



## **Older People, Housing and Services**

Invitation to submit a tender: to undertake research and inform our Strategic Plan for housing and service solutions for older people.

Closing Date for submissions is **1pm, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025**.

## Contents

1. Invitation to tender.....	3
2. About Respond .....	3
3. Older People and Housing – contextual information .....	3
4. Developing housing and service solutions for an ageing (tenant) population.....	5
6. Reporting and outputs.....	7
7. Format of tenders.....	7
8. Requests for further information or clarification .....	9
9. Terms and conditions .....	9
10. Submission of tenders.....	9
11. Assessment of tenders and selection .....	10

## 1. Invitation to tender

Respond wishes to contract a consultant, researcher or organisation to undertake research on older people's housing and service needs. As a learning organisation, we are keen to develop and deliver services that are evidence informed. The research will include an examination of current and future needs in Ireland as the population ages and identify international best practice that will help inform our Strategic Plan in terms of Respond's housing services to meet the needs of an ageing population in Ireland into the future along with, anticipating and responding to the changing needs of our current tenant and service user population, as they age. Furthermore, this research should also assist in the development of the evidence base to support policy and advocacy work in terms of engagement with the State and other key stakeholders.

This is an open invitation to tender, seeking applications from suitably qualified individuals, teams and partnerships who can bring their skills and experience of undertaking research and developing best practice in the field of social, community based or action research. You will bring the rigour and analysis of social research to the project to assist in the development of practical housing and service solutions that can be delivered within the funding and delivery framework Respond, as an Approved Housing Body (AHB) and service provider currently operates within.

## 2. About Respond

Respond, a construction-led Approved Housing Body and service provider, has been working all around Ireland for over 40 years. Our vision is that every family and individual in Ireland will have high-quality housing as part of a vibrant and caring community. Housing and decent accommodation, in the areas where people want to live, are central to improving people's lives and enhancing the health and well-being of society.

Respond currently own or manage over 7,700 homes and properties across the 26 counties. We also provide a range of services for families and individuals within our communities. This includes emergency accommodation with 24/7 support for families who are homeless in six Family Homeless Services, three Day Care Services for Older People, 15 Early Learning and School Aged Care (ELSAC), Family Support and Refugee Resettlement services. Our aim is to provide person centred services to support people to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

## 3. Older People and Housing – contextual information

### Ireland's ageing population

The topic of housing and an ageing population has received notable research attention over recent years as rising life expectancy is now a feature of almost all developing countries. Although Ireland currently has a younger overall age profile than most other European countries, our population is ageing faster than anywhere else in Europe as birth rates are falling<sup>1</sup>. Europe's ageing population has been increasing and will continue to do so due to increased life expectancy and the baby boom cohorts reaching older age<sup>2</sup>.

In the 10 years since 2022, an additional 200,000 people have been added to the 65+ age category and this age group is projected to increase very significantly from its 2022 level. Looking forward to the next 20 years, the number of people aged 85+ years is projected to rise from 89,000 to 222,000. This age group already accounts for half of people in long-stay care with 60% of the over 80's having at least three medical conditions<sup>3</sup>.

It is estimated that the number of people aged 65+ will grow from one fifth to over one third of the

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation. (Oct 2022). Ageing and Health. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>

<sup>2</sup> Marczack et al. (2019). Preventing social Isolation and loneliness among older people. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/332493>

<sup>3</sup> Cullen, P. (Dec 2022) Article in Irish Times available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/social-affairs/2022/12/02/irelands-ageing-population-we-should-be-anticipating-potential-problems-and-intervening/>

working population over the next 20 years. A Department of Health report published in December 2022<sup>4</sup>, shows the projected population growth for these older age groups and the percentage change over that 20-year period, with the 65-74 age group increasing by 60% and the 85+ age category increasing by almost 150%.

Population projections undertaken by the Central Statistics Office in January 2024, show, under the M1 scenario, that the 2022 older population of 781,400 persons will grow to over 1.94 million by 2057. Similarly, under the M2 and M3 scenarios it will grow to 1.88 million and 1.81 million respectively<sup>5</sup>. In 2022 the older population accounted for 15.1% of the total population, this will grow to between 27.8% and 31.6% (for M1 and M3 respectively) of the total population by 2057 depending on the scenario used<sup>6</sup>.

