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Social Impact Assessment Series

Homeless Services

JANE BURMANJE*

IGEES UNIT* & HOUSING VOTE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND REFORM

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Executive Summary

This paper presents a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of Homeless Services in Ireland. It provides an overview of the trends in numbers accessing services and trends in expenditure on these services from 2016 to 2020 with a particular focus on emergency homeless housing supports. It also presents a demographic profile of the service user in the Dublin region in 2020.

Trends in Service Use

- The number of homeless individuals in Ireland increased each year from 2016 to 2019, before falling in 2020. Based on the annual average of monthly data, the number of homeless individuals accessing emergency accommodation increased year on year from 6,419 in 2016 to 10,255 in 2019, a growth of 60%, before falling by 11.6% in 2020 to 9,062. This fall was largely driven by families exiting homelessness while total numbers still remain above 2017 levels. Numbers of homeless families fell by 27% in 2020. In contrast, the numbers of homeless single individuals have increased each year from 2016 to 2020.
- The majority of the homeless population accessing emergency accommodation are concentrated in the Dublin region (71%).

Expenditure

- Exchequer funding provided to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage towards expenditure incurred on the provision of homeless services under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 has increased each year over the period 2016-2019, from €89m to €165m, an increase of 85%. €271m was provided in 2020 although it should be noted that 2020 was an exceptional year as a result of carryover costs from 2019 and additional services provided due to the pandemic.
- The majority of this funding is provided to the Dublin Region, 76% on average each year. This is in line with homeless numbers which are concentrated in the Dublin Region.
- The majority of homelessness expenditure each year is attributed to the provision of emergency accommodation, accounting for 83% (€188m) of total homelessness expenditure (€226m) for Local Authorities' in 2019.

Profile of the Homeless Services User

Analysing a dataset of adult homeless individuals accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in 2020, the key characteristics of this group are:

- **The majority of service users are male.** 62% of adult homeless individuals accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in 2020 are male.
- **The majority of services users are young with 45% under the age of 35.**
- **The majority of service users are Irish.** The majority of adults accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region are Irish, 59% (4,954) of total.
- **They are more likely to be single than in a couple.** The majority are single (75%: 5,626) while 25% (1,898) are in a couple. If they have children, the service user is likely to have some or all children living with them while single service users with children are predominantly female.
- **The most common self-reported reason for homelessness were reasons relating to family circumstances.** Family circumstance reasons account for 44% of reasons given for homelessness with the breakdown of a relationship with a parent accounting for almost one quarter (24%) of this 44%. The remaining 56% self-reported reasons related to the private rental sector, leaving care and general other reasons as their main reason for homelessness. It should be noted that multiple reasons for homelessness fall under the Leaving Care category such as leaving prison, leaving care related to mental illness, leaving hospital and leaving direct provision.

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1. Introduction

Homelessness is an evolving social issue which is widely acknowledged as a highly complex social and public health phenomenon (Mabhala, Yohannes and Griffith, 2017). Providing well organised, co-ordinated and integrated homeless services to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the focus of moving people out of homelessness and into long-term sustainable housing as quickly as possible is a key priority of Government as set out in the Programme for Government and Housing for All: a New Housing Plan for Ireland. In 2020, there were on average 9,062 people each month recorded as homeless and accessing emergency accommodation which is a 41% increase on numbers recorded in 2016.¹

There is no universally accepted definition of homelessness.² In this Social Impact Assessment (SIA), those referred to as homeless relate to those who have been regarded as homeless by housing authorities under Section 2 of the Housing Act, 1988 which states that:

“—A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purposes of this Act 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.”

This paper applies the SIA framework to homeless services primarily focusing on emergency housing supports. A SIA is defined as “an evidence-based methodology which attempts to assess the impact of policy on households’ financial positions”. The SIA Framework is a first step in the process of developing “budget and policy proofing as a means of advancing equality, reducing poverty, and strengthening economic and social rights (Lawless and Reilly, 2016)”. While the provision of public services such as homeless services do not directly impact a household’s financial position in monetary terms, services can indirectly impact a household’s financial position through their effect on household welfare to date the SIA framework has not been applied to the policy area of homeless services.³

The paper presents trends in expenditure and trends in numbers of those experiencing homelessness and accessing homeless services over the five year time period 2016 to 2020.⁴ Trends in expenditure on services focus in particular on services provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988. The objective of this paper is to:

- Analyse trends in numbers of those experiencing homelessness and accessing homeless services;

¹ The average monthly figure for each year is calculated using monthly data as reported and published by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

² There are formal definitions of homelessness such as the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS).

³ O’Callaghan, Kilkenny and Farrell. 2018. Social Impact Assessment Series : Social Housing Supports Available at: <https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SIA-Series-Social-Housing-Supports-1.pdf>

⁴ This timeframe was selected for analysis as the current framework for data collection and publishing of this data relating to homelessness services began in 2016.

- Provide an overview of homeless services offered to those experiencing homelessness with a particular focus on housing and health supports;
- Provide an overview of and analyse trends in the expenditure on homeless services provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988; and,
- Present a demographic profile of those experiencing homelessness in terms of gender, age, household type and self-reported reason for homelessness.

Section 2 gives an overview of the trends in numbers of those homeless and accessing homeless services and also provides a brief review of the drivers of homelessness in Ireland. Section 3 presents an overview of the homeless supports and Section 4 gives an overview and trend analysis of the expenditure on these supports with a particular focus on housing supports as provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988. Section 5 describes the data and methodology used to create the demographic profile of homeless individuals which is presented in Section 6. Section 7 concludes.

2. Demographic Context and Drivers of Homelessness in Ireland

This section presents an overview of the numbers and regional locations of those experiencing homelessness. The figures presented in this section are sourced from the official homelessness statistics published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) on a monthly basis and refer to the national number of homeless persons in emergency accommodation funded and overseen by housing authorities during a specific count week, typically the last full week of the month. The reports are produced through the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS).⁵ A short literature review of the drivers of homelessness in Ireland is then presented.

2.1. Demographic Context

The number of individuals accessing emergency accommodation grew each year from 6,419 in 2016 to 10,255 in 2019, an increase of 59.8%.⁶ The number of individuals accessing emergency accommodation peaked in October 2019 with 10,514 individuals up from a low point of 5,715 individuals recorded in January 2016. This is demonstrated in Figure 1. There was a fall in the numbers of those accessing emergency accommodation in 2020, decreasing from an annual average in 2019 of 10,255 individuals to 9,062 individuals which is equal to a decrease of 11.6%. However, analysing the group of those accessing emergency accommodation over this time it is clear that the fall in group population is driven by families experiencing homelessness.

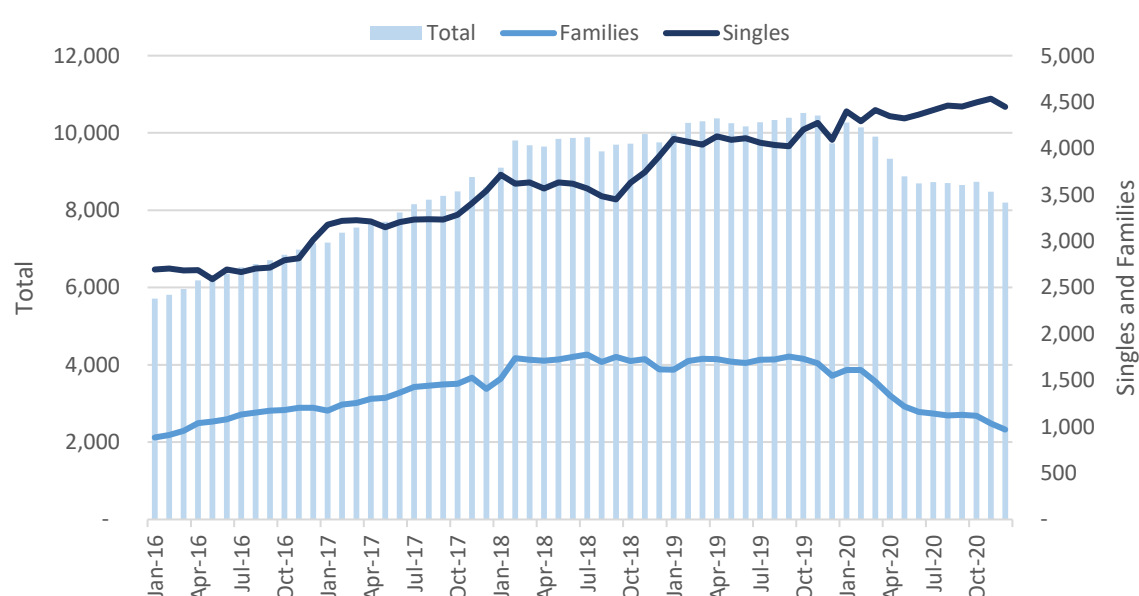
In 2019, single adults made up 40% of the total each month, adults in a family made up 23.5% and dependents (children) 36.5%. In 2020, adults from families fell to 19.8% of total and dependents fell to 31.5% of total. From 2018 to 2019, the annual average of family units accessing emergency accommodation each month fell by 0.5% from 1,704 to 1,695 and subsequently fell by a further 27% in 2020 from 1,695 to 1,245 families. The number of families accessing emergency accommodation

⁵ The Department of HLGH publish regional reports monthly and quarterly progress reports outlining the numbers of those experiencing homelessness as defined by those accessing state funded emergency accommodation by age, gender, whether the individual is in a family unit or single and the type of emergency accommodation being accessed. The quarterly progress reports detail the exits from and preventions from entering emergency accommodation along with duration in emergency accommodation on a quarterly basis.

