



## Submission to Wicklow County Council

Scheme of Letting Priorities (Allocation Scheme for Social Housing)

Proposed Amendment submitted by Tammy Byrne, Kathleen Kelleher and Sean O' Callaghan on behalf of Wicklow PPN

### **Priority Housing Provision for Victims of Domestic Violence, Coercive Control, Financial Abuse and Recognition of Jennie's Law**

#### PURPOSE

It is recommended that Wicklow County Council introduce a dedicated category within its Scheme of Letting Priorities for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence, coercive control, stalking, harassment, emotional abuse, sexual violence and financial abuse.

Safe, secure and affordable housing is a fundamental component of protection, recovery and long-term stability for victims and their children.

#### RATIONALE

Domestic violence and financial abuse can leave victims trapped in unsafe situations due to economic dependence, fear, homelessness risk, housing insecurity and concerns for personal safety.

Victims frequently face impossible choices between remaining in an abusive environment or entering homelessness and emergency accommodation. Children affected by domestic abuse often experience disruption to education, healthcare, social supports and community connections.

#### RECOGNITION OF JENNIE'S LAW

Wicklow County Council should recognise convictions published under Jennie's Law as supporting evidence of domestic abuse and risk when assessing housing applications, transfer requests and homelessness applications.

## PRIORITY STATUS

Victims should receive enhanced priority consideration for social housing allocations, accelerated assessments, exemption from local connection requirements where relocation is necessary for safety, and priority transfer consideration where already residing in social housing.

## PROTECTION OF EXISTING TENANCIES

Where legally permissible, the Council should prioritise measures that allow victims and dependent children to remain safely housed and support legislative changes that place the housing consequences of serious domestic abuse on perpetrators rather than victims.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFETY

All information relating to domestic violence and financial abuse applications should be treated as strictly confidential.

## POLICY STATEMENT

No victim of domestic violence, coercive control or financial abuse should be forced to choose between homelessness and remaining in an unsafe environment. Safe, secure and affordable housing should be recognised as a fundamental element of protection, recovery and independence for survivors and their families.