

FOCUS
Ireland

**Survey of families
that became
homeless in
June 2017**

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The principle aim of this report is to capture the accommodation trajectories of families who presented as homeless in Dublin during June 2017. The primary focus of the exercise is to capture where the families lived *before* they presented to homeless services and the key factors which impacted on their loss of housing. The analysis also presents key demographic information of families as well as patterns around help-seeking.

It is hoped that the generation of timely data will help to inform policy and service responses to family homelessness in Ireland today.

This exercise is carried out every three months by Focus Ireland to capture change or consistencies over time. This is the sixth report following the same methodology. All preceding reports can found in Focus Ireland *Insights into Family Homelessness Series*.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS – JUNE 2017

The Study

- This study presents key findings from a short quantitative survey conducted by telephone with **27** of the total 78 families who presented to Dublin family homeless services during **June 2017**. This represents **35%** of the total number of families who presented as newly homeless in the Dublin region during the month of June (**N=78**).
- This survey does not claim to offer a representative insight of all families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin region; rather, it offers a point-in-time analysis of a proportion of those entering homelessness during a particular month. By conducting this survey every three months, however, trends and patterns have emerged which will build our understanding of *what is driving family homelessness over time*. **Since March 2016, 251 of these telephone surveys have been completed with families.**
- Sample size for this study (**N=27**) is smaller on average than previous studies in the series. Focus Ireland did not have telephone contact details for many families because they left homelessness or, more commonly, another organisation/NGO was assisting them. In response to the deepening family homelessness crisis, 'Family Hub' accommodation is expanding (i.e. congregate emergency accommodation facilities) and are run by a range of homelessness organisations.
- In detailing the data from June 2017 data, the following report will frequently compare data with the aggregated data that emerged across all 2016 telephone surveys as well as the previous wave of data collection (March 2017). The aggregate analysis of all telephone survey 2016 data can be found in Focus Ireland's *Insights into Family Homelessness Series No. 9*.

Demographic Profile – JUNE 2017

- **4 (15%)** of the respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years, **15 (55%)** were 26 to 35 years and **8 (30%)** were over the age of 36 years. Unlike previous telephone survey data sweeps where roughly a quarter of all families were under 25, young families do not feature as prominently in **June 2017**.
- Among the **27** respondents who were surveyed, **17 (63%)** were born in Ireland and **10 (37%)** were categorised as being of migrant origin (i.e. born outside Ireland): **2 (7%)** were from countries within the EU and **8 (30%)** were from outside the EU. The proportion of migrant families in June 2017 (37%) is higher than previous wave of data collection (March 2017 - 26%) yet smaller than the 2016 average (46%).
- Of the sample, **8 (30%)** were experiencing homelessness with their partner and child(ren), while **19 (70%)** were lone parents. Of the 19 who were lone parents, **all were single mothers**. The proportion of lone parents is somewhat higher than the March 2017 surveys (60%) and the average in 2016 surveys wherein 65% were lone parents.
- **22 (81%)** of the families constituted one or two children. The remaining **5 (19%)** of the respondents had three or more children.

- Of these **27** families, there were **55** children – **45%** of these children were aged 4 years or younger.
- The vast majority of the respondents (**n=23, 85%**) described themselves as unemployed. **2** respondents were in employment - both part-time. **2** respondents were studying.

Housing History

- **18 (67%)** of the respondents reported that their last stable home was in the private rented sector. This closely reflects previous rounds of data protection (approximately 70%). **Thus each round of data collection here consistently demonstrates the predominance of families becoming homeless through private rented sector.**
 - **12 of these 18 families** had been in receipt of rent supplement in this private rented property. This is similar to the 66% of respondents who came from the private rented sector in March 2017 and also the 72% average of respondents who came from the private rented sector across all 2016 surveys.
 - The most prominent reason for their leaving last accommodation was properties being withdrawn from the market (**n=5, 19%**). 3 respondents (11%) reported that their landlord was selling the property.
- In analysing the respondents' previous four accommodations, key trajectory 'types' were identified. These are expanded upon in the report:
 1. Stability in the private rented sector
 2. Prolonged instability and hidden homelessness
- In terms of patterns around help-seeking or early engagement with services, **19 (70%)** of the **27** respondents sought help or support before becoming homeless. This is considerably more than the 55% of respondents who approached a service in the March 2017 survey.
- The most common first port-of-call for families was their local councillor or TD (**n=6**) or Focus Ireland advice and information services (**n=6**). **3** families sought help or advice directly from their local authority.

