

THE JOURNEY HOME

Galway's homelessness and housing crisis, and what you can do about it



Galway
Simon
Community

40 Years

Take Action Against Homelessness Now

It has been 40 years since Galway Simon Community was founded, and the housing and homelessness crisis is now worse than at any time since 1979. Urgent action is needed to ensure that our community does not have to go through another 40 years of this crisis.

Urgent action needed

With local elections coming up, we are calling on you to advocate on behalf of those experiencing homelessness in our community. With the information in this campaign guide, you can challenge your election candidate when they canvas door to door.

Help us to make sure that homelessness and housing is a central part of their manifesto.

Before trusting candidates with your vote, make sure they commit to addressing the urgent priorities below.

My community needs...

1

More Housing

The current rate of social housing build is nowhere near adequate for our social housing needs. Together, the government and local authorities must fast-track housing to ensure everyone can have a place they call home.

2

Regulation in the Private Rental Sector

Rent-pressure zones have so far failed to have a positive effect on rent affordability. To ensure the private rental sector is sustainable in the long term, the government needs to monitor and effectively regulate rent prices.

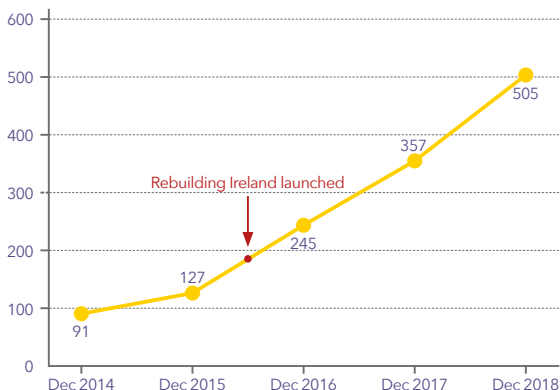
3

Security of Tenure

We need legislation to prevent people from losing their accommodation and to minimise arbitrary evictions and terminations. People need security in their own homes.

Emergency Accommodation in the West

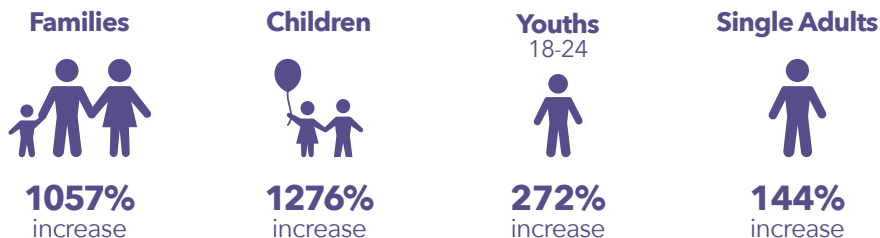
Five-fold increase in four years



The number of people living in emergency accommodation has continued to increase, year-on-year since 2014. More and more people are trapped in tourist hotels, hostels and B&Bs because they have nowhere else to go.

Rebuilding Ireland, the government's strategy to tackle homelessness was launched in July 2016, and since then, homelessness has increased by 142% in the West.

In 4 years, the number of people in emergency accommodation multiplied



The situation now: Spring 2019

 **556 people**
in emergency accommodation in February 2019

Homelessness in the west is growing
X 8 times faster
than the national average

 **39% increase**
since February 2019

The tip of the iceberg

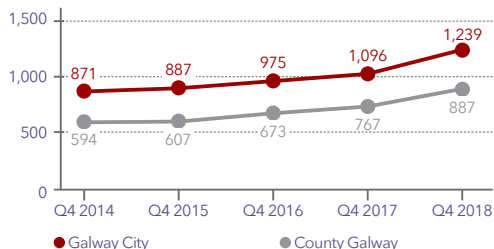
Hundreds more people are living in 'hidden homelessness', sleeping rough, or in homeless services. **Behind all of the statistics are real people whose lives have been turned upside down by homelessness.**

A Spiralling Rental Sector

With such low rates of new housing coming on stream in Galway, demand is outstripping supply, and the cost of renting is rising steeply. There has been a huge reliance on the private rental sector to deliver the majority of Galway's social housing needs.

Ever-increasing rents

Average rent in Galway (in €)



Source: Daft.ie Rental Reports

In the last four years, average rent in the city has increased by 42%, and in the county by 49%

In the last quarter of 2018 alone, rent increased by 13% in Galway City compared to the previous year - over 3 times the Rent Pressure Zone cap of 4%.

Over reliance on the private rental sector

In 2018, **85%** of the social housing delivered by Galway city and county councils, 925 of 1,087 units, came through Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and Rental Accommodation Schemes (RAS), in other words, through the private rental sector. This is 22% higher than the Rebuilding Ireland target of 63%.



The fight for affordability

HAP and Rent Supplement (RS) schemes are two ways in which the government supports people experiencing homelessness to pay for private rented accommodation. The Simon Communities, *Locked Out of the Market* studies, regularly analyse the gap between market rents and the limits of the RS/HAP schemes. Over four years, thirteen studies have been carried out which have highlighted that out of an average of 29 properties available to rent at a point in time in Galway City, only 2.3 of these were within the RS/HAP limits.

'Locked Out of the Market' in Galway City: the results to date (May 2015 - November 2018)

Average of
92% rent prices
above RS/HAP limits

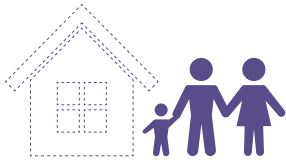


Average of
2.3 properties available
to rent within RS/HAP limits



Scarce Social Housing

Population growth in Galway has outstripped the increase in housing stock in recent years.



3,547 households

on the waiting list for social housing in Galway City and County

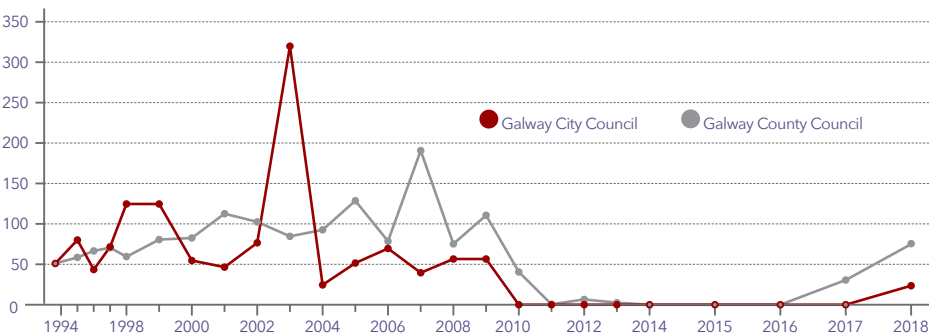


25% of households

on the waiting list for social housing have been waiting for 7 years or more

Rate of social housing build in Galway

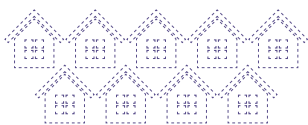
Social housing delivery has been extremely depressed in recent years. The rate of delivery needs to increase rapidly to meet social housing needs.



Source: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government: 'LA Build by Area' & 'Breakdown of Social Housing by Local Authority'

Slow social housing build

Rebuilding Ireland promises thousands of additional social housing units. Unfortunately, the pace of delivery in the first half of the implementation period of Rebuilding Ireland has been extremely slow.



3,547 households

on Social Housing Waiting List



100 social homes

were built in 2018



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Community

40 Years

Galway Simon Community

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Galway Simon Community is operating to the Charities Institute 'Triple Lock' standards and is compliant with the Irish Charity Governance Code, the Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP) and the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.