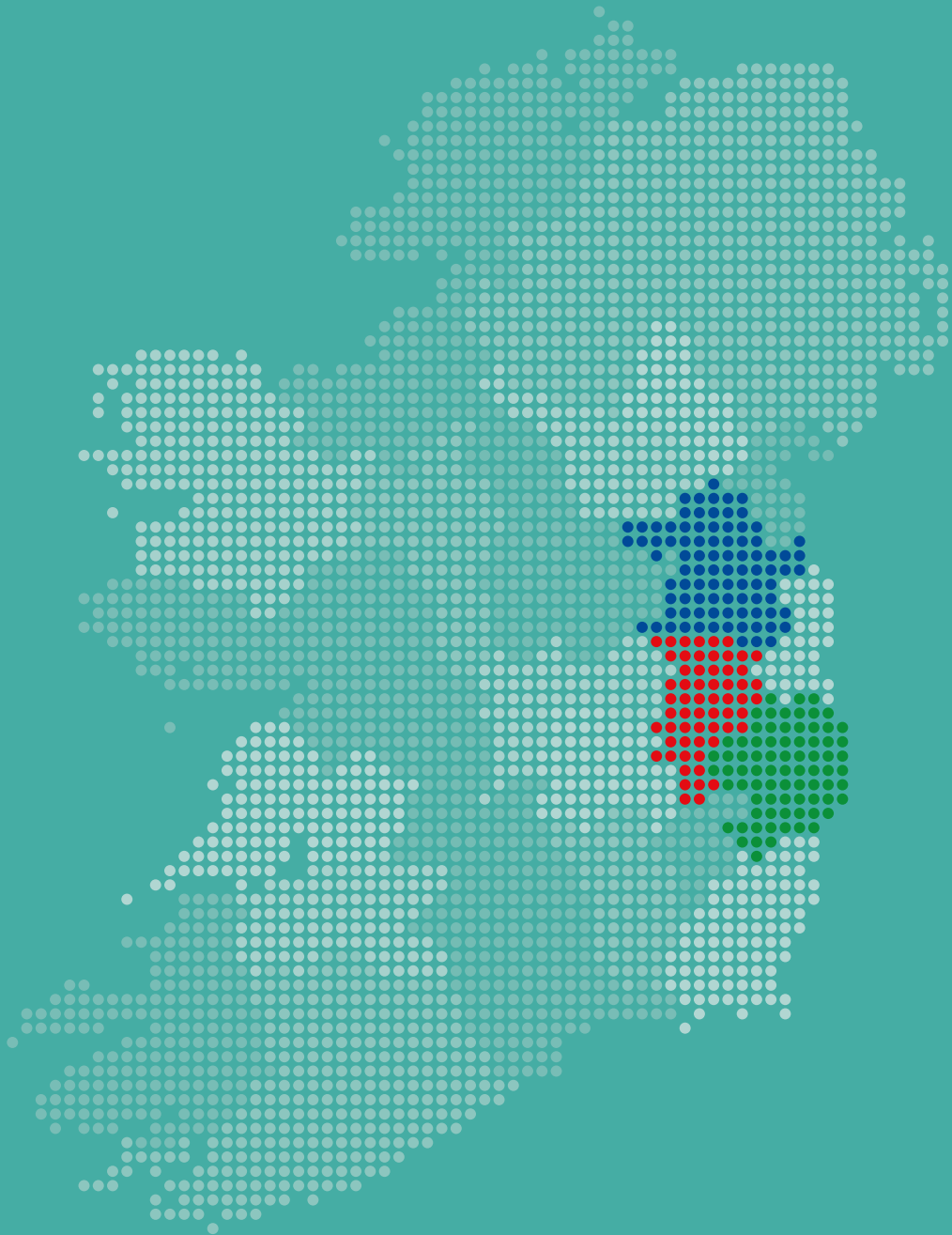
It is accepted that people may hold more than one identity and be part of more than one of the identified groups. Accordingly, the Mid East Region will keep a focus on intersectionality in its implementation.

The Mid East Region will continue to monitor and assess the Plan under the Duty enabling the tracking of its current responses to the issues and to further develop and expand these responses as found to be necessary, thereby advancing equality and human rights. The Duty monitoring process as outlined will form part of the review of the Action Plan by the Mid East Region, that will be conducted on an annual basis.

In fulfilment of our Public Sector Duty, a specific objective on the Duty has been included in the Table of Actions.



REGIONAL STRUCTURE



REGIONAL STRUCTURE

Kildare County Council, under a shared service arrangement, is the lead housing authority for the Mid East Region with regard to homelessness. This role includes overseeing the regional Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum and Management Group as provided for in Sections 38 and 39 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. Kildare County Council is also responsible for managing the region's administrative relationship with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The coordinating role of the lead housing authority does not impinge on any of the statutory functions of the other housing authorities in the region, including those with regard to arrangements for the provision of accommodation for persons considered homeless.

MID EAST REGION MANAGEMENT GROUP

A Management Group of the Mid East Homelessness Consultative Forum was established in accordance with legislation, with the primary responsibility being the preparation of this statutory Mid East Homelessness Action Plan. The management group 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 Action Plan and subsequent blueprint for Homeless Services.

Specifically, the Management Group:

- Assesses and makes decisions in principle on all funding applications for homeless services.
- Submits proposed budget for services to the budgetary authorities within the relevant statutory funding agencies.
- Is responsible for developing effective, efficient and integrated responses to homelessness, including the approval of three-year local homeless action plans and the commitment to seek adequate and appropriate resources for their implementation.
- Has links with similar groups in neighbouring counties to develop a high level regional focus on homelessness.

MID EAST JOINT HOMELESSNESS CONSULTATIVE FORUM

The Mid East Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum was first established in April 2010 arising from Ministerial directions issued by the then 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 this Forum is to provide a consultative mechanism in relation to homelessness in the context of the preparation of this statutory Mid East Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2023.

The aim of the Mid East Region Homelessness Consultative Forum is to provide information, views, advice or reports in relation to homelessness and to encourage and assess implementation of objectives to address homelessness in both national and regional policies.



The Forum places an emphasis on strengthening preventative policies, building relationships, reviewing procedures and improving services to reduce instances of homelessness across the region.

During the period of the last plan the Mid East Region Consultative Forum met on a quarterly basis and discussed matters including:



Preparation and monitoring of Homelessness Action Plan



Review of homeless presentations across the region



Housing Assistance Payment Scheme



Discharge policy from hospitals and prisons



Impact of homelessness on Travellers



National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services in Ireland



Regional and Agency updates



Covid-19 and impacts on homelessness and provision of services

The membership of the Mid East Homelessness Forum is drawn from sectors as outlined in Circular HU 1/2010. Further information with regard to the membership of both the Management Group and Forum is included at Appendix 1.

HOMELESS ACTION TEAM

The Homeless Action Team (HAT) provides a multidisciplinary approach to solving the needs of homeless persons or homeless families and facilitates the proactive interagency case management of homeless households. The service is provided with the close partnership of the HSE, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and Voluntary Housing Bodies.

HATs comprise the local decision-making expertise available to people who are homeless in the specific locality and includes health, housing and Approved Housing Bodies who provide emergency, transitional or long term residential accommodation.