Trends Identified between June 2017 Survey and 2016 Surveys:

- ∞ Once again, a majority of families that became homeless continued to report that their last stable accommodation had been in the **private rented sector**.
- ∞ Families continue to demonstrate **stable housing histories**.
- ∞ There was a **fewer reports of properties being withdrawn from the market** than in previous surveys.
- ∞ There were **fewer parents under the age of 25** entering homelessness – who have little or no experience living in independent housing.
- ∞ There was a **continued presence of families of migrant origin** – both EU and non-EU – presenting as homeless.

- ∞ The majority of respondents were **unemployed** at time of becoming homeless and dependent on rent allowance supplements, **indicating the persistent association between joblessness, low income and homelessness.**
- ∞ 6 families (22%) became homeless due to relationship breakdown (of which 2 families reported domestic violence from a partner); which is higher than in 2016.
- ∞ There was more diversity in the location of last stable home which include areas of Dublin previously unreported during 2016.

INTRODUCTION

During **June 2017**, **78** families presented as newly homeless to their local authority across the four Dublin regions¹. There were **1,115** families residing in emergency accommodation in the Dublin region alone during that month – comprising of **1,492 adults and 2,270 children**².

Across the country as a whole during **June 2017**, there were a total of **1,365** families with **2,895** children living in emergency accommodation³. This represents a **27%** increase when compared to the **1,078** families who were homeless across the country during the same month in **2016**.

Focus Ireland was appointed by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) as the Family Homeless Action Team (HAT) for families across the Dublin region⁴. When a family presents as homeless to their relevant local authority, they are routinely provided emergency accommodation in the form of commercial hotels or B&Bs. They are then referred to Family HAT who make contact with the family as soon as possible in order to set up an initial assessment. More recently, ‘Family Hub’ accommodations have been expanded significantly, drawing in a range of different non-governmental organisations such as Peter McVerry Trust, Crosscare and Respond.

In an effort to ensure that Focus Ireland (and relevant stakeholders and policy-makers) have an accurate and timely understanding of the accommodation trajectories and ‘triggers’ to family homelessness, Focus Ireland conduct telephone surveys with a sample of families every quarter⁵. This regular reporting highlights key causes of family homelessness and how can monitor how this can change over time. These regular reports also capture key demographic profile information on families who are presenting as homeless.

¹ This figure represents the number of families who became homeless during the relevant month and had not been counted as homeless in the past. Focus Ireland press release on the month of June can be found here: <https://www.focusireland.ie/press/new-government-homeless-figures-june-show-situation-worse-ever-every-single-category-getting-worse-2/>

² Monthly infographics on family homelessness in the Dublin (Dublin Region Homeless Executive): <http://www.homelessdublin.ie/homeless-families>

³ The count which is conducted on a monthly basis through regular reporting of statistics to the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and pertains to all persons residing in Section-10-funded emergency accommodation (during the final week of each month). This does not include women and children residing in domestic violence refuges nor does it include non-Section-10 funded facilities. Homeless figures for September 2016 can be found at: <http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/homelessness-report-june-2017>

⁴ While Focus Ireland is the principle service who assists families experiencing homelessness in Dublin region, other homelessness organisations also work with families. See the back page of this document for a brief background of the role and function of Focus Ireland Family HAT.

⁵ As agreed in the Research Programme set out by the Focus Ireland Research Advisory Group (RAG) – a subcommittee of the organisation’s Board – which comprises of expert researchers and academics in the area of homelessness and housing.

