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Editorial

With *Rebuilding Ireland* now being rolled out, together with financial commitments including in the budget estimates for 2017, there is much expectation that the intended ‘renaissance’ in providing more social housing will see a significant impact on waiting lists over the duration of *Rebuilding Ireland*.

The target of 47,000 additional social rented homes to be provided by local authorities and housing associations gives a clearer focus on what is expected in the coming years until 2021. It is estimated that housing associations (approved housing bodies) are earmarked to provide at least a third of this supply. Many housing associations have already been enhancing their capacity in recent years, particularly through recruitment of specialist staff in areas of development, finance and housing management. This has been counterbalanced by the strengthening of boards of directors to provide the necessary oversight and strategic direction to lead the expansion of those housing associations. All these processes are continuing and more is being done. However, housing associations still require enabling support from local authorities and Government to ensure ambitions for enhanced delivery are met.

There has been a stronger focus by housing associations, by opportunity and necessity, on working with the private sector in recent years to source available properties and newly finished developments. However, it is important not to put all the eggs in one basket. There still has to be a strong focus in ensuring there are ready-to-go residential sites that are assembled for future housing association delivery. This process needs to start now, if not be already commenced. We shouldn’t be waiting for the latter years in the roll-out of *Rebuilding Ireland*, which will be too late. Site assembly and development requires time to translate into completed homes for people on the waiting list and homeless households. It is important to remember with the strategic development of sites, even for mixed tenure, that we avoid a repeat of the previous scenario when the private housing market became rapidly very active, and displaced land and sites required for social housing delivery.

Housing associations do and can assist local authorities in meeting their housing needs in a much greater way than ever before. Housing associations as organisations with a specific housing focus bring added value of drawing in off-balance sheet and loan finance as well as housing management expertise for different groups and tenures. The mixed funding scheme that housing associations now utilise, combining CALF, P & A together with loan finance, can provide specific solutions to local authorities’ need from Part V obligations, as well as regeneration. These are instruments housing associations have at their disposal, and which should be utilised in a much more consistent manner by local authorities.

Importantly, new financing and regulatory arrangement for the housing association sector has seen significantly increased activity and sanction of new projects by the sector in 2016. Government can also have a key enabling role with some associations taking on significantly greater loan finance and risk for enhanced delivery, in addition to the regulatory and financial frameworks. Adjustments and decoupling of existing legal, mortgage and administrative requirements would play a significant role in this respect. A collective target for all social delivery at local authority level, to include local authorities and housing associations, would help to embed housing associations and ensure they are playing their part. In 2015, the ICSH Survey of local authority elected members found that over 90% wanted to work in partnership with housing associations. This should be built upon so collectively we can reach the needs of greater numbers of households in housing need.

Donal McManus, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Council for Social Housing
Innovation, Change and Delivery Across the Sector

New Social Homes from Túath Housing

An Riasc, Finglas, Dublin 11 and Thornwood, Beaumont, Dublin 9
117 households will be accommodated in North Dublin across two schemes acquired by Túath Housing. To date, 14 out of 49 homes have been completed in An Riasc and 28 of 68 in Thornwood. The Finglas homes, funded via CALF from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and private finance from the Housing Finance Agency, have been acquired from Capital Scene Limited. Purchase of the three and four-bedroom houses as well as two and three-bedroom apartments and duplexes in the Thornwood scheme has been funded through 30% CALF input through the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and a loan for the remaining 70% through the Housing Finance Agency using European Investment Bank funds. The Beaumont scheme will accommodate households on the Dublin City Council housing list. Both schemes are being built to a minimum BER rating of A3.

James Street, Dublin 8
The Association purchased apartments from a receiver in James Street, Dublin 8 via Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funding from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. There is a mix of two and three-bedroom apartments, currently used for emergency accommodation for homeless persons. The scheme is located adjacent to a larger Túath facility (Sundial House) managed by De Paul Ireland, who will provide services at the new James Street apartments.

Church Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Ten apartments within the gated development in the centre of Dundalk come fully furnished to a turnkey standard. The development will cater for people from various backgrounds including homeless persons and persons with a disability.

Minister Simon Coveney Opens new Dublin North Inner City Sophia Project for Homeless

During the summer, Minister for Housing, Simon Coveney TD officially opened Sophia Sean McDermott Street, home to people who, until recently, were homeless, had experiences of rough sleeping, and who were presenting to homeless services with a range of complex needs. The project at Sean McDermott Street Lower in Dublin’s North Inner City was made possible following funding under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and in partnership with Dublin City Council. The existing building was refurbished from 36 single-bed accommodation units into 18 self-contained, one bedroom apartments for single people and couples requiring intensive support to live independently.

Support staff at Sophia Sean McDermott Street includes a Project Manager, Support Workers and Key Workers, in total nine highly qualified, dedicated and experienced social care staff. The staff posts are funded by Dublin City Council via the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The project also provides work to people under the Department of Social Protection Community Employment (CE) Scheme.

