



**Safe Ireland  
Covid -19 DV Emergency  
Rent Supplement Proposal**

**2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2020**

# 1 Safe Ireland Covid-19 DV Emergency Rent Supplement Proposal

## 1.1 Introduction

We propose that women and children in need of immediate relocation as a result of domestic violence are facilitated to access emergency rent supplement for a period of three months and/or duration of Covid-19 national emergency.

## 1.2 Proposed Approval Pathways

There is a need for efficient, effective on-the ground approval routes for this supplement in order to keep victims of domestic violence safe. We propose that specialist Domestic Violence Service professionals, An Garda Síochána and Health professionals, along with DEASP, serve as direct referral pathways to this Covid-19 Rent Supplement, for example, through letters/emails of confirmation.

## 1.3 Context – Covid-19 Restrictions and Domestic Violence

The mandatory order for citizens to remain at home, except in limited circumstances, effected on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March last ensures that women and children in violent homes may be subjected to ongoing abuse without reprieve.

Our services throughout the country are experiencing significant shifts in demands under the crisis, and are anticipating a rise in domestic violence, as evidenced internationally.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, while all services remain open, and continue to respond and adapt to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence>.

changing DSGBV needs, there is currently a reduction in functional bed capacity across refuges due to Covid-19 infections and safety protocols. The pressures of Covid-19 emergency on an already inadequate refuge infrastructure are becoming apparent and pushing staff and services to the limit, in particular in providing safe, supported housing.

#### **1.4 Rational – Covid-19 Emergency Rent Supplement for Women & Children**

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children.<sup>2</sup> The complex interrelationship between domestic violence for example, the links between victimization and housing instability are also well established.<sup>3</sup> Housing instability is four times more likely for women and children who have experienced domestic violence.<sup>4</sup>

In Ireland 92% of homeless women interviewed had experienced some form of violence or abuse during their lifetimes and two thirds of the women interviewed reported intimate partner violence.<sup>5</sup>

The pathways to housing instability and homelessness may be both direct and indirect, e.g. perpetrators of abuse may undermine a family's financial stability by controlling income, creating debt, damaging property etc. The impact of the experience can result in poorer health outcomes, undermining the ability to gain and sustain employment. Some DV survivors flee their homes to protect themselves and their children, but may lack the financial resources to sustain housing.<sup>6</sup>

Although an association between homelessness and domestic violence has become increasingly clear, policy and service

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<sup>2</sup> Baker, CK. 2010 - <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9780429256127/chapters/10.1201%2Fb17162-14>

<sup>3</sup> Sullivan, CM & Virden, T. 2017 - <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-15651-001>

<sup>4</sup> Pavao et al - 2007 - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S074937970600434X>

<sup>5</sup> Mayock, P. & Sheridan, S. 2012 - <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/17047/>

<sup>6</sup> Galano, MM, et al. 2013 - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1077801213487056>

responses in Ireland and other European countries have remained dis-integrated – staying largely or wholly distinct.<sup>7</sup> This lack of whole-of-government directly exacerbates the problem, and short-circuits effective response.

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<sup>7</sup> Mayock, P & Bretherton, J. 2016 - <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/978113545152>



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