



**4. The *Pathway to Home* model
of homeless and housing
and support services**

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This section introduces and details key aspects of the *Pathway to Home* model related to its operation and how it will generate sought-after outcomes for person's experiencing homelessness. To begin with, it is important that we once again establish the basis of what we understand homelessness to be. While the work of the Homeless Agency Partnership is based on the legal definition of homelessness provided in Section 2 of the Housing Act, 1988,¹¹ we have also established that whether or not a person is eligible for local authority social housing, the person can still be considered as experiencing homelessness if their living situation fits the description provided in the legislation.

The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)¹² has been adopted by the Homeless Agency (and referred to elsewhere¹³) as a way of understanding the continuum of housing need that helps 'ensure awareness of groups that may be at serious risk of homelessness'. It is accepted that not everyone included in the ETHOS typology may be legally defined as homeless under Section 2 of the Housing Act, 1988. Nonetheless, the Homeless Agency uses ETHOS in parallel with the legal definition of homelessness in order to help us better understand housing exclusion as a dynamic that can lead to homelessness. The *Pathway to Home* model will address homelessness on this basis. In line with *The Way Home* and *A Key to the Door*, the *Pathway to Home* model defines a person as experiencing long-term homelessness where the person is resident in temporary accommodation for longer than six months.

4.1 The structure and outcomes of the *Pathway to Home* model

The *Pathway to Home* model has three inter-related and mutually dependent elements to its structure, namely:

- Interventions and services that prevent homelessness.
- Temporary accommodation and homeless services.
- Housing with supports.

These elements are illustrated in Figure 2. on page 24. Each element is comprised of a portfolio of housing and accommodation types and of services, grouped into distinct but inter-related service components, and configured to realise and ensure the sought-after customer outcome. The *Pathway to Home* model portfolio is described in more detail in Section 5.

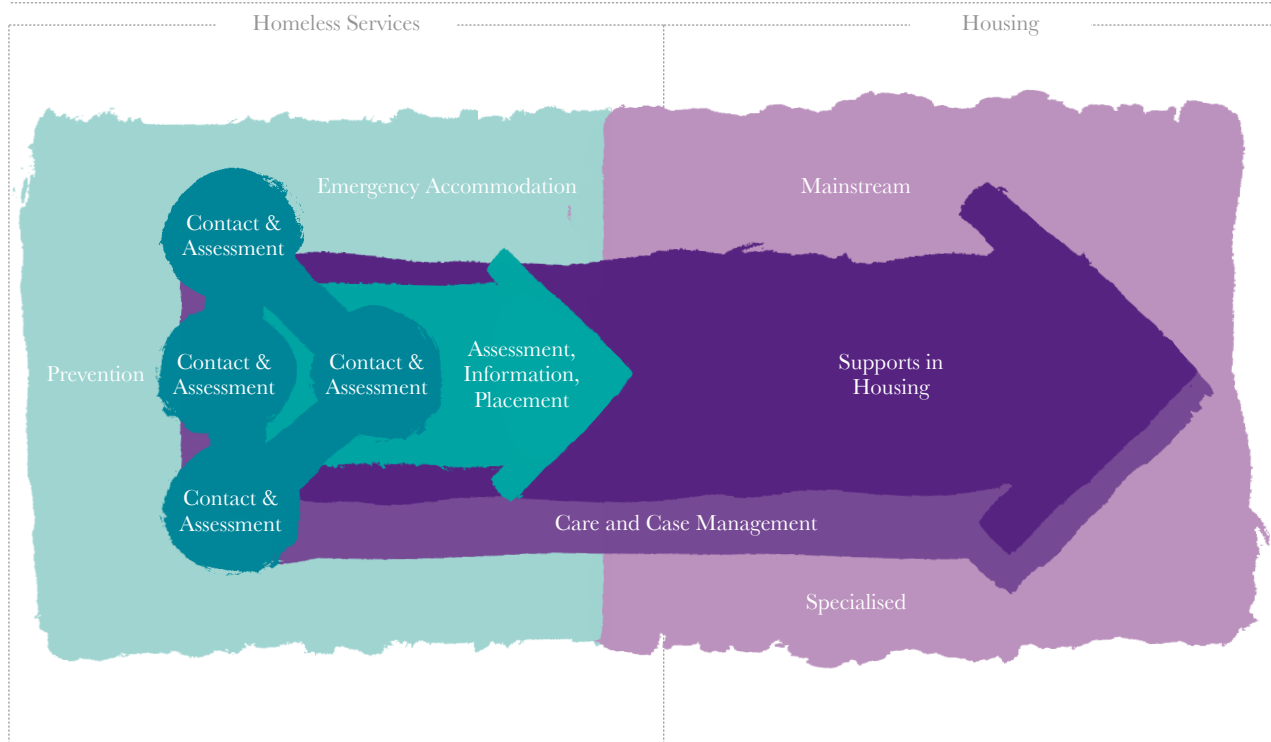
11 'Homelessness' is given a statutory definition in the Housing Act 1988, Section 2:

