Homelessness
COUNTS

European Homelessness Count (EHC) project – Methodology and results for Cork City and the Dublin region

Oona Kenny

FOCUS Ireland

Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

Funded by the European Union

Oona Kenny was seconded from the Housing Agency as the Irish Lead for the European Homelessness Count Research. The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of The Housing Agency.

Publication date: June 2026

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List of abbreviations

CCMA	The County and City Management Association
CUAN	The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency
DHLGH	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DoJ	The Department of Justice
DPA	Data Processing Agreement
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DRHE	Dublin Region Homeless Executive
DV	Domestic Violence
EEA	European Economic Area
EHC	European Homelessness Count
ETHOS	European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
EU	European Union
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HSE	Health Service Executive
IPA	International Protection Applicant
IPAS	International Protection Accommodation Services
LA	Local Authority
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NFA	No Fixed Abode
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFD	Own Front Door
ONO	One Night Only
PASS	Pathway Accommodation and Support System
PEH	People Experiencing Homelessness
PIT	Point In Time
PQ	Parliamentary Question
SSHA	Summary of Social Housing Assessments
STA	Supported Temporary Accommodation
Tusla	Child and Family Agency

1 Introduction

The European Homelessness Count (EHC) was a two year pilot project funded by the European Commission, in response to increasing policy demand for reliable and comparable data.[1] Using the ETHOS Light harmonised definition of homelessness developed by FEANTSA (see figure 1), it aimed to establish and test a common framework for measuring homelessness across cities in the European Union. Counts were conducted in 15 cities across 10 Member States in 2024 and expanded to 35 cities in 21 Member States in 2025.[2] Cork City and the Dublin region participated in both years, led locally by Focus Ireland, in partnership with the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College, assisted by Professor Eoin O'Sullivan a member of the European Observatory on Homelessness.

Figure 1: ETHOS Light harmonised definition of homelessness

1. People **living rough** in the streets of public spaces without shelter.
2. People in **emergency accommodation** who move frequently between various accommodation such as overnight shelters.
3. People in **homeless accommodation** where stay is time limited, e.g. homeless hostels, temporary accommodation (with/without support), refuges for domestic violence.
4. People in **institutions**, e.g. hospital or prison for longer than necessary because they have no housing prior to discharge or who will be released into homelessness.
5. People in **unconventional dwellings** due to lack of housing, e.g. mobile homes or caravans on illegal campsites, non-conventional or temporary buildings
6. People **living temporarily with family or friends** due to lack of housing

See https://www.feantsa.org/files/Home/ETHOS/PDFS/ETHOS-Light.pdf for further information.

1 See https://www.kuleuven.be/lucas/en/eu_homelessness_counts

2 The final EU Comparative Report can be found at https://www.kuleuven.be/lucas/en/images/eu-homelessness-counts-final-report-2026.pdf

The overall project was managed and co-ordinated by KU Leuven in Belgium, and introduced an innovative modular methodology, adaptable to diverse local governance and welfare contexts, existing data collection strategies and available administrative data sources across cities. Instead of imposing rigid standardisation, this approach allowed local ownership and the flexibility to implement counts using street surveys, headcounts, administrative data, surveys or a combination of these methods. Most cities used a version of the questionnaire developed by the project management team and city researchers, which draws on the European Service-Based Survey method. This method has been used since the 1990's in Sweden and Norway, since 2007 in Denmark, since 2020 in some Belgian cities and more recently in some cities in the Netherlands. It is completed by clients or professionals on behalf of or with clients, who are homeless and using services both within and beyond the homeless sector (Benjaminsen et al., 2020). The EHC survey contained both mandatory and optional profile questions and was administered through an open-source, online survey platform, managed by KU Leuven.

To allow a minimum core for European comparability, participating cities had to count people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in at least ETHOS Light categories 1–3 (roofless or sleeping rough, in emergency accommodation, and in temporary accommodation). Cities could opt to include additional data on PEH in ETHOS Light categories 4–6 if they wished. Steering Groups were formed in both Irish cities in 2024 to oversee the methodology, ETHOS Light groups for inclusion and data collection strategies. Stakeholders included the project researcher, representatives from the local authorities and other State bodies and representatives from NGOs working in the homelessness sector.

1.1 Existing data on homelessness in Ireland

Homelessness in Ireland is defined in Section 2 of the 1988 Housing Act[3] and Local authorities are responsible for administering homeless supports under Section 10 of that Act.[4] The Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) is an online bed management system used by homeless service providers and local authorities nationally. It contains 'real time' information on all adults and accompanying children using homeless accommodation funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) under Section 10 of the Housing Act. PASS also contains data inputted by local authorities and Outreach teams on those known to be sleeping rough. This means it provides information on the majority of PEH in ETHOS Light categories 1–3. Some ETHOS Light groups and sub-groups, and homeless accommodation not funded by DHLGH, are excluded from PASS (see section 4.2 for discussion). PASS data is extracted for the last

3 The 1988 Housing Act states that a person shall be regarded by a housing authority as homeless if: (a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or (b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and, he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

4 The measures which a local authority may take include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) Providing a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority considers appropriate, or (b) Renting accommodation or arranging lodgings for a homeless person.

full week of each month has been used to produce quarterly and monthly statistics on homelessness in each administrative region since 2014.[5]

PASS does not contain information on PEH in ETHOS Light categories 4–6, and figures for these groups are sometimes drawn from proxy sources (see for example Hearne & McSweeney, 2023; O'Sullivan et al., 2024b). For example, proxy data is available for those recorded as having 'no fixed abode' (NFA) on entry to institutions such as hospitals and prisons, however this information is somewhat unreliable for a number of reasons. Firstly, these institutions are not required to collect data on homelessness and many people entering prison or hospital don't declare that they are homeless. They may also give the address of a shelter or temporary accommodation that staff are not aware is homeless accommodation, so are recorded as having an address. Also, people entering prison or hospital may give a family member or friend's address in order to get early release or discharge, or because they believe they will return to a previous address. Furthermore, institutions must gather next of kin information so are motivated to collect family addresses rather than NFA. And lastly, prisons are now receiving non-EU nationals without documents at ports who are detained on remand due to flight risk.

The Department of Justice regularly publish data on the number of people living in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) by county.[6] However, there is no regular reporting of figures for former international protection applicants with a legal right to remain in Ireland but unable to leave this temporary accommodation due to the housing crisis. Similarly, there is no systematic source of valid and reliable administrative data that would comprehensively identify those in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 living situations. Many homeless day services work with, and may hold some data on, those in unconventional housing or living with family and friends but not all PEH in these living situations are in contact with homeless services. Local authorities hold data on applicants for social housing and could identify those whose basis of need for housing is homelessness, and who currently live in unconventional, unfit, involuntary sharing and overcrowded conditions. However, only those who apply for and are accepted as eligible for social housing are captured in this data.

5 See https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/collections/homelessness-data/#homelessness-data

6 See https://www.gov.ie/en/international-protection-accommodation-services-ipas/collections/statistics-2004-to-2026/

2 Methodology

2.1 Cork

Cork City Council chose to include only ETHOS Light groups 1 to 3 in the EHC in both years. ETHOS Light 1 was covered by a street count and most of the data for those in ETHOS Light 2 and 3 came from the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS). An online service-based survey was used to include cohorts within ETHOS Light 3 missing from the PASS administrative data.

2.1.1 ETHOS Light 1

Cork City's participation in the EHC offered an opportunity to design and conduct a point-in-time (PIT) street count which, unlike Dublin, does not currently take place in Cork on a structured basis. An extensive street count was carried out to enumerate all those found sleeping rough, whether or not they were known to the Outreach team or local authority, or registered on PASS. Seven predefined zones within the city were covered by teams of two on foot, with a further zone in the wider administrative area containing locations where people are known to sleep rough, covered by car. The Outreach team liaised with Cork City Council and others, including members of the public that receive information about rough sleeper locations and they carried out an extensive search before the count to identify any new rough sleepers.

Professionals from local homeless and housing NGOs, were recruited as additional volunteer enumerators. Enumerator teams were gender balanced and consisted of a volunteer and experienced Outreach team member. Each team was assigned a zone, and maps were distributed so teams could become familiar with the streets and roads in their zone. The Outreach team and volunteers met at an in-person preparation meeting, where the researcher presented an overview of the EHC context and the Head of Outreach Services outlined the city zones, how and what information would be collected, guidance on engaging with rough sleepers, health and safety considerations, responding to emergencies, contingency planning and answered questions. The Outreach team then monitored weather conditions, assembled zone packs, prepared the base meeting point, liaised with Gardaí and communicated updates and further information to volunteers over the two weeks before the count.

Zone packs for each team contained a clipboard and data collection sheets to record the location (mark on a map) and basic information (name, gender and age) of rough sleepers bedded down or in the process of bedding down. They also contained EHC Information sheets, laminated zone maps with notes, a torch, Hi Vis vests and a mini first aid kit. The teams assembled at a central meeting venue and the street count began at 4am. Beginning at this time was thought to increase the likelihood of finding people already bedded down and reduce the chance of meeting people who may be under the influence of substances. Safety concerns were mitigated by pairing enumerators in teams. Teams stayed in contact throughout the count via text and phone calls with the Head of Outreach who remained at the meeting point until everyone returned safely. As a further safety measure, the Gardaí were informed about the count and the Outreach team were aware of people who may have a hostile reaction on approach due to mental ill health or other vulnerabilities. To date, no children have been discovered sleeping rough in Cork City and teams were instructed to follow the formal protocol of contacting Tusla or the Gardaí if that occurred. All teams returned to the base by 6.30am.

The basic information collected during the street count was used to identify rough sleepers on the PASS system.[7] Profile data from PASS was then uploaded to the online EHC survey by the Outreach team in the following days. Cork Simon Day Centre staff also recorded basic details for any rough sleepers using the service the following day. The Outreach team and day centre staff had participant information sheets and consent forms to include anyone not registered on PASS but who wished to take part in the survey. Most rough sleepers are known to the Outreach team but follow up engagements took place to gather details for anyone not known or not registered on PASS. A total of 17 people found during the count were not registered on PASS and despite several follow up attempts, some could not be found again or didn't want to register on PASS or complete a consent form. Therefore, these individuals were not included in the reported total. Two people known to sleep rough in the city but who were not met on the count night were also followed up on and subsequently included in the survey.

2.1.2 ETHOS Light 2 and 3

As PASS provides a comprehensive and accurate count, and profile information for all adults in DHLGH funded homeless accommodation on a given night, this was identified as an essential data source to cover ETHOS Light 2 and 3. Details for those living in temporary supported accommodation not funded by DHLGH are not on PASS so they were included via the online EHC service-based survey (see section 3.3 for details on these services and how they were identified). Staff in a domestic violence service and an addiction aftercare service for PEH, completed the survey with informed consent from clients. The eligibility criteria ensured that only those who intended to remain Cork City and would therefore be the responsibility of the local authority to house, were included (see section 3 for more detail on data collection).

7 In 2025, total of 40 people were met by the Outreach team on the count night but only 23 of them were registered on PASS.

2.2 Dublin

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) is responsible for responding to homelessness across the four local authority administrative areas in the region which include Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin County Councils. Dublin used a similar methodology for both years. Comprehensive coverage of ETHOS Light 1–3 was achieved using a combination of PASS and survey data, and partial coverage of ETHOS Light 4–6 by inviting a sample of services from within and beyond the homeless sector, to participate in the study using the service-based survey. In the second year (2025), refugees with status to remain in Ireland but who cannot exit International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) due to lack of housing, were also included and categorised under ETHOS Light 4. This group were not covered in 2024 due to challenges in obtaining the involvement of IPAS in the first year.

2.2.1 ETHOS Light 1

Dublin Simon Street Outreach teams are commissioned by DRHE through a Service Level Agreement as the lead street outreach service in Dublin and have worked with PEH and rough sleepers for more than 50 years. They are aware of the large majority of those sleeping rough across the city and region, and engage with them every day from 7am to 1am. They support people to access temporary and permanent accommodation including Housing First where appropriate, and link them with health and other support services to prevent further rough sleeping. Outreach teams enter basic details on PASS for those not previously encountered and update interaction notes for those known to them.

A point in time Rough Sleeper Count has been carried out bi-annually in Dublin, since 2007. This is planned and co-ordinated by DRHE and, in recent years, Dublin Simon Outreach service. Teams, consisting of an experienced team leader and two or three volunteers sourced from various services across the four Dublin local authorities, are assigned to a specific area to conduct the count. Volunteers are fully briefed on their role including how to conduct the count, the purpose of the count, and the health and safety procedures in place and they are supplied with all the necessary materials required to conduct the count (torches, high visibility jackets, forms, etc.). Members of the Housing First Intake Team and Dublin Simon Outreach are assigned to lead teams in the areas where large numbers of individuals are known to sleep rough in the city centre. Since Winter 2020, the count has taken place over a full week, and teams visit all areas within specific zones across the region at least once over this period.

Accommodation for International Protection Applicants is the responsibility of the Department of Justice, through the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS), rather than the local authorities. Since 2024, due to a shortage of this accommodation, newly arriving single males with no health concerns or other vulnerabilities may receive a weekly allowance of €113.80 instead of accommodation.[8] While some of this cohort are sleeping rough in Dublin, as they are not the legal responsibility of the local authority, they are not included in the official street count. Participation in the EHC however, allowed an opportunity to include them using the survey in a sample of homeless day services.

8 See https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-justice-home-affairs-and-migration/publications/statistics-on-international-protection-applicants-not-offered-accommodation/

The city centre is divided into grids to facilitate full coverage (see figure 2, page 17), and rough sleeper teams also cover specific zones across all four administrative areas in the region where PEH are known to sleep rough (see appendices 3 to 5). Members of the public can alert the Outreach service to rough sleepers in their area using an app or online form[9] and the team also liaise with the Gardaí and other services for information about rough sleeping locations. The count begins on a Monday from 7am until 10am and again in the evening between 9pm and 1am, it is repeated at these times for the rest of the week ending on a Sunday night. The following basic details for each person encountered during the street count are recorded by enumerators; city grid number, exact location and time of engagement; name and surname, date of birth and nationality; person was in a tent; person was an international protection applicant (IPA); any essential notes. Enumerators are instructed to count only those bedded down in the open air (streets, doorways, parks or bus shelters) and not people in ETHOS Light 5 situations (barns, sheds, car parks, boats) or those in cars.[10] The Outreach team liaise with park rangers the following day to identify individuals who slept in city parks. Once cross-checked for duplicates, they are also included in the count. As with Cork, the Outreach teams in Dublin are normally aware of regular sleeping spots and follow up with people missing from their 'spot'. Outreach may even contact Gardaí and hospitals if people are not found as they may be in prison or hospital. In the city centre, some streets are checked in the morning and evening every day of the count. Areas outside the city are normally checked once but enumerators will return to regular spots if people are 'missing'.

Following the week-long count, all forms with basic details are collected from enumerator teams and the data is collated into a single spreadsheet. This is examined at meetings attended by representatives from Outreach, DRHE and local authorities so duplicates and unidentified individuals can be removed.[11] The information is then cross referenced with PASS and profile data added. Those with a homeless accommodation booking or an active tenancy may be removed from the dataset. Following analysis of the data, the DRHE disseminate results through a press statement and on their website.[12]

9 See https://www.homelessdublin.ie/our-work/news/drhe-launches-new-app-for-public-to-alert-teams-to-location-of-rough-sleepers and https://www.homelessdublin.ie/homeless/i-am-rough-sleeping/report-rough-sleeper.

10 Outreach services may be aware of and supporting PEH in ETHOS Light 5 situations but they are not included in the street count for enumerator safety. Those in cars are not counted for safety reasons, respect of privacy for the PEH (policy is not to knock on car windows) and difficulty verifying that someone is sleeping in a car.

11 Data is retained for individuals who give a first name that does not appear anywhere else in the dataset.

12 See https://www.homelessdublin.ie/info/publications?type=rough-sleeper-reports

2.2.2 ETHOS Light 2 and 3

ETHOS Light 2 or emergency accommodation is no longer used extensively by DRHE, although PEH may still be allocated accommodation for one night only (ONO) or on a very short-term basis. This happens only in certain cases on 'humanitarian grounds' to prevent rough sleeping (see Section 4.2.3 for discussion). However, it is not possible to disaggregate this type of allocation from the main data in the Dublin region, so ETHOS Light 2 cannot be reported in Dublin. Because there is a smaller number of services in Cork, the city council are able to identify clients that have been allocated short stays.

As with Cork, most ETHOS Light 3 data came from PASS and service-based surveys were used to include cohorts missing from this administrative data. This covered PEH in a hostel and in supported temporary accommodation (STA) not funded by DHLGH, including those leaving addiction treatment centres, prison or youth care. It also included women in crisis accommodation due to domestic violence which is funded by a separate state agency (CUAN). Eligibility criteria were applied to STAs to ensure that only PEH were included. In some cases, people may enter these services with housing to return to after the temporary support ends so could not be considered homeless. Services were however, given scope to include clients who are 'technically homeless' including those not accepted by the local authority as homeless. For instance, a person leaving the family home for addiction treatment but who cannot return due to a barring order, may not be considered homeless by a local authority if their details still appear on mortgage or rent documents, but they were eligible to be included in the EHC. The eligibility criteria also ensured that only those intending to remain in the Dublin region and who would therefore be the responsibility of the DRHE to house, were included. While PASS contains information on adults and families in Own Front Door (OFD) homeless accommodation, figures for this cohort are no longer reported in monthly statistics (see section 4.2). However, the PASS data received for the purpose of the EHC, does include those in OFD accommodation.

