**MEDIA RELEASE**

**December 1st 2015**

**THE DUBLIN LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS IN THE REGION**

***(DATA: July to September 2015)***

**The following detail outlines the Dublin local authority and state-funded service response to address homelessness and rough sleeping in the Dublin region from July to September (Quarter 3) 2015 and recent responses put in place through the operation of the Cold Weather Initiative (CWI).**

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive works as a shared service on behalf of the four Dublin local authorities, with Dublin City Council as the lead. It works collaboratively with statutory and state funded voluntary services to respond to homelessness. The CWI is in place to provide a humanitarian response to persons, who are at risk of rough sleeping, with the aim of preventing fatalities and/or serious harm from cold weather temperatures.

**MOVING TO TENANCIES AND OUT OF HOMELESS SERVICES**

**From Q1 to Q3 January to September, 739** adults moved to tenancies, this is 194 extra adults when compared to the same period last year.

**260** adult individuals moved out of homelessness in Q3 into tenancies, this is the highest move on rate to tenancies in a quarter reported to date. This represents a **36%** increase in move on from homelessness to independent living, as a direct result of work by the Dublin local authorities in sourcing and allocating social housing to homeless households.

*It must be noted that the social housing stock in the region is finite and the high rate of move-on to this type of tenancy that has characterised 2015, will be difficult to sustain into 2016.*

**500** modular housing units confirmed to be delivered in the Dublin region in 2016, to provide temporary accommodation for families who are currently in commercial hotels.  An initial 22 units will be delivered before end 2015 in the Dublin City Council administrative area through an Accelerated Restricted Procedure (ARP) to provide homes, in recognition of the extreme urgency to respond to family homelessness in the Dublin region.

**71 households** have moved to independent private tenanciesthrough the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Pilot**,** a key mechanism that has been put in place to address longer-term accommodation options for adult individuals and families.

*It is expected that the number of households moving to private rented accommodation will increase going forward. In addition, the Dublin Place Finders unit, managed by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, continues to work at promoting the pilot HAP scheme among landlords in the region, with a view to building up a database of landlords who are interested in taking on tenants who have been approved under the pilot homeless HAP.*

**ACCESSING EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORTS**

In excess of **2,100** adults accessed emergency accommodation each night across the Dublin region, an **increase of 233** adults compared to April to June 2015 (Q2)

Of the 2,100 adults, **1,587** have support plans in place to assist with their access to appropriate services and move on options out of homelessness. This is an increase of **33** on the previous quarter.

Almost **1,300** child dependents were accommodated on a nightly basis

**218** new families accessed emergency accommodation through the Dublin local authorities assessment and placement services from July to September 2015. This includes 70 new families in July, 78 were in contact in August with a further 70 in contact in September.

***Local Authority Actions to Increase Emergency Accommodation and Onsite Support for Adult individuals and Families (including the Cold Weather Initiative)***

**100** emergency bed facility for 80 single men and 20 single women in Brú Aimsir, Dublin 8. Dublin City Council is working in partnership with Crosscare homeless services to deliver this important initiative.  Additionally, the HSE is supporting the primary health care needs of through SafetyNet, providing a range of services including GP consultations, vaccination and health screening.  In addition light meals, laundry facilities, recreational services and support to engage with other relevant services will be provided.

**75 ring fenced beds across all state-funded homeless services-** this includes additional emergency accommodation in existing homeless services for the duration of the cold weather period.

**20 single beds –** if the temperature reaches zero degrees over three consecutive nights, the Civil Defence will provide additional emergency accommodation to assist homeless services

**37 new family units –** there are an additional number of family units in place including  12 units in Hazelwood House, Dublin 1 (onsite support provided by the Peter Mc Verry Trust) and 25 units in Ballymun Plaza, Dublin 9 (in reach support provided by Depaul Ireland)

**18 new couples units –**there are 18 new couples units in place on Sean Mc Dermott Street for couples who have been entrenched in rough sleeping in addition to couples that were accessing emergency accommodation on a singles basis. This accommodation forms part of the CWI but also is provided long-term tenancies to couples (onsite support provided by Sophia Housing).

**80 additional family rooms a**re now in place to provide emergency accommodation for households, who are currently accommodated in commercial hotels.  This service will also have onsite professional key-working services to support families in relation to finding long-term accommodation and to address any other concerns they may have.

**25 New Homeless Action Team Staff Members -** With the levels of families presenting to homeless services remaining such a daily challenge, the rate of support planning has decreased in large part due the logistical difficulty of accessing families as they were disbursed throughout the region in commercial hotels. The local authorities are working to respond to this through increasing the Focus Ireland staff resource for the family Homeless Action Team (HAT) to 25 to improve and speed up the support planning function for families.