⁶ Figures for each month in a given calendar year are aggregated and divided by 12 to find the average number of individuals accessing these services each month for the year.

reached a peak of 1,778 in July 2018 from 884 in January 2016. Dependents in emergency accommodation fell 23.8% from 3,746 in 2019 to 2,854 in 2020. Dependents reached a peak of 3,873 in September 2019 from 1,830 recorded in January 2016. In contrast, single individuals experiencing homelessness and in emergency accommodation have increased each year from 2016 to 2020. From 2019 to 2020, singles experiencing homelessness increased 7.5% from 4,103 to 4,412 individuals. Singles reached a peak of 4,536 in November 2020 from 2,590 in May 2016. Figure 1 shows the monthly figures of individuals accessing emergency accommodation and also monthly figures of families and singles.⁷ In December 2020, nationally there were 8,200 homeless individuals; 970 family units, consisting of 1,426 family adults and 2,327 dependents, and 4,447 singles accessing emergency accommodation.

Figure 1 Singles, Families and Total Numbers Accessing Emergency Accommodation Monthly 2016 - 2020



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (HLGH) - Homeless Reports

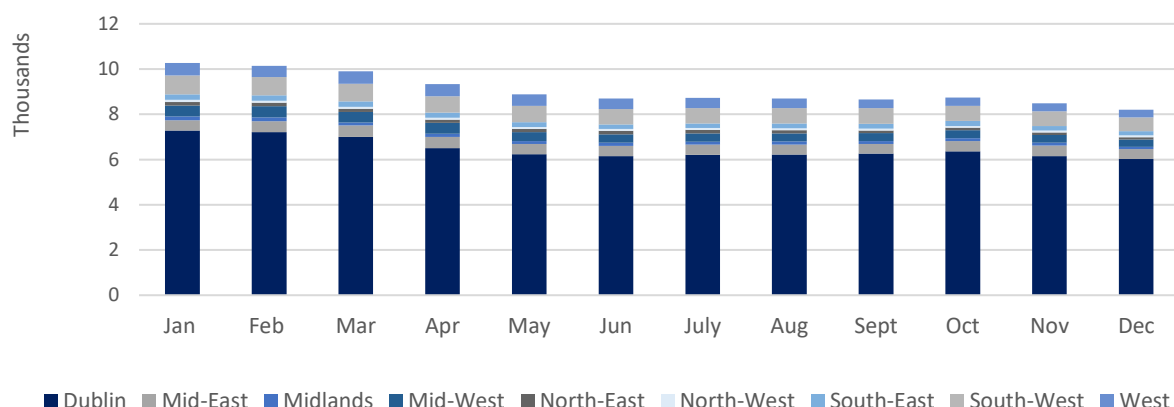
The majority of individuals accessing emergency accommodation each month in 2020 were located in the Dublin region. This is demonstrated in Figure 2, which shows distribution of the homelessness population by region in Ireland. On average, the Dublin region accounts for 71% (6,468) of the total homelessness population each month in 2020. 7% of those experiencing homelessness on average each month are located in the South-West, 5% in the West and 5% in the Mid-East. The remaining 12% is distributed over the Mid-West, North East, North-West and South-East regions.

During the week of 23-29 December 2020 there were 5,873 homeless adults, singles and family adults, accessing emergency accommodation. The counties presenting the largest numbers of homeless adults were county Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. This indicates that homelessness is concentrated in counties with urban areas. 71% (4,158) of these are located in the county of Dublin, 6.5% (385) are located in county Cork, 3.6% (209) in county Galway and 3.5% (206) in county Limerick.

⁷ Annual averages of individuals each month are used as there is substantial variation in monthly figures each year. For yearly changes of total, adults, dependents, families and singles accessing emergency accommodation using July as a reference point see Annex 2.

Figure 2 Total Number of Individuals Accessing Emergency Accommodation Monthly in 2020

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (HLGH) - Homeless Reports



The Central Statistics Office (CSO) 2016 Profile on Homelessness and the official homelessness statistics reports published by the Department of HLGH present information on the age and gender of homeless individuals. The CSO developed a national profile of homelessness using data collected as part of the Census, the most recent of which was collected on the 24th of April 2016 (CSO, 2016).⁸ The CSO found that nationally, 58% (4,018) of those experiencing homelessness were male. The official homelessness statistics reports indicate that there are more males experiencing homelessness than females. The CSO found that the average age of a homeless person Ireland was 30.5 compared to the average of the population at the time which was 37.4. In relation to nationality, the CSO found that 84.6% of homeless individuals who lived in Dublin were Irish with 15.4% non-Irish. For the rest of Ireland, 88.5% of homeless individuals were Irish with 11.5% non-Irish.

2.2. Drivers of Homelessness in Ireland

This section summarises the existing evidence on the drivers of homelessness in Ireland, identifying the main causes of homelessness at a high level and, where relevant, identifying how these causes vary for different sub-groups among the homeless population. The literature on homelessness is not concurrent on the best way to theorise homelessness. However, recent literature focusses on the complex interlinking between structural and individual factors which give rise to homelessness.

Structural factors create differing risk levels among subsections of the population whereby those that are also experiencing personal issues are more at risk of homelessness. Sociological literature broadly refers to social structures as “patterns of social relationships and social institutions that are both pervasive and enduring” of which the most commonly cited social structures within the homelessness literature include housing and the labour market (Johnson, Scutella, Tseng and Wood, 2015: pg.4). In the context of homelessness, individual factors are personal characteristics which might increase the likelihood of that individual experiencing homelessness during their life cycle. Focus Ireland highlight addiction, mental illness and family or relationship breakdown as individual factors driving homelessness in Ireland. Empirical research in the area of drivers of homelessness fails to provide insight into the exact mechanisms at play, however existing research does suggest that both structural factors and personal factors interact to increase the risk of homelessness (Johnson et. al., 2015).

⁸ In this profile the CSO define homelessness by the European descriptive typology (ETHOS) as Roofless or Homeless. As per the ETHOS, included in the count were: people living rough, people in emergency accommodation and in accommodation for the homeless and also individuals in women’s shelters.

In Ireland, recent research into drivers of homelessness focuses on particular subsections of the homeless population including young single individuals, families and LGBTQI+ Youth. Qualitative studies in an Irish context argue there are four main drivers of youth homelessness: a past history of extended interaction with the residential or foster care system; instability of family; family conflict or violence which may include parental substance abuse, domestic abuse or child neglect and wider problem behaviour and neighbourhood stressors such as negative peer associations (Mayock, Parker and Murphy, 2014; Bairéad and Norris, 2020). Empirical studies highlight issues relating to the private rental market as a leading drivers of homelessness in families in the Dublin region, including property removal from market (36% of 237 respondents, n=86), notice of termination and leaving family or friend's accommodation due to relationship breakdown or overcrowding (Long, Sheridan, Gambi and Hoey, 2019; Morrin, 2019). Research using survey data found that the LGBTQI+ group face cohort specific drivers of homelessness including issues associated with sexuality and gender identity such as experiences relating to coming out and/or transitioning (Focus Ireland, 2020).

The above literature largely focuses on drivers of homelessness in an urban context such as in the Dublin region. Homelessness in Ireland and internationally is often depicted as an urban rather than rural phenomenon. Both in Ireland and international there is limited quantitative research on rural homelessness and thus understanding of this group. However, international literature suggests that rural homelessness is often underreported as there is a higher prevalence of "hidden homelessness" in rural areas (O'Sullivan, 2006; Demaerschalk, Hermans, Steenssens and Van Regenmortel, 2019).⁹ Differences in drivers of homelessness between both groups is a largely unexplored area however, of international research which has been carried out the majority of literature argues both urban and rural homelessness are driven by similar causes including structural reasons such as loss of tenancy and personal reasons such as substance abuse (Schiff, Schiff, Turner and Bernard, 2015). Other literature argues that private rented sector reasons are a more important drivers for rural homelessness, particularly for single households (Cloke, Milbourne, and Widdowfield, 2001; Schiff et al., 2015).

3. Overview of Homeless Services

The response to homelessness involves a range of delivery programmes and strategies and is a cross-governmental response which encompasses multiple departments and bodies. The DHLGH is responsible for the development of the national policy framework and legislation in the policy area of homelessness accommodation and related services support, as well as the provision of funding in this area. Local Authorities maintain a statutory responsibility for the provision of homeless accommodation and related services for their individual region. The Department of Health and HSE are responsible for the delivery of a range of health-related services to homeless persons. Tusla, the child and family agency, also contributes to the cross-government response to homelessness through the provision of supports with regards to the educational welfare of children in families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The Department of Social Protection provides a range of supports which those experiencing homelessness can access including supports to assist in maintaining or securing tenancy. The following section will provide an overview of the policy context in which these services are provided. A detailed overview of the direct emergency services provided

⁹ Hidden homelessness refers to individuals availing of insecure accommodation types such as temporarily staying with friends or family.

to those experiencing homelessness in the area of housing is given. Health services and other services available to those experiencing homelessness are also discussed.

3.1. Policy Context

There are a number of commitments within the current Irish policy framework to meet the housing and health needs of people who are homeless. The Programme for Government (PfG): Our Shared Future, commits to increased collaboration with stakeholders such as local authorities and housing agencies to provide long-term accommodation for those experiencing homelessness. Underpinned by commitments set out in the Programme for Government, the Housing for All: a New Housing Plan for Ireland, published in September 2021, is a multi-stranded, action-oriented approach spanning to 2030 which aims to achieve the Government's key housing objectives and will see the supply of housing increase to an average of 33,000 per year over the next decade. The plan addresses all aspects of the housing system under four pathways which aim to lead to a more sustainable housing system. The pathways are;

1. Pathway to Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability;
2. Pathway to Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion;
3. Pathway to Increasing New Housing Supply, and;
4. Pathway to Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock.