This report marks the sixth report which used the same survey with families entering homelessness so the data emerging in each report can be comparable with one another and can depict trends over time. All previous reports can be found across separate publications as part of Focus Ireland's *Insights into Family Homelessness Series*⁶. Paper No. 9 presents data from all of 2016.

METHODOLOGY

The 3-page telephone survey developed for the purpose of this exercise was concise, tightly structured and targeted in its design⁷. This was for the purpose of efficiency, to maximise the response rate, and most importantly, to minimise the burden on families in crisis situations (see Appendix 1 for survey instrument).

The survey seeks to capture a recent trajectory of accommodation transitions, the demographic profile of respondents, and interaction with services prior to their presenting as homeless. Questions pertaining to the last four accommodations – which formed the main component of the survey – captured change and transition in the respondents' living situations and to (partially) capture the dynamics of their housing history. This section also included duration of time spent in these four accommodations, self-reported reasons for leaving each accommodation, and details around rental supplements.

In total, **27** of the **78** families who became homeless in the Dublin region during **June 2017** participated in the survey, representing **35%** of the entire cohort of families newly presenting as homeless that month. In keeping with Focus Ireland Research Ethics Guidelines, attention was paid by both the services and advocacy staff members to ensuring that families were never invited to participate in more than one study and that high ethical standards were maintained at all times. Data collection took place during November 2017⁸.

Prior to the Focus Ireland Research Officer making contact with the respondents, a member of the Family HAT team attained verbal consent from respondents during a routine phone call with the family as part of their initial assessment to the service. Eight families declined to participate in the survey at this initial stage. Twenty-nine families were not contactable; ten of these families had invalid phone numbers, while nineteen families were not contactable as Focus Ireland did not have telephone contact details for these families because they left homelessness very quickly (some to newly opened 'Family Hubs') or another organisation/NGO was assisting them.

At the research stage, several families were then not contactable (i.e. phones were always engaged or connecting to 'call catcher') or, alternatively, the families did not answer their phone or return voicemail messages⁹. Other families were not surveyed due to a language barrier problems and informed consent was not possible. This left **27** surveys which were successfully completed with relevant families via telephone.

⁶ Focus Ireland Insights into Family Homelessness Series publications can be found here: <http://www.focusireland.ie/resource-hub/publications-and-partnerships/research/>

⁷ The survey was designed by the advocacy team and was shared with Focus Ireland Research Advisory Group for feedback.

⁸ Some time was required to collect the telephone numbers and consents to contact families.

⁹ The researcher attempted to make contact a total of four times with each family. In cases where families had a message service activated on their mobile phone, one voicemail was left.

Upon making contact with the participants, the Research Officer stated the purpose of the telephone call and what was involved in taking part in the survey. While the survey was structured in design and questions were posed in a consistent way, in many cases, the families expanded on their answers and there was some flexibility in terms of follow-up questions (research notes were recorded in these instances). The surveys typically took around 5-10 minutes each, but sometimes calls were longer - depending on the level of detail offered by participants themselves.

In cases where information was requested by the family in relation to their homelessness or housing situation, the relevant contact number of the Family HAT team was provided to the participant.

All data was inputted and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.

Focus Ireland's Data Protection and Customer Confidentiality policies, as well as the organisation's Ethical Guidelines for Conducting Research, were adhered to at all times in the completion of this study. The respondents were made aware at both initial phone call and follow-up phone call that involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and that they were under no obligation to participate. All details emerging from the research were anonymised and this was also explained to the respondents¹⁰.

There were no changes made to the previous telephone survey instrument for June 2017 data collection.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

All **27** of the respondents were adult parents (i.e. over the age of 18 years) and were accompanied by one or more of their children.

Living Situation at Time of Survey

At time of survey, **19 (70%)** of the families were residing in private emergency accommodation (commercial hotels or B&BS), **2 (7%)** family were living with friends of family members. Finally, **6 (22%)** families had exited homelessness – **4** of whom had accepted a HAP tenancy.

