Introduction

Focus Ireland and the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin have collaborated for over a decade to bring high quality and up-to-date research on homelessness to a wider audience and into the core of public policy formation. Since 2014, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) has published data on the number of adults and child dependents in emergency accommodation each month. In addition, over the same period, Quarterly Performance Reports and Financial Reports have contained data on the duration and cost of homelessness in Ireland.

‘Focus on Homelessness’ aims to make this substantial body of data available in an accessible and reliable format. By condensing this data into 16 key indicators, ‘Focus on Homelessness’ provides a detailed report on the extent, nature and duration of homelessness, in addition to the public expenditure on households experiencing homelessness in Ireland.

This report provides an update to ‘Focus on Homelessness’ Vol 1 published in April 2020, which provided data up to end of 2019, by including data from the monthly reports from January to June 2020 and provides data for Q1 and Q2 2020 from the Performance Reports and Local Authority estimates for expenditure on services for households experiencing homelessness in 2020. A detailed description of the data sources and some of their limitations can be found in appendix 1 of this report.
Section A: Households
In the first half of 2020, the number of households accessing emergency accommodation decreased significantly from just over 6,000 households in January to 5,523 in June, and this decline is observed both in Dublin and outside of Dublin.

Presenting the scale of homelessness in terms of the number of households affected is important because solutions to homelessness come in terms of homes. This gives the clearest indication of the number of dwellings required to meet the needs of households currently in emergency accommodation. Despite the decline observed in the first half of 2020, the number of households accessing emergency accommodation in June 2020 is 240% higher than the number of households in June 2014.

It should be noted that only data on individuals and ‘adults with child dependants’ is published in the DHPLG monthly reports and Quarterly Performance Reports. The figure for homeless households is derived from these figures by taking into account the number of couples. See Appendix 1 for a discussion of the discontinuities in this data.
Figure 2 breaks down these households in emergency accommodation by composition, with one parent and two parent families shown separately. Households of ‘Adult Individuals (No Children)’ includes both single person households and couples with no children.

Between January and June 2020, the number of households accessing emergency accommodation with children declined by 28%, and households without children declined by just under 1%, to 4,364 households in June 2020.

More details of the composition of households with children are given in Section D: Families.
Section B: Adults in Homelessness
The number of adults in emergency accommodation has fallen by 10% between January and June 2020. As of June 2020, there were 6,046 adults in emergency accommodation nationally, the lowest level since October 2018.

This figure includes all adults, whether they are single or in a couple, and whether or not they are accompanied by children.
Adults in emergency accommodation comprise of 64% men and 36% women. The number of women in emergency accommodation has been growing faster than men over the past six years, a trend which is partly explained by the growth in family homelessness and the large proportion of families in emergency accommodation with one female parent (see Section D).

The graph shows that the rate of increase in women’s homelessness begins to slow down at the start of 2018, in a similar pattern to family homelessness (see Section B). This change in the trend is less visible among men in homelessness, indicating that homeless women are more likely to be part of a household with children than are men. Fifty five percent of families in emergency accommodation are one-parent.
25–44 year olds make up the majority of the number of adults in emergency accommodation at around 60%. The next largest group is 45–64 year olds (28%), followed by young adults aged 18–24 (12%). People aged over 65 years are just 3% of all adults in emergency accommodation.

All age groups have seen a rise in homelessness over the past six years. The largest rise has been among 45–64 year olds, with a 231% increase since June 2014.

On average, people in emergency accommodation tend to be younger than the general population. Half of Ireland’s overall population are under 45, while they comprise three quarters of those in emergency accommodation.
There are three types of emergency accommodation reported in the monthly reports. Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) includes hotels, B&Bs and other residential facilities that are privately owned and are being used on an emergency basis. Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) is emergency accommodation, primarily congregate shelters and Family Hubs, with onsite professional support, and operated by Non-Government Organisations funded or partially funded by Section 10 funding via the local authority. Temporary Emergency Accommodation (TEA) is the smallest category and includes emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) supports, TEAs are operated both by NGOs and private operators.

The number of people in PEA in Ireland is almost four times higher in 2020 than in 2014. The number of people in STA has increased by 93% over this period. TEA is the smallest group, and has further decreased since 2014 (-24%).