The plan also sets out how the four pathways will be supported and outlines the establishment of a Commission on Housing. Pathway 2, "Pathway to Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion", outlines the objective to eradicate homelessness by 2030.¹⁰ The plan sets out key objectives to achieve this, including; increasing Housing First targets to 1,200 tenancies over five years for homeless people, establishing a new National Homeless Action Committee and developing a Youth Homelessness Strategy, expanding Street Outreach Teams for rough sleepers nationwide and developing Individual Healthcare Plans. €17.5bn in National Development Plan funding and €12bn allocated by the Exchequer will be used to support the delivery of the Housing for All Plan.

In addition, a high level homelessness task force was established in July 2020. The objective of this task force is to establish a forum for engagement with key stakeholders to address homelessness and provide guidance on how the commitments on homelessness made in the Programme for Government can be achieved.

Legislation with particular relevance to this Social Impact Assessment are S2-10 of the Housing Act, 1988, Chapter 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and the Health Act, 1953. The Housing Act, 1988 empowers housing authorities to respond to the needs of homeless persons. The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 gives a statutory structure to address the needs of the homeless population in Ireland and outlines the statutory obligation of local authorities to have an action plan in place and also the need to establish a Homelessness Consultative Forum and a Statutory Management Group. Under the Health Acts, in particular the 1953 Act, the HSE has statutory obligations towards homeless persons; today this is understood to mean responsibility for the delivery of health and social care supports to homeless persons either directly or through section 39 funded services.

¹⁰ The Lisbon Declaration was signed in 2021 which commits Ireland to work towards ending homelessness by 2030. For more detail see: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_3044

3.2. Overview of Housing Supports and Services

This section provides an overview of the housing services available for households experiencing homelessness with a focus on those provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988.¹¹ For those experiencing homelessness the aim is to move people through emergency accommodation providing both housing and health supports towards sustained exit from homelessness. Types of supports offered to those that are experiencing homeless can be divided into three main areas of priority: prevention, protection and progression. Prevention services provide early intervention to people at risk of homelessness, protection services protect those experiencing homelessness through provision of emergency accommodation and targeted support, and progression services identify and enable pathways to long term housing solutions.

Prevention

Table 1 Overview of the Prevention Services Available for Households Experiencing Homelessness by Category

Prevention Services:
Place Finder Service
Tenancy sustainment services
Threshold: an advice and advocacy service

Preventing people from entering homelessness and emergency accommodation in the first instance is a key priority for the Department and for local authorities. Under Section 10 (S10) of the Housing Act, 1988, the Department provides funding to local authorities who work with families and individuals at risk of homelessness through prevention and tenancy sustainment services to ensure that households are prevented from entering emergency accommodation wherever possible. In 2020, expenditure on Homelessness Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment and Resettlement Supports was €12.1m. Preventive services related to homelessness offered to those at risk of homelessness include the Place Finder Service. The Place Finder Service, funded through the HAP budget, assists households in emergency accommodation by providing access to deposits and advance rental payments. This service is available nationally, the cost of the Placefinder service continues to increase as more Homeless HAP tenancies are created. In 2020 there was around €20m of public funding spent on PlaceFinder for between 4,000 and 4,500 new tenancies. Local authorities also operate tenancy sustainment services that provide assistance to those who have experienced homelessness to maintain their tenancies.

Outside of prevention and tenancy sustainment measures funded by the Department through S10 of the Housing Act 1998, the Department also funds Threshold (a housing charity) who provide an advice and advocacy service to all residents in the private rented sector. Under the national Tenancy Protection Service (TPS), Threshold assists all private rented households by providing information on tenants' rights, etc., advocating on their behalf with their landlords if required, cases are referred to visiting tenancy sustainment services for ongoing support as appropriate, and where there is a clear dispute between tenant and landlord the case will be referred to the Residential Tenancies Board for action.

¹¹ It should be noted that the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020 impacted the provision of services oriented towards homeless persons. A rapid response to the crisis was put in place by agencies involved with the homeless to put in place prevention measures to limit the spread of the virus among the homeless population. An evaluation of the impact of the pandemic on service provision is outside the scope of this paper.

Protection

Table 2 Overview of the Protection Services Available for Households Experiencing Homelessness by Category

Protection Services:
Emergency accommodation
Day Services
Outreach services for Rough Sleepers
Cold Weather Initiative
Housing First services

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for the provision of emergency accommodation to those regarded as homeless under the Housing Act, 1988. Emergency accommodation is provided as a short-term response to homelessness. This housing support is provided only for those who are assessed as homeless. Supported emergency accommodation is provided by local authorities under service level agreements with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and not for profit bodies (Focus Ireland, 2020). There are three main categories of emergency accommodation provided for those that are homeless: Private emergency accommodation (PEA), Supported temporary accommodation (STA): Temporary emergency accommodation (TEA). Table 3 shows the type of emergency accommodation provided under each category.

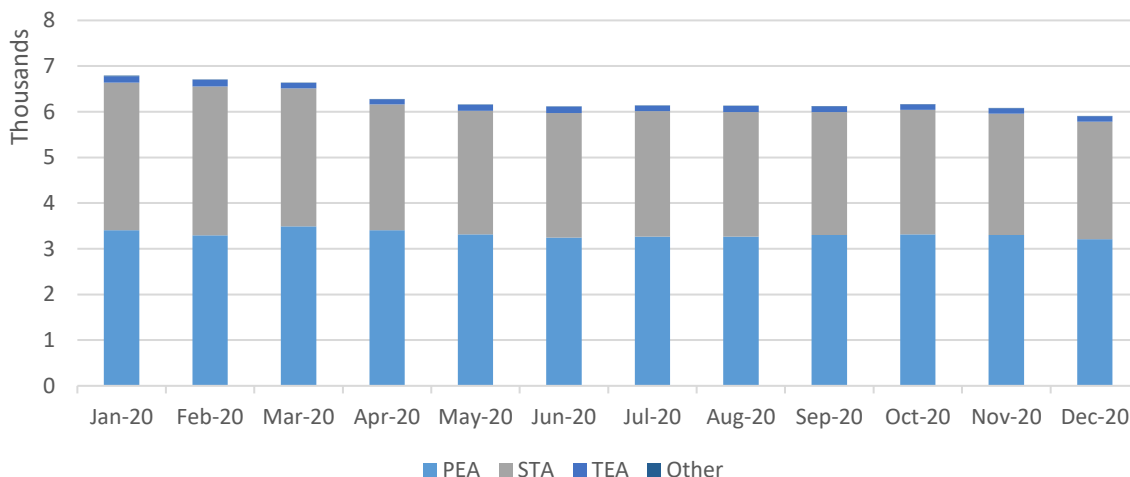
Table 3 Accommodation Type by Category of Emergency Accommodation

Category of Emergency Accommodation	Accommodation type
Private emergency accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Commercial Hotels¹ B&Bs
Supported temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Hubs Supported Single Accommodation Other supported accommodation with onsite or visiting support for service users
Temporary emergency accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation with no or minimal support.

1. In some instances, hotels are fully contracted by local authorities to provide emergency accommodation.

Private emergency accommodation is the main form of emergency accommodation service accessed by people experiencing homelessness. On average 53% (3,320) of those accessing emergency accommodation were in private emergency accommodation in 2020. 45% (2,816) accessed supported temporary accommodation (STA). The remaining 2% (132) of individuals and families accessing emergency accommodation each month on average in 2020 were in temporary or other emergency accommodations. Figure 3 shows the numbers of those accessing emergency accommodation by emergency accommodation type each month in 2020.

Figure 3 Monthly Numbers of those Accessing Emergency Accommodation in 2020 by Accommodation type



Source: Monthly data for 2020 from Local Authority Regional Performance Reports

The distribution of accommodation type provision differs across regions. This is shown in Table 4. However, for the majority of regions private emergency accommodation is the main form of emergency accommodation service accessed by people experiencing homelessness.

Table 4 Numbers of those Accessing Emergency Accommodation by Region in 2020 by Accommodation Type using July as a reference point

Accom. Type	Dublin	Mid-East	Midlands	Mid-West	North-East	North-West	South-East	South-West	West	Total
PEA	2315	195	68	82	53	27	48	326	155	3269
STA	1888	117	10	173	64	31	139	192	131	2745
TEA	38	4	17	34	12	11	0	0	0	116
Total	4241	316	95	289	129	69	187	518	286	6130

Source: Local Authority Regional Performance Report for July 2020

Supported temporary accommodation (STA) is the second most common form of emergency accommodation accessed each month. Family Hubs are a type of Supported Temporary Accommodation. They were first introduced in 2017 and are designed to provide families with a more stable accommodation type than other emergency accommodation types. Family hubs offer more appropriate living, storage, cooking and play areas for families. The setting also allows for intensive supports to be provided, including assistance to move to homes. There are now 35 hubs operational¹², offering over 766 units of family accommodation in urban areas. 26 (74%) of hubs are in Dublin, with two in Galway and Kildare and one each in Cork, Clare, Meath, Limerick and Louth.

Day services provide a range of non-accommodation related support services for homeless individuals and for individuals at risk of homelessness. Day services provide services such as hot meals, shower and laundry facilities and socialising spaces during the day time to help homeless individuals meet their basic needs. Advisory services such as housing and social welfare advice and support, and more specialist supports such as addiction, medical and mental health services are also provided. Availability of Day services differ regionally. In 2020, expenditure on day services was €3.8m.

Housing First support services are also available to those presenting as homeless and deemed eligible for this support. Housing First enables people who may have been homeless and who have high levels of complex needs to obtain permanent secure accommodation with the provision of intensive

¹² As of July 2021.

supports to help them maintain their tenancies. This is done through the provision of permanent secure accommodation with ongoing intensive supports to help people maintain their tenancies. This support is time unlimited and provided for as long as required. Housing First services are active in all regions in the country.

