

QUALITY STANDARDS  
PROVIDERS OF  
PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION  
  
DUBLIN REGION

2022

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DUBLIN REGION HOMELESS EXECUTIVE

&

FIRSTMOVE LTD DUBLIN

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For the Provision of Accommodation  
at  
Firstmove House  
Church Street  
Dublin

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Supporting persons and families experiencing homelessness is a key priority of Government. To assist in ensuring that homeless services provided are of a high standard, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) has developed Standards for providers of Private Emergency Accommodation on behalf of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

While the Service Agreement between the Service Commissioner, Dublin Region Homeless Executive and the Service Provider embodies the contractual arrangement for effective service delivery, there is an expectation that all services to people who are accessing homelessness services are of a high standard. This document is a supplement to the terms and conditions pertaining to providers of Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) in the Dublin Region and sets out the quality standards that providers of Private Emergency Accommodation are expected to implement.

The Service Agreement specifies the statutory legislation that service providers must meet unconditionally and it also includes a commitment to pursue the highest quality standards as required by the DRHE for the specified services to be delivered.

### **1.1 EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

Emergency accommodation is a short term measure to meet the needs of people who have become homeless. It is part of a strategy to protect people from rough sleeping. The overall focus of homeless services is homeless prevention and housing led solutions to homelessness. However, there are increasing numbers of people presenting as homeless and so an interim measure is required.

### **1.2 PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) is an emergency accommodation service that is directly provided by a statutory agency or by a private operator as opposed to a non-government organisation (NGO and usually a registered charitable organisation). Support services are available and promoted in all PEAs. They are provided and funded by the HSE and DRHE and include key workers, medical care workers, mental health care workers and addiction support. A Housing Support Officer is assigned to each PEA to support service users in exiting homelessness.

### **1.3 STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

The aim is to provide services that are focused on giving people who are experiencing homelessness a safe and comfortable place to stay while they are supported in moving out of homelessness. Standards are needed in all industries and services to set a benchmark for the expectations of the service, by both the funder and the service user. Regular assessment of the standards being achieved in each PEA will ensure the service is delivering to the criteria required.

### **1.4 THEMES**

In line with the model recommended by Health, Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) - the independent authority responsible for driving quality, safety and accountability in health and

personal social care services – DRHE has adopted the overarching themes describing the National Quality Standards Framework. These themes are the foundation for all quality standards frameworks that HIQA is involved with.

There are 8 themes under which the standards are organised.

- **Themes 1-4 focus on the provision of person-centred services, which are safe and effective, and support the rights and equal treatment of persons at-risk-of or experiencing homelessness.**
- **Themes 5-8 focus on the organisational capability and capacity to deliver high quality services.**

Each theme consists of a number of standard guidelines that describe the high level outcomes required to deliver effective homeless services.

Services within the provision of Private Emergency Accommodation will have varying features and characteristics that define the quality of provision and DRHE will exercise checks and balances to ensure that providers meet the commitment included in the contractual service agreement to pursue the highest quality standards.

Service Providers will be required to self-assure and self-evaluate the evidence of this commitment, and DRHE will conduct monitoring and support visits (announced and unannounced) in the course of its service delivery inspection and assessment responsibilities.

The eight themes and the anticipated outcomes that they are intended to provide, are set out in the following sections.

## 2. THE EIGHT QUALITY STANDARDS THEMES

### 2.1 THEME 1: PERSON-CENTRED SERVICES

This theme focusses on service users' rights and autonomy, including the right to have a complaint heard and responded to. This theme also emphasises the need for all management and staff of service providers to have a high degree of respect for the residents and ensure that they and their interests are at the heart of the mission and work. This theme insists that all necessary information is provided to residents clearly and that written information is displayed conspicuously and appropriately.

The outcomes expected from Theme 1 are summarised as:

- Services are delivered within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice;
- Service users have their choices and autonomy respected;
- Seek residents' feedback to inform service development;
- There is service improvement through fair and transparent processing of complaints.

### 2.2 THEME 2: EFFECTIVE SERVICES

Effective services are built around responding to the individual service user's needs, and engage in good practice in relation to service access, appropriate referral procedures, and facilitating their assessment, support planning and integrated working with DRHE and external support agencies.