### Changing tenure patterns

Globally, we are now seeing a significant change in tenure patterns emerging with a decline in home ownership and an increasing reliance on public and private sector renting. Accelerated by the Global Financial Crisis of 2006, it has been argued that is a long-term shift, arising predominantly as result of changes in labour market security and thus, is a pattern that is unlikely to be reversed<sup>7</sup>. This change is most starkly seen in countries where home ownership has traditionally been the predominant tenure. This means there is an increasing reliance of both public and private rental housing as long-term housing options.

A report by the National, Economic and Social Council (2014)<sup>8</sup> summarises the tenure shift that has taken place in Ireland and states:

*Ireland's rate of homeownership peaked, at 80 per cent of households, in 1991, with private rental accounting for 8 per cent and social renting for 10 per cent. By 2011, owner occupation had fallen to 71 per cent, while 19 per cent of household rented from a private landlord, and 9 per cent rented from a local authority or voluntary association (known as Approved Housing Bodies—AHBs). (p ix)*

The report goes on to highlight how tenure patterns vary across social groups and states that the most significant decline in home ownership is seen among 'young people and the unskilled and skilled manual classes. Also, the proportion of single-person and lone-parent households who rent has increased significantly over the past 20 years and owner-occupation is much higher among households headed by Irish nationals (77%) compared to, non-Irish nationals (34%).' Also, the age at which people get a first mortgage is increasing'. (NESC, 2014, p ix).

### Older people, tenure and affordability

High levels of home ownership have generally influenced social welfare and pension policies in these jurisdictions. As homeowners reach retirement age their income usually decreases however, they have usually paid off mortgage debts also by this time. Thus, their housing costs also decrease significantly. In this way, home ownership serves as an asset/income resource that is drawn on to supplement pension and retirement income and increasingly now also used to fund nursing and other care costs that might arise into older age<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> Department of Health. (Dec 2022). Health in Ireland. Key Trends 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fdc2a-health-in-ireland-key-trends-2022/>

<sup>5</sup> Central Statistics Office. (July 2024). Population and Labour Force Projections 2023-2057. Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-plfp/populationandlabourforceprojections2023-2057/populationprojectionsresults/>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Arundel, R & Doling, J. (2017). The end of mass homeownership? Changes in labour markets and housing tenure opportunities across Europe. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10901-019-09647-1>

<sup>8</sup> National Economic and Social Council. (2014) Home ownership and rental. Available at: [http://files.nesc.ie/nesc\\_reports/en/140\\_Homeownership\\_and\\_Rental.pdf](http://files.nesc.ie/nesc_reports/en/140_Homeownership_and_Rental.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Slaymaker et al. (July 2022) Future trends in housing tenure and the adequacy of retirement income. Available at: <https://www.esri.ie/publications/future-trends-in-housing-tenure-and-the-adequacy-of-retirement-income>

Conversely, the implications of decreasing levels of homeownership are that more people will be renting into older age while their rental costs will not decrease even though their income will have decreased with retirement. Therefore, decline in home ownership is a significant wider social policy issue, as housing affordability for this cohort of people is an ever-pressing issue that will require a response from Governments.

A publication by the Economic and Social Research Institute (2022)<sup>10</sup> examines the issue of changes in housing tenure and adequacy of retirement income. Below is a summary of points raised in the publication:

- The share of 25-34s who own their home halved from 2004-2015 from 60% to 30% and continues to fall.
- Homeownership rates are around 10 percentage points lower (approximately 80%) for those currently aged 55-64 and 45-54 years compared with current retirees.
- It is estimated that income poverty in retirement rises from 9% before housing costs are taken into account, to 14% once housing costs are taken into account.
- To demonstrate the impact of changes in homeownership on income adequacy, and linking the research on lower homeownership for younger households, simulated income poverty rates for those approaching retirement show they could reach:
  - 31% under a low homeownership scenario of 63%.
  - 28% under a medium homeownership scenario of 70%.
  - 21% under a high homeownership scenario of 78%.
  - This is compared to 14% under the baseline homeownership rate of 92%.
- Women, those with lower levels of education and those living alone during working life are particularly vulnerable to income poverty in retirement after housing costs are taken into account. (ESRI, 2002, p ix-xi).

