
South East

Homelessness Action Plan

2013 – 2016



Submitted to:

Carlow Local Authorities

Kilkenny Local Authorities

South Tipperary Local Authorities

Waterford City Council

Waterford County Local Authorities

Wexford Local Authorities

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Waterford City Council as Lead Authority for the South East region requested the Regional Homelessness Management Group, in consultation with the Regional Homeless Forum, to prepare a Regional Homelessness Action Plan for the period 2013 - 2016. The development of this South East Homelessness Action Plan is in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 40 (10) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

The plan is informed by the current national homeless strategy "*The Way Home: A Strategy to address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008 – 2013*" and is guided by the principles, strategic aims, approaches and actions as outlined. This plan is also informed by the most recent policy developments which include the Government's Housing Policy statement in 2011 and Homeless Statement in 2013. This plan is cognisant of the Government's policy move towards the provision of housing led responses, underpinned by community based supports, to address the move away from a high dependence on the traditional "staircase" model of care, applied to date.

The actions outlined in the plan are informed by the regional Review of Homeless Services carried out by Murtagh & Partners in 2011 and the recommendations arising from the subsequent Blueprint of Services. The actions are also informed by the work carried out across the region by the Homeless Action Teams, South East Homelessness Management Group and its Working groups and by an analysis of data captured from homeless service providers and Local Authorities front line homeless services. The actions as outlined will endeavour to ensure the strategic aims as outlined in *The Way Home* and the more recent National Homeless Policy Statement are achieved. The overall aim of this plan is to ensure that people are diverted from homeless accommodation in the first instance and where this is unavoidable that the period spent in emergency accommodation is as short and as successful as it can be.

During the period of this action plan significant change will occur in three of the six Local Authorities which are party to the plan in accordance with actions as outlined in "*Putting People First*". The planned amalgamations of Waterford City Council with Waterford County Council and South Tipperary County Council with North Tipperary County Council. Both amalgamations are underway and the impact of these amalgamations on Regional Homeless Structures will be addressed when official amalgamation takes place in June 2014.

Section 2

Vision & Strategic Aims

This section outlines the long term vision for homelessness in the South East region which this plan will lay the groundwork for achieving. This section also outlines the mission or purpose of the plan and the values and principles which underpin it. Overall the plan reflects *The Way Home* Government's National Strategy to address adult homelessness in Ireland from 2008 – 2013. The plan is also guided by more recent national policy developments including the 2011 Housing Policy Statement and National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability and the 2013 Homeless Policy Statement 2013.

Vision

The **2013 National Homelessness Policy Statement** has set a new target to end long term homelessness by 2016 and is underpinned by the commitment by Government to end long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by implementing a housing-led approach. ***The Way Home*** previously stated the 2010 target to end long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough throughout Ireland. The risk of a person becoming homeless would be minimised and where homelessness does occur the experience will be short term.

This aim has been largely achieved in the South East region with very low levels of rough sleeping recorded over the 2010 – 2013 period and numbers residing long term in emergency hostels have been greatly reduced. The South East Homeless Forum's vision is of a region where the needs of people who are experiencing homeless will be met in a co-ordinated and planned manner and will offer a range of appropriate, affordable and supportive services aimed at the prevention and reduction of all instances of homelessness and to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough.

Mission

The purpose of the Management Group of the South East Homelessness Forum is, in accordance with section 38 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, to provide information, views, advice or reports in relation to homelessness and in relation to the provisions of the draft homelessness action plan and the operation and implementation of the action plan. This requires the Forum to place an emphasis on strengthening preventative policies, procedures, working relationships and services to reduce levels of repeat homeless, thus reducing the overall level of homelessness.

Section 2

Vision & Strategic Aims

Values and principles

A number of values and principles have informed the development of this plan, and will underpin its implementation.

Outcome focused approach

- Homelessness is solvable and preventable and services will be thus focused.
- The overall objective in planning and delivery of homeless services is to achieve the best outcome for households experiencing homelessness by matching services to their needs.

Inter Agency Co-operation

- Homelessness can only be addressed by relevant bodies working in partnership to agreed objectives which are strategically planned.
- Homelessness has as much to do with appropriate support services as with bricks and mortar. Housing by itself will not solve homelessness in every case. There is also a need for interventions to assist people to move out of homelessness and support services to help them to maintain independent living.
- The co-operation of all relevant parties in providing co-ordinated service provision and integrated care planning is essential to prevent homelessness occurring, eliminating long term homeless and rough sleeping.

Value for Money

- Services and funding will be made available to tackle homelessness in the South East region and must be used in the most efficient and effective way possible.
- The provision of homeless services will be underpinned by a commitment to achieve value for money, effective, efficient and timely access to services.
- All new services to be tendered for.
- The potential for shared services to be fully explored.
- Ensuring that there is sufficient bed night capacity on a nightly basis to accommodate all those in need of emergency accommodation

Service Development

- Development of a case management approach to homelessness will ensure that a person experiencing homelessness is treated uniquely and services and supports are tailored to meet individual needs.
- The views and experience of service users and front line providers will be used to inform the planning of regional and local policy and service responses to homelessness.
- Implementing a housing led approach to preventing the need to sleep rough and end long term homelessness.

Section 2

Vision & Strategic Aims

- An emphasis on rapid resettlement & rehousing and prevention with a significant reallocation of resource, both human and financial, to same
- The continued development of Homeless Action Teams across the region
- Ensuring that all clients of homeless services with income supports make an appropriate contribution towards the cost of the provision of such services.

Strategic Aims

This South East Homelessness Action Plan mirrors the six strategic aims as outlined in *The Way Home*:

1. To reduce the number of households who become homeless through the further development and enhancement of preventative measures – preventing homelessness.
2. To eliminate the need for people to sleep rough.
3. To eliminate long term homelessness and to reduce the length of time people spend homeless.
4. To meet the long term housing needs through an increase in housing options.
5. To ensure effective services for homeless people.
6. To ensure better co-ordinated funding arrangements and re-orientate spending on homeless services, away from emergency responses to the provision of long term housing and support services.