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government Simon Coveney, Derek Fay and Nicole Hogan at the Sophia housing complex on Sean McDermott Street.
**Respond! Housing Association**

**Moy Glas, Lucan**

Respond! Housing Association officially opened 14 new social housing units in Moy Glas in Lucan, Co. Dublin in July 2016. The development will house 14 families who were previously on the South Dublin County Council housing list, many for a very long time. There will be 58 children in the new development.

Attending the Street Party and Official Opening of the new Homes, the Mayor Of South Dublin and local Councillor, Guss O’Connell had this to say: “I would like, on behalf of the people of South Dublin, to welcome all the new residents of Moy Glas Glade to the Lucan Community. It is wonderful that 14 Families, including 20 Adults and 58 Children, have been taken off the housing list thanks to Respond! If we are to really solve our housing crises, then we need many more initiatives such as this.

The building of Moy Glas Glade was financed through a combination of the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and a Payment and Availability Agreement (PAA). Respond! Housing will manage the Moy Glas Glade estate providing family support services and attending to the day-to-day needs of the residents as well as the property.

Ned Brennan, Chief Operations Officer said: “We are proud of this development and hope that Moy Glas Glade will prove best practice in terms of the quality of the housing supplied, the quality of the support services for the residents and true cohesion among our residents and their neighbours. Housing is only the first step – real success comes from the creation of flourishing communities. We wish the new residents well as we continue our work building social housing and creating communities nationwide and would also like to express our gratitude to the Department of Housing and South Dublin County Council for their support with this project”.

**Clúid Housing Association**

**Cuirt Roisin**

Cuirt Roisin was an unfinished standalone block of 15 units purchased by Clúid through NAMA in 2015. It is located in the very desirable area of Cappagh Road in Galway City. There is a very high need of one and two bed units in Galway City and the City Council were very keen to support Clúid in this acquisition.

Clúid procured a Design Team and Contractor to complete the units and external works. A complete fit out of the building was undertaken along with extensive external works providing car parking, footpaths, lighting etc. The works were completed to a very high standard with high quality finishes and energy efficient heating provided throughout.

Project works were completed on time and within budget. The project is funded by the Housing Finance Agency through CALF and Private Finance. The completed complex consists of 12 two-bed apartments and three one-bed apartments.

**St Vincent De Paul Society, Foxford**

The Foxford Conference of SVP recently opened a scheme in Foxford Co. Mayo comprising of eight two-bedroom units for the elderly. The dwellings in the scheme have been awarded an A3 BER Rating and were designed with consideration to changing mobility and accessibility for tenants. The development, funded through the Capital Assistance Scheme, is a testament to the hardworking conference led by Joseph Davitt.

**Opening of John’s College Redevelopment**

On Friday 22nd July, the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal, Damien English, T.D. performed the official opening of the John’s College campus in Waterford. The impressive re-construction project, build ahead of schedule, includes 21 new apartments in the College, with a 10-bed group home and 36 new-build one-bed apartments overlooking the Folly. The total redevelopment costs came to €12 million. All of the residents in John’s College came from the Waterford City and County Local Authority waiting list. The apartments cater mainly for Older People and people with specific needs and requirements who are capable of independent living.

**Innovation, Change and Delivery Across the Sector**
Regulation and Legislation Update

Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2015 – Implementation Rollout

Since the commencement of the Act on 7th April, the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) have received 1,004 registration applications from various housing associations across the country. There are now just 6 months left until the reduced fee period ends (6th April 2017). ICSH is urging housing associations to start the registration process as soon as possible to ensure that they have enough time to complete the process.

The RTB have also received 11 dispute cases from the sector. The adjudication process for disputes is currently taking approximately 1–2 months and telephone mediation is proving very successful with agreement reached in approximately 4 weeks.

Since commencement, ICSH has played a key role in providing advice and practical support on the legislative changes to housing associations nationwide and have developed a number of important guidance notes in response to queries raised in the sector. These notes are available on our website here: www.icsh.ie/content/rtb/residential-tenancies-amendment-act-2015-information.

For support and guidance on the legislation and the registration process, please contact Keelin McCarthy, Tenancies Registration Support Officer at keelin@icsh.ie or 01 6618334 / 085-8596571.

Charities Regulator Annual Return

All housing associations should now be signed up with the Charities Regulator. For many associations, the annual report to the Charities Regulator will now be due (completed online by logging in to your account). The Annual Filing Date is due ten months after the financial year end. You should ensure your association’s details are up to date before completing your annual report. You can add, remove or edit your Trustees, Addresses and many other areas of information. All information requested is for the annual period. If you have any queries on the annual report or on the Charities Regulator in general, please contact Kevin Ryan at 01 661 8334 or kevin@icsh.ie

Tier Two Financial Pilot

For members who have signed up to the Voluntary Regulation Code (VRC), the annual return for 2015 is now available to complete. All members who are signed up to the VRC by the end of August 2016 will have to complete a return for 2015. The deadline for return is 31st October 2016. If members need assistance with any aspect of the return, please contact Kevin Ryan at the number below.