2.2.3 ETHOS Light 4 – 6

The Dublin count attempted to cover a sample of institutions (ETHOS Light 4), including acute mental health units, prisons and residential addiction treatment centres using the service-based survey method. In 2025, former IPAs stuck in temporary accommodation due to the housing crisis were also included in ETHOS Light 4 using administrative data supplied by the Department of Justice. A sample of homeless day services in the Dublin region who provide assistance to those in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 living situations, also used the survey to collect data on these groups. It was anticipated that this would cover in particular, women, migrants, refugees and those fleeing domestic violence who are living in unconventional housing or with family and friends. This method was used in only a sample of services so did not cover all institutions or homeless day services operating in the region.

Table 1: Methodology summary

ETHOS Light category	Who	How	Where
1	Rough sleepers	› Headcount/PASS data › Service-based survey	Cork and Dublin
2	Overnight/one night only accommodation	› PASS data	Cork
3	Hotels, B&Bs, hubs, homeless hostels, temporary supported accommodation and refuges for domestic violence	› PASS data › Service-based survey	Cork and Dublin
4	Institutions including addiction treatment centres, prisons, mental health units, IPAS	› Service-based survey › IPAS data (2025 only)	Dublin
5	Unconventional housing	› Service-based survey	Dublin
6	Staying with family and friends	› Service-based survey	Dublin

2.3 Profile information

The survey questionnaire covered all mandatory variables required for the EHC. These were: ETHOS Light living situation, gender, age, citizenship, residency status, household composition, duration of and direct triggers (reasons) for homelessness. The PASS data also contained information on all these fields except for residency status. Two additional non-mandatory variables were included in the survey as these were available in PASS; they were country of birth and number of children living with the PEH.

2.4 Timing

The dates for the bi-annual, week long rough sleeper counts in Dublin are decided by the DRHE depending on multiple factors. In 2024, the winter count took place from 4th to 10th November and did not align with the reference date for the other ETHOS Light cohorts, which was 31st October. In 2025, the DRHE agreed to carry out the rough sleeper count from 20th to 26th October so it aligned with the 20th October reference date for ETHOS Light categories 3–6. Cross checks between PASS data for ETHOS Light 1 and ETHOS Light 3, and against survey data were performed and duplicates removed.

Service-based surveys for IPAs sleeping rough were also aligned with the official street count but restricted to one day to minimise the chance of duplication and limit the burden on services. This is also consistent with the DRHE policy of gathering data on rough sleepers from park wardens only on the morning after the official count. All services were given a two week period to complete surveys.

The reference date for the 2024 Cork City street count was agreed for 5th November to overlap with the Dublin count. Again this did not align with the 31st October when ETHOS 2 – 3 counts took place. In 2025, it was agreed that it was more important to align the count dates across the city rather than between the two cities, and the 2025 street count was initially set to begin early in the morning of 3rd October. On 1st October, Met Eireann issued a severe weather warning for Thursday, 2nd and Friday, 3rd October and a decision was taken to postpone the street count. It was rescheduled for the following Friday morning, 10th October commencing at 4am to count those who slept rough on the 9th October. PASS data was extracted for 9th October and service-based surveys were carried out over the two week period from 10th to 24th October.

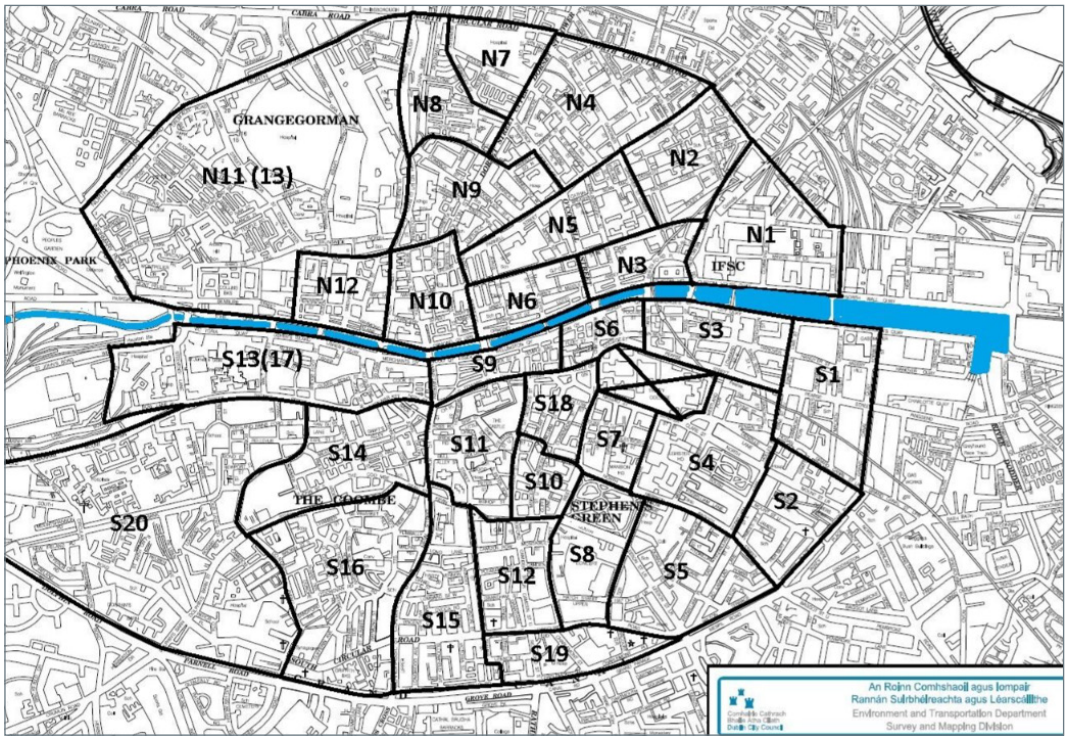
Table 2: Count reference dates by year

City/region	ETHOS Light group	Count reference dates	
		2024	2025
Cork	ETHOS Light 1	4th November	9th October
	ETHOS Light 2–3	31st October	9th October
Dublin	ETHOS Light 1	4th – 10th November	20th – 26th October
	ETHOS Light 3–6	31st October	20th October

2.5 Geographical coverage

The Dublin Region is divided into 58 areas for the purpose of the street count and enumerator teams are assigned to each of these 58 areas across the Dublin region, concurrently. There is full coverage of the 31 Dublin City Centre areas which means that every city centre street is covered (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Dublin city centre rough sleeper count areas



Outside the city centre, a 'known locations search' approach is adopted. This means the count is conducted at specific locations where people are known to sleep rough for example, through the rough sleeping alert system or where the Housing First Intake Team regularly engage with or encounter people sleeping rough. During the street count, teams drive to these specific locations and conduct the count on foot. Appendices 3 to 5 show the 27 areas covered outside of the City Centre. The Cork Simon Outreach service identified eight zones within the Cork City and metropolitan area based on a 2016 local authority survey map. Seven of these zones were covered on foot by teams of two enumerators with a further zone covered by car.

PASS data for ETHOS Light 3 contains information for every adult and child accommodated by DHLGH, across the entire region of Dublin which includes the four local authority administrative areas. This covers just over 900 km^2 and a significant number of services. The sample of services providing accommodation not recorded on PASS, along with the sample of institutions and day services in contact with PEH in ETHOS Light 4, 5 and 6 situations, were mostly located in the city centre. The PASS data for ETHOS Light 2 and 3 covers the entire administrative area of Cork City Council while the survey was completed by two services located in the city centre.

3 Data collection process

3.1 Administrative data

In both years, Focus Ireland relied on Section 42 and Section 54 of the Irish Data Protection Act (2018) as the legal basis to access PASS data. This allows for processing personal data for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes.

The same legal basis was used in 2025 to access and process IPAS data from the Department of Justice (DoJ). Focus Ireland complied with Article 89 of the GDPR, which requires appropriate safeguards to be in place to protect the rights of data subjects. This was achieved through data minimisation and pseudonymisation. Compatibility assessments were carried out in compliance with Article 6(4) of the GDPR, to ensure the purpose for processing EHC data aligned with processing purposes in the National PASS Office and DoJ. Focus Ireland then had to satisfy the transparency requirements under Article 14, and carry out a 'balancing test' to show that it would be disproportionate to contact each individual whose personal data was to be shared. Information about the project and data subject rights were published in a Privacy Statement on the Focus Ireland website. The variables required were agreed at meetings held with the National PASS Coordinator and DoJ officials and Independent Controller Data Sharing Agreements were in place between Cork City Council, DRHE and Focus Ireland, and between the DoJ and Focus Ireland. These agreements outlined what data would be extracted and shared, the purpose, processing operations, security and duration of the agreement etc. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was also prepared to identify and minimise data protection risks.

The PASS extracts were based on the same system query that generates data for monthly homelessness reports and included data for own front door (OFD) accommodation, normally excluded from these statistics. Some initial cleaning and reconciliation was carried out by administrative staff in Cork City Council and the DRHE, before data was shared with the National PASS Coordinator and accessed by the EHC researcher who was assigned a PC in the National PASS Office. A pseudonymised extract[13] from PASS

13 Only the first letter of the persons first name and first and last letter of their second name was retained for the identification and removal of duplicates.

containing information for all those enumerated during the official 2025 winter rough sleeper count was also shared. For the purpose of this project, this included information for any International Protection Applicants sleeping rough and inadvertently met during the count week.

The EHC researcher added unique identifiers, cleaned and structured the data before sharing an anonymised version securely to the Focus Ireland server. Cleaning included entering missing 'reasons for homelessness' from case notes and recoding that field to match categories in the EHC 'direct triggers' field. The household composition variable in PASS was used to represent 'household living situation' however, couples without children are categorised as single in the PASS data. Where single adults were linked through a common household number and the booking information indicated that two adults were placed together in homeless accommodation, their living situation was recoded as 'couple living without children'.

The IPAS administrative data extract was received from the Department of Justice on 24th October. This contained information on former international protection applicants who had obtained legal status to remain in Ireland but were unable to move out of reception accommodation in the Dublin region due to the lack of housing. This data was already anonymised to the EHC format and did not require any significant cleaning.

The IPAS, PASS and survey data (see below) were joined together in a single data file and analysis was carried out using R programming for statistical computing. A total of 14 duplicates were removed from the PASS data as they also appeared in the survey data.

3.2 Service-based survey

In 2024, Focus Ireland relied on Informed Consent under Article 6 (a) of the GDPR, as the legal basis to process data collected via the service-based survey. However, feedback showed that while services understood the project aims, were engaged with it and eager to collect data, they found the consent process lengthy and difficult to explain. This was exacerbated by staff shortages, time constraints, clients with poor engagement skills, language difficulties and anonymity concerns, and led to a higher than expected level of non-responses (see section 3.4 for further discussion). Some services indicated that they routinely collect most of the demographic information required for the EHC.

On that basis, in 2025 an attempt was made to allow the services that found using 'informed consent' most difficult, and who held all or most of the information required, to input client data into the survey directly from their administrative or registry databases. This could also be done using Section 42 and Section 54 of the Irish Data Protection Act (2018) as long as compatibility assessments showed that the purpose for processing data for the EHC aligned with the services' purpose for collecting data. This meant examining services' privacy policies or data protection statements which was a lengthy and costly process that required external consulting assistance, and many services either did not pass the compatibility assessment or could not provide enough information to complete it.[14] Services that did not pass the compatibility test or were unwilling to use administrative

14 In some cases no data protection notice was available or it was too general or it mentioned using data for research purposes but only in narrow circumstances.

data, reverted to informed consent as the legal basis for data collection.[15] All services based in Cork City used informed consent.

Data Processing Agreements (DPAs) outlining the terms and conditions of processing data for the EHC, were signed by each service using informed consent as a legal basis. Participant Information sheets based on Plain English guidelines from National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA),[16] and consent forms were prepared to ensure that written consent was received from all participants who completed a survey (see Appendices 1 and 2). Information and training sessions were arranged throughout the summer of both years to prepare staff in participating services for data collection. In 2025, a total of 33 sessions were held in Dublin and 2 in Cork, mostly online. These covered the EHC context, ETHOS light categories, client eligibility, giving information and gaining consent or using administrative data, count date and data collection period, a demonstration of the survey tool and time to ask questions. Staff received an email containing a training summary document, a poster to inform clients about the count, copies of the information sheet and consent form (where relevant) and a folder with help sheets to aid data collection. Services that participated in 2024 did not require the same intense preparation to repeat the study but found the training useful as a recap. In some cases, different staff members were assigned to the study in 2025 so they required the same step by step training as provided in 2024.

Two survey questionnaires were developed for Cork City, the first for the street count and another for those in ETHOS Light 3 living situations. Four separate questionnaires were developed in Dublin; one to count IPAs sleeping rough (ETHOS Light 1) and another for clients in ETHOS Light 3 – 6. These were further separated for services using administrative data or informed consent, so questions could be addressed to either staff or clients. The different ETHOS Light categories and subcategories were clarified in the training sessions. For example, State provided 'Tented accommodation' such as that at Crooksling,[17] was to be recorded as ETHOS 5 so IPAs in unconventional housing provided in a designated place by the State would not be included as ETHOS Light 1 in the rough sleeper survey. Services that attended the training and returned a signed DPA or passed the compatibility test, received an online survey link a few days before the count. The survey remained open for two weeks to allow all eligible clients to be included.

15 Compatibility tests were completed with 21 different services across 12 separate organisations. Of these, 14 services across 5 organisations passed. Other services were not prioritised for compatibility testing either because they were residential and feedback from last year showed that consent is easier to gain in these services or they were an institution and the ethical application stated that informed consent would be used.

16 See https://www.nala.ie/plain-english/

17 See https://www.gov.ie/en/international-protection-accommodation-services-ipas/publications/former-st-brigids-nursing-home-crooksling/

Three services in Dublin opted to use a paper based version of the survey which the researcher collected and used to complete the online tool. In two of these services the paper option was more convenient for staff and seen as less threatening to clients, while the Prison in-reach staff had no internet access in prisons. The remaining services used an online tool, hosted by Limesurvey, an open-source online survey platform, to submit data. In all services using informed consent, the information sheet was firstly summarised aloud for the client and they were given a copy to keep before consent was obtained. Participants were aware that they could withdraw from the study and were informed of their rights as data subjects. The consent form had a QR code to allow it to be downloaded to a phone to use a translation app where required. The information sheet was translated into Pashto for one service with clients who only spoke this language. The survey was completed by professional staff and service users together and no incentives were offered to clients for participating. Where staff were relying on administrative data held in the service, they completed the survey alone.

The process for returning completed consent forms was explained during the service training sessions. These could be posted, collected or scanned and emailed using encryption. Where forms were emailed, the attachment was immediately transferred to Focus Irelands secure server and permanently deleted from emails. Forms that were posted or collected were also scanned to the server and the hard copy shredded. A significant amount of time was spent emailing and phoning services to follow up unreturned consent forms. Consent was not returned in a very small number of instances, in which case, the relevant row was deleted from the survey dataset. Paper questionnaires collected by the researcher for upload to the tool were also shredded. Some services dedicated one staff member to completing the surveys and others brought in additional relief staff to cover daily tasks while service staff concentrated on the survey. In some cases, all staff attended the training and different staff collected data depending on the shift they were working. The researcher was available by email and phone to support staff who with any queries during the two week data collection period.

Ethical approval was required before collecting data from some institutions in Dublin for ETHOS Light 4. This was a lengthy and complex application process requiring approval from one Health Service Executive (HSE) ethical committee to carry out surveys in residential addiction treatment centres and from another committee to include mental health units. Separate internal approval was also required by one NGO addiction treatment service. While approval was granted for addiction treatment services in both years, this was not received in time to include the two mental health units that agreed to participate in 2024. However in 2025, it was successful and received in time to include these units in that years count. The NGO residential step-down and prison in-reach services did not require ethical approval.

3.3 Participating services

Insights from the Steering Groups about services providing accommodation to PEH but not included on PASS, were given to the researcher. Identifying and contacting all services in the full Dublin region that provide accommodation not included on PASS, would have been a huge task so only a sample of these were contacted. Emails with information about the EHC were sent to CEOs or management staff in these services and they were invited to join the study. Of the 49 different services invited to participate in Dublin in 2025, a total of 41 accepted and sent staff to a training session, and 36 of these returned survey data. A total of five services were invited to participate in Cork City in 2025 but only two agreed and both returned data. See tables below for a list of services.

3.3.1 Services participating in Cork

Five services were contacted in 2025 about participating in Cork City, this included a domestic violence service and four temporary accommodation providers of addiction aftercare. One of the four supported accommodation providers was run by a religious charity and when contacted in both years, thought their clients would not want to be involved. Another considered participation in both years but eventually declined due to lack of resources. The remaining service was initially interested in participating and attended the training in 2024 but did not collect any data that year. When contacted in 2025, they declined to participate due to staff shortages. A Cork Simon Community Service providing addiction aftercare accommodation to men and women in two separate houses did agree to participate however, there were no clients in the women's service at the time of the count.

Table 3: Services participating in 2025 in Cork

Organisation and service name	Type of service	ETHOS group	Description
Cork Simon Community addiction aftercare	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For men leaving residential addiction treatment centre
Cuanlee DV crisis accommodation	Supported temporary accommodation	3	Women and children fleeing domestic violence

The following services were invited but declined to participate in the 2025 Cork City EHC: Tabor Group Fellowship, Cuan Mhuire Cork, St Helens hostel.

3.3.2 Services participating in Dublin

In 2025, eight homeless day services across six different organisations providing advice and information, health and wellbeing, food, shower and clothing services to those sleeping rough including unaccommodated IPAs, were invited to collect data on this cohort. Two of the eight declined participation. One had also declined in 2024, as their ethos is to accept clients as they arrive and not ask questions. The other collected data in 2024 but declined in 2025 due to lack of staff. Four of the six remaining services agreed to use administrative data to complete surveys and all returned data. The other two used informed consent and only one returned data, and this was for a total of only two clients. Reasons for this are discussed in the Services Feedback in section 3.4 below.