Age

Of the participants who were surveyed, **4 (15%)** were aged between 18 and 25 years; **15 (55%)** were between 26 and 35 years of age; and **8 (30%)** were 36 years or older. See Table 1 below.

Table 1. Age Breakdown of Sample

Age Group (in years)	Number of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Total
18-25	4	15%
26-35	15	55%
36+	8	30%
TOTAL	27	100%

¹⁰ Contact details and names were destroyed once the telephone surveys were completed and all identifiable details were removed.

Unlike previous survey cohorts, 15% of respondents were in the youngest age category. This compares to 32% in March 2017 and 26% of the 186 surveys conducted during 2016.

Nationality and Ethnic/Cultural Background

In the **June 2017** survey, **17 (63%)** of the survey respondents were born in Ireland, while **10 (37%)** respondents were born outside of Ireland. **2 (7%)** of whom were originally from an EU country while **8 (30%)** were from outside the EU (see Table 2).

Table 2. Nationality Breakdown of Sample

Nationality Category	Number of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Total
Ireland	17	63%
EU	2	7%
Non-EU	8	30%
TOTAL	27	100%

The proportion of migrant households in this survey (37%) is higher than the recorded figure in the March 2017 survey (26%) and closer to the 2016 average of 46%. This 37% could be considered significant considering that 17.3% of the general population were born outside of Ireland¹¹.

Table 3 displays the ethnic and cultural background of the families surveyed. The majority were White Irish; there were 3 Black African respondents, 3 Irish Traveller families, and 5 from Asian or 'other' cultural backgrounds.

Table 3. Ethnic and Cultural Background

Ethnic and Cultural Background		Number of Respondents
White	White Irish	14
	Irish Traveller	3
	Another White Background	2
Black / Black Irish	African	3
Other	Asian other	2
	Other	3
TOTAL		27

One respondent reported that they had a history of living in direct provision accommodation for those seeking asylum. This is lower than 2016 samples when 4 to 5 families had histories of direct provision each round of data collection but nonetheless worthy of note that each wave of data collection has captured at least one respondent with histories of direct provision.

¹¹ Central Statistics Office 2016 Census [www.cso.ie]

Family Type

In this June 2017 survey, **19 (70%)** of the respondents were one-parent households. This is higher than the March survey (61%), the average proportion of one-parent households in 2016 surveys (62%) and Department of Housing homelessness statistics which highlights how around 65% of families in emergency accommodation constitute of one-parent households. Of the **19** one-parent households in June 2017 survey, **all were headed by lone mothers**. The remaining 8 respondents (30%) in June 2017 were two-parent families.

In terms of the number of children in the family unit, the majority of the respondents had either one or two children in their household (**N=22, 82%**) as per previous rounds of data collection. The remaining **18%** of the respondents had three or more children. One family had five or more children.

Table 4. Breakdown of Number of Children as per Each Family unit

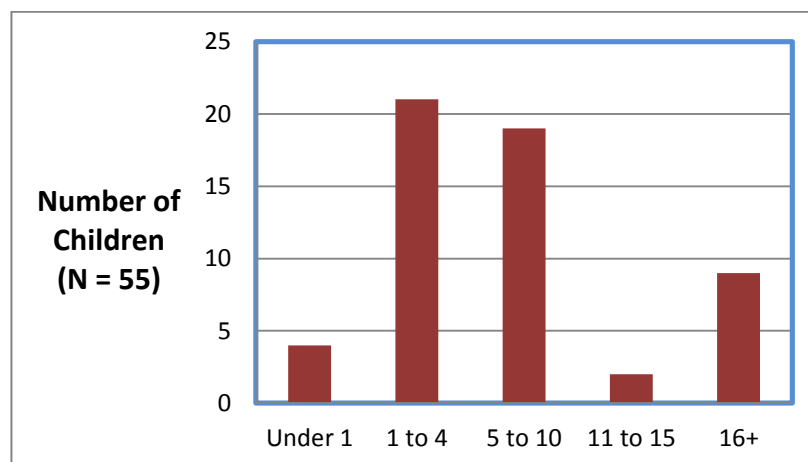
	Number of Families	Percentage of Total	
Number of Children	1	6	22%
	2	16	59%
	3	4	15%
	4	0	0%
	5+	1	4%
	TOTAL	27	100%

Showing a considerable increase on 2016 data average, 82% of June survey families had either one or two children (compared to average of 67%).

