

Invitation to Tender

An examination of the challenges facing young people transitioning from Focus Ireland youth homeless services to adult independent living

30th June 2025

Summary

Focus Ireland is making a significant contribution to combatting the growing social problem of youth homelessness in Ireland. However, some of the young people we support as they transition through under-18s services to independent living as young adults are unable to maintain their tenancies. Preliminary evidence suggests that a lack of independent living skills is the root cause. This research seeks to explore that theory by examining the extent to which a continuum of care model for young people operates in Focus Ireland that supports them to develop the skills to live independently in a secure home. This will be achieved by a review of the literature, consultation with staff, young people and stakeholders, and the development of detailed case studies to illustrate the factors that contribute to sustained tenancies. Central to the research is the development of recommendations for Focus Ireland and key stakeholders who provide social housing for young people.

Background

As of May 2025, 1,851 young people aged 18–24 were living in emergency accommodation in Ireland, highlighting the scale and urgency of youth homelessness. For young adults, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is a crucial point in their development, and traumatic experiences at this stage in their lives, like homelessness, can have a life-long impact.

Focus Ireland’s dedicated youth services, provided in partnership with Tusla, the HSE, local authorities, and other State agencies, aim to directly intervene and challenge the different pathways to homelessness that affect young people. The developmentally informed services that Focus Ireland and its key partners provide address well-being and life skills, and support young people to achieve their goals and thrive in a safe and secure home.

In recent years a significant number of Focus Ireland customers between the age of 18-25 who transition from youth homeless services to independent living are not able to maintain their tenancies. Anecdotal accounts from Focus Ireland staff working in both property and support functions identified insufficient independent living skills (budgeting, financial literacy, information and communication technologies, cooking, etc.) as the primary reason for tenancy failure for young people in this age group.

The Government’s Youth Homelessness Strategy (2023-2025)¹ also recognised a lack of independent living skills, including money management, as a significant barrier to young people

¹ Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2022)

sustaining a tenancy and an exit from homelessness. Direct consultation with young people as part of the formation of the Strategy showed that greater support with finances, access to services, and work and education would help with tenancy sustainment. As a response, a key aim of the Strategy was the establishment of a pilot service of Supported Housing for Youth (SHY) that provides housing and tailored supports for young people. This pilot commenced in June 2024 and houses approximately 20 young people in a mixture of single and shared tenancies in Dublin. An evaluation of the pilot is currently underway.

While there is some compelling, albeit limited, evidence about the reasons why young people with experience of homelessness are unable to live independently and sustain their tenancies, this research seeks to thoroughly examine the issue in relation to the extent to which there is a continuum of care model in Focus Ireland whereby there is coordinated service provision for young people as their care needs and conditions change over time as they transition through our youth homeless services and are supported to develop the necessary skills for independent living.

A vital element of the research is the provision of a robust set of recommendations to improve practices pertaining to young people and homeless prevention to not only Focus Ireland but also to key stakeholders and social housing providers such as local authorities. A key concern for Focus Ireland is that social housing providers are hesitant to provide tenancies to young people with experience of homelessness because of the propensity for tenancy breakdown and the associated challenges.

Research Questions and Objectives

The review is underpinned by the following research questions:

- Why is a significant proportion of young Focus Ireland customers struggling to transition from homeless services to independent living and maintain a tenancy?
- To what extent does Focus Ireland operate a model of continuum of care for young people that supports them to transition through under-18 homeless services to adult independent living?
- What can Focus Ireland and its key partners do to minimise young people experiencing tenancy breakdown and a return to homelessness?

Specifically, the key objectives for the review are as follows:

- **Conduct a review of the literature** to 1. examine the legislative and policy areas in relation youth homelessness prevention and Aftercare, and 2. establish an understanding of effective continuum of care models in the area of homelessness/youth homelessness/homeless prevention.

- **Consult with youth services staff** in Focus Ireland to establish an understanding of service provision for young people and specific challenges with transitions to adult independent living.
- In consultation with young people and frontline support staff, **develop detailed case studies of young people** (n=10) who have transitioned from Focus Ireland under-18s services to independent living, to include a mix of maintained and non-maintained tenancy cases.
- **Conduct interviews with several key stakeholders** (e.g. local authorities, Tusla, Approved Housing Bodies) to explore experiences of providing independent tenancies to young people and ways to mitigate tenancy breakdown.
- **Outline service and policy level recommendations** to minimise tenancy breakdown for young people. This should include recommendations for Focus Ireland, key stakeholders, and local and national Government.

