

To: The Management Team

Item: Homeless Services Policy

October Council Meeting & CPG Meeting

Homeless Services in Kilkenny are co-ordinated by Kilkenny Homeless Action Team (KHAT). The interagency team, which was formed in 2017, is managed by KCC and includes membership of both NGO and statutory service providers. The principle aim of KHAT is to work in partnership to *'develop and enhance the delivery of Homeless Services, in an integrated, efficient and effective way'*, with a key objective to assist homeless persons in to their own homes as quickly as possible.

A homeless front of house team was also set up to meet the daily challenges of homeless presentations which account for over 300 cases each year with a slight improvement shown in 2017 and 2018. Outlined below is a table of the three year monthly homeless presentations;

2016		2017		2018	
Jan	37	Jan	29	Jan	37
Feb	30	Feb	26	Feb	32
Mar	18	Mar	26	Mar	21
April	26	April	25	April	18
May	34	May	28	May	29
June	31	June	24	June	20
July	31	July	34	July	15
August	32	August	27	August	26
Sub-total	239	Sub-total	219	Sub-total	198
September	27	September	24	September	
October	30	October	27	October	
November	32	November	29	November	
December	21	December	19	December	
Total	349	Total	319	Total	198

The Council operates the homeless services function having regard to current and best practice in the region and national policy guidelines and legislation as follows;

- Rebuilding Ireland
- Housing Acts 1966 – 2009
- 1988 Housing Act
- South East Regional Homeless Plan
- Kilkenny Homeless Action Team Policies and Procedures
- Kilkenny County Council Housing Policy (Allocations & Housing First)
- Kilkenny County Council Safeguarding Children Policy

The policy was discussed at two previous Housing SPC meetings, namely on 7th June and 14th September 2018 and further amendments were made with a recommended to list for the full Council meeting for adoption.

Martin Mullally
SEO Housing

Homeless Services Policy Document

Introduction:

Homeless Services in Kilkenny are co-ordinated by Kilkenny Homeless Action Team (KHAT). The interagency team, which was formed in 2017, is managed by KCC and includes membership of both NGO and statutory service providers. The principle aim of KHAT is to work in partnership to *'develop and enhance the delivery of Homeless Services, in an integrated, efficient and effective way'*, with a key objective to assist homeless persons in to their own homes as quickly as possible.

This **Homeless Services Policy Document** is part of the ongoing commitment to providing a quality homeless service to those in need.

1. Legislative/National Policy Framework:

Homeless services are provided within government policy and legislation as follows;

- Rebuilding Ireland
- Housing Acts 1966 – 2009
- 1988 Housing Act
- South East Regional Homeless Plan
- Kilkenny Homeless Action Team Policies and Procedures
- Kilkenny County Council Housing Policy (Allocations & Housing First)
- Kilkenny County Council Safeguarding Children Policy

2. Homeless Presentation:

- a) Persons presenting as homeless will be entitled to a comprehensive homeless services **eligibility** assessment if any of the following apply;
 - Their permanent place of residence is Kilkenny City/County
 - They are approved social housing applicants with Kilkenny County Council
 - They have been in receipt of social housing supports RAS/HAP in Kilkenny
 - They are in receipt of a payment in Kilkenny from Department of Social Protection
 - They are in possession of a valid Notice of Termination
 - They are in possession of a valid repossession order from their bank

- b) Having met the above eligibility criteria, persons will be considered for emergency accommodation if;
 - They have demonstrated that they have exhausted all other accommodation options without success
 - They have not made themselves intentionally homeless
 - They have no rent arrears in their previous accommodation (except where payment plan in place)
 - They have not been evicted from their previous accommodation due to anti-social behaviour or for non payment of rent
 - They have not surrendered a social housing tenancy
 - They have not abandoned a social housing tenancy
 - They can prove that there is not adequate room in the family home.

- As a family unit, they can provide evidence that they have resided together for a minimum period of six months prior to date of presentation.
- As a young person, presenting to Homeless Services from the family home, are accompanied by a parent to discuss the reasons why they cannot remain at home, and are willing to engage with supports offered to resolve presenting difficulties.

3. Emergency Accommodation Options:

Single Men: Emergency Accommodation for single men will be provided at the Good Shepherd Centre. If no vacancy exists at the time of presentation efforts will be made to source emergency accommodation outside of the County.

A waiting list will apply if no immediate vacancy exists.

Single Women: Emergency accommodation for single women will be provided at self contained transitional units of accommodation at Greensbridge, Kilkenny.

Families/Parent with Children: Emergency accommodation will be provided in 2 x self contained family units within the city environs.

In the event that no vacancies are available, support will be given to source emergency Hotel/B&B accommodation.

KCC is actively engaged with AHBs under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), to provide accommodation for persons presenting as homeless. It is hoped that these measures will greatly reduce our current reliance on Hotels and B&B for women and families presenting as homeless.

4. Conditions of stay in Emergency Accommodation:

- Persons will agree to terms and conditions of contract
- Emergency accommodation will cease if a valid offer of accommodation is refused. (In making an offer, all reasonable efforts will be made by KCC to ensure that the accommodation meets the needs of the individual/family)
- Clients will agree to engage with appropriate support services and provide evidence of same.
- Clients will demonstrate that they are actively seeking alternative accommodation.
- Emergency accommodation will be withdrawn if engagement is not demonstrated.
- If emergency accommodation is withdrawn due to non compliance with terms and conditions, no alternative accommodation will be provided. Outreach community support services will continue to be made available.

5. Support Services to exit Homelessness, to include:

- Tenancy Advice and Information Support from Focus Ireland
- Mediation Support
- Referral to appropriate Support Services.
- Access to private rented accommodation via HAP scheme
- Social Housing Options RAS/AHB/Social Housing
- HAP Place Finders Service
- Housing First when applicable

Dated: 5th July 2018

Appendix

A reasonable offer is one that is made to Homeless clients in emergency accommodation and, where possible, is in accordance with the applicants chosen area of preference (up to 3 areas) or within close proximity to same.

A reasonable offer may include an offer of any of the social housing supports, for example, RAS, HAP, Leasing, LA, AHB Accommodation.

There are occasions where the Council will make a reasonable offer of accommodation to relieve the reliance on emergency accommodation outside of the client's area of preference. In this case, the ***Grounds for Refusal*** may include the following:

1. No available private or public transport
2. Where transport is available however, the cost, frequency etc is prohibitive
3. Is not within a reasonable distance to children's schools
4. Special case for family support (on compassionate grounds)
5. Special documented medical grounds