'A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purposes of this Act if — (a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or (b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.'

12 See Appendix H for full ETHOS typology.

13 See *The Way Home*, p. 15.

Figure 2. Blueprint for reconfiguration of homeless services into *Pathway to Home* model of service provision, Homeless Agency Partnership Submission to Government, December 2008



The outcomes of the *Pathway to Home* model are summarised as follows:

- Through the provision of effective early interventions and assistance that divert a person or household from homelessness, the *Pathway to Home* model will work to prevent homelessness (as set out in the ETHOS typology) from occurring;
- Where homelessness does occur, the *Pathway to Home* model will ensure a person's progression towards an exit from homelessness via temporary accommodation into a long-term housing option.
- Therein a person resides as a tenant with a tenancy agreement, either with visiting housing-related support services as required or on-site housing-related support services.
- The person is thereby supported and empowered to live independently and successfully as a full participant in the community and in society.¹⁴

¹⁴ The option of accessing owner occupation via an affordable or shared ownership housing scheme is not ruled out here, but is expected to be a less available option due to issues of qualifying income. With the exception of residence in a private rented tenancy (where a market rent is payable and where tenants can receive a income supplement for rent via the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme), all tenancy options accessed via the *Pathway to Home* model will charge a differential rent adjusted on the basis of tenant income.

The outcome of each element of the *Pathway to Home* model is stated below.

4.1.1 The person-centred outcome for Prevention

A person's risk of homelessness can arise from any number of living situations. There are known circumstances that increase the risk of homelessness and can become established pathways into homelessness.¹⁵ The *Pathway to Home* model will ensure that homelessness is prevented by services delivering early interventions, diverting the person at-risk from experiencing homelessness or from having to enter temporary accommodation.

4.1.2 The person-centred outcome for Temporary Accommodation

Where prevention does not occur and a person is experiencing homelessness, the *Pathway to Home* model will ensure a same-day initial assessment of a person's needs and their placement into an appropriate form of temporary accommodation. During their residence in this accommodation, the person will work with their key-worker to complete an assessment of their holistic needs and their housing options will be examined and assessed by the local authority. This will result in a person-centred Support Plan and move-on housing option being agreed. Prior to an allocation being made to appropriate move-on housing, the required housing supports will be confirmed and secured so that as seamless as possible a move, from temporary accommodation into housing, is made for the person.

4.1.3 The person-centred outcome for Housing with Supports.

The housing support service will deliver person-centred housing supports to the person who resides as a tenant in appropriate housing. Housing support will work to help establish, secure and sustain the tenancy, settle the person into their neighbourhood and community and support the person towards independent living and the realisation of their full potential and rights.

4.2 The *Pathway to Home* model assessment

Attaining the sought-after person-centred outcomes of the *Pathway to Home* model requires that all statutory and voluntary providers agree and utilise a common process of assessment of a person's needs. This should achieve a comprehensive understanding of the multiple care and related needs of the person in a holistic manner as well as establish the extent of their experience of homelessness, their housing and their housing support needs. This is a challenging and sometimes complicated task and requires time, resources and practices that respect and protect the individual.

The *Pathway to Home* model requires that certain key operational components are in place and working well. Firstly, a common operational criteria for the assessment of homelessness ensures a Dublin city and countywide provision of services to all people at risk of rough sleeping and rooflessness must be established. Secondly, work is now well underway under Core Action 4 of a *Key to the Door* developing

¹⁵ For example, these include (but are not limited to) income inadequacy, poverty and social exclusion, lack of housing options, discharge from institutions, leaving care, relationship breakdown, weak or absent family support and social networks, mental ill-health and addiction.

and implementing the Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA), and a care and case management approach across the sector needs to be built on. Mechanisms (such as inter-agency protocols) are being put in place that clarify and strengthen roles, relationships and responsibilities among service providers that in turn aim to improve the assessment process and support the deliver of the sought-after outcome for the person experiencing homelessness.