Members who were signed up to the VRC in time to complete their annual return for 2014 should have recently received their annual assessment report. This will include recommendations for change/improvement in areas such as governance/financial management. If you have any queries on your report, or require assistance in implementing any of the actions, please contact Kevin Ryan, Compliance Development Officer at 01 6618334 or kevin@icsh.ie

Regulation Assessment

For members who have signed up to the Voluntary Regulation Code (VRC), the annual return for 2015 is now available to complete. All members who are signed up to the VRC by the end of August 2016 will have to complete a return for 2015. The deadline for return is 31st October 2016. If members need assistance with any aspect of the return, please contact Kevin Ryan at the number below.

Members who were signed up to the VRC in time to complete their annual return for 2014 should have recently received their annual assessment report. This will include recommendations for change/improvement in areas such as governance/financial management. If you have any queries on your report, or require assistance in implementing any of the actions, please contact Kevin Ryan, Compliance Development Officer at 01 6618334 or kevin@icsh.ie
The Department of Housing, Community, Planning and Local Government (DCPLG) issued a call for proposals in July for the delivery through either the construction, or acquisition, of housing to cater for the priority groups under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). These include homeless persons, elderly persons and people with a disability – with a particular emphasis, but not exclusively, on moving people with a disability from a congregated setting into community based living.

In order to progress implementation of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPwD) 2011-2016, the Department allocated ring-fenced funding of €10m from the 2016 CAS budget specifically to provide accommodation for people with a disability moving from a congregated setting into community based living.

Housing associations must adhere to the guiding principles and requirements set out in Circular 45/2015 whereby service providers and housing associations must engage with housing authorities and the HSE in developing proposals that will support people with disabilities to move out of congregated settings. Certification is required to this effect when submitting proposals.

Following the call, ICSH members have prepared a large number of proposals for consideration by local authorities and many are now awaiting approval. The dates for submission of acquisition proposals have passed however listed below are the remaining closing dates for construction projects still open at the time of going to print.

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<td>Acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cork City Council</td>
<td>31st October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dublin City Council</td>
<td>22nd July 2016 (5pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dublin Co. Co.</td>
<td>29th July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galway City Council</td>
<td>29th July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galway Co. Co.</td>
<td>5th August (4pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kilkenny Co. Co.</td>
<td>Not Specified [drawdown by 30th November]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limerick City &amp; Co.Co.</td>
<td>5th August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offaly Co. Co.</td>
<td>Not Specified [drawdown by 30th November]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roscommon Co. Co.</td>
<td>12th August (5pm)</td>
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The HFA Board reduced the interest rates charged on existing offerings and approved a range of new fixed rate lending products to support the funding of new social housing and infrastructure projects by housing associations and local authorities. The new range of products provides extremely competitive fixed interest rates ranging from 5 to 30 years. Local authorities will be able to borrow fixed rate funding for 25 years at 1.5% or lower. In addition the current variable rate charged to local authorities for non-mortgage business was reduced by 0.25%, saving the sector €6 million in interest costs per annum.

The third drawdown, of €15 million 25 year fixed rate funding, under the €150 million European Investment Bank facility, was completed on 15 September to fund the development of new homes by Co-operative Housing Ireland, The Iveagh Trust and Túath Housing Association in Dublin and Wexford. The EIB Finance Contract, together with the €150 million Council of Europe Development Bank Framework Agreement, which was signed on 7 June and first drawn down on 7 July, will strongly support the HFA’s drive to reduce the cost of long term finance for housing associations and local authorities.

During 2016, work has continued with housing associations regarding off-balance sheet financial vehicles. This was being examined from a number of perspectives. Firstly, a financial vehicle being off the Government balance sheet, and secondly, the housing association’s own balance sheet and improving associations ability to increase borrowing capacity in the future. In addition, the Government has committed both in the Programme for Government and Rebuilding Ireland to support an ICSH/ sector led off balance sheet vehicle. An ICSH/AHB working group has been progressing this initiative with a number of interested AHBs, whilst engaging also with a number of financial bodies investors.
Will it rise to the challenge?
Minister Simon Coveney published the Government’s Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, *Rebuilding Ireland*, on July 19 2016. Designed to address the chronic under-supply of housing and the problems that deficit has created for families and communities, it seeks to address all aspects of the housing system – social, affordable, private and private rented housing. In terms of what the Plan sets out to achieve, much of it is laudable. However, the real test will be whether the implementation of the targets and commitments live up to the ambition.

Main Objectives of the New Plan
The Plan commits the Government to 47,000 social housing units by 2021 with funding of €5.35bn. The plan is based around 5 high level actions (Pillars)

**Pillar One Address Homelessness**
The fact that the Government is recognising homelessness as its number 1 pillar is appropriate. However, as a basic human requirement, the State should recognise and makes every effort to provide housing for its citizens. What does Pillar 1 say?
- Target of mid-2017 for phasing out the use of emergency accommodation
- Acquire 1,600 vacant houses
- 1,500 new rapid build units by 2018
- Supports and initiatives for families in emergency accommodation (access to creches, free transport and so on)
- 300 tenancies by 2017 through the *Housing First* Teams in Dublin

**Our comments**: Based on the fact that the flow into homelessness of families is not stopping, there are concerns that the phasing-out of emergency accommodation will not be achieved. The ambition for rapid build units is unrealistic given the pace of delivery to date. Also, the HSE Service Plan for 2017 will need to allocate sufficient resources to enable the *Housing First* teams to be effective.