A total of 23 services across 16 organisations providing ETHOS Light 3 type accommodation services were invited to participate in 2025, including four homeless hostels, three domestic violence (DV) service providers and 14 temporary supported accommodations for those leaving addiction treatment, prison or youth care. Of these 23 services, two youth aftercare services didn't respond to initial emails and two hostels run by religious charities declined to participate as they thought their clients would not want to be involved. They also declined to participate in 2024. The remaining 19 services attended the training and received a survey link, and a total of 16 returned data including a DV service that declined participation in 2024 due to concerns around client anonymity.

Invitations to participate in the EHC were sent to 14 institutions under ETHOS Light 4. This included nine addiction treatment services across four different NGOs, two acute mental health units, two NGO residential, step-down facilities for women reaching the end of a prison sentence and an NGO prison in-reach service that assists with finding accommodation in three separate male prisons in the Dublin region. Only two of the eight mental health units in the Dublin region were invited to participate due to both the convenience of having an existing contact in those units, and to challenges with the ethical approval system. All the invited services attended the training and all but four collected data. Two addiction treatment centres and the two prison step-down facilities, reported having no clients eligible for inclusion in the survey on the count date. ETHOS Light 4 also included administrative data received from International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) provided by the Department of Justice, to cover refugees unable to move on from reception accommodation.

Lastly, nine homeless day services across six organisations working with PEH in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 were contacted. Some of these services were also those targeted to collect ETHOS Light 1 data for IPAs sleeping rough, and all provided similar facilities. Six of these organisations collected data using the survey; four using their own administrative data and two using informed consent.

Table 4: Services participating in 2025 in Dublin

Organisation and service name	Type of service	ETHOS group	Description
ΔTiglin, the Lighthouse	Drop in day service	1	Low threshold, open access
Crosscare Housing & Refugee Services	Drop in day service	1	Low threshold, aimed at migrants
ΔMerchants Quay Riverbank	Drop in day service	1	Low threshold, aimed at those with addictions
*Focus Ireland Coffee Shop	Drop in day service	1	Low threshold, open access
ΔFocus Ireland Coffee Shop A&I	Advice and Information	1	Low threshold, open access
ΔFocus Ireland, Tallaght A&I	Advice and Information	1	Low threshold, open access
Iveagh Trust Hostel	Homeless hostel	3	Low threshold, open access
Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann (ONE)	Homeless hostel	3	Hostel for homeless veterans
Daisyhouse addiction aftercare service	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For women leaving residential addiction treatment centre
*ΔFocus Ireland Stanhope addiction aftercare	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For men leaving Coolmine residential addiction treatment centre
Chun Mhuire, Teach Mhuire	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For men leaving Chun Mhuire residential addiction treatment centre
Chun Mhuire, Santa Maria	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For women leaving Chun Mhuire residential addiction treatment centre
ΔDublin Simon, Recovery stage 2	Supported temporary accommodation	3	Low threshold, semi- independent with high level of staff support (approx. 6 mth stay).
ΔDublin Simon, Recovery stage 3	Supported temporary accommodation	3	Semi independent co-located housing post recovery, with visiting keywork (max. 18 mths)
PACE Organisation	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For men on release from prison
PMVT TRAIL	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For men on release from prison
DePaul Tus Nua STA	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For women on release from prison
Focus Ireland youth aftercare North	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For young people leaving state care
Focus Ireland youth aftercare South	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For young people leaving state care
Don Bosco, Ballymun Rd & Nephin Rd	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For young people leaving state care
Don Bosco, Clontarf	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For former unaccompanied IPA minors
*Don Bosco, Phibsboro & Fairview	Supported temporary accommodation	3	For young people leaving state care
Saoirse DV crisis accommodation	Supported temporary accommodation	3	Women and children fleeing domestic violence
Aoibhneas DV crisis accommodation	Supported temporary accommodation	3	Women and children fleeing domestic violence
*Sonas Refuge DV crisis accommodation	Supported temporary accommodation	3	Women and children fleeing domestic violence

Organisation and service name	Type of service	ETHOS group	Description
MQI, High Park	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Addiction treatment
Coolmine, Coolmine Lodge	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Addiction treatment for men
Coolmine, Ashleigh House	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Addiction treatment for women
PMVT, Community Detox and Stabilisation	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Addiction treatment
Dublin Simon, Blood Borne Virus Unit	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Approx. 3 wk nurse-led support for those with blood borne viruses to reduce substance misuse
Dublin Simon, Step Up Step Down	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Nurse-led pre/post treatment beds for conditions treatable in 3 or less wks
Dublin Simon, Alcohol Detox	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	6 month early recovery, following detox completion with on site staff
Dublin Simon, Stabalisation Unit	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	3–6 wk intensive medical, psychiatric, nursing care to stabilize PEH with complex needs
Dublin Simon, Recovery stage 1	Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	4	Low threshold 3 week alcohol & benzodiazepine detox with 24hr nursing and social care
Tallaght University Hospital	Acute Psychiatric Unit	4	Acute Psychiatric Unit
St James's Hospital	Acute Psychiatric Unit	4	Acute Psychiatric Unit
TOSU	Prison in-reach	4	Mountjoy, *Arbour Hill and *Wheatfield Prisons
*DePaul, Tus Nua Step-down	Prison step-down	4	Step down for women prior to prison release
*Focus Ireland, Outlook	Prison step-down	4	Step down for women prior to prison release
*ΔFocus Ireland, Mountjoy Family Centre	By appointment day service	5 & 6	Low threshold
*DePaul, Ballymun Case Management Team	By appointment day service	5 & 6	Low threshold
ΔTiglin, the Lighthouse	Drop in day service	5 & 6	Low threshold, open access
*Crosscare Housing & Refugee Services	Drop in day service	5 & 6	Low threshold, aimed at migrants
ΔMerchants Quay Riverbank	Drop in day service	5 & 6	Low threshold, aimed at those with addictions
*Focus Ireland Coffee Shop	Drop in day service	5 & 6	Low threshold, , open access
ΔFocus Ireland Coffee Shop A&I	Advice and Information	5 & 6	Low threshold, open access
ΔFocus Ireland, Tallaght A&I	Advice and Information	5 & 6	Low threshold, open access

* indicates services that participated but did not collect data.

Δ indicates the service used administrative data.

The following services were invited but declined to participate in the 2025 Dublin region EHC: Mendicity Institute, Capuchin centre, two Tusla Youth Aftercare services, the Morning Star and Regina Coeli hostels.

3.4 Services feedback

A short survey was emailed to services that had agreed to participate, to gather their feedback. This contained 20 mostly yes/no Likert scale items, covering preparation, resources, response level, the survey tool and lessons learned. Feedback was received via this survey or by phone, from 17 services in 2024 and from 13 services in 2025. One reoccurring theme in both years was that the information and consent process presented challenges and may have led to many non-responses. Services reported that the information required by clients to give informed consent was lengthy and difficult to explain. This was particularly so in the fast moving day services working with ETHOS Light 1, 5 and 6 clients, and was exacerbated by language barriers, staff shortages and time constraints. Many NGO services are already underfunded and understaffed, and manage high workloads so did not have the time or resources to carry out the survey fully. For example, the Prison in-reach service reported difficulty in accessing clients where 48 hours notice is required for a 2 hour visit. These staff are already overburdened with high caseloads due to extremely high levels of prison overcrowding.

Some services, especially those working with migrants and domestic violence survivors, reported concerns about sharing client initials required as unique identifiers to avoid duplicates. Potential participants in these services thought responses may not be fully anonymous and expressed fear of exposure. Some services working with rough sleepers, migrants or those with mental ill health, said clients refused to consent due to suspicions or paranoia, the volume of paperwork or not understanding enough of the information. Other explanations for low response rates included clients with poor engagement skills, clients in hospital or not present for other reasons on the count date, and in some institutions, clients not due to leave the service in the time given in the eligibility criteria.

The service that gathered ETHOS Light 1 data using informed consent, reported less IPAs sleeping rough on the count night, firstly because larger numbers of 'tented accommodation' in locations outside the city, made it more difficult for this group to engage with city centre services. Secondly, the protests that began following media reports of an assault on a minor by a man living in international protection accommodation,[18] made the environment for IPAs extremely hostile on the count date.[19] The Department of Justice responded quickly to NGO and public concerns, and began accommodating rough sleeping IPAs to keep them safe however, this was on an emergency, temporary basis only.

18 See https://www.irishtimes.com/crime-law/2025/10/20/man-30s-arrested-over-alleged-assault-of-girl-at-citywest-dublin/

19 See https://www.rte.ie/news/primetime/2025/1024/1540424-from-outrage-to-unrest-how-the-clashes-in-citywest-unfolded/

The feedback survey didn't explore how services successfully implemented the survey to make it work. However, informal feedback suggested that it was easier in 24 hour services, especially those with sufficient staff and time resources to allow additional efforts to encourage client participation. These services had the advantage of being able to complete surveys as part of a normal key working session or during quiet times in the evening. On the positive side, feedback suggested that all services were very interested in the study, they felt that it was really worthwhile, were strongly motivated and did their best to encourage client participation, had a good understanding of the task and would be willing to participate again. Some reported that the information and consent process allowed discussions to take place with clients around their experience of homelessness, where they would not have previously thought of themselves as homeless for example, survivors of domestic violence.

4 Challenges and limitations to the methodology

4.1 Survey limitations

Identifying a legal basis to process survey data was challenging because Focus Ireland is an NGO and therefore a private body, not a public institute such as a university. This made it difficult to rely on 'processing … carried out in the public interest' under article 6 of the GDPR, so informed consent was used. This created additional administrative work for both the researcher and services, and moreover, led to challenges which impacted the response rate. Consequently, in the second year of the EHC, services were allowed to input data into the survey from their administrative or registry databases.

There were advantages and limitations to both methods. For example, where staff completed the survey alongside the client with consent, more fields were likely to be covered, especially in services with ample staff and time. Other, especially fast moving day services, had less time and resources and were more likely to find that clients couldn't or didn't want to participate. Response rates were not an issue for services that completed the survey using administrative data. They were able to include a higher proportion of clients and may therefore have more accurately reflected the extent of homelessness. However, this depended on having accurate, up to date information and having all fields in the database completed. Even where data was good quality, in some services information was missing in certain fields required by the EHC especially 'reason for homelessness' and 'residency status'. Furthermore, some services did not have administrative databases or were not able to share data in this way which meant that despite its limitations, most participating services had to use informed consent in both years. Lastly, as discussed above, the process for establishing whether services could use administrative data was lengthy and expensive.

4.2 Exclusions from the PASS data

The PASS data provides a timely and reliable measure of the extent and profile of all adults using DHLGH funded homeless accommodation in Ireland. All services, across each local authority that receive DHLGH funding are required to input information into this system. Information is also available on people sleeping rough. This ensures that coverage for the majority of PEH in ETHOS Light 1, 2 and 3, is comprehensive. However, some ETHOS Light

groups and subgroups which fall outside the legal definition of 'homelessness' relevant to local authorities, and some services providing homelessness accommodation which are not funded through Section 10 funding are not recoded on PASS. The approximate magnitude of these exclusions are listed below.

IPAs not accommodated by IPAS due to a shortage of reception centres, are not defined as 'homeless' under the legislation and so not included on PASS. Figures for this cohort are reported separately by the Department of Justice and show that in October 2025, there were 613 IPAs without accommodation, some of whom were sleeping rough in Dublin.[20]

A further distinct category of people, who have come through the asylum system and have a legal right to reside in Ireland but are unable to leave their temporary reception accommodation due to a lack of housing, are also not included on PASS. A response to a Parliamentary Question states that on 30th September 2025, the national figure for refugees with legal status including children, who were unable to leave IPAS, was 4,825 with 1,363 in the Dublin region.[21]

People who are living in domestic violence refuges were initially included in PASS but, as set out in a note prepared by Professor Eoin O'Sullivan (2018) for the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government, they were removed from PASS in January 2015 to reflect changes in departmental responsibility. Responsibility for a total of 21 residential services nationally, with an approximate bed capacity of 250, and annual funding of €2.1m from DHLGH, were transferred to the statutory Child and Family Agency (Tusla). This function was since transferred to a new statutory agency, CUAN in 2024. Neither CUAN nor Tusla have published any data on those accessing domestic violence refuges since 2015, to date.

Lastly, while PASS contains information on people temporarily accommodated by local authorities in units which have their own front door – known as Own Front Door (OFD) homeless accommodation, they have not been included in the official monthly figures published by DHLGH since 2018. Data for a total of 625 adults (and 981 children) was excluded from official monthly reports in 2018 (O'Sullivan, 2018) after the Minister for Housing deemed them to be in non-traditional homeless accommodation unlike hostels, family hubs or hotels.[22] As outlined above, the PASS data received for the EHC includes those in OFDs.

Regarding the exclusion of some services providing homelessness accommodation not funded by the state, O'Sullivan (2018) notes that this number is relatively small in scale. He cites research by the Housing Agency that estimated 'less than 200 beds nationally did not, for various reasons, receive, nor indeed, seek Section 10 funding, and therefore were not included in the PASS data' (O'Sullivan, 2018, p.8). Some services, for example, the Iveagh Trust hostel and Cuan Mhuire post addiction treatment STA that participated in the EHC, receive funding from the DHLGH for only a proportion of their beds. Some of these services are considered long-term supported accommodation, and while Census

20 See www.gov.ie/en/department-of-justice-home-affairs-and-migration/publications/statistics-on-international-protection-applicants-not-offered-accommodation/

21 See https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2025-11-05a.388

22 See https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/more-than-1-600-removed-from-homeless-figures-still-accessing-services-1.3677244

2016 identified 1,772 individuals in such accommodation, they are not included in official monthly statistics on the basis that, although they 'may require a certain level of support, they are for the most part considered tenants (although some have license arrangements)', (O'Sullivan, 2018, p.9).

4.3 PASS data limitations

As with all administrative data systems, there are limitations to PASS. These include information not captured or pre-coded on the system, inconsistent input of data and the exclusion of some PEH from the PASS data due to local authority rules and policies.

4.3.1 Missing and pre-coded data

There were challenges in matching some fields required for the EHC with those available on PASS. For example, PASS contains information on 'residency status', however, this field does not output on data extracts as it is not currently a government key performance indicator, used to measure and track homelessness nationally. Most adults on PASS have Irish citizenship and therefore permanent residence status and the majority of those with EU/EEA and non-EU citizenship have permanent or temporary residence status. However, a small percentage of EU/EEA and non-EU citizens may be adults without residency permission and therefore have less direct pathways out of homelessness, as they are not eligible for social housing or subsidies in the private rental sector. This group will only be placed in homeless accommodation in extreme circumstances and for very short stays under 'humanitarian reasons'. Those whose International Protection status is still in process are directed to the Department of Justice who are responsible for their accommodation.

Data for 'duration of homelessness' was taken from the 'length of time homeless' field in PASS. However, this is already categorised using bands that did not match those required for the project. For this reason, responses from PASS were removed from the 'duration of homelessness' analysis which left results from only a very small number of survey responses. On inspection, this sample was quite different to the rest of the homeless population on PASS as they had more complex needs. Also, the results pattern for duration of homelessness among this smaller sample differed significantly from trends in the official Irish statistics. Results for 'duration of homelessness' are therefore not reported in the EHC to avoid confusion.

Data for 'residence status' is also based on a small number of survey responses due to missing PASS data but these results are reported because they are not currently included in official statistics and therefore less likely to cause confusion.

Finally, the EHC surveys contained non-binary gender response categories but only binary gender data is collected on PASS.

4.3.2 Inconsistent data input

There were also challenges with the 'reasons for homelessness' field in the PASS data. For example, while the main reason for homelessness might be categorised as 'relationship breakdown', an examination of sub reasons and case notes showed that domestic violence or eviction led to clients living with family and friends until this became unsustainable, leading to a relationship breakdown.

Some reasons available in the PASS drop down options don't actually relate to the reason for homelessness but rather to the person's current living situation, for example, 'Overcrowding' or 'Entrenched rough sleeper'. Some categories are used as a catch-all for example, 'Family circumstances' was found to cover anything from leaving IPAS accommodation to eviction, domestic violence or migration.

In some cases, a PEH may not have completed a full homeless assessment and so there may be no information in the 'reason for homelessness' field. In situations where data on reasons was missing, or didn't match the EHC 'trigger for homelessness' categories, the researcher checked sub reasons and case notes. In most instances, it was possible to recode the data to fit the EHC triggers field but where there was no, or only vague information, this field was left blank.

4.3.3 Non-coverage due to local authority rules and policies

Some PEH may not appear in the PASS data because of certain local authority rules and policies, particularly those related to the concept of 'local connection'.[23]

A protocol issued by a representative body for local authorities in July 2023, states that 'As a general rule [households] at risk of or experiencing homelessness, should present to their 'local authority (LA) of origin'. Homeless households presenting to a LA that is not their origin, will be accommodated 'on an emergency basis for the day/night of presentation' only and 'up to a period of up to a maximum of 5 days' (CCMA, 2023, p.4 and p.5). However, the legal basis of this protocol has been challenged, as it appears to conflate access to homeless accommodation with access to social housing, where a number of eligibility criteria, including local area connection, do apply.[24] Where this guidance is currently applied, PEH may be accommodated only for very short periods, sometimes on a one night only basis. As the PASS records in Dublin cannot systematically identify households that are allocated short-term homeless accommodation on 'humanitarian grounds', a figure for ETHOS Light 2 (overnight or short stay emergency accommodation), such individuals are likely to be categorised under ETHOS Light 3 in this report.

