

Support to Live Independently (SLÍ) Evaluation



TSA Consultancy on behalf of the 'Support to Home' Partnership



© 2014 Focus Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publishers.

Author: TSA Consultancy

Glossary of terms

| | |
|------|---|
| AHB | Approved Housing Body |
| DCC | Dublin City Council |
| DRHE | Dublin Region Homeless Executive |
| FCC | Fingal County Council |
| HNA | Holistic Needs Assessment |
| MIPS | Management Information Processing System |
| PASS | Pathway Accommodation and Support System |
| PMVT | Peter McVerry Trust |
| PRS | Private Rented Sector |
| RAS | Rental Accommodation Scheme |
| SDCC | South Dublin County Council |
| SLÍ | Support to Live Independently |
| STA | Supported Temporary Accommodation |
| SWA | Supplementary Welfare Allowance (rent allowance/ rent supplement) |

Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 3 |
| SUMMARY | 4 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 14 |
| 1.1. Background and objectives of the SLÍ evaluation | 14 |
| 1.2. Methodology | 15 |
| 1.3. Ethical considerations | 17 |
| 1.4. Format of evaluation report | 18 |
| 2. CONTEXT | 19 |
| 2.1. Housing First | 19 |
| 2.2. Pathway to Home | 19 |
| 3. PROFILE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SLÍ INITIATIVE | 22 |
| 3.1. Background | 22 |
| 3.2. The SLÍ stages and inputs | 23 |
| 3.3. Outputs from SLÍ and profile data | 26 |
| 4. ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES | 33 |
| 4.1. To deliver housing support to enable households to live independently in their community | 33 |
| 4.2. Liaise with landlords - ensure continuity for tenant between the housing provider & housing support service | 38 |
| 4.3. Develop relationships (service providers) integrating housing support into local community | 41 |
| 4.4. To engage with the systems of the DHRE | 44 |
| 5. OUTCOMES | 46 |
| 5.1. Data and sources of information on outcomes | 46 |
| 5.2. Factors influencing the sustaining of tenancies | 51 |
| 6. QUALITY OF THE PROCESSES | 54 |
| 6.1. Referrals | 54 |
| 6.2. Handover | 55 |
| 6.3. Support | 56 |
| 6.4. Review process and disengagement | 57 |
| 6.5. Organisational differences in delivery | 58 |
| 7. MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS | 60 |
| 7.1. Collaboration between the parties | 60 |
| 7.2. Support needs and implications | 61 |
| 7.3. Delivery and geographic issues | 61 |
| 7.4. Staff | 62 |
| 8. SWOT ANALYSIS | 64 |
| 9. RECOMMENDATIONS | 65 |
| APPENDIX 1: Proposed programme Indicators for SLÍ | 68 |

| | |
|--|----|
| APPENDIX 2: Profile of consulted SLÍ customers | 74 |
| APPENDIX 3: INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED | 76 |

Index of tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1-1 No of SLÍ customers taking part in telephone survey | 16 |
| Table 1-2 Reasons for non-participation in telephone survey | 17 |
| Table 3-1 Profile of SLÍ customers GENDER (n=172)..... | 27 |
| Table 3-2 Profile of SLÍ customers HOUSEHOLD PROFILE (n=172)..... | 27 |
| Table 3-3 Profile of SLÍ customers AGE PROFILE (n=171) | 27 |
| Table 3-4 Profile of SLÍ customers AGE PROFILE cross tabulated according to support levels | 27 |
| Table 3-5 Profile of SLÍ customers ACCOMODATION TYPE(n=171)..... | 28 |
| Table 3-6 Profile of SLÍ customers LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA (n=172) | 29 |
| Table 3-7 SLÍ customers SUPPORT NEEDS (active and closed cases) (n=170) | 30 |
| Table 3-8 SLÍ customers (n=142) DURATION OF SUPPORTS (closed cases) | 30 |
| Table 3-9 SLÍ customers (closed cases) (n=141) SUPPORT NEEDS OF SLÍ (closed cases only) ... | 31 |
| Table 3-10 SLÍ customers (closed cases) (n=141) SUPPORT DURATION OF SLÍ – percentages per support category | 31 |
| Table 4-1 SLÍ customers interviewed by telephone (n=33) SUPPORTS RECEIVED | 33 |
| Table 4-2 Profile of SLÍ customers (n=107) IDENTIFIED NEEDS | 35 |
| Table 4-3 Individuals moving to private rented accommodation with or without visiting support in the Dublin region in 2013 | 39 |
| Table 5-1 Move on independent living with and without supports and outcomes (2013) | 47 |
| Table 0-1 Age profile of telephone survey respondents (n=33)..... | 74 |
| Table 0-2 Gender profile of telephone survey respondents (n=33) | 75 |
| Table 0-3 Duration of homelessness prior to SLÍ (n=33) | 75 |
| Table 0-4 Duration of SLÍ supports (n=33) | 75 |
| Table 0-5 Housing status of survey respondents (n=33) | 75 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers would like to acknowledge all those who contributed to the research including:

- All those interviewed and consulted, including the 39 current and former participants of SLÍ
- The Monitoring Group and Focus Ireland's Research Advisory Group
- To the staff in both Focus Ireland the Peter McVerry Trust, particularly Sinead McGinley for her support and guidance throughout the process.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Support to Live Independently (SLÍ) initiative is a visiting support service to those with low or moderate needs who have secured independent accommodation after leaving homeless services. The aims of the scheme are to support homeless people to move on from homelessness to living independently, and to assist with re-integration into the local community. This scheme is part of the Dublin Region Homeless Executive's (DRHE) *Pathway to Home* model which it has been implementing since 2009. The SLÍ initiative has been delivered to over 584 households across Dublin since 2010 (as of the summer of 2013). While all local authorities have designated staff to coordinate SLÍ at a local level, Dublin City Council (DCC) is the overall coordinator of the scheme.

This evaluation is concerned with the delivery of SLÍ by the 'Support to Home' Partnership (a partnership between the Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) and Focus Ireland). Its key objective is to measure the effectiveness of the 'Support to Home' Partnership's SLÍ service¹ in settling formerly homeless households into independent living in the community within the context of a housing-led/pathways model of service provision.

The evaluation methodology included desk research (including policy review, project data, settlement and other outcome indicators); six interviews with SLÍ participants; 33 telephone interviews with SLÍ participants; one-to-one interviews with staff from local authorities, SLÍ service providers, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, and community based services.

OVERVIEW OF SLÍ

SLÍ provides a housing support service to an individual moving out of homelessness into their own housing, whether that housing is sourced from the private rented sector (PRS), voluntary housing associations, or local authority housing units. There are two SLÍ contracts operating in the Dublin area: one delivered by Dublin Simon, and the other delivered by the 'Support to Home' partnership.

While participation in SLÍ is voluntary, the majority of those referred take part in the programme. The process is outlined briefly:

¹ SLÍ is an acronym for the Support to Live Independently programme.

- Once a household or client has been allocated a unit of accommodation by the local authority from the homeless list (Allocations Section), they are automatically referred to the SLÍ coordinator in the specific local authority, who makes contact with 'Support to Home'. Referrals can also be made directly to SLÍ for those moving into private rented accommodation (by key workers or by self-referral).
- The first step in the SLÍ support process takes place when the individual has been handed the keys to their new tenancy, and a handover meeting takes place (which is attended by a SLÍ support worker, a key worker, and local authority SLÍ coordinator). The meeting includes a discussion on expectations, commitment required, supports offered, safety issues, etc.
- The SLÍ support worker undertakes an initial risk assessment with the SLÍ customer on a one-to-one basis at the handover stage.
- The SLÍ worker will provide supports to the household as required. This usually involves weekly home visits or weekly meetings. The SLÍ worker and customer jointly discuss support needs and develop a plan for how these will be delivered. The SLÍ worker provides advocacy and practical support to the SLÍ customer, with an emphasis on empowering the individual and household to meet their own needs.
- A process of disengagement can take place after a minimum of three months of participation in SLÍ. The programme provides for one hour support per week for a period of six months, but some households may end their involvement beforehand. In some cases, the duration of supports can be less than or greater than six months, depending on needs.
- Customers are also usually provided with an option for continued or future engagement with the service provider as a support, if they require it.

INPUTS

The contract for the delivery of the service is between Dublin City Council and the 'Support to Home' partnership. As outlined above, the contract provides for one hour support per week to each household for a period of up to six months (i.e. 26 hour per household or client). In the 'Support to Home' partnership, Focus Ireland undertakes the coordination and overall management of the SLÍ contract.

The frontline delivery of SLÍ is undertaken by two staff members in Focus Ireland, and three staff members in PMVT. Protocols for SLÍ and policies for its delivery are largely drawn from settlement and tenancy sustainment and prevention service indicators and policies that have been developed by Focus Ireland.

Both organisations utilise additional resources in the delivery of support, including:

- Befriending supports from volunteers in Focus Ireland
- Child and family support expertise in Focus Ireland
- 24 hour / seven day per week emergency telephone contact to PMVT

- Counselling services within PMVT

OUTPUTS FROM SLÍ AND PROFILE DATA

Between September 2010 and September 2013, 'Support to Home' engaged with 172 households in the delivery of SLÍ (at end September 2013, 29 of these were active cases). 129 of these cases have been delivered by Focus Ireland (75%) and 43 by PMVT (25%).

Profile

The profile data is based on PASS data of all 172 cases and reports that:

- Almost three quarters of participants were male (73%).
- 83% of households had no child dependents.
- Half of the participants were aged between 25-44 years.
- The data indicates that as the age profile of SLÍ participants increases, so do their support needs.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of participants were living in local authority accommodation, with just over one-fifth (22%) living in the private rented sector.
- Of those living in local authority accommodation, this was mostly in the Dublin City Council area (87% of those in local authority accommodation).
- Over half of SLÍ participants had low support needs (60%), and medium support needs accounted for 29% of participants. The remainder had either low-medium or high support needs. Some staff made the point that support needs can change depending on the external issues affecting the lives of participants.
- The majority of 'closed cases' (61%) had availed of support from SLÍ for a period of three months or less, and 86% of all participants engaged with SLÍ for six months or less. The data indicates that the higher the support needs, the longer the duration of support is received.

SUPPORTS RECEIVED AND SUPPORT NEEDS

94% of those SLÍ customers surveyed² were very satisfied with the support that they had received or were currently receiving from SLÍ, and 85% believed that SLÍ had assisted them in maintaining their tenancy into the long-term. Customers placed a high value on SLÍ workers' approaches to delivering support, and a balance between challenging, motivating, encouraging and supporting customers appears to have been achieved.

² The telephone survey was undertaken by Focus Ireland with all SLÍ customers, of whom 33 customers (current and former) took part.

The skills and expertise of staff were also highly rated by the local authorities consulted.

Types of supports identified³ included:

- Day-to-day housing tasks
- Linking in with other social supports
- Building positive relations with neighbours
- Linking in with community services
- Other supports identified included:
 - Accessing medical treatment and appointments
 - Emotional support
 - Court attendance support
 - Encouragement / motivation
 - Budgeting
 - Help with getting (furniture) grants and social welfare payments
 - Accessing a range of skills to live independently (e.g. healthy eating)
 - Literacy and educational courses

Supports available through PMVT and Focus Ireland (including befriending, counselling, out-of-hours telephone support) were also identified in the interviews.

Additional supports required included:

- Additional meetings, particularly at the outset of support when moving into the new accommodation (two meetings per week at the outset)
- A pre-tenancy meeting with the SLÍ worker prior to the handover meeting (which was the point at which most participants met their SLÍ support worker)
- Some post-SLÍ support (particularly dealing with landlords and maintenance issues) which might correspond to tenancy sustainment type services. It was noted that poor quality accommodation (notably those living in the private rented sector) is a particular issue.

Potential future needs

In the telephone interviews, 44% anticipated that they may face future challenges in their tenancy. The potential challenges that this group identified included:

- Mental health and health problems
- Financial problems, including expensive rents
- Poor quality accommodation

³ As part of the telephone survey and one-to-one interviews.

- Concerns about not being able to cope once their SLÍ support ends
- The need for help in accessing suitable accommodation to meet family needs
- The need for a key worker

Support and relationships with local community services

SLÍ workers establish relationships with a wide range of community-based services including addiction, mental health, community welfare, MABS, local employment services, services for elderly people, citizens advice, and education services. Many of these services played an important role for customers in combating isolation, maintaining successful tenancies, and enhancing confidence and self-esteem.

The ability for staff to engage with community-based services is influenced by factors including:

- Local resources: in some areas of Dublin, provision is mixed or there may be eligibility requirements that are restrictive. Moreover, there are differences in practices in certain parts of Dublin (e.g. where discretion around administering Supplementary Welfare arise);
- Local relationships: this was very important, and where workers are dispersed across geographic areas, it can be hard to consolidate relationships;
- Knowledge amongst services of SLÍ: where some services were not aware of the programme. It was felt that more awareness-raising of SLÍ was required.

OUTCOMES

One person was evicted from their accommodation, and returned to homelessness (Supported Temporary Accommodation) according to PASS data. The reason for the eviction is unknown.

Ten clients did not wish to continue receiving support, stopped engagement or refused to engage with SLÍ from the outset. One of these returned to homelessness (emergency accommodation), and for some of the others PASS data notes that they accessed other services (such as the Focus Ireland Coffee Shop or Focus Ireland's training and education service), there is no other reference to homelessness in the data.

One client is deceased and one client's engagement ended as they went into residential treatment for addiction.

Options for monitoring outcomes

There were a number of potential options identified for gathering information on outcomes:

- An exit interview post-participation or a longitudinal study for a period of three years (six monthly intervals) which would be voluntary.
- Desk research on PASS data to track customers' outcomes through homeless services, including prevention / tenancy sustainment and other services following the end of their SLÍ participation.
- Merging the housing support functions (tenancy sustainment and SLÍ) would ensure that participants' longer term outcomes as well as support needs would be captured and monitored within the one function.

Factors influencing the sustaining of tenancies

While the data indicates a very high rate of successful tenancies, consultations indicated that the following factors would be important in determining outcomes:

- Isolation and lack of social supports, particularly affecting those who have poor coping skills and may require ongoing supports.
- Poor quality of accommodation and short-term lettings in the PRS, compared with voluntary or local authority housing. The point was also made that local authority housing is better staffed (estate managers, community workers, liaison officers) which provide excellent support.
- The payment of rent 'top-ups' in the PRS, as the market rental rate exceeds the rent cap. This is likely to lead to debt.⁴
- Location: relating to the variability of service provision (e.g. mental health services) throughout Dublin, and also relating to the location of housing in areas where there is no connection or social networks for the individual.
- Pre-tenancy training and supports and previous experience in managing a tenancy.

QUALITY OF THE PROCESSES

- The process of referrals: in some cases, the low rate of participation amongst those in the PRS was believed to have resulted from a limited awareness of the service, particularly for those without key workers.

⁴ It is noted that a new prevention and support service for those in private rented accommodation (including a free telephone helpline as well as assessment and intervention) has been established in 2014 and is delivered by Threshold in close collaboration with the Dublin Local Authorities, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Department of Social Protection, Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland, Citizens Information Board and the Private Residential Tenancies Board.

- The low referral rate to ‘Support to Home’ presented organisational issues for the partnership, as resources needed to be put in place to respond to the expected level of referrals.
- Handover meeting: this was rated highly, with a minority of people stating that the short notice for the meeting and limited information about what it would involve was somewhat intimidating. The suggestion of a pre-handover meeting with SLÍ workers was recommended by some customers.
- The availability of key workers at the time of handover was important (but sometimes not possible arising from the fixed schedule of handover meetings on a Wednesday, and compatibility of shift work amongst some key workers).
- The convergence of the landlord and support functions in PMVT in Fingal County Council (where local authority housing allocated to homeless households is transferred by lease to PMVT) was mostly regarded as very successful. In particular, this has enabled tenancy issues to be addressed as soon as they arise, and before they develop into major issues. This arrangement does not arise between Focus Ireland and local authorities.