Key performance indicators

Key performance indicators have been introduced as part of the 2013 National Homelessness Policy and each Lead Authority will report to the High Level Oversight Group as established by the Minister for Housing & Planning:

These Performance Indicators are:

Progress will be measured by collecting accurate data on the:

- Number of new presentations on a daily basis.
- Number of persons in emergency accommodation for longer than 6 months.
- Number of persons leaving emergency accommodation.
- Occupancy rate in emergency accommodation.
- Number of persons moving on into independent living with support.
- Number of persons moving on into independent living without support.
- Number of persons sleeping rough voluntarily and involuntarily.

Section 2

Vision & Strategic Aims

The HSE operate three distinct Performance Indicators in terms of Homeless Services and these are:

- Numbers and % of individual service users admitted to statutory and voluntary managed residential homeless services which have medical cards.
- Numbers and % of individual service users whose needs have been formally assessed within 1 week of admission.
- Number and % of individual service users who have a written care plan within 2 weeks.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Progress Reports

Under the terms of the protocol governing delegation of Section 10 funding for Homeless Services to Waterford City Council on behalf of the South East Homelessness Management Group and the South East Homeless Consultative Forum, a new reporting procedure will be in place which will bring together data from each Local Authority area.

A **Quarterly Performance Report** will be submitted by Waterford City Council to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government on the following key deliverables:

- Target for accommodating homeless persons with full tenancies
- Number of new presentations on a daily basis
- Number of persons in emergency accommodation for longer than 6 months
- Number of clients with a Care Plan, allocated to a Homeless Action Team
- Number of persons leaving emergency accommodation
- Occupancy rate in emergency accommodation
- Number of persons moving on into independent living with support
- Number of persons moving on into independent living without support
- Number of persons sleeping rough voluntarily
- Number of persons sleeping rough involuntarily

A Lead Agency **Annual update** is to be submitted to the South East Homeless Forum at the April meeting each year. The report will deal with progress to date on the action and identify and gaps or blocks which are preventing the achievement of the action.

Section 3

Definition & Causes of Homelessness

Definition of Homelessness

There are a number of means by which homelessness can be defined and measured and this section will outline those most commonly known and accepted by homeless and housing service practitioners.

The independent Jury of the Consensus Conference on Homelessness, comprised of independent experts (not in homelessness), adjudicated on evidence and viewpoints presented by experts in homelessness, and recommended the adoption of the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS). **ETHOS** was adopted by FEANSTA – the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, and launched in 2005 as a common framework definition of homelessness. ETHOS defines homelessness under four conceptual categories according to a person's living situation:

- **Roofless** (without shelter, sleeping rough)
- **Houseless** (living in emergency accommodation)
- Living in **insecure accommodation** (threatened with eviction due to insecurity)
- Living in **inadequate accommodation** (in caravans, extreme overcrowding, unfit housing)

Research carried out in the 1990's in the US describes people who experience homelessness as being members of three subgroups. Kuhn et al describes the three groups as;

- **Transitional** (people who use emergency accommodation for brief periods of time and do not return)
- **Episodic** (people who move repeatedly in and out of emergency accommodation)
- **Chronic** (people who are long term users of emergency accommodation and may have repeated experiences of sleeping rough)

The instance of homelessness in Ireland indicates evidence of a small group of people with very high support needs who have been using homeless services for prolonged periods of time, of a further group with medium support needs who live in emergency accommodation for a period of six months to two years and a larger group of people who require emergency accommodation and low levels of support for short periods of time.

Section 3

Definition & Causes of Homelessness

Understanding the complexities of the nature and experience of homelessness is deepening in Ireland and is continuing to inform and shape national and regional strategies and plans such as this one.

For the purposes of this Homelessness Action Plan the definition of homelessness is that as has been defined in the **Housing Act of 1988** as:

A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purpose of this Act if there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority,

- he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of,

Or

- he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter, or other such institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a)

And he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

Causes of Homelessness

An understanding of the causes of homelessness is crucial to developing effective responses to people who are homeless and to developing strategies which will prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. While there is no universal consensus on why particular individuals and families become homeless there is an emerging convergence of opinion that it is likely to be due to the interaction of a range of factors, both personal and structural, which are examined here.

In the past, explanations for homelessness have tended to concentrate on it being an individual problem, due to personal difficulties and deficiencies. Now it is generally believed that structural issues such as poverty, unemployment and housing shortages cause homelessness. While these issues significantly affect the incidence of homelessness, not everyone who is unemployed or affected by poverty becomes homeless. Neither is the selection of who becomes homeless a random process, and there are a number of characteristics in the backgrounds of homeless people which are commonly held.

These have been identified in a range of research work and can be usefully summarised as follows:

- physical or sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence
- family disputes or breakdown

Section 3

Definition & Causes of Homelessness

- a background of institutional care
- offending behaviour and/or experience of prison

There are a number of general causes of homelessness, which include;

- Housing and financial crisis;
- Institutional discharge;
- Family breakdown, including domestic violence;
- Substance abuse;
- Mental health issues; and,
- the transition from youth to adulthood for young people in care or who were homeless as young people

In addition to these risk factors, there is a range of events or crisis points which can trigger homelessness including:

- leaving the parental home after arguments
- marital or relationship breakdown
- widowhood
- leaving care
- leaving prison
- a sharp deterioration in mental health or an increase in alcohol or drug misuse
- a financial crisis of mounting debts
- eviction
- victims of anti-social behaviour

Understanding these characteristics which place people at risk of homelessness and the events which might then trigger homelessness is vital in informing the development of services for homeless people and strategies to prevent homelessness. Clearly many people who experience homelessness will have a range of support needs, which must be addressed alongside their need for housing.

