A profile of families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region, 2019

Feidhmeannacht um Dhaoine ar Easpa
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Acknowledgment

Foreword

The 2019 report follows on from previous reports published by the DRHE on families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin region for the periods 2016 - 2018. As family homelessness continues to be a significant cohort of the homeless population in the Dublin region, the DRHE is committed to examining the data in relation to these families so that through the evidence, we can identify the pathways in and out of homelessness and understand where we can intervene most effectively to prevent or reduce homelessness. This report is a review of the data relating to families who presented and entered homeless services for the first time in year 2019. The analysis allows for further comparison to trends identified in previous research, strengthening the known evidence on the profile of families and their progression through services.

Similarly, this report continues to show that lone parents, non-Irish nationals and larger families are more vulnerable to homelessness compared with the general population. The Homeless Housing Assistance Payment remained the main route of exit out of homelessness into homes for most families. Of families who became homeless in 2019, 52.7% exited homelessness to housing within twelve months and of these 70.1% secured homes through the Homeless Housing Assistance Payment scheme. The report also indicates that larger families have a lower probability rate of exiting homelessness in the short-term compared to small size families. Continued provision of such evidence gives more insight into the multi-factorial nature of family homelessness and provides opportunity for potential new ways of thinking and for providing solutions at a national level.

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Executive summary

Between 2014 and 2019 inclusive, the Greater Dublin region has seen a notable increase in the number of families presenting to homeless services. In this time period, a total of 4,992 families have newly presented to Emergency Accommodation (EA). The year 2019 saw 1,022 of such families. The aim of this report is to continue and expand on existing research within the DRHE in order to obtain insights on these families presenting to EA, including those who have since exited from homeless services into a secured tenancy.

I. Overview

In 2019, a total of 1,022 families presented to homeless services and entered Emergency Accommodation (EA) for the first time in the Dublin Region. This was a decrease of 90 families on 2018.

- Between June 2014 and December 2019, a total of 4,992 families presented to EA services in the Dublin Region.

- The year 2018 saw the highest number of new families presenting to EA services, at 1,107 families.

- A seasonal pattern in presentations continues to exist in 2019, with the most number of new presentations occurring during the summer months (122 families in July), and the lowest number of presentations occurring in December (41 families).

- The monthly average number of new family presentations increased from 34 in 2014[1] to 90 by 2018, before decreasing to 89 in 2019.

- In 2019, a total of 2,146 new tenancies were created for families. Of these, 1,137 were prevention tenancies while the remaining 1,009 were families exiting from EA services.

- The Homeless Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) has played a major role in both family households exiting EA to tenancy and preventing families from entering EA services. Between 2017 and 2019, a total of 4,042 of the tenancies created for families were HAP tenancies, accounting for 70% of all family tenancies in this time period.

II. Reasons for family homelessness

The majority of family households entering EA services for the first time in 2019 presented due to issues stemming from the private rented sector (46% of family households).

- The most common form of Notice of Termination (NOT) given to families presenting to EA in 2019 were due to the landlord's intention to sell the property (34.6% of all family NOT cases in 2019).

- Family circumstances such as relationship breakdown, overcrowding and domestic violence accounted for 43% of new family presentations in 2019.

- From 2016 to 2019, the two most common reasons for presentation amongst families in the Dublin Region were NOTs and family circumstances. It was found that the number of NOTs present a similar seasonal pattern to that found in the Overview section.

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1. Data available from June 2014 only, hence a lower monthly average for this year. Median value used for average number of households instead of arithmetic mean.

III Family demographics

Of the 1,022 families who presented to EA for the first time in the Dublin Region in 2019, there were 1,429 parents with a total of 2,110 dependents. Of these 1,904 were child dependents while the remaining 206 were adult dependents.

- More than 60% of new families presenting to EA services in the Dublin Region in 2019 were lone parents. Of these lone parents, more than 93% were female.

