Families Exiting Homelessness: An Analysis of March 2016 Telephone Survey Cohort

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Every three months, Focus Ireland Research Team conducts telephone surveys with families presenting as homeless to understand the root causes of their homelessness, their housing histories and key demographic details. Data from this is published on an ongoing basis through our Insights into Family Homelessness Series[1]. In an effort to capture families' routes through and out of homelessness, we conducted an exercise by tracking the families who participated in March 2016 telephone survey through PASS database (Homeless Services Management System)[2]. During this month, 70 families were surveyed (representing 83% of all families who presented as homeless within the Dublin region that month)[3].

While this is exercise does not reveal the processes behind families who exited homelessness versus those who did not (and thereby is somewhat limited in its scope) it nonetheless indicates crude patterns around families' journeys out of homelessness in terms of demographic profile and housing history.

This exercise was conducted in October 2017 – i.e. 1 year and 7 months *after* families initially presented as homeless. Below is a brief overview of the findings emerging from this exercise. The housing status at follow up will first be presented. This will be followed by patterns of exits

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[1]Focus Ireland Insights into Family Homelessness Series can be found here: https://www.focusireland.ie/resource-hub/research/

[2] No identifiable details were retained of the March 2016 sample apart from PASS ID number. These ID numbers were then checked through PASS by Focus Ireland Research Officer. High ethical protocol was adhered to at all times to ensure that the identity was not revealed of each of the families.
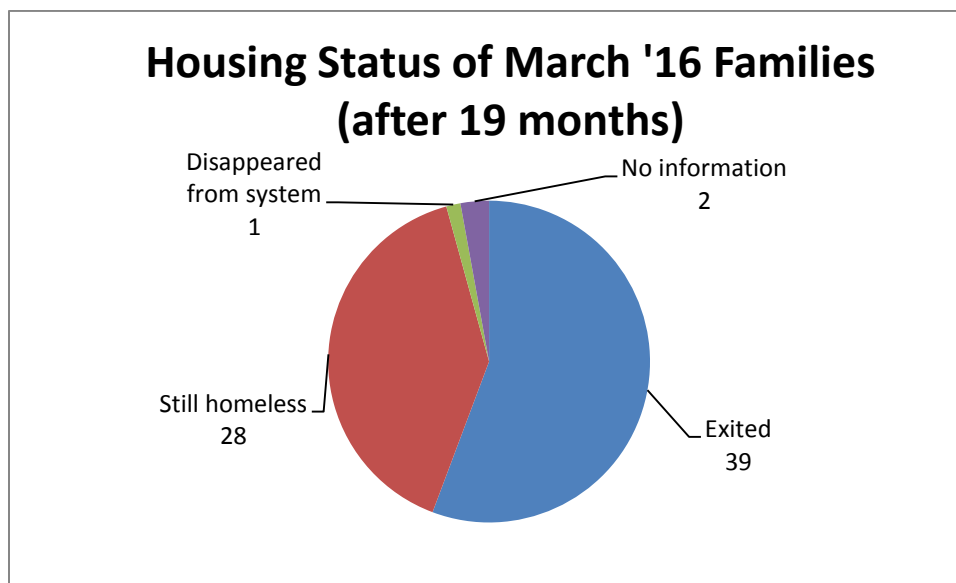
[3] The March 2016 survey analysis can be found here: https://www.focusireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Sheridan-2016-Insights-into-Family-Homelessness-No-4-Telephone-Survey-of-Families-that-Became-Homeless-during-March-2016.pdf

according to key demographic indicators and housing status categories, as per the analysis presented in Insights into Family Homelessness Number 4[4].

Key Findings:

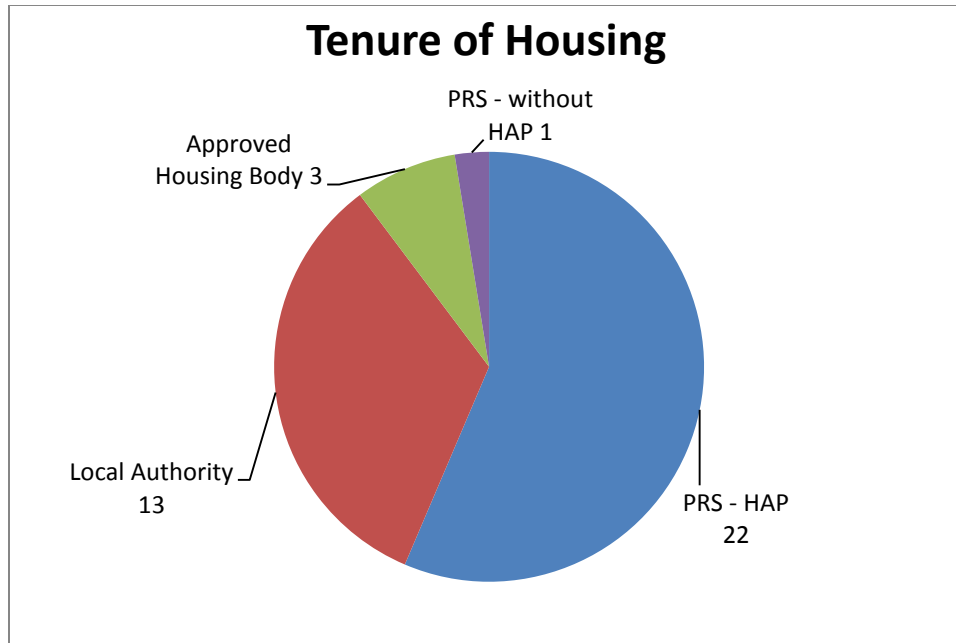**Housing Status of families 19 months Later (Total number of families surveyed = 70)**

