

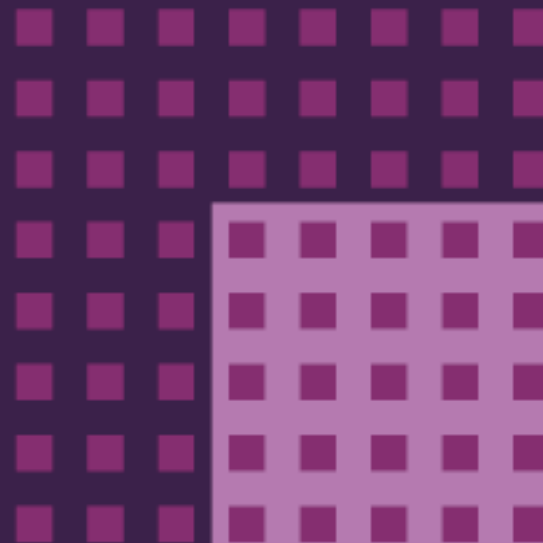
REVIEW OF THE HOMELESS ACTION PLAN 2022-2024

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DRHE Final report

Introduction

Homelessness remains a critical issue and complex societal issue in Ireland, demanding comprehensive and effective strategies to address its multifaceted challenges. Influenced primarily by structural factors such as the economic environment and supply of affordable housing, as well as known vulnerability of some population cohorts to homelessness, there are no immediate solutions or short-term fixes. However, as Finland and other countries have shown, it is possible to significantly reduce long-term homelessness. By the close of Quarter 4 in 2024, a total of 14,864 people across the country were accessing emergency accommodation. Of that number, 10,686 were in the Dublin Region, representing 72% of the people accessing such services at the time¹. These statistics underscore the urgency of developing effective solutions to address homelessness across the country.

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) commissioned CES to analyse the previous action plan for homelessness and provide insights to support the development of a new action plan for 2025-2027.

This “Framework for Action” document sets out a framework for action on homelessness for the Dublin Region for 2022 to 2024. This plan, like its predecessor from 2019-2021, adopts three key themes of Prevention, Protection and Progression to guide action on homelessness. It represents the first of three plans to bring the Dublin Region to the national goal of resolving long-term homelessness by 2030. The framework was developed in consultation with interested groups/organisations, Service Providers, Members of the Housing Strategic Policy Committees of the four Dublin Local Authorities and the Dublin Joint Homeless Consultative Forum (JCF) and Statutory Management Group (SMG).

The JCF comprises; Four Dublin local authorities (Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council), Health Service Executive, Tusla, Department of Social Protection, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Homeless Network, the Irish Council for Social Housing, the Irish Prison and Probation Services, City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB), Threshold and An Garda Síochána. Local Authorities and the HSE have joint statutory responsibility in addressing the housing and health needs of people experiencing homelessness. This joint statutory responsibility has been recognised since 2000 with Local authorities taking the lead in the planning for services across 9 regions nationwide. The DRHE is responsible for the coordination of homeless services in the Dublin region. It works in partnership with various stakeholders, including local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and service providers, to deliver effective responses to homelessness. The DRHE's mission is to prevent homelessness, provide support to those experiencing homelessness, and facilitate pathways to long-term housing solutions.

Despite its efforts, the DRHE faces several challenges. These include:

- **Limited social housing supply:** The constraint on social housing supply is a constant challenge, making it difficult to provide stable housing options for those exiting

¹ [homeless-quarterly-progress-report-2024-q4.pdf](#)

homelessness. In 2024, the four Dublin Local Authorities accounted for 41% of the national total of households, qualified and on a waiting list for social housing support².

- **Reliance on private rental market:** There is a reliance on the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) to secure tenancies, which can be precarious and subject to market fluctuations.
- **Impact on marginalised communities:** Some migrants and ethnic minorities may face a higher risk of homelessness due to a reliance on the private rental market, when coming to work in Ireland or leaving Direct Provision³. Larger family sizes and ethnicity can present additional barriers to accessing affordable rental accommodation.
- **Resource constraints:** The need for enhanced internal resources, including staff for place-finding and engagement with property providers, is critical to prevent homelessness and support those in emergency accommodation.

This report aims to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of past initiatives, identify areas for improvement, and propose actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of future efforts. By reviewing the previous action plan, we seek to understand the impact of implemented measures, assess their alignment with current needs, and ensure that the new plan is grounded in evidence-based practices. The goal is to create a sustainable framework that not only reduces homelessness but also supports individuals in achieving long-term stability and well-being.

Methodology

Introduction

The CES team conducted a comprehensive review of the "Framework For Action" and DRHE's annual business plans from 2022-2024 to gain insights into the implementation of the action plan and identify themes in the status of actions. This review included an initial analysis of actions by pillar, completion date, and designated lead, followed by discussions with DRHE leads to understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Additionally, CES employed the Rapid Insight (RI) methodology, a modified focus group format, to gather diverse stakeholder perspectives on homelessness in the Dublin Region. Four stakeholder groups participated in RI sessions, providing input on challenges, priorities, and concrete actions for the next action plan (2025-2027). Due to low turnout at RI sessions, a follow-up survey to further capture stakeholder views was used. The survey included both ranking and free text response options to balance depth with ease of response. The CES team was also able to conduct a focus group with people experiencing homelessness. The methodology is discussed below in further detail.

Review of Action Plan: CES undertook a review of the current "Framework For Action" and its operational outworking, DRHE's annual business plans from 2022-2024⁴. The purpose of the review was to generate insights into the implementation of the action plan and identify any themes in the status of actions. An initial analysis of the status of actions by pillar, date

² [105768 The Housing Agency SSHA Report 6.pdf](#)

³ McGinnity, F., Privalko, I., Russell, H., Curristan, S., Stapleton, A., & Laurence, J. (2022). Origin and integration: Housing and family among migrants in the 2016 Irish Census. *Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Research Series*. <https://www.esri.ie/news/migrants-face-greater-challenges-in-the-irish-housing-market-than-irish-born>

⁴ Latest update provided by DRHE to CES on 8th April 2025.

completed and designated lead was conducted. Following this initial analysis Dr Hanratty CES met with DRHE leads (Mary Hayes and Louise Arkins) to discuss observations and understand, from DRHE perspective, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats lay in the implementation of the current action plan.

Rapid Insight sessions: The Rapid Insight (RI) methodology⁵ is a modified type of focus group that gathers larger groups of stakeholders into a tightly managed, virtual forum to share system experiences and intelligence. One key benefit of RI sessions, relative to traditional focus groups, is that it empowers less heard voices, which may lead to capturing a greater diversity of experiences.

Four groups of stakeholders were engaged to gather their view on the key challenges for action on homelessness in the Dublin Region, priorities for prevention, protection and progression respectively and elicit concrete actions that stakeholders could commit to.

RI sessions were scheduled for:

1. Local Councillors, elected members of the 4 local councils in the Dublin Region (Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council)
2. Statutory Management Group consisting of senior leaders in the 4 Dublin local authorities, DRHE, the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Probation service and TUSLA.
3. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who have been engaged in action on homelessness through service provision and advocacy.
4. Dublin Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum Forum

The specific questions in the RI sessions were informed by the action plan review and in consultation with DRHE with a focus on the future to inform the next action plan 2025-2027.

1. Looking ahead to 2025-2027, what should be the top 3 priorities for action on homelessness in the Dublin region?
2. What is the biggest challenge in
 - a. Prevention for people at risk of homelessness
 - b. Protection for those experiencing homelessness
 - c. Progression out of homelessness?How can services be improved to address these challenges?
3. What role should you and your organization play in achieving these goals? What top 3 concrete actions are you willing to commit to? What impact could these actions have?

The questions were presented in turn, and participants gave their responses in writing via the 'chat' function in Microsoft Teams. Each session was facilitated by two people; the lead introduced the session and presented the questions. The observer analysed the responses to each question 'live' and offer a verbal summary of observed themes. Where participants used abbreviations or terms that were ambiguous both facilitators asked for clarity. Facilitators

⁵ Chandler, J., Darnton, P., & Sibley, A. (2023). Very rapid insight generation to support UK health and care systems: An AHSN approach. *Frontiers in sociology*, 8, 993342.

occasionally commented on disagreements between participants and asked for elaboration on points that were not immediately understood. Facilitators encouraged participants to interact with each other in the chat, through using emojis to react (e.g. like or thumbs down) and reply to comments. Each session was recorded, and the transcript and ‘chat’ record were then downloaded and analysed thematically. The analysis sought to identify:

- Priorities for each group of stakeholders
- Overarching themes present across groups of stakeholders
- Points of convergence between different stakeholder groups
- Points of divergence between stakeholders

Survey: Due to a relatively low turnout at rapid insight sessions CES conducted a follow up survey, via Microsoft forms. The survey included open and closed response formats to balance depth with speed/ease of response (See Table 1 below). The survey asked the same questions posed in the RI sessions with both a ‘ranking’ question, where concrete actions were proposed and respondents ranked the actions in order of priority, and free text response options.

TABLE 1: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE OPTIONS

Question	Response type
Looking ahead to 2025-2027, what are the top 3 biggest challenges likely to be in relation to homelessness in the Dublin region?	Free text
Looking ahead to 2025-2027, what should the top priorities for action on preventing homelessness in the Dublin region be? Please rank in order of importance, with 1 as "highest priority"	Ranking of 10 proposed actions, based on RI session insights and refined in consultation with DRHE
What other action(s) should be a priority for preventing homelessness in Dublin?	Free text
What specific actions can you, or your organisation, take to addressing these priorities?	Free text
Looking ahead to 2025-2027, what should the top priorities for action on protecting people experiencing homelessness in the Dublin region be? Please rank in order of importance, with 1 as highest...	Ranking of 10 proposed actions, based on RI session insights and refined in consultation with DRHE
What other action(s) would you suggest should be a priority for protecting people experiencing homelessness in Dublin?	Free text
What specific actions can you, or your organisation, take to addressing these priorities?	Free text
Looking ahead to 2025-2027, what should the top priorities for action on progression out of homelessness in the Dublin region be? Move the options to rank in order of priority with 1 being highest...	Ranking of 10 proposed actions, based on RI session insights and refined in consultation with DRHE
What other action(s) would you suggest should be a priority for progressing out of homelessness in Dublin?	Free text
What specific actions can you, or your organisation, take to addressing these priorities?	Free text
Please indicate which role/organisation/sector you are affiliated with? (Optional)	Checklist (select all that apply) Options: DRHE; Irish Prison

	Service; Probation service; Local Authority; NGO sector; Local Councillor; HSE; TUSLA; Other
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Focus group: A single focus group with service users and those with lived experience of homelessness in the Dublin region was conducted to ensure that the voice and experience of services users informed the next action plan. CES conducted one in person focus group, hosted by a Dublin based NGO. Service users were identified and supported to participate by a wider group of NGOs.

Qualitative datasets were analysed using thematic analysis. This method of analysis is used to identify, interpret, and report patterns (or themes) across a dataset, which represent beliefs, observations, and experiences that participants may share in relation to the research questions. Thematic analysis is also interested in identifying differences in experiences and developing explanations for these differences.

Each dataset was analysed separately and then combined in the triangulation stage. Methodological triangulation in social research involves using multiple research methods to study the same phenomenon, enhancing the depth and validity of the findings. For example, combining surveys, interviews, and observations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of a social issue. The strengths of this approach include increased reliability and reduced bias, as different methods can support the validity of the overall findings.