- The majority of coupled households were same-citizenship households. However, it was found that more than one in five couples presenting to EA (22%) were mixed-citizenship households. The most common such couples were Irish with Non-EU citizens (52% of mixed citizenship households and 12% of all coupled households).

- There has been a notable increase in the number of Non-Irish citizens entering EA in recent years. The proportion of EU citizens newly presenting to EA has doubled from 10% in 2016 to 22% in 2019. There has also been an increase in the percentage of Non-EU families entering EA, from 15% in 2016 to 23% in 2019 (a relative increase of 53%).

- The majority (66%) of parents in family households were aged between 25 and 44.

- The distribution of the number of dependents in family households has remained consistent from 2016 to 2019, with 45% of families in 2019 having just one child, and 14% having four or more dependents (this includes adult dependents).

IV Exit to tenancy

Of the 1,022 families presenting to EA for the first time in the Dublin Region in 2019, 53% exited EA into a secured tenancy within a year of their first presentation.

- HAP tenancies accounted for over 70% of all family households exiting to tenancy of the new family presentations in 2019.

- Of the families who exited to tenancy within a year of presentation in 2019, less than one in five (18.6%) accessed either visiting supports or on-site supports.

- The estimated probability of a family exiting EA within a year of presentation in 2019 decreases with each additional dependent present in the household. The estimated probability of a family with one dependent exiting EA was found to be 57%, while a family with four dependents has an estimated exit probability of 42%.

- Lone-parents had a higher rate of exit from EA into a secured tenancy, with 64% of household exits being from lone-parent households.

Conclusion

From June 2014 to December 2019, a total of 4,992 families newly presented to EA services in the Dublin Region. The year 2019 accounted for 1,022 of these cases, and was the first year in this time period which saw a decrease in the overall number of new family presentations. As found in previous DRHE research, the two most common reasons for families presenting as homeless were due to issues coming from the private rented sector (NOT) and family circumstances (such as relationship breakdown and overcrowding). The most common NOT issued to families were due to the landlord's intention to sell the property. Around 12% of families reported other miscellaneous reasons for presenting, such as having no income source, newly arriving to Ireland or having been recently released from a facility (such as prison or state care).

While many findings were consistent with previous research, there have been considerable changes in demographics amongst families presenting to EA services. From 2016 to 2019, there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of males entering EA services, from 24% in 2016 to 31% by 2019 (hence a decrease in females from 76% in 2014 to 69% in 2019). Furthermore, the percentage of lone-parents has decreased each year, from 66% in 2016 to 60% in 2019. The years 2018 and 2019 have seen a vast increase in the representation of migrants presenting to EA, with the total percentage of EU citizens having doubled between 2016 and 2019. There has also been a notable increase in non-EU citizens from 15% in 2016 to 23% by 2019.

Overall, the analysis of the 2019 cohort of families newly presenting to EA services provides some very notable findings about families entering and exiting from homelessness. For example, it was found that HAP accounted for 70% of tenancies for families from 2017 to 2019, and that smaller sized households had a statistically higher chance of exiting to a secured tenancy.

1. Introduction

Since 2014, Ireland has observed a notable increase in the number of families experiencing homelessness, particularly in the Dublin Region. From June 2014 until December 2019, a total of 4,992 families accessed Emergency Accommodation (EA) services across the Dublin Region for the first time. Families are classified as newly presenting as homelessness when they had no previous Pathway Accommodation and Support System[2] (PASS) record, or any accommodation history as a family unit with accompanying dependent children.

In more recent years the scope of PASS data has expanded, consequentially allowing for more thorough and detailed analysis. Hence, since January 2016, PASS data have been utilised further in attempt to understand which issues are contributing to the increase in the number of families experiencing homelessness. The analysis of such data has allowed for an analysis of not only demographic information of these families, but also a breakdown on the reasons for family homelessness. From this, it was found that there are two major contributing factors to family homelessness in the Dublin Region in recent years:

(1) Leaving private rented accommodation on foot of a formal Notice of Termination (NOT)[3]; and

(2) Leaving a family/friend's accommodation due to family circumstances, relationship breakdown and/or overcrowding.