The CCMA document also states that 'households entering emergency accommodation should have an identified exit out of homeless services through social housing supports'. This would mean that some households may be refused access to DHLGH funded homeless accommodation because they have no 'pathway to housing' or 'local connection' to the local authority where they present.[25] The impact of this protocol is unknown, but where vulnerable groups are refused homeless accommodation, they may resort to sleeping rough or living in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 situations. As the EHC survey in Dublin included only a sample of day services working with those in ETHOS Light 5 and 6, and given the challenges with implementing the survey, the true figure for PEH in these living situations may be significantly higher than reported. In Cork City, the count excluded those in ETHOS Light 5 and 6. The DHLGH is currently preparing legislation which is intended to clarify these issues.

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23 See a comparative discussion on the operation of local connection rules in Europe in Baptista et al. (2015).

24 See https://mercylaw.ie/2024/08/no-you-dont-need-to-be-on-the-social-housing-waiting-list-to-get-access-to-emergency-accommodation/

25 See https://mercylaw.ie/local-connection/

Finally, there may be additional non-coverage issues in the PASS data, as both cities stipulated that service-based surveys should be restricted only to those intending to remain in their administrative areas, but excluded those with a local connection to these cities who were using services outside the administration area.

4.4 Other limitations

Besides those excluded from or not covered by PASS or the small survey sample, there are other reasons that PEH within the different ETHOS Light groups, may not have been counted. While the majority of invited services agreed to participate, some declined in both years and some that participated in 2024 were unable to take part in 2025. Non participation was mainly due organisational ethos and resourcing issues, but means that some groups did not have a chance to be involved. For example in 2024, one domestic violence (DV) service in Dublin declined due to concerns about anonymity. This is the largest of the three crisis accommodation providers in Dublin, with a total of 44 beds. While they agreed to participate in 2025, they did not submit any data and did not respond to feedback requests. The two DV services that did submit data had a total capacity of 21 and returned data on 13 women in 2024 and 14 in 2025. The only service in Cork City providing crisis accommodation for DV has a capacity of up to 12 women and their children, and they submitted data from 7 clients in both years. Moreover, there is a shortage of refuge space in Ireland[26] with most services operating at full capacity on a consistent basis, meaning that women are often turned away from refuge services or forced to remain with the perpetrator.[27] Women who cannot access DV services, like other women experiencing homelessness, are less likely to use homeless services, preferring instead informal options such as staying with family and friends (Mayock and Sheridan, 2012; Bretherton and Mayock, 2021; Baptista et al., (2022)). This means women in both cities, may not have been captured by either PASS or the survey in ETHOS Light 3, or in ETHOS Light 6 via the survey in Dublin.

26 See https://www.ihrec.ie/news-press/we-need-more-refuge-spaces-to-comply-with-council-of-europe-standards#:~:text=The%20Irish%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Equality%20Commission%20has,standards%20on%20ensuring%20protection%20of%20survivors%20and%20victims.

27 See https://www.independent.ie/regionals/dublin/dublin-news/councillor-horrified-after-80-women-turned-away-due-to-lack-of-refuge-space-for-victims-of-domestic-violence/a1107777510.html

In 2025, the DoJ provided administrative data for refugees who can remain in Ireland but are unable to leave IPAS in Dublin due to the housing crisis. However, DoJ have begun issuing letters to those with status to remain, asking them to leave IPAS accommodation by a certain date in order to free up accommodation for new arrivals.[28] Some of those who cannot find alternative accommodation have been moved out of IPAS centres in Dublin and into other regions, often a great distance away.[29] This means that only including those remaining in IPAS centres in Dublin, represents an undercount of refugees who gained legal status and have a right to live in Dublin. Some of those moved to other parts of the country, return to Dublin because they have connections to the region through, for example, employment, education or family. Some of this group may enter homeless accommodation, however, many more are likely to end up in ETHOS 1, 5 or 6 situations. Again, this number is likely to be underestimated due to the small survey sample and the challenges with implementing it in Dublin, and are excluded in Cork.

28 See https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/housing-planning/2026/03/14/hundreds-of-families-told-to-leave-ipas-accommodation-despite-plea-for-pause-over-homeless-provision/

29 See https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2025/0703/1521584-ipas-relocations/

5 Conclusions

The Irish homelessness data collection strategy is currently based on information from PASS, however, the EHC modular methodology worked well as it allowed a practical approach to wider data collection. Despite its well documented limitations, the PASS system provides an invaluable source of reliable data on the individuals it covers, and the methodology allowed us to rely mainly on PASS data while complementing it with service-based survey data. It also allowed the incorporation of PASS data from the official street count in Dublin, supplemented with survey data for excluded cohorts, and the organisation of a street count in Cork.

Despite the limitations outlined above, PASS has proven to be very useful for reporting timely and reliable statistics on the use of DHLGH funded homeless accommodation at a local level. Participation in the ECH showed that this data also proved useful for reporting at an EU level on homelessness in ETHOS Light categories 1–3, especially when supplemented with survey data to provide a more complete understanding. The experimental inclusion of ETHOS Light groups 4–6 in Dublin provided an opportunity to broaden the perception of who experiences homelessness.

There are a number of advantages in continuing to use PASS to measure homelessness in Ireland. Firstly, this system has been in place since 2013 with more than a decade's worth of data now available from monthly homelessness reports.

Secondly, all DHLGH funded services providing accommodation for PEH in Ireland must input data into this system. As there is a high number of unique services in Cork City and the Dublin region, it would be almost impossible to collect survey data from each one individually. For example, in 2024 the DHLGH funded 83 different not-for-profit supported accommodation services for PEH across the Dublin region. The number of DHLGH funded for-profit services is not publicly available however, the number of homeless adults in for-profit accommodation is published. This shows that in 2024, more than twice the number of PEH were in for-profit compared to not-for-profit accommodation in Dublin (5,086 compared to 2,234 adults). This suggests that there could be approximately 160 for-profit accommodation services, making a total of approximately 240 DHLGH funded homeless accommodation services in Dublin. The task of individually surveying these services would be even more difficult as most of this for-profit accommodation consists of hotels and B&Bs, spread across the 900 sq. km of the four administrative areas in the region.

Furthermore, findings from other researchers involved in the EHC show that not all homeless service providers who are invited to participate in the count, actually take part. Some participate initially and then decline in subsequent years and this was the case in Cork and Dublin with some services participating in 2024 but not in 2025. Of the services that agree to participate, not all submit data in the end, again this was the case in Cork and Dublin in both years. Lastly, surveys were previously carried out every three years between 1999 and 2008, to collect data on PEH in Dublin.[30] These surveys were not extended on a national basis, and not conducted in 2013 or subsequent years due to delays in publishing, cost and personnel constraints. Also, with data collected only every three years, it was regarded as being of limited value in assessing the impact of policy on the extent and nature of homelessness. When discontinued in 2012, the absence of reliable regular data became an issue of concern and a new system of monthly reporting, based on data collected from PASS was established.

Learnings from implementing the survey showed this was a useful method for collecting data on some of the groups and sub groups not covered by PASS. However, it also presented some challenges. Firstly, relying on informed consent as the legal basis to collect data led to non-responses and additional administrative burden for the researcher and professionals in services. One the other hand, determining whether services could use administrative data was lengthy and complicated, and most services didn't satisfy the requirements to share data this way in the end. For the relatively small number that did, there was a higher level of missing data in some survey fields.

Secondly, there were gaps in the potential coverage of those in ETHOS Light groups 4–6, mainly due to the small sample of services identified some of which did not agree to participate. This means that results for these cohorts are not representative, and the undercount may particularly effect homeless migrants and women in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 living situations. Learnings from the UK women's rough sleeping census could provide a more gender-informed approach.[31]

In addition to sampling issues, challenges with the ethical approval process led to a limited coverage of those in ETHOS Light 4. Finally, the IPAS administrative data excluded those with international protection status who have been moved from Dublin to reception centres in other parts of the country.

On a macro level, participating in the EHC showed that it is more challenging to introduce change in a city where data collection methods are long established and working reasonably well, compared to cities with little or no data collection experience. Furthermore, involvement in the steering group showed the difficulty of overcoming siloed approaches despite the best intentions.

30 These were known as the 'Counted In' surveys.

31 See https://www.solacewomensaid.org/womens-rough-sleeping-census/

Any future Irish data collection system must ensure that it continues to serve both national and EU level homelessness measurement requirements. Taking account of both the strengths and the limitations of administrative data, and based on learnings from implementing the service-based survey, it seems appropriate that the survey method could be used to provide supplementary data in addition to that reported monthly from PASS. Targeted surveys could be carried out periodically for example, every two or three years to allow a more comprehensive measure of the extent of homelessness across all ETHOS Light groups 1–6, including ETHOS Light 1–3 subgroups not included on PASS. This is the approach taken in Denmark where administrative registers track service use while periodic surveys designed to capture all ETHOS categories are conducted (Benjemensen et al., 2020).

The supplementary service-based survey could be administered by a public body such as the Housing Agency or Central Statistics Office, using 'public interest' as a legal basis for data collection which may circumvent some of the challenges related to 'informed consent'. Other research partners involved in the EHC were universities or state actors and they collected survey data using public interest, from State bodies such as social welfare, social and public health workers etc. Whether or not such State bodies in Ireland hold the information on current tenure required to classify PEH into the correct ETHOS Light 1–6 groupings would have to be explored.

6 Results

All participating cities were mandated to report the number of PEH in ETHOS Light categories 1–3, so results are available for these groups in both Cork and Dublin. Only Dublin opted to experiment with also including PEH in samples of ETHOS Light categories 4–6. The sections that follow show firstly the results from both cities for categories 1–3, followed by results for groups 1–6 in the Dublin region.

Results and findings from all participating cities are available in the final EHC Report published by the European Commission (Hermans et al., 2026).[32]

6.1 Cork City ETHOS Light 1–3 results

Table 5: Cork City EHC results by year and ETHOS Light groups 1–3

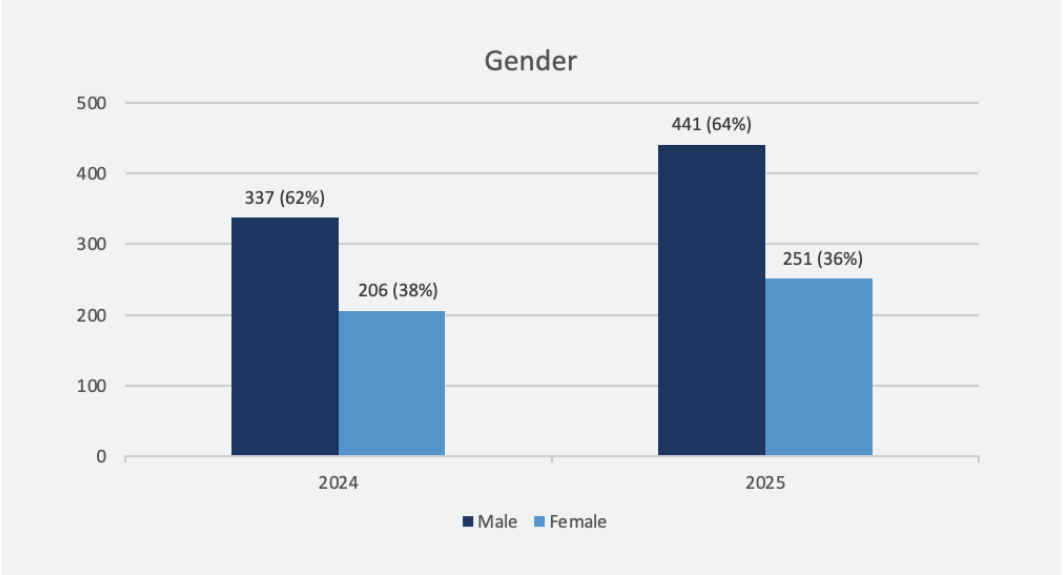
Count year	ETHOS Light group	No. adults	%
2024	1 – In a public space	37	6.8
	2 – In emergency accommodation	18	3.3
	3 – In accommodation for PEH or temporary housing	489	89.9
Total		**544**	**100.0**
2025	1 – In a public space	36	5.2
	2 – In emergency accommodation	16	2.3
	3 – In accommodation for PEH or temporary housing	640	92.5
Total		**692**	**100.0**

32 See https://www.kuleuven.be/lucas/en/images/eu-homelessness-counts-final-report-2026.pdf

Because the majority of data came from PASS, results from the EHCs are relatively similar to official Government statistics. The total number of homeless adults in the EHC 2025 for Cork City was 692, see table 5. Government figures are published by region, and the number of PEH in October 2025 in the South West region was 778.[33] This figure is slightly higher than the EHC figure for three reasons. Firstly, the South West region includes counties Kerry and Cork as well as Cork City. Numbers are based on an extract from PASS taken for a full week in October, whereas PASS data for the EHC is taken for one night only. And lastly, there was very little additional survey data from supplementary services in Cork.

In both years, the majority of PEH were in ETHOS Light category 3 (89.9% in 2024 and 92.5% in 2025), while only 6.8% and 5.2% were roofless (ETHOS Light 1) in 2024 and 2025, respectively. As indicated in the EHC comparative report, in Ireland and some other cities where there is a responsibility for local authorities to provide supports for PEH, there is a higher quantity of temporary accommodation, and these cities report lower incidences of rough sleeping (Hermans et al, 2026). In other European cities, a shortage of shelter provision or barriers to accessing services means there is a higher share of PEH in ETHOS Light 1. Comparing results from EHC 2025 to those from EHC 2024, the total number of PEH in Cork City rose by 148, from 544 to 692. This is mainly driven by the number of PEH in ETHOS Light 3, as figures for those in ETHOS Light 1 and 2 remained remarkably consistent. The increase may be related to a lack of permanent housing available to exit into, so people remain stuck in homeless accommodation, along with additional people entering it. Data for 'duration of homelessness' was not reported for either year of the EHC because the PASS categories for this field are coded differently from those required for the EHC. However, official government statistics from PASS show that 34% of households in the South West region, which includes Cork City, had a stay of longer than 12 months in temporary homelessness accommodation by the end of Q4 2025.

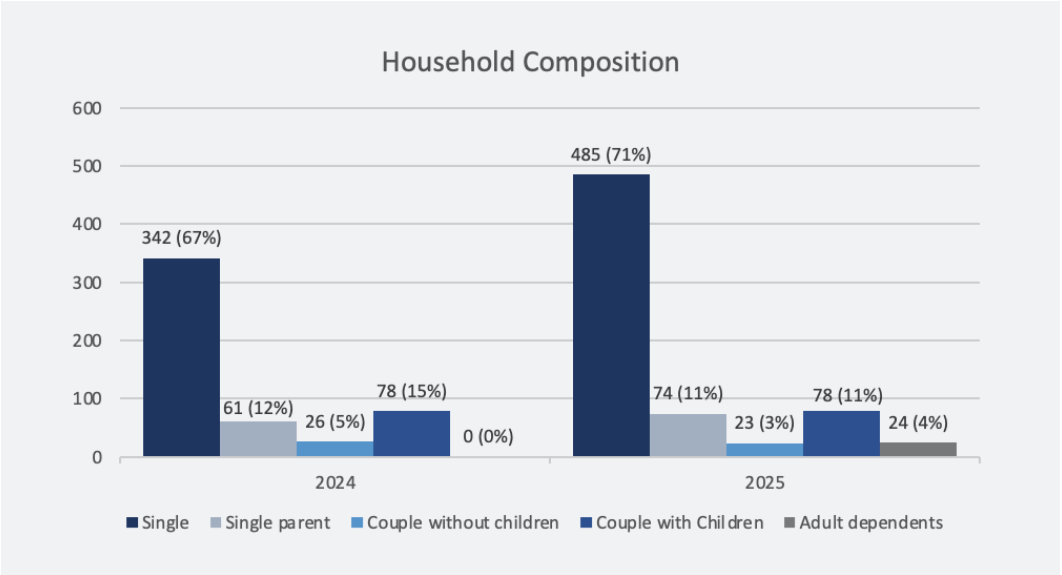
Figure 3: Cork City EHC results by year and gender



33 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/d585a64a/Homeless_Report_October_2025.pdf#page=4

Figure 3 shows that the gender breakdown is relatively similar in both years of the EHC, with a higher ratio of men, at 64:36 in 2025 and 62:38 in 2024. Other research (Mayock and Sheridan, 2012; Bretherton and Mayock, 2021) shows that women are less likely to use homeless services and rely more on informal networks such as family and friends but Cork City did not explore this, as data for ETHOS 6 was not collected in either year of the count.

Figure 4: Cork City EHC results by year and household composition



Note: Data was unknown/missing for 37 people in 2024 and for 8 people in 2025.

More than two thirds of PEH in Cork City (67%) were single adults in EHC 2024, and this rose to 71% in 2025 (see figure 4). This is in line with national trends, which show the total number of adult-only homeless households rising consistently, and tripling between 2014 and 2023 (O'Sullivan et al., 2024a and 2024b). Regional trends show the number of these households in the South West has almost tripled between 2014 and 2025 (O'Sullivan et al., 2025).[34]

The proportion of couples with children decreased from 15% to 11%, and lone parent proportions fell from 12% to 11% between counts. However, this means more than a fifth, or a total of 22% of PEH in Cork City had children living with them in 2025, down from 27% in 2024. In fact, there were 230 children living in homeless accommodation in the South West region in October 2025.[35] Time series analysis shows that homeless households with children, increased steadily in the South West between 2014 and 2019 before decreasing sharply. While the number of these households increased again since 2021, it has not surpassed the peak of 2019 (O'Sullivan et al., 2025). PASS can now distinguish adult dependents in a household so the decrease between the two EHC years, in households with children may also be partially explained by improved data cleaning. In 2024, there were no adult dependents as this group were assigned the same composition category as the head of household but in 2025, a total of 24 adult dependents were categorised separately.