Findings and Recommendations

The findings and recommendations section of the stakeholder engagement process presents a comprehensive analysis derived from multiple data collection methods, including rapid insight sessions, surveys, and a focus group. Triangulating the data from these sources, ensures a robust and nuanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives. This approach has allowed the cross-verification of information, identification of consistent themes, and uncovered insights that informed the recommendation. The recommendations provided are grounded in this triangulated data, offering actionable strategies that reflect the collective input and priorities of our stakeholders.

Review of Action Plan Findings

A new action plan presents an opportunity to further improve the process of monitoring and evaluating progress on homeless prevention, protection and progression. Based on our review of the information provided to us by DRHE we recommend the following practical changes to how the progress on the action plan is captured:

1. The current plan was considered to be too long and difficult to read for a wide range of stakeholders. CES recommend a leaner plan written with a wider audience in mind.
2. All actions in the annual business plans to have a target start and end date.
3. Actions in the business plans to be tracked as 'on time', 'delayed' or 'paused' and briefly capture reasons for any delays.
4. Implement ongoing monitoring and reflection on action status. This would support the identification and recording of issues arising *and* systemic issues that are impacting on progress.
5. Move from a system of recording actions as 'complete' or 'ongoing' to a system that reflects the phases of implementation to include:
 - a. Planned action, for actions that are planned but not yet begun. All actions will begin at this phase.
 - b. Action commenced or in process, for actions that are in motion but not yet complete
 - c. Action implemented, for actions that have been done. This can include actions where a change has been implemented but it is in its early stages.
 - d. Ongoing monitoring in place, for actions/changes that have been implemented and have now moved to ongoing monitoring to make sure that the change is embedded and the impact of that change is tracked.
6. All actions have a named lead organisation responsible for monitoring and providing regular updates on progress.
7. The lead organisation is responsible for providing updates on progress.
8. DRHE to consider the most efficient and effective method of tracking progress on actions, in particular for those actions where DRHE is not the lead organisation.

Stakeholder engagement Findings

This chapter presents key insights from the primary stakeholder engagement processes carried out by CES for the development of the DRHE Homeless Action Plan 2025–2027. It begins with findings from the Rapid Insight (RI) sessions, followed by insights from the Stakeholder Survey and the Service User Focus Group. A triangulated synthesis is provided at the end of the

chapter, integrating insights across sources, and drawing connections to secondary data reviewed by CES.

5.1 Rapid Insight Sessions

Seven Rapid Insight (RI) sessions were conducted by CES between January and March 2024. The RI methodology allowed for focused, real-time online engagement using the chat function to capture fast-paced, inclusive contributions. Each session explored the three strategic pillars of the Homeless Action Plan: Prevention, Protection, and Progression. A total of 64 stakeholders participated, drawn from a broad range of sectors:

Stakeholder Group	Attendees / Invited	Representation	Not represented
Local Councillors	26 / 184 (14%)	DCC, SDCC, FCC, DLR	n/a
Senior Management	8 / 16 (50%)	DRHE, Local authorities, Probation Service	HSE (Invitee attended JCF), TUSLA (Invitee attended JCF)
NGOs	22 / 40 (55%)	Focus Ireland, PMV Trust, Dublin Simon, MQI, Threshold, Depaul, Respond, Sophia Housing, Cuan Mhuire, Salvation Army, McGrath Housing, Hail, Orion Care, One Connect, MQI	Crosscare, Novas, PMV Trust, Anew, ALDP, Capuchin Daycentre, The Iveagh Trust
Joint Consultative Forum (JCF)	8 / 28 (29%)	DRHE, Tusla, Probation, CDETB, NGOs, Local Authorities, HSE	Threshold, PMV Trust

Thematic Reflections by Stakeholder Group

- **Local Councillors:** Strong focus on housing supply, use of public land, tenant protection (e.g., ending no-fault evictions), and earlier intervention. Several called out the role of local authorities in leading solutions but also expressed frustration at legislative constraints.
- **NGOs:** Prioritised increasing supported housing and mental health/drug dependency supports; called for more collaboration and a shift from a commissioning approach toward more meaningful partnerships between NGOs, DRHE and the HSE. Advocated for tenancy sustainment support that puts focus on reducing repeat homelessness and proactively engaging with individuals to ensure they don't lose contact with their support network.
- **Joint Consultative Forum:** Emphasised clarity on roles and responsibilities in interagency coordination, particularly in discharge pathways from Direct Provision and IPAS, and called for strengthened wraparound supports, especially for complex and family cases.

SMG: Focused on aligning all services to housing-led responses, balancing EA regionally, and increasing resources to local authorities Expressed importance of co-working with HSE to ensure housing and support needs are met

5.1.1 Cross-Session Findings by Strategic Pillar

Prevention

- Participants across all RI sessions described support as being "too little, too late." Often, services only intervened at crisis point.
- A repeated concern was the lack of early intervention before Notices to Quit (NTQs) are issued. One statutory rep remarked: "We're telling people to come back closer to the eviction date — by then, it's too late."
- Housing supply, particularly family-sized social housing, was identified as the root constraint in tackling homelessness.
- Councillors emphasised the need to reintroduce no-fault eviction bans. Local councillor quote: "We need the no-fault eviction ban back. Without it, families are on edge."
- Uneven implementation of prevention schemes across the four Dublin LAs was flagged as compounding risks.
- Stakeholders proposed targeted place-based prevention in high-risk communities and earlier cross-agency case planning.

Protection

- Emergency accommodation (EA)—especially Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA)—was described as chaotic, unsafe, and unsuitable for recovery or stability by those in the NGO consultation
- NGO participants emphasised that PEA lacked trauma-informed models. One said: "Some avoid hostels entirely due to fear of violence or re-traumatisation."
- Forum members and statutory agencies highlighted placement challenges: families placed far from services or in mixed-use environments.
- There was consensus that wraparound supports—mental health, drug or alcohol dependency, disability—were inconsistent or unavailable.
- Participants called for bespoke EA models for specific cohorts: women fleeing violence, older adults, and people with complex needs.
- Suggestions included mandatory minimum standards, co-location of services, and increased multilingual, trauma-trained staff.

Progression

- High refusal rates and long voids in local authority housing were reported as major barriers.
- The SMG participants noted that refusal of housing offers led to delays in progression and longer time in EA.

- NGO participants were concerned with post-tenancy supports provided.
- There were calls for tenancy sustainment training, transitional housing options, and a continuum model of support.
- Local councillors advocated for use of vacant properties, CPOs, and reduced bureaucracy in allocations.
- Progression was defined not as an “exit” but a supported journey toward stable, independent living.

Areas of Convergence:

- Across all groups, there was strong alignment on the need to increase housing supply, particularly for larger families and vulnerable cohorts.
- Early intervention was universally supported, particularly when paired with local knowledge and clear communication tools.
- Nearly every group flagged concerns about private emergency accommodation (PEA): the cost of, the standard and need for trauma-informed model of care.
- All stakeholders expressed frustration with the limitations of HAP and a desire for more social housing options.

Areas of Divergence:

- Local councillors were most vocal about systemic governance issues (e.g., transparency, planning delays, LA autonomy), while NGOs emphasized trauma-informed care and wraparound supports.
- Statutory agencies focused on interagency coordination and discharge pathways, less so on the structural or legislative reforms favoured by councillors. This may reflect a focus on what was achievable within their existing remit.
- Divergence emerged on tenancy refusals: some viewed these as legitimate (due to quality/location mismatch), others as contributing to blockages.
- Varied views on whether time limits in EA should be introduced: some supported a cap to drive progression, others cautioned this could risk punitive effects.

Cross-Cutting Insights

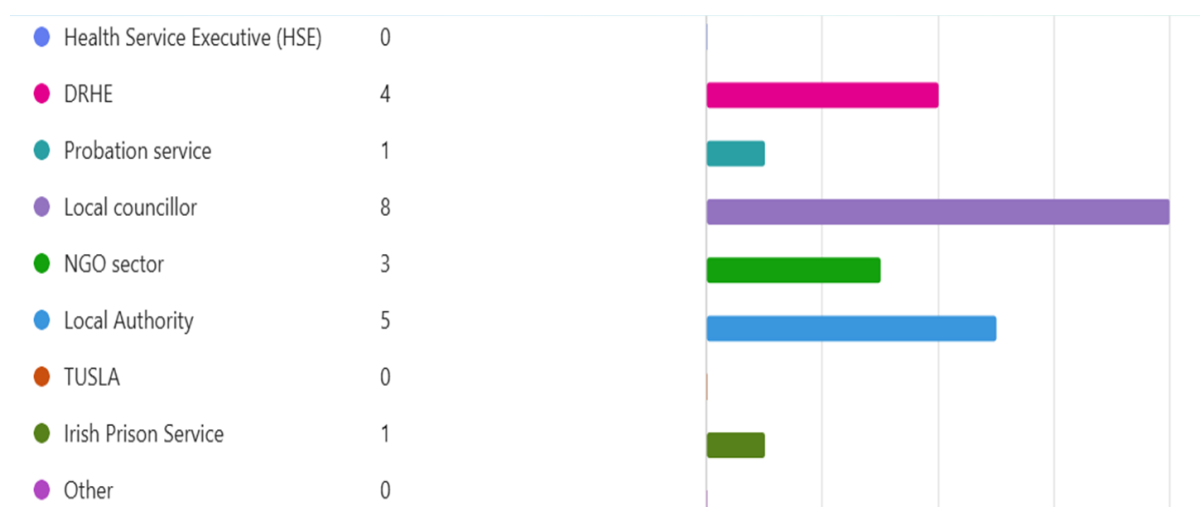
- Housing was cited as the key enabler across all sessions: “Without housing, prevention is stalled, protection prolonged, and progression blocked.”
- Local authorities described being overstretched and under-resourced.
- The need to have the HSE leading the response to the health needs of households experiencing homelessness was universally articulated. To address gaps, greater collaboration between the DRHE and HSE is needed.
- DRHE was urged to move from a funder/enforcer model to a systems leadership role, convening agencies and embedding shared governance.

Stakeholders brought different lenses, but there was high overall agreement on the need for system-wide reform, coordinated planning, and locally responsive delivery.

Although NGO and local authority representation was strong, there was lower turnout from other stakeholders, and this indicated a need to supplement the engagement. Consequently, CES administered a follow-up survey to ensure broader participation.

5.2 DRHE Stakeholder Survey

To complement the RI sessions, CES conducted a stakeholder survey with 18 responses from DRHE, local authorities, NGOs, elected officials, and statutory services (including the HSE, Probation and Irish Prison Service). The survey further validated themes from the RI sessions while offering more granular insights.



5.2.1 Findings by Strategic Pillar

Prevention

- 15 of 18 respondents cited lack of affordable housing as the main challenge.
- 13 called for earlier engagement and removal of rigid thresholds (e.g. waiting for formal NTQ).
- 8 supported expanding AHB provision of affordable rental units.
- Reinstating eviction bans and stronger protocols for immigration/family reunification were highlighted.

Protection

- 10 stakeholders criticised EA as unsafe and unsuitable.
- 9 called for trauma-informed, bespoke EA for cohorts with specific needs.
- 7 supported embedded wraparound supports, and 6 described active organisational commitments to trauma-informed training.