The above, together with data pertaining to families exiting EA to a secured tenancy provide detailed and important insights into not only the causes of family homelessness in the Dublin Region, but also the factors influencing them from exiting homelessness into a secured tenancy.

1.1 Objective

The overall goal of this research was to continue the examination of key factors influencing family homelessness in the Dublin Region, and to share insights on the demographic profiles of families presenting as homeless for the first time. It also aimed to outline the main factors influencing a family's exit from Emergency Accommodation to a secured tenancy. This information can be used to help inform operational and policy developments relating to homeless families in the Dublin Region.

1.2 Methodology

This report follows the methodologies established in previous research[4] and was compiled using data recorded on PASS. A family is defined as being new to homelessness when they have no previous PASS record or accommodation history as a family unit with dependent children. Upon presenting to services, families are asked

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2 PASS provides real-time information for homeless presentation and bed occupancy across the Dublin Region.

3 A Notice of Termination (NOT) is issued when a tenancy has lasted longer than six months in duration, and is a written notice issued by the landlord to the tenant on various grounds. A tenant is also entitled to issue an NOT to the landlord on specific grounds. Source: Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

4 H, Morrin (2019), "A profile of families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region, 2016-2018 families", Dublin Region Homeless Executive.

H. Morrin & B, O'Donoghue Hynes (2018), "A Report on the 2016 and 2017 families who experienced homelessness in the Dublin Region", Dublin Region homeless Executive.

H, Morrin (2017), "Analysis of the newly homeless families accommodated by Dublin's homeless services during 2016".

to detail the reason(s) for their current experience of homelessness in addition to details relating to their accommodation history. The data from their initial assessment forms were entered on PASS and reviewed on a case by case basis. Data relating to key variables were extracted and entered into an anonymised data set. The data were then analysed using the R statistical software package.The initial assessment used by the four local authorities was updated in May 2018, particularly the reasons for homelessness section. The aim was to collect more robust data on why families were presenting to homeless services. The free text box was removed and replaced with a list of the most common reasons for homelessness with room to input 'other' reasons where applicable. The different types of NOTs were listed as outlined by the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

1.3 Outline

Section 1 (this section) introduces the research and its objectives. Section 2 examines the trends in the number of families newly presenting as homeless in the Dublin Region in 2019, and compares this to the overall trends since June 2014. Section 3 details the reported reasons for each family presenting as homeless, and provides both a monthly breakdown of the data for 2019 in addition to a time series analysis of reasons for homelessness from 2016 to 2019 inclusive. Section 4 outlines demographic information for families newly presenting to homeless services in 2019. It does so by first giving overall family composition details, followed by demographic data on the individual parents of these families. Section 5 provides a detailed statistical analysis of new families who exited from homelessness into a secured tenancy within twelve months of first presentation. It also uses inferential statistics with the objective of establishing insights into the factors impacting a family's likelihood of exiting to tenancy. Finally, Section 6 summarises the findings of the research.

2. Overview – New family presentations

This section examines trends in the number of families newly presenting as homeless in the Dublin Region. It first presents the number of new families accessing Emergency Accommodation in 2019, followed by a time series analysis of trends in family homelessness from 2014 to 2019. Finally, it looks at homeless prevention figures in addition to the number of families exiting from homelessness into a secured tenancy from 2017 to 2019. It should be noted that due to retrospective data cleansing and information continuously being updated on PASS, the total number of families stated in this report will not be the same as in periodic reports as released by the DRHE and the DHLGH in 2019.