The purpose of the HAT is:

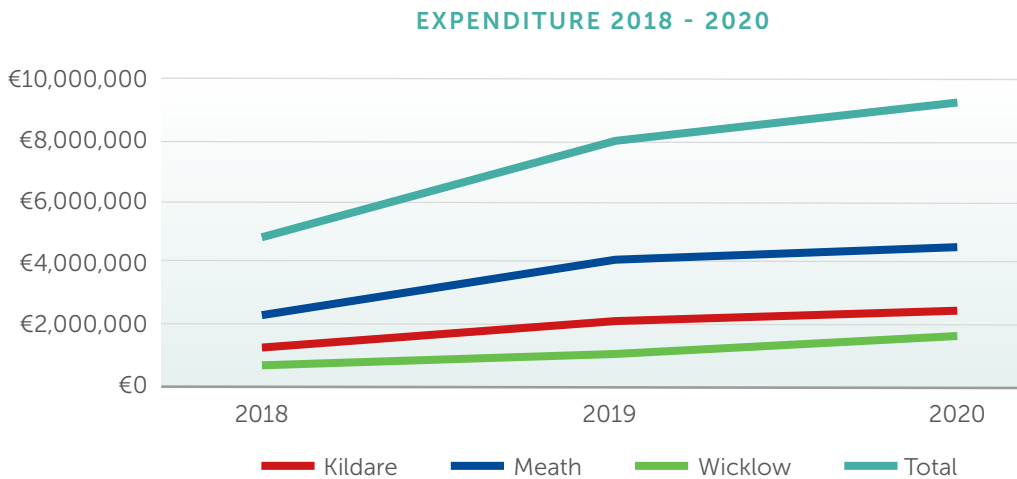
- To respond to the needs of clients in emergency accommodation holistically
- To reduce duration of stay in emergency accommodation
- To reduce the cyclical nature of homelessness
- To ensure co-operation amongst agencies
- To identify at an early stage if a client has relapsed and put in place appropriate supports

Each of the three local authorities operates a HAT, which meets on a frequent basis. A shared care and case management ethos is central to the success of the HAT process to ensure the completion of thorough assessments and the implementation of appropriate interventions for the clients concerned.



HOMELESS SERVICES EXPENDITURE

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage supports Housing Authorities by providing funding up to a maximum of 90% for homeless services, subject to annual budget review. As the lead authority in the Management Group, Kildare County Council has ultimate responsibility for the finalisation of the region's expenditure programme, which it develops in cooperation with the other two housing authorities. The regional allocation is delegated to Kildare County Council and this funding is disbursed appropriately across the three housing authorities in the region. Figure 1 shows the total expenditure on homeless services across the region for the period 2018-2020 including provision of emergency accommodation, together with support services such as homeless prevention and tenancy sustainment. As demand for services continues to increase, expenditure is also projected to increase over the lifetime of the Plan.



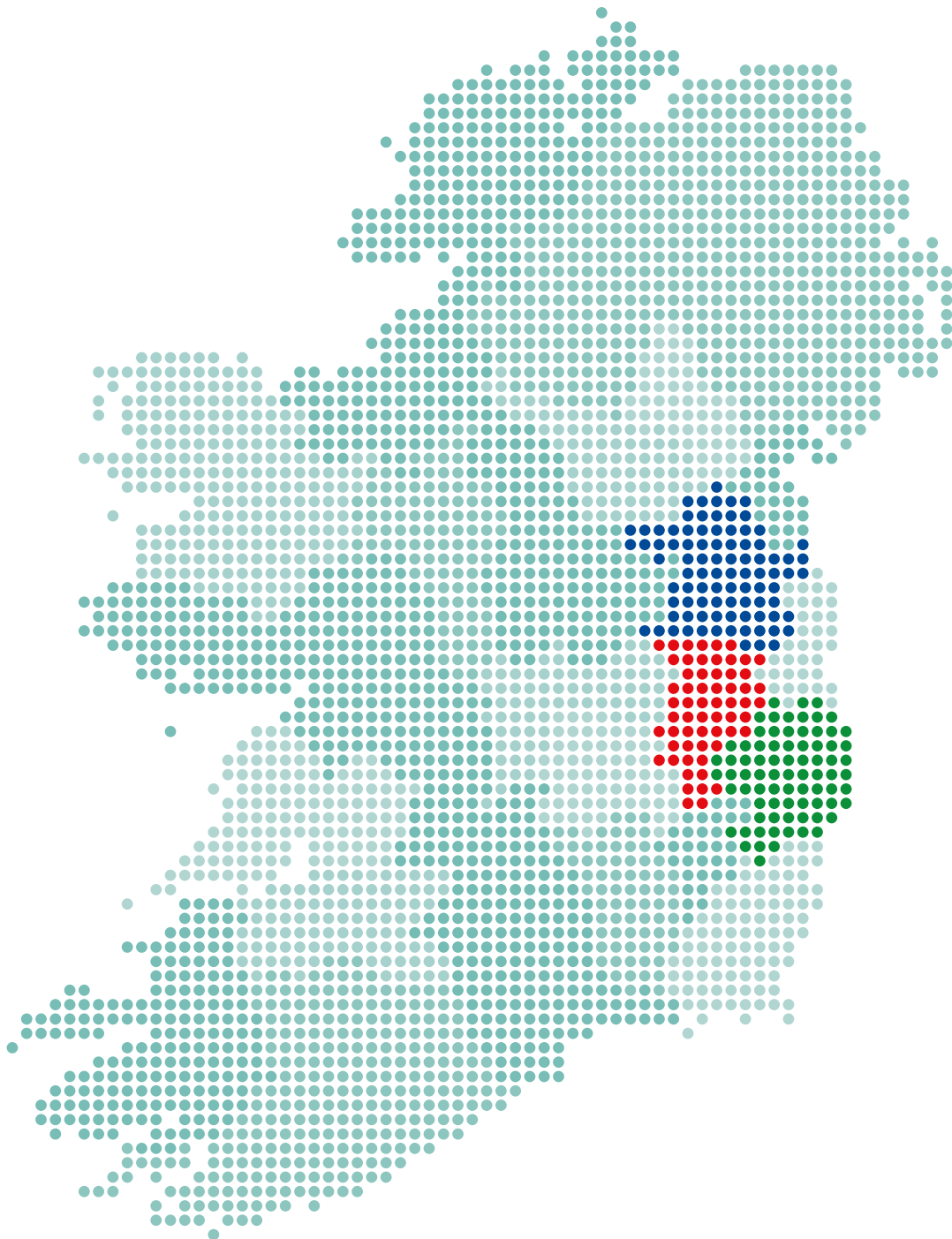
The breakdown of expenditure across the three local authorities is set out in Table 1 below:

	Kildare	Meath	Wicklow	Total
2018	€2,505,599	€1,493,205	€965,608	€4,964,412
2019	€4,367,657	€2,391,063	€1,291,273	€8,049,993
2020	€4,722,531	€3,090,136	€1,910,417	€9,723,084

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage supports Housing Authorities by providing funding of up to a maximum of 90% for homeless services, subject to annual budget review.