4.2.1 Operational criteria for the common assessment of homelessness

A proposed short-list of criteria useful to the assessment of a person's experience of homelessness has been developed through a process of workshop consultation with the four Dublin local authorities and Homeless Agency Partnership stakeholders. This has also involved the Centre for Housing Research, who generated an information paper for these workshops based on scoping research with statutory and voluntary service providers. This proposed shortlist of criteria will be used to deliver an initial assessment process that confirms an incidence of homelessness (rough sleeping and rooflessness). It will be utilised under a common operational criteria for the common assessment of homelessness operated by the four Dublin local authorities and will be deployed and used by all services involved in the same-day response to rough sleeping and rooflessness. The proposed short-list of criteria is set out in Appendix D.

4.2.2 Assessment and housing support

Once a person's experience of homelessness is established under the criteria for the assessment of homelessness operational definition, the follow-on period of service response requires the assessment process continues in order to determine the care and housing needs of a person, coordinate the person's care planning and deliver housing options and housing-related support services. This requires the integration of the outputs established under the Holistic Needs Assessment and the local authority Assessment of Housing Need into the persons Housing Support Plan (HSP).

The Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) is a dedicated assessment tool for persons experiencing homelessness. Completed in co-operation with a person's key-worker (who has competence in the area of assessment), it covers the full range of a person's care and care related needs, including general healthcare, mental health and/or addiction requirements, legal and family issues, income adequacy, training, education and employment, life skills and counselling and housing needs.

The HNA is used by all key-workers employed in services configured as part of the *Pathway to Home* model to develop and agree a care plan for the person. The care plan is used to coordinate access to and delivery of the spectrum of services required that meet the person's needs in a holistic manner. Where difficulties emerge in the realisation of a person's care plan, the key-worker refers to a case manager responsible for overcoming blockages or gaps in the spectrum of service provision required.

The HNA plays an important role in establishing progression for a person towards independent living and is therefore of significant value to the conduct of the local authority Assessment of Housing Need (AHN). Under the *Pathway to Home* model a completed HNA will be used to assist in the completion of a person's Assessment of Housing Need.

The local authority Assessment of Housing Need is established under the Housing Acts (1966 and 1988) and allows for the local authority to conduct an assessment of a person's overall housing needs and also to determine whether or not they are considered as homeless.

It covers a person's legal entitlement and eligibility for housing options as provided by a local authority, a registration on the local authority housing waiting list and whether or not homeless priority is awarded while on the waiting list.¹⁶

This overall *Pathway to Home* model assessment process (based on outputs of the HNA and the Assessment of Housing Need) will therefore lead to what will hereafter be known as the individual's Housing Support Plan (HSP). The HSP ensures the following outputs as a person moves onto and along the pathway towards an exit from homelessness:

- The management and coordination of access to non-housing related services for a person as required.
- The specification and allocation of housing options.
- The delivery of housing-related supports to the person (as required).

Work towards the HSP begins during a person's residence in temporary accommodation, where the completion of the HNA and the establishment of non-housing service provision is the primary function of the person's key-worker.

As a person progresses towards an exit from temporary accommodation, their housing options and their housing support needs will be examined and confirmed by the relevant Local Authority Housing Service and by the local housing support team responsible for service delivery when the person exits temporary accommodation and moves on into a secured tenancy option (or other available housing option).

This will require that formal inter-agency arrangements are in place between all service providers and the person experiencing homelessness. In other words, between the emergency temporary accommodation provider and their key-worker service, the move-on housing provider, and the housing support service, and the person/household planning for the move-on period that leads to the exit from homelessness.

4.3 The *Pathway to Home* model and residence

The third key operational component of the *Pathway to Home* model refers to the period of time a person resides in any form of temporary accommodation and the terms and conditions under which they reside.

¹⁶ This in turn is related to the local authority Scheme of Letting Priorities and the basis on which an allocation of a housing option can be granted and an offer made to the person or household concerned.

4.3.1 Legal basis for residency

The *Pathway to Home* model will ensure the roles and responsibilities of both service providers and service users are established in a way that respects and protects both provider and user and allows the standard, form and function of service provision to be held accountable in this regard. In other words, a legal status for residency in all forms of temporary accommodation and housing will be established under the *Pathway to Home* model (see Section 9 for more details).

