



**A Clearer Future:
New Funding Arrangements
for Homeless Services in Dublin**

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Homeless Agency, Parkgate Hall, 6-9 Conyngham Road, Dublin 8 Tel 7036100

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1. Introduction

Shaping the Future - an Action Plan on Homelessness 2001-2003, sets as an objective the introduction of a new funding scheme for homeless services, to apply from January 2002. The proposal for such a scheme and the principles of it were devised by a working group of the Homeless Initiative and adopted by the Initiative in May 2000. This has been followed by *Making it Home: An action plan on homelessness in Dublin 2004–2006* and *A Key to the Door – The Homeless Agency Partnership Action Plan on Homelessness in Dublin 2007-2010*.

The latest Action Plan *A Key to the Door – The Homeless Agency Partnership Action Plan on Homelessness in Dublin 2007-2010* has the following Vision and Strategic Aims:

Vision

By 2010, long-term homelessness and the need for people to sleep rough will be eliminated in Dublin.

The risk of a person or family becoming homeless will be minimal due to effective preventative policies and services.

Where it does occur, homelessness will be short-term and all people who are homeless will be assisted into appropriate housing and the realisation of their full potential and rights.

Strategic Aims

- Prevent people from becoming homeless
- Provide effective services in each local area to address the accommodation, housing, health and other relevant needs of people who are homeless in that area
- Provide sufficient long-term housing, with appropriate supports as required, for people who are homeless, especially single person households.

A working group, comprising representatives of statutory funding bodies and voluntary and statutory service providers, was established by the Homeless Agency in June 2001 to make detailed proposals on the scheme. (A list of members is contained in Appendix one). It was agreed that the Homeless Agency would be responsible for the

coordination and administration of the existing statutory funding schemes but that responsibility for payment would remain with the statutory bodies. The Department of Health and Children/Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government/local authorities subsequently clarified areas of responsibility and these are contained in Appendix two.

This document describes the arrangements agreed by the working group. It outlines the principles underpinning these arrangements; which type of services and activities will be eligible for funding; how applications for funding will be invited and assessed, how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and, broadly, what will be included in service agreements. The document was updated in September 2003, to include an appeals process which was agreed by the Board at its meeting of 23rd September. The document was updated in May 2007 to reflect changes in these processes.

2. Purpose & Principles of Funding Arrangements

2.1 Purpose

The funding arrangements will provide a single point of access for information about funding and for receipt and assessment of applications. They will also allow for the streamlining and coordination of monitoring and evaluation. The existence of a coordinating mechanism for funding will also ensure a clear overview of the range of services and activities in the sector. This in turn will facilitate a more efficient and effective use of public resources.

It is intended that the funding arrangements will be simple, flexible and supportive to homeless services, taking into account the varying range of organisational size and capabilities in the sector. The Homeless Agency will provide every assistance to agencies in adjusting to the funding arrangements. This will include the provision of a dedicated staff member to deal with queries and personal assistance with filling application forms where requested.

2.2 Principles

The following principles underpin the funding arrangements:

Related to overall policy objectives

Funding will support Government strategy in relation to homelessness and the achievement of the objectives of *A Key to the Door – The Homeless Agency Partnership Action Plan on Homelessness in Dublin 2007-2010*.

Unity and coherence

The relevant statutory funding bodies are committed to ensuring that funding in relation to homelessness is provided in a co-ordinated way, through a process to be managed by the Homeless Agency.

Transparency

The availability of funding, the application process, how decisions are made and on what basis, will all be clearly communicated. Any organisations turned down for funding will be given the reasons why and may request a review by the Board of the Agency.

Rationality

Decisions on funding will be based on the need for specific services and the ability of organisations to deliver those services

Adequacy

Funding will as far as possible, within the constraints of Government funding, relate to the actual cost of providing services to the appropriate standard in a cost-effective way

Needs related

Funding will be related to meeting known and emerging needs of people homeless

Accountability

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements will ensure improved accountability for expenditure of funds on homeless services, both in terms of value for money and effectiveness in addressing the needs of people who are homeless.

