

## Background

Habitat for Humanity's vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Since 1993, more than 40,000 volunteers from across Ireland have engaged in practical projects, locally and globally, aiming to break down barriers and empower communities. Habitat has built more than 100 new homes here in Ireland, brought empty homes back to life and delivered community projects where the objective is more than 4 walls and a roof. Using Habitat ReStore as a community hub, the House to Home programme, supports tenancy sustainment and tackles furniture poverty.

## Habitat ReStore

Through Habitat ReStores in Lisburn, Belfast, Ballymena, Newry, Newtownards and Drogheda Habitat directly tackles poverty in Ireland. ReStore serves thousands of low-income individuals who could not afford commercial prices to improve their homes, reducing levels of unfitness, diverts tons of construction and household materials from landfill, improving the environment and creates long term employability and training opportunities for target groups, especially those who need extra support.

## House to Home Programme

The '**House to Home**' programme supports vulnerable people who have been homeless or who are at risk of repeat homelessness, to sustain tenancies by helping them to make their house a home. Priority is given to those who are experiencing distress and hardship e.g. homelessness, domestic violence, young people leaving care or those returning into the community. Volunteers are an intrinsic part of the operations of the programme, helping break down barriers as they understand more of the complex nature of homelessness.

The programme has been delivered with support from the NIHE Homelessness Prevention Fund, Greenview Group and M&G.

## Key Objectives

- To support tenancy sustainment and improve homes
- To provide good quality re-usable household items to people in need
- Increase understanding and empathy to break down the stigma of homelessness and poverty
- To deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals; by tackling poverty and supporting sustainability by reducing material to landfill helping to protect the environment.
- To deliver impact for local people and the wider community

## House to Home Programme can include:

- **Practical Work** - each intervention (**maximum 2 days**) is at the individual household level and includes decorating or light touch repairs. Habitat assesses the property with the support work and client. Clients should be empowered to choose which work is important and supported to choose paint colours etc.
- **Essential Household Items** - Habitat ReStores can support individuals with essential household items which enable them to feel more at home. Individuals should be encouraged (where practicable) to visit one of the Habitat ReStores to select identified items. Up to 5 items with a maximum value of £250 can be selected. (see referral form).

- **ToolBox Basics Training** - During the assessment visit the supervisor will provide basic training for clients; simple ways they can look after and maintain their home; changing a lightbulb, where to and how to isolate water, smoke alarm maintenance etc.
- **Volunteering & Training Opportunities** - Opportunities for volunteering and OCN NI accredited training are available at ReStores, including for those who are considered 'hard to reach' due to disability, unemployment, economically inactive young people, mental ill health, offending histories.

Habitat already partners with a range of support agencies including Depaul, MACS, Womens Aid, NIACRO. In the last year Habitat delivered 67 practical interventions and provided essential furniture support for over 50 additional households. Feedback from clients and partner agencies has helped shape the programme and is very positive about the impact.

### Habitat seeks partners to identify and support clients who would benefit most.

Habitat Ireland provides all materials needed and has all policies, procedures and insurances required. This includes Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Privacy/GDPR policies and Public Liability and Employee Insurance policies.

### What does the Partner Organisation need to do?

- **Identify, assess and select clients** who meet the programme criteria and where there would be significant impact. Criteria for referrals can include any of the following:
  - Homelessness /at risk of repeat homelessness
  - Low income
  - On benefits
  - Domestic violence
  - Fire victims
  - Those returning into the community from prison / healthcare
- **Complete the online referral form** providing as much background information as possible. Habitat Ireland will only accept referrals from partner agencies where there is a signed partnership agreement. [www.habitatireland.org/housetohomereferral](http://www.habitatireland.org/housetohomereferral)
- **Support the client to engage in the programme.**

Practical Work – Support worker facilitates and attends to support client at assessment visit. Brief clients and ensure they understand what is expected from them during the practical work. This includes the property being in a suitable condition for the work e.g. skirting boards cleaned, furniture and items moved away from walls. Where clients have the capacity, Habitat can facilitate their participation in the project.

Household Items – review what essential items are needed and manage expectations. Depending on the capacity of the individual, support them to visit a Habitat ReStore and select suitable items. As we rely on donations, we can't guarantee what items are available or if they are in a style that clients would choose. Delivery will only be attempted once at an agreed timeslot.
- **Complete an online evaluation** following the work to provide feedback and measure impact

### For more information

To find out more about the programme or becoming a partner, please contact Jan on +44 (0)2892 635635 or email [JanL@habitatireland.org](mailto:JanL@habitatireland.org)