Progression

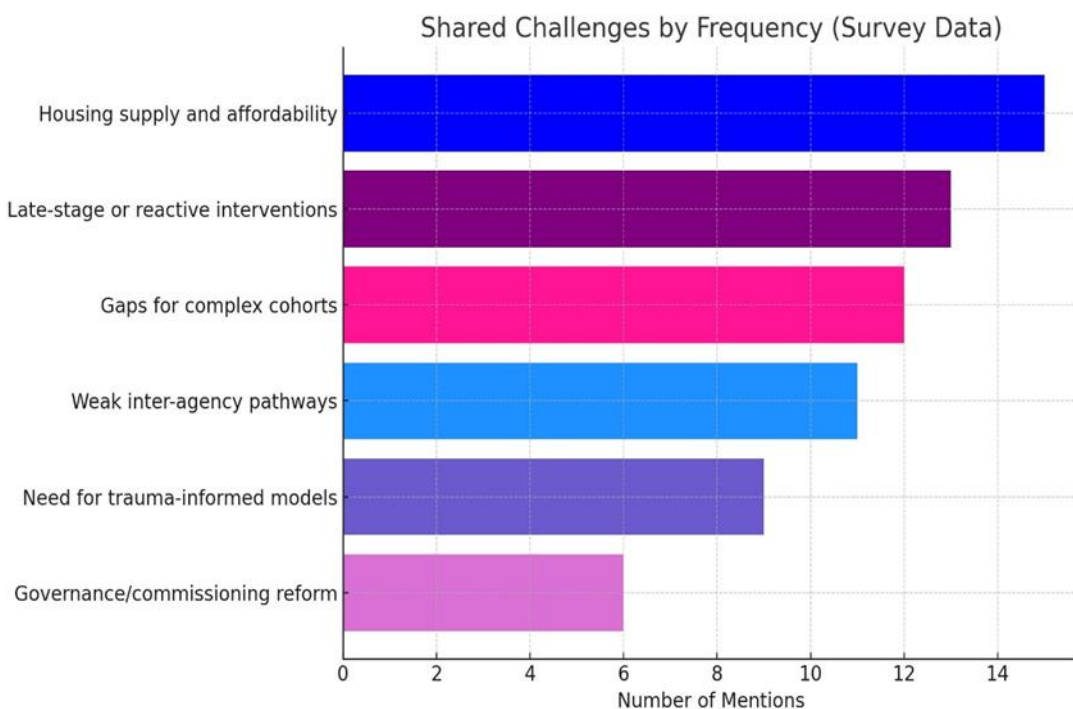
- 9 flagged mismatches and/or refusals of housing offers with household preference.
- 8 noted delays due to long void periods.
- 7 identified gaps in post-tenancy support.

The stakeholder engagement process surfaced a shared willingness to act and innovate across the homelessness system in Dublin. Stakeholders acknowledged the scale of the challenge, but also expressed optimism - grounded in evidence, collaboration, and sector-wide learning. The findings across RI sessions and surveys reinforce the centrality of housing, early intervention, and wraparound support, while underscoring the need for clear leadership and a coherent, trauma-informed approach to service delivery.

- 10 stakeholders (including councillors and NGOs) described specific actions being taken to support progression.

Cross-Sectoral Divergences and Convergences

- Operational fixes (schemes, funding) were more prominent among LA and DRHE reps.
- NGOs favoured trauma informed care
- Councillors favoured systemic reform.
- Clear consensus on the need for more social housing, wraparound support, and early intervention.



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5.3 Service User Focus Group

The focus group consisted of 11 service users of homeless services in the Dublin region – 10 are currently in temporary hostel accommodation, and one participant is living independently. The session provided a deeply human perspective, surfacing lived experiences of systemic gaps.

Hostel Life and Emergency Accommodation

- Participants described hostel life as infantilising: “It’s like being treated like children.”
 - Being moved frequently without notice or reason was traumatic and destabilising.
 - Service users were generally critical of PEA citing a lack of support, information and safety concerns especially around drug use. One service user describes the emergency accommodation as “swimming around through the **services**".
- #### Support and Staff Capacity
- High burnout among key workers, with limited training in trauma.
 - Recounting traumatic histories to multiple staff was a recurring source of distress.

Pathways and Progression

- The absence of clear “A to B to C” pathways led to hopelessness.
- Transitional housing with structured supports and life skills training was described as essential.

Structural Barriers

- Local connection rules disrupted access to housing lists.
- Stigma around hostel addresses limited employment and rental opportunities.

Independence and Recovery

- Autonomy was seen as essential: “A cage gives a bird a home... open the door, the bird will find its own.”
- Recovery was rooted in routine, supportive housing environments, and purpose-driven engagement.

These voices highlight critical issues including the lack of clear pathways out of homelessness, the inconsistent and sometimes inadequate support provided by key workers and services, and the re-traumatizing effects of repeatedly sharing their stories. Barriers to independence were explored, such as restrictive hostel policies and a lack of opportunities to develop essential life skills. The impact of systemic problems, like staff burnout, data protection limitations, and a housing crisis exacerbated by landlord practices and policy shifts, were also discussed. Furthermore, participants touched upon the difficulties faced by those with addiction and special needs, alongside a yearning for more transparent and effective support systems that empower individuals towards self-sufficiency and stable housing. The overall gestalt revealed a system struggling to meet the complex needs of its users, often leaving them feeling disempowered and stuck.

5.4 Insights from Secondary Data:

- **Rising Reliance on PEA:** DRHE administrative data confirms increasing use of private emergency accommodation with a growing proportion of families and vulnerable individuals placed in PEA settings standardisation.
- **Void Management and Allocations:** Local councillors expressed the view that turnaround times for social housing voids were too long, constraining progression options and contributing to prolonged EA stays. However, the most current national data⁶ indicates that the average re-letting time for the four local authorities in the Dublin region were all below the national average. There remain challenges in continuing to improve turnaround times due to capacity within the construction sector and long wait times for materials⁷.
- **Tenancy Sustainment Outcomes:** Existing published indicators capture tenancy starts but not sustainability. CES analysis flagged the need to publish tenancy sustainability rates as a gap in understanding true progression from homelessness.
- **Uneven Access to Services:** Stakeholders in both RI sessions and in survey responses raised concerns about inconsistency in access to services. DRHE data sources do not contain information about access to support services by local authority area.
- **Lack of Health Integration in Published DRHE reports:** Secondary data does not reflect HSE involvement in homelessness responses, with no shared metrics for mental health, primary care, drug or alcohol supports.

5.4.1 Current Indicator Landscape

DRHE collects and reports on a **broad range of operational indicators**, including:

- **Emergency accommodation usage trends** (monthly reporting)
- **HAP tenancy preventions** and NTQ interventions
- **Case management volumes and coverage**
- **Youth, prison, hospital, and IPAS discharges**
- **Training KPIs** (e.g., PEA staff upskilling, equality/diversity modules)
- **Quarterly returns on financial and service activity (via SLAs)**

Many of these are tied to specific **action plan targets or statutory reporting duties**. Indicators are also used to monitor progress against key performance areas like:

- Number of families exiting EA
- % of households accessing case management
- HAP refusals and prevention outcomes

⁶ NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Reports [2022](#) and [2023](#)

⁷ [Housing Operations Presentation to Housing SPC March 2025, Dublin City Council.](#)

Strengths of Current Data Collection

Comprehensive and regular reporting: Data is collated monthly/quarterly, which provides a solid evidence base for operational planning.

Clear link between actions and outputs: Many indicators directly tie to planned actions and give DRHE visibility over service activity.

Emerging focus on thematic areas (e.g. youth, DV, LGBTQ+, rough sleeping, hospital discharges) shows DRHE's growing capacity to disaggregate data by need group.

Limitations and Gaps (from a Strategic Perspective)

Limited outcomes-focused data: Much of the current data tells us *what is done* (e.g., people placed, services accessed), but not *what changes for people* (e.g., stability post-exit, recovery progress, wellbeing).

Lack of integrated health/housing data: The absence of a shared dataset with HSE (noted in both Jen's work and RI sessions) limits strategic coordination on mental health, addiction, and disability needs.

No person-centred indicators: There is little evidence that DRHE is tracking service user experience, quality of support, or indicators like:

- Length of time in EA *by cohort*
- Number of repeat homelessness episodes
- Satisfaction with housing offers or support plans
- Tenancy sustainment at 6/12/24 months

Progression metrics are transactional: While tenancy offers and Housing First placements are counted, progression is not captured as a pathway over time — this aligns with stakeholder calls to redefine “progression”.

What Stakeholders Want from Indicators (from RI + Survey):

- **Use of data to drive improvements:** Stakeholders called for metrics that go beyond volume — “how many” — to capture “how well” people are supported.
- **Shared accountability metrics:** Cross-agency work (e.g., discharges, mental health) needs shared KPIs between DRHE, HSE, Tusla, etc.
- **More transparent data:** Councillors and NGOs want more regular, user-friendly dashboards that track bottlenecks (e.g., void turnarounds, time to allocation).

Across all data sources, a consistent message emerges: the current system remains too reactive, overly fragmented, and insufficiently supportive. Opportunities exist to pivot toward prevention, person-centred EA reform, and integrated progression models. Strengthening DRHE's convening and strategic leadership role—especially with respect to interagency coordination and data-informed planning—is seen as critical to systemic improvement.

5.5 Triangulated Synthesis of all Reviewed Data Sources

The convergence across the three primary data sources is notable, underscoring critical and recurring challenges as well as stakeholder alignment on key principles for reform. These are

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further supported by CES's review of secondary data, including DRHE performance metrics, allocation, tenancy sustainment data, and the 2023 midterm review of the Homeless Action Plan.

Triangulated Thematic Insights

Key Issue	RI Sessions	Survey	Service Users	Secondary Data
Crisis-Triggered Support	✓	✓	✓	✓
EA Quality and Unsuitability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Need for Wraparound Supports	✓	✓	✓	✓
Progression Blockages	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff Burnout/Training Needs	✓	—	✓	✓
System Fragmentation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data Gaps (Tenancy/Outcomes)	✓	✓	—	✓
Role of DRHE as System Leader	✓	✓	—	✓
Demand for Person-Centred Practice	✓	✓	✓	✓

The findings presented in this chapter highlight a housing system that is straining under the weight of escalating demand, resource constraints, and deep-rooted structural gaps. Across all stakeholder groups—service providers, local authorities, elected representatives, statutory bodies, and people with lived experience—there is an urgent call for transformation. What emerges is a shared recognition of key fault lines: crisis-stage entry into support services, unsuitable emergency accommodation, siloed operations, and underdeveloped pathways out of homelessness.

At the same time, there is notable convergence on the solutions. Stakeholders are calling for earlier interventions, expansion of appropriate housing stock, trauma-informed and cohort-specific EA, wraparound supports, better data sharing, and a systemic approach to progression that extends beyond housing placement. Secondary data validates and amplifies these insights, particularly around void management, tenancy sustainment gaps, and the pressing need for interagency alignment.

While there are areas of divergence, especially regarding service governance and the role of regulation - these do not undermine the broader consensus. The findings reflect not only critique but commitment: stakeholders want to be part of a system that works better. The challenge now is for DRHE to respond with boldness, collaboration, and leadership - to embed these insights into a strategy that is both pragmatic and ambitious.