- No. of **EXITS** across entire sample: 39 / 68 (57%)
- No. of families **STILL** homeless / in emergency accommodation: 28 / 68 (41%)
- No of families who 'disappeared' from system: 1 (i.e. case notes ceased unexpectedly)
- No. of families for which there is no information on PASS: 2 of 70 (leaving 68)

Housing Status of March '16 Families (after 19 months)

Disappeared from system — 1
No information — 2
Still homeless — 28
Exited — 39

1. **ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE OF FAMILIES WHO EXITED (n=39, 57%)**
   - Breakdown of Exit by Tenure Type:
     − PRS – HAP = 22 (56%)
     − Local Authority = 13 (33%)
     − AHB = 3 (8%)
     − PRS (not clear whether with HAP) = 1 (3%)

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[4] Ibid.

Tenure of Housing

PRS - without HAP 1

Approved Housing Body 3
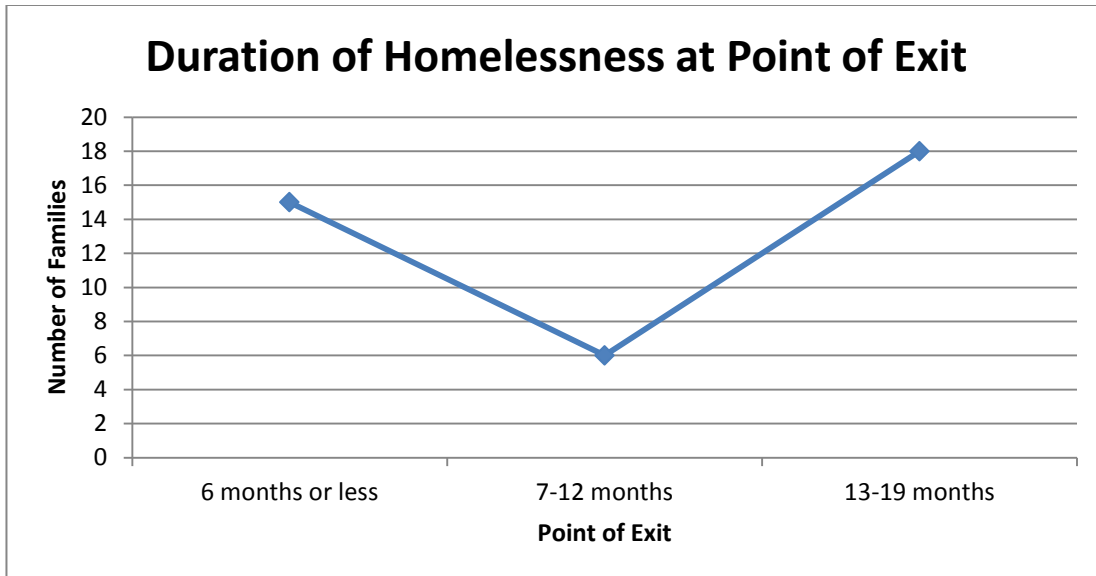
PRS - HAP 22

Local Authority 13

- <u>Exits and Tenancy Supports</u>:
  - 22 with Sli
  - 17 with no tenancy supports

- <u>Focus Ireland Case Workers</u>:
  - 24/39 (62%) of families who exited did so with the support of FI case workers.
  - Of the 15 who exited homelessness within six months, 4 did so with the support of a FI case worker.

- <u>Average time spent homeless (among exited cohort): 9 months</u>
  - >6 months: n=15   38% *of exit sample*
  - 7 -12 months: n=6   15%
  - 13-19 months: n=18   46%

Duration of Homelessness at Point of Exit

Chart: Line graph titled "Duration of Homelessness at Point of Exit"
- Y-axis: Number of Families (0 to 20)
- X-axis: Point of Exit
- 6 months or less: 15
- 7-12 months: 6
- 13-19 months: 18

- This U-Shape as identified above may be explained when looking at the tenure type at point of exit among the 39 families:
  - Among the 15 who exited six months or earlier, all but two families transitioned to PRS HAP (while one family went to LA; one family went to PRS without HAP).
  - Of the 6 families who exited between 7-12 months, all exited to HAP.
  - Of the remaining families who exited after 13 months, only 3 exited to HAP, while 12 exited to Local Authority housing and 3 exited to AHB.