CURRENT SERVICES IN THE MID EAST REGION

Reviews of the Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plans between 2013 and 2020 (two Plans) identified significant challenges that were faced across the region in dealing with the increasing numbers of people and families presenting as homeless to the local authorities. The latest review (2020) indicates that those challenges remain and are likely to continue to challenge the three local authorities over the duration of the new Plan 2021-2023.





Comhairle Contae Chill Dara Kildare County Council

In response to the number of families and individuals seeking assistance in relation to homelessness, Kildare County Council has developed a partnership approach with key homeless agencies to improve coordination and increase supports available to those at risk of homelessness. The Housing Department works closely with a number of organisations who provide services to homeless people, in particular Peter McVerry Trust, Simon, Focus and Threshold, in an effort to secure emergency accommodation and transition units throughout the county.

Kildare County Council employs a Homeless Team comprising of three Homeless Outreach Workers, three Tenancy Support Officers, two Homeless Support Officers, and one Homeless HAP Placefinder, together with administrative support staff, to aid and assist the families and individuals presenting as homeless.

TENANCY SUPPORT SERVICES

While the focus will remain on providing assistance to people presenting as homeless in the first instance, it is also recognised that assistance is needed in helping people to find and retain tenancies into the future. Tenancy Support Officers are supported by two social workers, employed by Kildare County Council, who work with traveller and vulnerable families and in cases of domestic violence and housing emergencies.

SUPPORTED EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

During the lifetime of the 2018-2020 Plan, a number of units were identified from the council's housing stock to be used as transition accommodation and further such units will be developed over the course of the next Plan, as the need continues. There are 25 hostel beds in Kerdiffstown, Naas, 21 beds in Newbridge and 8 transitional units, and 11 beds at Teach Íosa, Athy operated by voluntary agencies. A nine unit family hub facility is in operation in the former Dominican Priory in Athy, and a second family hub facility comprising four units is in operation in Prosperous. Both units are managed on a 24/7 basis by Peter McVerry Trust.

Kildare County Council operates an out of hours freephone homeless service with the support and assistance of Peter McVerry Trust. The freephone service, which is 1800 804 307, is available from 5pm to 9pm Monday to Friday and noon to 5pm Saturday and Sunday.

PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

While bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation is provided in cases where the other alternatives are either not available or not suitable, every effort is being made to reduce the use of this type of accommodation and this will continue to be a focus during the life of the new Plan.

HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Teach Tearmainn, in Kildare Town, is a dedicated service working to address the issues of domestic violence, and provides the only specialised service in Co Kildare. The opening of a purpose built Women and Children's Refuge in 2014 was a very welcome addition to the county and enhanced the services already provided by Teach Tearmainn.

AFTERCARE ACCOMMODATION

Kildare County Council is an active participant on Tusla's Kildare West Wicklow Aftercare Steering Committee. A new facility, specifically aimed at young persons leaving care, is now constructed at Jigginstown, Naas. The 12-unit flagship project for independent living was developed by Homeless Care Limited and allocation plans are now underway. The facility will be operated by Tiglin which aims to provide an effective and comprehensive solution to assist individuals through the provision of educational supports, employment, training and life skills to contribute positively to independent living within communities.

Aftercare facilities were also established in 2017 by the Peter McVerry Trust in partnership with Tusla. The facilities include one 2-bed unit in Celbridge and one 3-bed unit in Clane. An additional 5-bed facility has been purchased in Leixlip and will open in late 2021. Peter McVerry Trust has also established, in partnership with Kildare County Council and the Tusla's Kildare West Wicklow Aftercare Steering Committee, two CAS for Care Leaver units in Sallins and Kildare Town, and an additional two units are in the pipeline in Clane and Newbridge. All young people in Peter McVerry Trust aftercare accommodation have an individual care plan which includes supports around their independent living skills and their education, training and employment.

HOUSING FIRST

Six Housing First tenancies commenced in Kildare since the Housing First Model was launched in the Mid East Region in late 2019. The target for Housing First in Kildare is 31 tenancies in the first 3 years of the service.



HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS (HAP)

The total number of active Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) tenancies in County Kildare in 2020 is 2,398.

HOMELESS HAP PLACEFINDER

There is one Placefinder employed by Kildare County Council providing support to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness by way of assisting the sourcing of HAP properties and providing financial assistance. There were 246 active Homeless HAP tenancies in 2020.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION FOR KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL HOMELESS SERVICES

	SERVICE PROVISION	2020 EXPENDITURE
 PREVENTION	Homeless HAP Placefinder 246 Homeless HAP tenancies in 2020	€51,383
	Housing Assistance Payment 2,398 active HAP tenancies in place	€42,209
 EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION	Supported Emergency Accommodation Kerdiffstown, Naas: 25 beds Newbridge: 21 beds Athy: 11 beds	€4,074,368
	Private Emergency Accommodation Access to bed places on a rolling basis Ad hoc placements as need requires	
	Family Hubs Capacity for 13 families	
	Severe Weather Unit Capacity for 24 individuals	
	Housing First 6 tenancies commenced	
 MULTI AGENCY	3 Homeless Outreach Workers 3 Tenancy Sustainment Officers 2 Homeless Support Officers 1 Homeless HAP Placefinder Officer Administrative Support	N/A
 PERSONNEL AND SUPPORT COSTS	€4,722,531	€554,572
TOTAL 2020 EXPENDITURE		€4,722,532



comhairle chontae na mí *meath county council*

Meath County Council's Homeless Service is operated on a team based approach, involving Senior Housing Management, Housing Allocation Officers and representatives of statutory and voluntary sector service providers that are directly involved with homeless clients in Co Meath. There are currently three Settlement Officers employed by Meath County Council.

The Settlement Officers deliver the homeless service on a case management basis. As informed by national policy, prevention of homelessness remains the key aim of the service. This involves a thorough assessment of a client's circumstances, and the implementation of appropriate interventions. Homelessness has complex causes and the Settlement Officers respond to the psycho-social factors affecting each case in a strategic manner. Extensive support is provided in the prevention of homelessness with the adoption of a housing first led approach, through securing private rented accommodation, the payment of deposits and transitioning to Housing Assistance Payment.

In addition to Meath County Council's Homeless Service, the Simon Community delivers, and funds directly, a homeless support service in the County. The Simon Community over the past three years have engaged with Meath County Council and local community services in Co. Meath to provide support to people who are homeless, or who are at risk of becoming homeless. There is currently one part time Project Worker employed by Simon Community providing this service.

SUPPORTED EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Meath County Council has retained four bed places in Drogheda Homeless Aid, Drogheda. However, the Homeless Service avails of additional bed places subject to availability at the time of placement request. Typically, 5-7 bed places are occupied by Meath's Homeless Service at any one time.

Four supported emergency accommodation units have been established in the County via Approved Housing Bodies. Simon Community: 3 units with Capacity for 12 bed places, with a specific focus on homeless clients with substance misuse issues, Drogheda Homeless Aid: 1 unit capacity for 3 beds, with a specific focus on homeless female clients.

PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

The provision of emergency accommodation sourced through the private sector takes the form of house shares and small lodging establishment with shared self-catering facilities. Meath County Council has adopted a Policy Statement on Standards for Private Emergency Accommodation (November 2020). This policy document provides a local structure to guide a process of continuous review of the standard of the physical environment of emergency accommodation, through defined standards, site visits and review, including service user participation. The Settlement Officers have forged good working relationships with local agents and landlords, which have facilitated the supply of private rented accommodation for homeless clients, both in the form of emergency accommodation and long term private rented tenancies.



HOMELESS HUBS

There are two Family Hubs located in Navan town, managed by the Peter McVerry Trust with a capacity to support 8 families.

SEVERE WEATHER INITIATIVE

A Severe Weather Unit is currently operational under the management of the Peter McVerry Trust in Navan town with a capacity for six individuals.

HOUSING FIRST

Seven Housing First Tenancies commenced in Meath since the Housing First Model was launched in the Mid East Region in late 2019. The target for Housing First in Meath is 22 tenancies in the first 3 years of the service.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS (HAP)

The total number of active Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) tenancies in County Meath in 2020 is 2,261. It is anticipated that approximately 700 households will sign up to the scheme in 2020.

HOMELESS HAP PLACEFINDER

There is one Placefinder employed by Meath County Council providing support to homeless households and those at threat of homelessness by way of assisting the sourcing of HAP properties and providing financial assistance. There were 421 active Homeless HAP tenancies in 2020.

HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTION

Meath County Council's Homeless Action Team meets on a monthly basis to co-ordinate an inter-agency response to the support needs and case management of homeless people and individuals at risk of becoming homeless. The service is provided with the close partnership of the HSE and voluntary housing bodies.

CARE LEAVERS

Meath County Council is an active participant on the Meath AfterCare Steering Committee.


TENANCY SUPPORT AND SUSTAINMENT

Meath County Council provides a tenancy support and sustainment service through the Peter McVerry Trust which has a participant caseload of up to 50 referrals at any one time consisting of a mix of need within the range of low to high support needs, and to varying degrees of intensity and duration.

HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In relation to domestic violence, Meath's Women Refuge is located in Navan, and comprises four family rooms and one single room for women and children experiencing domestic violence. The Refuge operates a 24-hour phone line and an outreach service which includes court accompaniment.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION FOR MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL HOMELESS SERVICES

	SERVICE PROVISION	2020 EXPENDITURE
 <p>PREVENTION</p>	<p>Homeless HAP Placefinder 179 Homeless HAP tenancies in 2020 (Deposits & First Month Rent)</p>	€385,555
	<p>Housing Assistance Payment 2,235 active HAP tenancies in place</p>	€52,500
	<p>Tenancy Sustainment Service Capacity for 50 clients</p>	
 <p>EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION</p>	<p>Supported Emergency Accommodation Drogheda Homeless Aid Hostel - 4 retained beds, typical occupancy rate 5-7 Beds Drogheda Homeless Aid Supported Female House - 3 bed capacity Simon Community Supported House Shares (x 3)-12 bed capacity</p>	€50,089
	<p>Private Emergency Accommodation Access to bed places on a rolling basis Ad hoc placements as need requires</p>	€2,075,586
	<p>Family Hubs Capacity for 8 families</p>	€210,000
	<p>Severe Weather Unit Capacity for 6 individuals</p>	N/A 2020
	<p>Housing First 6 tenancies commenced</p>	€13,796
 <p>MULTI AGENCY</p>	<p>Regional Homeless Forum Quarterly Meeting</p>	
	<p>Homeless Action Team Monthly Meetings</p>	N/A
	<p>After Care Steering Committee Monthly Meetings</p>	
 <p>PERSONNEL AND SUPPORT COSTS</p>	<p>3 Settlement Officers 1 Homeless HAP Placefinder Officer Administrative Support</p>	€272,609
TOTAL 2020 EXPENDITURE		€3,090,136



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin *Wicklow County Council*

Wicklow County Council's Homeless Service team comprises a Homeless Outreach Officer and clerical support, to provide support and advice to the increasing number of individuals and families presenting as homeless. Further support is provided by one Dublin Simon Community worker based in Wicklow County Council offices, who assists with the ongoing work around prevention, settlement and outreach

The relationship between Wicklow County Council and the Approved Housing Bodies dealing with Homelessness is invaluable. It is accepted that those presenting as homeless may have complex addiction or mental health issues and as such, normal B&B accommodation cannot be offered in these cases. Supported accommodation is acknowledged as best practice in these cases. Wicklow County Council has continued to develop relationships with the homeless service providers in the region and this collaboration has been critical in dealing with these many and complex issues that have arisen.

With the increase of supply during the lifetime of the 2017-2020 Action Plan, significant successes were achieved in preventing and addressing homelessness through allocation of housing stock and resultant vacancies in the private rental sector with RAS and HAP.

TENANCY SUPPORT SERVICES

Wicklow County Council cofunds a Tenancy Support Worker (HAIL AHB) with the HSE to focus on tenancy sustainment for clients with mental health issues.

SUPPORTED EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Wicklow County Council has entered into Service Level Agreements with Approved Housing Bodies to provide a collaborative approach to supported accommodation (emergency and long term). This successful approach is both structured and practical in transitioning from a shelter-led to a sustainable housing-led response to homelessness.

This partnership approach to Homelessness has resulted in a diverse range of supported emergency accommodation throughout the County.

Dublin Simon provides 8 beds of low support temporary accommodation, 11 beds low to medium support accommodation and 20 beds high support temporary accommodation including emergency bed provision. Family supported accommodation comprising 7 apartments will also be operational in 2021.

Tiglin provides 4 beds of low support accommodation and 35 beds of low to medium support for clients who have successfully exited addiction and are now exiting homelessness.

PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

While bed and breakfast accommodation is provided in cases where the other alternatives are either not available or not suitable, every effort is being made to reduce the use of this type of accommodation. Wicklow County Council utilises own door accommodation as temporary emergency accommodation, where possible, from its own vacant housing stock.

HOMELESS FAMILY HUB

In partnership with Dublin Simon Community, Wicklow County Council is providing accommodation for families at risk of or experiencing homelessness in a 7 apartment facility in Wicklow town.

HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Crisis accommodation is provided by Bray Women's Refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence. This refuge provides support and relevant information to women accessing its service as well as delivering external outreach programmes

CARELEAVERS - AFTERCARE ACCOMMODATION

Wicklow County Council is an active participant on the Co. Wicklow AfterCare Steering Committee.

The Government has identified individuals exiting State Care (ie formerly teenagers in foster care), as particularly in need of supported accommodation. Wicklow County Council is working with AHBs and the HSE to identify properties suitable for Care Leavers. To date, 1 Careleaver has been successfully accommodated in a CAS property.

The Peter McVerry Trust, in conjunction with TUSLA, operates an Aftercare facility in Bray to provide semi-independent residential care to young people, aged 18-21 years old. The service works to support young people to move from dependence, through a period of semi-independence at this facility, and onto accommodation appropriate to need, by the provision of individualised aftercare programmes.

HOUSING FIRST

Wicklow County Council is committed to implementing the Housing First model. At the end of December 2020, Wicklow County Council had successfully accommodated 5 clients under Housing First. Other clients proposed for Housing First have been assessed by the team and are availing of key support work pending finalisation of accommodation provision. The three year target for Housing First in Wicklow is 11.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS (HAP)





The total number of active Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) tenancies in County Wicklow in 2020 is 1,668.