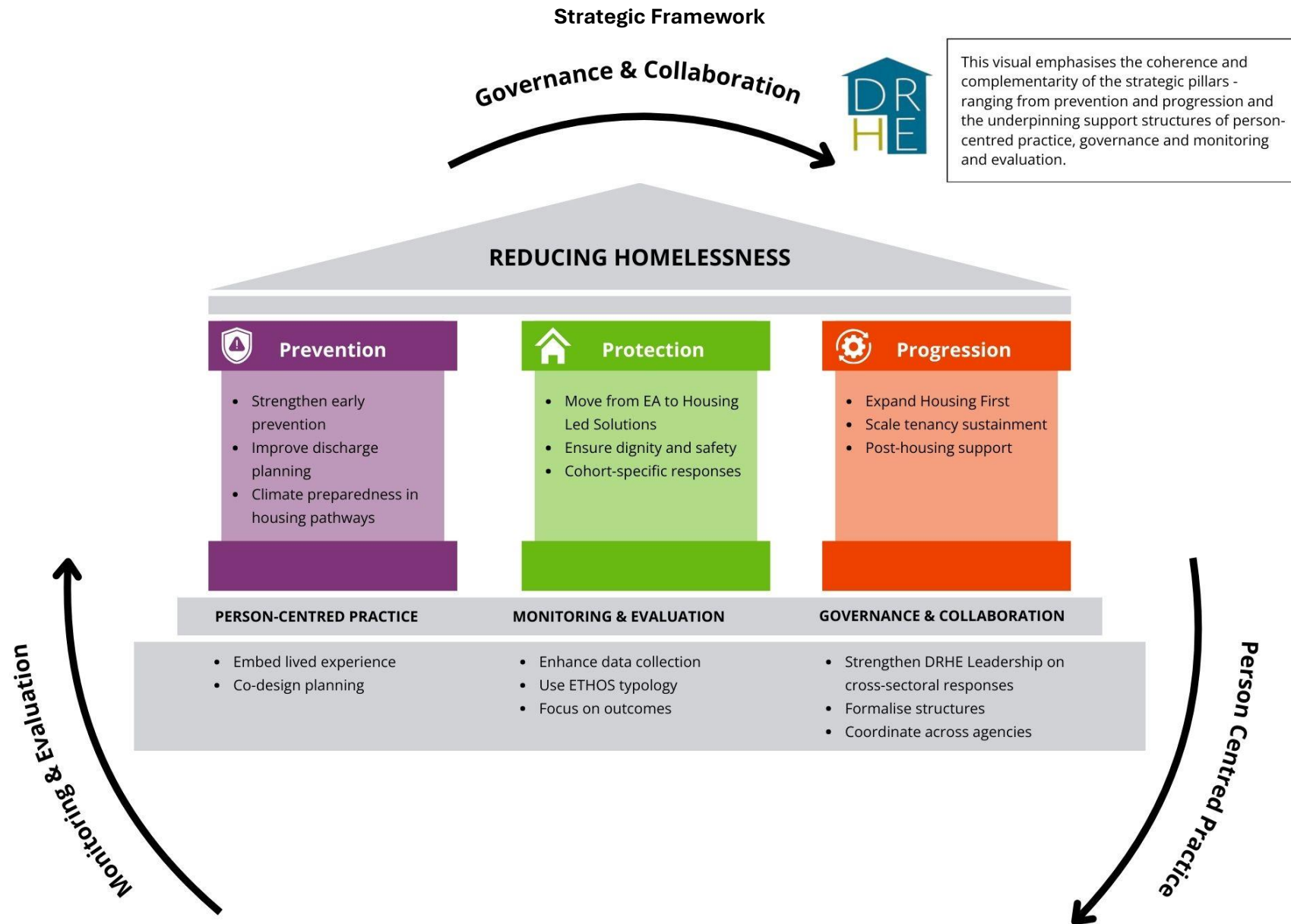
Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter sets out a comprehensive set of recommendations to inform the DRHE Homeless Action Plan 2025–2027. These draw from extensive stakeholder engagement, a review of secondary data, and international best practice frameworks. The recommendations aim to move from a crisis-driven model to a strategic, prevention-focused, and person-centred homelessness response. Structured around key system-building blocks—prevention, emergency accommodation, progression, governance, and monitoring; they reflect a shared stakeholder ambition for a homelessness strategy that is evidence-informed, inclusive, and outcomes-oriented.

Strategic Framework Overview

The accompanying visual representation below has been developed to show the overarching strategic architecture of this approach. It illustrates the interdependent pillars and foundational supports that structure implementation, offering a high-level representation of how the various components interact to facilitate systemic change. The framework is designed to communicate the coherence, complementarity, and iterative nature of the model, highlighting the alignment between strategic intent and operational delivery.



6.1 Strengthen Early Intervention and Housing-Led Prevention

Rationale: Stakeholders consistently identified crisis-triggered responses as a fundamental system weakness. Prevention must become the default rather than the exception. This aligns strongly with international frameworks such as the OECD Recommendations on Homelessness (2024), ETHOS Light typology, and Housing First Europe Hub guidance, which advocate for systemic, data-informed prevention strategies integrated into broader housing and social protection policies.

Key Actions:

- Embed prevention into national housing and social protection policy frameworks - not just homelessness strategies - to mainstream early action.
- Expand the Tenant in Situ scheme and tenancy sustainment capacity across all four Dublin local authorities, ensuring coverage and consistency.
- Pilot data-informed early warning systems and place-based prevention hubs in high-risk communities.
- Establish formalised discharge protocols across, IPAS, and care placements, with joint accountability metrics between relevant statutory agencies.
- Publicly report on the outcomes of the protocols in place for hospital and prison discharges.
- Tailor preventative supports and pathways for specific groups (e.g., young people leaving care, people exiting institutions, migrants, Domestic Violence survivors, families with infants/young children, the elderly), ensuring services are inclusive, rights-based, and culturally competent.
- Promote legal frameworks and policies that safeguard tenancy rights and prevent discrimination, consistent with OECD guidance.
- Adopt and apply the ETHOS Light typology as the statistical foundation for defining and measuring homelessness and use disaggregated data (by cohort and geography) to target prevention initiatives.
- Ensure climate resilience by linking prevention planning with emergency housing responses to extreme weather events and natural disasters.

6.2 Redesign Emergency Accommodation as Stabilising Support

Rationale: Emergency accommodation (EA) must provide safety, dignity, and pathways forward—not just shelter.

Key Actions:

- Where funding and availability allows, transition to own-door and small-unit EA models, particularly for vulnerable cohorts.
- Uphold minimum standards in EA, with regular inspections and transparency.

- Expand funding for on-site multidisciplinary teams (e.g., addiction, Mental Health, peer support).
- Prioritise cohort-specific models (e.g., women, LGBTQ+, older people).
- Co-locate wraparound services in EA settings.
- Develop culturally competent and trauma-informed workforce.

6.3 Embed a Continuum of Support for Sustainable Progression

Rationale: Progression should not end with housing placement. Individuals need long-term, person-centred supports to exit homelessness sustainably.

Key Actions:

- Expand Housing First and tenancy sustainment services.
- Develop regional progression pathways with case management.
- Introduce outcome indicators for post-tenancy stability.
- Reduce allocation bottlenecks through void turnaround reforms.
- Tailor Housing First for specific groups (e.g., youth, migrants, older people).
- Monitor programme effectiveness using systematic evaluation.
- Align social protection schemes with long-term housing retention.

6.4 Position DRHE as Strategic Convenor and System Leader

Rationale: Stakeholders want DRHE to take on a stronger leadership role—moving from a funder/enforcer to a convenor of systems change.

Key Actions:

- Ensure the formal interagency governance structures as set down in legislation (Housing Act 2009) are working well in the Dublin Region.
- Publish partnership protocols with shared KPIs.
- Build DRHE capacity for cross-system coordination.
- Lead the Statutory Management Group to review the working of the Homeless Action Plan at every meeting and resolve/escalate barriers identified.
- Clarify roles across provider, funder, and regulatory functions.
- Support training and capacity-building for frontline staff in conjunction with the HSE and other agencies.
- Elevate DRHE's role in public advocacy and political leadership on homelessness.

6.5 Shift to a Person-Centred, Outcomes-Focused System

Rationale: Service users continue to feel processed, not supported. System reform must be grounded in dignity, agency, and lived experience.

Key Actions:

- Co-design services with lived experience experts.
- Embed person-centred indicators (e.g., wellbeing, autonomy).
- Fund flexible, relational service models that reflect client needs.
- Create service-user panels for procurement and policy review.
- Use incentives to support lived experience engagement.
- Promote inclusion and rights-based service design.
- Ensure services are accessible, low-barrier, and trauma-informed.

6.6 Build a Smart and Transparent Data and Evaluation System

Rationale: A shift toward learning and adaptation requires better data and continuous evaluation.

Key Actions:

- Introduce outcomes-based indicators (e.g., sustainment, repeat homelessness), with greater emphasis on long-term impact.
- Use disaggregated data for equity monitoring.
- Share real-time dashboards with councils, NGOs, and funders.
- Link data systems across DRHE, HSE, Tusla, and housing providers.
- Utilise a consistent statistical definition of homelessness (ETHOS Light).
- Strengthen cross-agency SMG's Monitoring and Evaluation role to guide implementation.
- Build in-house evaluation capacity and incentivise learning cycles.
- Ensure alignment with international monitoring frameworks (e.g., OECD, Housing First Europe Hub) to enhance transparency and global comparability.

Conclusion

The recommendations in this chapter represent a roadmap for systemic change, rooted in stakeholder experience, lived expertise, and global best practice. They respond directly to the challenges surfaced throughout the engagement process—while also building on the operational strengths and collaborative momentum already evident across the homelessness sector in Dublin.

Delivering on this agenda will require more than incremental change. It will demand joined-up leadership, cross-sector coordination, a fundamental redefinition of ‘progress’, and an enduring commitment to person-centred, trauma-informed support. The DRHE Homeless Action Plan 2025–2027 can be a pivotal moment—a strategy that not only responds to current pressures but lays the groundwork for a system capable of reducing homelessness in a planned, strategic, and inclusive way.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Action Plan Analysis Narrative

The Brief

This report is based on the direction provided by the DRHE in the initial request for support in constructing the Homeless Action Plan 2025-2027:

- Review of the 2022-2024 Homeless Action Plan and annual business plans
- Liaise with Key Stakeholders
- Set Clear Strategic Objectives that align with National Policy
- Prepare a draft 3-year Homeless Action Plan for 2025 - 2027 and include key learning from review and consultation.

Analysis of Dublin Region Homeless Executive Homeless Action Plan 2022-24.

This analysis is based on the action plan as published: [Homeless-Action-Plan-2022-2024.pdf \(homelessdublin.ie\)](#)) and the business plan provided to CES by DRHE.

This “Framework for Action” document, (we will refer to this as the Framework), sets out a framework for action on homelessness for the Dublin Region for 2022 to 2024. This plan, like its predecessor from 2019-21, adopts three key themes of Prevention, Protection and Progression to guide action on homelessness. It represents the first of three plans to bring the Dublin Region to the national goal of resolving long-term homelessness by 2030. This is a mounting challenge given the high and increasing levels of homelessness in the Dublin region in the context of a national housing shortage.

