

## COPE Galway Pre-Budget Submission - Budget 2022

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## Introduction and Background

COPE Galway is a local Galway charity that provides a range of services to some of the most vulnerable and isolated people in Galway. The services we provide are across three main areas:

- Homeless Services
- Domestic Abuse Services for Women and Children
- Nutritional and Social supports for Older People

Our vision is a community where every person is valued, cared for, and supported at every stage of life.

We work to achieve this vision by providing essential supports for people at challenging times in their lives, and by advocating for systemic change to remove the root causes of inequality and disadvantage that constrain the wellbeing and development of individuals, families and communities.

Our mission is to make a positive difference by empowering people, creating change, and strengthening communities.

We understand, respect, and respond to the needs of those who struggle with the challenges of homelessness and domestic abuse, and we support older people towards healthy and active ageing.

Throughout the period since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and into 2021, COPE Galway has worked with many individuals and families experiencing times of vulnerability and crisis. Our services adapted to complex situations and we strived to ensure that those we worked with were at the centre of all we do. While responding to COVID-19 meant facing new challenges, we continued provide our full range of services, operating at full capacity and responding to an increasing number of individuals needing our support. COPE Galway welcomes the publication of the new Government Housing plan, 'Housing for All', and consider this plan as critical to the lives of many people who are experiencing the negative effects of the current housing crisis. Progressing the implementation of this plan must be a priority for Government and this needs to be reflected Budget 2022 with the necessary resources being committed by Government

## Homelessness

For the last number of years, we have witnessed the ongoing housing and homeless crisis. We understand that experiencing homelessness can be traumatic, with long lasting consequences for those who experience it. COPE Galway believes that the eradication of homelessness is achievable and welcome 'Housing for All' commitment to working towards this.

Although the official numbers of people who are homeless has decreased since the onset of the pandemic, we are now seeing increases again with 6,003 adults and 1,502 children reported as homeless in July 2021<sup>1</sup>, up from 5,847 adults and 2,167 children in June 2021<sup>2</sup>. In the western region there were 280 adults and 165 children reported as homeless in July 2021. It is also important to note that the western region has one of the largest proportions of adults in emergency accommodation for long durations, with 60% of individuals accessing emergency accommodation for more than six months<sup>3</sup>, similar to the previous year with the West having the second largest proportion at 61%<sup>4</sup>. As with our previous pre-budget submissions, we note that homeless figures do not include rough sleepers, hidden homeless, or those living in over-crowded accommodation. Therefore, these homeless figures do not accurately reflect the true extent of homelessness in Ireland.

### Youth Homelessness

The latest national figures show 943 young adults, aged between 18 and 24, accessing homeless accommodation nationally<sup>5</sup>. COPE Galway, as a member of the “Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness”, has long advocated for and are now pleased to see that a Youth Homelessness Strategy is being prepared to be launched in early 2022<sup>6</sup>.

### Responses to homelessness

A 2019 study<sup>7</sup> of clients using emergency accommodation in Dublin city for over four years, categorised individuals into three clusters; a transitional cluster, an episodic cluster and a chronic cluster. The transitional cluster accounted for 78% of clients (n=9,915), and had the lowest, average, amount of bed nights, only using 36% of bed nights that period. This cluster also had the lowest number of homeless episodes and consumed the least amount of emergency resources relative to their proportion of clients<sup>8</sup>. The episodic cluster which represented 10% of clients (n=1,252) recorded the highest average number of homeless episodes. The chronic cluster represented 12% of clients (n=1,567) and presented a small number of homeless episodes but included long stays in emergency shelter, consuming 50% of total bed-nights<sup>9</sup>.

This research indicates that the transitional cluster can move through homeless services quickly, with minimal support. Responses to this cohort should be Housing Led and should prevent them from becoming sporadically or chronically homeless.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Monthly Homelessness Report July 2021

<sup>2</sup> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Monthly Homelessness Report June 2021

<sup>3</sup> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2021) Homeless Quarterly Progress Report Quarter 2 2021.6

<sup>4</sup> Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (2020). Homeless Quarterly Progress Report Quarter 2. 5

<sup>5</sup> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Monthly Homelessness Report July 2021

<sup>6</sup> Government of Ireland. (2021) Housing for all. A new Housing Plan for Ireland.54

<sup>7</sup> Waldron, R. O'Donoghue-Hynes, B. Redmond, D. (2019). Emergency Homeless Shelter Use in the Dublin Region 2012 -2016: Utilizing a Cluster Analysis of Administrative Data. Cities.