34 Note that adult-only households in the PASS data include both single adults with no children and couples with no children. These two cohorts were disaggregated in the analysis of PASS data of the EHC.

35 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/d585a64a/Homeless_Report_October_2025.pdf#page=4.

Figure 5: Cork City EHC results by year and age group

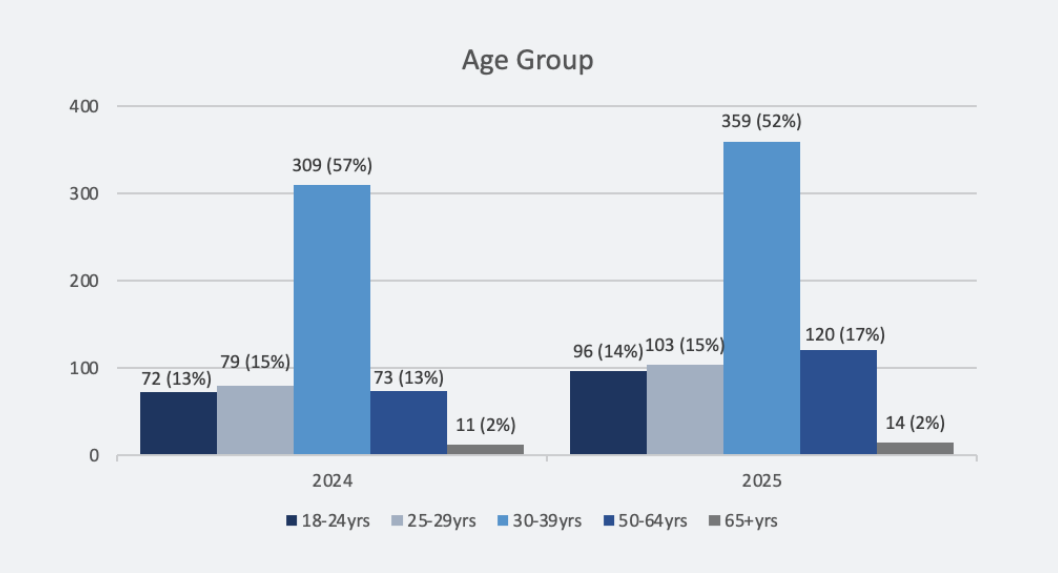
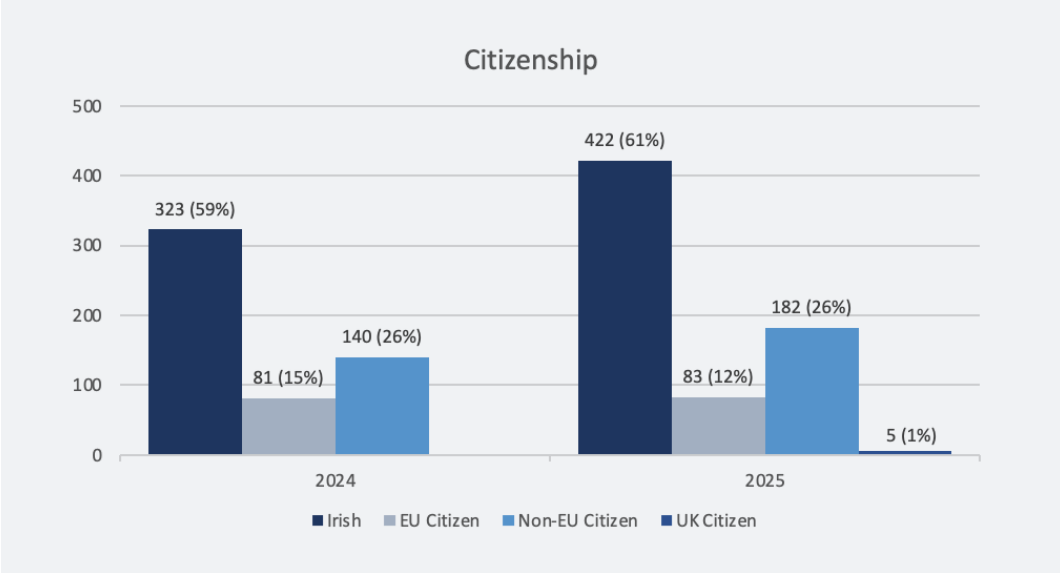


Figure 5 shows that the age profile of PEH remained quite steady between the two EHC years. The only notable change was a decline in proportions aged between 30–49 years from 57% to 52%, with a corresponding increase in proportions aged between 50–64 years from 13% to 17%. Again, this may reflect increasing numbers becoming stuck in homeless accommodation and moving into different age bands, as well as an increase in older cohorts entering homelessness. There was also a smaller increase in youth homelessness from 13 % to 14% for those aged 18–24 years.

The majority of PEH in Cork City are Irish citizens, at 59% in 2024 and 61% in 2025. While the percentage change is small, the absolute number increased by almost 100, from 323 to 422 between EHC 2024 and 2025 (see figure 6). As this is point in time data, it's not possible to know whether Irish citizens made up most of the overall increase between the two count years or they remained for longer in homeless accommodation. The proportion of non-EU citizens experiencing homelessness remained the same in both years at 26% but their absolute number also increased by 42 while the number of EU citizens remained relatively stable but decreased proportionally from 15% to 12%.

PASS has a 'residency status' field but this does not output on the reports used for the EHC, which means that very little data was available for this field apart from that in the very small number of surveys so it is not reported in either year.

Figure 6: Cork City EHC results by year and citizenship



Note: A total of 7 UK citizens are included in the non-EU cohort in 2024

The EHC 2025 results show that 39% of homelessness was triggered by eviction in Cork City, and while this is a fall from 41% in 2024, it remains the largest category of homelessness triggers (see figure 7). Family issues (mostly relationship breakdowns) remain the second most cited trigger at 25%, down from 28% in 2024. However, research shows that households often move in with family following an eviction, which can lead to relationship breakdown and homelessness due to overcrowding and unsustainable situations (Stamp, 2017; Maphosa, 2025).

Institutional discharge as a trigger for homelessness rose from 13% to 19% between EHC 2024 and 2025, likely driven by refugees leaving IPAS. The number of people leaving IPAS and entering homeless accommodation nationally, has risen sharply over the last five years from 39 people 2020 to 243 by 2023, before increasing to 638 in 2024 and to 674 in 2025.[36, 37] This cohort have gained the right to remain in Ireland but are unable to find accommodation due to the housing crisis and often become homeless when insecure and temporary arrangements become unsustainable (Murphy and Stapleton, 2024). A further 7% of homelessness in Cork City was triggered by physical or mental health and/or addiction issues, and while this represents a fall from 11% in 2024, it may indicate a continued need for Housing First type services for single adults with complex needs. Domestic violence was a trigger for 5% of homelessness in both years but this is a likely underestimate. Firstly, as mentioned above, women are less likely to use homeless accommodation services. Where women do use these services, domestic violence is often not recorded as the primary reason for homelessness in PASS but may be mentioned as

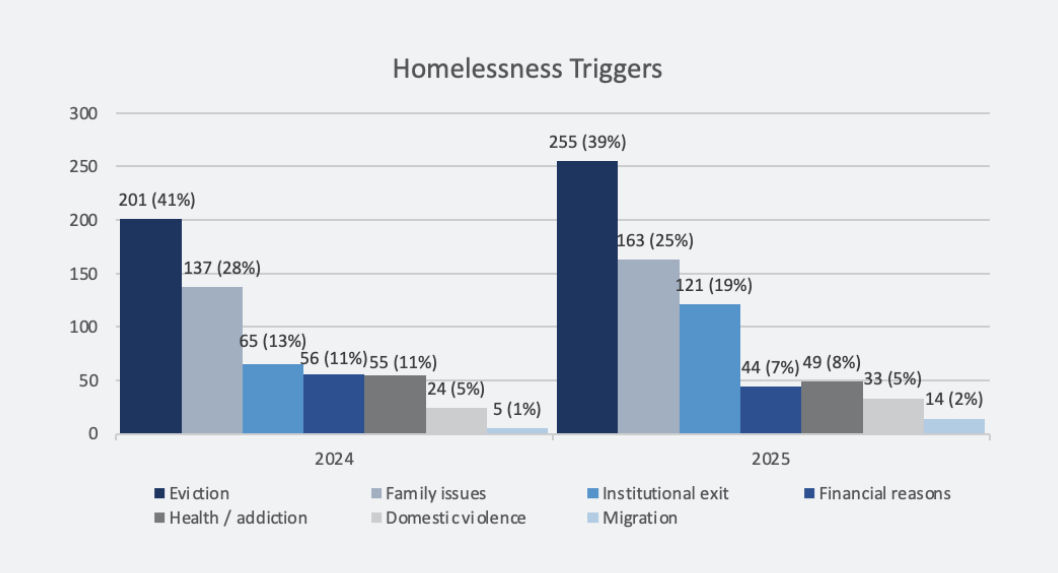
36 See https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2026/0416/1568552-direct-provision-homelessness/ and https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2026/01/07/numbers-entering-homeless-services-from-direct-provision-surge-since-pandemic/

37 These figures do not include those who leave IPAS, find housing or a temporary housing solution and then become homeless (these situations may be assigned reasons such as relationship breakdown, eviction etc.).

a secondary reason or in case notes, or it may not be the reason for a current episode of homelessness but may have been a trigger in the past.

Lastly, the DV service that participated in the study is the only one operating in the whole city and is normally full, which suggests a deficit in service coverage, as research shows that 1 in 3 women in Ireland have experienced gender based violence. In fact, services that participated in the research highlighted that some women are forced to remain with the perpetrator of violence against them, due to a lack of housing options.

Figure 7: Cork City EHC results by year and homelessness trigger



Note: Data was unknown/missing for 35 people in 2024 and for 40 people in 2025 and there were a total of 1.8% and 1.5% of 'Other' triggers cited in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

6.2 Dublin region ETHOS Light 1–3 results

Table 6: Dublin region EHC results by year and ETHOS Light groups 1–3

Count year	ETHOS Light group	No. adults	%
2024	1 – In a public space	151	2.0
	2 – In emergency accommodation	–	–
	3 – In accommodation for PEH or temporary housing	7,496	98.0
Total		**7,647**	**100.0**
2025	1 – In a public space	190	2.2
	2 – In emergency accommodation	–	–
	3 – In accommodation for PEH or temporary housing	8,320	97.8
Total		**8,510**	**100.0**

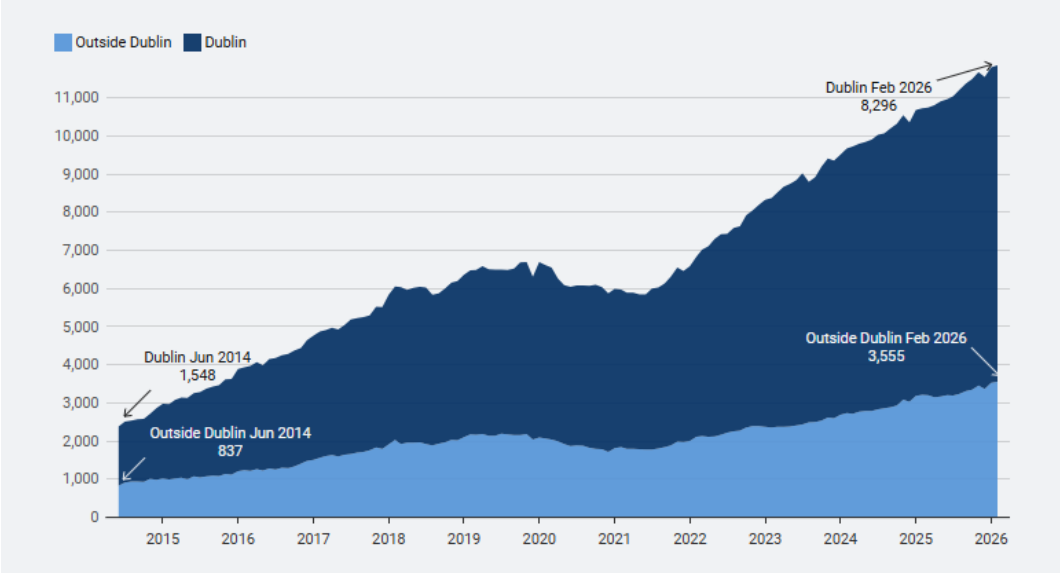
Results from the 2025 EHC show a total of 8,510 PEH in ETHOS Light categories 1–3 in the Dublin region, see table 6. As with Cork City, the majority of data came from PASS so results are relatively similar to the official Government figure of 8,141 PEH in the Dublin region for the last week in October 2025.[38] Although PASS data for the EHC was taken for one night only, the EHC results are slightly higher than official statistics. This is because they include data for 'Own Front Door' accommodation and IPAs found during the official rough sleeper count, which are excluded from official reporting, and are supplemented with survey data from 21 different services. Also similar to Cork, most PEH in Dublin were in ETHOS Light category 3 (98% in both years), compared to ETHOS Light 1 (2%), which is again related to Ireland's relatively high provision of temporary homeless accommodation and mandatory reporting of service use. In addition to the challenges of implementing the survey outlined in the methodology section, the lower share in ETHOS Light 1 may also reflect the challenge of carrying out street counts across large geographical areas which includes a full region in Dublin. This requires many more resources, and there is more difficultly including rough sleepers who are not in contact with services or who wish to remain hidden (Hermans et al., 2026).

Comparing EHC results from 2024 and 2025, the total number of PEH in Dublin rose by 863 (11.3%) to 8,510. Breaking this down, ETHOS Light 1 grew by 39 (25.8%) and ETHOS Light 3 by 824 (10.9%) over the two years. The increase in ETHOS Light 1 is mainly due to the inclusion of more survey data for IPAs sleeping rough. There were 35 completed ETHOS Light 1 surveys in EHC 2025 compared to only 11 in EHC 2024, while the number of PEH that were captured in the official street count increased by only 15. As outlined in the methodology section, only a sample of services were invited to participate in the EHC and there were challenges with implementing the survey. As with Cork, the increase in ETHOS Light 3 figures is probably linked to the growing number of people stuck in temporary accommodation due to a lack of permanent housing to exit into. PASS shows that 49% of homeless households in the Dublin region had a stay of longer than 12 months in temporary accommodation by end Q4 2025, and 23% were stuck in homeless accommodation for longer than 24 months.

Analysis of PASS data since 2014, reveals a large and growing problem of homelessness in Dublin, especially when compared to the rest of the country (see figure 8). The number of PEH has grown from 1,548 in June 2014 to 8,296 in February 2026, while figures for outside the Dublin region grew from 837 to 3,555 over the same period.

38 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/d585a64a/Homeless_Report_October_2025.pdf#page=4

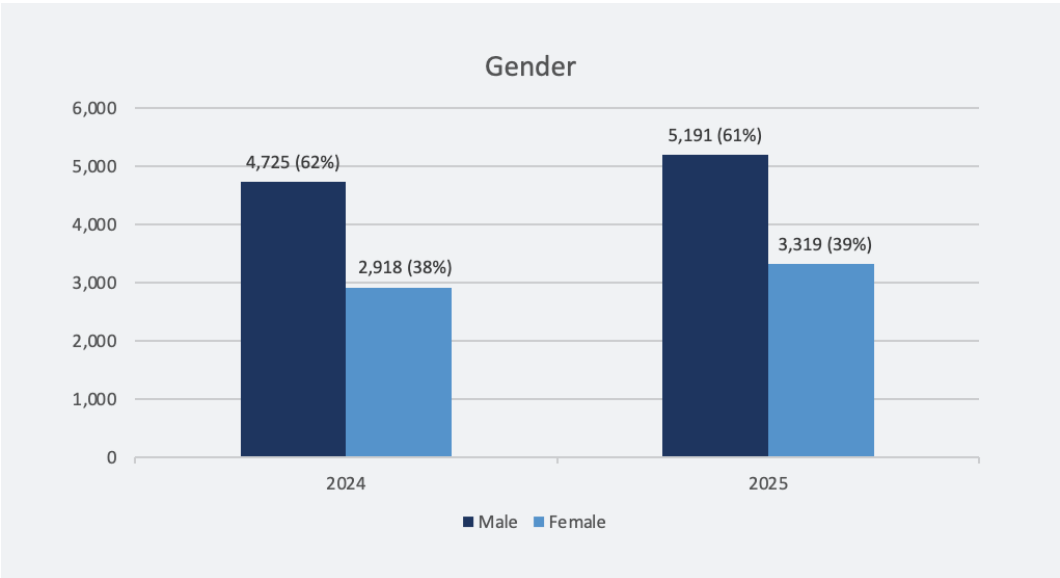
Figure 8: Number of adults in DHLGH funded homeless accommodation



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Created with Datawrapper

Figure 9 shows that gender distribution remained steady, with a higher ratio of men in both years (61:39 and 62:38 in 2024 and 2025 respectively). Research shows women are more likely to rely on informal networks like family and friends rather than homeless accommodation (Mayock and Sheridan, 2012; Bretherton and Mayock, 2021) however, data on those in ETHOS Light 6 offered little additional insight on gender or other profile characteristics because of the small sample size and low response rates.

