

## **Savage Budget Cuts Will Lead to Increase in Homelessness**

Focus Ireland has warned today that the savage cuts made in Budget 2011 will force more people to become homeless and will also act to keep many of the 5,000 people who are currently homeless trapped living in limbo in long-term homelessness. Today's budget slashed a massive 36% cut in the social housing budget and a substantial 6% cut in funding for HSE regions.

This means €300million less for social housing provision in 2011 at a time when social housing waiting lists are increasingly dramatically and €400million less for HSE bodies that fund, among other services, those for people who are homeless.

The charity said that sweeping cuts across welfare payments and funding for services & housing will increase the hardship of many thousands of the most vulnerable families and single people in society.

Focus Ireland CEO Joyce Loughnan said: "Today's budget will penalise people who are homeless in three separate ways. They will have their already meagre incomes cut forcing them further into poverty. The providers of homeless services will see a reduction in their funding at a time when demand for those services is on the increase."

"And the massive 36% cut in the social housing budget will condemn those trapped in emergency accommodation to long-term homelessness with little hope of moving on to a home. "

She added: 'Taken together these cuts will cause a severe deepening of the homeless problem across the country and puts in doubt the future viability of the Governments own homeless strategy. The Government and opposition parties must realise this road makes no sense as these funding cuts - and the continued lack of provision of housing -

will mean that people who are ready to move on from being homeless will be forced to remain in expensive emergency accommodation.”

“This will keep many families and single people trapped in homelessness and it will actually cost the State more to keep them in this emergency accommodation on a long-term basis than it would to provide homes and support to move on to independent living.”

“The Government has failed to achieve its agreed target of ending long-term homeless and the need to sleep rough by the end of this year and I regret to say that this Budget will act to undo much of the good work achieved in recent years in tackling these issues.”

Focus Ireland also warned that homeless services will not be able to cope with the increased demand for support as more new people become homeless and less of those who are currently homeless will be able to move on to a home