Of these 27 families, there were **55** children: **4 (7%)** were under the age of 1 year; **21 (38%)** were between 1 and 4 years; **19 (35%)** were between 5 and 10 years; **2 (4%)** were between 11 and 15 years; and **9 (16%)** were over the age of 16.

Therefore, **45%** of the children were under the age of 4, while **80%** of children were under the age of 10 years. See figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Ages of Children



Employment Status of Respondents

The vast majority of the research participants (**n=23, 86%**) described themselves as unemployed (or full-time parents in receipt of social welfare payment). This is higher than March 2017 surveys (74%). However, it mirrors the average in 2016 (83%). **2 (7%)** of the respondents were in part-time employment and **2 (7%)** were students. There were no respondents in full-time employment.

Once again, high levels of joblessness, limited income, and dependency on rental supplements have been found to be disproportionately represented among families entering homelessness.

Location of Last stable Home

The survey included the location of the participant's last stable home. Similarly to the March 2017 survey, the areas cited in this section differed from 2016 in some respects. Again, there was more *diversity* in the location of their last stable home and, perhaps related to this, there were no families who were living in Dublin 15 before they became homeless (whereas in previous surveys there were usually a large number from this area). Four families were living in Finglas in their last stable home; three in Ballyfermot; two in Tallaght and one in Rathcoole. The remaining families were living in places which included Dublin 7 (Phibsboro); Dublin 9 (Santry); Dublin 13 (Donaghmede), among other locations on the north side of the city. South Dublin locations included Dublin 2; Dublin 8 (Inchicore); Dublin 12 (Drimnagh) and South Co. Dublin (Dun Laoghaire). Five families reported that their last stable accommodation was outside of Dublin, with two of these families living abroad in their last stable home.

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

The survey captured the details – including duration, tenure and reasons for leaving – of the last four accommodations prior to their becoming homeless. Gleaning this information enabled two principle areas of insight: participants' recent housing history; and the various triggers or events which resulted in their loss of accommodation. It also indicated the nature of their housing histories and specifically, whether the families had experienced homelessness or housing stability in the past.

Last Stable Accommodation and Triggers to Homelessness

Mirroring both March 2017 and all 2016 survey data, the majority (**n=18, 67%**) of respondents who presented as homeless during **June 2017** reported that their last stable home was in the private rented sector (66% in March 2017; 72% average across all surveys conducted in 2016).

A majority (12 of 18 families) were in receipt of rent supplement in their last stable home, while 6 were meeting rental payments through their own income, income from a partner or from a family member.

Additionally, **4 families** reported that their last stable home was **staying with family** – 3 of whom categorised this as their parental family home and 1 other was staying with relatives.

A frequency analysis was conducted on reported ‘triggers’ to homelessness (in relation to the loss of their last stable home). Table 6 below highlights the self-reported reasons why families had to leave their last stable home. It is worth noting that these triggers did not always directly precede their stay in emergency accommodation; many families relied on informal arrangements for accommodation *before* they presented as homeless with their local authority, as will be discussed at greater length in the following section. One family arrived from another country, staying with a friend for several nights before moving straight into emergency accommodation and are not included in the table below.