There are other homeless supports and services provided to specific, at-risk groups within the homeless population in the area of housing, for example rough sleepers. In the Dublin region, there are a range of enhanced services available to those who are sleeping rough. An outreach service provided by Dublin Simon and funded by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive enables broader engagement with people sleeping rough. The team work actively on the street to encourage people to avail of emergency accommodation. An Outreach Mobile Health Clinic, operated by Safetynet Primary Care, delivers weekly services with the DRHE Outreach Teams (Dublin Simon) and the Housing First Intake team (Peter McVerry Trust), to support rough sleepers with complex medical needs. In addition, there is an increased provision of service support to this group during winter months to mitigate against exposure to health issues that may arise through rough sleeping in colder weather conditions as provided for under the Cold Weather Initiative. This initiative provides additional emergency beds in the period November to March for those sleeping rough. For the Dublin region, the DRHE has a range of rapid emergency beds and support measures that can be activated during extreme weather conditions or other serious adverse events.

Progression

Once emergency accommodation has been provided to the individual or family experiencing homelessness it is subject to ongoing review with the aim of providing a housing solution. Social housing is housing managed and arranged by a local authority (LA) for those who are assessed as being eligible for social housing supports. Social Housing can be provided in a number of ways for example, through the provision of a rented tenancy in homes owned and managed by an approved housing body, Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) where the local authority makes payments to private landlords subject to terms and conditions including rent limits on the HAP tenant's behalf or through the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) tenancy where the local authority arranges leases with private landlords for homes among others.¹³ If a household has been deemed eligible for social housing support, it is a matter for the local authority to examine the suite of social housing supports available to determine the most appropriate form of social housing support for that household in the administrative area of that local authority.¹⁴ While these housing supports are not exclusive to those experiencing homelessness, a specific HAP scheme is offered for homeless households or those at risk of homelessness which provides additional financial and related supports to tenants and landlords, in addition to the benefits of the national HAP scheme.

Under the HAP scheme, local authorities may provide financial support for households to rent privately through the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme, the recipient pays a rent contribution (differential rent) to the local authority who pay the rent balance to the landlord directly, subject to conditions such as rent limits. In order for a household to qualify for HAP, they must first be assessed as eligible for social housing support by their local authority. Any household assessed as eligible for social housing is immediately eligible for HAP. Under HAP, homeless households or households at risk of homelessness may be eligible for additional supports.

¹³ See the Housing Agency, Social Housing Support Overview for an overview of social housing support options: available at <https://www.housingagency.ie/housing-information/social-housing-support-overview>

¹⁴ For more detail see: Housing Agency, 2021. Social Housing Support Overview. Available at <https://www.housingagency.ie/housing-information/social-housing-support-overview>

Tenants source their own accommodation in the private rented market under HAP. However, while eligible households or individuals may source accommodation for themselves through the Homeless HAP scheme, a dedicated resource, the Place Finder Service, has been established to provide assistance. The Place Finder service can assist qualified households in finding suitable tenancies by ensuring that additional supports that may be needed are put in place. The Homeless HAP Place Finder Service provides all local authorities with the option to pay deposits and advance rental payments for any households at risk of entering homelessness, or currently experiencing homelessness in emergency homeless accommodation, in order to secure accommodation through the HAP Scheme. Local authorities also have discretion, because of local rental market conditions, to exceed the maximum rent limit by up to 20%, or up to 50% in the Dublin region, for those households either in, or at immediate risk of homelessness. The additional discretion available to homeless households recognises the difficulty this cohort of households faces in sourcing and securing properties in a highly competitive rental market. It is a matter for the local authority to determine whether the application of the flexibility is warranted on a case by case basis and also the level of additional discretion applied in each case

Table 5 shows the numbers of households referred to the HAP Scheme from Homeless Units and the numbers of new HAP tenancies set-up from 2017 to 2020. There has been an overall increase in the HAP households referred from Homeless Units, increasing by 122% from 2,179 in 2017 to 4,837 in 2020. The share of new HAP tenancies attributed to HAP households referred from Homeless Units has also grown, increasing from 12% in 2017 to 26.24% in 2019. The cost of Homeless HAP is provided for within the DHLGH's HAP Budget. The HAP budget funds the cost of the Placefinder service and the on-going landlord payment including the increased discretion of up to 50%.

Table 5 HAP households referred from Homeless Units and New HAP tenancies set-up 2017 -2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020
HAP households referred from Homeless Units	2,179	2,895	4,468	4,837
New HAP tenancies set-up	17,916	17,926	17,025	15,885
HAP households referred from Homeless Units as a % of HAP tenancies set-up	12.2%	16.2%	26.2%	30.5%

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

3.3. Overview of Health Supports and Services

People experiencing homelessness often have complex and multiple health needs, particularly those in addiction, suffering from mental health or other chronic health issues. Members of the homeless population face barriers to accessing health care for a number of reason such as lack of continuity of care, lack of medication adherence and perceived prejudice towards those experiencing homelessness, making them a particularly vulnerable group (Canavan, Barry, Matanov, Barros, Gabor, Greacen, Holcnerová, Kluge, Nicaise, Moskalewicz and Díaz-Olalla, 2012). The HSE jointly with local authorities have the responsibility to provide a “long-term, coordinated and integrated response to delivering homeless services to people experiencing homelessness” (HSE, 2021). The suite of healthcare services currently provided for those experiencing homelessness are provided for by statutory services such as the HSE and local authorities alongside Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and charitable organisations. Health supports which aid physical and mental health are provided alongside the provision of appropriate housing to support households maintain long-term tenancy.

The National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO) in the HSE is responsible for coordinating the suite of services and supports necessary to address the health needs of those who are experiencing

homelessness. This includes the provision of in-reach and outreach specialist health services, supports aimed at case management and the provision of multi-disciplinary homeless health teams among other services. There is a shared care approach in operation between Mental Health Services and Addiction Services to deliver care provision for those experiencing homelessness and presenting with substance misuse issues. Services and supports provided for these members of the homeless population include counselling and out of hours counselling services. Counselling is available through a national service, Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC) or through the HSE Addiction Services and by HSE funded NGOs. In addition, the HSE Mental Health Services have local Community Mental Health Teams and Acute Mental Health Units which provide mental health supports and services to those in the community experiencing homelessness can avail of. Underpinned by policy and legislation such as the National Drug Strategy, Reducing harm, supporting recovery: a health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017—2025, a stepped care approach for the provision of mental health and addiction supports and services is promoted for those experiencing homelessness.¹⁵ The HSE also provide targeted supports and services to the homeless population during the winter months from November to March as defined under the HSE Winter Plan which aims to provide enhanced health services for people who are homeless and in addiction.¹⁶

3.4. Overview of Other Supports and Services

Other services not related to housing or health are offered to those experiencing homelessness for example childcare services. Families experiencing homelessness with children under the age of 5 can access free childcare for 25 hours a week which includes 15 hours of free pre-school under Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme where children are eligible (Early Childhood Ireland, 2021). Further supports and services are available to those who are experiencing homelessness but are not contingent on the individual being assessed as homeless. These supports include: supports provided by the Department of Social Protection such as social welfare payments. In addition, support for the homeless is also provided for by charities and volunteer bodies in terms of advocacy and fundraising functions alongside the front-line services they provide. Analysis of these supports largely fall outside the scope of this paper and as such are not addressed in terms of the trends in numbers drawing these supports nor the level of expenditure these supports demand.

4. Overview of Expenditure on Homeless Services

¹⁵ Other policy supporting this provision include: Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland and Sharing the Vision: A mental health policy for everyone.

¹⁶ For more detail see: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/winter-initiative/stay-well/winter-activity-report-2018/winter-activity-report-2018.html>

This section presents an analysis of national expenditure on homeless services provision over the period 2016 and 2020. A trend analysis of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's homelessness budget from 2016 to 2020 is presented. National expenditure by region and by service category is also analysed. Public expenditure on health supports or other wider homeless services has not been included in this section as data was unavailable for consideration. Similarly, trend analysis of expenditure on homeless supports by the volunteer sector has not been included in this analysis.

Box 1 -Legislation relating to the Provision of Funding to Local Authorities by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage:

Under the provisions of Section 10 and provided for under regulation (S.I. 157/1993 – Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations, 1988 (Amendment) Regulations, 1993) the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage can recoup up to 90% of the expenditure appropriately incurred by local authorities in the provision of homeless accommodation and related services. Local authorities are required to fund at least 10% of expenditure on homeless accommodation services from their own revenue sources. Additionally, local authorities can fund homeless services outside of the arrangements with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The DHLGH does not fund any homeless services directly but provides funding to local authorities towards costs incurred under annually agreed funding allocation arrangements. Each regional lead authority submits an annual expenditure programme to the Department and the Department approves a funding allocation based on overall funding requirements set out in the expenditure programme. This is to ensure that sufficient funding is made available to local authorities to plan for the implementation, funding and co-ordination of services at a local level.

A protocol agreement between the Department and local authorities sets out reporting requirements in respect of expenditure incurred on the provision of homeless accommodation and related services and includes a requirement to ensure that certified expenditure is reported to the Department on a quarterly basis. The management of the funding allocation provided by the Department is delegated to the lead authority in each region and is governed by a protocol between the Department and the lead authority. All funding arrangements delegated under these Protocols set out the obligations of local authorities to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and public financial procedures including the Public Spending Code and obligations required under DPER Circular 13/2014: Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer funds. The Protocol agreement also sets out reporting requirements in respect of expenditure incurred on the provision of homeless accommodation services.

The funding discussed in this section relates to services provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 and does not include expenditure on social housing supports such as the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) as mentioned in Section 4 for neither the DHLGH nor the Local Authorities as these are not supports provided exclusively to those experiencing homeless.¹⁷ However, expenditure on these social housing supports is important to consider in the context of expenditure on homeless services. Exchequer funding to the overall HAP scheme, including both HAP and HHAP, has increased significantly over the period 2014 to 2020, increasing from €0.395m in 2014 with 7 LAs operating the

¹⁷ See Annex 3 for an overview of the services provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 as mentioned in Section 4.

scheme and supporting 485 households to €464.6m in 2020 with 31 LAs operating the scheme supporting almost 60,000 active tenancies (Department Of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021b). The increase in spending is due to the roll-out of the Rebuilding Ireland action plan and the increased demand for social housing (Lima, 2021).