<sup>8</sup> Waldron, R. O'Donoghue-Hynes, B. Redmond, D. (2019). Emergency Homeless Shelter Use in the Dublin Region 2012 -2016: Utilizing a Cluster Analysis of Administrative Data. Cities.8

<sup>9</sup> Waldron, R. O'Donoghue-Hynes, B. Redmond, D. (2019). Emergency Homeless Shelter Use in the Dublin Region 2012 -2016: Utilizing a Cluster Analysis of Administrative Data. Cities 2

Research notes that “(by) targeting interventions early among the transitional cluster, it would likely yield in resource savings by stemming the flow of clients moving into the longer-term episodic and chronic clusters”<sup>10</sup>. To ensure a Housing Led response, COPE Galway feels there must be an adequate level of social and affordable homes, as well as an adequately funded and resourced prevention services.

COPE Galway notes that an estimated total annual expenditure of €212million was spent on homelessness by local authorities over 2020<sup>11</sup>. Of this, just over €12million was spent on homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlement support<sup>12</sup>. In the Western Region €9.3 million was spent on homelessness of which €1.02 million was spent on homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlement support<sup>13</sup>. The most recent data for the Western Region suggests, that during the third quarter of last year, of the number of new presentations on a daily basis, 268 were repeat<sup>14</sup>. While the provision of emergency and supported accommodation and ancillary and support services is vital funding for prevention and tenancy support services must be increased alongside the increased provision of housing.

The research also noted that targeting resources at those in the long-term chronic cluster could provide positive results, as they are a relatively small group utilising a higher level of bed-nights. Supporting this group into long-term and supported accommodation with adequate levels of supports should be a priority. The author’s analysis provides an empirical basis for the review of existing programmes, and a guiding framework for the implementation of new policies including Housing First<sup>15</sup>. While this research is Dublin based, it underlines the importance of increasing focus on Housing First. Capacity to increase the delivery of Housing First is reliant on the provision of suitable homes. COPE Galway welcomes Housing for All, policy objectives 3.3 “Publish a new Housing First National Implementation Plan” and 3.4, “Target 1,200 new Housing First tenancies from 2022 to 2026”. The delivery of the necessary number of one bedroom units to meet Housing First targets is a challenge, in particular outside of the Dublin region and COPE Galway is asking that consideration be given to the use of two-bedroom accommodation units.

In addition to addressing the difficulties in terms of supply this will also address the specific need of some individuals being supported by Housing First who have overnight access to their children, as recommended by the joint committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>10</sup>Waldron, R. O’Donoghue-Hynes, B. Redmond, D(2019). Emergency Homeless Shelter Use in the Dublin Region 2012 -2016: Utilizing a Cluster Analysis of Administrative Data. Cities. 14

<sup>11</sup> This includes various aspects such as , supported accommodation and housing Authority Homeless Service provision including administration, full details available at Local Authority Regional Financial Reports, Available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/80ea8-homelessness-data>. Accessed 27/07/2021

<sup>12</sup> For exact figures see Homelessness data. Local Authority Regional Financial Reports, Available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/80ea8-homelessness-data>. Accessed 27/07/2021

<sup>13</sup>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage(April 2021) West Region Local Authority Homelessness Financial Report End of Year 2020 Available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/80ea8-homelessness-data>. Accessed 27/07/2021

<sup>14</sup>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2020)Performance Report for West Region Quarter 3 2020 Relating to the Protocol Governing Delegation of Section 10 Funding for Homeless Services to each of the 9 Regions.1

<sup>15</sup>Waldron, R. O’Donoghue-Hynes, B. Redmond, D (2019). Emergency Homeless Shelter Use in the Dublin Region 2012 -2016: Utilizing a Cluster Analysis of Administrative Data. Cities. 14

<sup>16</sup>Houses of the Oireachtas (April 2021). Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Interim Report on Homelessness.5

Through our outreach work we engage with rough sleepers, the majority of which are migrants. Our experience tells us that this vulnerable group can fall between the gaps. With poor prospects of securing paid employment, and no access to social welfare supports, this group becomes reliant on the generosity of the public and on the services we can provide, with very little opportunities to transition out of homelessness. We welcome Housing for All policy objective 3.17 “Expand Street Outreach Services to engage with rough sleepers in other key urban areas outside Dublin”<sup>17</sup>. However, without access to housing, COPE Galway is concerned some migrants will remain homeless and feels strategies that specifically target vulnerable, homeless, migrant households’ must be drawn up.