Introduction

In drawing up this Homelessness Action Plan the Management Group of the South East Homeless Forum took particular consideration of homeless and housing policies published over the past two decades. The policy framework incorporates the Government's 2013 Homelessness Policy Statement and the 2011 Housing Policy Statement, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government National Housing Strategy *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities*, the 2008 National Homeless Strategy *The Way Home* and the subsequent 2009 National Implementation Plan.

This section identifies significant developments in responses to the problem of homelessness over the past two decades. Overall it is evident from policy that homelessness has moved from the direct provision of accommodation, to a more co-ordinated approach that enables homeless people to access long term accommodation and prevents homelessness from occurring and re-occurring. The key policies and legislation affecting the delivery of this strategy are outlined below;

Homelessness Policy Statement 2013

The 2013 Homelessness Policy Statement places the rapid provision of appropriate accommodation, with support as needed to ensure sustainable tenancies, as the key solution to ending homelessness. The housing led approach recognises that long-term secure housing is the best outcome for people affected by homelessness. The primary purpose of the 2013 Homelessness Policy Statement is to make explicit the housing led principles in *The Way Home A Strategy to address Adult Homelessness 2008 – 2013*.

Housing Policy Statement 2011

The Programme *for Government 2011* contains a commitment to ending long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by implementing a "housing led" approach. The 2011 Housing Policy Statement has an overall objective to enable all households access good quality housing appropriate to their circumstances and in their particular community of choice. It acknowledges that delivering better outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged households is a key priority for the Government.

In this context, a continued focus on tackling the root causes of homelessness and maintaining an integrated and efficient approach to service delivery is required.

National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 sets out a framework for the delivery of housing for people with disabilities through mainstream housing policy. The strategy seeks to mainstream access to independent living for adults living with physical, mental, sensory and intellectual disabilities. The strategy will direct the efforts of housing authorities and the HSE to support people with a disability to live independently.

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 provides a comprehensive legislative framework for the operation of statutory Homelessness Consultative Fora and Management Groups and the making and adoption of homelessness action plans within specified time periods, publication and circulation of the adopted plans and procedures for undertaking a review of a plan or preparing a new plan.

2008 – 2013 *The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland*

The Way Home was launched in 2008 and is informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2006 Fitzpatrick report. The emphasis of the new strategy is to prevent people from becoming homeless or if they should become homeless this would be short term. The ultimate intention is that persons who have accessed homeless services will be assisted out of homelessness and into long term housing in as short a time as possible.

The strategy sets out six strategic aims around three core objectives:

- Eliminating long term occupation of emergency homeless facilities.
- Eliminating the need to sleep rough.
- Preventing the occurrence of homelessness as far as possible.

2007 *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities*

The 2007 National Housing Strategy *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities* places emphasis on the interagency approach to combating homelessness. It also places emphasis on the use of a case management approach in meeting the needs of homeless households. The strategy prioritises actions aimed at the inclusion of special needs groups within services that are focused around homelessness.

The South East Homeless Re-Settlement Strategy (2006)

This report was commissioned by the six local authorities comprising the South East region and the Health Service Executive. It was undertaken by Frank Murtagh of Murtagh & Partners. It has a fundamental theme to provide a planned, seamless range of services to homeless people which would return them to independent living with relevant supports as soon as possible. It recommended the establishment of a Regional Homeless Steering Committee comprising of Local Authorities, Health Service Executive and Voluntary Service Provider representatives. It also led to the establishment of six Homeless Action Teams comprised of local authority housing personnel, HSE healthcare staff and voluntary service provider staff. The South East strategy made a key recommendation for the appointment of a Regional Homeless Co-ordinator in the future to implement and develop the overall aims of the strategy.

Housing Act 1988

The 1988 Act defined homelessness for the first time in legislation and expanded the role of Local Authorities in addressing Homelessness. It resulted in improvements in funding available to voluntary bodies for accommodation for homeless persons. It also resulted in greater awareness of homelessness as an issue and in development of additional responses to it.

Child Care Act 1991

Under section 5 of the Child Care Act 1991 the HSE has responsibility for Homelessness in the following instance:

- Where it appears to the HSE that a child in it's area is homeless and if the HSE is satisfied that there is no accommodation available which can be reasonably occupied, then unless the child is received into the care of the HSE under the provisions of this Act, the HSE shall take such steps as are reasonable to make available suitable accommodation.

Health Act 1953

Prior to the passing of the Housing Act 1988, statutory responsibility for homelessness was vested in the Health Act 1953, which under Section 54 obliged health authorities to provide institutional assistance to those who were unable to provide shelter for themselves.

Section 5 Regional Implementation Structures

South East Homeless Forum

The South East Homeless Forum was established in April 2010 arising from Ministerial directions issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in Circular HU 1/2010 in accordance with the provisions of sections 38, 39 and 41 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. The role of the South East Homeless Forum is to provide a consultative mechanism in relation to homelessness in the context of the preparation of this statutory South East Homelessness Action Plan 2013 – 2016.

Membership of the South East Homeless Forum

The 24 members of the South East Homeless Forum are drawn from the sectors as outlined in Circular HU 1/2010 and are mandated for five years from 2010 - 2015. The membership is drawn from the following sectors:

South East Local Authorities

Waterford City Council – Lead Authority
Waterford Local Authorities
Kilkenny Local Authorities
Wexford Local Authorities
South Tipperary Local Authorities
Carlow Local Authorities

Statutory Agencies

FÁS
Department of Social Protection
The Probation Service
Vocational Education Committee
HSE Southeast

Approved Housing & Other Bodies

SE Regional Drugs Task Force
SE Regional Men's Hostels

- Good Shepherd Centre, Kilkenny
- Lady Lane Men's Hostel, Waterford

SE Women's Refuge

- Wexford Women's Refuge
- Cuan Saor Women's Refuge, Clonmel

Regional Homeless Service Providers

- Focus Ireland
- SE Simon

Specialist Homeless Service provider

- Tenancy Support & Sustainment – Carlow SVP

Section 5 Regional Implementation Structures

Voluntary Housing Bodies – Long Term Housing Providers

- Cluid Housing Authority
- Respond! Housing Authority

SE Regional Management Group

A Management Group of the South East Homeless Forum was established in March 2010, in accordance with legislation with the primary responsibility:

- For the preparation of the statutory South East Homelessness Action Plan and on the ongoing operation of this Homelessness Action Plan;
- To make recommendations to relevant statutory bodies in relation to the services required to address homelessness in the region;
- On funding for such services.