Equally important to consider in the context of expenditure on homeless services is wider expenditure on housing. Running alongside the spending on homelessness there has been a significant increase in spending on public housing. In 2019, total gross expenditure on housing was €2.37 billion. This is an increase of €1.78bn on 2014 expenditure (€595m) (DPER Databank). Capital expenditure for housing has also seen an upward trend in recent years, increasing from €814m in 2017 (pre NDP) to €2.766bn in 2021 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021). A detailed trend analysis of the exchequer funding for social housing supports including HAP is outside the scope of however, social housing supports and expenditure on such support are important to consider in the area of homelessness given the role of the Homeless HAP in facilitating both the exit of households from emergency accommodation and preventing households entering into emergency accommodation. These wider housing services are relevant to consider in the context of homelessness services provision as structural factors such as housing supply impact demand for these services and given the given the role of the Homeless HAP in facilitating both the exit of households from emergency accommodation and preventing households entering into emergency accommodation.¹⁸ The Housing for All Plan, which will receive €1.2bn in NDP funding to elevate pressure within the current housing model supplying which will have a knock on effect, improving housing outcome for those at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

4.1. Expenditure Trends in Homeless Accommodation and Related Supports

Expenditure incurred by local authorities across five categories of expenditure is presented in Table 6. Homelessness Expenditure grew each year between 2016 and 2019, by on average 24% each year. This follows the trend of growth in homelessness over the same period. Spending on these services fell by 6.2% (€14m) from €226m in 2019 to €212m in 2020. This decrease in expenditure is driven by multiple factors. The fall in homeless individuals recorded in 2020 has partially driven this fall in expenditure. Another driving factor is the fall in the costs associated with hotel and B&B accommodation in 2020 which fell by €19m or a 17% reduction in spend reported when compared to 2019. The €212m figure reported for 2020 does not include expenditure incurred with regards to Covid-19 related measures.

The majority of expenditure each year is incurred under category 2. Expenditure on category 2 includes expenditure on hotels and B&Bs, temporary supported emergency accommodation, family hubs and the provision of additional emergency beds annually under the cold weather strategy. The spending on category 2 as a percentage of total yearly spending has grown from 72% (€85.5m) in 2016 to 83% (€188m) in 2019. In 2020, 81% (€171m) of total expenditure was spent on this category. In 2020, Category 2C accounts for 53% (€92.3m) of total category 2 spending.

¹⁸ For an overview of housing supports see O’Callaghan, D. 2017. Analysis of Current Expenditure on Housing Supports, available at: <https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Analysis-of-Current-Expenditure-on-Housing-Supports.pdf>. For a detail analysis of HAP see Kilkenny, P. 2019. Housing Assistance Payment (2014 - 2019). Available at: [http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2020/Documents/Budget/Housing%20Assistance%20Payment%20\(2014%20-%202019\).pdf](http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2020/Documents/Budget/Housing%20Assistance%20Payment%20(2014%20-%202019).pdf)

Table 6 National Local Authority Expenditure on Homeless Service Provision by Main Category 2016 – 2020

	2016 €m	2017 €m	2018 €m	2019 €m	2020 €m
Category 1 - Homelessness Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment and Resettlement Supports	€8.8	€10.6	€9.8	€10.6	€12.1
Category 2 - Emergency Accommodation, of which;	€85.5	€115.1	€146.9	€187.9	€171.1
a. Category 2A - Supported Accommodation for families					€31.7
b. Category 2B - Supported Accommodation for singles					€47.2
c. Category 2C - Other accommodation - hotels and B&Bs and cold weather response					€92.2
Category 3 - Long Term Support Accommodation.	€9.2	€8.6	€8.6	€9.9	€11.8
Category 4 - Day Services	€4.6	€4.4	€4.4	€5.3	€3.8
Category 5 - HA Homeless Services Provision Incl. Administration, of which;	€10.5	€14.2	€11.1	€12.5	€13.4
a. Category 5A - Local Authority prevention services including HAP placefinder					€2.1
b. Category 5B - Local Authority admin.					€11.3
Total	€118.7	€152.9	€180.8	€226.2	€212.1

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Figure 4 shows the funding recouped by local authorities under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 from 2016 to 2020.¹⁹ Funding provided by the Department of HLGH towards expenditure incurred by local authorities on homeless services and supports has increased year on year from 2016 to 2020, growing on average by 33% each year. Funding provided increased from €89m in 2016 to €165m in 2019 which represents a growth of 85%. This increasing trend reflects the upward trend in numbers accessing emergency accommodation from 2016 to 2020.²⁰ The largest yearly growth in funding provided was recorded in 2020. Total expenditure by the DHLGH grew by 64% from €165m in 2019 to €271m in 2020, accounting for 23% of the DHLGH's Housing Programme current spend in that year. Of the €271, €173m (64%) was provided towards local authority homeless service programmes. €29m (11%) went towards the recoupment of exceptional expenditure incurred by local authorities on a suite of Covid-19 response measures and €68m (25%) of the €271m went to meet final recoupments of local authority expenditure in 2019.

¹⁹ For 2020, figures include funding provided to local authorities to support the response to Covid-19 and the need to implement social distancing measures in accommodation services offered.

²⁰ Peak in total national numbers experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation recorded October 2019 at 10,514. There were 6,847 individuals experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation in October 2016.

Figure 4 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Homeless Programme Outturn 2016 to 2020



Source: Department of HLGH

Analysing the regional breakdown of exchequer funding provided by the Department towards expenditure incurred by local authorities on homeless services and supports, the distribution of funding across regions has remained stable over the time period 2016 to 2019: the Dublin region is provided with the majority of funding which relates to 76% of total funding on average yearly, with regions outside of the Dublin region being provided with the remaining 24%. After Dublin, the South-West region (which includes Cork city) is provided with the most in funding, receiving between 6.1% and 7.3% of total department funding each year. In absolute terms all regions have seen a rise in funding provided which mirrors the rising number of total homeless persons recorded in each region over this time period with the exception of the South-East and Mid-West. These regions saw a drop in the numbers of persons experiencing homelessness from 2018 to 2019, while funding provided to these regions increased over this time.

Local authorities fund homeless services outside of the arrangements with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Therefore actual expenditure incurred by local authorities on the provision of services to homeless households is a matter for individual authorities. Expenditure by local authorities on homeless accommodation services under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 outside of that provided by DHLGH towards the regional expenditure programmes is shown in Table 7.²¹ Expenditure grew 17% from €24.9 in 2016 to €29.1m in 2017 but has remained relatively stable since then. Total DHLGH contribution towards programme expenditure is also shown in Table 7.²²

²¹ This expenditure was determined based on an analysis of available certified regional expenditure programmes reports and taking into account funding contributions made by the DHLGH towards these programmes.

²² This expenditure refers to the funding made by the Department towards the regional programmes relevant to the year in which expenditure was incurred by local authorities irrespective of the timeline of recoupment and thus differs from the figures presented in Figure 4.

Table 7 Total Expenditure incurred by Local Authorities under Homeless Expenditure Programmes 2016 -2020

	2016 €m	2017 €m	2018 €m	2019 €m	2020 €m
Total Expenditure incurred by Local Authorities under Homeless Expenditure Programmes	118.6	152.9	180.8	226.2	212.2
Total DHLGH contribution towards programme expenditure¹	93.7	123.8	151.0	196.7	183.2
Total Estimated Local authority contribution towards programme expenditure	24.9	29.1	29.8	29.5	29.0

1. Final recoupments on full year expenditure incurred by local authorities on their regional homeless services programme may fall to be placed on account subsequent to the year in which the expenditure is incurred. This arises as full year local authority certified expenditure reports are finalised and made available for examination in the quarter following the individual year. The table above refers to the funding made by the Department towards the regional programmes relevant to the year in which expenditure was incurred by local authorities irrespective of the timeline of recoupment and as such differs from the figures quoted in Figure 4.

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

5. Methodology and Data Sources

This section briefly sets out the data and methodology used to create the demographic profile of the homeless services user and the limitations of the data used. The Demographic Profile of Homeless Services Users uses data extracted from the Pathway Accommodation & Support System (PASS) by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE). The DRHE, the lead statutory local authority in the response to homelessness in Dublin, manages and runs the PASS system (DRHE, 2021). The PASS system generates a unique ID for each individual over the age of 18 which was used to extract the anonymised data used in this analysis. The data set consists of adults in the Dublin region who at some point in 2020 accessed emergency accommodation. Variables included in the data set are: gender, age, region of origin, self-reported household type and self-reported reason for homelessness. There are 8,403 individuals included in the data set.²³

The PASS system is a data management system developed to support the delivery of homelessness services and was not designed for data analysis or the creation of demographic profiles. The information recorded on the system is limited to key information required to best co-ordinate and arrange for the delivery of emergency accommodation. All information is recorded in line with the protocols developed by homeless services for the PASS system and Data Protection legislation. Additional information which is not required for the co-ordination of services is recorded only with the consent of the service user.²⁴ As such, the data set provided has certain limitations. The data set used in the profile is limited to that of adults experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region. National data was not available for analysis for this SIA. Thus, the demographic profile is created using data of those from the Dublin region only. However, the Dublin homeless population represents the majority (71%) of the entire homeless population. Similarly, the unique identification code by which the data is extracted does not allow for individuals to be linked. Another limitation of this data set is that it did not contain information on the length of

²³ Rough sleepers were included in the data set if they had accessed emergency accommodation at some point over 2020.

²⁴ An updated PASS system went live in June 2021. This can be used to support more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the profile of homelessness service users to be included in future research.