3. Eligible Services and Activities

Funding will be available for preventative measures, accommodation and other services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The priorities for funding are in line with the Dublin Action Plan and the Government Strategy, and will include the following:

3.1 Core Services

- Activities which address the gaps in emergency, transitional and long term accommodation
- Activities which reduce the number of people sleeping rough
- Activities which reduce the length of time people who are homeless spend in emergency accommodation
- Activities which enable people who are homeless to successfully settle in their own accommodation and optimise their independence
- Activities which will prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place and/or intervene early in relation to people at risk of homelessness
- Activities which improve the health and well-being of people who are homeless
- Activities that enhance the skills, qualifications, and employment of people who are homeless
- The development of services for people outside Dublin city centre

3.2 Other Activities

- Activities which improve the quality of services to people who are homeless, in line with the good practice guidelines in Putting People First
- Activities which promote effective partnership working and a continuum of care;
- Activities that give a voice to people who are homeless;
- Research into the nature and extent of homelessness; the needs, aspirations and abilities of people who are homeless; and how best it can be eliminated and prevented
- The development of existing services
- Pilot and innovative projects

3.3 Restrictions

The following will not be funded through the new arrangements:

- Services which do not contribute significantly the above priorities, or to meeting the needs of people who are homeless or at serious risk of becoming homeless
- Unnecessary duplication of services
- Poor quality services, where there is no plan to improve these services
- Services which are not cost-effective

4. What Will be Included in Funding

4.1 Actual Costs

Funding will relate to the actual cost of providing services or projects, subject to the availability of public funds. In the case of core/direct services funding will be available on a three-year cycle.

4.2 Overheads

Funding may include apportioned overheads e.g. administration, finance, personnel, training, etc. that can be related to the direct services. However, in the case of larger organisations where this cost is apportioned over a number of projects (some of which may not relate to homeless services) the funding of headquarter costs will be restricted to 5% of the total of all other overheads specific to that site.

4.3 Capital Costs

Funding may include capital items.

Grants under the Capital Assistance scheme will continue to be paid by the Department of Environment and Local Government. However, all applications under the scheme, or for which revenue funding may be sought in the future, will be referred to the Homeless Agency for recommendation before being approved by the Department of Environment and Local Government.

The role of the Agency will be to assess the application as to its relevance to the needs of people homeless in Dublin, the overall policy objectives of the Government strategy and the objectives of the Dublin Action Plan. The Agency will ensure that its assessment fits in with the time frame of local authorities for processing Capital Assistance applications and will not cause any delays in this process.

5. Application Process & Timetable

5.1 Information for Potential Applicants

Information on the funding arrangements will normally be provided in June of each year (except in 2007 when it will be provided in August). Information will be circulated to organisations known to be providing services to people who are homeless in Dublin and by the placing of adverts in appropriate journals and newspapers.

5.2 Helping Organisations Apply

The Homeless Agency will organise at least one workshop to advise groups of the funding criteria, what the Agency is looking for in the application, and how the application form should be completed.

5.3 Sending Out Application Packs

The Homeless Agency, within 5 days of a request for information about funding, will send out a funding information pack, containing a copy of the Action Plan; guidelines for applicants; and a copy of the application form. The application pack will also be available from the Homeless Agency website at http://www.homelessagency.ie/about_us/funding.html

5.4 The Application Pack

The Application Pack is made up of the Funding Application Forms (3 parts), Help Notes and this document.

The Application Form is made up of:

- a description of your organisation, it's structures, aims, staff, finances, etc
- a description of the project to which the application applies, it's target group, aims, staffing levels, standards and policies, services provided
- a detailed analysis of the costs for which funding is being sought

5.5 Application Deadline

Unless otherwise specified by the Agency potential applicants will have until the end of August to return the completed application. However one-off funding for new initiatives and other activities may be considered throughout the year, subject to public funding being available.