Through our work with families, we understand that some homeless families are likely to remain in emergency accommodation and that they have high support needs that require alternative responses. COPE Galway notes that Government will “identify families experiencing long-term homelessness that have complex support needs. Those that do will be provided with enhanced tenancy sustainment supports to help them exit homelessness and maintain their homes”<sup>18</sup>. A Housing First programme for families is the view of COPE Galway required to support some families out of homelessness and to sustain tenancies.

#### **Recommendations – Housing and Homeless**

1. Consideration needs to be given to how we can accurately measure homelessness. Without an accurate picture of the extent and complexities of homelessness, adequate planning to end homelessness is not possible.
2. COPE Galway recommends the development of a migrant homelessness strategy
3. COPE Galway recommends the expansion of the Housing First programme to include the provision of two-bed accommodation for individuals with overnight access to their children and the introduction of a Housing First programme for families. COPE Galway supports St. Vincent de Pauls recommendation to introduce a pilot scheme for families, with an investment of €1.5 million<sup>19</sup>.
4. COPE Galway recommends increasing funding for Homelessness Prevention, Resettlement and Tenancy Sustainment.
5. Ensure, once implemented, the Youth Homelessness Strategy is adequately resourced.

<sup>17</sup>Government of Ireland. (2021) Housing for all. A new Housing Plan for Ireland.55

<sup>18</sup> Government of Ireland. (2021) Housing for all. A new Housing Plan for Ireland.54

<sup>19</sup> Society of St Vincent de Paul (July 2021)Foundations for an equal Ireland Pre-Budget Submission 2022. 9

## Social Housing

To adequately address the housing and homelessness crisis, increased social housing through construction is required. According to the Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2020, the total number of qualified households was 61,880<sup>20</sup>. Across the two local authorities in Galway, there are a total of 2,789 households on the social housing waiting lists, accounting for just under 5% of the national total<sup>1</sup>. Of these 2,789 households, 1,643 are one adult households (59%)<sup>21</sup>. Nationally, 52% of households on the social housing waiting list are one adult households<sup>22</sup>.

Since 2016 the number of social housing units delivered across all streams was 130,079. However, the number of publicly owned units delivered through building and acquisition was 34,565<sup>23</sup>. The rest was delivered via the private rental sectors through leasing, RAS or HAP. COPE Galway does not view the latter as being a suitable and sustainable delivery method for social housing. The number of households being supported by HAP was 57,630 in 2019<sup>24</sup>. COPE Galway's view is that while HAP is an important short-term housing solution, it should not be viewed as a long-term solution as it leaves those with a housing need, vulnerable to the precariousness of the private rental market.

In 2020, an estimated €803 million was spent on various leasing schemes<sup>25</sup>, forecast to increase to an estimated €941<sup>26</sup> million in 2021<sup>27</sup>. It is the view of COPE Galway that the leasing of homes for social housing provision is uneconomical as it does not create a housing asset that can be utilised by the state long-term. COPE Galway welcomes the Government's commitment as set out in Housing for All to increase social housing stock therefore reducing reliance on HAP and RAS<sup>28</sup> and ending of long-term leasing<sup>29</sup>.

There are 2,044 households on social housing waiting lists where the employment status of the main applicant is retired<sup>30</sup>. COPE Galway feels that to ensure there is suitable social housing options for those whose needs may change as they age, new social housing stock must use universal design principles to ensure homes can be adapted as required. COPE Galway welcomes 'Housing for All' commitment to increase housing options for older people<sup>31</sup> and the statement to work to deliver appropriately designed housing in line with universal design principles<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> The Housing Agency (March 2021) Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2020. Key findings.4

<sup>22</sup> The Housing Agency (March 2021) Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2020. Key findings.5

<sup>23</sup> Figures made up of 23,546-build and 11,019-Acquisition.Rebuilding Ireland- Targets and Progress. Available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/6060e-overall-social-housing-provision/?referrer=http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/social-housing/social-and-affordable/overall-social-housing-provision#rebuilding-ireland-progress-against-targets> Accessed 10/06/2021

<sup>24</sup> Central Statistics Office. Press Statement (18 November 2020) Social Housing in Ireland 2019 - Analysis of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme

<sup>25</sup> HAP- 479,729,000. RAS- 133,000,000 and Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme- 190,886,000