MANAGEMENT

Some of the key findings included:

- The collaboration between PMVT and Focus Ireland in delivering the service was positive and highly rated by all those consulted. The skills and management structures of the two services were complementary.
- Line management for delivery of the programme has been undertaken by each organisation separately, which was effective.
- The overall coordination has been undertaken by Focus Ireland, and communication at that level of management was highly regarded.
- Management structures were effective: line management has been delivered by each organisation separately; the coordination function of Focus Ireland was highly regarded; it was felt that there was no duplication of function, and communication was good.
- Relationships between the local authorities and service providers were likewise highly rated, and were supportive, with positive and co-operative working relationships reported.

Support needs and hours allocation

There was general satisfaction that the 26 hours allocation was sufficient, as long as someone has low support needs. However, support needs may also be determined by a range of external factors, such as problems with landlords, quality of accommodation, maintenance, and social welfare issues. It was also noted that support needs may change throughout the duration of SLÍ support. There was a suggestion that an increase in the baseline / average support hours (i.e. an increase on 26 hours during the six-month period) would enable more support to be provided as required.

Delivery and geographic issues

The provision of visiting support across a wide geographic area of Dublin absorbs significant time in travel. Without a large caseload of customers, staff cannot cluster client visits within a single geographic area.

It was proposed that overcoming this issue could be supported if the contractual arrangements for SLÍ were reconfigured along geographic lines, by establishing local areas in which teams would deliver housing support services. This would have the added benefit of developing close working relationships with services in their respective geographic areas.

SWOT ANALYSIS

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Staff focused on task, very committed– Frontline staff expert and knowledgeable of services– Added value of befriending volunteers, 24 hr support– Good relationship between services and with LAs– Good level of engagement and structures, and processes rated highly (e.g. review meetings, etc.)– Relationship with support worker is based on equality– Client-centred approach facilitated by flexible approach to supports and time-scale– Ability to extend the period of support if needs determine– Clear communication and good protocols around engagement etc. with clients– Housing support and tenancy roles provided together (PMVT) are reported to contribute to good outcomes and tenancy sustainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Short notice around handover process can undermine preparation– Move-in and handover process itself can be rushed and can undermine capacity of tenant to control the process of moving in– Needs more publicity around SLÍ and services - many are not aware of it as a separate initiative– Lack of (quality) accommodation undermines Pathways model– Can be limitations with capacity to deliver quality supports within one hour per week– Lack of outcomes measurement means the success of SLÍ is anecdotal and not formally documented– Limited pre-tenancy training plays a big role in outcomes |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– To amalgamate prevention and tenancy sustainment and SLÍ, and deliver housing support on a local area basis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Limited availability of accommodation exacerbated by further difficulties of access to PRS– Referral numbers are low and partnership does not have internal flexibility to manage the case load - financial implications of this– Recommended caseload per worker has not been tested arising from low referrals |

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fifteen recommendations are made in the report – these are summarised below.

Publicity and awareness raising

- 1) For those without key workers, as well as those staying in the PRS or private emergency accommodation (who do not operate key working systems), more publicity and awareness-raising around SLÍ and its capacity to take referrals from the PRS is required.
- 2) More awareness-raising regarding SLÍ amongst agencies and community services is required.
- 3) Consideration should be given to approaching some former SLÍ participants as to whether they would be interested in acting as ‘ambassadors’ for the service and its outcomes, as part of awareness-raising activities.

Defining support needs

- 4) In spite of work undertaken by the DRHE on defining support needs, some workers believe that there needs to be greater clarity on how low, medium and high support needs are defined, and a collective agreement of them should be developed. Consideration should be given to how this could be addressed.

Staging and planning of supports

- 5) There should be more time given for the preparation of handover meetings with potential SLÍ customers in order to inform customers of the process.
- 6) The SLÍ process should start prior to the handover of keys and new tenancies, to allow customers and SLÍ workers to develop relationships. A single meeting in advance of the handover process would be beneficial.
- 7) Liaison with staff in emergency accommodation should be undertaken to encourage the provision of pre-tenancy information in advance of the handover process.

Data collection and monitoring

- 8) A mechanism for charting customer outcomes could include:
 - A three-year voluntary tracking or longitudinal study amongst customers at the outset of their participation in the programme.
 - Exit interviews at the point of disengagement from SLÍ.
 - A desk-based analysis of all PASS data to establish whether former SLÍ customers have reverted back to (other) homeless services since ending their engagement with the programme at key intervals.

Contract issues and caseloads

- 9) A review of the contractual arrangements should take place, for future contracts. This would take into account referral rates, and peaks and troughs in referrals. Consideration could also be given to increasing the average / baseline hours of support under the programme by increasing the number of support hours per week during the six-month engagement period.
- 10) The capacity of workers to take on 20 cases has not been tested (the contractual cost was based on a case load of 25), as referrals have been low. Consideration could be given to monitoring the caseload of staff, with a view to adjusting to a level of between 15-17 cases per staff member, if there are operational difficulties once the current caseload limit is reached.

Prevention / tenancy sustainment (TSS) and SLÍ

- 11) In order to best coordinate resources and ensure efficiencies, in future contracts consideration should be given to merging SLÍ and TSS / Prevention services.
- 12) As part of this merging, a mechanism for transferring longer term SLÍ customers to TSS (which may be more appropriate to their needs) should be considered. Contracts issued by Dublin City Council could be re-configured along a geographic / local area basis.
- 13) In the interim, consideration might be given as to how to effectively re-deploy the work of the SLÍ workers within Focus Ireland (to similar skilled work), while referrals are low, and how to flexibly respond to referrals as they come in.

Additional supports

- 14) Additional supports provided individually by Focus Ireland and PMVT to SLÍ were believed to add significant value to the service and to customers. A mechanism whereby SLÍ customers in both organisations could avail of these supports should be explored.
- 15) The 'Support to Home' Partnership was characterised by very effective collaboration between Focus Ireland and PMVT. Consideration should be given to documenting the partnership or devising a case study of its development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and objectives of the SLÍ evaluation

Focus Ireland is a national housing and homelessness organisation working to prevent people becoming, remaining or returning to homelessness through the provision of quality services, supported housing, research and advocacy.

The Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) has thirty years of experience in working with homeless young people who present with complex low-threshold needs. In responding to these needs, PMVT has developed a range of services to address homelessness and the factors that contribute to it. PMVT is committed to reducing homelessness, the harm caused by drug misuse, and social disadvantage through the principle of a housing first model.

The key objective of this evaluation is to measure the effectiveness of the ‘Support to Home’ Partnership’s SLÍ service (which is provided in partnership by Focus Ireland and the PMVT) in settling formerly homeless households into independent living in the community within the context of a housing-led/pathways model of service provision. Recommendations will be made in relation to settlement indicators and methods of service delivery that can enhance the experience and rate of tenancy sustainment for service-users. The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To develop a set of indicators that most appropriately captures a measure of effectiveness that incorporates a focus on the programme, process and customer experience evaluation.
- To determine if the agreed settlement indicators are sufficient to determine the successful maintenance of a tenancy over a long period of time.
- To determine to what extent the households have met the agreed settlement indicators.
- To analyse data on the ‘Support to Home’ SLÍ service, including:
 - The number of formerly homeless households settled through the service.
 - Any relationship between successful settlement and the type of housing tenure.
 - The length of engagement of the service with the households.
 - The number of tenancy failures and persons disengaging
- To review the reasons for any tenancy breakdowns.
- To provide a profile and history of the ‘Support to Home’ SLÍ service.
- To compare the initial assessment of needs (at the time of referral) with the actual extent and duration of support required.
- To analyse whether the cost of settlement per household corresponds to the assessment of cost in the tender document.

- To assess any learning from the partnership between Focus Ireland and PMVT in delivering the SLÍ service to households.
- To assess how this service is meeting the actions set out in *Pathway to Home*, which includes ensuring that the housing and support needs of homeless people are addressed.
- To highlight the strengths of the service, and identify existing/potential barriers (practice, policy and resources) that might block the service in supporting households to move on from homelessness and sustain independent living.
- To make recommendations on the future direction of the service, based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions.

1.2. Methodology

The methodology of the evaluation included the following approaches:

- An evaluation framework and set of indicators was prepared following discussion with the project Monitoring Group and Focus Ireland staff.
- One-to-one interviews were held with staff from the PMVT, Focus Ireland, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), community-based services, and six SLÍ customers. In total, 27 interviews were undertaken.
- A telephone survey with 33 former and current SLÍ customers was also undertaken by Focus Ireland.
- One-to-one interviews with six SLÍ participants were also undertaken.
- Desk research of national policy, research documents and project data.

Interviews with SLÍ customers

Eight SLÍ customers were identified for interview, and six SLÍ customers were interviewed (three male and three female).

As part of the terms of reference for the evaluation, it was proposed that ten current and former customers of SLÍ (six from Focus Ireland and four from PMVT) would be interviewed. The interviews would gather customers' views and experiences of the SLÍ programme. Staff from both organisations made direct contact with a selection of their current customers and former customers. Customers were primarily selected on the basis of factors such as their likely availability for interview, the stage of their involvement with SLÍ⁵, and whether they were in regular contact with SLÍ. Details were provided to customers on the process, the ethical provisions, the purpose of the

⁵ For example, customers who had experience of SLÍ for a number of weeks were selected prior to those who had just recently signed up with SLÍ and who may only have met with their SLÍ worker on one or two occasions.

interviews, and interviewees self-selected for participation in the one to one interviews. Eight people were identified for interview, of which six were interviewed (in the case of two interviewees, they were either not contactable, or did not attend for interview). Particular barriers arose with regard to former customers. The experience of staff was that when people completed their engagement with SLÍ, that they often preferred not to maintain contact with the service, or were not contactable for participation in interview.

Five of the six customers interviewed were currently participating in the initiative (the remaining interviewee had completed her participation in SLÍ). The full profile of SLÍ customers interviewed is included in the appendices.

Telephone survey of SLÍ customers

33 SLÍ customers (30 former and 3 current customers) participated in a telephone interview administered by Focus Ireland as part of the evaluation. The survey was undertaken by a Focus Ireland staff member, and not SLÍ support workers. This meant that the survey participant did not have a personal relationship with the interviewer, which could impact on participation rates. However, and potential issues of bias are likely to have been avoided, given that there was not prior relationship between the interviewer and interviewee.

All 172 customers who engaged with the ‘Support to Home’ SLÍ service between September 2010 and September 2013 were contacted for interview (with the exception of those who took part in the face-to-face interviews).

| Table 1-1 No of SLÍ customers taking part in telephone survey | |
|--|-----|
| Completed survey (valid responses) | 33 |
| Survey not completed | 133 |
| Total ⁶ | 166 |
| % response rate | 20% |

There were a range of reasons as to why SLÍ customers did not take part in the survey, and these included changes in contact telephone numbers, no telephone number available, lack of response or reply to calls, etc.

These are outlined in the table below:

⁶ This figure comprises the total caseload of SLÍ participants, less the six people who took part in face to face interviews.

| Table 1-2 Reasons for non-participation in telephone survey | |
|---|-----|
| Reason | No. |
| No answer | 43 |
| No phone/ phone changed or disconnected | 72 |
| Agreed to participate but unavailable on follow up | 7 |
| Refused to participate | 1 |
| Other ⁷ | 9 |

The full profile of surveyed SLÍ customers is included in the appendices.

1.3. Ethical considerations

The following ethical considerations were adhered to during the completion of the customer interviews:

- The need to ensure that interviewees in no way felt under an obligation to participate in the evaluation, and that they fully consented to the process.
- The need to ensure that those who did wish to participate were comfortable with the process, that the interview process only explored issues of relevance to the evaluation, and that they could answer only those questions that they were comfortable with.
- The need to protect the anonymity of research participants.
- The need to ensure that participants could, at any stage prior to report write up, withdraw from the research process.
- The need to ensure that there is follow-up with participants regarding the findings of the evaluation.

The evaluators have experience in undertaking sensitive research where ethical issues arise, and the research design process for this evaluation incorporated these ethical concerns as follows:

- An information leaflet was prepared prior to the interview, which detailed:
- The purpose of the evaluation and interviews
- The types of questions that would be asked in interviews
- The confidential nature of the information given
- What would happen to the information after the interview

⁷ Other included illness, death, could not remember engaging with SLÍ.

- The right of each interviewee to withdraw from the process at any stage and their right not to answer any question that they were uncomfortable with.
- A consent form was drawn up, with Focus Ireland, and signed by each customer who was willing to take part in the interviews.

No interviewee withdrew from the research subsequent to the interview process.

1.4. Format of evaluation report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the policy context for the SLÍ service.
- Section 3 describes the SLÍ initiative – its inputs, activities and outputs.
- Section 4 considers the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives.
- Section 5 examines the customer outcomes of engagement in SLÍ.
- Section 6 assesses SLÍ in terms of the quality of its processes.
- Section 7 describes management and implementation issues.
- Section 8 provides a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.
- Section 9 provides a number of recommendations for SLÍ based on the findings of the evaluation.
- The appendices include indicators for SLÍ, and reviews the sufficiency of settlement indicators currently in place.

2. CONTEXT

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) works to implement the *Pathway to Home* model of housing, homeless and support provision and the Dublin Region Homeless Action Plan 2010-2013. It has also supported actions in *The Way Home: A Strategy to End Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008-2013*, such as the rollout of the Pathway Accommodation Support System (PASS) and other measures.

An outline of the Pathway model and its origin is provided in this section.

2.1. Housing First

Housing First is a model for tackling homelessness that originated in New York with Dr Sam Tsemberis and the Pathways to Housing organisation. The model has been widely used in the USA and has, in more recent years, been adopted by homeless agencies in Australia, Canada, EU and Japan.

The Housing First model focuses on the immediate provision of long-term/permanent accommodation for the homeless with supports and services subsequently built around the needs of each individual.

The Housing First model differs significantly from the treatment first or staircase model. The staircase model works on the basis that a homeless person must deal with issues that gave rise to their homelessness, or have arisen as a result of homelessness, (e.g. drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues, etc.), before they are ready for long-term accommodation. The Housing First model acknowledges the central role of accommodation in addressing problems and issues.

The *Programme for Government* contains a commitment to ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by implementing a Housing First or Housing-Led approach. This commitment is reaffirmed in the *Homelessness Policy Statement* published in February 2013.

2.2. Pathway to Home

The *Pathway to Home* model is in place as a result of a comprehensive review of homelessness in 2008, which sought to measure the extent of homelessness in Dublin, an evaluation of measures in response to homelessness, and a review of expenditure on these responses in order to determine whether the resources deployed ensure that value for money is achieved.

From this review 'Counted In 2008', the 'Evaluation of Homeless Services' series and the 'Review of Finances and Expenditure for Homeless Services' were completed. A series of recommendations were made from these reviews resulting in the (then) Homeless Agency Partnership Board's December 2008 Submission to Government on implementing the national homeless strategy, *The Way Home*, and on realising the 2010 vision of eliminating long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough. These

recommendations highlighted that there was a need for change to move away from the way in which services were configured to a model of service delivery that provides better access to long-term housing and the provision of supports to people within housing.

With regard to housing support, the specific recommendations included in these evaluations were that:

- Housing support should be formally acknowledged as a housing service that is an integral element of effective mainstream housing provision for previously homeless people and others whose tenancy may be at risk without such support.
- Existing teams providing housing support (e.g. community settlement, settlement, tenancy sustainment, transitional and other housing supports) should be merged into a small number of housing support teams organised on an area basis, providing all housing support within a defined geographical area. These teams would be responsible for providing all short- and long-term housing support services to tenants in their area that need it. This will include new tenants (local authority, housing association or private rented), existing tenants experiencing difficulties, and those needing long-term support.