5.6 Small Funding Application Form

Applications for under €10,000 should be made on the shorter application form.

5.7 Acknowledgement

Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged in writing by the Homeless Agency within 5 working days.

5.8 Assessment Process

The full application will be circulated to the Assessment Panel and reviewed by them in detail. If they require additional information this may be requested in writing. The application will be discussed by the relevant panel members and a funding recommendation made.

Due to the volume of applications it is expected that full review of the applications will occur over a number of meetings.

5.9 Organisations Informed of Decision

Within five working days of its meeting, organisations applying will receive a letter outlining the outcome of the decision panel.

5.10 Final Deadline

Normally all applicants for 3 year funding will be informed at the latest about the funding they will be receiving by 30 November.

5.11 Payment

Payments will be made by the relevant statutory body as follows:

Local authorities: quarterly in advance, commencing in January of each year.

HSE: monthly in advance, commencing in January of each year.

5.12 Reapplication

The initial application will cover a three-year period for core services. Before the end of the three year period the organisation will be advised about the procedure for reapplying or renewal of funding.

6. How Applications will be Assessed

6.1 Assessment Panel

Applications will be assessed by the Homeless Agency, in conjunction with a panel of representatives from relevant local authorities and HSE. In addition, where appropriate, representative of other relevant bodies may be invited to join the panel to consider specific applications where they would have relevant input or share of funding (e.g. Addiction Services, Probation Welfare Services, VEC, etc). These representatives will be nominated by the relevant government departments and will be in a position to make decisions on behalf of their agency. Recommendations on funding will be made to the relevant government department, where necessary. The government department has the final decision.

The Assessment Panel will meet on a regular basis (normally monthly) and must have a quorum of representatives of at least two people from local authorities and two people from HSE.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

Applications for funding will be assessed on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the application meets the Action Plan priorities highlighted above
- The extent to which the application meets the emerging needs identified in ongoing research of the sector
- The extent of demonstrated commitment to relevant service and organisational quality standards
- The extent to which the application represents value for money
- The extent to which the proposed service unnecessarily duplicates other services
- The outcomes of previous monitoring and evaluation of services provided by the organisation
- The capacity of the organisation to implement programmes effectively

- The funding resources available.
- The extent to which the application form is accurately, appropriately and fully completed and returned on time

6.3 Where an application is not successful

The reasons for applications being turned down will be explained in person or in writing to the applicants. The applicant may request the Agency's Assessment Panel to review the decision.

6.4 Appeals Process

Given that the Homeless Agency's funding scheme budget is approved through the public estimates process and that the budget is finite, it is not appropriate to include an appeal on the basis of an amount of funding allocated. It is however appropriate that appeals can be made on the grounds of consistency and fairness in decision-making and on the process followed. The process then includes:

- An appeal must be lodged in writing to the Director of the Homeless Agency within 15 working days of receipt of advice of funding allocated
- An appeal may only be made on the grounds of process and in relation to one of the assessment criteria as stated in "A Clearer Future"
- In the first instance the Director of the Homeless Agency and members of the Assessment Panel will consider an appeal. This may include meeting with representatives of applicant, including at least one member of the applicant's Board
- The Homeless Agency will communicate the outcomes in writing to the agency, within 10 working days of the meeting date
- If the applicant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, this should be communicated to the Homeless Agency, within 15 working days

- The appeal will then be referred to a special meeting of the Finance and Funding Subcommittee of the Board, including representatives from the relevant government departments. Where possible, such a meeting will be convened within 10 working days from the point of notification from the agency seeking the appeal
- The decision of the sub committee will be communicated in writing to the applicant within 10 working days of the meeting.
- If the applicant is still not satisfied at this stage, the appeal will be referred to an independent third party (conciliator) to adjudicate the appeal. This is the final point of review in the appeals process and a decision reached here will be binding on all parties concerned.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation

The Homeless Agency is committed to monitoring all funding provided, in order to:

- Ensure that funding has been spent in accordance with the service/funding agreement
- Track the outputs and outcomes of the funding
- Monitor emerging trends or difficulties

7.2 Level of Monitoring

The level of monitoring will be appropriate to the size of the funding. It may include completing written monitoring forms and/or personal visits.