SE Regional Management Working Group

The Management Group of the South East Homeless Forum mandated a Regional Management Working Group to come together to provide a forum for discussing and making recommendations to the SE Homeless Management Group in relation to the services required to address homelessness in the region, on funding of such services and on the ongoing implementation of the South East Homelessness Action Plan 2013 – 2016. The membership of the working group mirrors the member organisations of the Management Group and is comprised of six local authority homeless practitioners and three HSE staff.

SE Regional Voluntary Service Providers

As a result of the establishment of the new regional structures in 2010, South East Management Group, South East Management Working Group and the South East Homeless Forum a need was identified for a regional voluntary service providers structure to ensure representation from the voluntary service providers. The development of this structure has begun during the period of the previous SEHAP 2010 – 2013.

The Voluntary Service Providers network will require ongoing support to enable its development as both a representative and a support structure for the voluntary sector to participate fully in the national, regional and local development of quality and efficient homeless services.

Section 5 Regional Implementation Structures

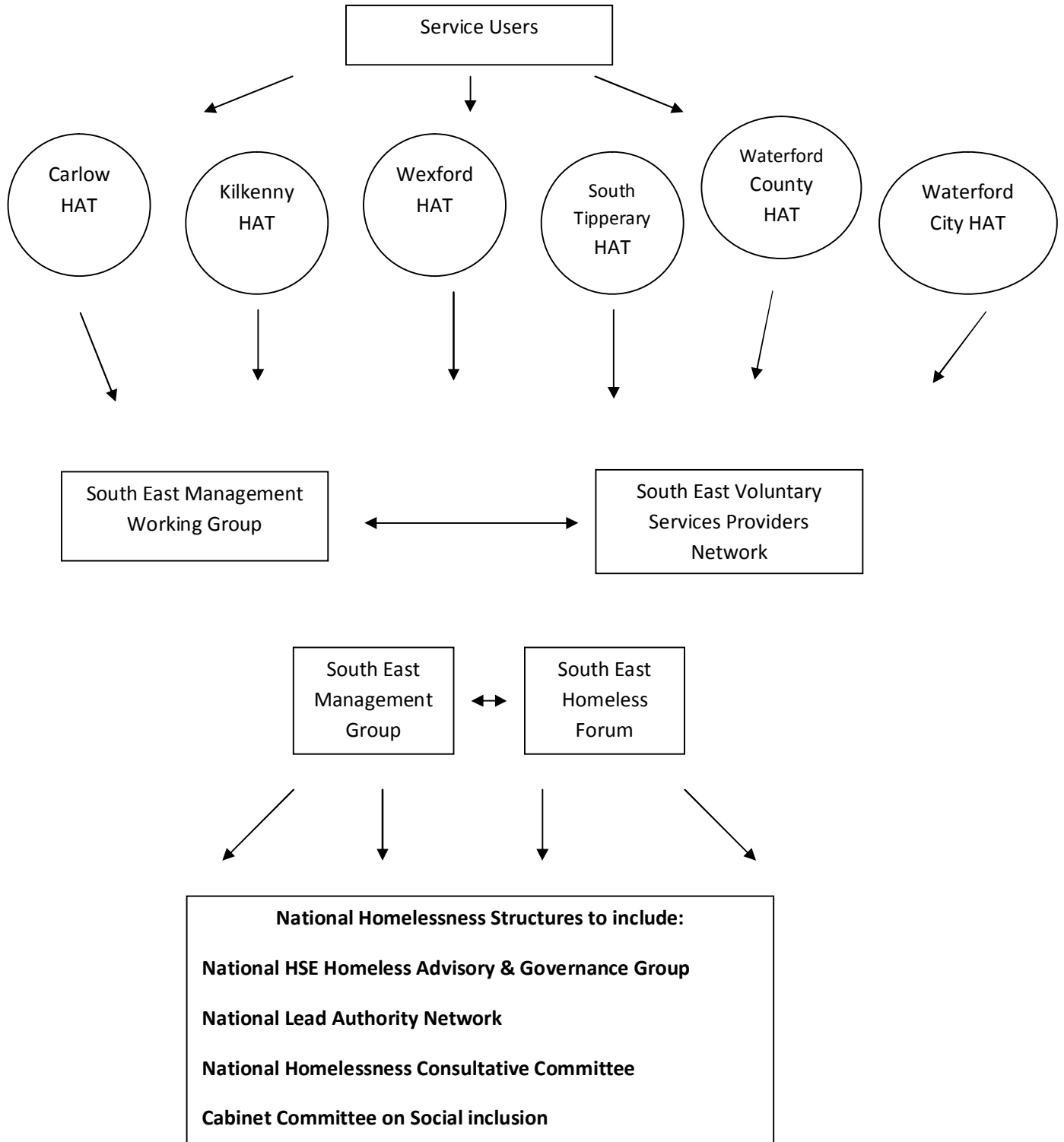
County/City Homeless Action Teams

Homeless Action Teams are in operation in each of the Local Authority and are comprised of Local Authority Housing officials, HSE healthcare, DSP community welfare staff and representatives from voluntary service providers. Each Homeless Action Team meets to co-ordinate an inter agency response to the support needs and case management of homeless people and individuals at risk of becoming homeless.

