



## **Focus Ireland**

**Five point plan to  
tackle the housing &  
homelessness crisis**

**Challenging  
homelessness.  
Changing lives.**

**FOCUS**  
Ireland

# Focus Ireland

## Five point plan to tackle the housing & homelessness crisis



**There are now nearly 10,000 people homeless. It is really shocking that nearly 4,000 of these people are children.**

Meanwhile, many households on low and middle incomes are struggling to keep a roof over their heads as rents are now higher than in the Celtic Tiger years.

Young families are unable to afford their first home and young adults are unable to move out of the family home.

A total of 1 in every 25 households is on the social housing waiting list.

During the recent General Election campaign, Focus Ireland ran our **#FocusOnHomes** campaign to inform and encourage voters to use their vote on housing and homelessness. For almost a third of voters, housing and homelessness was the most important factor deciding who they voted for in the election.

Since the election, the real issues have been neglected and party-political interests have dominated. It is true that the election outcome did make it difficult to form a Government.

However, while the party politics and positioning is ongoing the parties are not responding to the message of the voters, who overwhelmingly want solutions to the problems of the housing and health systems.

We are calling on all the parties and independents to take the party politics out of housing and build a governing coalition around policies not personalities or party interests.

Focus Ireland believes that the five key policy issues outlined in this plan can form the basis for tackling housing and homelessness if they are included in the next Programme for Government.

We are calling on all the political parties and independents to **#FocusOnHomes** and urgently build a governing coalition to implement the changes our country needs.

Every day wasted is another day lost for almost 4,000 children in emergency homeless accommodation and the thousands more people who have no place to call home.

# 1 **Build at least 35,000 new homes a year**

Focus Ireland is calling for at least 35,000 new homes each year to be built during the next Government's term in office, to prevent the housing and homelessness crisis getting even worse. The building of more homes is vital to solving our crisis. We need ambitious targets for building social and affordable homes on public land over the lifetime of the next Government.



# 2 **Develop a dedicated Family Homelessness Strategy**

The next Government must put in place a specific family homelessness strategy, alongside a guarantee that no family or individual is homeless for longer than six months. There is currently no specific plan in place to tackle family homelessness despite the fact that the number of families homeless has shot up by a shocking 286% in the last five years.

# 3 **Develop a new Youth Housing and Homeless Strategy**

Young people are at particular risk during a housing crisis, with private landlords, social housing bodies and local authorities less likely to rent to them. The issues of rising costs of rents, scarcity of properties and lack of references mean that many more young people are a lot more likely to fall into what we call the 'hidden homeless', meaning that they may be sofa-surfing with friends or family, squatting or living in insecure accommodation.

# 4 **Hold a referendum to put stronger housing rights in the Constitution**

Focus Ireland believes that a referendum to rebalance the right to private property with an explicit 'right to housing' is a crucial step in removing barriers to tackling our housing and homelessness crisis.

# 5 **Establish a National Commission on Housing**

The root cause of the homeless crisis in Ireland is the broken housing system and we need our next Government to put practical and long-term solutions in place in order to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place. (The proposal for a 'Commission on Housing' emerged from a diverse group of economists, housing policy experts, social housing providers, private developers, senior public servants, people with long experience of public affairs, who met last year to discuss a longer-term perspective on the current crisis.)

For more information on the Focus Ireland five point plan please go to [www.focusireland.ie](http://www.focusireland.ie)

# About Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland works through our 80 services nationwide to help support people who are homeless and prevent others from losing their homes in the first place. We provide a permanent place to call home for over 1,100 households in Ireland.

We are driven by the fundamental belief that homelessness is wrong. Wrong because it is a failure of society that creates victims out of ordinary people and robs them of their potential. Wrong because it can be prevented, it can be solved but is allowed to continue and in doing so, undermines society.

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