**Pillar Two Accelerate Social Housing**
Pillar 2 affects housing associations directly and will hopefully lead to significant improvements in the system for delivering social housing. What does it say?
- 47,000 homes by 2021 with €5.35bn
- Housing Delivery Office within his own Department with the emphasis on overseeing key sites and improving overall delivery
- Housing Agency revolving fund of €70m (which housing associations will work with)
- Special purpose vehicle from the NTMA, tasked with adding an additional 5,000 units over 5 years

**Our comments**: The figure of 47,000 falls short of the 50,000 recommended by the Oireachtas Committee on Homelessness and Housing. The new Housing Delivery Office will need authority within the Department to streamline the complex process spread across numerous sections, the Housing Agency and local authorities. The Action Plan does include a commitment to establish a co-ordination unit for AHBs to be established in the Housing Agency as well as support for an ICSH/sector led SPV to attract new investors into the sector. These commitments are welcome and key areas to be progressed by the Department within the coming months. However, access to local authority lands by housing associations is central to increasing social housing delivery and without specific plans in place to allocate lands to housing associations through strategic planning, the reliance on the private market will continue to dictate the pace of delivery of social housing. Expanding the use of Part 8 planning processes, as well as multi-annual funding programme for CALF have been sought for some time, and are welcome. But addressing the housing needs of people who are vulnerable, such as older people and people with disabilities, have been restated without any new commitments.
Pillar Three Build More Homes
The key component of Pillar 3 is a commitment to increase the supply of housing every year by 2020. What does it say?

- 25,000 new homes every year by 2020
- 200m Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund to get the private sector building
- Legislate for schemes of 100+ units to be made directly to An Bord Pleanála

Our comments: Arguably, the figure of 25,000 will not provide an adequate overall supply of homes. And the proposal of fast-tracking planning for larger schemes is highly contentious. The National Land Supply Management Strategy will ensure that sites in Local Authority and public ownership will be identified and mapped by a State Lands Management Group, with appropriate lands to be master planned to deliver increased mixed-tenure housing, including social and more affordable housing. It is critical that the strategy allocate lands to housing associations who can deliver social and mixed-tenure schemes on them.

Pillar Four Improve the Rental Sector
The Plan commits to develop a strategy for a viable and sustainable rental sector by Quarter 4 2016. What does it say?

- Legislate to address matters relating to tenancy protection and strengthening the role and powers of the RTB.
- Introduce an affordable rental scheme
- Student accommodation strategy

Our comments: The time lag here is unhelpful given the crucial role of the private rented sector in housing young people, single people and families. Much of the overflow of households who would qualify for public housing has seeped into the private rental sector through rent supplement and RAS and now HAP and indeed much of the homelessness now occurring is due to rent increases leading to economic evictions. The housing association sector eagerly awaits the details of the new affordable rental scheme which has been looked for over the past number of years.

Pillar Five Utilise Existing Housing.
This part of the Plan is a very sensible approach to take where supply is far below the level required. What does it say?

- National Vacant Housing Re-Use Strategy using CSO 2016 data
- Repair and Leasing Initiative (RLI)
- Review the Tenant (Incremental Purchase) Scheme

Our comments: an evidence-based approach to compiling a vacant units register is sensible as is the RLI. But it is seriously questionable how a tenant purchase scheme could continue to operate in the middle of a homeless and social housing crisis.

Next Steps
The ICSH will be working closely with the Department on commitments affecting housing associations as well as the broad spectrum of the Plan. In particular, the establishment of the new unit will be an early focus. Also, greater detail on access to sites will be key as this aspect of the Plan requires clarity. In the Autumn, the proposed strategy for the rental sector will require engagement by all actors, with the private sector central to this, in order to identify whether commitments can or will be met.
Budget 2017

The ICSH has issued a response to Budget 2017 broadly welcoming the additional housing allocation whilst highlighting the need for release of state lands to housing associations to enable the sector to deliver the target of 15,000 homes by 2021. The Government has made a substantial funding commitment of €1.2bn, a 50% increase over 2016 to meet the needs of 21,000 households in 2017.

Current Funding

A total provision of €581m has been allocated to support delivery of 16,600 units.

- Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP): Increased funding of €84 (additional €26m from 2016) for delivery of 600 direct leased units in 2017. Expected total delivery - 2,250 under SHCEP.

- RAS: Funding of €134m for 1,000 new RAS transfers.

- HAP: Increase in funding by €105m to €152.7m in 2017. Further 15,000 households to be accommodated and ongoing costs of 17,000 HAP tenancies.

- Homelessness: Increase in funding by €28m to €98m for emergency accommodation; funding for 3,000 exits from emergency accommodation; tripled target of 300 people in Housing First programme.