Housing with supports forms one of three core elements of the *Pathway to Home* model, and these three elements include the following:

Interventions and services that prevent homelessness – a *Pathway to Home* approach works to ensure that homelessness is prevented by services delivering early interventions diverting the person at risk from having to enter temporary accommodation.

Temporary accommodation and homeless services – where prevention does not occur, a same day initial assessment of a person's needs and their placement into temporary accommodation should take place. During their residence in this accommodation the person will work with their key worker to complete a Holistic Needs Assessment and their housing options will be examined and assessed by the local authority. This will result in a person-centred support plan and move-on housing options being agreed.

Housing with supports – this housing support service will deliver person-centred housing supports to the person who is residing as a tenant. Housing support will work to help establish, secure and sustain the tenancy, settle the person into their neighbourhood and community, and support the person towards independent living and the realisation of their full potential and rights. The SLÍ programme is an example of one initiative within the housing with supports core element of *Pathway to Home*.

Support needs of homeless households

Data produced by the DRHE demonstrates that 534 (67%) of all individuals who reported moving to a tenancy in 2013 required either visiting or on-site support: the majority of these individuals required visiting support (369 or 47% of all those maintaining their tenancies), with a smaller number requiring on-site support (165, or 21% of all those moving into new tenancies).

Procurement

Under the *Pathway to Home* model, procurement targets have been set by the DRHE for homeless households to secure long-term accommodation and move on to independent living. The target for 2013 is 900 units, with 430 of these units sourced through local authority and approved housing body lettings, and the remaining 470 units sourced through the private sector.

3. PROFILE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SLÍ INITIATIVE

3.1. Background

Dublin City Council (DCC) is the lead local authority in the response to homelessness in the Dublin region, and adopts a shared service approach across South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

It has a dual role in providing services to people who are homeless. The first is that of a direct provider of housing and related services for people who are experiencing homelessness, and the second is that of an enabling body that coordinates and assists with the provision of services by voluntary homeless service providers. DCC takes a lead role on behalf of the four Dublin local authorities in terms of contractual functions for SLÍ. As such, DCC is the overall coordinator of the Support to Live Independently (SLÍ) housing support initiative, which is delivered by voluntary homeless organisations on its behalf. Each local authority also appoints its own staff member to coordinate the implementation of SLÍ in its own functional area.

As of summer 2013, the SLÍ initiative had been delivered to over 584 households across Dublin since 2010, when the first contract for its delivery was awarded. The scheme is a visiting support service to those with low or moderate needs who have secured independent accommodation after leaving homeless services. The aims of the scheme are to support homeless people to move on from homelessness to living independently and to assist with re-integration into the local community. This scheme is part of the Dublin Region Homeless Executive's *Pathway to Home* model which it has been implementing since 2009.

This evaluation is concerned with the delivery of SLÍ by the 'Support to Home' Partnership (provided by the PMVT and Focus Ireland).

The SLÍ initiative

SLÍ is one of the first initiatives of housing support established as part of Pathway to Home. It is a visiting housing support service, and is described by the DRHE as:

"Person-centred supports delivered independently of the form of housing occupied at any one time by the person. There will be generic and specialist types of this support. The generic type may typically be visiting support required to enable an individual to occupy (or continue to occupy) their housing as their sole or main residence".
(Pathway to Home, p 46)

In 2009, DCC issued a call for tenders for the delivery of the SLÍ housing support service. The terms of the contract provided that the successful tenderer would be contracted to deliver support under the SLÍ programme to 100 households at any given time, and for a period of three years. The contract was awarded to Dublin Simon. A second call for tenders was issued the following year, for the delivery of SLÍ to a second group of households. It was envisaged that this contract would also

involve the delivery of support to 100 households at any given time. Focus Ireland and the PMVT submitted a joint tender for delivery of support (entitled ‘Support to Home’) and the tender was successful. The ‘support to home’ programme for the delivery of SLÍ has been delivering support to households since September 2010. However, the total number of households supported at any given time did not reach 100 as anticipated, and the payment of the contract was based on a price per referral, rather than a fixed price.

The ‘Support to Home’ joint tender was developed by the two organisations because they had previously engaged in successful joint programmes, and both considered that there were complementary skill sets between the two organisations which would be well suited for a joint bid. For example, the PMVT has extensive experience working with young people, and Focus Ireland is experienced in supporting families out of homelessness.

3.2. The SLÍ stages and inputs

SLÍ provides a housing support service to an individual moving out of homelessness into their own housing, whether that housing is sourced from the private rented sector (PRS), voluntary housing associations, or local authority housing units. It is a voluntary support programme, however the majority of those allocated housing also take part in the programme. The process for engaging in SLÍ is outlined below.

SLÍ process

In this section, an overview of the SLÍ stages and processes is provided. The evaluation findings in relation to their quality are discussed below in section 6.

Once a household or client has been allocated a unit of accommodation by the local authority from the homeless list (Allocations Section), they are automatically referred to SLÍ coordinator in the specific local authority, who – in turn - makes contact with the service provider to arrange handover. Referrals can also be made directly to SLÍ by those moving into private rented accommodation (by key workers or by self-referral, particularly for those who are leaving homeless services or private emergency accommodation that do not operate key work systems).

Focus Ireland undertakes the coordination and management of the SLÍ contract, and once a referral is made the SLÍ coordinator⁸ places the case with one of the SLÍ support workers in PMVT or Focus Ireland.

⁸ Each local authority appoints a staff member to undertake a coordination role of SLÍ in the local authority. In addition to this, there is an overall coordinator of the programme within Dublin City Council, and this role undertakes overall programme coordination, contractual management, etc. Therefore the DCC SLÍ coordinator has a wider role than individual SLÍ coordinators in each of the remaining local authorities.

The first step in the SLÍ support process takes place when the individual has been handed the keys to their new tenancy. In Dublin City Council, this takes place on a Wednesday. The handover process involves a meeting attended by the DCC SLÍ coordinator, the SLÍ support worker, the individual or household participating in SLÍ, and the individual or household's key worker, if available. This process can often take place quickly, with a few days' notice. The meeting includes a discussion on expectations, commitment required, supports offered, safety issues, etc.

The SLÍ support worker undertakes an initial risk assessment with the SLÍ customer on a one-to-one basis at handover stage.

In some instances key workers might be present, but not always, as the Wednesday handover is fixed and key workers may not be available (partly due to shift working schedules). Similarly, there may not always be a HNA available at handover, or if there is it can be typically quite out of date or incomplete. In most circumstances, the key worker and the SLÍ worker will have a telephone discussion to inform any particular needs or issues.

Following this initial handover meeting, the SLÍ worker will provide supports to the household as required (these are detailed below). Typically this involves weekly visits to the home of the customer or weekly meetings. The SLÍ worker and customer jointly discuss support needs and develop a plan for how these will be delivered. The worker provides advocacy and practical support to the SLÍ customer, with an emphasis on empowering the individual and household to meet their own needs.

If two meetings are unattended by the customer, the SLÍ worker will make an unannounced call to the customer. If the person continues to miss appointments, the SLÍ coordinator in Dublin City Council will make an unscheduled call to the SLÍ customer. If they are not contactable, the SLÍ coordinator will write to the tenant and a three way meeting will be convened.

Quarterly review meetings take place between the customer and the local authority, involving also the service provider. At these meetings, progress towards achieving plans and goals are discussed, as well as the views of the customer around the service that they are receiving (this part takes place in DCC with the SLÍ coordinator and the customer present only). According to DCC, the vast majority of customers express satisfaction in the supports received, and the commitment and expertise of staff is noted by all parties consulted.

A process of disengagement can take place after a minimum of three months of participation on SLÍ. The programme provides for six months support, but some households may end their involvement beforehand, and this is discussed at a review or disengagement meeting. Clients are usually provided with an option for continued or future engagement with the service provider, as a support if they need it.

Depending on their support needs, some customers will receive ongoing support under SLÍ beyond the six month period. This extension is subject to the approval of the local authority.

Inputs

The contractual arrangements provide for one hour's support per week to each household for a period of up to six months (i.e., 26 hour per household or client). An extension to this support can be sought if, after the end of the initial six month period, further support is required. An agreement around this is made between the support worker, the SLÍ customer and the local authority.

For example, the maximum duration of support received amongst the SLÍ participants who were interviewed was 14 months.

The SLÍ contract originally provided that the maximum caseload for each SLÍ worker would be 25 households. Subsequently, this has been reduced to 20 cases per worker. This happened as a result of discussions between staff delivering SLÍ and management in Focus Ireland, because the larger caseload was not regarded as practical for staff. However, this does not have a contractual implication for Dublin City Council as it pays a fixed rate per case at the outset, and caseload management is primarily an operational and management issue. Nonetheless, it could have budgetary implications for Focus Ireland and PMVT, because if fewer cases are taken on, income generated is reduced. However, a low number of referrals to the 'Support to Home' SLÍ service have meant that the maximum caseload has not been reached at any stage during the contract period.

Where staff are exclusively working in SLÍ, the risk lies with the homeless service provider, as the contract pays only for referrals and the cost of any under-utilisation of staff is absorbed by the homeless organisation.

The management of the contract is undertaken by Focus Ireland, and the SLÍ coordinator there manages the referrals (most of which are from Dublin City Council) internally within Focus Ireland and PMVT. Fingal County Council makes referrals directly to PMVT, owing to a separate housing management relationship that it has with PMVT (long-term lease). The SLÍ coordinator in Focus Ireland participates in quarterly meetings with the SLÍ coordinators in the local authorities and with Dublin Simon, and at these meetings operational delivery of the programme is discussed and reviewed.

The frontline delivery of SLÍ is undertaken by two dedicated staff members in Focus Ireland, as it was anticipated by Focus Ireland that there would be a constant flow of referrals to this service. At the beginning of the project, there was a high referral rate, and the requirement to be in a position to respond to the contract was important. However, the referral rate later fell.

There are three staff members in PMVT who work on SLÍ who also undertake other support and housing management functions within PMVT. Staff delivering SLÍ in

both organisations meet on a team basis and avail of the staff supervision and support mechanisms within both organisations. As staff delivering SLÍ in PMVT are not exclusively allocated to SLÍ, the work of SLÍ becomes integrated into the work of a number of staff. In light of the slow rate of referrals to the ‘Support to Home’ service, the SLÍ workers in Focus Ireland have taken on other duties and tasks to informally support other services provided by the organisation. This is discussed in more detail in Section 6 below.

Protocols for SLÍ and policies for its delivery are largely drawn from settlement and tenancy sustainment and prevention services indicators and policies that have been developed by Focus Ireland.

Additional organisational resources

All organisations delivering SLÍ make available additional resources in the delivery of support to customers. These include:

- Befriending supports from volunteers in Focus Ireland
- Child and family support expertise in Focus Ireland
- 24 hour / seven day per week emergency telephone contact to PMVT
- Counselling services within PMVT

3.3. Outputs from SLÍ and profile data

Since the start of the contractual period (September 2010) to September 2013, Focus Ireland and PMVT have engaged with 172 households in the delivery of SLÍ. 129 of these cases have been delivered by Focus Ireland (75%) and 43 by PMVT (25%).

An analysis of data and reports on SLÍ (including PASS data and additional data from PMVT and Focus Ireland) has been conducted as part of this evaluation to ascertain the profile and background of those accessing SLÍ. Additional project data was accessed, as PASS does not capture the full range of profile data we wished to explore. Moreover, there are some gaps in the data as a small minority of households either did not sustain their participation in SLÍ, or did not fully engage in the process.

The data sets report that at September 2013, there were 29 active households engaging with SLÍ in the Support to Home partnership. A further 143 households had previously been referred for participation in SLÍ during the three years of its operation (closed cases). This provides a total caseload of 172 households.

General demographic profile of SLÍ customers

Of all 172 households, including current and former customers SLÍ, almost three quarters are recorded as male. This compares with the general 2011 Census data on homelessness, which reported that almost 67% of the homeless population were male and 33% were female.

| Table 3-1 Profile of SLÍ customers GENDER (n=172) | | | |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | TOTAL |
| Number of customers | 126 | 46 | 172 |
| % customers | 73% | 27% | 100% |

A profile of households with child dependents is presented in the table below.

| Table 3-2 Profile of SLÍ customers HOUSEHOLD PROFILE (n=172) | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| | No children in household | Children in household | TOTAL |
| Number of customers | 143 | 29 | 172 |
| % customers (n=172) | 83% | 17% | 100% |

The age profile of customers is available for 171 households. The age ranges are outlined in Table 3-3 below.

| Table 3-3 Profile of SLÍ customers AGE PROFILE (n=171) | | |
|---|-----|------------|
| Age ranges | No | % of total |
| 18-24 yrs | 14 | 8.2% |
| 25-34 yrs | 42 | 24.6% |
| 35-44 yrs | 45 | 26.3% |
| 45-54 yrs | 32 | 18.7% |
| 55-64 yrs | 28 | 16.4% |
| 65 yrs or older | 10 | 5.8% |
| Total | 171 | 100% |

We can cross-tabulate the data on age to establish the support needs for those in each age category. The table below establishes the percentages of each category which is recorded as having support needs (low, medium and high). The data indicates that as the age profile of SLÍ participants increases, so do their support needs (with the exception of those aged 65 years or older). However, the population sizes in each of the age groups are relatively small, so caution is advised.

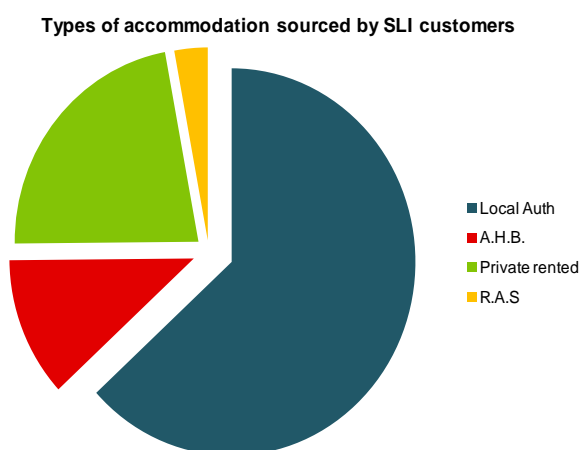
| Table 3-4 Profile of SLÍ customers AGE PROFILE cross tabulated according to support levels | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Age ranges | Low support needs | low- med/ med needs | High support needs |
| 18-24 yrs (n=13) | 69% | 31% | 0% |
| 25-34 yrs (n=41) | 83% | 15% | 2% |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 35-44 yrs (n=39) | 59% | 38% | 3% |
| 45-54 yrs (n=31) | 61% | 32% | 6% |
| 55-64 yrs (n=28) | 46% | 43% | 11% |
| 65 yrs or older (n=9) | 56% | 44% | 0% |

Accommodation type

The table below indicates the accommodation type for households from the SLÍ project data. The table indicates that almost two thirds of SLÍ customers are living in local authority (LA) accommodation. This is represented on the pie chart that follows the table below.

| Table 3-5 Profile of SLÍ customers ACCOMODATION TYPE(n=171) | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| | LA | AHB ⁹ | PRS | RAS | TOTAL |
| Number of customers | 108 ¹⁰ | 20 ¹¹ | 38 | 5 | 171 |
| % customers | 63% | 12% | 22% | 3% | 100% |



Local authority area and accommodation type

The local authority area refers to the location where the SLÍ customer is living, across the main local authority areas in Dublin. Dublin City Council accounts for a sizeable majority of cases. No cases are identified as being based in the Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown county area.

⁹ Approved Housing Body

¹⁰ Of which 8 are SDCC and 100 are DCC.