HOMELESS HAP

Wicklow County Council employs one Homeless HAP Placefinder to provide support to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness by assisting in the sourcing of HAP properties and providing financial assistance. At the end of November 2020, 303 households have been assisted under the Homeless HAP Scheme in Wicklow.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION FOR WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HOMELESS SERVICES

	SERVICE PROVISION	2020 EXPENDITURE
 PREVENTION	<p>Homeless HAP Placefinder 303 Homeless HAP tenancies in 2020</p> <p>Housing Assistance Payment 1,668 active HAP tenancies in place</p>	€53,991
 EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION	<p>Supported Transitional Accommodation Bray (Dublin Simon): 20 beds (includes Severe Weather beds) Bray (Dublin Simon) 8 beds (shared houses) Wicklow (Dublin Simon): 11 Wicklow (Dublin Simon): 7 apartments Arklow (Tiglin): 4 Greystones (Tiglin) 35</p> <p>Private Emergency Accommodation Retained B&B rooms/units Ad hoc placements as need requires</p> <p>Housing First 5 tenancies commenced</p>	€1,558,033
 MULTI AGENCY	<p>Regional Homeless Forum Quarterly Meeting</p> <p>Homeless Action Team Monthly Meetings</p> <p>After Care Steering Committee Monthly Meetings</p>	N/A
 PERSONNEL AND SUPPORT COSTS	<p>1 Homeless Outreach Worker 1 Homeless HAP Placefinder 1 Homeless Support Officer (Dublin Simon) 1 Tenancy Sustainment Officer (HAIL) Administrative Support</p>	€298,394
TOTAL 2020 EXPENDITURE		€1,910,417

EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE MID EAST REGION



REGIONAL STRUCTURE

The need for a common information gathering framework within the Mid East Region was identified in the last Action Plan, with a data capturing template devised, and subsequently completed for review at each quarterly Regional Management Group from 2018 onwards. The data captured covered information on presentations, emergency accommodation placements and exits, with a particular focus on the factors contributing to homelessness in the region. Based on the above, the Mid East Region is well placed to devise this Action Plan on an evidence-based approach, drawing on the statistical data available for the past three years, thereby informing the strategic development of homeless services in the Region for the period 2021 – 2023.

A summary of the key data pertaining to presentations, emergency accommodation placements and exits from emergency accommodation is outlined below in respect of 2018 - 2020.

Tables 1, 1a and 1b outline the number of homeless presentations across the region between 2018 and 2020, with a breakdown also provided for the number of repeat presentations and household composition.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS PER COUNTY 2018

	No. of Presentations	No. of Repeat Presentations	No. of Individuals/ Couples	No. of Families with Dependent Children	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Kildare	1211	768	219/48	114	327	225
Meath	343	79	179/	164	326	320
Wicklow	641	207	264/	377	514	695
Region Total	2,195	1,054	664/48	655	1,167	1,240

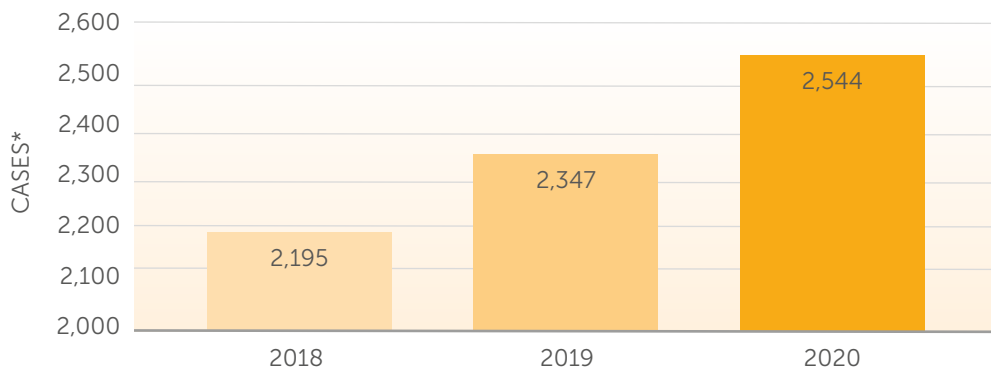
TABLE 1A: NUMBER OF HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS PER COUNTY 2019

	No. of Presentations	No. of Repeat Presentations	No. of Individuals/ Couples	No. of Families with Dependent Children	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Kildare	1,163	721	333/96	225	536	453
Meath	513	127	249/15	249	614	450
Wicklow	698	164	230/	369	351	700
Region Total	2,374	1,032	812/111	843	1,501	1,603

**TABLE 1B: NUMBER OF HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS PER COUNTY 2020**

	No. of Presentations	No. of Repeat Presentations	No. of Individuals/ Couples	No. of Families with Dependent Children	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Kildare	1198 (355 new)	843	307	164	400	329
Meath	731 (554 new)	177	359	196	626	354
Wicklow	615 (545 new)	70	358	270	730	500
Region Total	2,544 (1,454 new)	1,090	1,024	630	1,756	1,183

The rising trend of presentations in the region is displayed in Figure 1. From 2018 onward, the number of presentations increased on an annual basis.

FIGURE 1: REGIONAL PRESENTATIONS 2018-2020

*Case is defined as an individual or family with/without dependents.

Figure 2 shows the number of placements in emergency accommodation per year in each County.

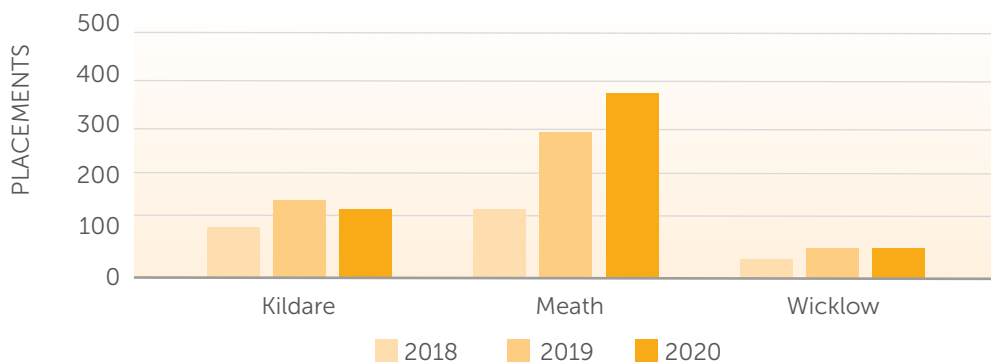
FIGURE 2: HOMELESS HOUSEHOLD PLACEMENTS PER COUNTY (2018-2020)

Table 2 outlines the number of homeless households placed in emergency accommodation for the period 2018-2020, and a breakdown is also provided for the composition of these households regarding total number of adults and dependent children.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF HOMELESS EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS PER COUNTY (2018-2020)

	2018			2019			2020		
	No. of Households	No. of Adults	No. of Children	No. of Households	No. of Adults	No. of Children	No. of Households	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Kildare	106	127	156	156	206	166	139	176	130
Meath	140	157	58	299	358	157	383	434	153
Wicklow	36	40	54	60	87	87	59	80	67
Region Total	282	324	268	515	651	410	581	690	350