Table 6: Cited Reasons for Leaving Last Stable Accommodation

Reasons cited for leaving last stable property		No. of Respondents
Property being withdrawn from the private rented sector (19%)	Landlord selling	3 (11%)
	Landlord moving in / giving property to family member	1
	Bank repossession	1
Additional issues related to private rented sector (27%)	Rent too high	4
	Substandard accommodation/contract non-renewal	3
Other	Relationship breakdown	4
	Domestic Violence	2
	Overcrowding	4
	Loss of employment	1
	Anti-social behaviour	2
	Fire damage	1
	Unclear	1
	TOTAL	27

A recurrent theme of each of these telephone survey reports is the relevant properties being withdrawn from the rental market. However, as highlighted in the table above, the number of **families** that cited their **landlord selling** as the main trigger to their homelessness (11%) was lower than the March 2017 survey (29%) and the average for 2016 data (23%). **1 family** reported that their landlord was either moving in to the property or giving it to a family member and **1 family** left their stable accommodation due to repossession of the property by the bank. Therefore, a lower number of families (**19%**) **were made homeless due to the landlord removing the property from the private rented sector** when compared to both the March 2017 surveys (37%) and the 2016 surveys (34%).

Affordability was a problem for 4 families (15%) had become homeless as a result of **rent being too high** – all of whom lost their accommodation over the last 12 months. Of note, 2 of these families were in receipt of Rent Supplement at the time of losing their rental accommodation.

4 families (15%) became homeless due to relationship breakdown. An additional **2 families (7%)** became homeless due to domestic violence.

3 families (12%) became homeless due to the poor quality of their accommodation. In these instances contracts were not renewed due to disputes with the landlord about repairs to the property.

Housing Trajectories and Routes into Homelessness

An additional objective of this regular research exercise with families presenting as homeless is to understand their accommodation trajectories – that is, to capture their previous four living situations and the reported reasons why they left each of those accommodations. Emerging from this were two broad analytical groupings:

1. Previous stability in the Private Rented Sector (n=19, 70%)
2. Prolonged Housing Instability and Hidden Homelessness (n=6, 22%)

Additionally, there was 1 family headed by a young person who had never lived independently (n=1, 4%) while 1 family was of migrant origin and had never had an independent tenancy since arriving in Ireland.

The two groups do not differ from previous surveys in terms of the overall level of stability in their housing histories – suggesting the majority had maintained tenancies successfully in the past and that the experience homelessness was a recent and new housing crisis. There was a cohort of 22% who reported a more unstable housing history.

These groupings will now be expanded upon, together with a brief case study of a housing trajectory of one family¹².

- 1. Previous Stability in the Private Rented Sector** – There were **19 families (70% of the sample)** who reported no prior experience of homelessness and very little time living with friends or family (apart from after they became homeless when they often relied on informal arrangements before presenting to their local authority as homeless). This is a higher proportion of both the March 2017 surveys (45%) and the 2016 averages which represented 50% in this grouping.

These families reported stable tenancies in the private sector, typically remaining for several years in each tenancy. Reasons for leaving previous tenancies in the past were usually associated with changes in family structure such as getting married, having a child, or frequently, the landlord removing the property from the private rented sector.

Their relative housing stability would strongly indicate that these families had previously complied with tenancy agreements and were able to pay their rent. Similarly to previous surveys, the majority of this group, but not all, were also supported with rent supplement.

Key Characteristics of Group One:

- **5** of these **19** families became homeless due to the landlord leaving the sector (**3** of which were due to landlords selling). An additional **2** families reported that they had to leave as the landlord would not renew the lease after a dispute regarding the quality of the accommodation.
- **8** of the **19** families were migrants; **6** were of a black or ethnic minority background.
- **13** of the **19** families were lone parent families.
- Three quarters of this group (**N=14, 74%**) sought advice and information from a support service or organisation *prior* to presenting as homeless; 4 of whom approached their local TD or councillor also.
- **4** of the families in this group had already exited homelessness by the time they were surveyed. **14** families were in hotel accommodation, while one family were living with relatives.

¹² All case studies are fully anonymised and identifiable details are removed.

- 2. Prolonged Housing Instability and Hidden Homelessness** – There were **6 (22%)** families in the **June 2017** cohort who reported more extensive marginalisation from the housing market. This marks an increase compared to both the March 2017 survey (11%) and the average of all 2016 surveys across which 11% reported more profound housing issues.