The role of the Homeless Action Team as identified in the Murtagh report (2006) is to:

- carry out initial assessment of presenting homeless people
- prepare and approve care and support plans
- resettle homeless people into new permanent and emergency accommodation
- regularly review the implementation and efficiency of plans
- to develop and implement local preventative strategies with other agencies such as hospitals, probation service, Gardai and voluntary agencies.

Section 5 Regional Implementation Structures



The South East region is one of nine Regions established under the Housing (Misc Prov) Act 2009 and comprises six local Authority areas, Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford City and County and Wexford. A large and varied range of services are provided by voluntary and statutory agencies, including advice and information, street outreach, accommodation, settlement, education and training and healthcare. Homeless services provide specific support for people who are homeless, according to their particular needs or age.

Access to Emergency/Temporary Accommodation

A person who is experiencing homelessness is entitled to shelter and assistance under the definition of homelessness in the Housing Act 1988 and the Health Act 1953. In the South East region, temporary or emergency accommodation is provided by voluntary bodies and supported by funding from the two main statutory sources, the HSE and funding provided by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Local Authorities.

In the main, emergency accommodation is accessible through presentation at the housing department of the Local Authority. A short assessment is undertaken and a referral made to the Homeless Action Team (HAT).

In 2011, 48% of all men and women presented on a self referral basis and 52% were referred by a referral agent, i.e. Local Authority, Gardai or otherwise.

Emergency/Temporary Accommodation

Men's emergency accommodation is provided in the South East by four voluntary service providers, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Carlow, Waterford and Wexford and the Good Shepherd Centre in Kilkenny. The four Men's Hostels provided accommodation for 435 men in 2011, almost 30% of these men reporting either alcohol and substance misuse and family breakdown as the main reason for presentation. 56% of the men were aged between 20 – 39 years of age.

Emergency accommodation for women and children is provided in four Women's Refuges in the South East located in Amber Women's Refuge in Kilkenny, Cuan Saor in South Tipperary, OASIS House in Waterford City and Wexford Women's refuge in Wexford. A total of 141 women were accommodated in 2011, 56% of whom had dependent children.

Transitional/On Site Supported Accommodation

Transitional housing provides a person with an opportunity to have secure, medium term accommodation, with support to help them establish themselves in a home and provides them with support to address any issues which might make long-term housing unsustainable.

The length of time a person stays in transitional accommodation is time limited. It averages from 6 months to 2 years. In total 54 people presented to the transitional sector in 2011, 50% male, 50% female.

Transitional/On site supported accommodation is available largely in Waterford and is also provided by the men's hostels in Kilkenny and Wexford for previous residents of the main hostel. The Waterford City and County providers are Focus Ireland which provide supported housing to people who have experienced difficulties maintaining previous tenancies and have housing and a support need.

Providers specific to Waterford City are Tinteán Housing which offers supported accommodation to single women and Ceim Eile which offers supported accommodation to people who have completed a residential treatment programme.

Permanent On-Site Supported Accommodation

Long term supported housing is provided for those who have difficulty in living independently and for people who need some level of support on an on-going basis. There is no specific time limit on how long a person can stay in supported housing. The type and level of support varies and is provided by the staff within the service and through linkages with mainstream community based services. Focus Ireland provide 43 units of Permanent On Site supported accommodation in Waterford City.

Tenancy Support & Sustainment

Tenancy Support & Sustainment (TSS) services are available in each Local Authority area since 2012 and is operated by the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Carlow, SE Simon in South Tipperary and Focus Ireland in Kilkenny, Waterford City & County and Wexford. The overall objective of the Tenancy Support & Sustainment service is to provide support to households that are at risk of becoming homeless, in order to assist them to occupy (or continue) to occupy their accommodation and progress from homelessness or potential homelessness towards independent sustainable living. This involves home visits by the Tenancy Support & Sustainment

service Project Workers whose role will be to signpost and facilitate access to mainstream services. 187 people were referred to TSS services in 2011, 43% of which were referred by Local Authorities.

LUB Outreach Service

Street outreach services are funded by the HSE and provided by Waterford and South Tipperary Regional Youth Service through the LUB project worker. The role of the service is to make contact with people who are sleeping rough and to work with them to link them into accommodation and other services, with a view to supporting them out of rough sleeping and into long-term accommodation.

Housing First project

SE Simon are to pilot a Housing First project in Waterford City. Housing First is one example of a housing-led policy approach. The Housing led approach is an alternative to a system of emergency shelter/transitional housing progressions. Rather than moving homeless individuals through different "levels" of housing, known as the Continuum of Care, whereby each level moves them closer to "independent housing" (for example: from the streets to a emergency hostel, and from a emergency hostel to a transitional housing program, and from there to their own apartment in the community) Housing Led approaches move the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or emergency accommodation into their own accommodation and provides them with a high level of support until they are linked in with mainstream support services to ensure that they can sustain their tenancy.

Aim One Preventing Homelessness

To reduce the number of households who become homeless through the further development and enhancement of preventative measures.

Strategic Objectives

- To ensure the National structures in place to co-ordinate specialist and mainstream services are operating effectively. Ensure SE regional participation in relevant structures: National Homelessness Consultative Committee, Cross Departmental Team, HSE Homeless Advisory Group, HSE Social inclusion Specialist group.
- To ensure effective inter agency partnerships are in existence between relevant service providers, statutory services specific to homelessness, mainstream statutory service providers and voluntary service providers.
- Ensure referrals pathways to long term housing supports, substance misuse services and mental health services are in place for people who are experiencing homelessness, where appropriate.
- Ensure emerging trends in the causes and contributors to homelessness are documented and effective responses designed on an on-going basis.
- Ensure timely access to supports which can build capacity of people to move out of homelessness, i.e. education and training and labour activation opportunities.
- To collate all data gathered from the PASS system to monitor regional trends in the causes of homelessness and identification of approaches most successful in ending homelessness.
- Maximising funding opportunities within the region from all relevant agencies and ensuring all funding is co-ordinated through the Management Group structure

Aim Two Eliminate the need to Sleep Rough

To ensure that emergency and long term responses to homelessness are adequate to meet emerging needs and to ensure that no one needs to sleep rough.