¹¹ Of which 11 units are PMVT units.

| Table 3-6 Profile of SLÍ customers LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA (n=172) | | |
|--|-----|------------|
| | No | % of total |
| SDCC | 12 | 7% |
| FCC | 11 | 6% |
| DCC | 149 | 87% |
| TOTAL | 172 | 100% |

It is known from project records what accommodation was accessed by 108 customers (which accounts for 63% of all 172 customers). Of these 108 customers, 47% were housed in what was described as ‘bedsit’ accommodation (51 cases). This data should be qualified by a number of points: there are varying definitions of bedsit. According to census 2011, the definition used is ‘bedsit: with some shared facilities, e.g. toilet’. The Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2008 and the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 provides that shared facilities such as toilets are prohibited, as each flat/ apartment are required to have separate facilities.¹² It is not known how many of these units correspond to the traditional interpretation of ‘bedsit’ accommodation (some shared facilities), but we do know that in 31 units classified as bedsits are provided by local authorities. In this instance, the accommodation is one bedroom/ studio style, and not bedsits with some shared facilities. In the remainder of cases, this category of accommodation is located in the private rented sector.

Support needs and duration of supports

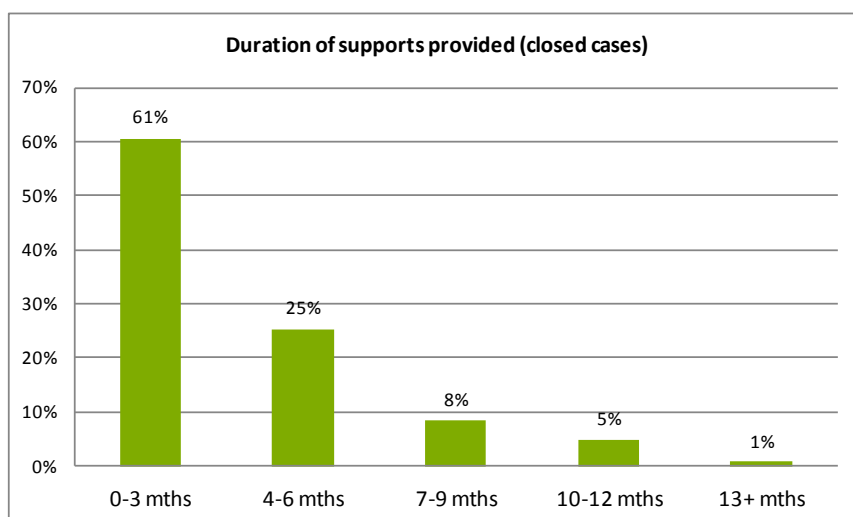
The support needs of all SLÍ customers (former and current customers) are specified in the PASS data for the majority of cases (all cases with the exception of 2). Gaps in data can be attributed to the fact that a small number of SLÍ participants disengaged from the earliest stage. The available data on identified support needs for all cases is outlined below.

¹² The regulations provide that the landlord must provide the following: A sink with hot and cold water; a separate room, for the exclusive use of each rented unit, with a toilet, a washbasin and a fixed bath or shower with hot and cold water; a fixed heating appliance in each room, which is capable of providing effective heating and which the tenant can control; facilities for cooking and for the hygienic storage of food, for example, a 4-ring hob with oven and grill, fridge-freezer and microwave oven; access to a washing machine; access to a clothes-dryer if the rented unit does not have a private garden or yard; a fire blanket and smoke alarms; access to vermin-proof and pest-proof refuse storage facilities.

| Table 3-7 SLÍ customers SUPPORT NEEDS (active and closed cases) (n=170) | | | | |
|--|-----|------------|--------|------|
| | Low | Low-medium | Medium | High |
| Number of customers | 102 | 11 | 49 | 7 |
| % customers for whom data is available | 60% | 6% | 29% | 4% |

The duration of supports for all closed cases is outlined below.¹³ It indicates that 61 percent of these customers received support for 3 months or less.

| Table 3-8 SLÍ customers (n=142) DURATION OF SUPPORTS (closed cases) | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|
| | Up to 3 mths ¹⁴ | 4-6 mths | 7-9 mths | 10-12 mths | 13+ mths |
| Number of customers | 86 | 36 | 12 | 7 | 1 |
| % customers (closed cases) | 61% | 25% | 8% | 5% | < 1% |



A further analysis of data on supports has been undertaken (amongst closed cases) in order to examine whether there is a relationship between support needs and the duration of supports received.¹⁵ The table below outlines the support needs identified in the PASS data for closed cases.

¹³ As active cases are still receiving support, it is not possible to identify the duration of support for active cases.

¹⁴ This includes a small number of people who (although referred to SLÍ) did not engage with the process.

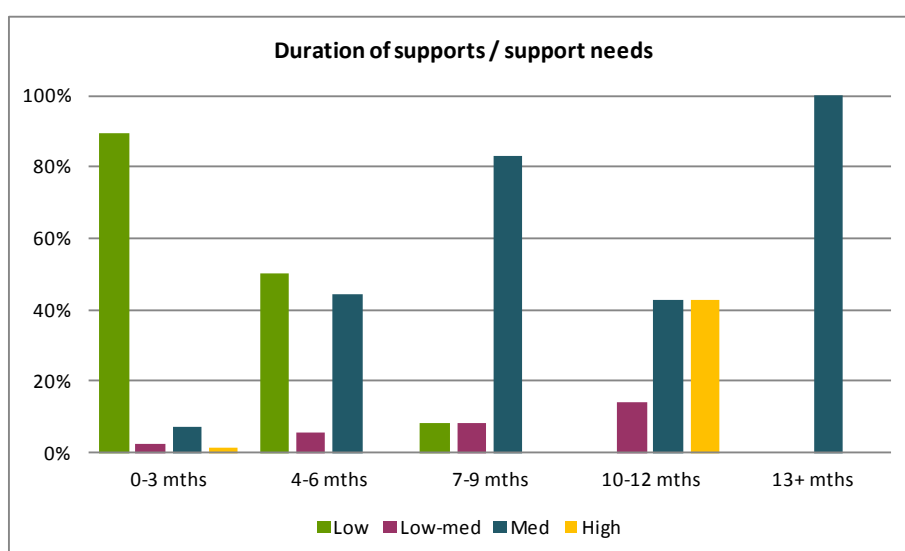
¹⁵ This analysis is undertaken amongst closed cases only as it is not possible to determine the total duration of supports that a customer is likely to access while a case is open.

| Table 3-9 SLÍ customers (closed cases) (n=141) SUPPORT NEEDS OF SLÍ (closed cases only) | | | | |
|--|-----|---------|-----|------|
| | Low | Low-med | Med | High |
| Number of customers | 95 | 6 | 36 | 4 |
| % customers (closed cases) for whom data is available | 67% | 4% | 26% | 3% |

In terms of the relationship between these support needs and duration of support received for closed cases, the table below cross-tabulates support needs and duration of support for closed cases (data presented as percentages).

| Table 3-10 SLÍ customers (closed cases) (n=141) SUPPORT DURATION OF SLÍ – percentages per support category | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|------------|----------|
| | 0-3 mths | 4-6 mths | 7-9 mths | 10-12 mths | 13+ mths |
| Low | 89% | 50% | 8% | 0% | 0% |
| Low-med | 2% | 6% | 8% | 14% | 0% |
| Med | 7% | 44% | 83% | 43% | 100% |
| High | 1% | 0% | 0% | 43% | 0% |

While the figures for some support categories are very low (in particular, those with high or low-medium support needs), the data indicates that the higher the support need, the longer the duration of support provided across the main categories above. This is illustrated graphically below.



The data also allows us to investigate further some profile data amongst those with different support needs. Summary findings include:

- Of those with low support needs (102 households), two thirds are living in LA accommodation; 24 percent are living in private rented sector, and the remaining 10 percent are living in accommodation provided by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)).
- Of those with low-medium or medium support needs, 61 percent are living in LA accommodation, 21 percent are living in PRS accommodation, and just under a fifth are living in AHB accommodation.
- Of those with high support needs (7 households), five are living in local authority (LA) accommodation (DCC), and two in private rented (PRS). Two of the DCC tenants are living in senior citizen accommodation.

Tenancy outcomes

In terms of recorded outcomes on PASS, the following can be ascertained:

- One person was evicted from their accommodation (AHB) but the data does not give more details on the reason for eviction. PASS revealed that this individual returned to homelessness and Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA).
- Ten clients did not wish to continue receiving support, stopped engagement or refused SLÍ from the outset. Through a review of PASS, it was evident that one of these returned to homelessness (emergency accommodation); and while for some of the others PASS data notes that they accessed homeless day services (such as the Focus Ireland Coffee Shop or Focus Ireland's training and education service), they were not using emergency accommodation.
- One client is deceased.
- One client's engagement ended as they went into residential treatment for addiction.
- 86 of the 172 households had a HNA in place when referred (50%).

172 referrals reflects a lower than anticipated number of referrals, and averaged at just over 57 referrals per year. In interviews with SLÍ workers, this was attributed primarily to a lack of long-term housing units, as well as a lack of information around eligibility for SLÍ amongst those living in the PRS.

The majority of those who have been allocated housing and offered SLÍ took up the service. Of the 159 cases for which information has been recorded, three customers did not engage in the service from the outset, and a further two requested to withdraw from the service. However, it is not clear if this is an underestimation of the data, as the reasons for closing a case is not detailed in all cases. However, anecdotally, the participation rate in SLÍ has been very high according to support workers and DCC.

4. ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

In this section, each of the objectives of the SLÍ initiative are assessed in terms of their achievements, based on consultations with customers of SLÍ and staff involved in its delivery and management.

4.1. To deliver housing support to enable households to live independently in their community

The data and high rate of tenancy sustainment points to successful achievement of this objective in the SLÍ programme. This is further supported by those consulted as part of the evaluation process.

Experiences of customers

SLÍ customers rated highly the support offered to them, and stated that this support was critical in supporting their tenancy, particularly in its early stages. They noted the flexible nature of supports and the confidence that they had in staff.

94% of those who were surveyed¹⁶ were very satisfied with the support that they had received or were currently receiving from SLÍ, and 85% believed that SLÍ had assisted them in maintaining their tenancy into the long-term. The remainder believed that they already had the skills to maintain their tenancy. No respondent reported that SLÍ had not assisted them in some way.

The table below includes the data from telephone interviews on the nature of supports received.

| Table 4-1 SLÍ customers interviewed by telephone (n=33) SUPPORTS RECEIVED | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Day-to-day housing tasks | Building positive relations with neighbours | Linking in with community services | Linking in with other social supports |
| No of telephone survey respondents | 29 | 26 | 18 | 29 |
| % of all survey respondents | 88% | 79% | 55% | 88% |

Other types of supports accessed included:

- Emotional support
- Court attendance support
- Encouragement, motivation

¹⁶ The telephone survey undertaken by Focus Ireland with all SLÍ customers, of whom 33 customers (current and former) took part. Profile details are included in the appendices.

- Help with getting grants
- Getting furniture grants
- Literacy courses

Outcomes

In the face-to-face interviews, customers described the nature and value of the supports. These included support around accessing medical treatment and consultant appointments for a customer with serious medical conditions:

The support that I got was brilliant. I got help with a lot of paperwork regarding my medical appointments.

SLÍ customer

For the same customer, the SLÍ worker played an important role in increasing his confidence and self-esteem. The SLÍ worker motivated him to take-up educational programmes, and to realise the value and importance of socialising and combating isolation.

They encouraged me not to isolate myself and to socialise. I now go out for a pint once a week and I have people around to my apartment that I have met through courses.

SLÍ customer

The additional support resources available within the two organisations were also rated as important. These resources include access to counselling, befriending and PMVT's out-of-hours telephone service.

All supports that I asked for were met. The telephone number is a very useful support as has been the counselling service.

SLÍ customer

One observation by a customer was that at the outset of his engagement, two meetings per week would have been beneficial:

I could have done with two meetings at the start of the programme as I was really low on energy and felt like throwing in the towel.

SLÍ customer

Moreover, some customers stated that a pre-tenancy meeting with the SLÍ worker (prior to handover) would have been useful.

Identifying support needs

SLÍ data from PASS reports that 86 out of the 172 SLÍ customers had a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) completed (50%) prior to engagement with SLÍ. There were a number of possible reasons for this, including the fact that some customers may not have had key workers to undertake the assessment. The support needs of many clients were determined by the SLÍ support worker and identified throughout the SLÍ meeting and review process, through the development of a support plan. PASS data indicates that all customers had support needs, and 94% of telephone interview participants could recall having a support plan completed.

Of the 172 cases, the needs of 107 households are presented in the table below. It should be noted that a number of customers were identified as having multiple support needs (for example, 182 separate needs were identified for 107 customers). Moreover, it should be noted that five individuals presented with mental health and substance mis-use needs (dual diagnosis).

| Table 4-2 Profile of SLÍ customers (n=107) IDENTIFIED NEEDS | | |
|--|-----|-----------------|
| | No. | % ¹⁷ |
| Tenancy management / accommodation | 93 | 87% |
| Substance misuse | 35 | 33% |
| Physical health | 15 | 14% |
| Mental health | 15 | 14% |
| Education/ training | 9 | 8% |
| Family functioning | 4 | 4% |
| Welfare/ budgeting | 4 | 4% |
| Employment | 4 | 4% |
| Support with children/ access | 3 | 3% |
| Total needs identified | 182 | |
| Average needs per customer for whom data is available | 1.7 | |
| Customers with support needs not specified | 65 | |

Some observations were made by staff and customers in relation to client support needs. These include:

- In the first instance, it was noted that while the programme was planned for those with low to medium support needs, there have been some clients with higher than expected support needs (4 percent of customers are believed to have high support needs, according to Focus Ireland/ PMVT SLÍ data).

¹⁷ As a percentage of those whose needs were identified (107 cases)

- Others made the point that there is no ‘collectively agreed definition’ of what constitutes a high or a medium support need, and so it can be perceived differently. Some staff observed that most of their customers had high support needs, but this is not reflected in PASS data, possibly because support needs change or emerge over time, and the PASS data may not be inputted at different points in time.
- External factors relating to housing or welfare issues can give rise to a need for more intensive supports at different times, almost irrespective of whether the individual has high support needs:

It can change. one month they can be fine and the next the benefits could be cut off so there may be a lot of work involved in getting that re-established, or they could have health needs and that can be resolved and they can go on for a while being fine and low support needs and then there could be a family member ill.

SLÍ worker

- At the outset of the SLÍ process, it was envisaged that the individual’s key worker would be present at the handover meeting, but as previously noted, this is not always possible. However, SLÍ support workers do liaise with key workers around support needs of the client.

Approach of support

Customers highly valued the SLÍ workers’ approaches, and a balance between challenging, motivating, encouraging and supporting the customer appears to have been achieved.

The [SLÍ] worker encouraged me to do things rather than doing them for me and she made sure things were done.

Former SLÍ customer

The views of customers and local authorities alike pointed to the nuanced nature of this approach, and all rated the staff members as knowing when to apply pressure in different circumstances. Customers believed strongly that this was empowering.

Without the push from [SLÍ worker] I would not have done half of the things that I achieved.

Former SLÍ customer

The [SLÍ] worker did not beat around the bush in what I needed to do and if I did not do something, she was not long about telling me.

SLÍ customer

The support was like getting a kick up the backside, that was great...I needed that.

Former SLÍ customer

Three customers believed that the approach facilitated them to identify the factors that contributed to the difficulties they were experiencing and worked with them to overcome these difficulties.

They treated me like an adult and made me take control of my life. It was great to be supported to make decisions that would improve my life.

SLÍ customer

It helped me see that my drinking was linked to my self-esteem. The drinking was destroying my health.