<sup>26</sup> HAP- 558,000,000. RAS- 133,000,000 and Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme- 250,000,000

<sup>27</sup> Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Revised Estimates for Public Services 2021. 152

<sup>28</sup> Government of Ireland(2021) Housing for All. A new Housing Plan for Ireland. 58

<sup>29</sup> Government of Ireland(2021) Housing for All. A new Housing Plan for Ireland. 59

<sup>30</sup> The Housing Agency (March 2021) Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2020. Key findings. 28

<sup>31</sup> Government of Ireland(2021) Housing for All. A new Housing Plan for Ireland. 64

<sup>32</sup> Government of Ireland(2021) Housing for All. A new Housing Plan for Ireland. 67

A recent report published by the Health Research Board explores the evidence in relation to Housing with Support for Older People. It found “housing with support enables a self-directed life that maximises free choice and independence, which is integral to improving quality of life for older people”<sup>33</sup>. They noted housing with supports can allow people to live in their own areas, enabling them to maintain their supports. Communal areas and activities were noted as being important in fostering social engagement, personal care and support<sup>34</sup>. A paper by the Housing Agency noted that the provision of supported housing, with varying levels of care requirements (independent, assisted and specialised), has a strong financial benefit for the exchequer. The benefits mainly accrue due to delaying the need to access nursing home care or by directly replacing more expensive nursing home beds. Other benefits are produced due to reducing health and social care needs of individuals in supported housing, compared to those in standard accommodation<sup>35</sup>.

#### **Recommendations - Social Housing**

1. Increase funding for the building of social housing.
2. Ensure social housing builds reflect the needs of the community. Consideration should be given to ensuring that at least 40% of social housing is one bedroom, and universal design principles should be utilised to ensure homes can be adapted as individuals and households needs change.
3. The reorientation and redirecting of funding away from the leasing social housing and towards increased supply of social housing through building.
4. Consideration should be given to developing a fully resourced “Housing with Support strategy”.

### **Rents and the Private Rental Market**

COPE Galway welcomes the continuation of rent pressures until 2024, and new measures linking rent increases in rent pressure zones to general inflation, as measured by the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices<sup>36</sup>. While this is welcome, it is the view of COPE Galway that rents are already too high and for many, any increase is unsustainable and issues related to long-term security of tenure must be addressed. According to Residential Tenancies Board data, nationally between Quarter 2 in 2019 and Quarter 2 of 2021, 3,772 notice of terminations were received, 1,902 of these during 2020<sup>37</sup>. It is the view of COPE Galway that this is indicative of the insecurity in the private rental market.

<sup>33</sup>Coyle, C. Buggy, S. Cagney, O. Farragher, L. Lee, C. Patje, D. Long, J. (February 202) Housing with support for older People. An evidence review. Health Research Board. 19

<sup>34</sup>Coyle, C. Buggy, S. Cagney, O. Farragher, L. Lee, C. Patje, D. Long, J. (February 202) Housing with support for older People. An evidence review. Health Research Board. 19

<sup>35</sup>Mulholland, R. Molloy, R (2020) Thinking Ahead: The Financial Benefits of Investing in Supported Housing for Older People. The Housing Agency

<sup>36</sup>Residential Tenancies Board (1<sup>st</sup> July 2021) Minister O’Brien receives Government approval for significant changes to RPZs. Available at <https://www.rtb.ie/news/minister-obrien-receives-government-approval-for-changes-to-rpzs> Accessed 12/08/2021

<sup>37</sup> Figures from Residential Tenancies Board. Available from <https://www.rtb.ie/data-hub> Accessed 02/09/2020



**Recommendations – Rents and the Private Rental Market**

COPE Galway recommends that alongside new measures introduced, issues regarding security of tenure must be addressed.

## Older People

COPE Galway's Senior Support team provide a range of supports and services for older people living in their own homes in the community in Galway. Our mission is to support healthy, independent ageing at home. Our main areas of focus are to support good nutrition through our meals service, to support better quality of life through one to one and group activities, and to promote positive ageing.

COPE Galway firmly believes that for older people to live in their homes, living full and active lives, adequately and properly resourced supports must be put in place. Until areas such as housing, health, safety, and strategies that support positive ageing are fully resourced and implemented, COPE Galway is concerned many older people will be vulnerable to insecurity and exclusion. Budget 2022 must ensure that there is adequate service provision to support full and meaningful participation in society for all older people. Below we set out various issues which will support healthy, independent ageing at home.

