



For immediate release:

Emergency Accommodation Figures Mask the True Scale of Homelessness in the West

The latest figures on homelessness released today by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage show that across Galway, Mayo and Roscommon 640 people were living in emergency accommodation. While this represents an increase on the December figure, the headline number tells only a fraction of the story. Galway Simon Community is today highlighting that the real level of homelessness in the West is far higher, and that hundreds of people in the West, experiencing housing insecurity every day, are not included in the official count.

The majority of the individuals and families supported by Galway Simon do not appear in the Government's homelessness statistics. They are living in hidden, precarious, and unsafe situations - rough sleeping, couch-surfing, sharing overcrowded accommodation, staying with strangers, have received a "Notice to Quit" in their current rental accommodation or are living in conditions that no family should have to endure.

These are people who are homeless in every meaningful sense of the word, yet they are not included in official government homelessness figures and remain invisible in the data that shapes public understanding and policy decisions.

Hidden Homelessness: Mary's Story

Mary*, who we are currently supporting, is living in privately rented accommodation and is one of the many people not captured in the official figures.

After giving birth to her daughter, Mary struggled to make ends meet while on maternity leave. Her rent consumed nearly all of her reduced income. With no other option to keep a roof over her baby's head, she was forced to take in a stranger to share her bedroom in a shared house.

Imagine trying to breastfeed your new born while sharing a room with someone you have never met before.

Mary is not captured in any Government statistic.

Mary's experience is not an outlier. It is a growing reality for working people, parents, and families across the West who are doing everything they can to avoid entering emergency accommodation, yet are living in situations that are unsafe, unsuitable, and unsustainable.

Three Generations Under One Roof: Teresa, John and Aisling*

We are supporting Teresa and John, parents to two-year-old Aisling who are living in hidden homelessness. After five years in their rented home, they received an eviction notice when their landlord decided to sell the property.

Despite both working in relatively well-paid jobs, the couple could not find any rental home they could afford in their community. With nowhere else to go, they moved in with John's parents; back into the three-bed semi-detached house he grew up in and left more than a decade ago.

Now, three generations are sharing a home that was never meant to accommodate them all. Privacy is gone. Space is limited. Stress is constant. And yet, like so many others in overcrowded or unsuitable living situations; Teresa, John and Aisling do not appear in the Government's official homelessness figures.

Their story is a stark reminder that homelessness is not always visible. It is often happening behind closed doors, in childhood bedrooms, on sofas, and in overcrowded family homes where people are doing everything they can to avoid slipping further into crisis.

A Call for Recognition and Action

Carol Baumann, CEO at Galway Simon said, "The official figures are important, but they are only one piece of the puzzle. Every day we support people who are homeless but not counted in government figures; people who are working, parenting, studying, and trying to survive in deeply precarious situations. If we want to solve homelessness, we must first acknowledge the true scale of the crisis we are facing."

Galway Simon Community is urging policymakers, local authorities, and the public to recognise that homelessness is not defined solely by those who enter emergency accommodation. It is defined by the lived experience of people who have lost the security, dignity, and stability of a home. In order to address this crisis, there is an urgent need for an all of government response to save people like Mary, Teresa, John and Aisling from the trauma of homelessness.

***Names have been changed to protect individual's identities.**

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Notes to Editor:

Galway Simon Community Services:

Galway Simon Community's services focus on three key areas; homelessness prevention, housing and health & wellbeing:

- From January to December of 2025, Galway Simon Community supported 1,151 households, a total of 1,732 people. This comprised 1,277 adults and 455 children.
- Our Homelessness Prevention Services supported 638 households who were at risk of homelessness to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place. These services work to keep people in their own homes or when this is not possible, help to resettle them to a new home.



- Over 90% of people who engaged with our Prevention Services in 2025, did not access Emergency Accommodation.
- 432 Households were supported through our Housing with Supports Services. At any one time over 200 people are provided with a home through our Housing Services.
- Our Health & Wellbeing Services supported 623 individuals and provided 8,630 interventions including Nursing, GP, Psychology, Occupational Health and Addiction Counselling services.