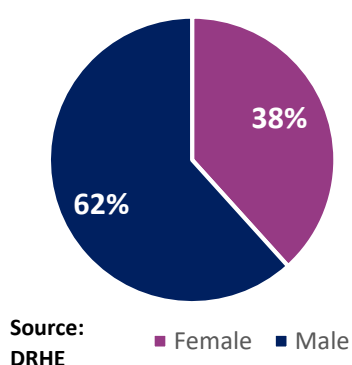
continuous stay of individuals in emergency accommodation and thus an analysis of the characteristics of individuals by length of continuous stay in emergency accommodation could not be included.²⁵

6. Demographic Profile of Homeless Service Users

This section presents the profile of adults experiencing homeless and accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in 2020. This profile includes analysis on the following characteristics: gender, age, region of origin, household type and self-reported reason for homelessness. It should be noted that as Covid-19 was on going during the time of data collection used in this analysis the variables included in the analysis may have been impacted by the pandemic in particular the self-reported reasons for homelessness.²⁶

6.1. Gender

Figure 5 Gender Distribution



The gender profile of those experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in 2020 is shown in Figure 5. There are more men experiencing homelessness than women with more than three fifths or 62%, (5,184) of adults that accessed emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in 2020 reporting as male. The rough sleeper population is even more predominantly male. The DRHE Spring 2021 Count of Rough Sleepers in the Dublin region show that there were 139 individuals sleeping rough. 127 of them had PASS records which showed that 93 (73%) were male (2021).

Source: DRHE data

The official statistics on homelessness as published by the Department HLGH show that nationally, the share of average monthly homeless individuals each year reporting as male has increased from 58% (2429) of total in 2016 to 63% (3936) of total in 2020. The majority of regions (Dublin, North-East, and South-West, Mid- East, Mid-West and the Midlands) show similar gender distributions over this time period. The North-West and South-East regions report higher shares of males for 2020 with 70% (49) and 74% (146) of homeless individuals reporting as male on average each month respectively. The West, in contrast, shows a falling share of males. The share of homeless individuals on average each month reporting as male in the West region fell from 69% (105) in 2016 to 57% (168) in 2020.

6.2. Age

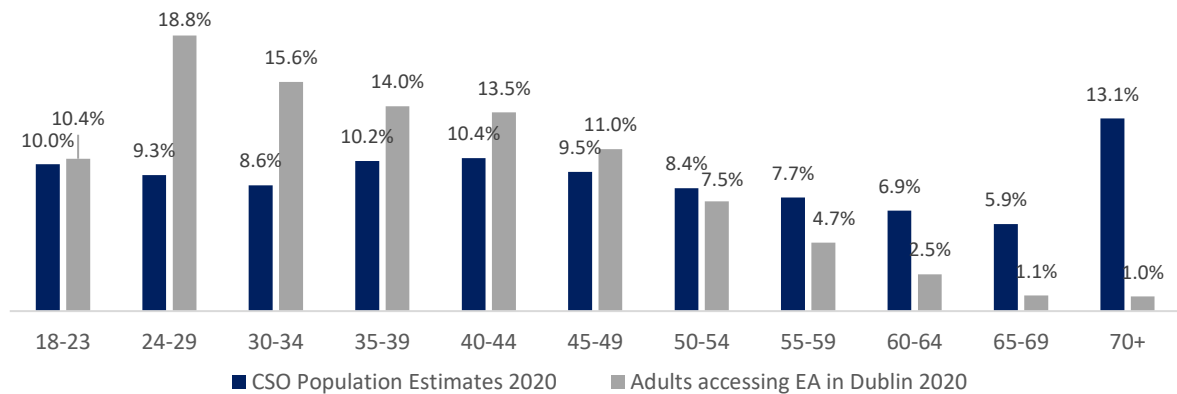
The age distribution of adults experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region is younger than the age distribution of the total population in 2020. Most notably the largest proportion of adults accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin region is in the 24

²⁵ Homeless Quarterly Progress Reports published by the DHLGH provide data on the length of time spent in emergency accommodation. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/80ea8-homelessness-data/>

²⁶ Covid-19 had a significant impact on jobs and incomes across Ireland. It also impacted the rental market. Changes in rental laws were enacted during this time for example, in October 2020 an eviction ban was put in place. For more detail see the Residential Tenancy Board: <https://www.rtb.ie/emergency-measures-ended-new-protections-introduced-for-the-rental-sector>

to 29 age group which accounts for 19% (1,577) of total. 45% (3,760) are under the age of 35. The average age of an individual experiencing homelessness is 37.7 years.

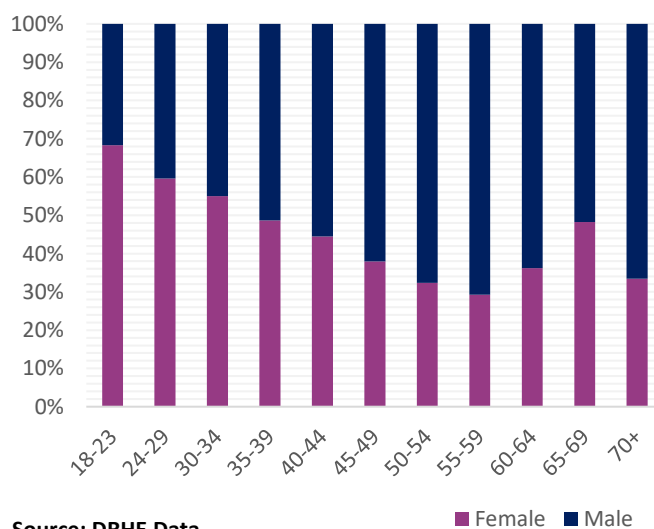
Figure 6 Age Distribution of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020 compared to the Total Population 2020 Aged 18 and over



Source: Author's analysis of DRHE and CSO Census 2016 data

While the data used to calculate these statistics is Dublin region data exclusively, similar results are found at a national level. Statistics published by the DHLGH find that the age of the majority of homeless persons in emergency accommodation nationally each year from 2016 to 2020 (between 57% - 60%) are recorded in the 25 to 44 age group.

Figure 7 Age Distribution by Gender of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020



Source: DRHE Data

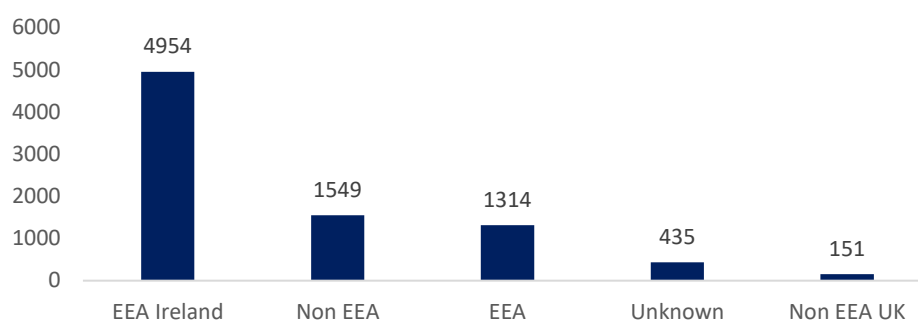
Figure 7 shows the distribution of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020 by gender and age. The younger age groups have a higher percentage of females compared to total. The age group 18 to 23 is the only age group which has predominantly more females than males (57% or 499 of 872). In comparison, the 55 to 59 years age group has the largest male proportion of all the age groups (80% or 312 of 392).

6.3. Region of Origin

The majority of those provided with emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in 2020 are Irish. 4,954 of the 8,403 report as Irish, this accounts for 59% of total. 15.6% (1,314) are from the European Economic Area (EEA) not including Ireland. A further 18.4% (1,549) are from outside the European Economic Area excluding the UK. 1.8% (151) of adults that accessed emergency accommodation in

the Dublin region in 2020 are from the UK.²⁷ 5% (435) did not provide detail on their region of origin. This is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Region of Origin of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020

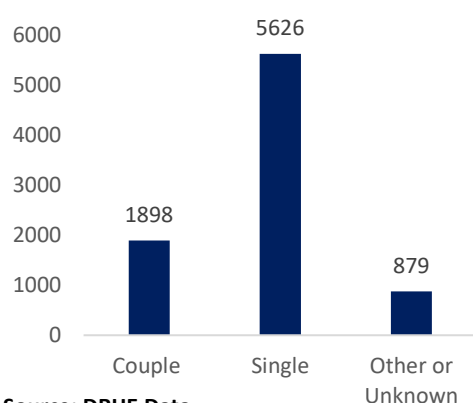


Source: DRHE Data

Analysing the gender and the age distribution of the group by region of origin does not reveal significant findings. The gender ration of each region of origin group is similar to that of the total homeless population (3:2 males to females). Similarly, the distribution of region of origin groups across all age cohorts is similar to that of the total sample.