These families had little or no experience of living in independent or stable tenancies; they were heavily reliant on friends or families, typically for lengthy periods of time and reported extensive difficulties in accessing private rental accommodation. However, **1** of the families in this group had exited homelessness (to a local authority tenancy) by the time they were surveyed.

Key Characteristics of Group two:

- **5** had spent time moving between the homes of family, friends and relatives and lived in significant housing precariousness for many years.
- **1** respondent was the victim of domestic violence which resulted in moving between various refuge services.
- **5** respondents were Irish (one respondent of a Traveller background) and **1** was Black African.

Help-Seeking before Becoming Homeless

19 of the 27 families (70% of total) sought information or advice *prior* to presenting as homeless. This is considerably higher than the March surveys (55%), thus reverting closely to the average of 67% across the surveys during 2016. 14 of the 19 families who did seek help were from the stable housing group (Group No. 1 described above). 4 of the 6 respondents from the housing instability and hidden homelessness group (Group No. 2) sought help or information.

6 of the families approached their local TD or councillor as their first action in seeking help. Through this contact, TDs advised families to present to their local authorities or city council offices, or offered other relevant information and advice. An additional 3 families approached their local authority office as a first port-of-call, and 7 families approached either Focus Ireland or Threshold. 1 family contacted MABS and the RTB respectively.

Like previous months, in cases where families did not contact any service, it was typically related a lack of knowledge about which services were available and how they could help.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this regular telephone survey exercise with families presenting as homeless is to produce a concise and targeted examination of the accommodation trajectories, demographic profile and help-seeking patterns of families experiencing homelessness. As has been emphasised a number of times within this document, the findings do not necessarily pertain to all families experiencing homelessness; rather, they relate to a *cohort* of families at a particular *point-in-time*. Nonetheless, repeating this exercise on a regular basis is yielding targeted and timely analysis of family homelessness, building a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon.

As such, below are the key themes emerging from June 2017 survey, together with some discussion on the similarities and divergences with the previous surveys of similar data collected in March 2017 and in 2016. Data from families presenting as homeless in June 2017 provides, yet again, a pattern of consistency.

1. **Families with histories of stability in the private rented sector:** 70% of the families reported stable tenancies in the private sector before becoming homeless, typically remaining for several years in each tenancy. This is a higher proportion compared to both the March 2017 surveys (45%) and the 2016 average (50%) for this cohort.
2. **Greater diversity of reasons for losing private rented accommodation:** Within this sample, there was a lower prevalence of landlords withdrawing their properties from the market (19% compared to 37% in March 2017; 34% across all of 2016). Of note, a prominent reason for leaving last stable property in the June surveys was affordability problems, poor quality of accommodation and disputes with landlords.
3. **Continued prevalence of lone parents (and particularly lone mothers):** In this June 2017 survey, **19 (70%)** of the respondents were one-parent households. This is higher than March 2017 survey data (62%) and the average across 2016 data (62%). Again, women are consistently overrepresented: all lone parents surveyed in June 2017 survey were female.
4. **Persistent link between joblessness and homelessness:** Families entering homeless are more likely than not to be unemployed and dependent on social welfare jobseekers' allowance. 86% of the respondents reported they were unemployed and 12 of the 18 families who were living in the private rented sector were dependent on rent supplement to meet their rental payments.
5. **Continued Prevalence of migrant families:** Families of migrant origin, that is, respondents who were not born in Ireland (but may have Irish citizenship), continue to feature in high numbers in June 2017 (37%). This is a higher proportion compared to the 26% reported in March 2017, but lower when compared to the 46% average across 2016.
6. **Increase of Number of families seeking advice prior to homelessness:** 70% of the families sought support prior to presenting as homeless. This is higher than the March 2017 surveys (55%), reverting to the average reported across 2016 (67%).

