

MAJOR FOCUS BY CHARITY ON DELIVERING 750 HOMES BY 2020

Focus Ireland's CEO Pat Dennigan explains how the charity is challenging homelessness and changing lives through its support and prevention services, and direct housing provision, as they work towards delivering 750 homes by 2020.

Figures issued at the end of August showed a record total of 9,891 people are homeless, while a shocking total of 122 families with 270 children became newly homeless in Dublin during the month of July. Focus Ireland is working in partnership with the State to tackle this issue and last year managed to help over 1,060 households to secure a home and leave homelessness behind.

And as part of our four-year strategy, building works at John's Lane West (located just off Thomas Street) have intensified with the final touches being made to 31 new homes. The delivery of these homes in the fourth quarter is a key part of Focus Ireland's preventative work.

Providing these new homes in the heart of Dublin 8 reinforces the work of the organisation as families will be prevented from ever experiencing homelessness again. The residential apartment complex will include one, two and three bed apartments as Focus Ireland continues to deliver on lasting housing solutions.

Singles, couples and families will have homes. The John's Lane West development is made possible thanks to a combination of Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government support, Housing Finance Agency and donated funds.

The only solution to this crisis is that, as a society, we must do more to keep families in their existing homes so they never become homeless in the first place. Measures to prevent people becoming homeless must be further prioritised.

The evidence from our own prevention work shows that it is effective. In 2017 Focus Ireland supported 614 households on the brink of becoming homeless to avoid homelessness. This work involved case management support, tenancy sustainment and youth housing.

LEAVING HOMELESSNESS BEHIND

The current trend of numerous evictions resulting in rising homelessness with the State responding by placing people in



hotels or hubs is not sustainable. This development at John's Lane West will help more men, women and children to leave homelessness behind.

These homes will be places where families can do all the things many of us take for granted, sit as a family for a meal, chat after a hectic day at work or for children a stable, appropriate setting for a child to do their homework.

Work began in the summer of 2017, and since then the progress has been rapid due to the precast concrete build programme. The seven floors are complete and the building is almost airtight so the works can continue on the internal finishes. Already the building stands tall and will be a landmark in the Johns Lane quarter.

Installation of the windows has commenced, external brick work and plaster are near completion so we can really see finished product come together. It's exciting when we are now at the stage where we are selecting fixtures and fittings.

We are committed to working with the State to tackle and prevent homelessness. We are playing our part by delivering these homes with the support of the State. The shift towards ending the crisis is vital as no emergency accommodation will ever replace a place to call home.

It will be great when the first individuals and families move in to their homes at John's Lane West, leaving homelessness behind. These will be permanent homes for the new residents just like yours and mine. It is a fresh start for people.

We are on track to deliver 450 homes in three years and now provide over 1,100 homes nationwide. We work closely and collaboratively with local authorities around the country to prevent and tackle homelessness, the increase of housing provision with new homes such as those provided at John's Lane West is central to this.

For more information visit www.focusireland.ie