SLÍ customer

Some of the workers in other organisations have you boxed off as being a certain type of person. With the SLÍ it was different, you also felt that SLÍ workers were not looking down on you or saying to themselves they are this or that type of person.

Former SLÍ customer

Additional types of supports provided to SLÍ customers included:

- Assisting them to become familiar with their new communities
- Helping them to transfer from one GP to another
- Support around budgeting
- Support around accessing Supplementary Welfare Allowance (including rent supplement and furniture grants).
- Support around accessing a range of skills to live independently (including cooking healthy food).

It was the opinion of a number of interviewees that the supports provided by SLÍ made the transition to private rented accommodation less stressful and made a significant contribution to maintaining their tenancy. For one interviewee, the advice of setting realistic and achievable targets from the SLÍ worker was pivotal to him remaining off alcohol and maintaining his accommodation.

One of the strengths of the initiative cited is that it is driven by the support needs of the individual, and so it is client-centred, which was an important consideration.

Follow up support

While there is a disengagement process which is discussed with each SLÍ customer, some customers did feel that post-SLÍ support would be useful for them, particularly around dealing with landlords and maintenance issues.

One customer requested some clarity on the circumstances in which she could access follow up support:

Some more information about how I might be able to access SLÍ in times of crisis would be useful...the main need would be help with the landlord, agents and dealing with maintenance people.

SLÍ customer

For some customers who are tenants of PMVT, they are integrated into the support functions on a long term basis (post-SLÍ). Focus Ireland provides an open-door policy where support can be accessed if needed after disengagement with SLÍ. As one SLÍ worker stated:

I would always tell them that I'm here at the other end of the phone if you need support. So that can be reassuring for them as well that you're still there, you haven't signed them off altogether.

SLÍ worker

There is a balance to be achieved between providing ongoing support and discouraging dependency on a service. If people have ongoing difficulties, they may be more appropriately referred to prevention/ tenancy sustainment services.

4.2. Liaise with landlords - ensure continuity for tenant between the housing provider & housing support service

It is not surprising that tenancy management and accommodation issues are the most prevalent support needs of SLÍ customers (87%), and much of this includes dealing with landlord and tenancy issues. The extent to which this can be achieved depends on the nature of the tenure and the landlord. The majority of clients are living in local authority or voluntary housing (74%), with the private rented sector accounting for a smaller proportion of the caseload (22%).

A significant number of SLÍ customers have accessed local authority housing, much of which is dedicated senior citizen accommodation, with estate management supports and staffing on site. There are good relationships and liaison between SLÍ supports and these supports. There is a relatively low rate of access to the PRS amongst SLÍ participants. This may be a reflection of difficulties of access to the PRS, arising from

increases in market rates for rent in the sector particularly for those in receipt of SWA.¹⁸ The table below reports the numbers of individuals moving to private rented accommodation from homelessness in Dublin, and it reports a sharp reduction in numbers after Quarter 2, 2013.

| Table 4-3 Individuals moving to private rented accommodation with or without visiting support in the Dublin region in 2013 | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | Q1 2013 | Q2 2013 | Q3 2013 | Q4 2013 | Total |
| Move to private rental with support | 41 | 70 | 52 | 32 | 195 |
| Move to private rental no support | 62 | 65 | 58 | 46 | 231 |
| Total no. of individuals moving to private rented accommodation | 103 | 135 | 110 | 78 | 426 |

The support needs of SLÍ customers identified relate to poor quality accommodation, maintenance issues, and also the prevalence of low quality bedsit accommodation in the private rented sector. In relation to liaison with landlords, advocacy and emergency support was required. One woman interviewed experienced an emergency maintenance situation in her flat. She was offered immediate alternative accommodation by PMVT, who then liaised with her landlord to rectify the maintenance problem and make the necessary repairs on her flat. The support received was highly regarded, and she felt that had it not been available, she would not have received prompt attention from the landlord. Other supports noted by SLÍ customers included assistance with dealing with anti-social behaviour and bullying.

The possibility of future support around private rented sector landlords was identified as one of the factors that could require ongoing or once-off support:

The main need would be help with the landlord, agents and dealing with maintenance people.

SLÍ customer

One barrier to engaging with landlords in the private rented sector was confidentiality issues, where tenants did not want their landlord to know that they had experienced homelessness or were receiving housing support.

The landlord doesn't know the person is moving on from homelessness as well, it's very confidential information and for people a judgement can be made. However, it's a different story when there is a problem in

¹⁸ Difficulties in accessing PRS is well documented. For more information, see TSA (2012): *Out of reach: impact of the changes in rent supplement*. Dublin: Focus Ireland, and TSA (2013): *Feasibility study into on a social rentals initiative in Dublin*. Dublin: Focus Ireland.

the accommodation, you know, where there's maintenance or something needs to be followed up. Maybe the heating isn't working, the shower isn't working. I ring up, what I might say about where I'm working actually depends on the conversation I'm having with the client and how comfortable they are with me saying I work with Focus Ireland.

SLÍ worker

Other barriers identified included the willingness of landlords to engage:

The quality of the engagement depends on who the landlord is, their level of professionalism, their level of interest, their level of expectation.

SLÍ worker

In a number of instances, the support and landlord functions converge. Tenancies in Fingal County Council housing stock are transferred via lease agreement to PMVT, who then take on the landlord and tenancy management role (this arrangement does not feature in the relationships between Focus Ireland and local authorities). This was mostly regarded as a very important model, insofar as it provided a seamless service between landlord and support functions:

You have a more long-term relationship with the individual. You know your relationship with them is not going to end in six months even though the SLÍ part of the relationship may be deemed to be successfully finished, your relationship moving forward is a long-term with that individual.

SLÍ worker

Moreover, it enables potential issues with tenancies to be addressed before they have the opportunity to escalate and become serious.

One interviewee believed that because his apartment is managed by PMVT, this motivated him to ensure his tenancy was not lost. He had a problem with alcohol, but felt that he could manage this better with his current living arrangements.

...then I got this beautiful apartment, with brand new furniture and with plenty of room. I was not going to screw this opportunity up by drinking my rent. I also did not want to mess up the relationships that I had with the SLÍ staff who had been really good to me.

SLÍ customer

He felt that this relationship was a major factor in maintaining his tenancy. If he had been in a conventional private rented tenancy, he feels that it would have been too tempting to drink his rent money.

I think that if I had been a flat owned by a private landlord, the temptation to drink would have been too much and I would not have paid my rent. I would probably have had my drinking friends around to stay and this would have not gone down well with the neighbours and I probably would have lost the apartment.

SLÍ customer

However, there was one contrary view amongst a staff member that mediating the roles of housing support and the landlord relationship within the one organisation could be challenging. This view held that there may be potential for the two roles to conflict, particularly if there were tenancy difficulties or breaches, or if eviction was being pursued by the landlord. The point was made that this could compromise the advocacy function of the housing support role. However, the experience of PMVT was that this did not arise.

Focus Ireland is currently piloting a Housing Management Project in Waterford and Dublin, where the housing management and support functions are separated within different roles. An internal review of this pilot project is currently being undertaken by Focus Ireland.

4.3. Develop relationships (service providers) integrating housing support into local community

SLÍ workers establish relationships with a wide range of community-based services, and support clients to engage with these services. The most commonly cited services included: addiction services (local community drugs teams), mental health, community welfare services, MABS, local employment services (LES), care local (support for elderly people), active retirement groups, mediation services, counselling, health promotion, probation, legal services, citizen's advice, and Meals on Wheels. Other supports include establishing accounts with utility companies, support in handling deposits, applications for furniture grants, etc.

I would have been lost without the support offered – the weekly meetings are great and they support me in everything I need – equipping the apartment., dealing with bills, providing information about local services, putting up furniture, etc. Without it things would have been very different with my move.

Without being made aware of my entitlements, I would have never have found out about them.

SLÍ customer

Particular mention was made of some services, for example, Dublin Adult Literacy Centre (DALC) which provides a range of education supports.

They have been fantastic. They've built almost training plans around our clients' needs and met them half way. If people are not quite sure,

given tasters, giving different options and they draw people into move them onto mainstream education afterwards.

SLÍ worker

A strong relationship has also been established with staff providing support in sheltered accommodation units in local authority housing, particularly in preparation for disengagement.

We would also link a lot with the liaison officers in sheltered accommodation where there are older people and we'd be talking to the estate managers to see if there are any issues and at the point of disengagement, and we would inform them that the case is closed or it's being extended etc.

SLÍ worker

The SLÍ workers undertake roles around advocacy and information provision. This could include accompanying SLÍ customers to meetings with local services, to support relationship building and establishing these connections. This work is time-consuming, and can be exacerbated by a wide geographic area in which SLÍ is provided. The success of the work is influenced by local knowledge and relationships that have been developed between the SLÍ worker and community, voluntary and statutory services. The supports may also be drawn upon where a new tenancy is established in an unfamiliar area of the city, and are most time-consuming at the outset of the tenancy and support period.

One of the key issues identified for SLÍ customers was isolation. For those who have been homeless for a long period of time in particular, the stillness and solitude of a new home can be troubling, particularly for those who have lived in emergency accommodation and who have lived in busy or chaotic environments. If customers are living in an area where they have no connections or where there is poor local services, this isolation can be particularly acute. For some this is the biggest issue for people and the one which requires the most supports:

It's not even managing the house it's the loneliness, they are incredibly lonely and they don't have the social skills or the confidence to go and meet people and go and interact... They want to belong, and putting them into an apartment away from everybody, that's not belonging, that's isolating.

SLÍ worker

Moreover, homeless people are likely to have lost connection with their family, and so social supports may not be present.

My support worker gave me a lot of support as it was a big adjustment to live alone and I am now getting more comfortable with my own space.

SLÍ customer

The role of voluntary community participation helped some to combat their feelings of isolation:

The worker was good at helping me to design a plan aimed at reducing my sense of isolation. I was encouraged to become active in my community and they helped me to make contact with local services in the area. I am now helping a community organisation to make meals for members of the community. I have made some friends through doing the voluntary work.

SLÍ customer

Focus Ireland's befriending service was also noted as an important added value service, as it can provide a mentor-type support for people who are new to a community, and the reassurance of having a volunteer guide the SLÍ customer around a new area was important.

The ability to engage with community-based services is influenced by a number of factors including:

- **Local resources:** in some areas, community health and mental health services are difficult to access as the services are under-resourced. In parts of north County Dublin, mental health services are hard to access, as resources there have not kept pace with population increases. Moreover, in some areas, the requirement to have lived in an area for six months as a condition for eligibility is enforced, and SLÍ support workers may have to make representations on behalf of their client.
- **Local relationships.** SLÍ workers develop relationships with local services in geographic areas. In Tallaght, the homeless advice unit is delivered by Focus Ireland, and this local knowledge and relationship benefits SLÍ. It was believed that if teams focused on particular geographic areas, that relationships could be consolidated and further developed.
- **Differences in practice:** for example, in the case of furniture and move in grants, there is discretion around the amount of money given by the Department of Social Protection officers administering Supplementary Welfare.
- **Knowledge amongst services of SLÍ:** in general, services engaged with workers on an individual basis, and in some instances, were not familiar with SLÍ as a distinct initiative. Some workers made the point that there should be an awareness-raising and information dissemination campaign amongst services to ensure a smoother transition to accessing services. This could be coordinated by the DRHE.

4.4. To engage with the systems of the DHRE

The Housing First and Pathways models are based on a framework where the first step in overcoming homelessness is the provision of accommodation, around which supports are offered, according to the needs of the client to maintain their tenancy. It is a client-centred approach, where the support needs are flexibly provided based on individual needs. The key systems of the DRHE of relevance to SLÍ include the completion of Holistic Needs Assessments (HNAs), a detailed paper document, with the service user. The PASS system (Pathway Accommodation and Support System) captures data on if the HNA has been completed. Following this, a support plan is developed and staff record all support activity on PASS.

Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA). HNAs are completed when an individual or household is in homeless services. As mentioned earlier in this report, HNAs have been completed for half of the SLÍ customers. Some customers may not have had a key worker to carry out the HNAs prior to engagement with SLÍ, or may have been using services in an ad hoc manner preventing the assignment of a key worker. The point was also made that as HNAs are not mandatory for customers to provide consent, although it is best practice in the sector to do so, this may account for the low rate of HNA completion.

Often we don't always get HNAs ... It's great when we get them but a lot of times it's all old stuff...and the person might be in a very different state now so it's trying to kind of start with kind of a clean slate, if you know what I mean, and not kind of focus too much on that because it's really all about moving on.

SLÍ worker

Once customers engage with SLÍ, staff carry out a new assessment of their needs and develop a support plan. PASS data indicates that support plans are in place for all participants (the data records the support needs of participants and also the duration of support). Moreover, 31 of the 33 individuals (94%) who participated in the telephone interviews recalled having a support plan in place.

Liaison with key workers. The limited availability of key workers to attend handover meetings can be problematic, from the perspective of identifying needs. This is because there is a set time for handover meetings (Wednesdays) in Dublin City Council. Some key workers (particularly those working in emergency accommodation) work on a shift basis and might not be available on the set handover day. In addition, from a customer perspective, the handover meeting may be intimidating if there is no key worker present, as the individual may not know any of the other parties present. This reinforces a need for a pre-handover meeting with the SLÍ worker.

PASS. Some of the SLÍ workers consulted noted that the system can be limited in its capacity to produce reports on every intervention. However, it is also noted that there is no limit to the amount of case notes that can be inputted.

During the evaluation process, DRHE and DCC issued a new protocol for SLÍ PASS users, as the DRHE monitoring process revealed that data was not always being recorded correctly/consistently. The objective was that the DRHE/DCC staff would work together to review data to ensure that all relevant data was being recorded adequately. Extracts from the protocol, which was issued in mid-2013, includes:

- Each of the SLÍ service providers will run the SLÍ report on PASS during the last week of each quarter, and will liaise with the relevant local authority to confirm the actual number of open SLÍ clients and the number of cases closed.
- Any anomalies identified by this report will be resolved during this week.
- All reports will be presented at the quarterly meeting (which will take place during the first week of the next quarter) for final sign off.
- The DCC SLÍ Coordinator will sign off the SLÍ PASS data and will submit it to DRHE on a quarterly basis.

In addition to the guidance note on SLÍ issued by the DRHE during the summer of 2013, it was also proposed to provide a training session on PASS to all SLÍ staff to ensure that they are confident in using PASS.

5. OUTCOMES

One of the objectives of SLÍ, and of this evaluation, is to capture outcomes of customers' engagement and to identify key factors leading to successful tenancies.

5.1. Data and sources of information on outcomes

PASS data

This data recording system reports that, as of September 2013, one SLÍ customer had been evicted from their accommodation in an approved housing body, and that there were plans for a case conference.

DRHE data

The DRHE provided data for all quarters of 2013 on newly established tenancies across all sectors. This data is not specific to SLÍ, and includes all forms of visiting and on-site support to individuals across all types of accommodation. Both supported and unsupported tenancies are very successful and both have a low failure rate. There is a small difference between supported and unsupported tenancies (where supported tenancies have a lower failure rate than unsupported tenancies). One caveat here is that the support needs between the two groups are different, and so the two groups are not directly comparable (those in supported accommodation have higher support needs than those who do not avail of supports).

For example, the figures relating to failed tenancies are lower for those who have moved to new tenancies with visiting support (2.9 percent of all persons across all accommodation types) compared with the total percentage of individuals in failed tenancies (4.3 percent).¹⁹ Tenancies that failed in cases where there was no support increased by a factor of 1.6 compared with supported tenancies.

Another caveat is that the data deals with all accommodation types, which itself appears to be an important factor in determining outcomes. For example, the private rented sector as a whole reports more than twice the rate of tenancy failures compared with both the voluntary housing and local authority housing sectors.

The data for 2013 is outlined in the table below.

