

### The present situation

#### On Homelessness

- 10,448 people accessing emergency accommodation, including 1,685 families (with 3,752 children) (November 2019).
- Homelessness has increased by 60% since July 2016 when Rebuilding Ireland was introduced (146% increase on November 2014).
- Family homelessness has increased by 49% since July 2016 (325% since November 2014).
- Child homelessness has increased by 60% since July 2016 (323% since November 2014).
- State spent €147 million on emergency accommodation in 2018, and €438 million since 2014.
- 41% of families in emergency accommodation in Dublin in Q3 2019 were there for a year or more, with 15% accessing it for 2 or more years.
- The reported impacts include children not having enough space to learn to crawl or walk; not being able to properly chew due to lack of cooking facilities; and mental health difficulties in children and adults<sup>1</sup>.
- The 10,448 does not include rough sleepers, families accessing some emergency accommodation owned by the Local Authority; 'couch surfers'; victims of domestic violence in refuges; asylum seekers; people in Direct Provision.

#### On Social Housing

- 68,693 households on the social housing waiting lists, not including c.90,000 on HAP, Rent Supplement or housed through the Rental Assistance Scheme.
- Rebuilding Ireland targets for social housing building, while insufficient, are not being met.
- Over-reliance on the private sector to provide 'social housing solutions'. Local Authorities spent

€1.2 billion on HAP between 2015 and 2019 - €545 million was budgeted for 2019 alone.

#### On Housing Delivery Generally

- 27,000 homes needed annually between 2011 and 2019 to keep up with population growth<sup>2</sup>.
- Rebuilding Ireland committed to 25,000 per annum. Between 2017 and Q3 2019, 47,127 homes were built, an average of 17,137 per (full) year.
- Government has priced "affordable homes" at €320,000, beyond the reach of households earning less than €82,500 per year.
- Average house prices in 2018 were in excess of €290,000 nationwide and €446,000 in Dublin.
- Insufficient housing options for older people and people living with disabilities.
- Not all Local Authorities drawing down funding for Traveller Specific Accommodation.

#### On the Private Rented Sector

- 1 in 7 people living in rented accommodation.
- Long-term private rented accommodation being replaced with short-term, higher-value lettings.
- Between Q2 2012 and Q1 2019, private rents increased by 57%, while average weekly earnings increased by less than 10%.
- Only 7.39% of registered properties were inspected by Local Authorities, 83% of which were non-compliant with standards.

#### On Vacant Homes

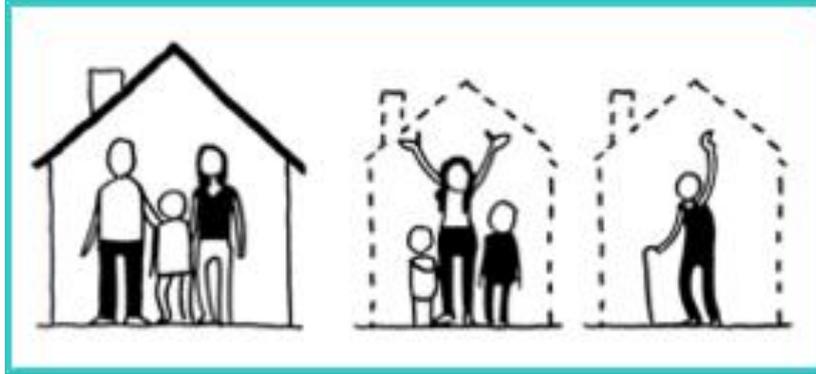
- 183,312 vacant homes in Ireland (Census 2016).
- More vacant homes than households on the social housing waiting list in every county.
- Vacant site levy not being collected by every Local Authority.

<sup>1</sup> Royal College of Physicians (2019): *The Impact of Homelessness and Inadequate Housing on Children's Health*, Royal College of Physicians, Dublin

<sup>2</sup>Conefrey, T. and Staunton, D. (2019): *Population Change and Housing Demand in Ireland*, Central Bank of Ireland, Dublin

## What type of housing system does Ireland need?

A housing system that ensures that adequate and appropriate accommodation is available for all people and provides an equitable system for allocating resources within the housing sector.



## Things a new Government can do to develop a system that provides adequate and appropriate housing all people

- Set a target of 20 per cent of all housing stock to be social housing and achieve this through building more social housing.
- Increase the provision of 'Housing First' accommodation for families in emergency accommodation, with wraparound supports to include public health nurses, dieticians, speech and language therapists, physical therapists, and mental health workers.
- Introduce legislation to limit the length of time families can spend in Family Hubs and other emergency accommodation.
- Allow local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies pool resources to finance this increased supply in a sustainable way.
- Ensure that no State land suitable for housing is sold by a Local Authority or State agency.
- Utilise existing housing development models to reduce the average price of a family home to below €220,000.
- Develop a spectrum of accommodation options for older people and people living with a disability.
- Introduce sanctions for local authorities who do not utilise funding available to provide safe, sustainable Traveller accommodation.
- Develop a system of affordable rent through the cost rental model, financed 'off-balance-sheet' to allow for supply to scale up without adding to the general government debt.
- Increase the rate of Local Authority rent inspections.
- Resource the enforcement of legislation targeting short-term lettings.
- Commence the legislation bringing a statutory tenant deposit scheme into effect (enacted in 2015).
- Enforce the Vacant Site Levy.