Figure 9: Dublin region EHC results by year and gender

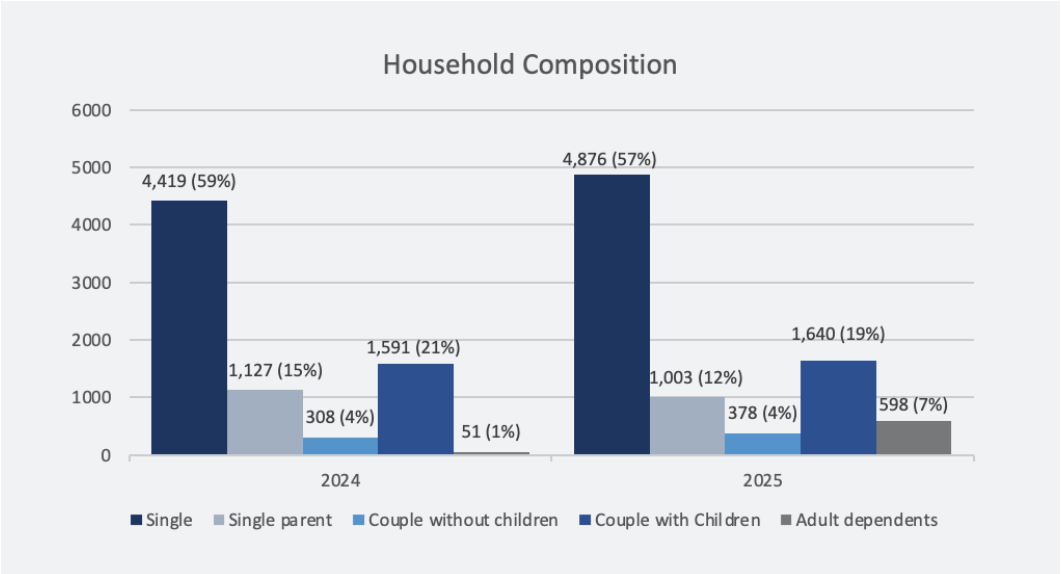


As with Cork City, figure 10 shows that most PEH in the Dublin region were single adults (59% in 2024 and 57% in 2025). However, this is lower than the proportion of single adults in Cork (67% in 2024 and 71% in 2025, table 4), indicating a higher rate of homelessness

among households with children in Dublin. EHC results show that in 2024, 15% of PEH were lone parents and 21% were couples with children, meaning that more than a third of PEH in Dublin (36%) had children living with them, while a total of 31% had children with them in 2025. This compares to 27% and 22% of adults with children in Cork. Official statistics from PASS show that 3,883 children were living in temporary homeless accommodation in the Dublin region in October 2025.[39] Other research shows that the number of households with children in Dublin rose significantly from 2014 through mid-2018, before declining. The decline accelerated, with large reductions in this household type during 2020 and 2021 when the COVID-19 pandemic protection measures were in place.[40] However, this number increased steadily again once the tenancy protections were lifted, and is higher now than pre-covid, indicating that the positive impact of the COVID-19 policies have been completely reversed since their removal (O'Sullivan et al., 2025).

The EHC results show a fall in the proportions of lone parents (15% to 12%) and couples with children (21% to 19%) between 2024 and 2025. Again, we don't know if this is related to less households with children entering homelessness or more of these households exiting. It may also be partially explained by improved data cleaning which resulted in an increase in adult dependents from 51 (0.6%) in 2024, to 598 (7%) in 2025.

Figure 10: Dublin region EHC results by year and household composition



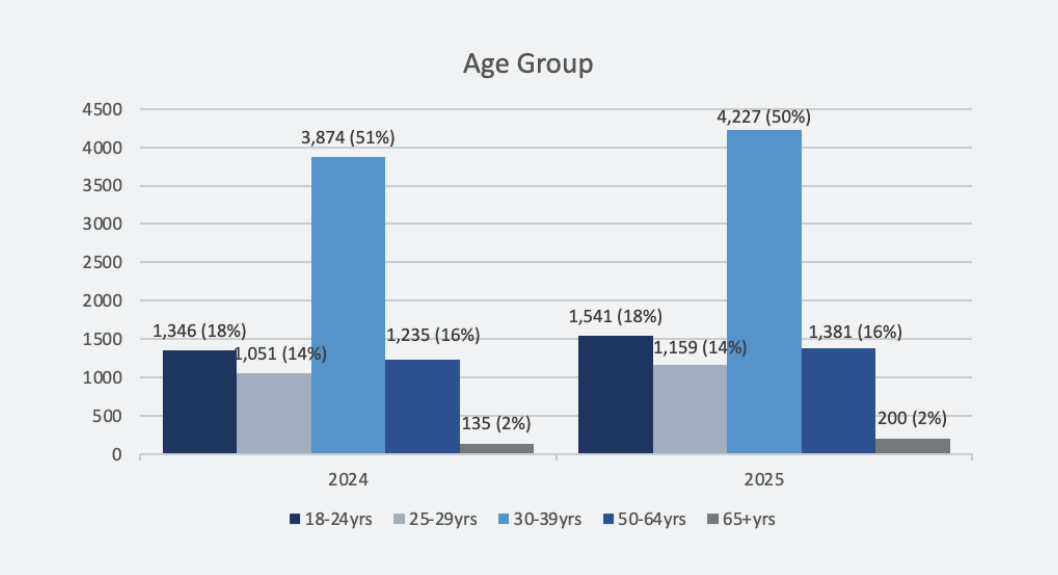
Note: Data was unknown/missing for 15 people 2025.

39 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/d585a64a/Homeless_Report_October_2025.pdf

40 The Irish Government introduced a temporary moratorium on evictions and a rent freeze to prevent people losing their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The moratorium on evictions on all grounds was in place between March and August 1st, 2020. Evictions were permitted under limited circumstances between October and November 2020 and from January to April 2021. Depending on the tenant circumstances, a notice period, sometimes of several months, applied after lifting the moratorium before a tenancy could be terminated.

Figure 11 shows the different age groupings of those included in the Dublin region EHCs. As can be seen, the age profile remained remarkably steady between 2024 and 2025, with most PEH falling into the 30–39 years age group in both years.

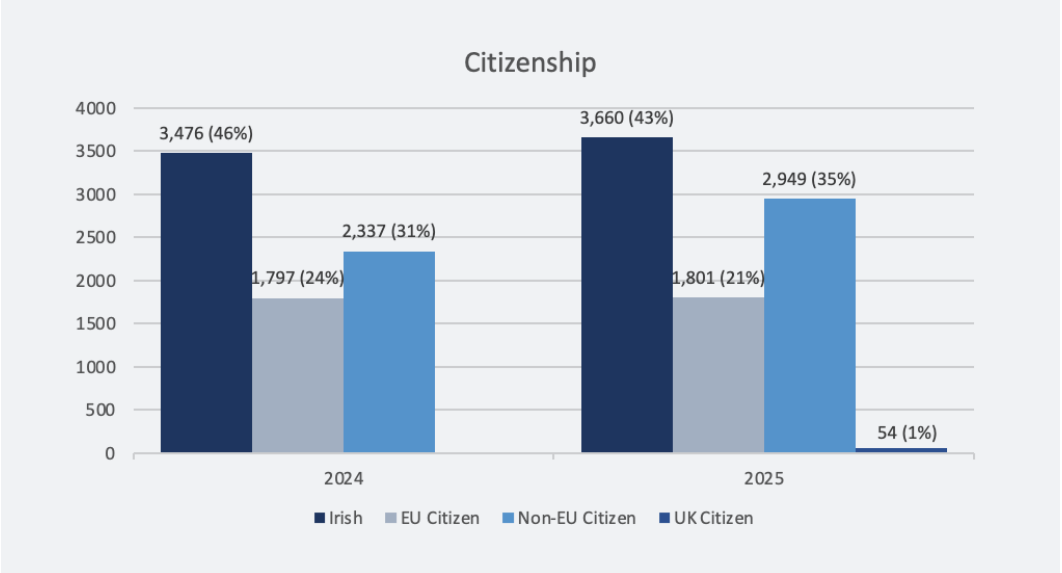
Figure 11: Dublin region EHC results by year and age group



Note: Data was unknown/missing for 6 people in 2024 and for 2 people in 2025.

Unlike Cork City, the majority of PEH in the Dublin region are not Irish citizens and these proportions fell from 46% in 2024 to 43% in 2025 (see figure 12). The proportion of EU citizens experiencing homelessness also fell from 24% to 21%, while non-EU homeless citizens increased proportionally over the two EHC years from 31% to 35%. This group also saw the largest increase in absolute numbers between 2024 and 2025 at 612, and again this could be due to more non-EU citizens becoming homeless or less of them moving out of homeless accommodation. Time trend analysis shows that the number of homeless non-EU citizens in the Dublin region increased from 852 in April 2022, when citizenship data first began to be reported from PASS, to 2,616 in June 2025. The same analysis shows a declining proportion of Irish citizens in homeless accommodation in Dublin, falling from 58% in April 2022 to 43% in June 2025 (O'Sullivan et al., 2025).

Figure 12: Dublin region EHC results by year and citizenship

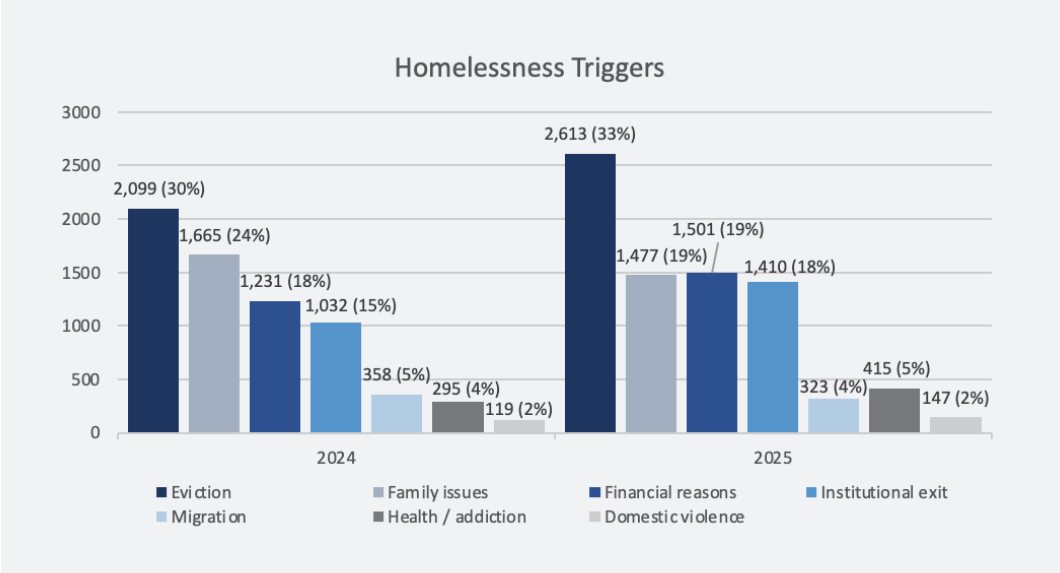


Note: A total of 47 UK citizens are included in the non-EU cohort in 2024. Data was unknown/missing for 37 people in 2024 and for 46 people in 2025.

Figure 13 shows that eviction remains the most common trigger for homelessness in Dublin at 33% in 2025, up from 30% in 2024. Family issues accounted for 24% of triggers in 2024 but only 19% in 2025, again this may be due to improved data entry and cleaning to better reflect original or underlying homelessness triggers. The rate of homelessness triggered by financial reasons rose slightly from 18% to 19% and highlights the significant amount of PEH due to structural causes such as unaffordable housing.

Exiting an institution remains the fourth most cited homelessness trigger but increased from 15% in 2024 to 18% in 2025 and continues to be driven by exits from IPAS. In EHC 2024, exiting this institution type accounted for 65% of all institutional exits (which also included general and psychiatric hospitals, addiction treatment centres, prisons and care homes) however, 73% of institutional exits were from IPAS in the 2025 count. This is in line with national trends outlined in the Cork City results section above. As with Cork City, the number of PEH due to domestic violence is likely to be underestimated for the reasons cited above.

Figure 13: Dublin region EHC results by year and homelessness trigger



Note: Data was unknown/missing for 816 people in 2024 and for 638 people in 2025 and there were a total of 9.5% and 0.1% of 'Other' triggers cited in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

6.3 Dublin region ETHOS Light 4–6 results 2025

Table 7 shows the results from the Dublin region EHC for ETHOS Light groups 1–6. Only the results from 2025 are shown, as the 2024 count was a pilot test that generated very limited results. The total figure for PEH on 20th October 2025, in ETHOS Light groups 1 – 6 is 9,759. This includes data from PASS, the supplementary survey data and administrative data from the Department of Justice for those stuck in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). These figures have not been broken down by demographic profile because they are a relatively small sample and therefore not representative. As those in ETHOS Light 4–6 comprise only a small additional group, when added to the cohorts in ETHOS Light categories 1–3, they do not significantly change the profile results.

Table 7: Dublin region EHC 2025 results for ETHOS Light groups 1–6

ETHOS Light group	No. adults	%
1 – In a public space	190	1.9
2 – In emergency accommodation	–	–
3 – In accommodation for PEH or temporary housing	8,320	85.3
4 – In an institution	1,143	11.7
5 – In non-conventional dwelling	46	0.5
6 – Staying with family/friends	60	0.6
Total	**9,759**	**100.0**

6.3.1 ETHOS Light 4 – institutions

In Dublin, institutions included in ETHOS Light category 4 comprised of prisons, residential addiction treatment services, acute mental health units and International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). Table 8 shows the number of PEH in EHC 2025, in ETHOS Light 4 by institution type.

Table 8: Dublin region EHC 2025 results by Institution type

ETHOS Light 4 – Institutions	No. adults
Prison	<5
Acute Mental Health Unit	12
Residential Addiction Treatment Centre	52
International Protection Accommodation Services	1,077
Total	**1,143**

The research partners agreed the criteria for including people in institutions based on the definition used in the ETHOS Light typology of homelessness for this operational category. This criterion was communicated to professionals working in services via staff information sheets, and was as follows.

> Clients must be eligible to participate, and you are being asked screen for eligibility based on the following criteria; Those who will be resident on the count date and who will either
>
> 1. leave the institution into homelessness (i.e. one of the 6 ETHOS Light categories) in the Dublin region, on or up to a month after the count date.
> 2. those remaining in the institution for longer than is clinically necessary because they have no housing to be released into (i.e. delayed discharge).

Under this definition and criteria, those in institutions cannot be considered homeless unless they are about to be discharged or released, and have no secure housing to go to, or must stay longer than needed due to lack of housing. This covers both those whose discharge or release to homelessness is imminent and those whose discharge is delayed due to homelessness. Clearly, those who are actively serving a prison sentence cannot be kept in prison beyond their sentence dates so the second part of the criteria did not apply in prisons. People with no housing available prior to release from an institution are included to identify those at risk of homelessness upon exiting an institution. The Lisbon Declaration on Homelessness[41] to which Ireland is a signatory, and policy in some EU countries including Ireland, aims to ensure that no one is discharged from an institution without an offer of appropriate housing.

41 See https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/280675/20210619_bb%20-%20Lisbon%20Declaration%20on%20the%20European%20Platform%20on%20Combatting%20HomelessnessFINAL%20(8).pdf

This limited appropriately, the number of clients in each service that could participate, to only those who were eligible. Two addiction treatment centres and the two prison step-down facilities reported that there were no clients eligible to be included in the survey on the count date. However, the consent process limited participation even further, leading to an underrepresentation of eligible clients. As outlined in the methodology sections, the consent process was complicated and time consuming, and more difficult in services with staff shortages and high workloads. This was particularly challenging in prisons where notice is required before visits and persistent levels of overcrowding in Irish prisons have become 'unprecedented'.[42] On the count date (20th October 2025), the bed capacity figure was 100%, 114% and 123% for the three participating prisons in Dublin.[43]

Prisons

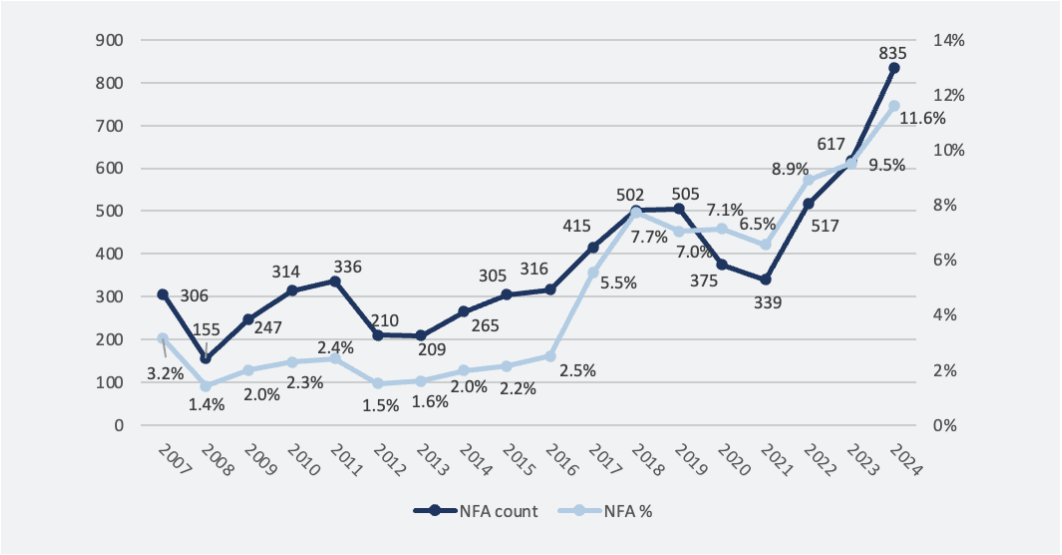
The number of surveys completed in prisons was extremely low. Feedback from TOSU, the prison in-reach service showed that aside from the challenges with gaining consent, the process of identifying eligible clients was very difficult due to short sentencing, early release and release with little or no notification. Prisoners that receive short sentences for example, for minor crimes which PEH are more likely to be involved in, often leave the prison before having the chance to engage with services such as TOSU. Furthermore, information on release dates are often not communicated to TOSU or people are released with little or no notification so TOSU could not include these clients in the survey. Finally, early release is becoming more prevalent in an effort to alleviate overcrowding and again, TOSU may not be informed about this or receive the information in time to engage with the person.