4.3.2 Licensing and tenancies

All providers of temporary emergency accommodation (TEA) established under the *Pathway to Home* model will be contracted under the terms of the revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) being established by the Homeless Agency. It is envisaged that the SLA will require all *Pathway to Home* TEA providers to establish a license to reside for everyone living in one of their dwellings. This license to reside will be common to all forms of TEA registered with the Homeless Agency and will be regulated against quality standards relating to the operation of a *Pathway to Home* TEA, for example in relation to policies, practices and procedures that affect the terms and conditions of a person's residence in temporary emergency accommodation.

Currently, social rental tenancies for local authority owned housing are established under the *Housing Act, 1966* (and subsequent Housing (Misc Provision) Acts, e.g. 1997 Act related to anti-social behaviour), as are the powers, roles and responsibilities of the local authority as a landlord. The equivalent relevant legislation for approved housing bodies is the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992* and for private rented is the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2004*.

However, key issues relating to the registration of a tenancy, security of tenure, tenancy dispute resolution and mediation, arrears management, estate management, tenant participation structures, and anti-social behaviour are not all commonly addressed under these different legal arrangements.

For all forms of move-on housing established under the *Pathway to Home* model, there should be an equality of outcome for the person residing therein. This will require that under the *Pathway to Home* model, distinctions that can be made between tenancy agreements operating across different forms of rented housing are diminished and that all tenancies created as move-on housing options (where a housing support service is provided) are legally established and protected and can be secured by both landlord and tenant.

It is envisaged that under the terms of the revised Homeless Agency Service Level Agreement, a voluntary code of practice can be developed specific to this task.¹⁷ In addition, the legal basis for tenancies established by *Pathway to Home* model housing providers under the Support to Live Independently scheme established by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (circular N3/09) will seek to resolve these issues as a matter of priority. Work towards realising this will be undertaken as part of the sector's transition to the *Pathway to Home* model (further detail in Section 9).

¹⁷ For example Dublin City Council has adopted a voluntary code of practice for Approved Housing Bodies.

4.4 Performance and learning in the *Pathway to Home* model

4.4.1 Towards better performance management under the *Pathway to Home* model

Measuring the activity of services using key performance indicators is an established element of current housing and homeless service provision. To date, considerable resources have been expended producing empirical data that can be combined into relevant indicators of performance.

Much of the data that is currently gathered is based on resources expended or the activity of services (i.e. the level of service provision) rather than measures of the overall outcome for persons experiencing homelessness. It is important to measure service provision, but it is equally, if not more important to measure outcomes. That is, to measure the extent to which service users make a successful exit from homelessness.

The reconfiguration and change process outlined in this plan underlines the importance of a robust ‘information system’ for measuring outcomes generated by the *Pathway to Home* model. In other words, we need to know how well the *Pathway to Home* model of homeless services works to prevent (as far as possible) people coming into homelessness in the first instance, to prevent anyone from needing to sleep rough and to assist people into housing with housing supports as required.

An information system, in this context, does not refer to a computer system but rather to an agreed set of protocols and procedures for gathering and reporting on relevant data. This system needs to ensure accountability, focus on outcome measurement and deliver a strategic overview of how well *Pathway to Home* model services are working to meet the strategic outcome that is the overall 2010 Vision to eliminate long-term homelessness and the need for people to sleep rough in Dublin.

4.4.2 Accountability in performance measurement

It is important to recognise that seeking to measure outcomes can involve a change in ethos for some organisations and that people are sometimes uncomfortable and occasionally resistant to doing so. This is especially so, if the proposed monitoring is considered overly intrusive to the person experiencing homelessness or involves an increased investment of time. Therefore, one of the aims of the *Pathway to Home* model information system will be to streamline what is asked of service providers, as much as possible, and to minimise the administrative burden of supplying data, while at the same time maximising the use that is made of available data.

For example, the Homeless Agency requires data on the financial activity and service activity of funded services in order to ensure cost-effectiveness and accountability in the expenditure of public monies. This is a standard requirement of any Service Level Agreement (SLA) signed between statutory funding bodies and service providers. Currently, all funded services complete a quarterly financial return as well as a quarterly service activity report. These cover ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’. In future, these will be merged into a single Quarterly Report from all services.

