



**An Ghníomhaireacht
Tithíochta**
The Housing Agency

Newsletter

February 2025

Welcome to the February edition of The Housing Agency newsletter.

This month we shine a spotlight on our Research Support Programme which funds research into topical housing issues that have the potential to impact housing policy and practice. We take a look at the Property Optimisation Unit, a team within the Agency that provides advice and support to local authorities addressing vacancy within their areas. This edition also contains more information about our Housing Practitioners' Conference, our new four-part webinar series on community-led housing, and much more.

We hope you enjoy the February edition. For the best viewing experience, please open this newsletter in your browser.



AWARD

BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2025

Congratulations to Ethan Brennan, Rossa Mac Gearailt and Colm Cronin, the winners of The Housing Agency Award at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition 2025.

The fifth-year students of Pobalscoil Inbhear Sceine, Kenmare, Co Kerry, examined the

reasons for the declining rates of people entering the trades in their project entitled Hands on, Hands off: The Trade Puzzle.

Their award was presented by Roslyn Molloy, Head of Policy, Practice and Communications at The Housing Agency.



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Research Support Programme

THE HOUSING AGENCY

Research Support Programme

The Research Support Programme (RSP) is an important part of The Housing Agency's function to undertake and support independent research to inform housing policy development and good practice.

Since it was established in 2020, the RSP has funded 23 unique research projects on themes of affordability, cost rental housing, emergency accommodation, Modern Methods of Construction, social housing, sustainability, vacancy, and youth homelessness.

Projects are one year in duration and receive up to €30,000 in funding. Funding is available to researchers in Ireland and internationally.

Five reports were published in 2024 under the RSP and you can find these on our website here - [Research Support Programme](#)

An open call for applications to the RSP is carried out each year. Funding from the 2024 call was awarded to two projects, both of which commenced in January 2025.

- The Irish Green Building Council was awarded funding for their project, BIO-NEIGHBOUR, which will work to create simple, clear recommendations for scaling up nature-positive solutions in new Irish residential developments.
- The Local Government Information Unit was awarded funding to conduct an international comparative analysis of how local authorities measure and monitor the benefits of housing-based interventions to strengthen social cohesion.

The next call for the RSP is expected to go live on The Housing Agency's website in May 2025.

**To receive updates about the RSP please email
researchsupport@housingagency.ie**



The poster features a background image of a modern residential building with a glass facade and a balcony. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top left, the word 'WEBINAR' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. To the right of this, there is a small harp icon, followed by the text 'An Ghníomhaireacht Tithíochta' and 'The Housing Agency' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below this, the title 'COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, followed by 'WEBINAR SERIES' in a slightly smaller, white, sans-serif font. The poster is divided into four white rectangular boxes, each containing information about a webinar session. Each box has a large number (1, 2, 3, or 4) in the top left corner, followed by the session title, the date and time, and a list of speakers.

Session Number	Session Title	Date and Time	Speakers
1	INTRODUCING COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING	12th February 12 - 1pm	SPEAKERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Sara Brysch - Co-author of Together: Towards Collaborative Living • Tom O'Donnell - Self Organised Architecture
2	COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING	25th February 12 - 1pm	SPEAKERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eduard Cabré Romans - Barcelona Municipal Institute for Housing and Renovation • Ailbhe Cunningham - Cork Community Land Trust • Eve Olney - Cork Community Land Trust
3	COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING FOR AGE FRIENDLY LIVING	11th March 12 - 1pm	SPEAKERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Brenton - UK Cohousing Network • Anne Connolly - Cohousing Communities Ireland
4	STATE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING	26th March 11.30 - 1pm	SPEAKERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elke Seipp - Hamburg Baugemeinschaften Agency • Éadaoin Ní Chléirigh - Irish Council for Social Housing • Hugh Brennan - Ó Cualann Cohousing Alliance • TBC

WEBINAR SERIES

Community-led Housing

The Housing Agency is hosting a new webinar series on community-led housing. Community-led housing encompasses a wide range of approaches to housing, but they all share a common goal – to meet a local housing need via collaboration, empowerment and mutual support.

This four-part webinar series aims to raise awareness of community-led housing as a new form of affordable housing in Ireland, to showcase examples of it in other countries and reflect on its future in this country.

Four webinars will cover the below topics. You can sign up to these webinars by clicking the links below.