Between January and June 2020, the number of adults in STA declined by nearly 16%, with a decline of nearly 5% for adults in PEA.
The number of adults in emergency accommodation for longer than six months in Dublin has risen every quarter since the recording of this data began in 2014, reaching its highest level in Q1 of 2020 at 3,117. In the second quarter of 2020, the number fell for the first time, with an 11% drop from Q1 to Q2 2020.

Outside of Dublin, the number of people in long-term homelessness has been more variable. It rose by 92 people between Q1 and Q2 this year, bringing the number of adults in emergency accommodation for longer than 6 months outside of Dublin to just over 1,000.

The total number of adults in temporary and emergency accommodation for more than six months increased from just under 800 in Q1 2014 to nearly 3,800 in Q2 2020, an increase of 377%. Sixty-five percent of adults were in emergency accommodation for more than six months at the end of 2020, and 69% in Dublin, compared to just under 50% in Q1 2014. Outside Dublin, 55% of those in emergency accommodation had been homeless for more than six months in 2020 compared to 26% in Q1 2014.

---

1This data includes those adults consecutively or continuously for longer than 6 months, and non-consecutively for longer than 6 months in the previous 12-month period. The collection of data on the number of adults in emergency accommodation for more than six months reflects the fact that the aim of Government policy in 2014, when the format of the data collection was agreed, was to ‘end long-term homelessness’, i.e. homelessness lasting for more than 6 months.
Figure 8 shows the number of adults entering and leaving emergency accommodation as expressed by a daily average (i.e. the quarterly total divided by the total number of days in the quarter).

In each quarter between 2014 and Q1 2020, more adults entered emergency accommodation than exited, resulting in the increase in the total number of people in such accommodation. However, Q2 2020 is the first time that presentations have fallen below exits, due to a drop in presentations. A moratorium on evictions came into effect on March 27th and remained in effect for the entirety of Q2, which may explain this decrease. For example, in Dublin there were 232 new family presentations to emergency accommodation in Q2 2019, but 98 in Q2 2020. For singles, the number of new presentations in Q2 2019 was 447, with 327 in Q2 2020.

Nationally, there were 9.8 daily presentations to homeless services in Q2 of this year on average, compared to 16.1 for this period in 2019. Compared to Q1 2020, 5.7 fewer people entered homelessness each day in Q2. However, exits from homelessness have not risen concurrently, having risen by just 0.3 since Q1 and 1.2 since the same period in 2019.

The figure for ‘new presentations’ includes those who have applied to their local authority for homeless support for the first time, are deemed by the local authority to fulfil the conditions under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 and are offered (and take up) emergency accommodation. People who apply for homeless support but are deemed ineligible are not counted as ‘presenting’, nor are people who are deemed to be eligible for homeless support but do not enter homeless accommodation (for instance because they find alternative rented property, or go to stay with relatives).
3,960 adults exited emergency accommodation to tenancies nationally in 2019, the most exits in a single year to date. In the first half of 2020 there were just over 2,000 exits to housing nationally, with Dublin\(^2\) accounted for nearly two-thirds of these housing exits. Two-thirds of the exits in Dublin in the first half of 2020 were to the Private Rented Sector, with the balance exiting to social housing tenancies. Of the 755 exits outside of Dublin, just over half were to the private rented sector with a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), with the remaining exits to Local Authority managed or Approved Housing Body tenancies.

Other adults exited from emergency accommodation to stay with friends, migrated, entered other services such as hospital, or in a few cases were imprisoned, but such exits are inherently unstable and may return to emergency accommodation. In the first half of 2020 there were 271 such exits from emergency accommodation in Dublin.

\(^2\) It should be noted that this figure does not include adults in the Dublin region who were successfully diverted from homeless services, through the offer of Homeless Housing Assistance Payment (Homeless HAP) or arrangements to remain with family. Some published figures for ‘exits’ from homelessness include this group.
Section C: Rough Sleeping
FOCUS ON HOMELESSNESS

SECTION C: ROUGH SLEEPING

Figure 10: Rough Sleeping in Dublin, Q1 2014—Q2 2020

A rough sleeper count has been conducted in Dublin in the Spring and Winter of each year commencing in 2007, and data from 2014 is shown in Figure 11. After reaching a high of 184 people sleeping rough in Q4 2017, rough sleeping on a point-in-time basis has fallen steadily and has now reached its lowest level since 2015. No point-in-time rough sleeper count was conducted in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown, but 709 people were in contact with street outreach teams in Q2, the highest ever number.

