



# **A response to The Potential of Linked Administrative Data for Advancing Homeless Research Policy**

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# The Irish Experience

- PASS – national “data capture system”
  - Live database used by all homeless services funded by the state
  - Every person has a single identifier
  - At a regional level, the research office has oversight of all activity, regardless of which service used.
  - Accommodation; support planning; street outreach (housing first intake team)

# Defined population

- Ethos: roofless and most houseless
- Have a PASS id = engaging with homeless services
  - If no activity after two years, details purged, no longer homeless
- Denominator enable calculation of:
  - Prevalence Rates
  - Standardised Mortality Ratios

# Predictive analysis & intervention testing

- **Patterns of service use** (Kuhn & Culhane, 1998)
  - 3 years (2012 - 2014)
  - Emergency accommodation AND engaged in rough sleeping
  - Additional 2 years (2015 - 2016)
  - ‘new homeless’ families vs singles (Herault and Johnson, 2017)
- **Intervention testing**
  - Rough sleeper level of access to new beds introduced
  - Impact on Free-phone activity of ‘roll-over beds’ and the ‘assertive engagement’ initiative

# Linking homeless data with other datasets

- Can be simple:
  - Local within the Local Authority has facilitated an alignments of PASS data with housing waiting list data
    - Added a field for the PASS id
  - Reconciliation of two data sets possible
    - Methodology developing over past four years
    - Access additional verified data relating to demography; income; employment; social welfare; housing requirements
    - Data ready for large scale investigation
      - PhD students
  - Alignment with external data
    - National Drug Related Death Index (NDRDI)

# Impact on policy or practice?

- PASS data used to:
  - Track national goals (ending long-term homelessness & eliminate need to sleep rough)
  - Monitor national indicators (additional focus on movement through services)
  - New targets in ‘Rebuilding Ireland’ action plan (Housing First targets; emptying commercial hotels; Housing Assistance Payment tenancy targets)
- Detailed quarterly report submitted and published along with all financial details on spend by the state

# Barriers

- Increase demands on the data
  - Need to develop reporting functionality
  - Develop processes and procedures for data sharing
- Limited datasets to link the data to!
  - Unique Health Identified
  - Health Research Board- recommend:
    - SASSL model
    - Governance board “strikes a balance between individual privacy and public benefit” (2016)
    - Key task: building trust so that participation was “motivated by positive outcomes for citizens not blame” (Culhane 2017, p. 120)

# 'Context Matters'

- DRHE – unusual positioning
  - Policy insider (located in local authority and funder of services)
  - Policy outsider (direct service delivery)
  - Buy-in still needed at all levels
    - Benefits need to be demonstrated first
- On the road to a model IDS
  - Article opportune and can point us in the right direction