The framework was developed in consultation with interested groups/organisations, Service Providers, Members of the Housing Strategic Policy Committees of the four Dublin Local Authorities and the Dublin Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum and Statutory Management Group. This group comprises; Four Dublin local authorities (Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council), Health Service Executive, Tusla, Department of Social Protection, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Homeless Network, the Irish Council for Social Housing, the Irish Prison and Probation Services, City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB), Threshold and An Garda Síochána.

It is our understanding that services users were not directly engaged in consultation on the current framework or the annual business plan that operationalises this framework. The plan notes that the consultative forum and management group “continue to commit themselves to keeping the service user central to all decision making”.

Local Authorities and the HSE hold joint statutory responsibility in addressing the housing and health needs of people experiencing homelessness. This joint statutory responsibility has been recognised since 2000.

Process for this review

The initial intention of this review was to carry out a gap analysis on the action plan. *(The reporting process will be threefold: a narrative report providing an overview of the process, findings, and conclusions/recommendations; an Excel spreadsheet/matrix setting out the progress to date of each output detailed in the existing action plan; a Gap Analysis reporting actions and tasks that are behind schedule. The progress spreadsheet/matrix will be broken down according to strategic goal theme, related actions, owner, outcome, and measurement.)* DRHE already had a good system in place to track actions and progress on actions, so we changed our approach to this review. Instead we began with:

- Review of the framework as compared to its operational outworking – DRHEs business plan.
- We amalgamated the actions and sub-actions from previous years business plans across the three pillars plus governance actions.
- We created a spreadsheet that allowed some preliminary analysis of
 - o Status of actions by pillar
 - o Actions completed over time
 - o Analysis of patterns in action status
 - o Analysis of action status by designated lead (as per business plan, this is different from the designated lead in the framework document in places).

Following this initial analysis Dr Hanratty met with DRHE leads (Mary Hayes and Louise Arkins) to discuss observations and understand, from DRHE perspective, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats lay in the implementation of the current action plan.

SWOT analysis

- **STRENGTHS– Data Systems are Strong and Inform Planning: The Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS)** is described as working well and providing **very strong data**. It offers publicly accessible **monthly updates** on key metrics, including the **number of individuals and families presenting as homeless** and the **number of exits from homelessness**. This data is actively used to **plan and develop services**, helping identify trends like the **increase in people entering versus exiting** the system and other demographic trends to inform policy.
- **'Protection' (including Emergency Accommodation) Appears Strengthened:** Actions related to **'protection'** appear to be completed most often and there is a **strong sense that 'protection' has been strengthened**.
- **Improved Physical Standards and More Supports in Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA):** There is a mention that **physical standards have improved** in private emergency accommodation. Furthermore, **more supports are being directed into PEA**.
- **New Health and Mental Health Teams in PEA:** Under the current plan, a **new health team (PACT)** has been specifically placed in **single Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA)**, reportedly covering 70% of service users. A **specific new mental health team** has also been introduced. (It is noted, however, that access to mental health services more broadly is still problematic).

- **Successful Prevention Efforts:** Prevention was a clear focus and appears to have been successful, with **prevention statistics improving over time**. While overall numbers increased, the situation is seen as likely being much worse without these improvements. Measurable support actions prevented homelessness, and there may be further unmeasured instances of prevention.
- **Effective Initiatives Supporting Tenancy:** The **tenant in situ initiative has been very successful**, receiving strong support for its continuation and expansion. **Threshold** is also seen as working well, though they cannot always prevent tenancy endings, they can **delay them to provide more time** for alternative accommodation.
- **Effective Support Workers and Protocols:** **Housing support workers** are reported to be working well, efficiently covering core tasks. The **prison discharges protocol** is also highlighted as working well.
- **Learning from Pilots:** An approach of piloting, learning, and acting on learning is seen as a strength, exemplified by a pilot program for households in arrears that was found to be unsuccessful and therefore not rolled out further.
- **WEAKNESSES –** There is a **need for more information and analysis on actions led by organisations other than the DRHE** (Dublin Region Homeless Executive). The updated action plan appears to have a much greater focus on DRHE-led actions compared to the initial framework document, which was more balanced.
- There is a **gap in analysing the impact of actions**. Figures might be available, but they haven't been consistently linked to specific actions or integrated into progress reporting. While the business plan is good at capturing the execution of actions, the **link between actions and outcomes is not consistently made**.
- The system **does not appear to meet the OECD benchmark** of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness **meaningfully and systematically** at all stages of the policy cycle.
- There are questions about **how well interagency collaboration and communication are functioning**.
- There is a **challenge in ensuring every organisation takes responsibility for their actions** and provides regular updates on progress, monitoring, and evaluation. The impression is that the DRHE is leading much of the work, and other agencies are not taking sufficient leading roles or ensuring their actions are reflected and updated.
- The process of reviewing the action plan prompted a significant number of updates, suggesting that ongoing tracking and reporting might be inconsistent.

Opportunities

- Strong support from NGOs.
- New action plan could focus more on tracking outcomes.
- Differentiate between implementation, monitoring, and scaling.
- RI sessions indicate a desire for better interagency working and collaboration.
- Framework has specific outcomes and measurements.
- Business plan could monitor progress and bring everything together.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation needed to sustain and improve actions.
- Complaints process could better integrate service users' voices into actions.
- KPIs being developed to focus on outcomes, presenting an opportunity for a shared measurement framework including service user experiences.
- National capital fund available to build, adapt, or purchase homes more cost-effectively.
- Tendering could address specific challenges, such as over-concentration of services in one area.

Threats

- Underlying housing supply and increasing demand remain significant threats.
- Specific needs for large families not met by current housing supply; planned stock focuses on 1, 2, and 3 bed homes.
- Overreliance on city centre accommodation.
- Rising number of International Protection Applicants presenting as homeless and requiring emergency accommodation.
- Progression from homelessness constrained by wider housing market conditions.
- Budgetary cycles cause financial uncertainty for NGO providers, affecting stability and staff retention.
- Private emergency accommodation remains a costly last resort, limiting funds for additional services.

Analysis of headings

Current structure of business plan

Action No.	Objective	Action	Lead	Timeline Year	Timeline Qtr.	Outcome/s	Updates	Status
#	The objective outlined	The specific action related to the objective	Organisation(s) tasked with leading on the action	Year and quarter). It is unclear if this is the target completion or target start time. It is unclear if qtr. refers to calendar year (Jan-Dec) or financial year (Apr – Mar)		The target outcome that the objective aims to achieve	Brief notes on progress. Occasionally this included outcome data or refers to monitoring figures but often not.	A large proportion of actions were initially listed as 'ongoing'. Updates in April 2025 significantly changed this picture to majority complete.

Recommendations and rationale for next action plan

A new action plan presents an opportunity to further improve the process of monitoring and evaluating progress on homeless prevention, protection and progression.

Based on our review of the information provided to us by DRHE we recommend the following for the next action plan:

1. All actions in the Annual Business Plan to have a target start and end date.
2. Actions are tracked as 'on time', 'delayed' or 'paused' and briefly capture reasons for any delays.
3. Implement ongoing monitoring and reflection on action status. This would support the identification and recording of issues arising *and* systemic issues that are impacting on progress.
4. Move from a system of recording actions as 'complete' or 'ongoing' to a system that reflects the phases of implementation to include:
 - a. Planned action, for actions that are planned but not yet begun. All actions will begin at this phase.
 - b. Action commenced or in process, for actions that are in motion but not yet complete
 - c. Action implemented, for actions that have been done. This can include actions where a change has been implemented but it is in its early stages.
 - d. Ongoing monitoring in place, for actions/changes that have been implemented and have now moved to ongoing monitoring to make sure that the change is embedded and the impact of that change is tracked.

5. All actions have a named lead organisation responsible for monitoring and providing regular updates on progress.
6. The lead organisation is responsible for providing updates on progress.
7. SMG to consider the most efficient and effective method of tracking progress on actions, in particular for those actions where DRHE is not the lead organisation.

Summary of the action plan progress

Targets (copied from current framework for action document:

Within the current plan we aim, by the end of 2024, to:

1. Achieve significant reduction in the numbers of single adults sharing dormitory accommodation.
2. Reduce the average time spent in Emergency Accommodation for all households.
3. Reduce the percentage of families in Emergency Accommodation living in commercial hotels.
4. Ensure all identified chronic rough sleepers in Dublin are offered Housing through Housing First during the lifetime of this plan.
5. Reduce the overall number of families with children living in emergency accommodation by increasing exits to tenancies.
6. Achieve a significant reduction in the number of families in emergency accommodation for longer than 12 months.
7. Increase the proportion of families and single individuals prevented from becoming homeless by support to sustain their existing tenancy or support to find a replacement tenancy.
8. Ensure that everyone assessed as needing care and support is offered an integrated care plan within 2 weeks and they are being supported to manage their physical / general health, mental health and addiction issues as part of their plan.
9. Ensure that all those requiring support after moving out of Emergency Accommodation receive that support, and that lack of support does not present a barrier to progress from Emergency Accommodation.
10. Improve the understanding of the causes of homelessness in Dublin through research and reporting.
11. Devise strategies for accommodating single homeless adults in shared tenancy arrangements given the demand for and supply of 1 bedroom accommodation in the Dublin Region remains a significant challenge.
12. Clarify the role and purpose of Day and Food Services, target group(s) and delivery of Prevention, Protection and Progression outcomes in the changed context of 24-hour emergency accommodation and on-site food for all persons experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region.

Simplified Notes on the Review Process

- Initial Submission: Business plan provided to CES in late March, detailing actions and sub-actions for each pillar (Prevention, Protection, Progression), governance, completed objectives, and current year plans.
- CES Review: CES amalgamated actions and sub-actions into one table, separated responsible organizations into columns, and added notes, questions, and suggestions for status updates.
- Action Plan Structure: Presented in 4 sections (Prevention, Protection, Progression, Governance) with 38 overarching actions and 167 sub-actions
- Updates: DRHE sought further information on actions believed to be completed and provided updates to the business plan on 1st, 7th, and 8th April. It was noted by CES that the flow of information from stakeholders to DRHE was inconsistent and this was echoed by DRHE.
- Meeting: CES met with DRHE lead Mary Hayes and Louise Arkins on 25th March to discuss initial review insights.

Baseline comparison

The data below is provided a benchmark the Action plan and is taken from the OECD recommendations. It may serve as a useful comparative to the action plan to identify how the action plan aligns with the recommendations and provides an evidence-based structure.

OECD Table 1. Summary of main recommendations to combat homelessness.

[Copy link to Table 1. Summary of main recommendations to combat homelessness.](#)

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Building block	Fundamentals for success
Policy design	
1. Strategies, stakeholders and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy to end homelessness, which defines and assesses the scale and scope of homelessness; sets out core priorities and measurable targets; identifies proposed actions, involves responsible actors from the beginning, and links to other relevant policies (such as housing and social protection); and embeds systematic monitoring and evaluation. • Identify and engage diverse stakeholders in solving homelessness, including people and institutions within and outside government with a range of policy expertise, practical experiences and perspectives. • Engage people with lived experience of homelessness meaningfully and systematically in all stages (strategy, programme design, and operation) of the policy cycle, including through creating appropriate incentive structures. • Develop strategies and public policies that promote inclusion and safeguard the rights of people experiencing homelessness.
2. Measurement: Definitions, data, drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that homelessness data collection is policy-relevant – that is, that data collection is designed and implemented to meet a clear policy purpose. In particular, aligning data collection efforts with a clear, measurable policy commitment to end homelessness (or specific types of homelessness) can be helpful. • Develop a clear, consistent statistical definition of homelessness, upon which data collection efforts are based, drawing on the ETHOS Light Typology where feasible. • Collect disaggregated data by different types of homelessness (e.g. ETHOS typology) and key demographic characteristics of relevance in a given country context to facilitate in-depth assessments and to tailor interventions accordingly.