ICSH Before Special Committee on Housing and Homelessness

In April 2016, Dáil Éireann established a Special Committee on Housing and Homelessness to review the critical issues and publish a report with recommendations. This was published on 17th June 2016. After 40 hearings and 90 written submissions made, the final report, published on 17th June 2016, made 23 key recommendations and more than 50 in total, some of which have been addressed in Rebuilding Ireland. There were 14 members of the All Party Committee and all but one signed up to the report. The committee has since been dissolved and the issue of housing is covered in the Oireachtas through the committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The ICSH appeared before the committee on 28th April 2016 and gave a detailed overview of the history and development of the sector, the adaptation to changes in the funding and regulatory environment, the housing expertise, provision of supports to tenants and capacity for future delivery of social and affordable housing.

The questions and comments from members of the committee demonstrated the wide array of views of elected members of housing associations and the role they play in the delivery of housing. Many were supportive about what the sector has accomplished to date. Other views were less than favourable and it is difficult to reconcile these views and political positions with the fact that housing associations are providing quality homes at affordable rents to families, formerly homeless households, older people and people with disabilities on the housing waiting list.

The potential of the sector is still being questioned and the ICSH is working with both local authorities and elected members to encourage and engender support for housing associations. Staff of the ICSH are attending a large number of Housing Strategic Policy Committees across the country, delivering training to elected members and attending events under the auspices of the Association of Irish Local Government for Councillors. Strategic partnerships between housing authorities and housing associations will be crucial to increase the scale beyond what was planned in the Social Housing Strategy and the goals in Rebuilding Ireland and it is the support of elected members at both local and national level that will enable the sector and social housing delivery in general. Over 2,400 homes were provided by housing associations in 2015 from new build, acquisitions and re-lets and there are a further 5,170 homes in the pipeline by 2018. Despite mixed perceptions among elected members, the sector will continue to play its part.

Capital Funding (€655m)

A total provision of €732m has been allocated to support delivery of 4,450 units.

- Traveller Accommodation: €9m allocation (an increase of €3.5m) for Traveller-specific accommodation schemes.

- Housing Adaptation grants: Increased funding (additional €2.6m) to enable 9,000 grants in 2017.

- Housing Agency rotating fund: €70m capital funding to engage with banks and investment companies to acquire properties for social housing nationally – expected to deliver 1,600 units by 2020.

- Repair and Leasing Initiative: €6m - Local Authorities to provide financial assistance to bring properties up to standard and then leased for social housing – expected to deliver 150 units.

- Buy and Renew Initiative: €25m - To support local authorities and AHBs to purchase private housing units in need of works to make available for social housing.
We have been witnessing a rapidly unfolding crisis in homelessness in Ireland. And, as Minister Damien English said recently, we know it’s getting worse. Readers might recall that this time last year, we discussed the growing number of families being made homeless and it’s worth reflecting on how much this has changed in only a few months. Figures for one week in December 2015 counted a total of 5,241 adults and children presenting as homeless. The figures for a week in August 2016 are 6,611. That’s a 20% increase in six months.

All of the major homelessness organisations have been reporting a massive surge in service use, putting their capacity to deliver services under severe strain. Launching their 2015 Annual Report in August, the Peter McVerry Trust reported a 89% increase in participant engagements across their services. The Simon Communities, recently launched, ‘Cut the Red Tape Campaign’ has also been looking at the administrative processes and poor interagency working that have been acting as barriers for people seeking to exit homelessness. And at their recent ‘Housing, Homelessness and Rights’ conference, the organisation called for the right to a home (recommended by the 2014 Constitutional Convention) to be firmly put on the agenda for the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Focus Ireland pulled no punches in their review of homelessness in 2015; the worst year for family homelessness. The Focus 2015 Annual Report states that a monthly average of 34 families being made homeless per month rose to 60 in 2015. Reassuringly, volunteering numbers within the organisation rose by 52% over the course of the year, reflecting both the extent to which the organisation relies on unpaid staff, and the heightened awareness and solidarity of the Irish public with those at sharp end of the homelessness crisis. Focus Ireland held a major conference on 27 September called ‘No Going Back’, at which the organisation’s President, Sr Stan stated that we need to ‘build sustainable pathways out of homelessness’, providing homes for families and individuals – not just better emergency accommodation. Focus is currently planning to double their housing stock, and provide 600 more homes to help tackle the crisis.

Rebuilding Ireland Launch: Pillar 1 – Address Homelessness

ON September 22, The Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Simon Coveney TD, launched Pillar 1: Address Homelessness, the first of five pillars under the Rebuilding Ireland housing action plan on Thursday 22 September. The launch was livestreamed and the commitment of a ‘whole of government’ plan was reflected by the attendance of the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children & Youth Affairs and Simon Harris TD, Minister for Health.

The Minister stated that during a single week in August, 6,311 people used homeless services, and almost 90% were in Dublin. Just over 650 were accommodated in hotels and he said that by the middle of 2017, hotels would be used in very limited circumstances. Reflecting on the housing landscape in general, he said that having only 7% to 8% social housing of the houses in Ireland just wasn’t good enough He went on to commit to the following:

- 320 rapid-build homes completed or under construction by the end of 2016.
- Expansion of the homeless HAP scheme in the Dublin region to create 1750 tenancies by the end of 2017.
- Tripling the target for the Housing First teams in Dublin from 100 tenancies to 300 tenancies and strengthening the housing-led approach in other urban areas.