This point-in-time data conceals the fact that a larger number of individuals sleep rough over a period of time. For example, during Q2 2020, of the 709 unique individuals identified by street outreach teams in Dublin, nearly 70 percent fluctuated between rough sleeping and accessing emergency shelter accommodation.

---

3 The full series of Dublin Rough Sleeping Counts can be accessed on the Dublin Region Homeless Executive website at https://bit.ly/2KCNogb
Section D: Family Homelessness
In June 2014, there were just over 300 families in emergency accommodation in Ireland. As of June 2020, there were 1,159 families, an increase of 236%. This is mainly concentrated in Dublin, which has 75% of all homeless families.

The June 2020 figure is the lowest since mid-2016. Between January and June 2020 there was a sharp drop of 28% or 452 less of families in emergency accommodation.

* See Appendix 1 for a discussion in changes in the categorisation of homeless families over this period.
Five families presented as homeless in the Dublin region in January 2013. Since January 2013, an average of 63 families have become homeless every month and there have been ten individual months in which over 100 families became homeless.

In April 2020, 14 families entered emergency accommodation for the first time, the lowest monthly figure recorded since May 2013. By June 2020, the number of such families had increased again to 59.
In June 2020, there were 2,653 child dependents in Ireland living in emergency accommodation, a decrease of 26% since January 2020. Virtually all the people in this category are children under the age of 18, but around 7–10% are over-18s who are accommodated with their family.

The majority are in Dublin, with around three quarters of all children in emergency accommodation living in the capital. While family homelessness is mostly concentrated in Dublin, the rest of the country has also seen an increase in the past six years. Child homelessness outside of Dublin is now more than four times higher than it was in June 2014. Just 5% of all homeless children were outside of Dublin in 2014. This figure now stands at a quarter, with 514 more children living in emergency accommodation outside of Dublin than five years ago.
As of June 2020, there were 602 families who had been homeless for longer than six months. This represents 71% of all homeless families in Ireland. The number of families homeless for over two years has increased from 22 families to 162 families since 2016.

As described earlier there was a sharp drop on the number of families in emergency accommodation in Dublin between January and June 2020. The biggest decrease is among families who have been homeless for 6 months or less, which has fallen from 406 to 240 in this period.
Section F: Individuals
The total number of individuals in emergency accommodation (adults and children) rose above 10,000 for the first time in February 2019. In June 2020 it stood at 8,699, which is over twice the number of people in emergency accommodation in June 2014.

Since January 2020, there has been a decline of nearly 1,600 adults and children in emergency accommodation.
Section E: Expenditure
Actual expenditure by central (DHPLG) and local government on services for households experiencing homelessness nationally increased from €57m in 2013 to €226m in 2019, and it is estimated by the Local Authorities that they will spend just over €240m in 2020. Between 2013 and 2019, nearly 75% of this expenditure was on emergency accommodation, and in 2020, it is estimated that expenditure on emergency accommodation will be close to €200m, or 82% of total estimated expenditure. Expenditure on Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) for 2020 is estimated to be close to €130m.\(^5\)

---

\(^5\) For a more detailed exploration of expenditure trends and some of the limitations of the Quarterly Financial Reports, see Eoin O’Sullivan and Thadee Musafiri (2020) Public Expenditure on Services for Households Experiencing Homelessness (Dublin, Focus Ireland).
Appendices
Appendix 1: Data

Monthly Reports

The PASS (Pathway Accommodation & Support System), established in Dublin as a bed management and client support system in 2011, was rolled out nationally in 2013, and this development allowed for data on number of adult individuals with accompanying child dependents experiencing homelessness and residing in designated emergency accommodation funded by Section 10 and Local Authority contributions during the third week of every month in each county to be generated on a monthly basis. The publication of these Monthly Reports commenced in April 2014 on a trial basis, and from June 2014, with some modifications, has been produced on a continuous monthly basis. Data is generated from PASS on the profile of households in the designated services by household composition, the gender, age and nature of accommodation provided for adults and the number of accompanying child dependents. In comparison with the quarterly performance reports, the monthly reports provide stock data on the number of adults, child dependents and households in a given week each month.

