

# FOCUS Ireland

## Voting to End the Homeless Crisis



This is a practical guide for voters and supporters of Focus Ireland when speaking with local canvassers for the upcoming Local Elections on June 7th.

### Did you know?

Almost 14,000 people are officially homeless in Ireland, including over 4,000 children living in emergency accommodation.



Homelessness has increased by 294% since 2014. Ireland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, yet the homeless crisis is out of control.

With the right policies and support - homelessness is preventable - and it is solvable. Focus Ireland supports over 16,000 people annually – helping to end homelessness every day.

### Will you join Focus Ireland in Voting to End the Homeless Crisis?

While homelessness and housing are national issues, many decisions are made at local government level too. Local councillors can have a positive impact on ending the homeless crisis in Ireland, which is heavily concentrated in Dublin City. Together, local councillors can work with your local council to actively reduce homelessness and increase housing in your area.

### How can I help?

You can play your part by ensuring that you vote for local councillors who are committed to ending homelessness. When local canvassers come knocking, ask them if they will support the four commitments below.



# Questions for Local Candidates



## 1 Will you ensure that the Local Council builds enough social housing to reflect real demand?

The current social housing delivery plans adopted by Councils in 2022 under the Government's Housing for All Strategy are not ambitious enough to deliver the number of homes needed for the people currently in need of social housing or future housing need. The [Summary of Social Housing Needs Assessment](#) records the number of people in need of social housing. In 2023, a total of 58,824 households were assessed as needing social housing. In 2023, 11,939 new social homes were delivered by local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies.



## 2 Will you ensure that the type of housing built in my council area reflects the real size of households on the social housing waiting list? This means building more 1-bed apartments and 4-bed plus homes.

The changing pattern of Irish households and family sizes, means that more and more people need small (usually 1-bed) homes. But building plans for social and market housing do not reflect this, usually as these homes are less profitable for developers to deliver, and national housing targets are not broken down by housing size. Most households on the social housing waiting list and in emergency homeless accommodation are one-person households. At the other end of the spectrum, there are larger families who are stuck in homelessness for years because there are no suitable homes for them.



## 3 Will you ensure that the Local Council allocates a fairer proportion of newly built social homes to people who have been trapped in homelessness the longest?

The number of homeless households being allocated to social housing is not increasing in line with the increasing delivery of social housing. If we continue with the current way we manage the housing queue, we will not see a reduction in homelessness for many years, and many families and individuals will continue to be trapped in homelessness for very long periods. In the same way that hospitals can respond to emergency cases in a timely manner, we need a fair and flexible system of housing allocation to ensure that homeless households receive a fair share of social housing to move people out of homelessness.



## 4 Will you ensure that the Local Council makes decisions in the best interests of the child when assisting families who are homeless?

Homelessness is a traumatic life event, particularly for children. When responding to homeless families, local authorities operate under legislation that was not designed for families and before children's rights were reflected in the Constitution. Pressurised and under-resourced Council staff do not always understand the traumatic impact that decisions can have on households. Ideally, this situation would be changed at national level by a change in the law, but it is possible for councillors to make a positive difference by passing a motion at a council meeting.

