

2017 Overview

Focus Ireland rolled out our new Strategy 2017–2020 ‘Challenging Homelessness, Changing Lives’ in January 2017 which will guide our approach in the coming years.

We will focus on two pillars:



Making sure that we can prevent homelessness before it happens is one of the most effective ways that we can tackle this crisis. We will aim to reach young people, adults and families who are facing homelessness early to ensure they have our support to keep the home they have.

Focus Ireland continued our work across housing, services and advocacy to respond as effectively as possible to the deepening housing and homelessness crisis in 2017.

Sadly, the problem continued to get worse as the number of people who were homeless shot up to a new record total of nearly 9,000 people by year end. However, it is important to stress that this crisis would be even worse without the work of our staff during the year. Focus Ireland services progressed again

in 2017 as we continued to shift our focus to prevention. Focus Ireland now provides services in Carlow, Clare, Cork, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Monaghan, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.

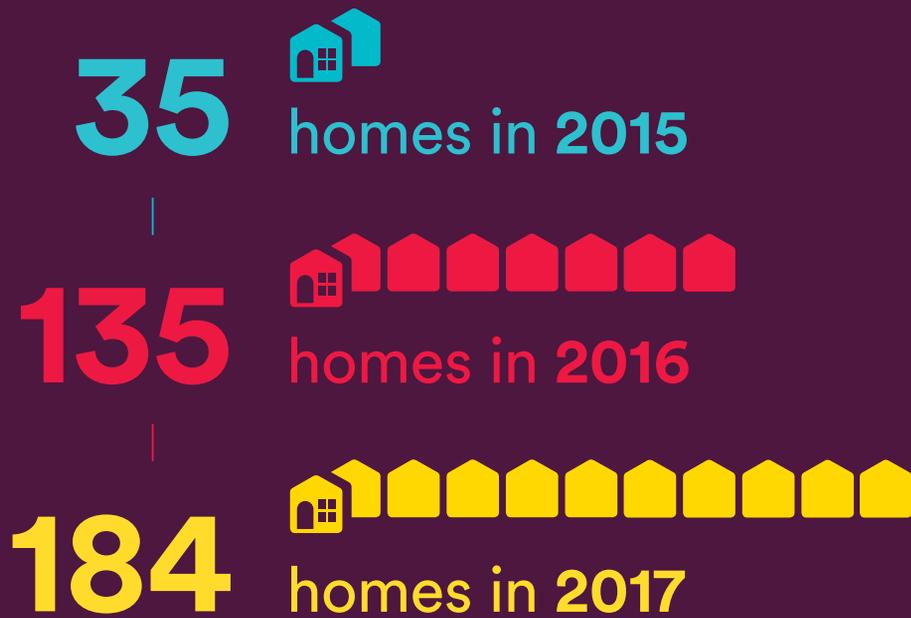
We are now also helping more people at risk of homelessness, supporting more people into new homes, building new homes and being there to fight for people when they need us the most.

We supported 1,065 households out of homelessness in 2017 with support from the State. This shows how Focus Ireland is working every day ‘Challenging Homelessness and Changing Lives’.

Behind every number is a human story or stories; a man, a woman, a family who are now in a home, or never became homeless in the first place because of the work of Focus Ireland. In 2017 this work meant we supported a record total of 14,500 people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness – compared to the 13,500 we supported in 2016.

Focus Ireland works in partnership with the State to achieve a high standard of work. We receive approximately 50% of our funding from the State including, local authorities, the HSE, Tusla and other statutory bodies.

The number of Focus Ireland homes provided in the last three years:



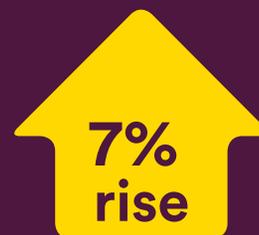
However, Focus Ireland is able to reach the number of people we do as 50% of our funding is raised through individual donations, corporate support and community events. Focus Ireland has a responsibility to never shy away from highlighting to the Government of the day what more could be done to end homelessness. People are four times more likely to move out of homelessness if they have a key worker.

This work continued apace in 2017 as we consistently presented our insights and highlighted the policies that we believe will start to solve the problem (proposals can be found on focusireland.ie). Many of the policies that have been outlined by the Government in its housing strategy 'Rebuilding Ireland' are, we believe, the right ones: increased social housing, rent regulation and rent supports that reflect market realities.

However, the implementation of these policies has not made any major inroads to ending the crisis as the policies are often so watered down that they are ineffective in delivering real change. The men, women and children who are homeless simply cannot afford to wait for years for a home. Homelessness is wrong and it damages lives. Focus Ireland's organisational strategy 2017–2020 firmly

restates our commitment to challenging homelessness and not merely managing it.

This strategy will lead our work towards ending this problem for good. We need to be resolute and strong in our conviction that this is the right thing to do. This is why we were critical of the Government's over-reliance on developing family hubs as a response to homelessness. Under our strategy, every Focus Ireland service and policy demand will be directed to the twin goals of preventing homelessness or supporting people to exit homelessness for good.



We supported over

14,500

people in 2017, a 7% rise from the 13,500 supported in 2016.