

WHAT?

HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS HAVE THEIR RIGHT to CARE and EDUCATION UPHELD?

OUR PROCESS

* Briefing Session □ Online Meeting (2hrs)

- ✓ ALS guidelines upheld
- ✓ 2 x problem-holders at 1st two meetings
- ✓ 2 x experts at 3rd meeting to inform our learning



Organisations involved: DCU • Focus Ireland • DCDE • DCCC • CYPSC • Tusla child and Family Agency

SO WHAT?



LOCAL AUTHORITIES SPENT **18 TIMES MORE** ON EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION (approx. €360 million), THAN HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION, TENANCY SUSTAINMENT, and RESETTLEMENT SUPPORTS.

* Figures refer to the number of homeless persons accommodated in emergency accommodation centres only.

This is important to us because of the rising homeless crises.

15,915 * EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS including **3,666 CHILDREN** UNDER the AGE OF 18 in DUBLIN (4,958 CHILDREN NATIONALLY) and **1,391 YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18-24** ~ **450% INCREASE** in the LAST DECADE.

Not included: rough sleepers, hidden homeless/overcrowding, those in DSGBV centres, own-door temporary accommodation, etc.

When children and young people experience the trauma of homelessness, long term negative impacts include:

- Educational Disadvantage
- Social Exclusion
- Poorer Life Outcomes

When we ensure a child's rights to care and education are upheld:

- We break cycles of poverty
- We support well-being for children and young people across Ireland

Tackling homelessness early is not just compassionate, it's cost effective.

KEY LEARNINGS:

ALS allowed for cross-sector collaboration to share perspectives, break down silos and foster integrated solutions to complex multi-agency challenges.

It also facilitated reflective problem-solving, allowing group members to examine causes of child and youth homelessness and suggest innovative responses.

The timeframe did not allow for full participation of key government departments. It was agreed that the absence of critical partners such as the Department of Education and Youth and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage was a great disadvantage to this ALS.

WHO WOULD BENEFIT?

The almost 16,000 PEOPLE who are HOMELESS, as well as LOCAL COMMUNITIES

POSITIVE IMPACT!

NOW WHAT?

The Department of Education and the Department of Housing are critical partners to this Action Learning Set and it is vital they participate in all ALS going forward.

NEEDED:

- Ring-fenced funds/supports for schools to support children and young people experiencing the trauma of homelessness.
- Long term solutions and supports to reduce the length of time spent in emergency accommodation.
- Larger homes to meet the needs of big families.
- Onsite childcare provided in all accommodation centres/housing agencies.

- Purpose-designed play/activity/social areas for children and young people for play and socialising.
- Increased access to childcare schemes by poverty-proofing the childcare scheme.
- An increased number of support workers allocated to homeless families.
- An increase of social housing stock from 9% to 20% as per European counterparts.

It is essential that a rights-based approach to early childhood care and education is introduced immediately and becomes a national standard, as per our constitution and European protocols such as the UNCRC and the EU child guarantee.