Rebuilding Ireland Launch: Pillar 2 – Accelerate Social Housing

Minister Coveney was joined by Ministers of State, Damien English and Catherine Byrne at Charlemont Street to launch Pillar 2 – Accelerate Social Housing, the second action Pillar from the Rebuilding Ireland housing action plan. Dublin City Council is engaged in a major Private Public Partnership (PPP) scheme at Charlemont Street to supply homes for families on the housing waiting list.

The Minister outlined the overall targets for Rebuilding Ireland and announced details of a series of initiatives, including the ‘Buy and Renewal’ funding scheme, which is open to housing associations. This allows for the purchase and renewal of housing units in need of remediation, to be made available for social housing use. This scheme complements the new ‘Repair & Leasing Initiative’ announced, whereby housing associations can approach owners of vacant, privately-owned houses in need of repair/remediation, with the option to either lease/repair the housing unit, or to buy and repair/remediate the unit.

The Minister stated that in 2017, local authorities & approved housing bodies will provide 5,050 homes through building, buying & leasing. The overall target for the sector is 15,000 by 2021. The ICSH have consistently raised the issue of access to state land which is critical for the sector to achieve this level of output.
A Housing Model for Older People

Launch of Dublin City Age Friendly Programme Housing Working Group Report A Housing Model for Older People

The ICSH has highlighted the gap in housing provision and choice for older people in Ireland for many years. Housing associations have bridged this gap in the absence of an appropriately developed framework through the delivery and management of nearly 10,000 homes and provision of supports to older people. These options, in the heart of communities, have enabled people to live longer in their homes by providing an alternative to residential or nursing care. The challenge is bringing together the housing and health requirements for housing associations to continue to provide both housing options and the continuum of support tailored to the changing needs of older persons.

We welcomed the opportunity to participate on the Dublin City Age Friendly Programme Housing Working Group to agree an outline for an innovative housing scheme for older people and to develop a prototype project for Dublin which could be a transferable model nationally. Importantly, the working group involved representatives from Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Department of Health, HSE and Dublin City Council along with representatives from NGOs.

Over six months, the group was involved in mapping, site visits, literature reviews, workshops with older people in Dublin and staff who work with older people in the community. The working group, with the assistance of Dublin City Council have identified a site for a demonstration project in Inchicore and it is the intention that the project would encapsulate all 15 recommendations. Of significance is recommendation 12 that states the intention that the scheme would be developed and run by an approved housing body and that expressions of interest will be sought in this regard.

The HSE have written in its intention to financially support the DCC pilot project within their 2016 operational plan and this commitment will be carried over to further operational plans to enable this project to come to fruition (recommendation 10).

Housing associations have an excellent track record in the provision of housing for older people and are managing a wide network of housing schemes across the country. The experience and innovative practices from members have been fed into the working group by the ICSH and are incorporated into the principles of best practice informing the proposed housing model.

The full report is available on the ICSH website and members will be contacted as soon as the call for expressions of interest is issued by Dublin City Council.
In Tribute

The housing association sector relies heavily on the commitments of voluntary board members, without whom we would not be able to deliver on our mandate to provide homes for those most in need. The ICSH recognise the contributions and dedication of recently deceased members, who will be sadly missed.

**Sr Veronica Gilsenan**
Lann Elo Housing

THE death of Sr Veronica Gilsenan of the Convent of Mercy, marks the end of an era in Tullamore. A public health nurse by profession, Sr Veronica was also a volunteer most of her life, working in particular with the disadvantaged and the disabled. Educated in the Convent of Mercy in Navan, she entered the order in Tullamore in 1938. She helped found the Offaly Branch of the Irish Wheelchair Association and she played a key role in establishing the Tullamore Housing Association ‘Lann Elo’, which provides housing services to homeless people.

**Tony Gilmore**
North & East Housing Association

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Tony Gilmore, one of the original founders of North & East Housing Association and the first Chairperson, a position he held for 20 years. He performed his obligations as Chair with enthusiasm and commitment. Another founding member, Pat Lennon, spoke of Tony’s commitment to North and East: “he was a poet, writer, teacher and committed member of the Labour Party. I will remember him most as a decent human being who gave much of his time for the benefit of other people exemplified by his commitment to North and East and the disadvantaged young people of the Dublin’s inner city”.

**David Wilkinson**
Dublin Central Mission

David Wilkinson was Director of Sheltered Housing for nine years up to his retirement in May 2015. David spent much of his working life in Guinness and after his first retirement, he carved out a second career in the area of Care for the Older Person. David became involved with Dublin Central Mission (DCM) in setting up Mount Tabor Care Centre in Sandymount. DCM also had Sheltered Housing units in Margaretholme, Sandymount and Ailt an Óir in Glenageary, and David moved across to take responsibility for these. He was an accomplished musician, church organist, and choir director, an interest that often came through in activities he planned for his beloved residents. Following a long battle with cancer, David died on 28th June. He is survived by his wife June and his four children and four grandchildren.