While Dublin Region Homeless Executive now publish reports on the causes of homelessness among families from data derived from assessment forms¹³, these reports seeks to uncover the loss of last *stable housing* (as opposed to most recent living situation). It also reveals the stable housing histories reported by a majority of the families. By conducting these surveys over time, one can observe the impact housing market dynamics have on low income families – the majority of whom are headed by a single mother and dependent on social welfare and rent subsidies. This, combined with landlords leaving the market, high rents, low take up of tenants on rental subsidies on the part of landlords, together with extraordinary competition on private sector units in the Dublin region – continues to push low income families *out* of the private rented sector and *into* homelessness.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to the staff of Focus Ireland Family HAT, and in particular to Pauline Burke and Anna Bermingham who provided ongoing assistance across the data collection phase. Focus Ireland would like to thank the commitment and expert guidance from all members of our Research Advisory Group.

¹³ Dublin Region Homeless Executive (2017) *Reported Reasons for Family Homelessness in the Dublin Region*. Dublin: DRHE. Available at: <http://www.homelessdublin.ie/publications>

Appendix 1: Telephone Survey Instrument

Telephone Survey with Families – June 2017

SECTION I: Accommodations Prior to Homelessness

Q.1	What type of accommodation are you <u>currently</u> residing in? (✓)	Hotel / Emergency Accommodation (✓)	With Friends/Family (✓)	Moving between Accommodations (✓)	Have Exited Homelessness (include details on tenure type and, where appropriate, tenancy scheme, HAP, RS, etc.)		
Q2	Please describe your previous 4 accommodations BEFORE you entered emergency accommodation (note: No.4 relates to accommodation IMMEDIATELY BEFORE entering Hotel/B&B accommodation)						
	Tenure Type	Duration of Stay	Primary Reason for Leaving	If you were in PRS:			
				a) were you in receipt of rent supplement? (Y/N)	b) did you receive a RS supplement increase from social welfare?		
1							
2							
3							
4							
Q3	How long would you say it has been since you last had a 'stable' accommodation?	< 1 month	1-6 months	7 months – 1 year	1-2 years	3+ years	N/A
Q4	In what area/location was your last stable home? (please specify):						

Q	Would you describe this as the first time you have experienced homelessness? (✓)	First Time Homeless	Have experienced homeless before	Don't know	

SECTION II: Demographic Profile

Q5	What age are you?					
Q6	What country are you originally from? (✓)	Irish	EU	Non-EU (go to Q3b)		
Q6b	<i>If you are originally born outside Ireland, have you ever resided in Direct Provision Accommodation in Ireland?</i> <i>If yes, for how long? _____</i>	Yes		No		
Q7	What is your ethnic or cultural background? (✓)	White	Irish			
			Irish Traveller			
			Another White background			
		Black /Black Irish	African			
			Any other Black background			
		Asian/Asian Irish	Chinese			
			Any other Asian background			
	Other / Mixed					
Q8	What is your current employment status? (If unemployed, ask Q4b) (✓)	Unemployed	Student	P/T Employment	F/T Employment	
Q8b	<i>If unemployed, are you in receipt of a weekly social welfare payment? (✓)</i>	Yes		No		
Q9	Are you single or in a couple? (✓)	Single		In a couple		
Q10	How many children do you have? (✓)	1	2	3	4	5+
Q11	What age are your children? (insert number of children in relation to age categories)	Age in Years	Number of Children			
		Under 1 year				
		1-4				
		5-10				
		11-15				
		16+				

SECTION III: Help-seeking PRIOR to becoming homeless

Q13a	Did you contact anyone BEFORE you became homeless? (✓)	Yes	No	Don't know	
Q13b	If yes, who did you contact? (✓ all that apply)	Local councillor/TD			
		Local Authority			
		CWO			
		Citizens advice			
		MABS			
		RTB			
		Local Social Welfare Office			
		Friend/Family member:			
		Non-Statutory organisations:	Focus Ireland		
			Threshold		
			Simon Community		
		Other (please state):			
		GP			
Your landlord					
Other (please state):					
Q14	Was there a service/support that you felt you particularly need(ed) living in emergency accommodation? (please give details)				

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. We really appreciate it.

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