Strategic Objectives

- An appropriate supply of emergency accommodation is to be ensured by ending long term occupation of emergency beds.
- Consideration of use of long term mainstream accommodation for housing led approaches to end instance of rough sleeping.

- Ensure all reasonable risk assessments are carried out to enable accommodation providers to provide shelter to those with high needs and challenging behaviours.
- Continued inter agency co-operation with regard to the monitoring of Rough Sleeping patterns.

Aim Three Eliminate long term homelessness

The elimination of long term homelessness is a core objective of Government's Homeless Policy and a national commitment has been made to end long term homelessness by 2016. This requires homeless services to ensure no one is in occupation of emergency homeless accommodation for longer than six months.

Strategic Objectives

- Identification of all persons who have homeless for six months in the South east region through the use of PASS.
- Undertake standardised Needs Assessment as part of an overall Care and Case management approach to be agreed by the South East regional homeless service providers.
- Explore potential for re-designation of emergency to long term beds in region.

Aim Four Meet long term housing needs of persons moving out of homelessness

To provide an adequate supply of long term housing tenancies, with supports, as necessary within the South East region as a response to tackle and prevent homelessness.

Strategic Objectives

- Ensure an adequate supply of all social housing tenures, Local Authority, Approved Housing Bodies, RAS/Leasing and Private Rented.
- Ensure access to relevant and timely supports to long term tenancy sustainment.
- Ensure all homeless service provision is focused on supporting the person move out of homelessness.

Aim Five Effective homeless services

Ensure that homeless services are effective in addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness in a comprehensive way and are aimed at moving the person out of homelessness and into long term housing as quickly as possible.

Strategic Objectives

- Agree and implement a standardised an approach to Care and Case Management.
- Implement a standardised data sharing system regionally.
- Ensure the voice of service users is sought, heard and listened to within the South East region.
- Ensure quality standards are implemented within the region.

Aim Six Better coordinated funding arrangements and proposals for new funding arrangements

Ensure expenditure is used in the most appropriate and efficient way possible, with the focus, at all times on achieving the best possible outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. Funding will be focused on the achievement of the goals set out in government policy, i.e. ending long term homelessness through a housing led approach.

Strategic Objectives

- Ensure the Consultative role of the South East Homeless Forum is maximised in relation to service development and achievement of the goals as set out in this regional plan.
- Ensure all funding arrangements are monitored and targeted, value and effectiveness achieved within available resources.
- Ensure co-ordination between all funding streams, capital and revenue, accommodation and health/ social care.
- Avoid duplication of services and pursue co-operation/shared service where appropriate.

1.	Strategic Action Area Preventing Homelessness	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
1.1	Education, Training & Employment			
1.1.1	Ensure all emergency service providers undertake basic life skills programmes with all residents of emergency accommodation. Programmes to include modules on budget management, cooking, basic hygiene etc.	HSE Local Authorities	HAT's VEC	Q1 2014 - Ensure part of 2014 SLA's
1.1.2	Ensure an inter agency approach is adopted to develop the educational and employment skills of people experiencing homelessness.	FAS VEC	HAT's PETE - FI	Q1 2014
1.2.	Preventative action for specific target groups			
1.2.1	New social households Ensure all new tenants sign up to An Post Household budget.	Local Authorities & DSP All AHB's		On-going
1.2.3	People with mental health support needs Develop & implement working guidelines/protocols between mental health & homelessness services to ensure that any individual who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness can access appropriate services and supports to address their needs.	HSE Mental Health Services	HAT's	Q4 2013 Begin process of agreement on protocol

1.	Strategic Action Area Preventing Homelessness	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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1.2.4	<p>People with addictions</p> <p>Develop a memorandum of understanding with Substance Misuse Teams which will ensure that, where appropriate, people with substance misuse needs are assessed and appropriately referred into Substance Misuse Services</p>	HSE Substance Misuse Teams	HAT's	Q1 2014 Begin process of agreement on protocol
1.2.5	<p>At risk households in Local Authority tenancies.</p> <p>Implement the Local Authority's preventative policies; Anti-Social Behaviour, Rent Arrears Management</p>	Local Authorities	An Garda Síochána, MABS	On-going
1.2.6	<p>People with a Disability</p> <p>Implement the recommendations in the 2011 National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen linkages between relevant partners to the strategy.</p>	Local Authorities & HSE	HAT's Disability organisations	On-going
1.2.7	<p>Homelessness due to Domestic Violence</p> <p>Develop a working protocol which will address the accommodation needs of women and children leaving instances of domestic violence and ensure safety and support is available to those presenting "out of area" and "out of region".</p>	HSE Local Authorities	An Garda Síochána The Court Service Women's Aid DECLG	Q4 2014

1.	Strategic Action Area Preventing Homelessness	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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1.3	Discharge Planning			
1.3.1	HSE Hospital Discharge Planning Ensure that effective discharge protocols are in place for people experiencing homelessness.	HSE	HAT's	Q4 2013
1.3.2	HSE Aftercare Service Users Ensure young people leaving care and aftercare are linked to the HSE Aftercare Service and are provided with appropriate supports into adulthood. Ensure joint national protocol between HSE Child and Family Services and Local Authorities is signed off and implemented.	HSE HSE & Local Authorities	Aftercare Steering Groups DH&C and DECLG	Q4 2013
1.3.3	Irish Prison Service Liaise with Irish Prison Service and The Probation Service to agree a regional protocol for persons leaving state prisons. Liaise with Multi Agency Group on Homeless Sexual Offenders to agree a procedure for the management of people who have been convicted of sex offences who are availing of homeless services	IPS, The Probation Service	HAT's Local Authorities	Q4 2013