7.3 Self-Evaluation

All organisations will be encouraged to evaluate their own services on a regular basis (this may be one aspect of the services provided at a time), either in-house or using an external consultant, and may apply for funding to support this. Where this is being funded through the funding arrangements, the Homeless Agency must be consulted about the process for carrying out this self-evaluation and have the opportunity to comment on draft reports, etc

7.4 External Evaluation

7.4.1 Organisations receiving most of their funding through the funding arrangements

Organisations which receive most of their funding through the funding arrangements will be subject to independent external evaluation, commissioned by the Homeless Agency, at least every five years.

7.4.2 Organisations receiving partial funding

Organisations which receive only part funding through the funding arrangements will also be externally evaluated at least every five years. However in such situations the evaluation will only normally cover those aspects of the work where there is a service agreement with the Homeless Agency, unless agreed otherwise with other funding bodies, or with the organisation itself.

7.4.3 Timetable of Evaluations

The Homeless Agency will endeavour to develop a timetable of evaluations over a five year period, in consultation with the organisations, so that only a small number of evaluations are carried out in any one year. However the Homeless Agency reserve the right to instigate an independent evaluation at any stage, if there is cause for concern about an organisation's performance.

7.4.4. Consultation

The Homeless Agency will consult the organisation about the carrying out or commissioning of the external evaluation, to try and ensure that it is, as far as possible, an agreed process.

7.4.5. What evaluations will do

Evaluations will examine:

- The extent to which the services have made an impact on the aims and objectives of the Dublin Action Plan
- The extent of achievement of service agreement targets, and other performance indicators
- Compliance with "Putting People First" service standards
- The satisfaction level of service-users and other stakeholders with the services provided
- The internal capacity of the organisation in relation to the "Putting People First" organisational standards
- Financial management and accountability
- The cost-effectiveness of the services;
- The views of staff, managers and trustees
- Training needs
- Recommendations for the future.

8. Service Agreements

8.1 Homeless Agency

A service agreement will be drawn up by the Homeless Agency (as an agent of the relevant statutory bodies) in relation to each approved application, for approval and authorisation by the funded and funding agency. No funding will be given until a service agreement is agreed and signed and, where appropriate, the organisation confirms in writing that it is ready to proceed with the project.

8.2 What will be in the service agreement

The service agreement will cover the following:

- The name, address and legal status of the parties to the agreement
- The period of the agreement (normally 12 months)
- The inputs which will be covered by the funding e.g. the number and type of staff
- The outputs which the funded body is agreeing to provide e.g. the number of bedspaces, occupancy levels, opening hours, the number of users of a day centre, etc
- The outcomes to be achieved by the funded body e.g. the number of people resettled
- The amounts being committed, when payments will be made, the financial reporting required, etc.
- The powers of the Homeless Agency to terminate the agreement and recover a funding not expended as agreed
- The obligation on the funded body to participate fully in all agreed monitoring and evaluation arrangements