6.4. Household Type

Figure 9 Adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020 by Household Type



Source: DRHE Data

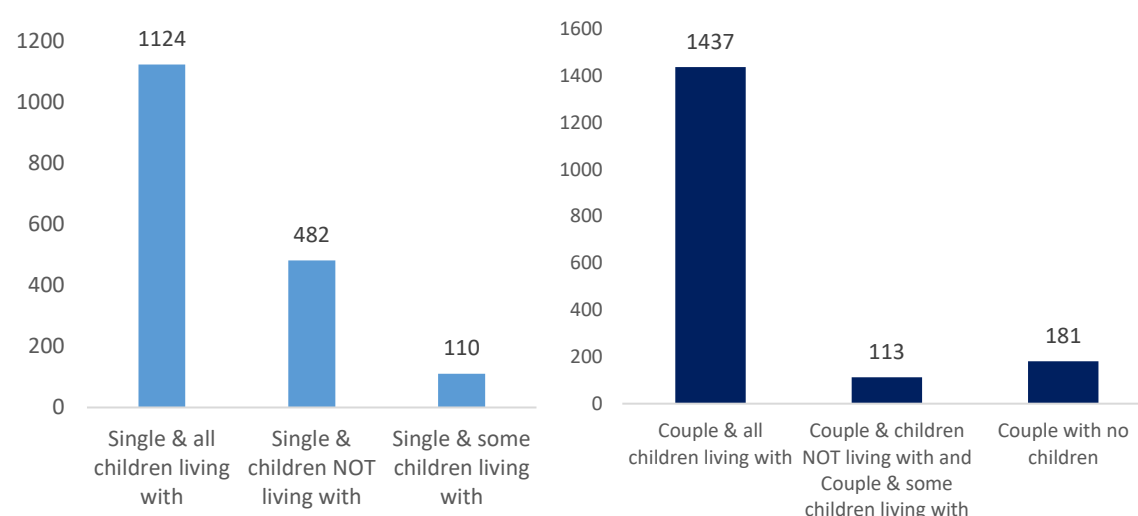
Household type is not a criteria used to assign emergency accommodation and is thus information is voluntarily given or not. Of those that disclosed this information (N=7,524), 75% (5,626) identified that they are single while 25% (1,898) identified they are in a couple. Figure 9 shows the distribution of the homelessness population by household type. An unknown or other response was recorded for 10.5% (879) of the sample of the homeless sample used in this analysis.

Of the 1,898 homelessness individuals that said they were in a couple, 91% (1,731) indicate whether they have children and whether these children are living with them. The majority (86% or 1,494) booked emergency accommodation with some or all of their children. 10.5% (181) of couples had no children. 8.8% (167) of homeless people in couples (1,898) did not provide detail as to whether they had children or not. The majority of single homeless individuals (5,626) did not indicate whether they had children or not (70%, 3,910). However, of single individuals that did indicate whether they had children (N=1,716), the majority (66%, 1,124) had all their children living with them. A further 28% (482) of single individuals had children but were living in emergency accommodation without their children and the remaining 6% (110) were single and had some but not all of their children living with them. This is shown in Figure 10. Singles with children and couples with children are considered

²⁷ Under common travel agreements, those with UK citizenship residing in Ireland have the right to access social housing, including supported housing and homeless assistance. See here for more details: <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/eu/brexit/brexitandyou/Memorandum-of-Understanding-Ire-version.pdf>

families and thus considered for supports for families experiencing homelessness such as Family Hubs as outlined in section 4.

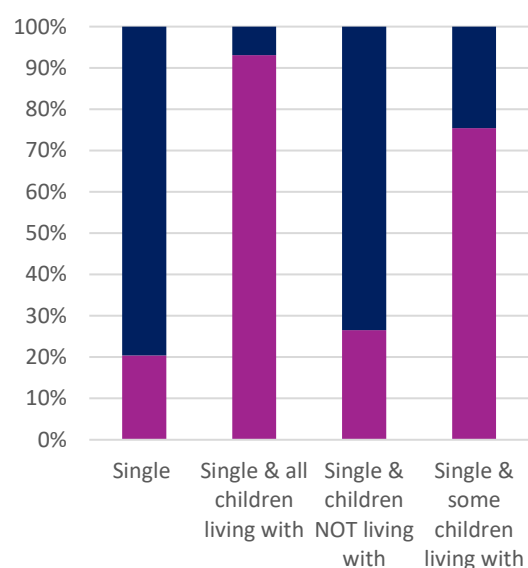
Figure 10 Distribution of Single Households by type and Couple Households by type



Source: DRHE data

Source: DRHE data

Figure 11 Gender Distribution of Single Household types



Source:

DRHE data

Female Male

Analysing single households by gender, there is substantial variation. Figure 11 shows the gender distribution of single households. Individuals in single households with all children are predominantly female (93% or 1,046 of 1,124). Similarly, individuals in single households with some children are predominantly female (76% or 83 of 110). In contrast, single individuals with children but not living with children are predominantly male (73% or 354 of 482). Single individuals which have not indicated whether they had children or not were in majority male (80% or 3,112 of 3,910) compared to total (62% male).

6.5. Self-Reported Reasons for Homelessness

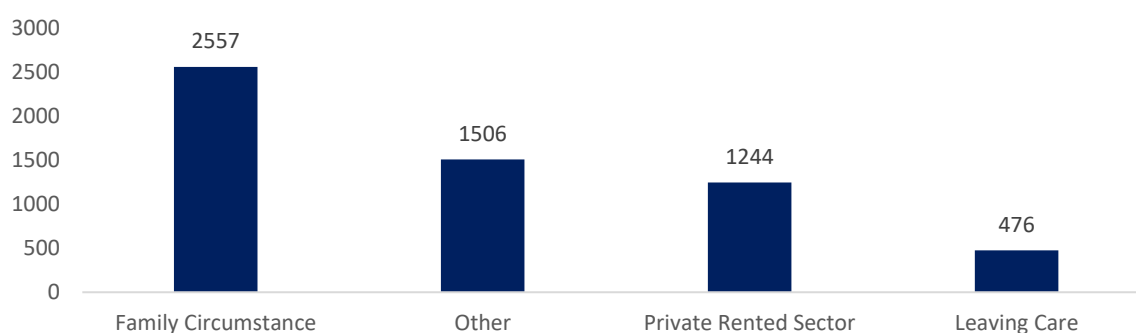
Service users report reason for homelessness on a voluntary basis as it is not required to assign services. 69% (5,783) of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020 gave a reason for homelessness. The following analysis analyses the sub group which voluntarily provided this information. It should be noted that this analysis explores **self-reported** reasons for homelessness. Reasons for homelessness are often unique, complex and multifaceted. Therefore it is a difficult metric to capture and reports are expected to be subjective. However, analysing this metric can give a good initial, high-level understanding of what is driving homelessness in the population. The categorisations

include: Family Circumstance, Other, Private Rented Sector and Leaving Care. Multiple reasons for homelessness fall under Leaving Care category such as leaving prison, leaving care related to mental illness, leaving hospital and leaving direct provision.²⁸

As noted in Section 5, the analysis of self-reported reasons for homelessness presented uses data from 2020 and as such may be impacted by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Self-reported reasons for homelessness in particular are likely to be impacted by the outbreak. With regards to the private rental sector, a number of different protections were put in place to support tenants in the in this sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. Protections included restrictions on the scope of landlords to evict households, a moratorium on evictions, a ban on rent increases and other protections for those who lost their income as a result of the pandemic.²⁹ Furthermore, lockdowns and restrictions of movement put in place during the pandemic may have influenced homeless in terms of strain placed on relationships and households during this time. Similarly, the restrictions put in place across society during 2020 due to the outbreak may have potentially impacted those leaving care and thus impacting homeless presentations. Other exceptional circumstances arising from Covid-19 could also impact the self-reported reasons for homelessness reported in this paper.³⁰ While an analysis of how Covid-19 has impacted homelessness is outside the scope of this paper, it is important to note the potential impact of these circumstances on the self-reported reason for homelessness presented below.

The distribution of the self-reported reasons for homelessness is shown in Figure 12. 44% (2,557) individuals reported family circumstances as the main reason for homelessness. The breakdown of a relationship with a parent accounts for almost one quarter (24% or 609) of the self-reported reasons for homelessness within the Family Circumstances category. Relationship breakdown with a partner or person other than a parent or partner accounts for 29% (760; n = 2,557) of the total reasons for homelessness caused by family circumstance. The “Other” category accounts for 26% (1,506), the Private Rented Sector category accounts for 22% (1,244) and Leaving Care 8.2% (476) of total reasons given for homelessness.

Figure 12 Self-Reported Reason for Homelessness



Source: DRHE

The main reasons for homelessness reported within the “Other” category include no income source, asked to leave accommodation and involuntary sharing which account for 27% (405), 20% (293) and

²⁸ Terminology for the categorisation of the self-reported reasons for homelessness is provided by the DRHE.

²⁹ See Citizens Information for further detail on the protections put in place for renters during Covid-19: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/renting_a_home/tenancies_and_covid19.html#l1bd92

³⁰ Other circumstances may potentially the increased availability of properties previously used for short-term tourist letting which may have driven exists from homelessness.

16% (245) of total. Substance Abuse in terms of drugs and alcohol account for 20% (284) of the total reasons given for homelessness in the “Other” category.³¹ A quarter (25%; 308 of 1,244) of those experiencing homelessness due to reasons related to the private rented sector report landlord selling property as the main reason for homelessness. Reasons for homelessness falling under the Leaving Care category include leaving prison, leaving care related to mental illness leaving hospital and leaving direct provision. Almost half (43% or 206) of individuals in this category attributed leaving prison or an institution as the main reason for homelessness.

Analysing the main reason for homelessness by gender, the gender ratio of those reporting leaving care as the main reason for homelessness is significantly more male dominated (79% male or 376 of 476) than the total sample with a ratio of 1:4 females to males compared to 2:3 for total (62% male). In contrast, gender is more evenly disbursed in the private rented sector than total with a gender ration of 1:1. The other categories have gender ratios similar to that of the entire data set.

Analysing the reasons for homelessness by age, family circumstance makes up a large proportion of the reason for homelessness for younger age groups. For the 18 to 23 and the 24 to 29 age groups, family circumstances accounts for 74% (510) and 62% (674) of all reasons for homelessness respectively. In contrast, it accounts for 32% (49) and 21% (13) for all reasons for homelessness for the 60 to 64 and 65 to 69 age groups respectively. As age increases, reasons for homelessness relating to the private rental sector account for an increasing percentage. Reasons relating to the private rental sector account for just 4.8% (33) of total reasons for homelessness for the age group 18 to 23 but 57% (35) for the 65 to 69 age group.