Inputs are measured as resources utilised by a project or service. These include finance (money), staff and staff time, volunteers and volunteer time, facilities, equipment and supplies. Required inputs that necessitate resources include legislative constraints and regulations affecting a project or service and the attainment of professional standards of practice. Outputs are measured as the service that is delivered and the volume of work accomplished. They include, for example, the number of persons using the service each day, the number of advice sessions conducted, the number of meals served and the number of successful referrals to other services. Measured outputs give an indication of benefit for the recipient of the service and what was done with them. However, in general they say little about the service per se, or the outcome of any action.

4.4.3 Outcome measurement

Outcomes refer to a measure of the difference made to the person concerned as a result of using a service. In other words, the tangible benefits or changes for individuals during or after receiving a *Pathway to Home* model service. There is an obvious connection with the outputs of a service (these relate, for example, to behaviour, knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, condition and other such attributes). Outcomes refer therefore to what is different for the person following the intervention of the service and are measurable in terms of what the person now knows, thinks or can do, how they behave and what their condition is.

There is a need for clear evidence that the users of homeless services are benefiting from them in terms of having their needs addressed, moving into appropriate housing with supports as required, and sustaining their homes.

In line with Core Action 6 of *A Key to the Door* and the need to increase service user participation, the ongoing involvement of homeless people in identifying the impact of service provision is a crucial factor will need to be taken into consideration when measuring outcomes.

The *Pathway to Home* model will therefore require a shift to a more outcome-focused performance management system. The benefits of outcome measuring is that it helps us understand:

- What actual qualitative difference has the use of a particular service made to that person's life?
- What the implications would be if the service were to be withdrawn?
- The effectiveness of the various working methods and practices employed by staff.
- The potential problems with outcomes that are generated.
- The reason why the person chose to use one particular service over another.

4.4.4 Achieving strategic outcomes

The Board of the Homeless Agency Partnership, along with other stakeholders, needs evidence that the agreed actions in *A Key to the Door* are being achieved and that the sum total of activity and performance by *Pathway to Home* model services are delivering the sought after person-centred outcomes and moving the Homeless Agency Partnership closer to achieving the 2010 Vision. In addition, where there are blocks to progress, the Board needs sufficient information to be able to make decision about changes required to ensure that services work better for people who are experiencing homelessness.

A Key to the Door lists 10 core actions and 74 additional actions. Almost all of these actions are underway and a number of them have been completed.¹⁸ The *Pathway to Home* model detailed in this plan, is designed to address and further progress all of the actions in *A Key to the Door* as part of a single, coherent system of inter-related parts rather than as separate individual projects.

In terms of the *Pathway to Home* model information system, funded services will provide information through their Quarterly Reports that will enable the Homeless Agency to monitor the progress of the actions from *A Key to the Door* that they are responsible for. In addition to the quantitative data that is used to measure performance against established indicators related to agreed outputs,¹⁹ there will be a greater use of more qualitative data that is useful for measuring performance against agreed outcomes.

For example, the development of the Homeless Agency's Care and Case Management Strategy over recent years has shown the need to monitor 'gaps and blocks' in specialist and mainstream service provision – that is, situations where homeless persons are unable to access the supports and/or care services that they need, or where the process of accessing services is excessively onerous or slow, and thus prevents them from being able move on to housing and/or to sustain housing.

Currently, gaps and blocks are monitored as part of the Care and Case Management pilot. However, in order to strengthen the flow of this information, all Quarterly Reports from *Pathway to Home* model services will include the opportunity to report gaps and blocks, so that this information can be addressed more systematically by the Homeless Agency and brought to the attention of the relevant bodies on the Board.

18 See Homeless Agency Annual Review 2007 on www.homelessagency.ie/Research-and-Policy/Publications.aspx and Homeless Agency Annual Review 2008 (forthcoming).

19 For example:

- How many people are experiencing homelessness?
- How many people are homeless for more than six months?
- How many people are sleeping rough?
- How many people are becoming homeless every year?
- How many households move from homelessness into appropriate housing with supports every year?
- How many households are being prevented from homelessness through housing support services?

In addition to the information provided through the revised Quarterly Reports, the Homeless Agency will continue to directly monitor the situation through regular rough sleeper street counts and other research that indicates the continuing need for action by homeless service providers.²⁰

²⁰ This is the context in which the Homeless Agency will continue to commission and support research, such as its current focus on the effects of migration on homeless services and the changing profile of service users. This context also allows for the important role that qualitative research can have to deepen our understanding of people's experience of homelessness.