## Safeguarding

Based on COPE Galway's experience in working with older persons we are becoming increasingly concerned about the incidence of self-neglect. COPE Galway believes that to best address this issue and ensure suspected cases of self-neglect are managed in an appropriate and compassionate manner, the HSE's Safeguarding and Protection Teams must have the legal powers and the capacity to respond to issues, not only of self-neglect but all adult safeguarding issues. However, services have been challenged with backlogs and waiting lists introduced due to increased demand<sup>38</sup>. Home supports such as Home Help and Meals on Wheels were considered as playing an important role in safeguarding plans. However safeguarding teams noted a lack of availability of home help hours<sup>39</sup>.

## Housing Adaption Grants

Eurostat data indicates that in 2018, 9.9% of all those aged 65 and older were living in a dwelling with a leak, damp, or rot<sup>40</sup>. Between 2010 and 2020, the total spent on the Housing Adaption Grant for older people has fallen from just over €30.7 million to just over €12.7million, with the numbers of people receiving a grant dropping from 7,205 to 3,290<sup>41</sup>. Housing adaption grants are vital in supporting older people to live in their own home for longer.

<sup>38</sup>Health Service Executive. National Safeguarding Office. Annual Report 2019. 38

<sup>39</sup>Health Service Executive. National Safeguarding Office. Annual Report 2019. 39

<sup>40</sup>Eurostat. Total population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor - EU-SILC survey Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc\\_mdho01/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_mdho01/default/table?lang=en) Accessed 06/07/2021

<sup>41</sup> Statistics from <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/statistics/social-and-affordable/other-local-authority-housing-scheme-statistics>. Accessed 06/07/2021



### Pensions

10.5% of those aged over 65 live in relative income poverty<sup>42</sup>. The State Pension is a vital source of income for many older people. The Roadmap for Pensions Reform 2018-2023 commits to benchmarking State Pension at 34% of average weekly earnings<sup>43</sup>. Age Action estimates that full rate of the Contributory State Pension is 28.9% of average earnings leaving a gap of €43.84 per week<sup>44</sup>.

### Fuel Allowance

Keeping one's home warm is important for a person's health. The fuel allowance is a vital source of income for many of the older people we work with. The majority of households headed by a person aged over 65 use fossil fuels to heat their home, with 49% using oil, while over 25% use natural gas<sup>45</sup> and are therefore vulnerable to increases in Carbon Tax.

### Homecare

To age in your own home requires adequate and properly resourced health supports. As the Home Care system currently operates, services can be limited and waiting lists long. The Government has committed to increasing homecare hours and introducing a Statutory Homecare Scheme<sup>46</sup>. While the number waiting on funding for home support has dropped to 2,964<sup>47</sup>, their needs are still an unmet, with 417 delayed acute hospital discharges of older people reported between July and September 2020<sup>48</sup>.

### Ageism

Goal 1 of the National Positive Ageing Strategy is to remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the continued involvement of people as they age in all aspects of cultural, economic and social life in their communities according to their needs, preferences and capacities. The first objective of goal 1 is to develop a wide range of employment options (including options for gradual retirement) for people as they age and identify any barriers (legislative, attitudinal, custom and practice) to continued employment and training opportunities for people as they age<sup>49</sup>.

COPE Galway acknowledges that while many may wish to retire others may want to continue working and that participating in the labour market has positive impacts for individuals. For employers, it is an opportunity to tap into the skills, knowledge and expertise of older people.

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<sup>42</sup> Social Justice Ireland (April 2021) Poverty Focus. 4

<sup>43</sup> Government of Ireland. A Roadmap for Pensions Reform 2018-2023. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Age Action (2021) Submission to the Department of Social Protection in advance of Budget 2022. 15

<sup>45</sup> See Central Statistics Office 'The Census of Population from an Environment Perspective 2011 and 2016' Available at

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-copep/thecensusofpopulationfromanenvironmentperspective2011and2016/mainresults/>  
Accessed 02/09/2021

<sup>46</sup> Programme for Government – Our Shared Future. 45

<sup>47</sup> Health Service Executive. Performance Profile July - September 2020. 29

<sup>48</sup> Health Service Executive. Performance Profile July - September 2020. 29

<sup>49</sup> Department of Health (2013) National Positive Ageing Strategy. 25

While there are areas of policy that may be addressed, the resourcing of training and education opportunities for older people must be considered in Budget 2022.