Analysing the reasons for homelessness by gender in the 18 to 23 age group (N=694), reasons relating to a relationship breakdown is the main reason for homeless reported by both males and females in this age group, 52% (211) for females and 40% (115) for males. Females in this age group are twice as likely to report the reason for homelessness as overcrowding than their male counter parts, 9.43% for females age 18 to 23 compared to 4.12% for males. There is also significant variation in the age group analysing household type. Of females aged 18 to 23, 36% (177) report that they have children and are single. In contrast, of males aged 18 to 23, 1.6% (6) report that they have children and are single. Males in this age group were most likely report themselves as single without indicating whether they have children or not (62%:230) compared to females (27%:134). As is reported above the 18 to 23 age group is the only age group which has predominantly more females than males (57% or 499 of 872).

7. Key Findings and Conclusion

This paper has provided an overview of supports in housing and health and trends in expenditure primarily focusing on services provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act as well as providing a profile of adults in the Dublin region accessing emergency accommodation in 2020.

7.1. Trends in Homelessness Services Spending and Homeless Services User Numbers

Numbers experiencing homelessness and expenditure follow a similar pattern, showing an upward trend from 2016 to 2019 and falling in 2020. Numbers experiencing homeless and accessing emergency accommodation increased from 6,419 in 2016 to 10,255 in 2019 but fell by 11.6% in 2020 to 9,062. This fall is driven by families. Single individuals accessing homelessness services remains high.

³¹ 4.9% (284 of 5,783) of the total data set self-report substance abuse as their main reason of homelessness. Other reasons for homelessness which fall under this category include property repossessed, experience of anti-social behaviour and domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse.

Exchequer funding provided to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage towards expenditure incurred on the provision of homeless services under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 has increased each year from €89m in 2016 to €165m in 2019, a growth of 85.4%. €271m was provided in 2020 although it should be noted that 2020 was an exceptional year as a result of a carryover of costs from 2019 and additional services provided as a result of the pandemic outbreak. Local Authority spending on homeless services, which includes Exchequer funding increased significantly from €118.7m in 2016 to €226.2 in 2019 but decreased in 2020 by €14m (6.2%) to €212m. The majority of total local authority expenditure each year is attributed to the provision of emergency accommodation, accounting for 83% (€188m) of total expenditure (€226m) for LA's in 2019. Emergency accommodation is increasingly the largest category of spending for local authorities. Category 2 spending has grown each year, growing €102.5m from €85.5m in 2016 to €188 in 2019. The spending on category 2 as a percentage of total yearly spending has also grown, growing from 72% (€85.5m) in 2016 to 83% (€188m) in 2019. In 2020, 81% (€171m) of total expenditure was spent on this category. Continued analysis of these trends should be undertaken to ascertain whether the downward trend of numbers accessing homelessness services and expenditure on these services will continue.

Numbers experiencing homelessness and expenditure on homeless services are both concentrated in urban areas. 71% of individuals experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation are centred in the Dublin region. The Dublin region is provided with the majority of funding which relates to 76% of total funding on average yearly, with regions outside of the Dublin region being provided with the remaining 24%.

7.2. Profile of the Service User

Key findings from the analysis of the profile of homeless service user are:

- **Gender:** The majority of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020 are male (62%: 5,184).
- **Age:** The age demographic of adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020 is younger, 45% (3,760) are under the age of 35. The largest proportion of these are in the 24 to 29 age group (19%: 1,577).
- **Region of Origin:** The large majority are Irish with 4,954 of the 8,403 those included in the sample reporting as Irish, this accounts for 59% of the total.
- **Household Type:** Of those that disclosed whether they were single or in a couple (90%:7,525), 75% (5,626) are single while 25% (1,898) are in a couple. There is substantial gender variation among single homeless individuals with children. Individuals in single households with all children are predominantly female (93% or 1046 of 1124).
- **Self-Reported Reason for Homelessness:** As noted in the paper Covid-19 has had a significant impact on jobs, incomes and the rental market across Ireland during 2020 which may have impacted self-reported reasons for homelessness as reported here.
 - **Family Circumstance:** Almost half of all homeless individuals (44%: 2,557) reported family circumstances as the main reason for homelessness with one quarter of those reporting the relationship breakdown with a parent as the family circumstance causing homelessness (24% or 609).
 - **Other:** A quarter of the total sample give reasons which fall under the "Other" category (26%:1,506). These include reasons such as no income source, asked to leave accommodation and involuntary sharing which account for 27% (405), 20% (293) and 16% (245) of homeless individuals which are included in other.

- **Private Rental Sector:** Reasons relating to the Private Rental Sector account for 21.5% (1,244) of all adults accessing emergency accommodation in Dublin in 2020. A quarter (25% or 308) of those experiencing homelessness due to reasons related to the private rented sector report landlord selling property as the main reason for homelessness.
- **Leaving Care:** 8.2% (476) of total reasons given for homelessness are reasons relating to leaving care. Almost half (43% or 206) of individuals in this category attributed leaving prison or an institution as the main reason for homelessness.

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8.1. Annex 1

Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988.

10.—(1) A housing authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section—

- (a) make arrangements, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of [section 5](#) for the provision by that body of accommodation for a homeless person,
- (b) provide a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority consider appropriate, or
- (c) rent accommodation, arrange lodgings or contribute to the cost of such accommodation or lodgings for a homeless person.

(2) A request for accommodation may be made to a housing authority by or on behalf of a homeless person.

(3) Where accommodation or lodgings are made available to a person by virtue of *subsection (1)*, the housing authority may at any time specify a period for which the accommodation or lodgings are to be so made available to that person.

(4) The Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Finance and subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section, recoup, out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas, all or part of any payment made by a housing authority by virtue of *subsection (1)*.

(5) Where accommodation or lodgings are made available to a person by virtue of *subsection (1)*, the housing authority may require that person to pay to them such charge as they see fit, having regard to the means of the person, the cost to the authority of such accommodation or lodgings and such other matters as the authority consider appropriate.

(6) A charge due to a housing authority under *subsection (5)* shall be recoverable by them as a simple contract debt in any court of competent jurisdiction.

(7) A charge under *subsection (5)* shall not be subject to the terms of any rent scheme in relation to houses let by the housing authority.

(8) Where accommodation or lodgings are made available to a person by virtue of *subsection (1)* and—

- (a) the circumstances of that person change to the extent that, in the opinion of the housing authority—
 - (i) if the accommodation or lodgings being made so available were no longer available, the person would not be homeless, or
 - (ii) the person is now able to provide accommodation from his own resources, or
- (b) that person has failed to pay a charge under *subsection (5)*,

the authority may cease to have such accommodation or lodgings made so available and may require the person to vacate the accommodation or lodgings.

(9) Where accommodation or lodgings are made available or assistance is provided to a person by virtue of *subsection (1)*, such person shall not be precluded for that reason from being included in an assessment under [section 9](#) or being accepted for inclusion in the next such assessment.

(10) A housing authority may, while making enquiries to enable them to determine if a person is homeless, exercise the powers provided for in *subsection (1)*.

(11) Regulations under this section may, in particular, but without prejudice to the generality of *subsections (1)* and *(4)*, make provision in relation to all or any one or more of the following:

- (a) the manner in which housing authorities exercise their powers under this section;
- (b) the amount and conditions of recoupments under *subsection (4)*;
- (c) the notification by a housing authority of the decision on a request for accommodation and the reasons therefor;
- (d) the furnishing of information to a housing authority in relation to a request for accommodation or assistance from the authority;
- (e) such other incidental, consequential or supplementary provisions as may appear to the Minister to be necessary or expedient.

Source: Irish Statute Book

8.2. Annex 2

Table 8 Absolute numbers and growth in numbers of total, adults, dependents, families and singles experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation nationally from 2016 to 2020 using July as a reference point.

	Total	Adults	Dependents	Families	Singles
July 2016	6,525	4,177	2,348	1,130	2,667
July 2017	8,160	5,187	2,973	1,429	3,234
July 2018	9,891	6,024	3,867	1,778	3,567
July 2019	10,275	6,497	3,778	1,721	4,060
July 2020	8,728	6,077	2,651	1,142	4,413
Growth % Year to Year					
16 to 17	25.1%	24.2%	26.6%	26.5%	21.3%
17 to 18	21.2%	16.1%	30.1%	24.4%	10.3%
18 to 19	3.9%	7.9%	-2.3%	-3.2%	13.8%
19 to 20	-15.1%	-6.5%	-29.8%	-33.6%	8.7%

Source: Author's own analysis of DHLGH data

8.3. Annex 3

The range of homeless services provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 are categorised into five areas in the Quarterly Financial Reports produced by Local Authorities. Table 9 gives an overview of the types of services which fall under each of these categories and the area of service priority they relate to.

Table 9 Categories of Homeless Services as provided under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988, their corresponding area of provision priority

Category	Area of Priority	Services
Homeless Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment and Resettlement Supports	Prevention	Tenancy sustainment services not including funding for Threshold
Emergency Accommodation	Protection	Supported Accommodation for families and for singles. Other accommodation: hotels and B&Bs and cold weather response
Long-Term Supported Accommodation	Protection	
Day Services	Protection	A range of non-accommodation related support services that help homeless individual's meet their basic needs such as shower and laundry facilities.
Housing Authority Homeless Services Provision including Administration	Prevention	Housing Authority prevention services including HAP place finder

Quality Assurance process

To ensure accuracy and methodological rigour, the author engaged in the following quality assurance process.

- ✓ Internal/Departmental
 - ✓ Line management
 - ✓ Spending Review Steering group
 - ✓ Other divisions/sections
 - ✓ Peer review (IGEES network, seminars, conferences etc.)
- ✓ External
 - ✓ Other Government Department
 - ✓ Peer review (IGEES network, seminars, conferences etc.)
 - ✓ External expert(s)



**An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe**
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

Tithe an Rialtas. Sráid Mhuirfean Uacht,
Baile Átha Cliath 2, D02 R583, Éire
Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2, D02 R583, Ireland

T: +353 1 676 7571
@IRLDeptPer
www.per.gov.ie