- The arrangement for varying the terms of the service agreement e.g. only in writing and agreed by both parties
- The obligation on the funded body to comply with all relevant health & safety regulations
- The obligation on the funded body to have appropriate insurance to cover all reasonable risks and that the funding body will not be responsible for any claims arising from the activities of the body
- The obligation on the funded body not to sell, or otherwise dispose of any capital item wholly or partly funded through the new arrangements, unless approved in writing
- The arrangements for appointing staff i.e. where a post is being funded (wholly or partly) through the new arrangements and the post is a new post or becomes vacant, the position must be filled in accordance with good equal opportunities practice
- The requirement to acknowledge the source of funding in any recruitment advertisement. Posts funded through the new arrangements should only be advertised at the salary scale approved as part of the funding
- Where a project funded through the funding arrangements requires the appointment of a consultant or other freelance person, and the fee is likely to be in excess of €10,000, the Homeless Agency must be consulted about the process for appointing consultants (e.g. the brief, selection process & contract). The Homeless Agency may be able to provide a list, without prejudice, of consultants who work in the relevant area.
- Potential applicants for consultancy work or employment must declare their relationship with existing staff or trustees in the organisation. The Agency must be informed where it is intended to appoint a consultant who is related, by birth or marriage, to a staff member or trustee involved in the organisation. Where the cheapest tender is not being accepted a detailed written explanation must be provided.
- Arrangements when things go wrong. i.e. when it becomes apparent to an organisation in receipt of funds through the funding arrangements that the funded body will not be able to deliver the agreed service agreement objectives, or there are allegations of fraud, misuse or misappropriation of funds, the organisation must immediately inform the Homeless

Agency in writing. Failure to inform the Agency may result in the immediate withdrawal of the funding.

- Where the organisation informs the Homeless Agency that some aspect of the Service Agreement will not be delivered as agreed, for a reasonable reason, the Agency may agree to a limited re-negotiation of the service agreement. Where the reason is not reasonable the funding may be wholly or partially withdrawn.
- Arrangements for the production of audited accounts. i.e. The Homeless Agency expects the accounts of funded bodies to be audited by a qualified external auditor. The signed audited accounts should as far as possible be provided to the Homeless Agency within 6 months of the end of the financial year. All funding provided under the new arrangements and what it was spent on should be designated clearly as such in the accounts. The funding should be allocated to the financial year(s) in accordance with the proportion of expenditure to which it relates.
- Arrangements for terminating the agreement
- The duties and responsibilities of the relevant statutory body and the Homeless Agency in relation to the services which are funded under the new arrangements

9. Miscellaneous

9.1 Review of Funding Arrangements

The new arrangements will be subject to ongoing annual review. All organisations receiving and seeking funding will be asked to comment on the funding regime and ways that it can be improved. This review will also seek to identify if there are emerging trends that need to be reflected in future funding.

Appendix One

Members of the Working Group

Orla Barry	Focus Ireland
Don Comiskey	The Aids Fund
Roger Courtney	Independent Consultant
Lisa Cuthbert	PACE
Frank Goodwin	Dublin Corporation
Mary Higgins	Homeless Agency
Dermot Kavanagh	Merchants Quay Ireland
Greg Maxwell	Dublin Simon
Peter McCann	Department of Environment and Local Government
Madeline Meade	Department of Health and Children
Frank Mills	Northern Area Health Board
Ger Sweeney	Homeless Agency
Mary Walsh	Department of Environment and Local Government
Tommy Wilson	Department of Health and Children

Appendix Two

Division of responsibilities between the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government/ local authorities and the Department of Health and Children/Health Service Executive (HSE)

Dept of Environment/local authorities	Job Title	Dept of Health & Children/HSE
	Project Manager/Leader	✓
	Assistant Project Leader	✓
	Project/Key Worker	✓
✓	Attendants/Shift Attendants	
✓	Clerical/Secretarial Staff	
✓	Laundry/Bed Supervisor	
✓	Cook/Kitchen Staff	
✓	Cleaner	
✓	Janitor	
✓	Maintenance Person	
✓	Security Officer	
✓	Street Outreach Worker	
✓	Settlement Worker	
✓	Public Relations Officer	
	Childcare Leader	✓
	Childcare Worker	✓
	Doctor/GP	✓
	Nurse	✓
	Social Worker	✓
	Family Support Worker	✓
	Counsellor	✓
	Home Help	✓
	Chiropodist	✓
	Optician	✓
	O.T.	✓
	Health Promotion Officer	✓
	Therapist	✓
	Harm Reduction Staff	✓
✓	All HQ overhead costs	

N.B. All rental income will be credited to the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government/local authorities