Tables 3, 3a and 3b detail the number of households placed in emergency accommodation across the region between 2018 and 2020, with an analysis of the duration those households remained in emergency accommodation.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS & DURATION (%) 2018

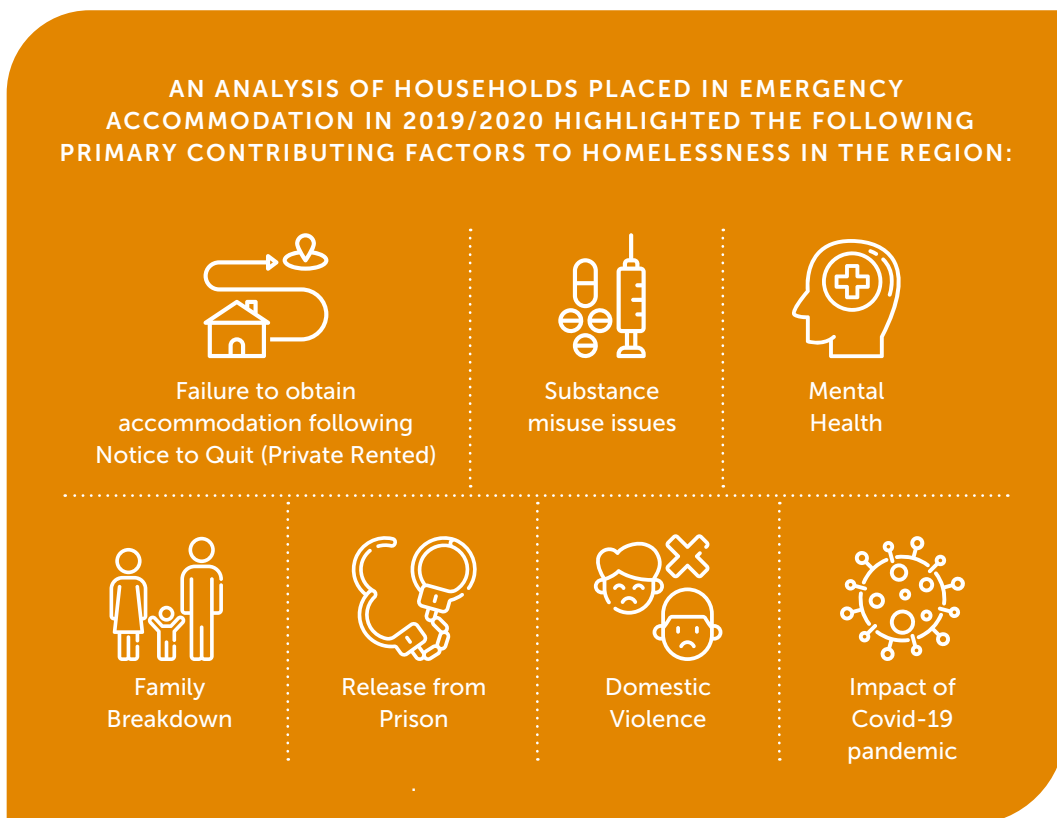
	No. of Households	<3 mths	3-6 mths	6-9mths	9-12 mths	> 12 mths
Kildare	106	25%	27%	10%	5%	33%
Meath	140	42%	24%	18%	8%	8%
Wicklow	36	28%	27%	25%	17%	3%
Region Total	282	31%	26%	18%	10%	15%

TABLE 3A: NUMBER OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS & DURATION (%) 2019

	No. of Households	<3 mths	3-6 mths	6-9mths	9-12 mths	> 12 mths
Kildare	156	15%	17%	8%	18%	42%
Meath	299	44%	25%	13%	4%	14%
Wicklow	60	50%	21%	10%	12%	7%
Region Total	515	36% (avg)	21% (avg)	10% (avg)	11% (avg)	21% (avg)

TABLE 3B: NUMBER OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS & DURATION (%) 2020

	No. of Households	<3 mths	3-6 mths	6-9mths	9-12 mths	> 12 mths
Kildare	139	14%	14%	8%	6%	58%
Meath	383	46%	18%	13%	7%	16%
Wicklow	59	42%	17%	12%	12%	16%
Region Total	581	34% (avg)	16%(avg)	11%(avg)	8%(avg)	30%(avg)



A rough sleeper count was carried out on the night of the 30/12/2020 - 17 rough sleepers were recorded in Kildare, while Meath reported 5 and Wicklow reported one rough sleeper.

Table 4, 4a and 4b report on the number of households that exited emergency accommodation in 2018, 2019 and 2020, household composition and reasons for exit.

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS EXITING EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION & REASONS 2018

	No. of Households	No. of Families with Dependent Children	Secured Private Rented	Local Authority/ AHB	Breach of Conditions	Return to Family	Prison/ Hospital	Disengaged
Kildare	103	50	30	22	7	30	7	7
Meath	130	24	49	7	65	2	1	6
Wicklow	25	20	20	1	4	0	0	1
Region Total	259	94	99	30	76	32	8	14

TABLE 4A: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS EXITING EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION & REASONS 2019

	No. of Households	No. of Families with Dependent Children	Secured Private Rented	Local Authority/ AHB	Breach of Conditions	Return to Family	Prison/ Hospital	Disengaged
Kildare	99	68	17	43	6	15	1	17
Meath	201	55	92	12	39	26	8	24
Wicklow	47	45	25	18	1	1	0	2
Region Total	347	168	134	73	46	42	9	43

TABLE 4B: NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS EXITING EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION & REASONS 2020

	No. of Households	No. of Families with Dependent Children	Secured Private Rented	Local Authority/ AHB	Breach of Conditions	Return to Family	Prison/ Hospital	Disengaged
Kildare	115	74	45	40	1	18	3	8
Meath	202	46	67	18	45	29	7	36
Wicklow	23	5	11	5	1	1	0	5
Region Total	334	125	118	63	46	48	10	49



ANALYSIS AND EMERGING TRENDS

Unfortunately, the backdrop to the development of this new Action Plan remains the persistent high level of homelessness in the region, despite the significant interventions undertaken to prevent homelessness in the first instance. The significant numbers presenting to Homeless Services, and placements in emergency accommodation, have continued throughout the duration of the last Action Plan.

PRESENTATIONS

In terms of presentations, each local authority reported considerable numbers of presentations, a high portion of which are repeat presentations. The main reasons for homeless presentations continue to be Notice to Quit from landlords and family circumstances including addiction, mental health and domestic violence.

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS

Similar to the trend in presentations, the number of households placed in emergency accommodation has also increased. However, when compared to the extent of presentations, the number of actual placements in emergency accommodation highlights the extent and importance of the preventative work that is carried out by the respective Homeless Services in avoiding the need to resort to emergency accommodation provision.

EXITS FROM EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

The trends in each county reveal a high number of exits from emergency accommodation in 2018, 2019 and 2020, with securing private rented accommodation, local authority and AHB-provided accommodation being the primary exit strategies. The continued increasing supply of new social housing delivery across the region is anticipated to continue over the duration of the 2021-2023 Plan.