### Private Rental Sector (PRS)

Most significantly, there are major concerns highlighted with regard to the reliance of the Private Rental Sector (PRS) in Ireland and the adequacy of this tenure model to meet the needs of housing older people. Concerns include supply, high rental costs, reliance on housing subsidies, the absence of predictability, limited security of tenure and the lack of agency for renters. This has been highlighted in a recent report published by Threshold and Alone<sup>11</sup> that include a recommendation for government to develop and invest in appropriate housing models, particularly via Approved Housing Bodies.

### Respond's current tenant age profile by income

Currently less than 15% of our tenants and joint tenants are aged 65 years and over. 43% of Respond tenants are in the 45 to 65 year age category and since the majority of Respond tenants remain as Respond tenants for long periods/lifetimes, we can predict that we will have an increasing number of older tenants (even though percentages may stay low in the shorter term due to our increasing housing stock and new tenant populations who may be predominantly from lower age cohorts).

The nature of our tenant base already predicts that there is a higher level of reliance in social welfare income groups across all age cohorts however, the reliance on social welfare income supports also increases with age. On average 86% of 65+ years are on social welfare compared to 45% of the younger age groups. Those aged 85 years and older are totally reliant on social welfare income.

## 4. Developing housing and service solutions for an ageing population

Respond provides 'homes for life' and we are committed to ensuring that we continue to meet the

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid (July 2022).

<sup>11</sup> Haran et al. (May 2023). Double Deficit: Older and Ageing Persons in the Irish Private Rental Sector. Threshold and Alone. Available at: <https://alone.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Threshold-Alone-Report-highres-web.pdf>

needs of both our current and future tenants and service users and fulfil our vision and social purpose of providing high quality housing and services in vibrant and caring communities. We are a learning organisation, and our Research Strategy sets out our commitment to being 'evidence informed' in our work.

In striving to achieve social justice and improve the opportunities and outcomes for our tenants and communities into the longer term, we recognise that it is necessary to tackle the root cause of social problems and change the mechanisms that perpetuate inequity. Therefore, our services are developed with a focus on providing early intervention and prevention. In supporting the development of sustainable communities, we aim to provide homes and services that are adaptable to meet the needs of individuals and families throughout their lifecycle. This means adopting inclusive design principles that supports access to the physical environment, promotes brain health, physical health and wellbeing through the life course and as community needs change. This also includes delivering appropriate tailored services that support the diverse needs of individuals and communities. Respond has committed to embedding 'value for money' principles in all we do, ensuring our approach considers the social impact of our work.

Looking ahead at the changing demographics both globally and in Ireland, we now wish to commission research which will make recommendations for consideration by Respond's Executive and Board. This research will help inform the development of Respond's Strategic Plan and our overall focus on housing and services for future generations of older people focusing on security, affordability, accessibility and promoting choice and independence.

Key requirements of this tender will include, but are not limited to:

- An examination of the current and projected housing and service needs of older people in Ireland in the context of Respond's current housing and services offering.
- An examination of the existing and projected needs of Respond's current tenants and service users.
- Analysis of evidence and literature on international best practice in delivering housing and service solutions for an ageing population, consideration of the Irish policy context in particular the Programme for Government, Report of the Housing Commission and other key initiatives.
- An analysis of and inclusion of good practice examples from other jurisdictions taking into account their funding and operating models.
  - a) Housing affordability, changing tenure patterns, promoting independence, wellbeing and 'ageing in place'.
  - b) The needs of tenants as they age encompassing housing design, right sizing, housing adaptations and upgrades and support for 'ageing in place' or 'ageing in community' including, promoting brain health and wellbeing through the life course and taking into account Respond's Design Guide.
  - c) Particular service needs of an ageing population promoting brain health and wellbeing, independence and 'ageing in place'.
  - d) A review of new and emerging innovations in these fields and how they might be incorporated into housing and services delivery and design.

(NB: Some of the proposals in a, b and c may be interrelated).

The proposed solutions above should be set out to address both:

- Wider/national housing and service needs of Ireland's ageing population.
- Changes required to Respond's current housing stock and delivery of services to meet the needs of our current tenants and services users.

