

Community Sponsorship Housing



Information Booklet



Section 1

What is Community Sponsorship Ireland?

1.1 Overview

Community Sponsorship Ireland (CSI) offers a community-based approach to helping refugees settle in Ireland. It gives local groups the opportunity to take the lead in welcoming and supporting individuals and families as they begin their new lives, complimenting existing government resettlement efforts. The people resettling under CSI have already been registered as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and are invited by the Irish Government under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) which is a division of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

1.2 Ireland's strong history of refugee resettlement

Refugee resettlement is not a new process in Ireland. Ireland has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those fleeing persecution and conflict, including Hungarian refugees after the 1956 revolution, Chileans following the 1973 coup, and the Vietnamese Boat People in the late 1970s.

In more recent years, Ireland has extended its support to Bosnian, Syrian, and Afghan refugees, demonstrating a continued commitment to global humanitarian efforts.

Ireland's robust infrastructure for supporting resettled refugees is facilitated through the IRPP and the work of various non-governmental organisation's (NGOs).

1.3 How does it work?

Community Sponsorship Ireland is open to any group of people who want to make a real difference in the lives of refugee families. A group could be formed by neighbours, friends, members of a hobby or sports club, a faith community, or an existing social or business group. Participation is voluntary. Each group needs at least five members, including a primary and secondary sponsor, and all members must be over 18 and legally living in Ireland.

Support is expected to be provided by the Community Sponsorship Groups (CSGs) for eighteen months.

1.4 Accommodation

CSGs must secure housing in their local area for a period of at least 24 months, typically availing of the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) or Rent Supplement (RS).

The rented home must meet certain minimum standards. This is a legal requirement. These standards are set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

Section 2

Why rent your property to a community sponsorship family?

CSG support	The role of the CSG is to support the resettled family with their integration needs. The CSG will provide an oversight into rent, utility costs and general home upkeep. CSGs understand that housing is key to strong integration and work closely with the family to support this.
National Support Organisation (NSO) support	The role of the Community Sponsorship NSO is to provide support and guidance to the CSGs. The NSO has extensive experience in housing and tenancy management.
Steady income stream	HAP is a steady income stream for the landlord. It is paid directly by HAP Shared Services and not the tenant. RS can also be paid directly to the landlord.
Being part of the Community Sponsorship journey	You get to support a programme that inspires and empowers ordinary people in Ireland to come together and welcome a refugee family and directly support them to rebuild their lives in safety.

Section 3

What supports are available to the landlord?

The CSG	<p>The CSG is expected to maintain a healthy line of communication with the landlord. Housing is an important marker of integration, and it is essential for all parties to feel happy with the tenancy.</p>
The NSO	<p>The NSO will provide all information required for landlords to sign up for HAP.</p> <p>Furthermore, the NSO will provide all admin support to landlord and tenant so that HAP is processed as efficiently and quickly as possible.</p>
The Residential Tenancies Board	<p>The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) was established under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 to regulate the private rental sector in Ireland. Its primary functions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Maintaining a register of private residential tenancies, approved housing body tenancies, and student-specific accommodation tenancies2. Providing a confidential dispute resolution service for tenants and landlords3. Conducting research on the private rental sector4. Advising the Government on rental sector policies <p>The RTB's dispute resolution service is available to tenants, landlords, and individuals directly affected by rental issues.</p>
Citizens Information	<p>The Citizens Information Board is a statutory body that provides information, advice, and advocacy on a wide range of public and social services. It operates the Citizens Information website (citizensinformation.ie) and supports a network of Citizens Information Centres and the Citizens Information Phone Service at 0818 07 4000. These services offer free, confidential, independent, and impartial information to the public.</p>

Section 4

Rental income and deposit

Question

Who covers the rent while the family is registering for housing support?

Answer

The CSG will cover any rental costs until the HAP payment is set up.

Question

Who covers the Deposit?

Answer

The CSG will cover the deposit on the property. HAP Shared Services and the Department of Social Protection will cover the deposit in some instances.

Section 5

What Is the HAP and social housing support?

