

# HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS IN IRELAND – A Growing Option

The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) is now launching the 10th Biennial Community Housing Awards, supported by Allianz Ireland. ICSH member housing associations continue to work in productive partnerships with local authorities and other key stakeholders in the public and private sectors to provide homes. This has resulted in housing associations (also known as approved housing bodies) now managing in the region of 35,000 homes throughout the country, accommodating over 90,000 people and serving 600 communities.

**A**lthough housing associations have been active for over 130 years, their work has intensified and diversified, particularly over the last 20 years. Together with local authorities, 8,422 homes social rented homes were provided in 2018 by the combined social housing sector. The housing association sector played its part in delivering 3,228 of these long-term permanent homes for households on local authority waiting lists (this represents 38% of total delivery). The homes were provided through new construction, acquisition and long-term leasing.

## PROMOTING HIGHEST STANDARDS

The ICSH (the national federation of non-profit housing associations) has 270 members who are active in both urban and rural areas where there is a housing need identified by local authorities. Housing associations are governed by their management boards, operate on a not-for-profit basis, and own and manage housing and related services for families, single people, older people, people with disabilities as well as households experiencing homelessness.

The ICSH, through all of its activities, seeks to support and promote the highest standards in housing provision, management and governance in delivery of services to tenants. This includes support through ICSH group schemes, such as insurance, Garda vetting, stock condition surveys as well as education and training programmes and capacity building programmes.

## OBJECTIVES OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Housing associations continue to play a key role in assisting local authorities to meet their housing and related objectives in many ways, as follows:

- Housing associations delivery of homes will assist local authorities in meeting their social and any future affordable rental targets established by Government through Rebuilding Ireland.
- The work of housing associations contributes to wider social and economic objectives of local authorities in the areas of

regeneration, Part V developer obligations, ensuring special housing needs outcomes, such as in the area of homelessness, supported housing options for an ageing population, people with disabilities and those encountering mortgage problems who wish to rent.



- New types of loan financing accessed by housing associations have created new innovative types of delivery that stretches existing state capital expenditure.
- Stronger partnerships, mutual learning and problem-solving solutions have been developed with local authorities and other stakeholders in both strategic and operational aspects of housing delivery and this continues to flourish.
- Housing services provided by housing associations act both as a springboard and safety net for tenants in the housing sector throughout their life-cycle.

Housing associations may have different ambitions and focus. Some developing housing associations have significantly scaled up their activity and delivery in recent years while others focus more on management and service delivery.

However, one aspect has remained constant – housing associations deliver locally and collectively, thereby making a national impact.

The 10th Biennial Allianz Community Housing Awards is now open to local authorities, housing associations and co-operatives. Winners will be announced at the ICSH Biennial Social Housing Conference on 10-11 October in Wexford. To contact Allianz Community Housing Awards email Catherine McGillicuddy [catherine@icsh.ie](mailto:catherine@icsh.ie) or visit [www.icsh.ie](http://www.icsh.ie)