**Trevor Morrow**
Villiers Housing Association

Trevor’s association with the Board of Villiers goes back to the early 1980s when he joined the Board of Governors as the Church of Ireland representative. Villiers Charitable Institutions was originally founded in 1819 and in the mid-1990s, the Widows Homes were modernised and converted into a Sheltered Housing complex with the assistance of the Irish Council for Social Housing. As a practising Chartered Accountant, Trevor was able to combine his considerable business and financial skills with his vision of caring for the needs of the elderly residents in the Villiers homes, and he was actively involved in securing Grants for this work, which cost in the region of £800,000. Trevor was a very active and influential member and Secretary of the Board for over 30 years up to his recent death. His advice and input at every level will be sadly missed.
ICSH News and Events

Tier 1 Seminar September 29th

The annual ICSH Tier One Seminar, an event specifically aimed at board members and employees of smaller associations, took place on Thursday September 29th in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8. This followed on from last year’s successful seminar and featured presentations from expert speakers on topical issues such as financial governance and best practice for smaller charities, asset management and governance in the context of the Voluntary Regulation Code.

Our CEO, Donal McManus, opened the seminar stating that the government’s expectation for the sector was to deliver one third of the 47,000 social housing units committed to in Rebuilding Ireland over the next six years. He said it was a big ask, but 2,000 units from Tier 1 housing associations would be a massive contribution to this. Donal encouraged attendees to identify their ASK and their OFFER. He said the added value (the OFFER) of Tier 1 providers was their local focus, capacity to provide housing for tenants with special needs as well as management expertise. It’s then up to the local authorities (the ASK) to provide sites and tenants.

Tony Ward, Financial Director at The Wheel offered a lively presentation on financial governance for smaller boards. He said organisations need to be visible online, with their financial statements in plain view. Attendees spoke out about the rising costs of financial audits for Companies Limited by Guarantee, and that accounting firms seemed unwilling to take on the work. Tony also reminded members of their responsibility under the new Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13 to provide disclosure of all public funding in their annual accounts.

The seminar continued after lunch with presentations by Paula Kenny of the ICSH on the future regulatory requirement of stock condition surveys and how this can contribute to active asset management. The ICSH is currently developing guidance for members in this area and members present provided useful input and feedback into what they require in this. Alma Gallagher of Clár IRD spoke to members about the potential of the Warmer Homes Scheme and the process that is followed to get involved.

Finally, the seminar was closed by a well-received presentation focusing on governance and internal management by Justin Moran of Mazars Consultants, particularly highlighting some of the changing practices, roles and requirements as we enter an increased phase of accountability and transparency in the community and voluntary sector.

Supported Housing October 5th

This seminar explored some of the key issues around providing housing and services for older people and people with a disability. Speakers focused on the impact of current policy on supported housing for housing practitioners, supporting people with dementia to live in their own homes, the issue of stress management and compassion fatigue for front-line staff and the impact of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015.

ICSH Housing Finance Conference 20-21 October, Newpark Hotel Kilkenny

This year the Conference will explore the provisions within the Government’s recently published Action Plan, ‘Rebuilding Ireland’, and will address and link the Financing, Delivery and Management challenges in meeting expectation and ambition towards a more appropriate housing supply. In fulfilling delivery requirements, the Conference will explore the financial rightsizing of the sector, looking at new state funding investment, loan finance mechanisms — including lender requirements — while also addressing innovative strategic funding options to address off balance sheet requirements. With high delivery expectations, the conference will link financial arrangements to explore a range of delivery options to accelerate provision with key stakeholder perspectives from both the public and private sector on potential collaborative and supportive delivery arrangements, and the need to deliver value for money. The conference will explore housing management practices in meeting special needs accommodation provision, and also asset management requirements from regulatory and operational perspectives, drawing on good practice and experiences from Ireland and abroad.

Our expert line up of speakers will include senior representatives from the Department of Housing Planning, Community & Local Government, the Housing Agency, lending institutions, local authorities, the HSE as well as key economic and financial analysts and housing associations from across Ireland and the UK whose opinions and knowledge will help housing practitioners understand and navigate their financial, delivery and management challenges and opportunities ahead.

FINANCING FOR DELIVERY & MANAGEMENT
ICSH Social Housing

Changes to Garda Vetting Procedures

The ICSH has been an authorised signatory for Garda vetting for a number of years now and as of July of this year, vetting applicants which come through the ICSH can now access e-vetting which should significantly reduce processing times for vetting in the future.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, which was commenced in April 2016, requires vetting for all employees, directors, volunteers, interns or anyone else engaged in what’s referred to in the Act as “relevant work”. It is a criminal offence to employ someone for such work who has not been vetted. If you are not carrying out this relevant work, then you do not have to be vetted, although you still can be if you’d like to as a matter of good practice.