1. [Introducing community-led housing - February 12th, 2025](#)
2. [Community-led housing as affordable housing - February 25th, 2025](#)
3. [Community-led housing for age friendly living - March 11th, 2025](#)
4. [State support for community-led housing - March 26th, 2025](#)

REGISTER NOW



CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Housing Practitioners' Conference

The Housing Agency and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) will host the 2025 Housing Practitioners' Conference, taking place in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone, Co Westmeath on Thursday, 10th April and Friday 11th April (half day). The conference will involve expert speakers and workshops.

If you would like to make enquiries on accommodation for this event, please contact the hotels listed below.

Special Conference Rates:

- **Radisson Blu Hotel Phone** (090 6442600) €145.00 per night (single occupancy), including breakfast
- **Hodson Bay Hotel** (Phone: 090 644 2002) €145.00 per night (single occupancy), including breakfast
- **Athlone Springs Hotel** (Phone: 090 644 5808) €125.00 per night (single occupancy), including breakfast

- Sheraton Athlone Rooms available at the market rate.

REGISTER NOW

PROFILE

Profile of the Property Optimisation Unit (POU)

The Property Optimisation Unit (POU) is a team within the Housing Agency which supports local authorities to address vacancy within their areas.

The POU assist the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in addressing vacancy through supports such as the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, Repair and Lease Scheme, and guidance on Compulsory Purchase Orders and Compulsory Acquisition. The POU also assists members of the public with vacancy queries.

The team is most active in checking the charge documents on behalf of local authorities for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. This activity streamlines the legal process in relation to the grant which enables quicker drawdowns and reduces legal costs for local authorities. Each charge document must be thoroughly checked to review the verification of information, and additional documentation such as maps and / or land registry documents where applicable, before it can be returned to the local authority and applicants for signing.

If you require the assistance of the POU team please contact POU@housingagency.ie



MUDs

New FAQs for Multi-Unit Developments (MUDs)

The Multi-Unit Developments webpage has recently been updated to include new FAQs, which include:

- What is a sinking fund and why is it important?
- Where can I find out about fire safety for MUDs and OMCs?
- Where can I find out about taking in charge of residential developments as it relates to MUDs?



FAQs

This resource is part of the Agency's support for the MUDs and OMC sector.

Further resources are available on the Housing Agency website here <https://www.housingagency.ie/housing-information/multi-unit-developments-managed-estates>

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Citizens Information Sessions

The Housing Agency is delivering a series of information sessions directly to staff of the Citizens Information Board in February and March 2025. The sessions will be delivered by experts across the Agency, and the Residential Tenancies Board, and will cover a wide range of housing-related topics, including:

1. The role of local authorities in social and affordable housing
2. Homelessness
3. Regulation in the rental sector
4. Vacancy
5. Living in managed estates/apartment developments

You can subscribe to the Training and Events mailing list, by clicking the link below:

MAILING LIST

Events and resources



Key Irish Housing Publications 2024

The Housing Agency has put together a reference document with information for housing practitioners, academics and students. Read the report here - [2024 Key Irish Housing Publications](#).

AffordableHomes.ie

The AffordableHomes.ie website provides information on the Affordable Purchase and Cost Rental Schemes as well as other supports available such as Help to Buy Scheme and the Local Authority Home Loan. The website contains step-by-step guides on the different schemes available, a set of FAQs and a section where available properties are advertised.

Report: Good practice in the development and

Age Friendly Homes

This website provides support and information on housing topics of relevance to older people.

Spotlight on Housing Research

The latest edition in the Spotlight on Housing Research Series delves into upcoming work by UCD lecturer in Political Economy at the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, Dr Michael Byrne.

International Social Housing Festival

The International Social Housing Festival comes to Dublin from June 4th - 6th. Further details and information on how to register to attend can be found here.

The Housing Manual

The Housing Manual is a resource for housing practitioners as it includes circulars, guidance documents and toolkits from across the housing sector.

Housing for all E-Zine

Subscribe to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage newsletter at this link - [Housing for All E-Zine](#)

The Housing Agency is on Instagram!

The Housing Agency has launched an organisational Instagram channel to engage a broader audience of stakeholders. Follow along to stay up to date with events, conferences and more!

design of Traveller-specific accommodation

The Housing Agency has commissioned independent research which explores the value of inclusive and meaningful engagement and site layout design.

The Housing Training Network

The Housing Training Network is a website that provides Housing Professionals with information on upcoming training, courses and events.

Home and Supports Hub

The Home and Supports Hub website is a central resource which contains information, supports and services needed to access independent living.

The Housing Agency

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