

'Housing for All' critical to Budget 2022 says COPE Galway

By **Michael Malone** - September 29, 2021

COPE Galway has set out a number of measures in its submission on the upcoming Budget 2022, to respond to the needs of the people who the Galway charity works with and supports.

In the submission, **COPE Galway** describes the recently published Government housing plan 'Housing for All' as critical to the lives of so many people who are experiencing the negative effects of the current housing crisis.

Progressing the implementation of this plan is a priority for Government that must be reflected in Budget 2022, COPE Galway says.

They are seeking a commitment of the necessary resources to deliver much-needed new additional housing to begin working towards eradicating homelessness – a stated commitment in the housing plan.

"'Housing for All' must make a real difference in tackling the housing crisis, which is blighting the lives of so many," said Martin O'Connor of COPE Galway.

"Budget 2022 is the Government's opportunity to demonstrate a clear commitment to delivering on this plan and providing for the necessary levels of investment."

COPE Galway points to the findings of their Autumn Equinox Census as a clear illustration of why it is critical to tackle the issues of housing shortages and homelessness.

They conducted a point-in-time census of the number of people COPE Galway is accommodating through its homeless services over a 24-hour period between Tuesday September 21 and Wednesday 22 2021.

It revealed that on the Tuesday night there were 298 people – men, women and children – living in emergency accommodation provided by COPE Galway, with a further 108 living in transitional accommodation while trying to secure long-term permanent accommodation.

There were also 25 people identified as sleeping rough in Galway City on that night.

“This is a situation that should not go on any longer than is absolutely necessary and despite all of the challenges there are in respect of the new additional housing units being provided, Budget 2022 needs to send out a very clear statement of intent to tackle this situation,” said Mr O’Connor.

COPE Galway has proposed a range of other specific measures in its submission to tackle homelessness, including increasing the funding levels available for homelessness prevention, the resourcing of a youth homelessness strategy and the development of a migrant homeless strategy.

COPE Galway is also asking Government to allow for the use of two bedroom units to facilitate the further expansion of the Housing First Programme which currently only permits the use of one-bedroom units, something which is having a limiting effect at a local level in Galway.

COPE Galway’s Budget 2022 Submission also highlights the needs of the growing population of older people and challenges faced by many in this demographic. They seek a number of measures to help ensure that older people can continue to live in their own homes.

These include increasing funding for Housing Adaption Grants to the levels they were in 2010 and funding levels for homecare hours and the introduction of a statutory homecare scheme.

They also seek the reinstatement of the Fuel Allowance for a 32-week season and an increase in fuel allowance to ensure it covers any additional costs due to increases in carbon tax and energy costs.

COPE Galway considers that the annual budget represents an important opportunity for Government to address poverty and in its submission on Budget 2022 is calling for a €10 per week increase in all basic social welfare payments and a €15 per week increase in the old age pension.

“Increases in basic social welfare and pension rates must be a priority for Government in Budget 2022,” says Mr O’Connor.

“Such increases can make a real difference in people’s lives and in alleviating poverty across our community.”