- Breakdown of Accommodation Trajectory among those who exited (as categorised in March 2016 analysis):
  - 1 Stable   n=24   62% *of exit sample*
  - 2 Precarious   n=6   15%
  - 3 Unstable   n=9   23%

- Ethnicity:
  - Irish   n=27   69% *of exit sample*
  - EU   n=5   13% (X% of migrant cohort)
  - Non EU   n=7   18% (X% of migrant cohort)
  - Travelers   n=0   0%

- Family Type:
  - Lone parents n=26   66% *of exit sample*
  - 2-parents   n=13   33%

- Age (average age 30.1):
  - U/25s   n=13   33% *of exit sample*
  - 26-39   n=21   54%
  - 40 years +   n=5   13%

2. **ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE OF FAMILIES WHO REMAINED HOMELESS (n=28)**
   - Last available information on most recent emergency accommodation of families:
     - 11 in hotel accommodation
     - 4 in hubs
     - rest in other emergency accommodation
     - 1 family self-accommodating since March 2016 (non-EU)
   - Breakdown of Accommodation Trajectory:
     - 1 Stable   n=8   29% *of 'still homeless' sample*
     - 2 Precarious n=8   29%
     - 3 Unstable   n=12   43%
   - Ethnicity:
     - Irish   n=18   64% *of 'still homeless' sample*
     - EU   n=4   14% (X% of migrant cohort)
     - Non EU   n=4   14% (X% of migrant cohort)
     - Travelers   n=2   7%
   - Family Type:
     - Lone parents   n=16   57% *of 'still homeless' sample*
     - 2-parents   n=12   43%
   - Age (average age 30.4):
     - U/25s   n=6   21% *of 'still homeless' sample*
     - 26-39   n=19   68%
     - 40 years +   n=3   11%

3. **ANALYSIS OF HOUSING STATUS FAMILIES BY HOUSING TYPOLOGY *PRIOR* TO HOMELESSNESS**

Pathway 1 – Stable housing history (n=34):

- **Housing Status:**
  - Still homeless n=9
    - Irish 5 / EU 3 / Non EU 1
    - All between 26-40 years
    - Lone parent 6 / two parent 3

- Housed   n=24
    - Irish 15 / EU 5 / Non-EU 4
    - Lone parent 15 / two parent 9
- Unknown   n=1

Pathway 2 – Precarious housing history (n=14):

- **Housing Status:**
    - Still homeless n=8
        - Irish 4 / Traveler 2 / Non EU 2
        - All between 26-40 years
        - Lone parent 5 / two parent 3
    - Housed   n=6
        - All Irish
        - All between 26-40 years
        - Lone parent 4 / two parent 2

Pathway 3 – Unstable / chaotic housing history (n=22):

- **Housing Status:**
    - Still homeless n=12
        - Irish 9 / EU 1 / Non EU 2
        - 5 of 12 were under the age of 25
        - Lone parent 9 / two parent 3
    - Housed   n=9
        - Irish 6 / Non EU 4
        - All were under the age of 30 (8/9 under age of 25)
        - Lone parent 7 / two parent 2
    - Unknown   n=1

Summary

Notwithstanding the already-stated limitations in using exclusively focusing on PASS data analysis (and that information may not necessarily be up-to-date), this exercise reveals important patterns among families' journeys through homelessness.

Demographic Profile	Variable	Exit Sample	Percentage (of exits)	Remain Sample	Percentage (of remain)
Housing Typology	1	**24**	**62%**	8	29%
	2	6	15%	**8**	**29%**
	3	9	23%	**12**	**43%**
Ethnicity	Irish	27	69%	18	64%
	EU	5	13%	4	14%
	Non- EU	7	18%	4	14%
	Travellers	0	0	2	7%
Age	18-25	13	33%	6	21%
	26-39	21	54%	19	68%
	40+	5	13%	3	11%
Family Type	Lone parent	26	66%	16	57%
	2-parent	13	33%	12	43%

Drawing on the data in the above table, the following patterns can be identified:

- According to PASS data, only 41% (n=28) of the families who were surveyed in March 2016 are still homeless 19 months later.
- 24/39 (62%) of families who exited did so with the support of FI case workers. Only 4 of these families exited within six months.
- The most common exit is through HAP (56%) followed by Local Authority housing (33%) or an Approved Housing Body housing (8%).
- 22 (56%) of the families who exited availed of Slí tenancy supports, while 17 (43%) did not.
- There was a discernible 'U' shape in the rate of exits, with relatively few families exiting homelessness between 6-12 months. This suggests that families are more likely to exit quicker through PRS – HAP channels but those who remained on in homeless accommodation may remain in emergency accommodation until they are allocated social housing. All but one family were allocated LA / AHB housing after they were homeless for 12 months. This may partly explain why there remains 28 families (41% of sample) who are still in homeless accommodation 19 months on.

- Importantly, families who had a stable housing history were **more likely** to be housed after 19 months.
- There were no significant patterns between demographic profile variables and exit rates.
- This evidence suggests that stable housing history is a significant determinant in families exiting homelessness. This suggests that prioritizing category 2 and 3 for case workers may compensate for inherent challenges they face.