Administrative data held by the Irish Prisons Service is often presented in other research to estimate the level of hidden homelessness in prisons using figures for no fixed abode (NFA) as a proxy (see for example O'Sullivan et al., 2024b). Figure 14 shows the number and proportion of persons committed to prison who declare that they have no fixed abode (NFA), from this administrative data.

42 See https://www.irishtimes.com/crime-law/2026/04/20/crisis-response-group-to-prison-overcrowding-to-meet-after-warning-of-unprecedented-strain/

43 See https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/20-October-2025.pdf

Figure 14: Number and proportion of persons with no fixed abode committed to prison by year



Source: Irish Prison Service yearly prison population statistics, see here

This figure averaged 266 a year or 2.1% of all persons committed, in the 10 years between 2007 and 2016. The number of NFAs began to increase consistently from 2017, apart from a decrease during 2020 and 2021 when the Covid pandemic restrictions led to a reduced prevalence of certain crimes and reduced Court activity led to lower committals. The national average figure for NFAs stood at 442 or 7.1% of all persons committed between 2017 and 2022.[44] In 2023, a total of 617 (9.5%) prisoners declared that they had no fixed abode on committal and in 2024, this number rose to 835 or 11.6% of all persons committed nationally. The Irish Prison Service data does not disaggregate NFAs by individual prison however, it shows that a total of 1,854 prisoners were in custody in the three prisons in the Dublin region on the count date.[45] Taking the 11.6% rate of NFAs, this suggests that there could have been about 215 prisoners declaring no fixed abode on entry to a prison in Dublin. As outlined in the introduction, NFAs are not a reliable indicator of homelessness in Irish prisons and likely underestimate the size of this cohort, as people often give the address of a shelter, family or friend and growing numbers are now being held prior to deportation.

A Systematic review of results from five studies from 2005 to 2015, with a total sample size of 1,523 prisoners, found a 17.4% prevalence rate of homelessness in Irish prisons (Gulati et al., 2018). These studies used surveys, semi-structured interviews and retrospective record reviews to estimate the reported rate of homelessness at the time of committal. Estimates from this study and figures for NFAs from administrative data, are not directly comparable with results from the EHC because they represent the number of PEH on entry to prison, while the EHC attempted to quantify the number of people who would be homeless following an imminent release from prison.

44 The number of committals to prison began to decrease as a direct impact of the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 which came into operation in January 2016. It is both this decrease in committals, along with an increase in number of declared NFAs which led to a spike in the proportion of NFAs from 2017.

45 See Irish Prison service daily prison population statistics at https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/20-October-2025.pdf

Acute Mental Health Units

The results for PEH in acute mental health units were also relatively low however, as outlined in the methodology section, a sample of only two of the eight units in Dublin were invited to participate. This was because individual ethical approval was required from each hospital and the approval process was extremely complicated, lengthy and bureaucratic.

Table 9: Summary of eligibility in participating acute mental health units

	No. adults	%
Eligible to participate	34	41.5%
Not eligible to participate	48	58.5%
Total number of inpatients on 20th Oct 2025	**82**	**100%**

Note: A third eligibility criterion, those who did not have capacity to consent, applied in mental health units. In total, 8 patients present on the count date, lacked capacity to consent.

Table 10: Summary of consent and participation in acute mental health units

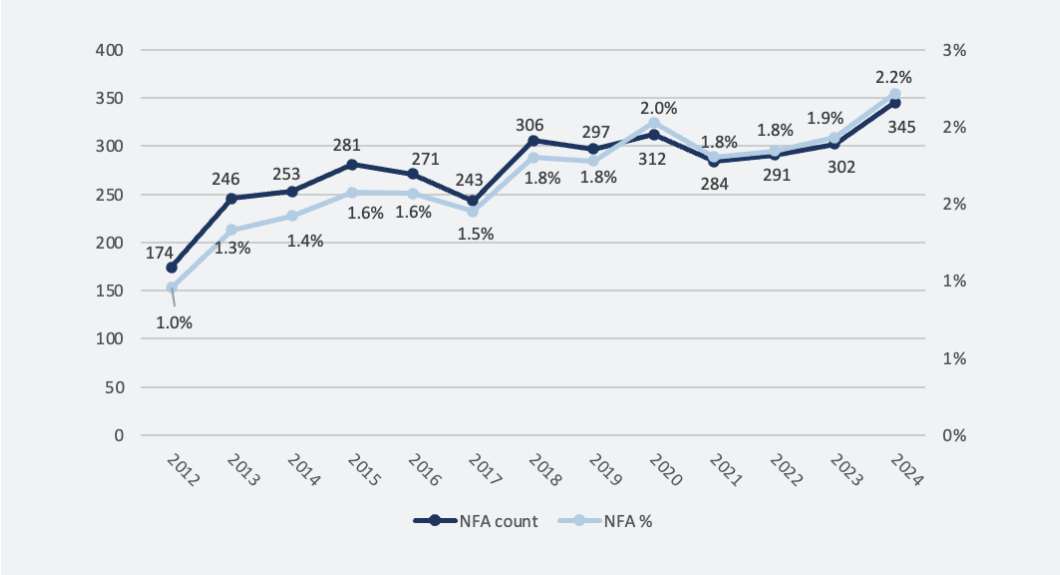
	No. adults	% of eligible patients	% of all patients
Could not participate due to transfer/discharge	3	8.8%	3.7%
Lacked capacity to consent	8	23.5%	9.8%
Did not give consent to participate	11	32.4%	13.4%
Gave consent to participate	12	35.3%	14.6%
Total	**34**	**100%**	**41.5%**

Table 9 shows that 34 (41.5%) of inpatients present on the count date were eligible (met the criteria) to participate in the study. Three of the eligible patients were discharged or transferred before they could complete a survey and a further eight were eligible but lacked the capacity to consent, due to intellectual disability or dementia (see table 10). A total of 11 or almost a third of eligible patients chose not to consent to participation, mainly due to suspicions associated with paranoia. This again, demonstrates the challenges associated with using informed consent as a legal basis for collecting data. In total, 12 or 35.3% of all eligible patients consented to participate in the study. This means that in total, 14.6% of all patients present in the two participating hospitals on the count date, were experiencing homelessness under the ETHOS Light criteria.

The EHC results for PEH in mental health units are also not directly comparable with figures from administrative data held by the Health Research Board (HRB).[46] As with the prison data, these records contain information on patients who declare that they have no fixed abode (NFA) on admission to a mental health unit nationally.

46 The National Psychiatric Inpatient Reporting System (NPIRS), managed by the Health Research Board (HRB), gathers data on patient admissions to, and discharges from, psychiatric hospitals and units throughout Ireland.

Figure 15: Number and proportion of persons with no fixed abode admitted to mental health units by year



Source: Health Research Board (HRB) statistics in Central Statistics Office (CSO) data, see https://www.cso.ie/en/databases/healthresearchboard/

Figure 15 shows that in the ten years between 2012 and 2021, the average figure for NFAs was 267 or 1.6% of all admissions nationally, ranging from 174 in 2012 to 312 in 2020. In 2022, 2023 and 2024 the national figure for NFAs was 291, 302 and 345 respectively, representing an average of 2% of all admissions. The HRB administrative data does not show the number of NFAs by individual units but it does show that for 2024, a total of 3% of all admissions to the Dublin and Midlands region, where the two participating mental health units are located, were NFAs.[47]

A recent UK study quantified the total observed instances of hospital admissions for PEH from three routine hospital data sources (Luchenski et al., 2025). These were NFAs, referrals from Homeless GPs (HGPs) i.e. GPs that exclusively serve PEH, and the International Classification of Diseases version 10 (ICD-10) which has a code for homelessness. Luchenski et al. discuss the limitations of these measures which lead to underestimates for example, they point to the same 'convenient address' and data quality challenges with NFAs noted in the methodology section of this report. They also highlight potential selection bias with referrals from specialist health services such as HGPs, and point out that ICD coding of homelessness in routine hospital data is inconsistent. When they modelled an estimate to account for this known underreporting, they concluded that there were five times as many hospital admissions for PEH than were observed directly in the official data.

47 See https://www.hrb.ie/publication/activities-of-irish-psychiatric-units-and-hospitals-2024/.

A study in one acute mental health unit in Dublin (Tallaght University Hospital) by Cowman and Whittey (2016), found that an average of 18 or 38% of inpatients had a housing need at any one point in time during the research.[48] This is in line with results from the EHC, which show that 41.5% of inpatients were eligible for inclusion in the study. Cowman and Whittey also found that an average of 39 patients or one patient every 9–10 days, was discharged to homeless services over the course of the study.[49] Furthermore, an average of 13 or 28% of inpatients were experiencing 'delayed discharge', defined as clinically fit for discharge but a discharge not imminent within 48 hours, and 98% of delayed discharge patients had a housing need. When this study was repeated in 2018, it found the average number of patients with a housing need had doubled to 26 or 55%, while the average number of patients discharged to homeless services dropped to 29, or one patient every 13 days. The average number of delayed discharges increased to 15 or 32%, with 12 or 26% requiring specific mental health or nursing care support (Cowman et al., 2023). While DRHE are not directly responsible for the accommodation needs of those awaiting discharge to congregated living, nursing care or similar, this cohort are still considered homeless under the ETHOS light definition.

Residential addiction treatment centres

Ethical approval from the HSE was required to include these services in the study but it was not as complex as the approval required for hospitals, and all treatment centres in the HSE Dublin and Midlands area could be included on the same application form.[50] The treatment services included are a sample, rather than the full compliment of centres providing Section 38 services to the HSE in this region.[51] However, invitations to participate in the study were sent to 7 distinct services and all seven accepted. Separate approval would have been required to include services in other HSE regions. The same eligibility criteria applied as in hospitals, so that only those who would be discharged into homelessness or those experiencing delayed discharge could be included in the study. Two addiction treatment centres reported that none of their clients were eligible for inclusion on the count date. While there were still challenges with the consent process, some services found that they could give information to clients in the evenings or during resident meetings so this process was less of a barrier to participation, compared to other services.

Table 8 shows that a total of 52 PEH were in residential addiction treatment centres on the EHC date. There is no existing source of data that estimates the number of PEH in addiction treatment centres in Ireland. The PASS data contains information in the 'reason for homelessness' field that identifies clients who enter DHLGH funded homeless

48 This was based on data collected weekly over a one year period, from nurse managers and key nurses using their broad interpretation of each patient's housing need.

49 These were to official services only, for example hostels and state funded hotels and B&Bs. They did not include discharges to unconventional accommodation (ETHOS Light 5) or to family and friends (ETHOS Light 6).

50 The Health Service Executive (HSE) divides service delivery across six health regions to improve integration of hospital and community care, enhance local decision-making, and align services with population needs.

51 Section 38 services under the Health Service Executive (HSE) refer to health and personal social services provided by organisations funded under the Health Act 2004. These services are typically operated by not-for-profit acute hospitals and organisations providing social care, such as disability services and elder care.

accommodation as a result of leaving a treatment centre (or hospital, prison, IPAS or other institution). However, this is an indication of those who have already left such institutions and as outlined in the methodology, there are data quality and consistency issues with the 'reasons for homelessness' field. Over the full last quarter of 2025, a total of 112 people were reported to have entered homeless accommodation due to leaving an institution (including care, hospital, prison, refuge).[52]

International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)

The Department of Justice DoJ provided data on former IPAs with legal status to remain in Ireland, but unable to exit reception accommodation (IPAS) in Dublin, due to the housing crisis. Table 8 shows that this stood at 1,077 on the date of the EHC. The DoJ publish the number of people in IPAS weekly and this shows a total of 10,809 for the Dublin region on 19th October 2025.[53] Approximately 30% of people in IPAS centres across Ireland that week were children, suggesting that about 7,566 of those in Dublin were adults. This implies that the figure of 1,077 represents approximately 14% of all adults in IPAS in Dublin.

While PASS data can estimate the number of people who enter homeless accommodation from IPAS (see page 26), data on the number with status who are unable to exit IPAS are not readily available and are usually made public through Parliamentary Questions (PQs) or other research. A report by the European Migration Network (EMN) based in the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), shows that nationally, 'approximately 22% of those in IPAS accommodation had been granted status as of January 2024, a significant increase from 2020, when around 14% of those in IPAS accommodation had status, but a decrease from the peak of almost 30% in July 2022' (Murphy and Stapleton, 2024).

As outlined in the methodology section above, current policy involves moving former IPAs out of IPAS to free up accommodation for new arrivals. As refugees are often moved great distances away from the accommodation centre where they gained legal status, only including those remaining in IPAS in the Dublin region leads to an undercount of those who gained status in Dublin.

6.3.2 ETHOS Light 5 and 6 – non-conventional dwellings and living with family and friends

Data for those in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 living situations on the count date, was collected by a sample of homeless day services in contact with these cohorts. Table 11 shows that 46 PEH were counted in ETHOS Light 5 or non-conventional dwellings, and 60 were included in ETHOS Light 6 or living with family and friends, giving a total of 106. The figures for those in ETHOS Light 5 are further broken down by type of non-conventional dwelling, and most (20) were in 'mobile dwellings'. It's important to note that this does not include Travellers whose cultural choice is to live in mobile dwellings. Also, as noted above, the categories and subcategories for ETHOS Light 1 and 5 were distinguished and clarified in training sessions to prevent any cross over or double counting.

52 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/32fe9a8f/Homeless_Quarterly_Progress_Report_2025_Q4.pdf

53 See https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.gov.ie%2Fstatic%2Fdocuments%2F2af3caf1%2FIPAS_Weekly_report_wk_ending_19_10_2025_short_version_final.pptx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

Table 11: Dublin region EHC 2025 results by ETHOS Light 5 non-conventional dwelling type and ETHOS Light 6

ETHOS Light category		No. adults
ETHOS Light 5 – Non-conventional dwelling	Non-conventional buildings: Garage, shed, shack, garden house, commercial building (squat)	9
	Mobile dwellings: caravan, camper, boat	20
	Insecure conventional dwellings: Occupied building with/out permission (squat), housing without basic facilities (e.g without bathroom/kitchen), housing without rental contract (informal subletting)	16
	Unknown	1
	ETHOS Light 5 total	46
ETHOS Light 6 – With family/ friends	ETHOS Light 6 total	60
Total		**106**

The results for these cohorts are also lower than expected considering the limited previous research that exists and issues highlighted in the methodology section, such as women's pathways into homelessness and local area connection rules etc. This is despite findings from other countries that systematically include counts of these groups, finding a higher level of homelessness among these cohorts, especially ETHOS Light 6 (Baptista et al., 2022, Hermans et al., 2026). Again, this is related to the survey method. Firstly, like other studies, the EHC excludes those not in contact with homeless services, and PEH in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 situations may avoid or be unaware of services. For example, in a study of single people using homelessness services, Reeve and Batty, 2011 (in Clarke, 2016), found the majority of service users had experience of hidden homelessness but 'very little is known about how many non-service users also have experience of hidden homelessness' (Clarke, 2016, p.61). Secondly, as already discussed, our sample size of homeless services was small and the consent process was particularly difficult in these fast moving day services where language barriers, staff shortages and time constraints presented the most challenges.

No single source of data to measure the extent of homelessness in ETHOS Light categories 5 or 6 exists in Ireland. Previous research highlights a lack of consensus in defining 'hidden homelessness', or the methods that should be used to measure it. This difficulty in identification and measurement, means that hidden homelessness is often underestimated (Clarke, 2016; Deleu et al, 2021; Hearne and McSweeney, 2023). Clarke (2016), draws on results from an online survey of a representative sample of over 2,000 young people (aged 16–25) in the UK. She found that over a third (35%) had experienced sofa surfing (ETHOS Light 6) at some point in their life, with 20% or one in five, doing so in the last year. Sofa surfing was defined as those staying 'with friends or members of their extended family on their floor or sofa, as they have nowhere else to go'. In total, 9% of young people had stayed in an ETHOS Light 5 situation (a squat, abandoned building or night bus).

A study carried out by Simon Communities of Ireland and Northern Ireland, found that 3.8% of households in their representative study sample were currently experiencing some form of hidden homelessness in the Republic of Ireland (Cunningham, 2024). This included those staying with family and friends (ETHOS Light 6), and those sleeping in a car or work van, a tent or caravan, workplace, bus station, hospital waiting room or café, or squatting (ETHOS Light 5). With 1.86 million households in the Republic of Ireland, this equates to a total of about 70,680 households currently experiencing hidden homelessness. In a previous poll carried out by Simon Communities of Ireland, 5% of a representative adult population described themselves as 'staying temporarily with another household, because they don't have a regular address of their own' (Red C, 2022).