The significant number securing private rented accommodation is indicative of the success of the Homeless HAP Placefinder services that are in operation in all three Counties.

The number of family households with dependent children exiting emergency accommodation continues to increase and demonstrates the focus by each authority in assisting families. The challenge of securing one bed properties for single adult households will continue for the foreseeable future pending the increase in the construction and availability of such property.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, KEY FINDINGS AND FUTURE OBJECTIVES



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Current national performance indicators require each local authority to provide annual data with regard to the number of adult individuals in long term emergency accommodation (i.e. 6 months or more) as follows:

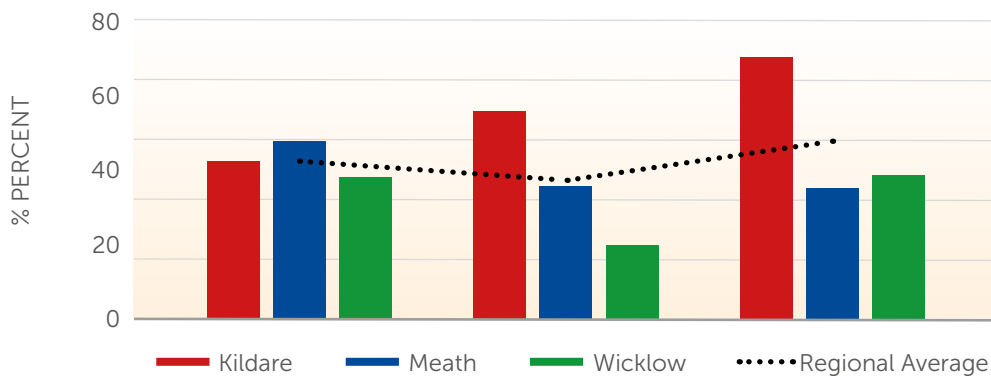
Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long term (i.e. 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a % of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at 31st December.

TABLE 4: EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS >6 MONTHS (2018-2020)

	% of Adult Individuals in Emergency Accommodation at Year End for greater than 6 Months		
	2018	2019	2020
Kildare	43%	57%	72%
Meath	49%	37%	36%
Wicklow	39%	21%	40%
Region Total	44%	38%	49%

Figure 2 graphically displays the percentage of adult individuals in emergency accommodation for more than 6 months for the period 2018-2020. The regional average is 49% over the three year period. These statistics further demonstrate the increase in numbers presenting as homeless and the challenge of sourcing long term suitable accommodation for those placed in emergency accommodation.

FIGURE 2: PERCENT OF ADULT INDIVIDUALS IN EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION (> 6 MONTHS)





KEY FINDINGS AND FUTURE OBJECTIVES

The experience of homelessness in the Mid East Region over the period of the previous plan, in tandem with due consideration of the current policy context, has informed the identification of the key objectives and actions.

Focus on prevention remains core to the operation of homeless services in the Mid East Region. Significant work is undertaken to prevent an emergency accommodation placement in the first instance. This has involved the development of systems, protocols and good working relationship with a range of stakeholders. This is particularly fundamental in the prevention of homelessness among key target groups most at risk, including victims of domestic violence, sex offenders, prisoners being released from prison and youths leaving State care.

KEY FINDING 1

As is evident in the statistics provided for the previous Plan period, it has not been possible to prevent homelessness in all cases, and the provision of emergency accommodation remains a necessary intervention.

The need to ensure sufficient provision of quality emergency accommodation across the various models of provision is apparent, from general supply to provision that is tailored specifically for the spectrum of homeless cohorts and their respective needs.

KEY FINDING 2

The implementation of Housing First in the region during 2019 and 2020 represents a significant intervention in addressing the needs of high support need clients, and will be a key focus for 2021-2023. The need for tenancy sustainment supports has been recognised as critically important for certain clients in order to maintain their tenancies and break the cycle of homelessness that can often exist. A housing-led approach has been to the fore in successfully exiting households from emergency accommodation during the period of the last Action Plan.

Furthermore, interagency wrap around health and welfare supports is a prerequisite for any successful long-term exit from homelessness for particular homeless cohorts, most notably those suffering from mental health and substance misuse issues. Across the Mid East Region these two issues have represented the key contributing factors in a large proportion of homeless cases.

KEY FINDING 3

2020 witnessed a significant increase in the number of single adult presentations, and a resultant increase in emergency accommodation placements for this cohort. This has placed pressures on services in relation to maintaining a sufficient supply of emergency accommodation. Furthermore, exit strategies for this cohort have proven challenging, with barriers identified both in terms of one bed availability and the respective Housing Assistance Payment rate that is currently applicable in each County.

KEY FINDING 4

Family homelessness has persisted, with notice of terminations remaining the main contributing factor into homelessness for families in the region. The provision of family hubs across the region over the past three years has greatly assisted, both in terms of providing high quality, suitable emergency accommodation, as well as the necessary supports on site to facilitate move on strategies. This is particularly important for families that have high support needs, and where interventions are required, beyond what is available through mainstream support services. The requirement for enhanced services to facilitate both exits from emergency accommodation and tenancy sustainment thereafter has been identified as part of the review process

KEY FINDING 5

Rough sleeping by individuals is present throughout the region. Various initiatives have been instigated targeting rough sleepers, including Cold Weather Initiatives and Housing First. Notwithstanding such interventions, the actual extent of rough sleeping has not to date been verified on an ongoing basis, with outreach strategies required to further address the issue.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

The identified priority areas listed below have been informed by the experience in the Mid East Region over the period of the previous plan, statistical review, and due consideration of the current policy context:



Prevention



Tenancy Sustainment



Emergency Accommodation



Models of Provision



Quality Provision



Exit Strategies



Health and Welfare Supports



Multi Agency Approach

In addition to the above, an objective has been included in fulfillment of our Public Sector Sector Duty obligation.



MID EAST REGION ACTIONS 2021-2023



MID EAST REGION ACTIONS 2021-2023

The following actions reflect the prioritised objectives of key Housing/ Homeless policies as set out in the Policy Context section of this document.

OBJECTIVE	CONTINUING KEY ACTIONS	KEY ADDED VALUE ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE BODIES	TIMEFRAME
<p>PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS</p>	<p>To provide on-going support and advice through Homeless Services Teams</p> <p>Operation of Homeless HAP Placefinder Service</p> <p>Provision of tenancy sustainment services</p> <p>Provision of Interagency services</p>	<p>Extension of tenancy sustainment services</p> <p>Specific preventative initiatives targeted at single homeless adults, and those with disability issues where affordability is the key issue, for example the HAP rate</p>	<p>LAs, AHBs, HSE</p>	<p>2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>OUTCOMES: HOMELESSNESS IS AVOIDED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. TENANCIES ARE SUSTAINED, THUS REDUCING CYCLICAL HOMELESSNESS</p>				



