

## Focus Ireland: Annual Report (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/110620>)

### Focus Ireland Annual Report shows 12.5% increase in the number of people supported in 2023

#### Focus Ireland helped 1,757 households to either keep their home or support their exit of homelessness

Focus Ireland launched its Annual Report, showing a 12.5% rise in the number of people it supported in 2023 (18,000 people) compared to 2022 (16,000). The report also showed Focus Ireland helped 1,757 households to either keep their home (657 households) or support their exit from homelessness (1,100 households), an increase of nearly 10% on the previous year (1,598).

One person supported by the charity is Lived Experience Ambassador Al Leahy who helped launch the charity's Annual Report at City Asembly House, in Dublin City. He also spoke at the event and told how he was previously homeless and is now housed by Focus Ireland in Phibsborough. Al went into rehab in 2003, successfully completing treatment and then returned to education. After experiencing homelessness and his previous addiction, he got in touch with Focus Ireland.

He said: "They helped me to read and write. I then progressed. They put me on to a career counsellor. I didn't know if it was always in me, but I always liked helping people in life. It made me feel good any time I did help someone. I thought about this when I was thinking about going to college. I ended up going to UCD and doing a Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills."

Al qualified with a diploma and has been working in drug rehabilitation for 20 years, helping many people along the way.

"I feel very blessed that I am working in drug rehabilitation where I can use all the experience and skills I have gained to help others. I also feel very blessed for the home that Focus Ireland gave me. I could not have asked for anything else in life. I am happy now and I will be forever grateful to Focus Ireland for the help and support they gave me when I needed it the most."

Meanwhile, Focus Ireland CEO Pat Dennigan said: "This was another challenging year, as homelessness continued to rise sharply. By year end, a total of 13,318 people, including 3,962 children, were homeless, with many thousands more at risk of becoming homeless. I believe that it is vital to continue to emphasise that homelessness is not inevitable. It is possible to end homelessness with the right policies in place. To this end, Focus Ireland remained committed to its overall objective of ending homelessness in Ireland through prevention and sustained exits. We worked to support the most vulnerable families in 2023, and the Family Centre, Family Homeless Action Team and other family services proved highly effective in supporting 486 families with children out of homelessness."

"Over the past three months, Focus Ireland, in collaboration with the State, has helped over 100 families secure homes and escape homelessness. This progress is largely due to improved access to social housing for families trapped in long-term homelessness. We must build on this success. We urge the Government to adopt a policy that dedicates a portion of the new social housing supply to long-term homeless families. This strategy was instrumental in significantly reducing homelessness during the pandemic."

#### Focus Ireland Annual Report 2023 highlights include:

- 1,851 families engaged with our services, an increase of 11% compared to 2022 (1,668)
- 1,757 households to either keep their home or support their exit from homelessness,
- 593 adults were supported by the Preparation for Education, Training and Employment (PETE) service, an increase of 44.2% compared to 2022 (411)
- Over 4,223 children were supported across our services
- 450 adult-only households were supported out of homelessness
- 164 young people were supported to exit homelessness
- 486 families were supported out of homelessness
- 657 households were supported to keep their homes

Focus Ireland Life President & Founder Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy sent a strong message to the current government. She said:

"Homelessness inflicts severe trauma on everyone, but it is especially devastating for children. It is utterly unacceptable that over 4,400 children are currently homeless. We must all take greater action to stop this crisis. Children who are homeless face the risk of losing their childhoods. Our specially trained staff work tirelessly to support families and children through targeted services, helping them navigate homelessness and transition to secure housing."

She added: "The aim must be to end long-term homelessness, as opposed to managing it through providing more emergency beds. This is why Focus Ireland is calling on more ambition from the Government, there must be an increase in the annual social housing targets for homelessness prevention. We have proven before that we can deliver social housing, and Ireland must do it again."

**The full Annual Report can be downloaded via the link below.**

**Annual Reports and Financial Statements – Focus Ireland (<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.focusireland.ie%2Fwho-we-are%2Fannual-reports%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cconnor.murphy%40focusireland.ie%7Cae4641a02c6547a4253208dccb73eafa%7Cc7297a260db04f71a5c00dddcd51bf58>)**

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#### Region

Nationwide

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