Hearne and McSweeney (2023) use various disparate data sources, as proxies to estimate the number of PEH in different categories of the ETHOS typology.[54] ETHOS has slightly different categories compared to ETHOS Light, which is a pragmatic tool to aid data collection in the statistical measurement of homelessness. The more comprehensive ETHOS typology, was designed to provide a conceptual and operational definition for use in a range of policy and practice purposes. Hearne and McSweeney draw on data published in the Summary of Social Housing 2022 report (SSHA)[55] to estimate the number of individuals in inadequate housing (ETHOS Light 5), and the number living with family and friends (ETHOS Light 6). They arrive at a figure of 32,736 individuals in ETHOS light 6. This is made up of 17,984 individuals whose current tenure in the SSHA is 'living with friends/relatives', and 14,752 whose tenure is 'living with Parents'. The estimate for 'living with friends/relatives', is based on a total of 6,661 households reported in the SSHA, which they multiply by the average household size of 2.7, to reach the number of individuals. The figure of 14,752 for 'living with Parents' is that reported in the SSHA, so they must assume these households are one-adult-only. Hearne and McSweeney estimate that 2,430 individuals are living in temporary/non conventional structures, which aligns with ETHOS Light 5. This is based on the figure of 900 households with a 'requirement for Traveller specific accommodation' in the SSHA 2022, and is multiplied by 2.7 to give the number of individuals. This figure is presumably used on the assumption that social housing applicants with this accommodation requirement, are currently living in caravans or mobile homes. However, this is not a valid estimate for ETHOS Light 5 because this field was used as a proxy to identify Travellers in the SSHA data before the Traveller identifier was introduced in 2022, and not all these social housing applicants are currently living in a caravan or mobile home. Furthermore, some Travellers chose to live in a caravan or mobile home due to their cultural heritage. Also, estimating a figure for number of individuals from the number of households reported in the SSHA, may also be unreliable given that the majority of households in the SSHA are one adult only (56%).

This shows that using data from the SSHA as a proxy to estimate the number of PEH in ETHOS Light 5 and 6 is not straightforward and can lead to unreliable findings. For example, this administrative data was not designed for research purposes, and there are inconsistencies between and across local authorities in how information is recorded. It only includes those who make an application for social housing, so excludes those who do

54 See https://www.feantsa.org/ethos

55 The Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) collates point-in-time information from each local authority, about households in their functional area that are qualified for, and waiting on social housing.

not apply because they think they will be waiting too long, or those who lack the literacy skills and social capital to navigate the application system. Not all of those who apply will meet all the eligibility criteria, so they may not qualify to be added to the housing list. The Simon Communities research cites a review carried out by DRHE, which found that 43.5% (2,481) of households in emergency accommodation did not have an active social housing application on the 23rd November 2023 (Cunningham, 2024). It's possible that ETHOS Light 5 and 6 cohorts may be even less likely to have an active social housing application, given their profile, their likelihood of moving between living situations and addresses, and that they are more impacted by local area connection rules. Finally, Hearne and McSweeney also estimate that 2,421 individuals live in 'unfit housing' and 9,293 in 'extreme overcrowding' based on categories from the 'basis of need for accommodation' field in the SSHA 2022. While these are operational categories in the ETHOS Typology, they are not used in ETHOS Light as categories to measure homelessness. The category of unfit housing in the SSHA, is mainly used by local authorities to record Travellers in substandard accommodation, including a caravan or mobile home. This may explain why it aligns closely with the figure for Traveller specific accommodation which Hearne and McSweeney use as a proxy for 'temporary/non conventional structures'. It is therefore likely that the figures for people in 'temporary/non conventional structures' and in 'unfit housing' are not mutually exclusive. Similarly those in 'extreme overcrowding' which is also taken from the SSHA 'basis of need for accommodation' field, may overlap with other operational categories in Hearne and McSweeney figures such as those currently 'living with family/friends'.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Example participant information sheet (for STAs not on PASS)

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what taking part will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if anything is not clear or you would like more information. Then take time to decide if you want to take part.

What is this research about?

This research is part of a 2 year project funded by the European Commission. The number of people who are homeless will be counted in 35 European cities including Cork and Dublin.

What are the aims of the research?

The research aims to

- find a common way to define homelessness in different European cities
- find a common way to count people who are homeless in different European cities
- provide some basic detail about people who are homeless like age, gender, nationality

Who is doing this research?

The overall project is managed by a team of researchers at the University of KU Leuven in Belgium. Focus Ireland will lead the study for Cork and Dublin in Ireland.

Funded by the European Union

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Why is it important?

At present, only people who are sleeping rough or living in some forms of homeless accommodation are counted as homeless in Ireland. Over two years, this study will try to broaden who is counted as homeless and make comparisons across European cities easier.

How will the study be done?

The study will use 'ETHOS light' to count people in different homeless living situations (see the last page of this Information Sheet for details). This includes people who are sleeping rough and living in homeless accommodation, but also people in unusual housing situations or living with family and friends.

Some temporary supported accommodation for people who would otherwise be homeless, is not included in official homeless figures in Ireland at present. This study will carry out a survey to count people in this situation, and to get some basic information like their age and gender. You are being invited to participate in this study because you fit into this category.

Do I have to take part?

You do not have to take part and you will not be treated any differently or lose services if you decide not to take part. Equally, taking part in the study will not lead to your housing and/or support needs being met.

If you do decide to take part and then change your mind, that is completely ok. If you begin the survey and then decide not to continue, that is also fine and any answers you have given can be removed. If you complete a survey and then change your mind, you will be asked what you wish to happen to any data you have provided up that point.

What will I be asked to do?

Taking part in this research is completely up to you. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Taking part will involve filling in a survey. You can do this with the help of staff in the service you use.

The survey asks for the following details

- your month and year of birth and your gender,
- your household composition and how many children live with you,
- your citizenship, residency status and what country you were born in,
- how long you have been homeless and what led to you becoming homeless.

Will my data be private and confidential?

All answers you give in the survey will be confidential and private. The only time this may not apply is if you say you intend to harm yourself or others, or to harm or abuse a child. Legal guidelines will be followed and fully explained to you in this unlikely case.

Your name or any other personal identifier like a public service number will **not** be recorded. You will be asked for the first letter of your first name and the first and last letter of your second name, so the researcher can make a unique code for your data. These codes will only be used to make sure you are not counted twice. Once double counts are checked for, the codes will be removed and it will not be possible to identify anyone who completed a survey.

Data protection

The survey data you provide will be sent safely to a database in Leuven University and only the researchers there will be able to see to it. They will send it to the researcher in Focus Ireland using a secure electronic system.

The Focus Ireland Data Protection Officer oversees all activities involving the processing of personal data for this study. You have the right to access your personal data and to have any inaccuracies corrected. You can contact the Data Protection Officer at dpo@focusireland.ie. See Focus Ireland Privacy Policy for more information about your privacy rights in this study.

How will my data be used?

The data will be used to show the total number of homeless people in Cork and Dublin and the number in different homeless living situations for example, in temporary supported accommodation. It will also show for example, what age group they are in, their citizenship and why they became homeless. This can be compared with similar figures in other European cities.

Who to contact for more information

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact the researcher by email oona.kenny@focusireland.ie or by phone 087 798 9738 or ask your key worker.

ETHOS Light — EUROPEAN TYPOLOGY OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY		LIVING SITUATION		DEFINITION
1	People living rough	1	Public spaces / external spaces	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided
		4	Temporary accommodation	
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	
		6	Women's shelters or refuge accommodation	
4	People living in institutions	7	Health care institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
		10	Non-conventional buildings	
		11	Temporary structures	
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Appendix 2: Consent form

Please read the statements below and tick the box if you agree. Please ask any questions you may have when reading each of the statements. Thank you for your time.

Statement	Tick box
› I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study, and I have downloaded/been given a copy of the information sheet to keep.	❑
› The information has been fully explained to me and I have had a chance to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.	❑
› I understand that taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and if I decide that I do not want to take part, I can stop at any time without giving a reason.	❑
› I understand that deciding not to take part will not affect the service I receive here.	❑
› I understand that taking part in this study will not lead to my housing or support needs being met.	❑
› I understand that I will not be paid for taking part in this study.	❑
› I understand that a code will be used to identify my data and this will be removed after checking for double counts.	❑
› I understand my personal data will be processed in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only data needed to achieve the research aims will be used. My data will be kept confidential throughout the study and my privacy will be protected.	❑
› I know how to contact the researcher if necessary.	❑
› I agree to take part in this research study.	❑

Please give the reason a client did not want to/was unable to participate, if known (the client does not need to sign the form in this case):

Participant Name (Block Capitals)	Participant Signature	Date
Data collector Name (Block Capitals)	Data collector Signature	Date

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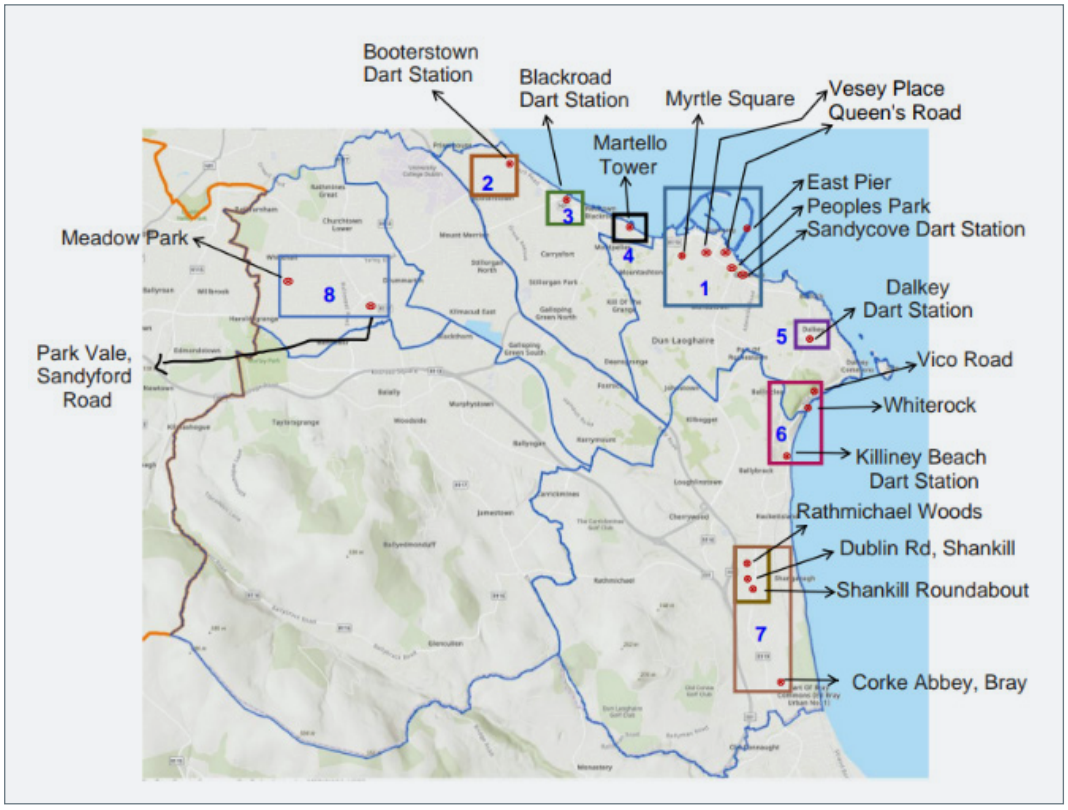
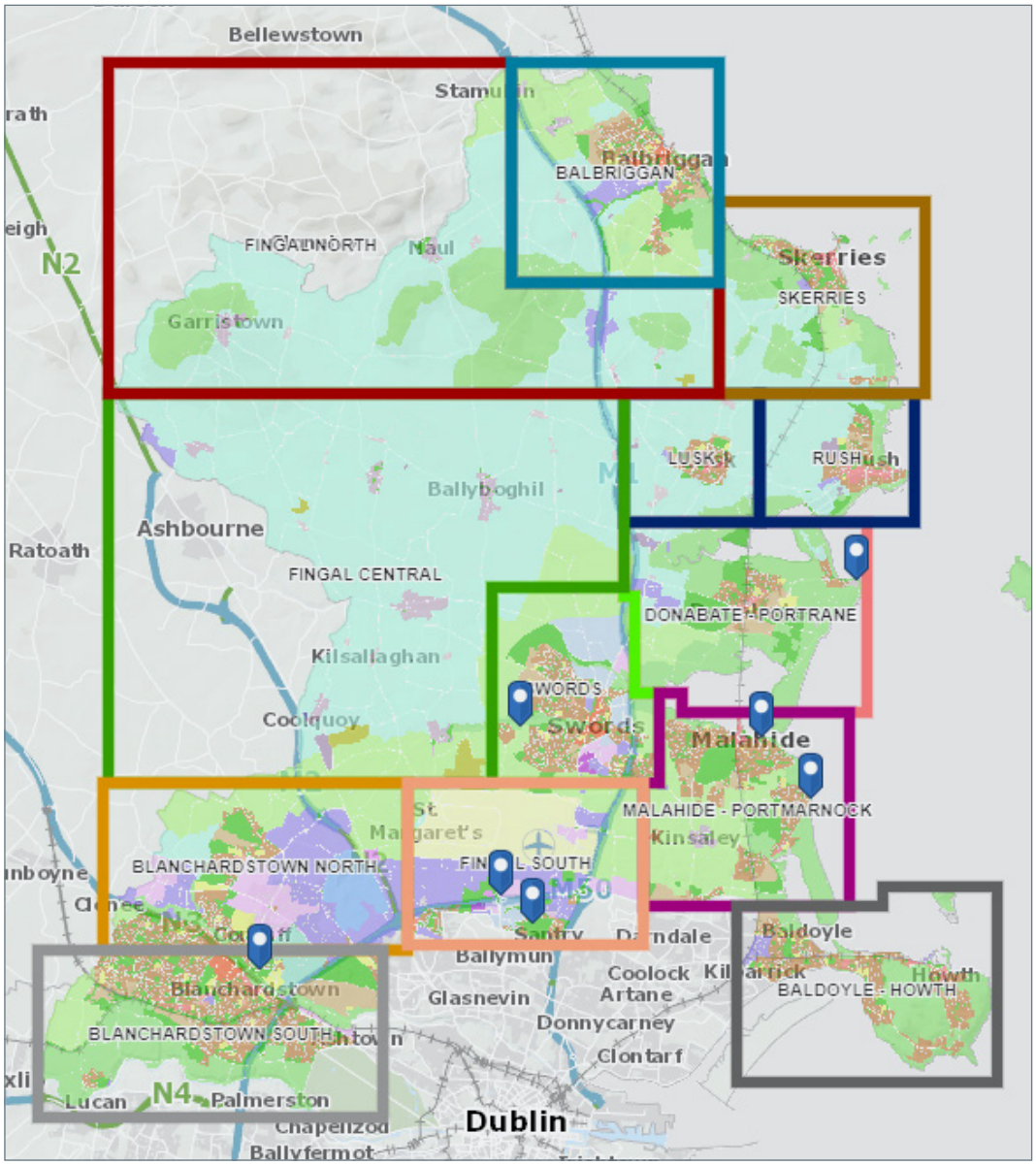
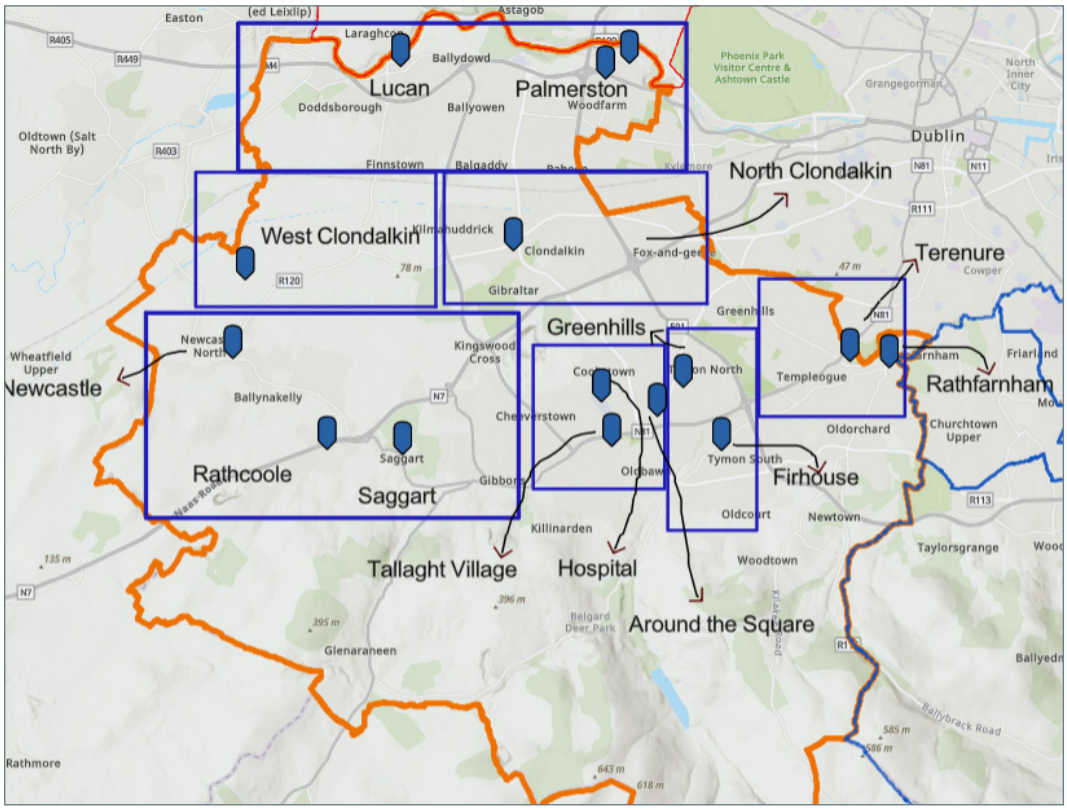
Appendix 3: Areas covered as part of the Rough Sleeper Count in Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown



Appendix 4: Areas covered as part of the Rough Sleeper Count in Fingal



Appendix 5: Areas covered as part of the Rough Sleeper Count in Fingal



focusireland.ie

Head Office
9–12 High Street,
Christchurch, Dublin 8
D08 E1W0

T 01 881 5900
LoCall 1850 204 205
F 01 881 5950
E info@focusireland.ie

Registered Charity
CHY 7220

FOCUS Ireland