The outcomes expected under Theme 2 are summarised as:

- Assistance to homeless persons is delivered in accordance with national legislation and policy;
- Person-centred policies, procedures and processes are in place;
- Service users are referred to the most appropriate service;
- Service users experience continuity of service;
- Services are proportionate to the needs of service users;
- Agencies providing integrated care and support are facilitated by the service provider.

### 2.3 THEME 3: SAFE SERVICES

The standards under this theme focus on the provision of a safe environment to reside and work in. The theme of Safe Services is concerned with balancing a diverse range of service user needs while maintaining a safe environment.

- There is consistency of practice with regard to the safeguarding and protection of children and adults from abuse;
- Effective practices, policies and procedures are in place to manage risk in services;
- There is compliance with Health and Safety legislation;
- Physical environments have regard to the needs of service users and provide adequate and clean accommodation, free from hazard.

## 2.4 THEME 4: HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

This theme is concerned with the health, well-being and personal development of people at-risk-of or experiencing homelessness. It seeks a consistent approach by service providers in identifying and referring any observed needs of residents relating to health, well-being and developmental requirements.

The range of services provided directly by services will vary according to service type, but all of the standards can be met through effective joint-working arrangements with community and other relevant services.

The outcomes expected under Theme 4 are summarised as:

- **Services participate in initiatives to actively promote positive health outcomes for residents;**
- **Identify opportunities to make arrangements with appropriate agencies to refer residents to primary (GP, PHN, dental) and specialist health (including mental health and addiction) services;**
- **Services participate in promotions to raise awareness of training, education and employment opportunities for residents.**

## 2.5 THEME 5: LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This theme focuses on organisational capacity: governance, management and leadership. The theme of leadership governance and management supports clear organisational purpose and structures.

It is concerned with having an overall effective governance structure, which entails having clearly defined accountability at individual, team and service levels so that all individuals working in the service are aware of their responsibilities, who they are accountable to and how that relates to the outcomes for residents.

It also focuses on legislative compliance at all levels of finance, governance and the safety of residents and how service providers work towards continuous quality improvement through internal review.

The outcomes expected under Theme 5 are summarised as:

- **There are clear and accountable management structures;**
- **service outcomes are clearly documented and aligned to the statement of purpose in relation to residents' accommodation needs;**
- **Governance of services is in accordance with legislative requirements and good practice guidelines;**
- **There is continuous quality improvement in services focussed on improving outcomes for service users.**

## 2.6 THEME 6: USE OF RESOURCES

This theme is concerned with the alignment of funding of services to the overall policy aim of reducing/preventing homelessness and the need for services to be accountable and transparent with regard to the use of public money.

It is aimed at ensuring that all public money is used to deliver the most effective outcomes for persons at-risk-of or experiencing homelessness.

The outcomes expected under Theme 6 are summarised as:

- **Performance outcomes are measured and evaluated;**
- **Services are delivered in accordance with the requirements specified in Dublin Region Homeless Executive Service Agreements;**
- **Resources are used to achieve the prevention/reduction of homelessness.**

## **2.7 THEME 7: RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF**

Person-centred, effective and safe service provision is dependent on having trained, competent management and staff with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to respond effectively to the requirements of their role, and the range of residents' needs. The quality standards under this theme are concerned with how staff and volunteers contribute to high quality service delivery.

In addition, staff need to have the competencies appropriate to working in a challenging environment, the skills to effectively achieve outcomes for residents where required, and the capacity to work collaboratively with a range of other agencies. The work environment should reflect the motivation and flexibility of staff in responding in a safe and effective way to the presenting needs.

The outcomes expected under Theme 7 are summarised as:

- **A trained, competent workforce is in place and is adequately supported and supervised.**
- **Staff are supported to deliver effective services.**

## **2.8 THEME 8: USE OF INFORMATION**

Effective information systems are in place to enable services to operate within statutory guidelines, to use information to support accountability and guidance and to have a high level of information governance at individual and organisational levels.

This theme is concerned with the use of information. Quality information and effective information systems are central to ensuring services are operating within statutory guidelines, and to a high standard of information governance. Information must be accurate, complete, legible, relevant, timely and valid, secure and meet all mandatory statutory requirements.

The outcomes expected under Theme 8 are summarised as:

- **Residents' rights are protected and upheld under current and relevant GDPR, Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.**
- **There is evidence of adherence to robust policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of service users.**
- **Accountability and guidance responsibilities are informed by accurate information.**