Through examining the evidence, identifying solutions on 'what works' both locally in other jurisdictions and assessing how these principles can be applied by Respond/in Ireland is a key focus of this project. Therefore, in

relation to Respond's **current housing, services and advocacy operating context** the research should also identify:

- Developing future social and affordable housing options for older people in Ireland, in terms of design and development, community facilities and services.
- Options for adapting current housing and services to meet future needs and demands.
- Provision of Day Care and other community services for older people.
- Consider the needs and preferences of service users, tenants and their families and the local communities.
- What is working well and highlight any areas of refinement in service delivery in the short to medium term.
- The internal/organisational interfaces and how these can be strengthened to support the development of future housing design and service solutions.
- The interfaces with statutory and other services and any gaps that need to be addressed, to support developing future and service solutions.
- Areas for Respond's advocacy work on these matters e.g. cost rental options for older people.

## 5. Management of the research process

A Respond Research Advisory Group (RAG) will oversee the research process. The group's role will involve discussing and approving aspects of the research design and instruments, as well as advising and supporting the researchers to undertake tasks that involve Respond staff tenants and service users. It will also advise on all aspects of the developing recommendations and proposals for implementation as appropriate. Membership of the RAG may include key members of Respond staff and subject matter experts. Day-to-day management of the contract will be led by Respond's Strategy and Policy Lead who will also act as the key contact person.

## 6. Reporting and outputs

The appointee will be required to submit regular progress reports and to attend review meetings with the Research Advisory Group. The developing findings, outputs and recommendations from this research will also inform the Strategic Planning process that is currently underway at Respond. Therefore, the schedule of progress reports will dovetail alongside the development of this strategic planning process where possible.

In addition, the final outputs will include, a detailed report of the research methodology, process and findings covering:

- A literature review of national and international best practice.
- Analysis of current and future housing needs of older people in Ireland
- Analysis of the current and future housing and service needs of Respond's current tenants and service users as they age.
- Conclusions and proposals for future development.
- A strategy/framework for Respond on meeting the current and future housing and service needs of older people. This will address short (1-2 yrs), medium (3-4 yrs) and long-term (5 years +) aims and objectives with identified milestones to track progress.

## 7. Format of tenders

Applicants should submit a tender document which addresses the points listed below in the order given. The tender document should be no more than 3,000 words (excluding CVs and references, which should be added as appendices). Please find the information headings to be addressed in the tender document below.

### General information

- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the applicant, identifying who will be the principal / day to contact as appropriate.
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of any third parties, partners or

collaborators involved in the tender, along with a description of their role or the element of the contract that they will fulfil.

- Confirmation of acceptance by the applicant and any third parties of the conditions of the tendering process as set out.
- A copy of the applicant's Tax Clearance Certificate, or, in the case of a non-resident applicant, a statement from the Revenue Commissioners confirming suitability on tax grounds.

### Previous relevant experience and expertise

- Outline of the qualifications and relevant professional experience of each member of the evaluation team. Please add a summary CV of each member of the team, as an appendix to the tender document. Each CV must not exceed two A4 pages.
- In particular, please describe how the team's expertise and competencies relate to the area of work described in the tender, substantiated with evidence such as previous similar and/or published work if possible.
- Provide evidence to demonstrate the team's knowledge of current relevant national and international policy and practice and/or methods of acquiring these.
- Outline your understanding of data protection legislation including responding to data access requests, sharing of information etc.

### Methodology

Outline how the project will be undertaken. This should start with an overview of your proposed approach covering the following areas:

- The proposed elements/areas of investigation/examination;
- Methods to be used to investigate each element;
- Approach to identifying and consulting key stakeholders including staff, tenants, service users and experts;
- Nature and types of data to be gathered;
- Specific approaches and tools to be used to gather data and ensure it is robust;
- Methods used for analysis of data;
- Your approach to ensuring high ethical standards are applied before, during and after the project/research duration.

### Timetable

State the overall project timescale, outlining the key milestones and actions to be undertaken and the calendar / timeframe for each.