Timescale and Budget

The proposed project would be carried out over approximately a **12 month timeframe**. The budget for this study is set at **€20,000** (including VAT and all relevant expenses).

Ethical Considerations

The following basic principles provide a framework from which ethical practice can develop:

- Informed consent;
- Privacy;
- Confidentiality (and limits of confidentiality);
- Fairness and equity;
- Avoidance, prevention or minimisation of harm to others;
- Professional competence;
- Integrity;
- Respect for human rights, diversity and equality;
- Trauma informed care; and
- Social responsibility.

The tendered consultant must ensure that participants do not feel under any obligation to participate in the evaluation; that they fully consent to the process; and that they understand the purpose of the evaluation and what will happen to the information they provide. The anonymity of participants must be protected, and only issues of relevance to the evaluation should be explored in the interviews. If individuals reveal that they are at risk of harm (or someone else is); appropriate actions should be taken as set out in Focus Ireland Research

Ethical Guidelines. Participants should be informed that they can withdraw from the process at any time, and procedures for recording of interviews must be agreed with all participants before the interviews commence. Focus Ireland can assist in recruitment for evaluation but this process will be guided by a strict ethics protocol which ensures that the needs of participants are prioritised first and foremost.

Guide for applicants

(i) Tender format

Tenders should be brief and must be completed in accordance with the format specified below. Incomplete tenders and tenders that are submitted late will not be considered.

- Title of project
- General research approach
- Detailed discussion of methodology (to include consideration of ethical procedures and protocols).
- Timing of activities for delivery
- A detailed budget breakdown (including number of days and cost per day), including VAT and all expenses
- Statement of tenderer's capability to undertake project
- Information on similar work previously undertaken
- Biographical details of personnel working on the project
- Details of Project Management
- Disclosure of any conflicts of interest

(ii) Financial Arrangements

An overall Fixed-Price Cost for the evaluation should be clearly detailed and specified, with a breakdown of the individual elements of the project. Details of personnel assigned to each element of the tender should be shown and the number of days' work for which they are assigned. VAT and details of any other costs, taxes or duties, which may be incurred, should be shown separately.

Payment for all goods and services supplied will be made on the submission of appropriate invoices, in accordance with the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997, as amended by the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (SI 388/2002). The Payment Schedule and Invoicing Arrangements will be agreed with the successful tenderer following their selection.

Focus Ireland retains the right to withhold payment, where a contractor has failed to meet his or her contractual obligations in relation to the delivery of goods and services to an acceptable level of quality.

(iii) Tax Clearance Certificate

Before a contract is awarded, the successful tenderer will be required to produce a current valid Tax Clearance Certificate, and if the certificate should expire within the course of the contract, a

new certificate will be required. A successful non-resident tenderer will be required to produce a Statement of Suitability from the Irish Revenue Commissioners. All payments under the contract will be conditional on the tenderers being in possession of a valid Certificate at all times.

(iv) Withholding Tax

No withholding tax will be placed on this contract.

(v) Freedom of Information

Information supplied in respect of this tender may be disclosed by Focus Ireland under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, provided it is not 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 S. 29 of the Act, any tenderer must be consulted by Focus Ireland before any decision to disclose such information.

(vi) Conflict of Interest

Any registered interest involving the contractor and Focus Ireland, their staff or relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this Invitation to Tender, or should be communicated to Focus Ireland 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. Any other conflicts of interest, which arise, must also be fully disclosed to Focus Ireland.

(vii) Ownership

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

(viii) Indemnity

The consultant agrees to indemnify Focus Ireland against any material damage and/or personal liability whatsoever arising from the execution of this contract.

Application

Completed tender documents should be submitted (preferably electronically) by COB **July 18th** to: Daniel Hoey, Research Manager, Focus Ireland, 9–12 High St., Dublin 8, D08 E1W0, Tel: 01-881 5942; Email: daniel.hoey@focusireland.ie

Please contact Daniel if you have any queries relating to the application process.