In comparative terms, using the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) as a framework, this monthly data provide provides data category 2, people staying in a night shelter; and category 3, people in accommodation for the homeless and in 2014 only (see below), category 4, people in a women's shelter (see appendix 1 for an overview of ETHOS).

The Monthly Reports do not capture the those using emergency or temporary shelters not funded by the Local Authorities, does not include all those rough sleeping, those in Section 10 funded long-term supported accommodation, these in direct provision nor households in insecure or inadequate accommodation. Only a small number of services with less than 200 beds nationally do not, for various reasons, receive, nor indeed, seek Section 10 funding, and therefore are not included in the PASS data.

Data on the numbers sleeping rough or literally homeless is collected via a point-in-time or one-night street count twice a year in Dublin (in March and November), and the number of contacts outreach teams have with those sleeping rough is available in Dublin, the South West and South East regions only. Data from Dublin shows that the majority of those rough sleeping also use emergency shelters, so that a significant number are likely to be captured in the monthly reports.

On households in insecure or inadequate accommodation, data is collected via the Housing Needs Assessment, which was carried out by the local authorities on a bi-annual basis, and now annual basis. Amongst the categories of need for social housing support are ‘unsuitable accommodation due to particular housing circumstances’, reasonable requirement for separate accommodation, ‘unsuitable accommodation due to exceptional medical or compassionate grounds,’ ‘over-crowded accommodation and ‘unfit accommodation.’ In the Assessments conducted in 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, between 35,000 and 40,000 households were assessed as being in these categories.

The Monthly Reports do not include persons in long-term supported accommodation but funded via Section 10. In 2019, 49 long-term supported residential services were allocated funding via section 10 in the amount of €9.8m. Census 2011 identified 992 individuals in such long-term supported accommodation, with Census 2016 identifying 1,772 individuals.
Nor do the Monthly Reports include persons who are in Direct Provision Centres (DPCs), which provide congregate accommodation with various support services, for international protection applicants provided by the Department of Justice / Reception and Integration Agency, who have been granted refugee status or leave to remain in Ireland, but are unable to exit Direct Provision due to their inability to secure rental accommodation. At the end of June 2019, there were 780 such persons in Direct Provision Centres, or 12% of the overall number in DPCs (IGEES, 2019, p.22). Furthermore, at the end of June 2019, there were over 900 persons seeking international protection, who due to an increase in persons seeking international protection and constrained capacity in DPCs, were placed in commercial hostels and B&Bs by the Reception and Integration Agency.

**Modifications to the Monthly Reports**

**Removal of Refuges in January 2015**

From 1 January 2015, accommodation or refuges for those escaping from gender-based violence (ETHOS category 4) which was funded via Section 10 — a total of 21 residential services with a bed capacity of approximately 250, with annual funding of just over €2.1m was transferred to the statutory Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), and these accessing these residential services have not been enumerated in the monthly data since that date. This followed from a recommendation of the *Homelessness Oversight Group*[^6] (2013, p.23) that: “such refuges are not homeless emergency accommodation and would prefer to see both a discrete funding stream and separate reporting for the provision of State support to the accommodation needs of persons experiencing domestic violence. This would seem to appropriately reside within the scope of the recently established Child and Family Agency. We recommend therefore that existing funding arrangements for the provision of refuge accommodation and services would be transferred to the Child and Family Agency.”

The *Policy and Procedural Guidance for Housing Authorities in Relation to Assisting Victims of Domestic Violence with Emergency and Long-term Accommodation Needs* states that “It is a matter for Tusla to monitor women’s refuges in terms of capacity, usage, through flow, etc. The official monthly homeless data published by this Department and produced by housing authorities via the Pathway Accommodation & Support System (PASS) relates to the State-funded emergency accommodation arrangements that are overseen by housing authorities only. PASS is not operational in the refuge sector. (2017, p.3).” To-date, the Child and Family Agency have not published data on a monthly basis on the number and characteristics of those accessing such residential services.