Building block	Fundamentals for success
Policy design	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake efforts (including through partnerships with competent research entities and NGOs) to assess the structural, systemic, institutional and/or individual drivers of homelessness in your country, city or community context, to improve the capacity to prevent homelessness and help people exit homelessness. • Establish a standardised, consistent data collection and monitoring system, which may draw on multiple data collection approaches, and improve data coverage of hard-to-reach groups (including by collecting data from a broad range of service providers, e.g. beyond emergency shelters and temporary accommodation for people experiencing homelessness). <p><i>[cf. OECD Monitoring Framework (OECD, Forthcoming[6]) for additional recommendations to strengthen data collection, reporting, and monitoring]</i></p>
3. Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and rigorously evaluate programmes by identifying policy objectives, indicators, and baseline context at the beginning of the policy design stage and carry out evaluations with stakeholders at pre-determined stages of the policy process. This can be supported by putting in place at the outset a results framework and establishing an M&E group for effective oversight. • Identify from the start the data and evidence to be collected <i>ex ante</i> and <i>ex post</i> and the resources needed to collect and analyse the data. • Build in-house monitoring and evaluation skills, including the ability collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data, create/manage budgets and evaluate outcomes, by conducting regular training and collaborating with academia and the private sector. • Create incentives for policy evaluation and allocate dedicated resources to set up and sustain robust monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes throughout the policy life cycle and determine whether the evaluation should be internal, external, or hybrid. • Incorporate evaluation results in policy-making processes and adapt measures with this evidence where needed to improve the impact of interventions.

Building block	Fundamentals for success
Policy design	
Policy emphasis	
4. Prioritising prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing social policies and housing supports to reduce the risk of homelessness, including social protection schemes and access to affordable and social housing. • Ensure balanced rights and protections of property owners and tenants in tenancy agreements and related legislation. • Provide targeted, timely support to people due to be discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care system or facility) to secure appropriate housing and providing, where needed, tailored wraparound services to address their specific needs and facilitate social integration (cf. Block 6). • Provide targeted assistance to people facing imminent housing loss (e.g. people at risk of eviction, victims/survivors of intimate partner violence) to help them find an appropriate housing solution. • Ensure access to safe, quality emergency accommodation with low barriers of entry to prevent individuals from sleeping rough and guaranteeing that facilities are welcoming and safe for all individuals. • Assess <i>ex ante</i> the specific needs and resources required to connect people experiencing homelessness to housing solutions in the aftermath of large-scale climate events or natural disasters. • Explore novel approaches to prevention, including early warning systems, using big data technologies. To facilitate this, governments could consider how to standardise data collection across systems as much as possible.
5. Long-term housing solutions: Housing-led and Housing First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue housing-led and Housing First as core policies to provide housing solutions alongside comprehensive wraparound services, tailored to an individual's support needs. • Facilitate rapid transitions into appropriate long-term housing, using a detailed needs assessment and a housing-led approach for individuals with low to moderate support needs. • Leverage the existing housing supply and social protection system to facilitate long-term housing solutions, including through social rental schemes, co-operation agreements with social housing providers, and other opportunities to mobilise housing in the private stock.

Building block	Fundamentals for success
Policy design	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor housing-led and Housing First programmes to the needs of specific socio-demographic groups, such as youth, LGBTI, women, older people, Indigenous groups, and migrants, ensuring inclusivity, appropriate housing solutions, and targeted support. • Track the progress and effectiveness of housing-led and Housing First programmes through systematic monitoring and evaluation and rigorous research. • Scale up housing-led and Housing First programmes to end homelessness, including by leveraging mainstream social services to support housing retention, setting regional targets, using research and evaluation to track outcomes and cost savings, and advocating for a system-wide shift in homelessness policy.
6. Low-barrier, tailored services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a timely needs assessment to identify individual needs and circumstances of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness (including people leaving institutional care) and ensure that individuals with high-service needs receive the support they need. • Eliminate administrative, logistical, and social hurdles to accessing services, including through training to mainstream service providers. • Co-ordinate and, where possible, co-locate, health and social services to facilitate targeted, treatment and care to meet individuals' needs that extend beyond housing. • Facilitate access to low-barrier medical services, including Overdose Prevention Centres, street medicine, and mental health support. • Strengthen access to employment opportunities for people who are able to work through training and sustained support.
Policy delivery	
7. Funding and financing	<p>For funders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and communicate policy objectives to be achieved and align funding and incentive structures accordingly. • Remove bottlenecks to funding integrated, long-term projects that combine both housing and service elements.

Building block	Fundamentals for success
Policy design	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks as part of funding obligations. • Ensure transparency in funding decisions and budget allocations related to homelessness. • Lay the foundation for long-term funding and financing for affordable and social housing, including through (revolving) fund systems, as well as systemic solutions to scale up Housing-led and Housing First solutions. <p>For fundraisers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map potential (supra-national, national, sub-national and non-public) funding sources, along with technical assistance needs. • Develop a pipeline of projects that are ready to finance, including scalable projects. • Address technical assistance needs in the homelessness services sector to develop skills to attract and manage funding. <p>More generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt lessons from climate and energy funding and financing schemes to the homelessness and social policy sector. • Effectively communicate the rationale, the importance, and the social and economic benefits of funding Housing First programmes to the broader population.
8. Leadership, co-ordination and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clear policy lead on homelessness and clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors (provider, financier, regulator), ensuring that the agency has the necessary mandate, capacity and resources. • Strengthen horizontal and vertical co-ordination – and, where possible, encourage integration – of critical homelessness services. • Encourage information sharing and mutual learning across different levels of government and relevant authorities, NGOs, and the private sector, including through national networks such as Housing First hubs. • Engage a range of relevant stakeholders in support service networks and co-create homelessness service delivery with impacted individuals.

Building block	Fundamentals for success
Policy design	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve conditions and develop capacity and training for local governments and frontline staff in the homelessness sector.
9. The political economy of reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate the issue of homelessness on the political agenda through an evidence based, housing-led approach. • Build broad-based coalitions to depoliticise the issue of homelessness. • Engage, inform, and mobilise the public to support homelessness reform, including through strategic, evidence based communication tools to increase public awareness of “what works”, based on rigorously evaluated interventions. • Regularly report data on people experiencing homelessness and make key indicators publicly accessible to facilitate research and policy development and promote transparency and accountability. • Regularly review government’s progress towards policy objectives, as well as the evidence base to inform policy decisions and make adjustments where needed. • Identify, engage and support potential policy entrepreneurs and “champions” on homelessness, including outside government, to leverage their expertise and reinforce policy continuity beyond electoral cycles.

Appendix 2. DRHE Stakeholder Engagement: Rapid Insight Sessions

Rapid Insight (RI) sessions are structured, time-efficient workshops designed to gather real-time input from stakeholders on complex or fast-moving issues. Originally developed for emergency and healthcare contexts, RI sessions enable participants to reflect collectively, identify key priorities, and share grounded insights - all within a short, focused format.

A defining feature of RI sessions is the use of the **chat function** as the main way for participants to contribute. This allows a wide range of voices to be heard, reduces pressure to speak aloud, and facilitates fast-paced, inclusive dialogue.

The RI methodology is particularly well suited when:

- Timely insights are needed to inform planning or decision-making.
- A broad and diverse group of stakeholders needs to be consulted quickly.
- There's a need to surface both strategic priorities and operational realities.
- Full-length interviews or surveys aren't feasible due to time or resource constraints.

RI sessions are light-touch but powerful — allowing high-quality insights to emerge through a dynamic and engaging process.

As part of the development process for the **Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) 2025–2027 Homeless Action Plan**, the **Centre for Effective Services (CES)** facilitated **seven RI sessions** between stakeholders from across the Dublin region. These included representatives from:

- The four Dublin **local authorities** (Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council, and Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council);
- **Statutory agencies**, including the Probation Service and Tusla (the Child and Family Agency);
- **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)** delivering frontline homelessness and housing supports;
- Elected members (**local councillors**) and members of the **DRHE Consultative Forum**

CES facilitated **seven Rapid Insight sessions** in partnership with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE). These sessions involved key stakeholders across the Dublin region, including local authority representatives, elected members, service providers, and agencies such as the Probation Service.

Each session was designed to explore the **three strategic pillars** of the new Action Plan:

- **Prevention** – reducing the risk of homelessness
- **Protection** – ensuring safe, secure responses for those currently experiencing homelessness
- **Progression** – enabling sustainable exits from homelessness

Rather than organising sessions around individual pillars, each session explored all three, allowing for a holistic, system-wide view of homelessness responses and interdependencies. Each RI session focused on the future direction of homelessness work across the region. To guide structured input, participants were asked the following three questions:

1. **Looking ahead to 2025–2027, what should be the top priorities for action on homelessness in the Dublin region?**
2. **What are the biggest challenges, and how can services be improved to address them?**
3. **What role should you or your organisation play in achieving these goals, and what concrete actions are you willing to commit to?**

These questions were designed to prompt strategic thinking, surface systemic challenges, and encourage shared ownership of future action.

Using Rapid Insight sessions enabled us to:

- Gather timely input from a diverse cross-section of key stakeholders.
- Explore shared priorities and local challenges across the three strategic pillars.
- Encourage open dialogue and collaborative reflection in a low-pressure format.
- Support a sense of shared responsibility by asking participants about their own roles and commitments.

The total number of attendees across all sessions was **64**, out of a possible 266 participants (24% participation rate across the different stakeholder groups). All sessions were held online via Microsoft Teams and facilitated by CES. Participants contributed mainly via the **chat function**, enabling a wide range of views to be shared quickly and inclusively. CES team members captured and synthesised comments live, identifying emerging themes as the discussion progressed. Throughout the session, a high-level summary of key points and themes was shared back with the group, allowing participants to confirm, expand, or clarify the analysis in real time.

Table 1: Attendance Breakdown by Session and Organisation *Attendee affiliations span across local authorities, government departments, NGOs, and key service delivery partners.*

Stakeholder Group	Total Attendees	Represented Organisations/Details
Local Councillors	26 / 184 (14%)	Dublin City Council (DCC), South Dublin County Council (SDCC), Fingal County Council (FCC), Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council (DLR)
Senior Management	8 / 16 (50%)	DCC, SDCC, FCC, DLR, Probation Service (Tusla & HSE invitee attended JCF)
NGOs	22 / 40 (55%)	Focus Ireland, Peter McVerry Trust, Dublin Simon, MQI, Depaul, Sophia Housing, Threshold, Respond, Salvation Army, HAIL, OneConnect, Cuan Mhuire, McGrath Housing, Orion Care, COPE Foundation, Anew, ALDP, Capuchin Day Centre, The Iveagh Trust
Consultative Forum	8 / 28 (29%)	DCC, Tusla, Probation Service, CDET, Threshold, Dublin Simon, PMV Trust, DLRCOCO, Irish Prison Service, HSE

Thematic Reflections by Stakeholder Group

- **Local Councillors:** Strong focus on housing supply, use of public land, tenant protection (e.g., ending no-fault evictions), and earlier intervention. Several called out the role of local authorities in leading solutions but also expressed frustration at legislative constraints.
- **NGOs:** Prioritised increasing supported housing and mental health/addiction supports; called for more collaboration and a shift from a commissioning approach toward more meaningful partnerships between NGOs, DRHE and the HSE. Highlighted gaps in tenancy sustainment supports.
- **DRHE Forum:** Emphasised clarity on roles and responsibilities in interagency coordination, particularly in discharge pathways from Direct Provision and IPAS, and called for strengthened wraparound supports, especially for complex and family cases.
- **SMT:** Focused on aligning all services to housing-led responses, balancing EA regionally, and increasing resources to local authorities. Expressed concern about limited HSE engagement.