¹⁹ Tenancies are deemed to have failed and are excluded from the totals presented in the table if persons return to emergency accommodation during the quarter in which their tenancy began or up to three weeks following the end of the quarter. Over the year, there were 36 tenancies that failed somewhere between the first and fourth month of tenancy and the individuals returned to use Emergency Accommodation reducing the 829 moves to independent living recorded to a verified 793 for 2013. This provides a total failed tenancy percentage across all accommodation types of 4.3 percent.

Table 5-1 Move on independent living with and without supports and outcomes (2013)

| Type of Accommodation/Support | No of persons in Tenancy Q1-Q4/2013 | Failed Tenancies | Sub-Total | Grand-Total |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Moved private rented housing WITH visiting support | 205 | 10 | 195 | |
| Moved private rented housing (no support) | 244 | 13 | 231 | 426 |
| Moved to A.H.B Housing WITH on-site support | 41 | 1 | 40 | |
| Moved to A.H.B Housing WITH visiting support | 45 | 0 | 45 | |
| Moved to A.H.B housing (no support) | 12 | 1 | 11 | 96 |
| Moved to LT supported housing WITH on-site support | 130 | 8 | 122 | 122 |
| Moved to L.A housing WITH on-site support | 3 | 0 | 3 | |
| Moved to L.A housing WITH visiting support | 130 | 1 | 129 | |
| Moved to L.A. housing (no support) | 19 | 2 | 17 | 149 |
| Totals | 829 | 36 | 793 | 793 |

In addition to the above, other DRHE data produced in July 2013 details the number of tenancies that were offered across all sectors in Quarter 2 (2013) and their outcomes. The data reports that of 135 private rented sector tenancies, 75 has accessed visiting support from SLÍ (55%), and five had subsequently failed (6%). In terms of the voluntary housing sector, 34 tenancies were offered, of which 12 received visiting SLÍ support. None of these tenancies had failed.

Local authority housing accounted for a total of 38 tenancies, of which 35 included visiting support from SLÍ. None of these tenancies had failed.

Interviews with customers

Ultimately, for customers who were interviewed for the evaluation, SLÍ enabled them to maintain their tenancy, and some doubted that this would have been possible without the support that they received. Customers spoke about how engaging with SLÍ enhanced their levels of confidence in accessing accommodation. They spoke of their concerns and apprehensions about moving into new accommodation and of managing the process. These customers believed that SLÍ provided important and flexible supports in the moving in process.

Whatever I needed, they provided. I couldn't have done it without them.

SLÍ customer

SLÍ has also been noted by customers as having supported the process of maintaining and managing their tenancies (in spite of the fact that those customers consulted were still in the process of participation with SLÍ). This was particularly important for those living in PRS.

In terms of outcomes, some customers spoke about how they were volunteering in community activities and participating in education programmes, which played an important role in combating isolation, and in maintaining successful tenancies. The SLÍ worker played an important role in motivating and supporting customers to take part in these community activities, and the process was important for customers in tackling isolation. As mentioned earlier, this was partly facilitated by achieving a balance between challenging and supporting the customer, depending on their individual circumstances. This was highly valued by customers.

As a result of this approach, customers referred to enhanced confidence and self-esteem as a result of participation.

While these outcomes were highly rated, some SLÍ customers also believed that the availability of ongoing support, if required, could support these outcomes. While the disengagement process in SLÍ encourages the customer to end contact with their support worker, the reassurance of having the support available was an important factor for some, particularly in relation to ongoing housing management and dealing with landlords in the PRS:

I would like to be able to dip in and out of SLÍ in times of crisis – for instance, if something serious maintenance happened my accommodation could I call the number like before? Some reassurances around this for when I complete SLÍ would be good.

SLÍ customer

It is worth noting that the high cost of rent (and the prevalence in general of paying rent top-ups) can lead to indebtedness amongst homeless households, as evidenced in previous research. This – and the general lack of availability of PRS – can undermine the tenants' security of tenure, increase risks of losing tenancies, or affect the quality of PRS accessed. The capacity of SLÍ to overcome these problems is limited, but the provision of some ongoing support to those participants who are affected by these issues (and who have exited SLÍ) could contribute to ongoing positive outcomes for participants.

Telephone survey findings

The findings from the telephone survey indicated that 14 people (42% of respondents) anticipated future challenges to their tenancies. The majority (51%) were living in local authority tenancies, while 24% were living in the private rented sector. The findings indicate that:

- 31 out of 33 respondents (94%) were very satisfied with the support that they had received from SLÍ, and 28 (85%) believed that SLÍ had assisted them in maintaining their tenancy into the long-term. The remainder believed that they already had the skills to maintain their tenancy before engaging in SLÍ. No respondent reported that SLÍ had not assisted them in some way, and where customers were not very satisfied with the support received from SLÍ, this was

primarily to do with difficulties in accessing accommodation suitable to their needs.

- One person reported that he was living in emergency accommodation having been evicted from his accommodation.
- 14 out of 33 people (44%) anticipated that they may face future challenges in their tenancy. The majority of these respondents were characterised as having low support needs (75%). Moreover, their accommodation profile reflects the overall profile of SLÍ customers, with the majority living in local authority accommodation. The potential challenges that this group identified included:
 - Mental health and health problems
 - Financial problems, including expensive rents
 - Poor quality accommodation (characterised by damp and mould conditions)
 - Concerns about not being able to cope once their SLÍ support ends
 - The need for help in accessing suitable accommodation to meet family needs
 - The need for a key worker

These findings may point to the need for some ongoing occasional support for tenants – this is discussed further below. Eight of the 14 survey respondents who expressed concerns around their tenancies and future issues, believed that SLÍ could provide support in overcoming their concerns. The types of support identified included support in accessing new accommodation including AHB and support with addressing financial problems.

Views of others consulted and limitations in identifying outcomes

Two cases were highlighted in consultations as having been known to have lost their tenancies or had difficulties in their tenancies at the time of consultation (in one instance, a person was transferred within PMVT properties, but maintained their accommodation).

However, the data available is limited, and we cannot determine the outcomes for customers post-SLÍ participation (in the case of three customers, we know that one individual was evicted from their accommodation and subsequently returned to homelessness, one individual is deceased, and one individual entered into residential treatment for addiction).

For SLÍ participants consulted, outcomes refer primarily to outcomes to date, or anticipated outcomes, given their recent participation in the programme. In addition to the limited availability of data, there is no formal follow-up or tracking of SLÍ customers. Knowledge of longer term outcomes is either anecdotal, or is known through the housing management function undertaken by PMVT. The view of those consulted was that former customers would not favour an ongoing process, and the end of SLÍ signals a move away from homelessness, and in most instances, the majority of cases prefer a fresh start and limited contact.

Notwithstanding the limited data, the dominant view was that the outcomes of SLÍ have been very positive, and that tenancies have been successfully maintained in all but a very small proportion of cases.

There was a view, however, that greater identification of what constitutes a positive outcome is important. A positive outcome needs to take into consideration whether the tenant is satisfied with their accommodation and living arrangements, even if the tenancy itself is not at risk. Factors such as poor quality, high cost of rent, location, or isolation and loneliness could exacerbate addiction or mental health problems, leading to negative outcomes for customers.

In circumstances where the tenancy may be at risk, the individual may be referred to the prevention and tenancy sustainment services if they are a local authority tenant. However, as tenancy sustainment is a separate service, this move from SLÍ to tenancy sustainment may never be noted, unless formally as part of a PASS desk exercise. The fragmented nature of the housing support services also means that the geographic remit of prevention and tenancy sustainment services delivered by Focus Ireland is different to that of SLÍ, and if an individual moves from SLÍ to prevention and tenancy sustainment, the informal knowledge of the individual's needs and circumstances may not be available. There may be a strong rationale for merging the two services into a single housing support function, which could better track outcomes and subsequent support needs for former SLÍ customers. This would also be consistent with the original plans for configuration in a *Pathway to Home*.

However, the point was also made by some staff that services need to be configured in such a way that the individual does not become dependent on a specific service provider, and that systems need to be robust enough to provide an effective housing support service, irrespective of what organisation is delivering it.

Tracking outcomes is further compromised as existing prevention services offered by Focus Ireland and Dublin Simon are mostly accessed by those living in local authority housing. Ultimately, people living in the private rented sector are more vulnerable to losing their tenancy, because arrears in the private rented sector are likely to result in eviction quicker than in local authority or AHB housing. The vulnerability of private rented sector tenants is exacerbated by the provision of 'under the counter' payments in the PRS, which can arise in circumstances where 'rent caps'²⁰ are lower than the market rate of rent, and tenants must make up the difference from their own resources.²¹

It should be noted that in summer 2014, a new prevention service for those in rented accommodation who may be at risk of losing their tenancy was launched. This service

²⁰ Under Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) or rent allowance, in order for a unit of accommodation to be eligible for rent supplement, the accommodation must not exceed a 'rent cap'.

²¹ Section 5.2 below outlines some of the factors influencing tenancy sustainment, including tenure type.

provides a free telephone helpline, assessment and interventions for those at risk of losing their homes. The service is delivered by Threshold, in partnership with the Dublin Local Authorities, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Department of Social Protection, Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland, Citizens Information Board and the Private Residential Tenancies Board.

Options for monitoring outcomes

There were a number of potential options identified for gathering information on outcomes:

- An exit interview post-participation or a longitudinal study for a period of two years (six monthly intervals) which would be voluntary. There is an open door policy with SLÍ, where customers can make contact if required. However, this tracking mechanism would establish contact with all former participants.
- Desk research on PASS data to track customers' outcomes through homeless services, including prevention/ tenancy sustainment and other services following the end of their SLÍ participation.
- Merging the housing support functions (tenancy sustainment and SLÍ) would ensure that participants' longer term outcomes as well as support needs would be captured and monitored within the one function.

5.2. Factors influencing the sustaining of tenancies

Although the data would appear to indicate a high rate of successful tenancies, and a small number of tenancies that have ended, conclusions from the data cannot be made about the factors influencing tenancy sustainment. However, we can consider some of the views of those consulted about what factors influence this outcome.

Isolation and lack of social supports

Isolation was noted by both customers and staff working in SLÍ as the primary threat to sustaining a tenancy. The extent of isolation depends on whether the SLÍ customer has maintained relationships with their family. Isolation can be so acute that some individuals may not have a contact that they can identify as their next of kin.

Moreover, isolation can be exacerbated for people who have come from busy environments, such as emergency hostel accommodation.

Moving from say a hostel, where [the individual] has been there for 15 years, there's a staffing presence, meals are provided, laundry is looked after, and then here they are on their own and they may not necessarily see anyone.

SLÍ worker

The observation was made that some individuals may find moving into their own accommodation daunting and that the need for long-term supported accommodation

may be a more suitable option for people in these situation. The point was made that many people have poor coping skills, and may not have the capacity to live in accommodation which is not supported.

Quality of accommodation

Good quality accommodation is a key factor in that it is a strong motivational factor to maintain a tenancy. Accommodation in the private rented sector is the main option for those seeking to leave homelessness, even though this is not reflected in the SLÍ caseload figures. The high rate of private rented sector bedsit accommodation was a concern for SLÍ workers. Even if quality is good, private rented lettings are more likely to be short-term than local authority or AHB accommodation and limited in ongoing support.

With DCC you've got your estate managers, you've got your maintenance teams, your liaison officers, your community workers, there's a whole package of support in addition to these available.

SLÍ worker

The point was made that the variability of quality is high, with local authority housing and AHB far exceeding the quality of the private rented sector:

There were a lot of local authority senior citizen accommodation when SLÍ started...most of these have dried up now but their quality was phenomenal...Everything was floored, everything integrated in the kitchen everything was there...It's much the same with the voluntary housing associations....and then someone with the very same needs might end up in a bedsit with nothing in it.

SLÍ worker

A number of tenants consulted in the research reported that they either had been paying, or were now paying a 'top-up' payment on their rent, as the market rate for private rented accommodation was higher than the rent cap. The risk of financial indebtedness is a significant threat for these tenancies.

Location

Location is a significant factor for a number of reasons:

- There is significant variance between the availability and resourcing of services across different parts of Dublin. This was particularly the case with mental health services, and to a lesser extent with addiction services.
- Location of housing in areas where there is no connection or social network for an individual, or where there are limited community infrastructure (such as some of the newer areas of north County Dublin), can have an exacerbating impact on isolation.

Given the limited availability of accommodation and social housing as a whole, this undermines the choice of location for households. However, it was suggested that the effects of this could be mitigated if SLÍ workers worked in particular geographic areas, which would enable them to gain a more specialised and in-depth knowledge of services available in particular geographic areas. It would also enable them to develop close relationships with personnel and services in their particular area. At present, workers can be located across all local authority areas.

Pre-tenancy supports

Finally, the role of pre-tenancy supports and previous experience in managing a tenancy was highlighted as an important factor:

It makes a huge difference if they've gone through a pre-tenancy training ... It makes a massive difference, where they are at, at the point of moving in, in terms of how much input they need from the service.

SLÍ worker

People who had done the pre-tenancy course, their confidence and the skills is very, very different to people who wouldn't have done anything like that at all. They know exactly where to go to, they know exactly what they're entitled to do. They know exactly what they have to do with their deposits, getting the deposit back, where they stand in terms of their rights, tenants and everything else and are a lot better informed and...have seemed to have been building up those skills.

SLÍ worker

Given the impact of having completed such training (for example, provided by Crosscare), the point was made that there is an opportunity for staff in hostels to work with people prior to tenancy sign-up in this respect:

There's certainly an opportunity for staff in emergency accommodation to work with people prior to signing their tenancy around very basic tenants rights, responsibilities, what the roles of the various agencies are, so it's not all new information they are getting at the point of signing their tenancy.

SLÍ worker

6. QUALITY OF THE PROCESSES

In this section, the stages involved in SLÍ are assessed for their effectiveness. The experience of those who have taken part in SLÍ – both as workers and customers – are discussed and presented. The discussion is also framed in terms of policy issues and good practice.

6.1. Referrals

The process of referrals

Every person who is homeless and who is allocated a housing unit is eligible for participation on SLÍ. There has been a high rate of referrals of customers housed in local authority accommodation. This would indicate that the profile of referrals is not representative of the homeless population accessing long-term tenancies. In particular, it would appear that those who have secured private rented accommodation are under-represented in SLÍ. As SLÍ is being delivered by two contracts, and this evaluation is of the SLÍ service delivered by Focus Ireland and PMVT, it is strongly noted that this is an assumption, as we do not know the profile of those receiving supports from the other SLÍ service.

However, some comments by customers in this regard may somewhat support this assumption. One customer had previously lived in emergency accommodation which does not offer a key working service, and she was trying to source her own accommodation. She had not been aware of the existence of SLÍ, and it was only when she sought key work support that she was informed of SLÍ. She made the point that if you can self-refer to SLÍ, it is important for publicity/information to be made available on the programme. She was living in the private rented sector, having secured her own accommodation, and stated that:

I could have easily fallen through the cracks and not have heard about SLÍ.

SLÍ customer

Referral rate

Since the SLÍ programme was first delivered by Focus Ireland and PMVT in September 2010, a total of 172 people have been referred (up to September 2013). This is a lower than expected referral rate of 100 cases, and reflects a number of issues as reported in consultations, including:

- The low number of referrals from those with accommodation in the PRS (especially amongst those coming from homeless services with no key work function)
- The low number of referrals arising from a shortage of new housing units and tenancies.

- The voluntary nature of participation in SLÍ

It is also a reflection of the contract configuration, which provides for referrals to Focus Ireland and PMVT only when 100 cases have been secured by Dublin Simon.

Focus Ireland's MIPs²² data for the first six months of 2013 reports a maximum take-up of 46% (July 2013). This low caseload undermines the capacity for flexibility in managing or transferring hours (as outlined above) to deliver supports within the average hourly provision.

