



An Ghníomhaireacht  
Tithíochta  
The Housing Agency

# Lived Experience Roles in Ireland

Finding paid roles, training, and good  
governance

## What is The Housing Agency?

The Housing Agency is a Government body working with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies in the delivery of housing and housing services. The Agency's vision is to achieve an integrated housing system, meeting the nation's housing needs and promoting sustainable communities. It does this by providing evidence-based housing insights and data that inform thinking and policy-making; by working with others to enable the delivery of housing solutions and to implement programmes and actions in Government housing policy; and by equipping itself and its stakeholders with the capacity required to respond quickly and effectively to challenges in the housing system. For more information, visit [www.housingagency.ie](http://www.housingagency.ie)

This topic was selected as part of the Strengthening Lived Experience Programme (HSE, Genio, and The Housing Agency).

## Acknowledgements

The Housing Agency would like to acknowledge and thank all the survey participants who participated in this research.

**Author:** Carissa Dieli

**Date:** August 2025

ISBN 978-1-903848-96-8

## Cite as:

The Housing Agency, Carissa Dieli (2025). Lived Experience Roles in Ireland: Finding paid roles, training, and good governance. Dublin: The Housing Agency.

More publications, information and reports can be found at [www.housingagency.ie](http://www.housingagency.ie)

## Introduction

Lived experience roles require a person to have first-hand experience of a topic to support service users.

This report summarises the findings of the three main questions of this research:

1. Where are there **paid lived experience roles** across Ireland?
2. What **training** is available for people in lived experience roles?
3. What are some examples of **good governance** in lived experience organisations?

This research relates to **paid** lived experience roles within four sectors:

- Disability,
- Homelessness,
- Mental health, and
- Social inclusion.

The 'social inclusion sector' refers to organisations that work with addiction, migrants, refugees, Irish Travellers, Roma, and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

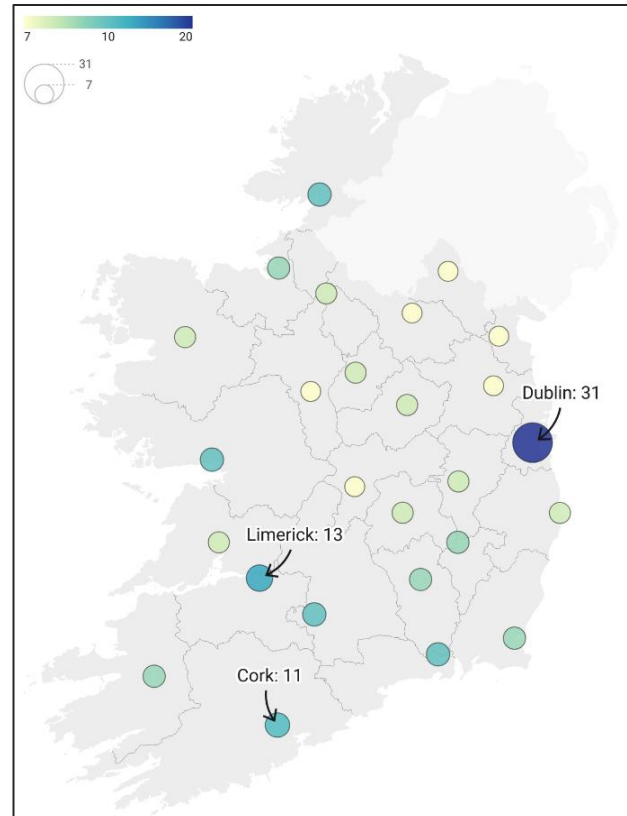
### 1. Where are there paid lived experience roles across Ireland?

We found **78 organisations** that employ at least **437 paid lived experience staff** across Ireland.

We found at least seven organisations in each county that employ paid lived experience staff (Figure 1).

Some organisations employ paid lived experience staff in every county. Some paid lived experience staff work remotely.

We counted the highest numbers of organisations with paid lived experience staff in Counties Dublin, Limerick, and Cork.



**Figure 1.** The locations of organisations with paid lived experience staff in Ireland

### Organisations by sector

We counted the following numbers of **organisations** with paid lived experience staff in each of the sectors:

- 43 in social inclusion,
- 24 in mental health,
- 9 in disability, and
- 3 in homelessness (Figure 2).

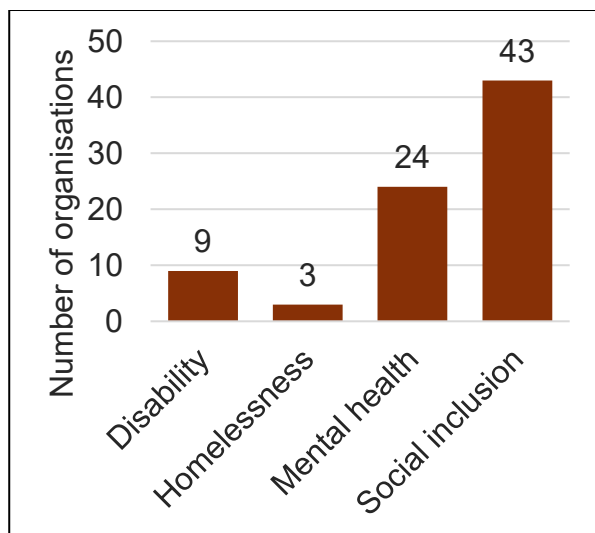
One organisation works in both the homelessness and mental health sectors.