#### Recommendations - Older People

1. Increase funding for Housing Adaption Grants to 2010 levels
2. Increase funding levels for homecare hours and introduce a statutory homecare scheme<sup>50</sup>.
3. Re-instate the Fuel Allowance for a 32 weeks season increase fuel allowance to ensure it covers any additional costs due to increases in carbon tax.
4. Ensure adequate levels of funding is available to adequately resource the HSE's Safeguarding and Protection Teams.
5. COPE Galway supports Age Action's recommendation to increase pension by €15 per week.
6. Budget 2022 should adequately fund training opportunities for older people wishing to re-enter the workforce.

### Domestic abuse

During the early part of the Covid-19 pandemic, Gardaí reported a 25% increase in domestic violence incidents recorded on PULSE and by CAD in April/May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019<sup>51</sup>. As of May 2021, 33,277 contacts or attempts at contact with victims of domestic abuse have been recorded as part of Operation Faoiseamh<sup>52</sup>. This is concerning, especially in the context of the recent revelations regarding cancelled 999 calls made by people seeking help including for domestic abuse<sup>53</sup>. COPE Galway feels Budget 2022 should show a clear commitment to tackling domestic abuse; ensuring there are enough spaces for those seeking refuge is a vital first step. The Council of Europe recommends, in line with the Istanbul convention, that, "In member states where shelters are the predominant/only form of service provision, there should be one place per 10,000 population" and "In member states where shelters form part of a community strategy with intervention projects, there should be one family place per 10,000 women"<sup>54</sup>. The latter standard is currently applied. Tusla provides financial support for the provision of 158 family units of domestic violence accommodation nationally, However, based on population estimates and applying the standard of one family place per 10,000 women would require 193 refuge spaces meaning there is a shortage of 45 spaces.

Based on our population and applying the standard of one family place per 10,000 population, 498 spaces would be required, meaning an additional 350 spaces are needed. The estimated annual cost of providing 350 additional spaces is €35,000,000<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Programme for Government –Our Shared Future.45

<sup>51</sup>An Garda Síochána Monthly Report to the Policing Authority. May 2020. 5

<sup>52</sup>An Garda Síochána Monthly Report to the Policing Authority. June 2021. 4

<sup>53</sup>Lally, C( 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 )Irish Time. 'Garda Commissioner apologises to domestic violence victims whose 999 calls were cancelled'. Available at <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/garda-commissioner-apologises-to-domestic-violence-victims-whose-999-calls-were-cancelled-1.4602571> Accessed 13/08/2021

<sup>54</sup> Kelly, Prof L., (2008) Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services. Council of Europe. 38

<sup>55</sup> Figures taken from [Minister for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration. Domestic Violence Refuges Provision](#) Dáil Éireann Debate, Tuesday - 8 September 2020. Available at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-09-08/793/>. Accessed 23/07/2021

### Social Welfare and Domestic Abuse

Many clients of COPE Galway Domestic Abuse service are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. It is their source of income and their only financial lifeline. For some, it means they are not financially dependent on an abusive partner and for those who are experiencing homelessness, it can be the financial support they need to exit homelessness. However, the level of payment is inadequate. It is the opinion of COPE Galway that the higher level of the pandemic unemployment payment is indicative that current social welfare rates are not sufficient. Budget 2019 delivered a welcomed increase to the minimum social welfare payment by €5 per week to €203 in 2020. However, this rate has not changed since then.

#### **Recommendations – Domestic Abuse**

1. Increase refuge space and supports for victims of domestic abuse
2. COPE Galway recommends increasing basic social welfare rates by €10 per week<sup>56</sup>.

### Community and Voluntary Sector

COPE Galway along with many other community and voluntary services, continued to operate and provide services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Our services adapted to the additional complexities that the crisis presented for our clients, our staff and our services but yet there has been very little recognition of this. COPE Galway along with many other community and voluntary services are essential services vital for the well-being of our society yet, we continue to rely on fundraising to make up shortfalls in our funding.

#### **Recommendations – Community and Voluntary Sector**

Adequately fund essential services, funding should not aim to cover basic costs, but also ensure services can improve and adapt for future needs and challenges.

<sup>56</sup> As recommended by Social Justice Ireland (14th July 2021) Minimum social welfare rates should increase by €10 in Budget 2022. Available at <https://www.socialjustice.ie/content/budget/2021/minimum-social-welfare-rates-should-increase-eu10-budget-2022> Accessed 12/08/2021