

4 Ways

Budget 2021 can address the housing needs of people with mental health difficulties

Housing Association for Integrated Living (HAIL) is calling on the Government to make housing and mental health a priority in Budget 2021. COVID-19 has delayed the construction and delivery of social housing in 2020 and has led to increased levels of mental health difficulties across the population. Now more than ever, we need to focus on delivering good quality, affordable housing and specialist tenancy support to those that need it.

1 Increase the funding for tenancy support services for people with mental health difficulties and those who are at risk of homelessness. Tenancy support, such as that provided by HAIL, provides people with mental health difficulties with the personalised, practical and emotional support that they need to live independently. Tenancy support is key to reducing the risk of hospitalisation or homelessness. However, despite rising costs and increased demand, funding for tenancy support has not increased in many years. This funding shortfall is threatening the future sustainability of these essential services.



Furthermore, COVID-19 has placed huge additional demands on this already over stretched and under resourced service. A recent survey of 154 HAIL tenants, many of whom have severe and enduring mental health difficulties, found that 85% were experiencing increased isolation, stress and anxiety than before the pandemic. Vulnerable people need tenancy support now more than ever. Having a home of your own is vital to protecting one's health and reducing stress and anxiety. Tenancy support is key to maintaining that home and helps prevent homelessness.



2 Increase investment in mental health services. The World Health Organisation has warned that COVID-19 risks sparking a major global mental health crisis and that a surge in demand for anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) services can be anticipated. HAIL supports the call of the Mental Health Reform to **invest additional funding of €80M in our mental health services in Budget 2021**. This includes €30M to maintain existing levels of services and €50M to be used exclusively for developing our services to deal with the new challenges faced.



3 Ensure the continued supply of social housing by adequately funding the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) allocation and the associated Payment and Availability (P&A) allocation. COVID-19 has delayed the delivery of social housing, but by committing to and increasing these key funding mechanisms for the delivery of social housing, we can get back on track and meet the Rebuilding Ireland targets. The CAS scheme in particular, allows specialist Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), such as HAIL, to build or acquire housing stock that meets the need of persons with disabilities including mental health difficulties, as well as those of older people or people who are homeless. HAIL supports the ICSH recommendation that €110m funding is allocated to CAS in 2021.



4 Increase the supply of one-bedroom properties. Single person households are the biggest cohort on the social housing waiting list and this type of home is often most suited to those with mental health difficulties. The under supply of one-bedroom homes, particularly in Dublin, increases waiting times on housing lists and makes it harder to source suitable accommodation.



HAIL is an Approved Housing Body whose mission is to provide quality housing and individually tailored services to support tenants and clients, primarily those with mental health difficulties, to integrate and live independent lives in the community.