It should be noted that consideration was given by Focus Ireland to the temporary and flexible re-deployment of staff resources to other housing support functions (e.g. prevention and tenancy sustainment) and administrative tasks (e.g. archiving, accommodation finding) when SLÍ referrals were lower than anticipated.

Proposed measures to access the private rented sector could enable greater access to tenancies. The private sector leasing arrangement currently being negotiated will increase Focus Ireland's tenancies by 27 units in the short-term. Such measures are designed to increase the rate of tenancies, and should lead to an increase in SLÍ referrals.

6.2. Handover

The handover process was satisfactory from the perspective of customers, and the approach of those present at meetings was positive.

I found the process very clear and helpful. The support were offered initially once a week, then once every two weeks and then once a month.

Former SLÍ customer

In most cases, SLÍ customers were working towards their new tenancy with their key worker. This was not always the case however - some SLÍ workers referred to the fact that where key workers had undertaken some tenancy preparation work prior to handover, the outcomes were better for tenants and they were better prepared for the transition. It was noted that pre-tenancy support is likely to be offered by PMVT in some instances, arising from its role as an accommodation provider to young people in advance of them securing a tenancy. Focus Ireland also provides Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) in George's Hill for young people, which also provides opportunities for pre-tenancy support in advance of tenancy. Such pre-existing relationships allow some initial work to be undertaken prior to handover.

²² Focus Ireland's Management Information Processing System (MIPs)

A small number of customers expressed the view that they were not fully aware of what would happen at the handover meeting, and found the lack of time to prepare for it or to be informed of the process somewhat intimidating. This arose because the meeting was often at short notice (less than one week):

The handover process was a bit difficult – I did not really know what to expect from the meeting and I found it a bit intimidating as the key worker was the only person I knew there....I was quite anxious about the experience.

SLÍ customer

This view was also expressed in the telephone surveys and wider consultation. When asked about what changes could be made to improve SLÍ, suggestions were made about having greater clarity about what would be involved for a household in engaging in SLÍ, and managing people's expectations.

In addition, the importance of relationships between the customer and worker was emphasised, which is why some initial contact and meeting with their worker would be beneficial prior to handover.

One SLÍ customer made the point that their first SLÍ meeting was overwhelming and too much information was provided in one day.

A recommendation from SLÍ customers (current and former) is the need for a pre-handover meeting with the SLÍ worker, so that introductions are made and relationships can be built prior to the handover process.

Potential limitations in the handover process

From the perspective of the SLÍ staff, the key drawback in the handover process was the fact that key workers were not always present at the handover meeting, which take place on a fixed day (Wednesdays). Many key workers across homeless services (for example, staff in emergency accommodation) work on a shift basis, which can mean that they are not always available for the handover meeting, and there is no scope to reschedule this meeting. The SLÍ worker will then make contact separately with the key worker to discuss and identify support needs and considerations.

6.3. Support

Supports are discussed in Section 4.1 above, where it is noted that the provision of support was highly valued by SLÍ customers, who reported high levels of satisfaction in their support needs being met. In terms of the SLÍ model and provisions, it was noted by those consulted that the support needs are likely to change at different times.

There will always be chaotic periods in their lives...they will be slipping in and out...They may go drinking for a couple of weeks, and not pay their rent, or they'll have parties, or they will go missing for a couple of months.

Duration of support and intensity of support

The provision of an average of 26 hours per customer as a baseline of support (delivered one hour per week over a six month period) was regarded as sufficient on average for most customers with low support needs. However, a number of observations were made on the duration of support.

It was argued that, at the outset of the process, one hour is not sufficient, particularly as attendance at meetings characterises the early interventions with customers. Moreover, the advocacy role involves significant follow-up meetings.

If they are allocated one hour per week the majority of time it runs over and you would spend more than one hour per week, and then it's follow up things like phone calls to different services for them, you know advocating for them so it's more than one hour per week.

SLÍ worker

Geographic constraints can add to this time pressure. The issue of contractual provisions for support is discussed further in Section 7 below.

6.4. Review process and disengagement

A three monthly review takes place with the local authority, SLÍ support worker and SLÍ customer. At this meeting, a three-way discussion takes place which considers support needs and progress in tenancy. There is slight variation in practice between the different local authorities. For example, in the case of DCC, the SLÍ support worker does not attend the full review meeting – for part of the meeting, the review process takes place between the SLÍ customer and DCC. In other local authorities, all three individuals remain present for the entire review process.

From the perspective of customers, the review meetings worked well and customers appreciated the structured approach. Staff in the local authority, as well as their SLÍ support workers, were approachable and supportive, and the review meetings were regarded as positive. Having the local authority staff present was believed to support the motivation of the tenant (as most of the SLÍ customers are living in local authority tenancies).

One SLÍ customer made the point that some preparation and support around the review meeting process would have been useful, as she found the handover meeting stressful. The main reason for her stress was her uncertainty about what it might involve.

It would also be good to have some preparation for the review meeting, so that it is not stressful like the handover meeting.

SLÍ customer

This was a minority view, and moreover, from the perspective of staff, there is preparation with SLÍ customers prior to the review meeting. Staff also felt that the opportunity for the customer to discuss the support they receive from SLÍ was beneficial, as it allowed the individual the freedom to discuss any issues candidly with the local authority.

With regard to disengagement, most of the customers interviewed were currently participating in the process, and some were preparing for disengagement. For those who had gone through the disengagement process, it was highly rated:

I have recently completed my involvement and was told by the local authority that if I needs any extra supports, all I needs to do is call.

Former SLÍ customer

There was an acknowledgement that the disengagement process and its handling must strike a balance between ongoing support where required, as well as ending a process of support. This requires judgement and expertise, and the point was made in the consultations that SLÍ staff are particularly experienced/skilled in managing this process without fostering dependency amongst former customers.

6.5. Organisational differences in delivery

Additional resources

Each of the organisations delivering SLÍ draw upon support from their wider organisations in its delivery. These include the voluntary befriending service, and child and family support services in Focus Ireland; counselling services, and a 24 hour/ 7 day per week emergency telephone service in PMVT (this latter service is delivered to PMVT clients by support workers in PMVT (including SLÍ support workers) on a rostered basis).

These supports were believed to have added significant value to the service, and to have contributed to the overall success of the delivery of SLÍ. Some of the points raised in relation to them included the following:

- They provide additional and flexible services for SLÍ customers (given limited time provided for SLÍ support)
- They support the SLÍ worker (e.g. referrals to other services as needed, including counselling and child and family services)
- Can maintain contact between the SLÍ customer and the service (post SLÍ)

- Provides a relaxed and less formal support environment (e.g. Focus Ireland's befriending service²³)
- Provides confidence for the SLÍ customer that support is available at all times in case of emergency (e.g. the out of hours / telephone support service, and befriending service). While we do not have data on their use, their availability was an important support to SLÍ customers, and they acknowledged this in the interviews.
- They are already in place within PMVT and Focus Ireland, and so there is a strong added-value element to them given that they are already in situ, independent of SLÍ.

Some mechanism for enabling SLÍ customers across both organisations to access these additional supports would be valuable.

Housing management function in PMVT

PMVT has a particular arrangement with Fingal County Council around housing management and support. Local authority housing units that are allocated to homeless households are transferred to PMVT who acquire the units on a long-term lease basis. All SLÍ customers in PMVT properties therefore are referred directly to PMVT for support. To date, 11 tenancies supported by SLÍ were managed by PMVT in this way.

PMVT therefore provide a tenancy and landlord function, as well as a housing support function to some SLÍ customers. This was highly rated by the SLÍ customers consulted, PMVT and the local authority, and it was felt that it helps to identify any problems with tenancies before they escalate, and enables a follow-up with tenants. This is also discussed in Section 4.2 above.

There was a view amongst one SLÍ staff member in one of the homeless services that there is a potential clash between a housing support (advocacy) function and a landlord (tenancy management) function. However, this issue has not arisen for PMVT, and where necessary, if there have been difficulties in tenancies the housing support worker would not undertake the enforcement role (which would be undertaken by another staff member). Focus Ireland is currently undertaking an internal review to assess the impact of the separate provision of housing support and tenancy management by different staff within the organisation.

²³ In the SLÍ context, this was noted as being particularly beneficial at the start of a tenancy, and it has supported participants to gain a familiarity with their new area, in a relaxed and informal way.

7. MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS

In this section, key themes relating to the management and delivery of SLÍ are outlined.

7.1. Collaboration between the parties

PMVT and Focus Ireland submitted the tender for the delivery of SLÍ as a single partnership between the two services ('Support to Home'). The collaboration between the two organisations in delivering the service was positive and highly rated by all consulted. Both believed that further collaborations could arise as a result of the positive experience.

As was anticipated at the outset, the services were complementary in their respective skills and management structures. Line management for the delivery of the programme was provided by both organisations through their usual line management structures, enabling consistency for each of the organisations at operational levels.

The overall coordination of the programme was undertaken by Focus Ireland, and communication at that level of management across both organisations was highly regarded. It was felt that structures were effective and that there was no duplication of function.

Relationships between the local authorities and service providers were likewise highly rated, and were supportive in the implementation of SLÍ. The local authority's role involves both monitoring and support (as well as overall coordination in the case of DCC). While these roles can be conflicting in some ways, there was a good working relationship between the parties, and there was flexibility and commitment to SLÍ amongst all parties which meant that the relationship was highly rated. Staff felt supported in engaging with all the local authorities between review meetings around implementation issues. In one case, a worker noted that, depending on the issue, she might be more inclined to call the local authority before her own internal line manager.

It was also felt that in order for a service to be client-centred, there does need to be flexibility stitched into the process, and it was generally felt that this has been facilitated by DCC in how it has delivered SLÍ.

At an operational level, staff support each other in the delivery of SLÍ, but in most instances there is little interaction between Focus Ireland and PMVT frontline staff, and there would be little need for them to engage as they generally focus on different geographic areas.

7.2. Support needs and implications

At the early stage of tenancy set-up, support needs are higher, and one hour per week is not sufficient at this stage. However over the course of six months, as an average, 26 hours is usually sufficient for clients with low support needs. However, it is not possible to determine this in advance, as support needs can change throughout the tenancy. For SLÍ clients with low support needs, while the intensity of support can be variable, the timescale of support over six months is sufficient, and in overall terms provision is sufficient to cover most costs per individual.

Higher than anticipated support needs for some SLÍ clients means that additional supports are required than might have been originally envisaged.

Advocacy has become big, we do a lot of that especially with utilities. So no it's not sufficient [the time provided].

SLÍ worker

A further issue arises within the context: support needs may be determined by a range of other factors, some of which cannot be determined in advance. These include problems with landlords, quality of accommodation, maintenance, and social welfare issues. Therefore an individual who has low support needs (in terms of health or other needs) may from time to time require more supports.

Notwithstanding this, there are variable needs amongst clients, and (unused) resources for clients with low support needs can be transferred to higher need clients in consultation with Dublin City Council.

There was a suggestion that while a six month support period is sufficient for the majority of SLÍ participants, on average, an allocation of 26 support hours per participant (at one hour per week) was not sufficient for some customers and consideration should be given to increasing this within the six-month support period.

7.3. Delivery and geographic issues

Geographic issues arise where the provision of visiting support across a wide area can absorb significant time in travel and transport. Moreover, without having a large caseload of clients, there is not the critical mass of clients to enable staff to manage the provision of supports by clustering client visits.

Geographic delivery and merging of housing support services

It was proposed that overcoming this issue could be supported if the contractual arrangements for SLÍ were reconfigured along geographic lines, by establishing local areas in which teams would deliver housing support services. These housing support services could include prevention and tenancy sustainment services as well as SLÍ, under a merged single service. This was originally envisaged in *Pathway to Home* and this proposal gained widespread support in the consultations undertaken.

This geographic delivery and merging of housing support services could help address the need to reconfigure the contractual arrangements, in light of low referrals. It would also enable staff to specialise in delivering services on a geographic basis, which would enable close working relationships to continue to develop with local and community-based service providers. Finally, by having teams specialising in geographic areas, these teams would be larger than the current SLÍ teams and it could facilitate the development of specialised expertise within these teams.

7.4. Staff

The role and approach of staff has been highly valued and is discussed in Section 4. In terms of the delivery of SLÍ, credit was given to the expertise and commitment of staff in its delivery, by customers and local authorities alike:

The staff are exceptional in their levels of dedication to the levels of their work and they adopt a flexible approach.

SLÍ coordinator (local authority)

The staff also provide an important support and resource to the local authorities around the model development of SLÍ and other housing management issues.

In many ways they are our eyes and ears on the ground and they make us – and agencies – aware of gaps and issues in service delivery.

SLÍ coordinator (local authority)

The point was made by one of the homeless service providers that:

Staff of our own organisation for example have a broad working knowledge of people and the complexities that they may present with coming from homeless services, and the staff most likely have worked in other areas of the organisation and would have a pretty in-depth idea of what the challenges that would present to a person who is looking to move into independent living.

SLÍ worker

However, some staff made the point there is a need for service reviews of SLÍ internal to each partner organisation, and to consider policies and procedures internally at least on an annual basis. There was a strong team approach, particularly where staff work on other initiatives, as this meant a larger pool of support to draw upon:

The different projects all having a stake in it. It's great because I can bring it back to my team and we would have a wealth of expertise.

SLÍ worker

For staff fully allocated to SLÍ, the lack of referrals have meant that they are operating below capacity. This could potentially impact on staff morale, as it could lead to

uncertainty around the future of the roles. Consideration was given by Focus Ireland to the temporary and flexible re-deployment of staff resources to other housing support functions (e.g. prevention and tenancy sustainment) when referrals have been low, if the capacity is required in other services.

8. SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis of the SLÍ service based on this evaluation is provided below.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Staff focused on task, very committed – Frontline staff expert and knowledgeable of services – Added value of befriending volunteers, 24 hr support – Good relationship between services and with LAs – Good level of engagement and structures, and processes rated highly (e.g. review meetings, etc.) – Relationship with support worker is based on equality – Client-centred approach facilitated by flexible approach to supports and time-scale – Ability to extend the period of support if needs determine – Clear communication and good protocols around engagement etc. with clients – Housing support and tenancy roles provided together (PMVT) are reported to contribute to good outcomes and tenancy sustainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Short notice around handover process can undermine preparation – Move-in and handover process itself can be rushed and can undermine capacity of tenant to control the process of moving in – Needs more publicity around SLÍ and services - many are not aware of it as a separate initiative – Lack of (quality) accommodation undermines Pathways model – Can be limitations with capacity to deliver quality supports within one hour per week – Lack of outcomes measurement means the success of SLÍ is anecdotal and not formally documented – Limited pre-tenancy training plays a big role in outcomes |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To amalgamate prevention and tenancy sustainment and SLÍ, and deliver housing support on a local area basis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Limited availability of accommodation exacerbated by further difficulties of access to PRS – Referral numbers are low and partnership does not have internal flexibility to manage the case load - financial implications for this – Recommended caseload per worker has not been tested arising from low referrals |

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this evaluation.

Publicity and awareness raising

- 1) For those without key workers, as well as those staying in the PRS or private emergency accommodation (who do not operate key working systems), more publicity and awareness-raising around SLÍ and its capacity to take referrals from the PRS is required. This could include greater engagement and promotion with homeless and housing advice services that work with people moving into the private rented sector, who could refer clients to SLÍ (as well as support customers to self-refer to SLÍ).
- 2) More awareness-raising regarding SLÍ amongst agencies and services, as some are not familiar with the programme and instead have good relationships with support staff on an individual basis.
- 3) Consideration should be given to approaching some former SLÍ participants as to whether they would be interested in acting as ‘ambassadors’ for the service and its outcomes, as part of awareness-raising activities.