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Cross-Session Findings by Pillar

1. Prevention: Stopping Homelessness Before It Starts

Key Challenges:

- Consistent frustration with late-stage interventions – support often begins only at point of crisis (e.g., after Notice to Quit (NTQ) issued). A statutory agency representative noted: "We're telling people to come back closer to the eviction date — by then, it's too late."
- Lack of affordable housing supply, especially three- and four-bed homes for families.
- Inconsistent protections for renters, with many stakeholders calling for the return of the no-fault eviction ban. local councillor said, "We need the no-fault eviction ban back. Without it, families are on edge." While legislative control lies beyond DRHE, stakeholders noted the need for strengthened supports and advocacy for tenants dealing with eviction from private landlords.
- Uneven practices across councils: especially in applying elements of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme and access to emergency accommodation.
- Discharge planning gaps, especially for individuals leaving hospitals, prisons, or International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) without a clear housing pathway; this was particularly acute when discharges were unplanned.
- Young people leaving care or experiencing family breakdown highlighted as a specific risk group.

Recommended Improvements:

- Strengthen early intervention, including support for households before an NTQ is issued.
- Reintroduce or strengthen eviction bans and better enforce rent caps.
- Expand and secure funding for the Tenant in Situ Scheme, which allows local authorities to buy properties from landlords to keep tenants in their homes.
- Increase the capacity of tenancy sustainment teams, with more caseworkers to support households at risk.
- Improve consistency and accessibility of services across local authorities, especially for non-English speakers.

Overarching Insight: Prevention requires a shift from crisis response to early action, supported by local intelligence, community-based services, and interagency collaboration.

2. Protection: Ensuring Safe, Dignified Emergency Accommodation

Key Challenges:

- Strong dissatisfaction with Emergency Accommodation (EA): Described as "chaotic" and lacking basic dignity.
- Emergency accommodation often lacks a trauma-informed approach. One NGO representative shared, "Some avoid hostels entirely due to fear of violence or re-traumatisation."
- Wraparound supports are inconsistent or unavailable: mental health services, addiction supports, disability access.
- Challenges in placement: families often housed far from schools, employment, or medical services.
- EA models do not support specific cohorts such as women fleeing domestic violence, older people, or those with complex needs.

Recommended Improvements:

- Shift toward single-room or small-unit emergency accommodation, particularly for vulnerable individuals.
- Embed wraparound services in all emergency accommodation models.
- Implement mandatory standards and regular inspections across all emergency providers.
- Ensure geographic spread of EA to maintain community ties.
- Increase and diversify staffing to provide culturally competent, multilingual, trauma-informed care.

Overarching Insight: Emergency accommodation must evolve into a stabilising platform, not just a bed for the night. Safety, dignity, and support need to be central design principles.

3. Progression: Enabling Pathways Out of Homelessness

Key Challenges:

- Housing supply bottlenecks dominate lack of appropriate social and cost-rental housing, especially for families and people with disabilities.
- High rates of social housing refusal where applicant does not want the property offered based on location or type of accommodation. Long void periods for local authority properties delay allocations.
- Over-reliance on HAP: seen as insecure and unfit for long-term stability.
- Perception of post-exit supports lacking: "We house them, then lose sight of them until they re-enter the system," said one NGO representative.

Recommended Improvements:

- Expand Housing First with co-managed support models between housing and health.
- Enable LAs to lead social housing development on public land.
- Reduce void turnaround times; increase use of CPOs and adaptive reuse strategies.
- Fund and implement tenancy sustainment services to reduce repeat homelessness.
- Ensure that pathways out of homelessness are not blocked by rigid income thresholds that penalise small earnings increases.

Overarching Insight: The system must evolve to see housing as a continuum with embedded support — not a final handover point. Scaling solutions means diversifying stock and investing in long-term engagement.

4. Structural, Operational and Cross-Cutting Issues

Cross-Stakeholder Observations:

- Housing is the enabling factor: As one Forum member put it, "Without housing, prevention is stalled, protection prolonged, and progression blocked."
- Local Authorities feel overburdened but under-resourced: There's a clear appetite for more autonomy, direct capital funding, and control over housing delivery.
- The role of the HSE in service provision was noted across nearly all sessions. The need for greater HSE representation in planning and delivery was highlighted.
- Multi-agency working: Calls for stronger referral mechanisms, shared data protocols, and joined-up service models.
- Transparency and communication: Local councillors in particular requested direct lines of communication to check on cases and support constituents. Furthermore, they asked for information on services available for their constituents so they can better signpost and support constituents.

Overarching Insight: Systems leadership and governance need attention. Implementation must be supported by national departments, with better horizontal integration across housing, health, and justice.

5. Convergence and Divergence: Common Ground and Key Differences

Areas of Convergence:

- Across all groups, there was strong alignment on the need to increase housing supply, particularly for larger families and vulnerable cohorts.
- Early intervention was universally supported, particularly when paired with local knowledge and clear communication tools.
- Both the NGO and service user consultations flagged concerns about private emergency accommodation (PEA) and the need for standards and trauma-informed models.

- All stakeholders expressed frustration with the limitations of HAP and a desire for more social housing options.

Areas of Divergence:

- Local councillors were most vocal about systemic governance issues (e.g., transparency, planning delays, LA autonomy), while NGOs emphasized trauma-informed care and wraparound supports.
- Statutory agencies focused on interagency coordination and discharge pathways, less so on the structural or legislative reforms favoured by councillors.
- Divergence emerged on tenancy refusals: some viewed these as legitimate (due to quality/location mismatch), others as contributing to blockages.
- Varied views on whether time limits in EA should be introduced: some supported a cap to drive progression, others cautioned this could risk punitive effects.

Cross-Session Insight:

Stakeholders brought different lenses, but there was high overall agreement on the need for system-wide reform, coordinated planning, and locally responsive delivery.

Summary of Stakeholder Commitments: Proposed Actions for Inclusion in DRHE Action Plan 2025-2027

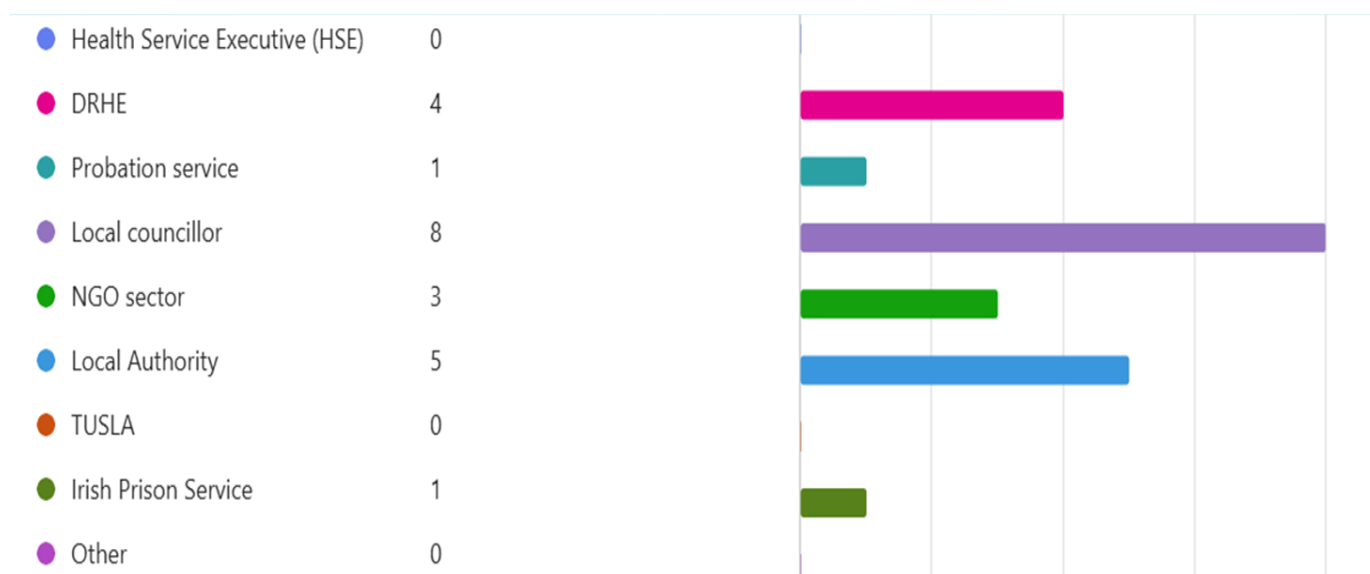
Stakeholder Group	Proposed Actions / Commitments
Local Authorities	Lead local delivery of emergency and social housing. Prioritise vulnerable groups in allocations. Improve planning for discharges from institutions. Expand Housing First with wraparound staffing. Develop emergency accommodation within local areas to support community ties.
NGOs	Pilot enhanced tenancy sustainment models. Transition to single-room emergency accommodation for single adults. Expand Housing First where feasible. Collaborate on strategic planning. Advocate for reforms to funding and commissioning models.
DRHE Forum Members	Strengthen interagency referrals (e.g., with HSE, Tusla). Develop protocols for planned discharges (some organisations, such as Probation, already have a protocol in place). Agree a process for unplanned discharges. Promote Choice-Based Letting (a model where applicants express interest in available homes). Participate in multi-agency case reviews.
Statutory Services	Coordinate planned housing transitions from institutional settings. Share good practice. Engage in housing forums. Identify and address high-risk transitions (e.g., care leavers, people exiting prison).

Stakeholder Group	Proposed Actions / Commitments
(Probation, Tusla)	
Local Councillors	Advocate for land use and planning reform. Support eviction bans and renter protections. Raise motions to address youth homelessness. Promote adaptive reuse of vacant buildings and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) . Push for greater local authority autonomy and case-level transparency.

The RI sessions uncovered strong alignment across all stakeholder groups around the centrality of housing supply, the need for prevention to begin earlier, and the importance of embedding trauma-informed, person-centred practices. Stakeholders brought valuable on-the-ground experience and strategic insight, with a clear willingness to engage in collaborative solutions. While there is deep frustration about systemic limitations, particularly around cross-agency coordination and housing market constraints, the engagement revealed a shared commitment to ambitious yet practical reform. The **DRHE Action Plan 2025–2027** will benefit from anchoring these insights and commitments at the heart of its delivery model.