1.	Strategic Action Area Preventing Homelessness	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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1.4	Track Pathways into homelessness and identify Best Practice approaches			
1.4.1	Undertake research on regional data gathered during 2011 – 2012 to ascertain the main causes of homelessness and the initiatives that led to the most successful outcomes achieved.	SE Regional Management Group	HAT's VSP network	Begin in Q 2 2014
1.5	Maximise Funding opportunities			
	Circulate all available funding opportunities to voluntary service providers Ensure all HSE and DECLG funding is accessed and utilised to its best advantage	SE Regional Management Group	HAT's VSP network	On-going
1.6	Homeless Proofing			
	Recommend the proofing of all policy changes against the risk of homelessness. Explore funding opportunities to enable a Homelessness Proofing tool to be commissioned	Cross Departmental Team SE Management Working Group	Lead Authorities	Q1 2015 Q2 2014

2.	Strategic Action Area Eliminate the need to Sleep Rough	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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2.1	Monitor levels and patterns of Rough Sleeping			
2.1.1	Rough Sleeping Count A Rough Sleeping count to be carried out at least once a year in each local Authority area in line with National count criteria.	HAT's	VSP network An Garda Síochána	Q3 2013 Q3 2014 Q3 2015 Q3 2016
2.1.2	Monitor Rough Sleeping Include the tracking of people who are known to services on HAT agenda.	HAT's	VSP network An Garda Síochána	On-going
2.1.3	Explore the reasons for continued Rough Sleeping.	HAT's	HSE Local Authorities	On-going
2.2	Preventative Measures			
2.2.1	Out of Hours Plan Develop and implement an Out of Hours plan in each Local Authority area which is fit for purpose and ensure dissemination to all relevant stakeholders.	Local Authorities	HAT's	Q4 2013
2.2.2	Severe Weather arrangements Develop and implement a Severe Weather procedure and ensure dissemination to all relevant stakeholders.	Local Authorities	HAT's	Q3 2013

2.	Strategic Action Area Eliminate the need to Sleep Rough	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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2.2.3	<p>Access to services</p> <p>Ensure all service providers have clear written policies on assessment procedures, barring procedures and appeals procedures which are standardised across the region.</p> <p>Monitor access to services and exclusions by services.</p>	<p>Voluntary Service Providers</p> <p>HAT's</p>	<p>HSE</p> <p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>Q2 2014</p>
2.2.4	<p>Monitor occupancy</p> <p>Monitor occupancy of all homeless facilities to ensure availability of beds</p>	<p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>HAT's</p>	<p>On-going</p>
2.2.5	<p>Pilot Housing First project</p> <p>Ensure Housing First pilot project in Waterford City receives appropriate referrals and has access to adequate supports from all statutory providers.</p> <p>Ensure best practice learning from the project is implemented in other Local Authority areas, where appropriate to local needs.</p>	<p>SE Simon</p>	<p>Waterford City HAT</p> <p>HAT's</p>	<p>Mid way review of project Q1 2015</p>
2.2.6	<p>Continue Outreach & TSS services</p> <p>Continue to fund outreach and resettlement services across the region.</p>	<p>Local Authorities</p> <p>HSE</p>	<p>HAT's</p> <p>SE Regional Management Group</p>	<p>On-going</p>
2.2.7	<p>Transient Homelessness</p> <p>Ensure that people who present as experiencing transient homelessness are offered respite accommodation, if necessary.</p>	<p>Local Authorities</p> <p>VSP's</p>	<p>DSP</p>	<p>On-going</p>

2.	Strategic Action Area Eliminate the need to Sleep Rough	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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2.2.8	<p>People presenting with High Support needs</p> <p>Undertake a regional scoping exercise which will identify: the numbers of people presenting to homeless services with high support needs and/or challenging behaviours, the risks to service providers in meeting the person's needs, and the instances in which needs cannot be met by existing service provisions.</p>	<p>HAT's SE Management Working Group</p>	<p>Local Authorities HSE</p>	<p>Q4 2013</p>
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3.	Strategic Action Area	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
	Eliminate long term homelessness			

3.1	Care & Case Management			
3.1.1	Work with PASS and Regional Working Group to agree a standardised framework for Assessment, Referral and Care Planning (Personal Action Planning) for regional implementation and to ensure its application to those who are long term in emergency accommodation.	SE Management Group	HAT's VSP network	Q1 2014 for roll out
3.2	Identification of Long Term Homeless cohort			
3.2.1	Identify the number of people who are resident in emergency accommodation on a long term basis.	Emergency VSP's	HAT's	Q3 2013
3.2.2	Carry out a needs analysis of each individual and agree a Care Plan which includes a Move On plan.	HAT's	LA HSE DSP	Q4 2013
3.3	Meet the needs of long term homeless people			
3.3.1	Consider the need to reconfigure existing emergency beds to continue to meet the needs of long term residents.	HAT's VSPs	SE Management Group	Q1 2014

4.	Strategic Action Area	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
	Meet long term housing needs of persons moving out of homelessness			

4.1	Identify housing options available to ensure people can move on from homeless accommodation to a sustainable long term housing option			
4.1.1	Ensure each Local Authority identifies an adequate supply of accommodation from all available housing options to move people on from homeless services	Local Authorities	VSPs DECLG	Quarterly reports to DECLG
4.1.2	Ensure each HAT has a care plan in place for each person in homeless services which addresses the specific support needs required for that person to establish and sustain a long term housing option. Monitor the implementation of each Care Plan.	HAT's	VSPs HSE LA DSP	On-going
4.2	Best Use of Capital Assistance Schemes			
4.2.1	Ensure all CAS approved applications are aimed at meeting the highest level of need categories and are sanctioned by the Regional Management Group	SE Regional Management Group	LA AHB's	On-going
4.2	Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)			
4.2.1	Ensure best use of the HAP system to alleviate potential homelessness	Local Authorities	DSP HAT's	Q1 2014
4.3	Support to Live Independently scheme (SLI)			
4.3.1	Actively pursue the SLI scheme for regional roll out	SE Regional Management Group	Local Authorities HAT's	Q 4 2013