Relevant work consists of the following in relation to vulnerable persons. There is a different list for work that relates to children:

- Work involving access to a vulnerable person in a school, hospital, designated centre under the 2007 Health Act or 2001 Mental Health Act.
- Treatment, therapy or counselling to a vulnerable person.
- Provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to a vulnerable person
- Provision of health and personal social services to a vulnerable person
- Provision of advice, guidance and developmental services to vulnerable persons
- Driver of a public service vehicle used only for conveying vulnerable persons
- Work as a priest or religious minister
- Accommodating a vulnerable person in own home
- Research involving access to vulnerable persons
- Assessment of a person’s suitability to act as a care representative
- Managing a designated centre

If you are interested in having your staff or volunteers vetted, you should contact the ICSH with your details and the ICSH vetting form will be forwarded to you. All forms and results will be treated in the strictest of confidence and in line with Data Protection guidelines. A charge of €5 per vetting application will be charged to ICSH members. This fee is subject to change.

For further information, contact Catherine McGillycuddy, Membership Development Officer on 01 6618334 or catherine@icsh.ie.

CalF Workshop November 10th

The CPD workshop, taking place in the Ashling Hotel, is targeted at both local authorities and housing associations and will give an overview of the Capital Advance Leasing Facility including information relating to the application and assessment process, clarifying the role and responsibilities of the Department, local authority and Housing Association in each aspect of the process. The afternoon session will allow for learning on the workings of the ICSH Financial Model in a step by step manner using worked examples for both acquisition and new build projects.

Partnership Working for Housing Associations and Local Authority Elected Members

November 16th

This seminar, aimed at local authority elected members will take place on Wednesday, 16th October in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8. The seminar will feature speakers from both local authorities and from the housing association sector to discuss ways the sectors can work together over the coming months and years to help deliver housing solutions. Partnership working between the two sectors has been so important in the last few years and will be more vital than ever in the coming years with ambitious delivery targets outlined in government’s Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. The day will also feature visits to housing associations schemes that have been successfully delivered through a process of partnership with local authorities.

Social Housing Fundamentals for Housing Associations

21st and 22nd November

This two-day course, delivered as part of the National Housing Training and Development Programme is designed for new staff of housing associations and for those requiring an update on the latest developments in housing.

The course is divided into four sessions. On the first day there are two sessions providing the context for the work in the housing area. The first session deals with an overview of the policy framework for social housing. In the second session, there is a briefing on the current state of the housing market in Ireland and on how this may impact on the supply of and demand for social housing.

Day two of the course concentrates on the regulatory environment. The first session examines the legislative framework within which social housing is provided. The second session sets out the regulatory requirements that govern the operation of housing associations.

Contact Catherine McGillycuddy at Catherine@icsh.ie or 01 6618334 for further details on any of these events.
Housing Europe Conference 2016

If people do not have a degree of certainty about their future, of having a roof over their head, an income, assurance of safety in their neighbourhood, there is no confidence and no sustainable growth. We must make the link between people’s every day concerns and policy makers at national and EU levels.

Housing Europe President, Marc Calon

The Housing Europe General Assembly 2016 took place on 14-15 September in Geneva. An important conference on the future of housing policies, as part of the #housing4all campaign also took place. ICSH Chief Executive, Donal McManus attended.

Many countries in Europe are at the crossroads of reforming their housing systems under pressure of an extended housing crisis; more affordable homes are needed. How can policy makers respond to these changing needs? What is the right policy mix? The conference “The Housing Policies of the future: How to make them work” took place on September 15th at the UN European Headquarters, the Palace of Nations in Geneva and brought together more than 180 stakeholders, including housing providers, representatives from a wide range of housing providers, ministry representatives from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, local authorities, international institutions, academia and civil society.

USA

Housing costs burden on households

The most recent American Community Survey found that 37% of households (42.3m) spent 30% of their pre-tax income for housing. In addition, 20.6m households in the USA paying more than 50% of their combined income for housing are considered cost overburdened. Housing is considered affordable in Europe and North America when households do not spend more than 30% of their disposable income on access to decent and appropriate housing. This is often known as the 30% rule. This includes mortgages for owners and rent for tenants and may, but not always, include utility bills.

Sweden

Social housing companies force down construction prices by 25%

SABO, the Swedish Association of Public Housing Companies, represent 300 member companies who collectively manage around 725,000 dwellings in Sweden. 1 in 7 Swedes lives in public housing which is universal and open to everyone. SABO member companies identified the problem of spiralling construction costs. SABO has implemented three procurement programmes for ready to occupy apartments which was procured through a bidding contest. The construction prices set in the procurement process correspond to a construction price which is 25% lower for the public housing company. Known as the Kombohus programme, it demonstrated that it was possible to reduce construction costs and build housing at a lower cost. It is intended that 11,000 homes will initially be completed through the Kombohus.

Germany

Modular housing solutions

An increasing number of members of the GDW (housing federation in Germany) have been using high quality modular housing to provide housing to a range of households in housing need. In Germany, members of the GDW manage up to 30% of all rental flats. The programme of modular housing ensured a much more rapid construction time for the assembly of new homes on a significant scale. As the GDW are concerned with a range of issues such as construction costs in Germany, they have asked the Federal Government to establish a Construction Commission to examine these issues.