### Staff by sector

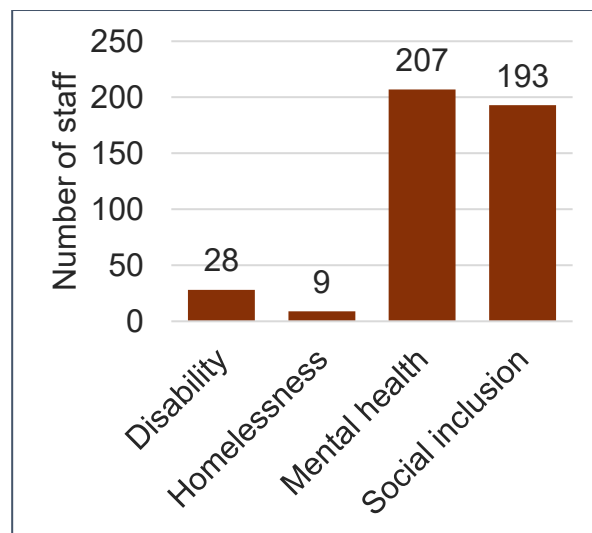
We counted the following numbers of paid lived experience **staff** in each of the sectors:

- 207 in mental health,
- 193 in social inclusion,
- 28 in disability, and
- 9 in homelessness (Figure 3).

**Figure 2.** The number of organisations with paid lived experience staff in Ireland



**Figure 3.** The number of paid lived experience staff in Ireland



### Additional information

A few organisations said they wanted to hire paid lived experience staff. However, they did not have enough money to do so.

Some organisations said strictly requiring lived experience for a role could stop some people from applying. People might not apply for these roles because their peers outside of work may know they have that experience if they get the job.

## 2. What training is available for people in lived experience roles?

This research looked for training for people in lived experience roles. Training found in this research can be grouped into three broad themes: office work, dealing with others, and self-care and development (Table 1). Some of the training we found was provided by organisations for their own staff and some was provided by external agencies.

**Table 1.** Common training themes for people with lived experience

Office work	Dealing with others	Self-care and development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administration and practical office skills</li><li>• General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</li><li>• Human Resources (HR)</li><li>• First Aid</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication and managing people</li><li>• Dealing with crisis and learning about trauma</li><li>• Domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence training</li><li>• Leading a group and active listening</li><li>• Cultural awareness and sensitivity</li><li>• Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)</li><li>• Learning about and managing mental health</li><li>• Keeping children and adults safe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boundary setting</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Life skills and personal development</li><li>• Stress management</li><li>• Storytelling</li></ul>

An organisation can hire people without office experience if they provide training related to office work. Lived experience and related skills can be the main qualifications for the job.

Training for dealing with others helps lived experience staff to do their work well. It helps bring about the best results for everyone. Training in these areas can help staff to work well in teams with different skills.

Training related to self-care and development can build general skills for using lived experience in work. It can also help career progression and help to reduce burnout.

## 3. What are some examples of good governance in lived experience organisations?

Governance is the way an organisation is managed. The United Nations identified nine

traits of good governance in 1997.<sup>1</sup> Table 2 shows how these traits can be seen in policies and practices. These examples come from lived experience organisations in various sectors in Australia, Canada, Ireland, and the United States.

**Table 2.** Policies and practices showing good governance in lived experience organisations

Trait of good governance	Relevant policies and practices
1. Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with lived experience staff</li> <li>Learn from each other</li> </ul>
2. Consensus orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set long-term goals for staff and supervisors</li> </ul>
3. Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold those in power accountable</li> <li>Show personal and shared responsibility</li> </ul>
4. Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide supervision</li> <li>Use two-way feedback</li> </ul>
5. Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be prepared for new staff</li> </ul>
6. Effectiveness and efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set long-term goals for the organisation</li> <li>Provide clear job descriptions</li> </ul>
7. Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow reasonable accommodations</li> <li>Host teambuilding events</li> <li>Prioritise psychological safety</li> <li>Promote communities of practice</li> <li>Provide opportunities for training</li> </ul>
8. Rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow national standards</li> <li>Follow HR policies</li> </ul>
9. Strategic vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve lived experience throughout the organisation's management</li> </ul>

There are early models of good governance in Ireland across sectors. This table can be a useful tool for lived experience organisations creating governance frameworks and toolkits.

<sup>1</sup> The UN's nine characteristics of good governance can be found here: [Governance for sustainable human development: a UNDP policy document](#)



**An Ghníomhaireacht  
Tithíochta**  
The Housing Agency

The Housing Agency  
53 Mount Street Upper  
Dublin, D02 KT73

(01) 656 4100  
[info@housingagency.ie](mailto:info@housingagency.ie)  
[www.housingagency.ie](http://www.housingagency.ie)