5.	Strategic Action Area	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
	Effective homeless services			

5.1	Care & Case Management			
5.1.1	Work with PASS and Regional Working Group to agree a standardised approach to Assessment, Referral and Care Planning (Personal Action Planning) for regional implementation.	SE Regional Management Working Group & Review Group	VSP network	Complete by Q2 2014
5.1.2	To agree a memorandum of understanding with Substance Misuse Services to ensure timely access to appropriate services as part of an agreed care plan.	SE Management Working Group	HSE HAT's	Q1 2014
5.1.3	Ensure the Inter County protocols for the effective case management of homeless presentations within the region is agreed and implemented	SE Management Working Group	HAT's Local Authorities DSP	Q2 2013
5.1.4	Ensure Homeless Action Teams continue to operate effectively as the inter agency team mandated to co-ordinate the Care and Case Management of all people accessing homeless services. Develop Terms of Reference for all HAT's	SE Management Working Group HAT's	HAT's	On-going Q1 2014
5.2	Awareness Raising with Statutory & Voluntary Service providers			
5.2.1	Each HAT to develop an annual Awareness Raising programme to include Information Sharing workshops with relevant stakeholders.	HAT VSP	HSE DSP Probation CIC	Q4 2013 Q4 2014 Q4 2015 Q4 2015

5.	Strategic Action Area Effective homeless services	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
5.2.2	Complete and launch regional Directory of Services and ensure publication is updated on an annual basis	SE Management Working Group	VSP network HAT's HSE	Q3 2013
5.2.3.	Continue a programme of open invitations to HAT's to discuss potential partnership or collaborative actions	HAT's		On-going
5.3	Training & Development programme			
5.3.1	Undertake a Training Needs analysis with all relevant staff to identify the needs to ensure the delivery of effective services in the region	SE Management Working Group	HAT's VSP network	Q3 2013
5.3	Training & Staff Development programme			
5.3.2	Develop and implement an annual Regional Training & Development plan	SE Management Working Group	HAT's VSP network	Q3 2013
5.5	Advice & Information "One Stop Shops"			
5.5.1	Explore the potential for developing a One Stop Shop type Information Point in each local Authority area to ensure people seeking homeless services are signposted to the most appropriate provider	VSP's	HAT's LA HSE	On-going

5.	Strategic Action Area Effective homeless services	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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5.6	Quality Standards			
5.6.1	Seek National Guidance on the Quality standards to be adopted by Homeless service providers to ensure both Putting People First and Quality in Alcohol and Drugs Services (QuADs) standards are met through the development of a revised set of quality standards appropriate to homeless services.	Local Authorities HSE	DRHE Working Group	Q 3 2013
5.7	Definition of Homelessness			
5.7.1	Local Authorities to seek guidance from the Housing Agency on the application of the statutory definition of homelessness to inform assessment procedures	SE Management Working Group	Local Authorities	Q3 2013
5.8	Service User Involvement			
5.8.1	Ensure service users views and opinions are sought and acted upon through service users panels being established.	HAT's	SERDTF Local Authorities HSE	Q1 2014

6.	Strategic Action Area	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
	Better coordinated funding arrangements and proposals for new funding arrangements			

6.1	Service Level Agreements			
6.1.1	Ensure all services funded under Section 10 Housing Act 1988 have a Service Level Agreement with their respective Local Authority	Local Authorities	SE Management Group	Q1 2013 Q1 2014 Q1 2015 Q1 2016
6.1.2	Ensure all services funded by HSE funding have a Service Level Agreement or Grant Aid Agreement with the relevant section within the HSE.	HSE	SE Management Group	Q1 2013 Q1 2014 Q1 2015 Q1 2016
6.1.3	Ensure all services are met in a three way joint funders meeting on an annual basis.	Local Authorities HSE	SE Management Group	Q1 2013 Q1 2014 Q1 2015 Q1 2016
6.2	Ensure effective funding arrangements			
6.2.1	Ensure all services to be funded are in line with the principles outlined in the “ <i>The Way Home</i> ” and the Devolved Funding protocol	SE Management Group	High Level Oversight Group SE Management Working Group VSP network	On-going
6.2.3	Ensure all services funded have been approved the SE Management Group	SE Management Group	High Level Oversight Group SE	On-going

6.	Strategic Action Area Better coordinated funding arrangements and proposals for new funding arrangements	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
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			Management Working Group VSP network	
6.3	Co-ordination of Local Services			
6.3.1	The SE Regional Management Group will review the expenditure and operation of all existing services in the region to assess and compare them to the proposed headings in the protocols of devolved funding as per the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government	SE Management Group	HSE High Level Oversight Group VSP network	Q2 2013
6.3.2	Following action 6.3.1 the Regional Management Group will develop a regional protocol for the SE region to inform the future funding allocation for all homeless services.	SE Management Group	HSE VSP network	Q3 2013
6.3.3	Ensure an agreed Communication protocol is implemented and regularly reviewed for effectiveness	SE Management Group & Working Group	VSP network SEHF Local Authorities	Q2 2013

Town Housing Authorities consulted

TB Completed

Adjoining Housing Authorities consulted

North Tipperary County Council

Cork County Council

Wicklow County Council

Laois County Council

Kildare County Council

Limerick County Council

Housing Strategic Policy Committees

TB Completed

Other groups/Organisations

South East Homeless Forum

South East Management Working Group

South East Voluntary Service Providers network

South East Homeless Action Teams

Health Service Executive