Defining support needs

- 4) In spite of work undertaken by the DRHE on defining support needs, some workers believe that there needs to be greater clarity on how low, medium and high support needs are defined, and a collective agreement of them should be developed. Consideration should be given to how this could be addressed.

Staging and planning of supports

- 5) There should be more time given for the preparation of handover meetings with potential SLÍ customers in order to inform customers of the process.
- 6) The SLÍ process should start prior to the handover of keys and new tenancies. This would allow customers and workers to start to develop a relationship and plan issues around utilities, bank accounts, direct debits, etc. A single meeting in advance of the handover process would be beneficial. If this undertaken, and a pre-SLÍ meeting was scheduled, perhaps at this meeting the key worker could meet with the SLÍ worker and the customer.
- 7) Moreover, liaison with staff in emergency accommodation should be undertaken to support and encourage the facilitation of pre-tenancy information in advance of the handover and signing of tenancies.

Data collection and monitoring

- 8) Some mechanism for charting customer outcomes should be put in place. These could include the following:
- Seeking voluntary participation in a three-year tracking or longitudinal study amongst customers at the outset of their participation in the programme.
 - Exit interviews at the point of disengagement from SLÍ.
 - A desk-based analysis of all PASS data to establish whether former SLÍ customers have reverted back to (other) homeless services since ending their engagement with the programme.

Contract issues and caseloads

- 9) A review of the contractual arrangements and structure should take place, for future contracts. This would take into account factors such as referral rates, and would account for peaks and troughs in referrals. A review should also give consideration to increasing the baseline/average hours for support under the programme (by increasing the number of support hours per week during the six-month support period). The low cost of providing SLÍ compared with other services (e.g. STA) and the positive outcomes in terms of sustaining tenancies could be used to support this argument.
- 10) The capacity of workers to take on 20 cases has not been tested (the contractual cost was based on a case load of 25), as referrals have been low. However, on the basis of current time required to provide support (including travel and follow up), it was suggested by some that a more realistic caseload would be 15-17 cases per staff member. Consideration could be given to monitoring the caseload of staff, with a view to adjusting to this level, if there are operational difficulties once the current caseload limit is reached.

Prevention / tenancy sustainment (TSS) and SLÍ

- 11) In order to best coordinate resources and ensure efficiencies, in future contracts consideration should be given to merging SLÍ and TSS / Prevention services, as the methodologies are similar. There is no strong rationale for structuring services differently, and merging the services would enable peaks and troughs in demand and low referrals to be managed easier, as staff could be deployed across the larger service. Currently the two services are delivered in a fragmented and separate manner. This would address some of the issues around risk for the service delivery organisations (where referrals for one service are low). This would also provide additional supports and sharing of expertise amongst staff members, as they would be working within a larger team. Moreover, having a housing support service that is the same could provide continuity where prevention/ TSS services are required.
- 12) As part of this merging, a mechanism for transferring longer term SLÍ customers to TSS (which may be more appropriate to their needs) should be

considered. Alongside this merging of structures, staff teams could operate on a geographic basis, with contracts issued by Dublin City Council re-configured along a geographic and local area basis. This would allow staff to make best use of their local knowledge and contacts with services, and might mitigate the difficulties experienced by some SLÍ participants in accessing services in certain parts of Dublin.

- 13) In the interim, consideration might be given as to how to effectively re-deploy the work of the SLÍ workers within Focus Ireland (to similar skilled work), while referrals are low, and how to flexibly respond to referrals as they come in.

Additional supports

- 14) Additional supports provided individually by Focus Ireland and PMVT to SLÍ (Focus Ireland's befriending service and child support service, and PMVT's 24/7 emergency telephone contact) were believed to add significant value to the service and to customers. A mechanism whereby SLÍ customers in both organisations could avail of these supports should be explored.
- 15) The 'Support to Home' Partnership was characterised by very effective collaboration between Focus Ireland and PMVT. The learning from this partnership should be used as a basis for future collaborations and partnerships. Consideration might be given to documenting the partnership or devising a case study of its development.

APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED PROGRAMME INDICATORS FOR SLÍ

Based on the findings of the evaluation, a set of programme indicators have been developed for SLÍ. These indicators relate to processes of SLÍ, outputs and targets, outcomes, and the experience of customers.

They are drawn from good practice in settlement service provision, including indicators developed by Focus Ireland and '*Putting People First*'. They are drawn from the findings of the evaluation, in terms of factors that are believed to facilitate positive outcomes and the experiences of workers and SLÍ customers.

The key headings for indicators are outlined below.

Indicator categories:

- Referrals and take-up
- Introduction to the service
- Supports and relationships
- Feedback and participation
- Disengagement from SLÍ
- Outcomes of support
- Tenancy outcomes
- Financial indicators

Referrals and take-up

The number and profile of referrals into SLÍ each quarter should reflect the number and profile of long-term accommodation accessed by homeless households for that same quarter. Some discrepancies will arise due to the voluntary nature of SLÍ and the provision of other housing support functions to households with high support needs. However, after factoring for these adjustments, there should be minor discrepancies. Collection of data can ensure that discrepancies are monitored and that action is taken to ensure SLÍ referrals are a representative sample of all homeless households offered accommodation.

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| Referrals | Profile of referrals into SLÍ reflect new long-term lettings secured by homeless households Total number of new tenancies (long-term housing) with PRS / AHB / LA tenancies Number of SLÍ referrals with PRS / AHB / LA tenancies Number of accepted referrals to the service The number and percentage of cases who have participated in pre-tenancy induction programmes Number of cases per support worker | Discrepancies between potential and actual referrals are noted and action taken. Homeless households eligible for SLÍ and relevant services have been offered the service. | DRHE quarterly housing reports Quarterly PASS data Consultations with key workers and SLÍ customer |

Introduction to service

Introduction to the service takes place at the handover process. However, the evaluation findings point to the need for pre-handover supports and introductions. The output indicators are based on the presumption that this will be provided.

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| Introduction | SLÍ worker is appointed Pre-handover meeting takes place with SLÍ customer Customer has been made aware of the SLÍ process and model of support Customer is satisfied with the process | SLÍ customer is prepared and confident about the process SLÍ customer knows about the process of SLÍ | Quarterly PASS data Customer case files Exit interviews |

| | | | |
|------------------|---|--|---|
| Handover meeting | <p>An up-to-date HNA and support plan are in place for all customers</p> <p>Number of risk assessments completed</p> <p>Number of meetings attended by key workers</p> <p>Number of customers satisfied with the preparation, notice and process for handover meeting</p> | <p>Support needs are identified</p> <p>A plan is in place to address needs</p> <p>The customer is clear about needs and how they will be addressed</p> | <p>Quarterly PASS data</p> <p>Customer case files and feedback</p> <p>Exit interviews</p> |
|------------------|---|--|---|

Supports and relationships

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|--|---|--|---|
| Review and assessment of support needs | <p>Criteria for support needs have been defined (low, medium, high) for all SLI customers</p> <p>Number of customers with low support needs</p> <p>Number of customers with medium support needs</p> <p>Number of customers with high support needs</p> <p>Number of support plans in place</p> <p>Number of customers with physical health needs</p> <p>Number of customers with mental health needs</p> <p>Number of customers with substance mis-use needs (and dual diagnosis)</p> <p>Number of customers with education/ training needs</p> <p>Number of customers with family functioning support needs</p> <p>Number of customers with welfare/budgeting needs</p> <p>Number customers with employment needs</p> <p>Number customers with child and family support needs</p> <p>All support plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis</p> <p>SLI worker and customer believe that the supports needs are being addressed effectively</p> | <p>Support plans are in place</p> <p>Support plans are reviewed and progress monitored</p> | <p>PASS data</p> <p>Customer case notes and review process</p> <p>Exit interviews</p> |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Supports accessed | Number of interventions ²⁴ around physical health Number of interventions around mental health needs Number of interventions around substance mis-use needs (and dual diagnosis) Number of interventions around education/ training needs Number of interventions around family functioning support needs Number of interventions around welfare/budgeting needs Number of interventions around employment needs Number of interventions around child and family support needs % of interventions provided in local community % of interventions accessed through self-advocacy (with support) % of interventions that are advocacy related % of interventions that are information related % of customers availing of befriending services % of customers satisfied with the supports accessed | Monitoring of needs and subsequent interventions are undertaken Self-advocacy interventions are monitored Satisfaction rating of the interventions and their appropriateness amongst customers is monitored | PASS data Customer case notes and review process Exit interviews |
|-------------------|---|---|--|

Feedback and participation

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Feedback throughout the process | Customers have the opportunity to feedback on the process and their experience of SLÍ Number of positive comments about SLÍ Number of negative comments about SLÍ Mechanism for responding to comments and feedback is in place Number of customers who report that SLÍ supports them to meet their needs Number of formal complaints made by SLÍ customers | The customer is empowered to participate in assessing the quality of service delivery. Opportunities to amend the process based on feedback are in place. | Quarterly PASS data Customer case files Exit interviews Follow up interview/ tracking (longitudinal) Customer complaint forms |

²⁴ Interventions can be a combination of information provision and advocacy support.

Disengagement from service

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Disengagement | Number of planned disengagements Number of unplanned disengagements Number of customers from whom service has been withdrawn % of goals that have been achieved at disengagement Contingencies ²⁵ are in place and explained Number of satisfied disengaged customers Number of dissatisfied disengaged customers SLI feedback mechanism for all disengaged customers is in place and used Number of customers who have taken part in feedback / exit interview Number of hours provided to customers at time of disengagement Number of months availing of services at time of disengagement % of customers prematurely disengaged who have maintained their tenancies one year after disengagement | SLI customers are prepared and confident about the process of disengagement Customers have recourse to prevention services post-engagement Customers are confident around capacity to sustain tenancy and address needs | Quarterly PASS data Customer case files Exit interviews |

²⁵ For example, if crisis supports are required post-engagement.

Outcomes

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| Tenancy is sustained | <p>Number of customers who have not returned to homelessness after one, two and three years</p> <p>Number of customers who have advocated on their own behalf in areas of need</p> <p>Number of customers who are engaged in local community activities</p> <p>Number of tenancies that have been maintained by sector of letting (as a % of all tenancies)</p> <p>Gender and household profile of sustained tenancies and discontinued tenancies</p> <p>SLÍ supported tenancies have a higher rate of sustainment than non-supported tenancies</p> <p>Number of issues identified in sustaining tenancies and % of these addressed by customer</p> <p>Number of customers engaged in education, training or engaged in day time activities</p> <p>Number of customers who have a knowledge of local supports and express confidence in accessing them</p> <p>Number of customers who have contacts, supports and networks within their local community (social capital)</p> <p>Number of customers who consider their housing to feel like home and report a good quality of life</p> <p>Number of housing unit that are well maintained and in an acceptable condition</p> <p>Number of customers in rent arrears</p> <p>Number of customers who have their welfare and financial needs met</p> | <p>The customer is effectively managing their tenancy after one, two and three years</p> <p>The customer's capacity to address their needs is enhanced</p> <p>The capacity of customer to identify their needs has been enhanced</p> <p>The customer is satisfied with their tenancy</p> <p>The customer is engaged with local services in their community</p> | <p>Quarterly PASS data</p> <p>Customer case files</p> <p>Exit interviews</p> <p>Follow up interviews/tracking (longitudinal)</p> |

Financial indicators

| Area | Output indicators | Outcomes | Source of data and evidence |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Financial indicators | <p>Number of cases per staff member (average)</p> <p>Cost per household settled (average)</p> <p>Contract value of case equates to organisation cost of delivery</p> | <p>Caseload is appropriate and enables support worker to address needs of customers in a flexible manner</p> <p>The service is cost effective and targets for referrals to SLÍ are being met</p> | <p>Quarterly PASS data</p> <p>Customer case files</p> |

APPENDIX 2: PROFILE OF CONSULTED SLÍ CUSTOMERS

Profile of SLÍ customers who took part in interviews

Six SLÍ customers participated in face to face interviews: five of these customers were currently participating in the initiative (the remaining interviewee had completed her participation in SLÍ).

Three of the five current customers were engaging with SLÍ for less than 3 months, with two of the customers engaging for between 3-6 months. The customers were equally distributed across the age ranges of 18-30 years (2 customers); 31-49 years (2 customers) and 50 + years (2 customers).

Four customers had moved into their current accommodation from emergency accommodation provided by homeless services, one had previously lived in private (B&B) accommodation, and one customer had lived in institutional (psychiatric) care for several years prior to SLÍ.

In terms of current accommodation, three were staying in accommodation provided by the voluntary housing sector (of which two of these were by PMVT), two were staying in the private rented sector, and one had accessed housing from the local authority. All but one of the customers were living alone. Four of the customers had children, but three of these were not living with their children. In some instances, the children were adults in their own accommodation.

Four of the six customers interviewed had enrolled in second level education, and two had completed second level education. The lowest age at which a customer had left education was 12 years.

One of the six customers was employed and was working in a restaurant.

Profile of SLÍ customers who participated in the telephone survey

The profile of respondents, were broadly representative of the age profile of SLÍ participants as a whole.

| Table 0-1 Age profile of telephone survey respondents (n=33) | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| | No. | % |
| 18-24 | 3 | 9% |
| 25-34 | 7 | 21% |
| 35-44 | 9 | 27% |
| 45-54 | 5 | 15% |
| 55-64 | 9 | 27% |
| 65 or older | 0 | 0% |

| | | |
|-------|----|------|
| Total | 33 | 100% |
|-------|----|------|

Table 0-2 Gender profile of telephone survey respondents (n=33)

| | No. | % |
|--------|-----|------|
| Male | 26 | 79% |
| Female | 7 | 21% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

Table 0-3 Duration of homelessness prior to SLÍ (n=33)

| | No. | % |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| Less than 6 months | 4 | 12% |
| 6 months to less than 1 year | 3 | 9% |
| 1 year to less than 18 months | 5 | 15% |
| More than 18 months | 18 | 55% |
| Don't remember | 1 | 3% |
| Was not homeless prior to SLÍ | 2 | 6% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

Table 0-4 Duration of SLÍ supports (n=33)

| | No. | % |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| Less than 6 months | 25 | 76% |
| 6 months to less than 1 year | 8 | 24% |
| 1 year to less than 18 months | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

Table 0-5 Housing status of survey respondents (n=33)

| | No. | % |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| Private rented sector | 8 | 24% |
| Local authority | 17 | 52% |
| Voluntary housing association | 5 | 15% |
| Other - Hostel | 1 | 3% |
| Other - RAS | 2 | 6% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

APPENDIX 3: INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

Caitrona White, Project Leader, Focus Ireland

Grainne O’Grady, Project Worker, Focus Ireland

Sandra Hallissey, Project Worker, Focus Ireland

Sorcha Griffith, Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT)

Noel Sherry, Services Manager, Focus Ireland

Deirdre Rossiter, Frontline Manager, PMVT

Chris Fitzpatrick, Project Worker, PMVT

Sandra Kavanagh, Project Worker, PMVT

Caroline Norris, Dublin Simon

Kathy Walsh and Brian Harvey, Evaluators of the Dublin Simon SLÍ service

Mary Brennan, Fingal County Council

Anthony Gleeson, Dublin City Council

Fearghal Connolly, Donore Community Drugs Team

Mary Maher, Dublin Adult Literacy Centre

Louise Byrne, HAIL

Elaine Moore, Adapt/ Blanchardstown Community Drug Team

Catherina O’Rourke, Dublin City Council

Brian Friel, Head of Services, PMVT

Ciaran Lanigan, Blanchardstown Community Mental Health Service

Catherine Maher, National Director of Services, Focus Ireland

Daithi Downey, Dublin Region Homeless Executive

Bernie O’Donoghue-Hynes, Dublin Region Homeless Executive

One-to-one interviews with 6 SLÍ customers

Telephone interviews with 33 former and current SLÍ customers