### Schedule of costs

- Quote costs in euro (€).
- The indicative budget is **€50,000 exclusive of VAT**.
- The budget must show the total costs of the research project, **including VAT**, any expenditure to third parties, collaborators or subcontractors.
- Use the following as main headings for the breakdown of costs, subdivided as required.
  - Salaries (include details for each person involved and note their role or position in relation to the project).
  - Data collection and processing costs, including IT.
  - Administration (explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
  - Overheads (give details of cost headings for overheads and explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
  - Other costs appropriate to a project of this nature (which must be specified and defined).



## 8. Requests for further information or clarification

Requests for further information or clarification of any aspect of this process or expectations for this evaluation can be made by email to: [reyhana.cushnan@respond.ie](mailto:reyhana.cushnan@respond.ie). To ensure equitable treatment of prospective tenderers, where such additional information or clarification is provided, Respond will seek to make relevant information available to all. Therefore, please provide a contact email address with your tender to facilitate this information-sharing.

## 9. Terms and conditions

### Ownership

Respond will remain the sole owners of all end-products including, but not limited to, research data, reports, manuals or other documentation, programmes, information, etc., irrespective of whether or not the project is completed. The contractor's work shall be acknowledged by Respond in materials produced and disseminated on the basis of work completed under this contract.

Proposals for scholarly/academic publishing under the name(s) of the researcher(s) arising from this research can be discussed with Respond, as owners of the data and other products of the research and are to subject to prior approval in writing from Respond.

### Conflict of interest

Any registered interest involving the contractor and Respond, their staff or relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this Invitation to Tender, or should be communicated to Respond immediately upon such information becoming known to the contractor. In any case, such information must be made available prior to the award of the contract. The terms "Registered Interest" and "Relative" shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the *Ethics in Public Office Act 1995*. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify a tenderer or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

### Garda clearance

All personnel who may be required to work directly with children and families throughout this project will be subject to Garda clearance. If any such personnel has been living or working outside Ireland in the past three years, Respond may also require equivalent clearance.

### Freedom of information

Information supplied in respect of this tender may be disclosed by Respond under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, unless it is exempt from Disclosure under that Act (e.g. personal information or commercially sensitive information where the public interest in non-disclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure). Tenderers are invited to indicate if they consider any information supplied to be sensitive. Under Section 29 of the Act, any tenderer must be consulted by Respond before any decision to disclose such information.

### Changes to invitation to tender

Respond reserves the right to update or alter the information contained in this document at any time, but not later than seven days before the closing date for the receipt of tenders. Participating tenderers will be informed as the need arises.

There is no obligation on Respond to accept the lowest cost or any tender, and it may be decided, following the review of the tenders, not to proceed or to proceed with a new invitation to tender or an amended version of the proposed research.

## 10. Submission of tenders

Tenders should be submitted by email attachment as a single PDF or Microsoft Word document (with researcher CVs as appendices) to: [rebecca.hamilton@respond.ie](mailto:rebecca.hamilton@respond.ie) Receipt of tenders will be acknowledged. **The closing date for receipt of completed tenders is 1pm, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**

Incomplete tenders, tenders that do not follow the format prescribed above, or tenders received after the closing date will not be considered.

### 11. Assessment of tenders and selection

All tenders will be evaluated against set criteria as outlined below. Respond in its commitment to quality and value for money will evaluate tender submissions on a cost/ quality basis, with 30% being awarded for cost and 70% for quality. There will be a minimum threshold score of 35 marks for quality. All submissions below this level will be automatically excluded.

- Overall alignment with research brief and relevant experience and expertise. (15 marks)
- Methodology. (20 marks)
- Knowledge and experience of the subject area. (10 marks)
- Timeframe and evidence of ability to meet deadlines. (10 marks)
- Budget, taking into account our commitment to value for money. (30 marks)
- Capacity for project management, administration, and to develop and maintain relationships with the various stakeholders. (5 marks)
- Ethics and ethos. (10 marks)

Respond reserves the right to seek additional information and/or interview tenderers in connection with its assessment of their tenders. It is anticipated that a number of tenderers will be shortlisted for interview.

The lead contact person and other key members of the research team should be available to attend the interview. Respond will not be held liable for any costs incurred by tenderers in relation to the tender submission or the assessment/interview process.

Respond reserves the right not to award the contract in the event that no tender is found to be suitable.

Please note we are not able to provide feedback on tender submissions as this is not always practical due to the volume of applications received.