**Re-categorisation of Households March, April and July 2018**

In March 2018, 253 Adults accommodated ‘in houses and apartments’ who had hitherto being included in the monthly data were excluded, and in April a further 121 adults were excluded on the same basis that they were not in emergency accommodation, giving a total of 374 adults. Following further investigations by the Department of Housing, ‘further cases of houses and apartments being recorded as emergency accommodation’ were identified, containing a further 251 adults, giving an overall total of **625 adults** (with 981 accompanying child dependents) excluded for the Monthly Reports. On 27 September 2018, a note was prepared by the Homelessness and Housing Supports Unit in the Department of Housing summarizing the re-categorizations.

[^6]: To assist the Minister in monitoring and measuring progress towards ending homelessness in 2016, a three—person Homelessness Oversight Group, comprising a senior social policy academic, a retired former senior civil servant and a private sector accountant, was established in February 2013. Some 10 months later, in December 2013, the oversight group produced its first, and what was ultimately, its only report.
Quarterly Performance Reports

From January 2014 onwards, at the end of each quarter, Local Authorities, were required by the Department of Housing to produce Performance Reports providing flow data on a range of indicators, included the number of new and repeat adult presentations to homelessness services per quarter; the number of adults in emergency accommodation for more than six months, the number of adult individuals exiting temporary and emergency accommodation to tenancies in the local authority sector, approved housing bodies or private rented sector (including those in receipt of the Housing Assistance Payment) with, or without support, and the number of rough sleepers.

Quarterly Financial Reports

Local Authorities were also required to produce detailed quarterly Financial Reports outlining the distribution of central government and local authority funding on preventative actions, emergency and long-term supported accommodation, and other services for those experiencing homelessness. The reports also provide data on the distribution of this expenditure to NGO and private sector providers of the range of services listed above. These reporting requirements arose from the issuing of a Protocol Governing Delegation of Section 10 Funding for Homeless Services to Local Authorities.
### Appendix 2: ETHOS – European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Operational Category</th>
<th>Living Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roofless</td>
<td>1 People living rough</td>
<td>1.1 Public space or external space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 People staying in a night shelter</td>
<td>2.1 Night shelter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Houseless           | 3 People in accommodation for the homeless | 3.1 Homeless hostel  
|                     | 3.2 Temporary accommodation  
|                     | 3.3 Transitional supported accommodation |
|                     | 4 People in a women’s shelter | 4.1 Women’s shelter accommodation |
|                     | 5 People in accommodation for immigrants | 5.1 Temporary accommodation, reception centres  
|                     | 5.2 Migrant workers’ accommodation |
|                     | 6 People due to be released from institutions | 6.1 Penal institutions  
|                     | 6.2 Medical institutions  
|                     | 6.3 Children’s institutions/homes |
|                     | 7 People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness) | 7.1 Residential care for older homeless people  
|                     | 7.2 Supported accommodation for formerly homeless persons |
| Insecure            | 8 People living in insecure accommodation | 8.1 Temporarily with family/friends  
|                     | 8.2 No legal (sub)tenancy  
|                     | 8.3 Illegal occupation of land |
|                     | 9 People living under threat of eviction | 9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented)  
|                     | 9.2 Repossession orders (owned) |
|                     | 10 People living under threat of violence | 10.1 Police recorded incidents |
| Inadequate          | 11 People living in temporary/non-conventional structures | 11.1 Mobile homes  
|                     | 11.2 Non-conventional building  
|                     | 11.3 Temporary structure |
|                     | 12 People living in unfit housing | 12.1 Occupied dwelling unfit for habitation |
|                     | 13 People living in extreme overcrowding | 13.1 Highest national norm of overcrowding |
Eoin O’Sullivan is Professor in Social Policy at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin.

Aisling Reidy is Policy Officer in Focus Ireland.

Mike Allen is Director of Advocacy in Focus Ireland.

ISBN: 978-1-9996896-4-3

Publication date: July 2020