Appendix 3. Survey-Based Thematic Analysis: DRHE Stakeholder Survey

Eighteen stakeholders responded to the DRHE Homeless Action Plan 2025–2027 survey, offering detailed insight into their priorities, challenges, and capacity to contribute to solutions. Respondents included representatives from **DRHE (4), local authorities (4), NGOs (4), local councillors (6), and statutory services including Probation and the Irish Prison Service (2)** — with some individuals identifying across multiple sectors. Across the survey, three dominant themes emerged: the scale and complexity of housing need, the fragmentation of service delivery, and the insufficient focus on progression out of homelessness. Each theme, however, was interwoven with sector-specific insights and suggested actions.



Each thematic section below combines descriptive insights with relevant counts to illustrate patterns and prominence of responses.

1. Prevention: From Late Intervention to Early, Inclusive Response

Top Prevention Challenge (as ranked by 18 respondents):

- Lack of affordable housing (especially 1–2 bed and 3–4 bed units) was cited by **15 of 18** respondents as a key barrier.
- NTQ-related delays and late interventions mentioned in **11 responses**.
- Family reunification into homelessness, especially from IPAS, was raised by **5** different respondents across DRHE, local authorities, and NGOs.

Prevention Priorities:

- **13 respondents** called for earlier engagement and removal of thresholds (e.g., waiting for formal NTQ to begin support).
- **8 respondents** explicitly recommended **expanding AHB provision of affordable rentals** to reduce pressure on HAP and EA.
- **6 respondents**, mostly councillors and NGOs, advocated for reinstating or introducing a **ban on no-fault evictions**.

- **4 responses** emphasised the need for **clearer protocols between DRHE and Dept. of Justice** on immigration/family reunification.
- Place-based approaches and prevention in high-risk areas mentioned in **3 responses**.

Action Commitments:

- **6 respondents**, including DRHE and local authorities, identified lobbying, cross-agency coordination, or policy advocacy as their main prevention contribution.
- NGOs (3) highlighted efforts to deliver funded tenancy sustainment and awareness-raising among at-risk groups.

2. Protection: Reimagining Emergency Accommodation

Key Protection Challenges:

- Unsafe or inappropriate EA (mixed drug-use environments, family separation, lack of trauma-informed care): referenced by **10 of 18** respondents.
- Gaps in wraparound supports (addiction, mental health, disability): cited by **8 respondents**.
- Weak engagement with couples, older people, and people with pets: identified by **6 respondents**.
- **5 councillors and NGOs** noted the psychological harm of prolonged stays and lack of child-friendly settings in EA.

Protection Priorities:

- Need for **bespoke models**: Women, couples, people with disabilities, and older people named in **9 responses**.
- **Housing First with wraparound supports** identified by **6 respondents**, including 2 NGOs and 2 councillors.
- Calls for **minimum standards, training, and staff ratios** were noted in **7 responses**.
- Co-location of health and welfare services in EA: suggested by **4 respondents**.

Action Commitments:

- **6 stakeholders** (DRHE, NGOs, local authorities) named peer support, service design, and trauma-informed training as part of their planned contribution.
- Local councillors (3) expressed support for improved planning and community acceptance of high-standard EA developments.

3. Progression: Housing as a Platform, Not an Exit Door

Challenges to Progression:

- **Inappropriate housing offers** (e.g. apartments offered to families): reported by **9 respondents**.
- **Long void periods and delays** in social housing allocations: noted by **8 respondents**.

- **Post-exit service gaps:** named by **7 respondents**, especially NGOs and statutory sector.
- **Rigid local allocations** and over-emphasis on location preference: mentioned in **5 responses**.

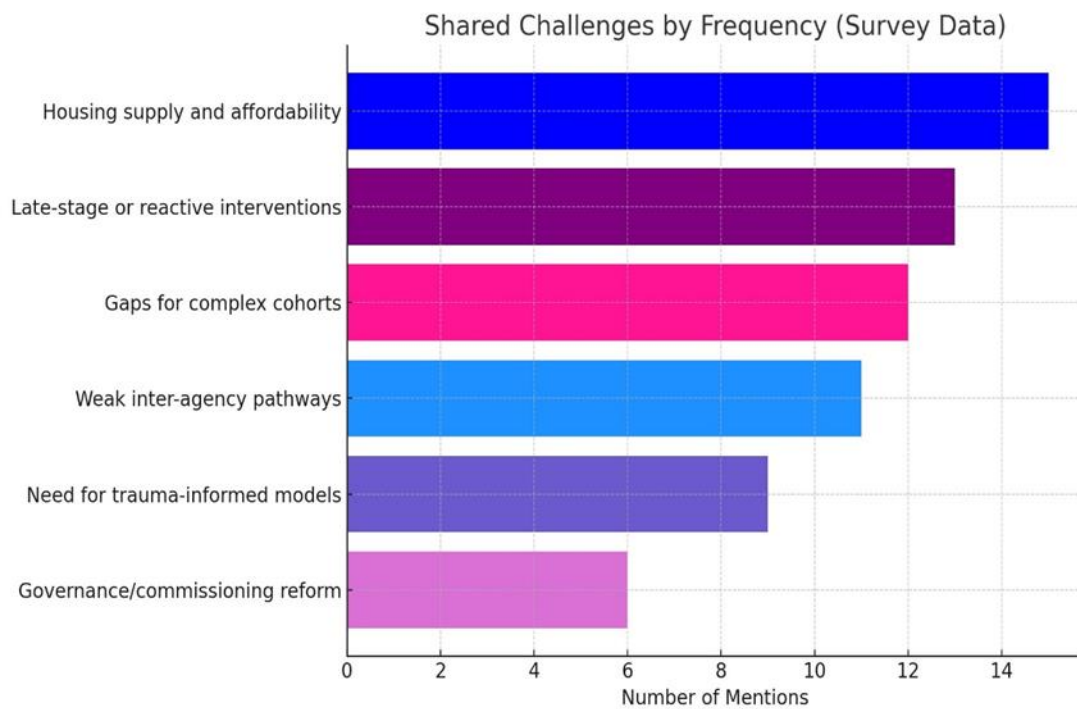
Progression Priorities:

- **Expansion of SLI (Supporting Living Independently)** and tenancy sustainment services: proposed by **8 respondents**.
- **Increase in Housing First provision:** advocated by **7**, with emphasis on integrated care and health partnerships.
- Use of **vacant or derelict properties**, especially for 1-bed EA or progression pathways: mentioned in **6 responses**, largely from councillors.
- Strategic action plans for **specific cohorts:** ageing homeless populations, people with complex needs, and single adults—highlighted by **5 NGOs and LA reps**.
- Piloting **innovative models** (e.g., rural therapeutic communities): **2 responses**.

Action Commitments:

- **10 stakeholders** identified their organisational or individual role in enhancing progression through:
 - New tenancy sustainment roles (3 NGOs)
 - Expansion of AHB-owned stock (3)
 - Advocacy for systemic reform (4)
- Councillors (3) explicitly pledged to support social housing and EA developments in their local areas.

Cross-Cutting Observations



Insights:

- There is strong cross-sector convergence on structural limitations: affordability, housing supply, and insufficient wraparound supports.
- Divergences mainly lie in emphasis: LAs and DRHE often cite operational fixes (schemes, funding), while NGOs and councillors push for policy and cultural reform.
- A notable thread across responses was the call for DRHE to evolve beyond a “funder and enforcer” role into a **co-strategist and systems leader**.

Appendix 4. Analysis by pillar of the Service user focus group

Prevention

The transcript highlights several factors that contribute to individuals becoming homeless, often pointing to a combination of personal circumstances and systemic failures. Participants describe entering homelessness due to **personal crises** such as addiction. One person mentions their **house being destroyed by fire** leading to them being directed to a hostel. The **lack of accessible support for addiction recovery** is identified as a significant factor that can lead individuals back into homelessness if they lose access to crucial support networks. Furthermore, the **instability and trauma experienced within the homeless service system itself**, including frequent changes in accommodation, can exacerbate existing issues or even contribute to developing addictions. Participants also point to broader structural issues, including the **housing crisis and the lack of affordable and available housing...**, where **high rents are often unsustainable on unstable incomes**, and difficulties arise from the private rental market system, such as getting recommendations. The system's failure to adequately prepare individuals leaving care or prison, who have had everything done for them, for independent living... by not providing essential life skills training or transitional support also contributes to them potentially becoming homeless. There is also a perceived **lack of appropriate facilities and support for individuals with special needs**, including those who are undiagnosed, making them more vulnerable..., and insufficient support for complex family situations like mothers caring for autistic children. Limited availability of specific support facilities, such as **female addiction recovery centres in key areas**, can force individuals to leave areas where they have established recovery support. Finally, **local connection criteria** can act as a barrier, preventing individuals from accessing housing lists in areas where their support systems are located.

Protection

Within the immediate context of homelessness, the system provides a basic level of **protection by offering a roof over people's heads in hostels...**, providing a safe alternative to sleeping on the street. Hostels are noted for providing **basic provisions such as food...** and **support for medication**. The level of support from key workers is acknowledged to vary; some are described as performing their duties merely as "just a job", while others are recognized as being "very invested". Accommodation with a **strong recovery focus and clear expectations** regarding behaviour is viewed positively by some residents. Having a **guaranteed duration of stay** in accommodation, even if temporary, offers a significant sense of security for residents. The concept of **"Housing First" with wrap-around support** is mentioned as a positive model for helping people maintain housing once acquired.

Progression

A pervasive theme related to progression is the **striking absence of a clear, defined "pathway" out of homelessness**. It is described as being "in" the system with no clear route out, leaving individuals feeling as though they are "swimming around through the services" with little guidance, even from some staff. Residents feel they are **left to navigate the system and find their own way out**, a task made incredibly difficult by years of trauma and instability. A significant obstacle identified is the **constant and often abrupt movement between different hostels or facilities**. This lack of stability prevents residents from settling and feels akin to being a "prisoner", with moves frequently occurring with little notice or choice for the individual.

There is a critical **lack of appropriate transitional housing** between emergency accommodation or institutional settings (like care or prison) and fully independent living. This gap means residents are often not equipped with the **basic life skills** necessary to manage a home, such as cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and maintaining a property. Furthermore, some hostels are criticized for **not promoting independence**, instead managing residents' money or handling basic tasks like cleaning for them..., which is seen as **disempowering** and leaves individuals unprepared for the responsibilities of self-sufficient living.

The system's capacity to facilitate progression is also hampered by **high staff burnout and turnover**..., leading to inconsistent support. Residents face the trauma of **repeatedly retelling their personal stories** to new key workers..., which is distressing. The significant administrative burden on staff reduces the time available for direct client support. Some residents feel the system itself is structured in a way that **keeps people within hostels** rather than enabling their exit. The mixing of residents with **very different levels of need** in the same accommodation, particularly as high-threshold hostels change their intake criteria, can negatively impact the progression of those who are more stable.

A major impediment is the **lack of effective dissemination of information about available services, programs, and pathways**. Some residents express suspicion that this lack of transparency is deliberate, perhaps to manage demand and maintain the perception that services are essential. The difficulty in navigating complex systems like HAP... and **long waiting times for council housing lists**, even when meeting criteria..., also hinder progress. The absence of a **consistent case manager** overseeing an individual's entire journey... means complex needs may be overlooked. Difficulty securing employment due to the stigma associated with using a hostel address further blocks progression. Participants suggest that a historical shift away from building public housing has contributed to the current difficulties in moving out of homelessness... and that **prioritizing long-term hostel residents** for social housing is needed. A proposed solution involves a structured, guaranteed pathway of staged moves through different levels of support accommodation.