HAP is a form of social housing support. Under the HAP scheme, a local authority will pay rent directly to a landlord. The amount they pay depends on location and household size, based on an official rent limit for the area.

The tenant then pays a weekly rent contribution to the local authority. This is called a 'differential rent'. The resettled family needs to register their housing need with the relevant local authority for the area. The family is supported by the CSG and the NSO in making this process as seamless as possible.

Social housing support is provided by local authorities or approved housing bodies to people who cannot afford housing on their own. Local authorities are the main providers of social housing in Ireland. HAP tenants are private tenants and not tenants of the local authority.



Section 6

Additional Rental Top-Ups to the Landlord

6.1 Understanding the HAP scheme: How rent payments work.

Under the HAP scheme, the local authority will pay rent directly to the landlord. The amount they pay depends on the location and household size, based on an official rent limit for the area (please see table below). However, if the rent is higher than this limit, the tenant will need to pay the extra amount directly to the landlord. This additional payment is known as a 'top-up'.

6.2 How much will the tenant pay in top-ups?

The government has guidelines to make sure top-ups are affordable for households. Here's how it works:

- For households in employment: They should not have to pay more than 35% of their monthly income toward rent (including top-ups and differential rent).
- For households relying on social welfare: The limit is set at 30% of their monthly income.

Local authorities have the discretion to adjust payments, so the tenant doesn't exceed these percentages, helping to keep the housing costs manageable.

6.3 What Are the HAP rent limits?

HAP rent limits depend on your household size and the area you live in. More information on HAP rent limits can be found at citizensinformation.ie.

Local authorities have some flexibility to exceed these limits if the tenant is unable to find suitable accommodation within them. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis, and they can:

- Increase rent limits by up to 35%.
- Apply couple rates for single applicants.

Additional flexibility applies to eligible homeless households in the Dublin region, where higher limits may be approved. The increase in those circumstances is generally 50%.

Section 7

What documents does the landlord need to provide?

The landlord needs to provide the following to the local authority:

- Proof of ownership (evidence of payment of Local Property Tax, RTB registration letter, Land Registry folio, Insurance Policy Schedule or Mortgage Statement).
 - Rent Pressure Zone Calculation (including for first time let).
 - Bank Header (which should match bank details supplied on application form).
 - Tax Clearance Certificate (must be supplied within 5 months).
 - Deed of Appointment if the property is in receivership.
 - Copy of Will if the property is undergoing Probate.
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Section 8

Tenant in Situ Scheme

The Tenant in Situ Scheme enables Local Authorities to purchase properties where tenants are at risk of eviction due to the landlord selling the property.

This scheme is available to tenants who have received a valid Notice of Termination, are at risk of homelessness, and qualify for social housing support. It includes those receiving Rent Supplement, the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), or living in properties under the Rental Accommodation Scheme or long-term leasing arrangements.

Local Authorities will offer the market rent for the property.

Section 9

HSE Fair Deal Scheme

You can apply for financial assistance to help cover nursing home care costs through the Nursing Homes Support Scheme, commonly known as the Fair Deal scheme. This program is managed by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Under the Fair Deal scheme, you contribute a portion of your care costs, and the HSE covers the remaining amount. The scheme applies to approved private, voluntary, and public nursing homes.

As of 1 February 2024, changes have been made to the financial assessment under Fair Deal for those renting out their homes while in a nursing home. If you choose to rent your vacant property, you can now retain 100% of the rental income.

To apply under this updated policy, you must complete the Principal Private Residence

Rental Income application form and provide the following supporting documents:

- Your Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) registration approval letter.
- A signed tenancy agreement that shows the rental amount.
- Your most recent Notice of Assessment from Revenue.

Further information on the Fair Deal Scheme can be found at

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/schemes-allowances/fair-deal-scheme/about/>

Additional Information

For further engagement or information please visit:

www.communitysponsorship.ie

Call or email us.

Phone: 1800 753 343

Email: info@communitysponsorship.ie

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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
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Department of Children, Equality,
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An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
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