**Improving progression options for persons** – a strong emphasis is being put on improving progression options for persons; by converting a sizeable number of existing one night only beds into supported accommodation options as well as increasing capacity for the CWI target group specifically Cedar House, Crosscare and Grantham Mews, Peter Mc Verry Trust.

**PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS**

The Tenancy Protection Service (TPS) continues to operate as a key mechanism deferring households from accessing homeless services.  The number of households contacting the TPS free-phone number has increased to **6,792,** since it began operation in June 2014.

Of these **3,233, or 48%,** were considered to be at risk of losing their tenancy.  Threshold, who operates the service on behalf of the four Dublin local authorities, has worked with **1,346** of these households to effectively protect their tenancies.

The majority of these cases were approved for an uplift in their Rent Supplement rate under the Department of Social Protection (DSP) Protocol **(1,179 households**) while a lesser number retained tenancies following negotiations with landlords on behalf of tenants **(104).**  The remaining (**63 households)** were supported to source alternative tenancies in the private rented sector.  Since operations began, only **20** of the households who contacted the TPS have accessed homeless services.

**NOTES TO EDITOR**

**FAMILY HOMELESSNESS**

Each month, the number of families presenting to homeless services who had not previously engaged with services is tracked. The table below details the monthly breakdown of the 218 families who accessed emergency accommodation during the quarter who were ‘new’ to homeless services.

**August 2015 families’ reasons for presenting to homeless services**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Notice to Quit** | | |  | 32 |
|  | *General* | | 10 |  |
|  | *Invalid notice/Illegal eviction* | | 3 |  |
|  | *Landlords family use* | | 4 |  |
|  | *Property to be sold* | | 7 |  |
|  | *Landlords bankrupt/receivership* | | 1 |  |
|  | *Tenant Rent Arrears/Rent increase* | | 6 |  |
|  | *Tenant Anti-social behaviour* | | 1 |  |
| **Overcrowding** | | |  | 9 |
| **Relationship Breakdown** | | |  | 22 |
|  | *General* | | 8 |  |
|  | *Parent* | | 9 |  |
|  | *Partner* | | 5 |  |
| Victim Anti-Social Behaviour | | |  | 3 |
| Unsuitable/Poor Quality Accommodation | | |  | 3 |
| Voluntarily Left Property | | |  | 2 |
| Other | |  |  | 4 |
|  | | *Parental family home sold – unable to afford rent in the Dublin region* | 1 |  |
|  | | *Returning to Dublin – unable to afford rent in the Dublin region* | 2 |  |
|  | | *Rented property secured but fell through* | 1 |  |
| Insufficient information | | |  | 3 |
|  | **Total** | |  | **78** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**INCREASED SUPPORT LEVELS FOR COLD WEATHER INITIATIVE**

**OPERATION OF HOUSING FIRST INTAKE TEAM**

The Housing First Intake Team will be operating from 7am to 1am every day and will extend service as daily needs arise. The Intake service transport available to the team to assist in supporting vulnerable people who are sleeping rough to access accommodation.

**ROUGH SLEEPER REPORTING**

This reporting process can be employed by anyone encountering a person who is rough sleeping, and will alert the Housing First Intake Team as to the exact whereabouts of the rough sleeper so that the team can engage with them at that location.

<http://www.homelessdublin.ie/report-rough-sleeper#1>

**DAY SERVICES AND NIGHT CAFÉ**

The Capuchin Centre has extended his early opening hours to 7am.  Merchants Quay Ireland breakfast service is available from 7.30 and the Night Café is open all night. Focus Ireland Coffee Shop, Mendicity Day Services etc are all operating day services during the cold weather period.

**ASSERTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Assertive engagementwith one night only services in the Dublin region to ensure that persons most consistently using homeless accommodation services on a night by night basis can be engaged with to identify progression requirements.

**GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

A *Guide to Good Practice for Street Outreach Teams* hasbeen developed in partnership with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, Dublin City Council Homeless Services Central Placement Service (CPS) and the Housing First (HF) Team (Focus Ireland and Peter Mc Verry Trust) and a range of volunteer groups who are currently providing street engagement. This guide clarifies roles and appropriate interventions: what to do and what not to do, and also promotes effective communication between outreach volunteer groups, HF and CPS/ Freephone services. The aim is to ensure best practice is clear, and to improve progression options and outcomes for people who may be rough sleeping.