OBJECTIVE	CONTINUING KEY ACTIONS	KEY ADDED VALUE ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE BODIES	TIMEFRAME
PROVISION OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MODELS OF PROVISION QUALITY PROVISION EXIT STRATEGIES <p>*Families with dependent children, young persons exiting state care, victims of domestic violence, prisoners, single males/females, couples/sex offenders, rough sleepers, health (mental health & addiction)</p>	<p>Ensure a sufficient supply of suitable emergency and/or supported temporary accommodation in order to meet need as it arises for all homeless cohorts*</p>	<p>Rough sleeper counts to be undertaken or alternative measures to capture the actual extent and verify the numbers of individuals rough sleeping</p>	LAs, AHBs, HSE	2021
	<p>Continued operation of Severe/Cold Weather Initiatives</p>	<p>Accelerate the creation of Housing First tenancies, endeavour to exceed the targets as set out in National Plan, and to examine the feasibility of the provision of Housing First tenancies for at-risk prisoners on release</p>		Ongoing
	<p>Continued implementation of Housing First</p>	<p>Further models of supported emergency accommodation to be developed in lieu of private provision</p>	NGOs/Mental Health	Ongoing
	<p>Ensure best practices in all dealings with homeless persons in line with implementation of National Quality Homeless Standards.</p>	<p>Specific Initiatives targeted at exiting single homeless adults, where affordability is the key issue, for example House Share Arrangements provided by Local Authority</p>	2021	
	<p>Operation of Homeless HAP Placefinder Service</p>	<p>To review operation of Family Hubs with a specific focus on identifying additionality in respect of high support families where exiting emergency accommodation is a challenge</p>	2021	
	<p>Adopt an interagency approach through the Homeless Action Teams</p>			
	<p>Collaborate with approved housing bodies and other relevant support services to identify housing solutions</p>			
<p>OUTCOMES: THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ROUGH SLEEPING IS REDUCED. ENHANCED EXPERIENCES FOR CLIENTS WHO AVAIL OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION. QUICKER EXIT STRATEGIES FOR ALL HOMELESS COHORTS FROM EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION</p>				

OBJECTIVE	CONTINUING KEY ACTIONS	KEY ADDED VALUE ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE BODIES	TIMEFRAME
HEALTH & WELFARE SUPPORTS	<p>1. Provide the most appropriate primary care and mental health services to those in homeless services and improve their ability to sustain a normal tenancy</p> <p>Ensure each Homeless Action Team (HAT) has access to and is being supported by a member of the Community Mental Health Team, the priority being an integrated service delivered through HAT.</p> <p>Provide the most appropriate drug rehabilitation service to those in homeless services to improve their ability to sustain a tenancy</p>	<p>Identify proposals relevant to mental health and homelessness for implementation in the region, both in the context of prevention and exit strategies</p> <p>Strengthen and further develop Housing First links with Addiction and Mental Health Services.</p> <p>Identify proposals relevant to drug rehabilitation and homelessness for implementation in the region, both in the context of prevention and exit strategies.</p>	LAs, AHBs, HSE, Regional Drugs Task Force	
<p>OUTCOMES: ENHANCED HEALTH & WELFARE SERVICES FOR THOSE CLIENTS WITH SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND/OR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, LEADING TO MORE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES REGARDING ACCOMMODATION</p>				
COVID-19 ACTIONS	Maintain self- isolation facilities in the Region	<p>Ensure timely testing facilities are available to clients</p> <p>Ensure adequate cocooning/shielding facilities are retained throughout the pandemic</p> <p>Advocate for and ensure vaccination programmes prioritise frontline staff and service users</p>	HSE, LAs	Monthly review
<p>OUTCOMES: MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF CASES OF COVID-19</p>				



OBJECTIVE	CONTINUING KEY ACTIONS	KEY ADDED VALUE ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE BODIES	TIMEFRAME
MULTI AGENCY APPROACH	<p>Effective operation of Homeless Action Teams</p> <p>Ensure that discharge protocols/policies are in place and working effectively for people being discharged from health services and those released from prisons</p> <p>Engage with SORUM [Sex Offenders Risk Assessment and Management] in relation to planned discharges where the person is identified as homeless or likely to be homeless.</p> <p>Engagement with TUSLA Aftercare Steering Committees</p>	<p>Review discharge protocols/policies and amend where necessary</p> <p>Review of inter-agency collaboration and gap analysis through the HATs on an annual basis</p> <p>Develop formal structures at County level to facilitate a coordinated approach between services for victims of domestic violence in respect of homelessness, including data capture</p> <p>Ensure best practice in all engagement with homeless persons in line with the implementation of the National Quality Homeless Standards.</p>	<p>LAs, AHBs, HSE, TUSLA, IPS, DV Refugees</p>	<p>Annual Review of Protocols</p> <p>Annual review of HAT</p> <p>2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>OUTCOMES: ENHANCED STREAMLINED SERVICES ACROSS ALL RELEVANT AGENCIES, WITH A CLIENT CENTRIC FOCUS, RESULTING IN IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR SHARED CLIENTS</p>				
PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY		<p>To complete an annual assessment of Equality & Human Rights issues, through the gathering of relevant data regarding the different identified groups concerning their situation in respect of homelessness</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>Annual</p>
<p>OUTCOMES: IDENTIFY AND GIVE SUBSTANCE TO EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES</p>				

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

As provided in the Act the following bodies were consulted in the preparation of this Action Plan:

- Mid East Region Homelessness Consultative Forum
- Housing Strategic Policy Committee [Kildare]
- Housing Strategic Policy Committee [Meath]
- Housing Strategic Policy Committee [Wicklow]

REVOCATION AND PERIOD OF PLAN

On adoption of this Plan, the previous Plan adopted in January 2018 stands revoked and this Plan shall remain in force until 31 December 2023.

ADOPTION

This Action Plan was adopted by the three Local Authorities as follows:

Meath County Council March 2021

Wicklow County Council April 2021

Kildare County Council April 2021



APPENDIX 1

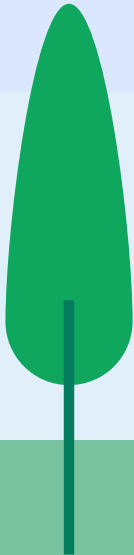
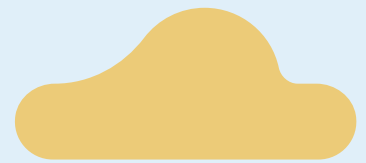
MEMBERSHIP OF MID EAST REGION HOMELESSNESS MANAGEMENT GROUP

Annette Aspell	Director of Services, Kildare County Council [Chair]
Barry Lynch	Director of Services, Meath County Council
Joe Lane	Director of Services, Wicklow County Council
Ollie Brady	Administrative Officer, Kildare County Council
Justin Parkes	Primary Care Manager, Health Service Executive

MEMBERSHIP OF MID EAST REGION HOMELESSNESS FORUM

Mid East Local Authorities	Kildare County Council – Lead Authority (Director + 1) Meath County Council – Director or nominee Wicklow County Council – Director or nominee
Mandatory Representation	Health Service Executive (HSE) Prison Service Probation Service Education and Training Board
Other Representation	Member of County Council [Lead Authority] Department of Social Protection Regional Drugs Task Force TUSLA
Approved Bodies and Other Bodies	Simon Community Focus Ireland Peter McVerry Trust Bray Area Partnership Meath Women’s Refuge

MID EAST REGION
HOMELESSNESS
ACTION PLAN
2021-2023



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin
Wicklow County Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