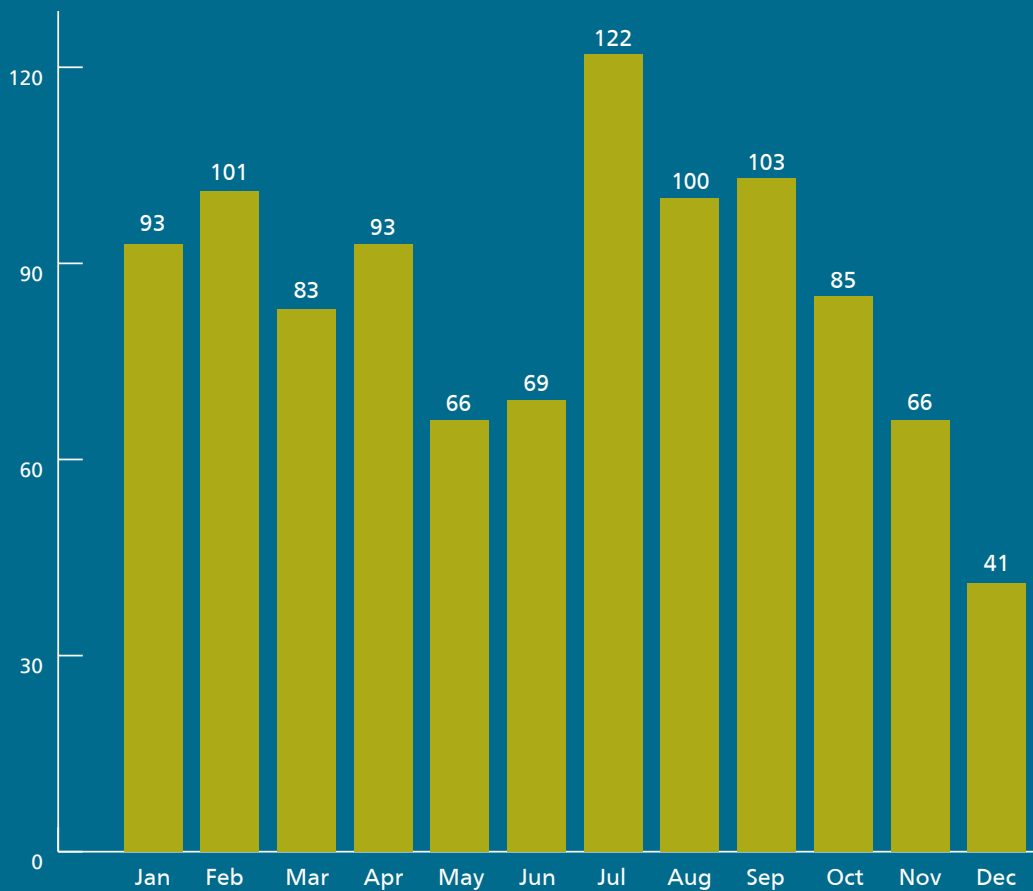## 2.1 New family presentations, 2019

From January to December 2019, a total of 1,022 families newly presented to homeless services for the first time within the four local authorities across the Dublin Region. This was a decrease of 90 families on the number of new family presentations in 2018. Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 illustrate that the highest number of families presenting in 2019 occurred in July, at 122 new families, and the lowest occurred in December, at 41 families. This trend is similar to that of 2018, where the number of new presentations peaked during the summer months, and then decreased towards the end of the year.

Table 2.1: New family presentations by month, 2019

Month	No. of presentations
January	93
February	101
March	83
April	93
May	66
June	69
July	122
August	100
September	103
October	85
November	66
December	41
Total	**1,022**

Figure 2.1: New family presentations by month, 2019

2.2 Trends in new family presentations

Over the five and a half year period between June 2014 and December 2019, a total of 4,992 families have entered emergency accommodation services across the Dublin Region. Figure 2.2 shows a fluctuating trend in new family presentations each month, however there is a general upward trend between the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2019. In the last seven months of 2014, there were on average 34 new families presenting each month to homeless services. The monthly average increased to 62 new families per month in 2015, and increased again to 75 in 2016, 81 in 2017, and 93 in 2018. By 2019, there were an average of 85 new families presenting to homeless services per month.

Figure 2.2: Families entering emergency accommodation for the first time 2014-2019
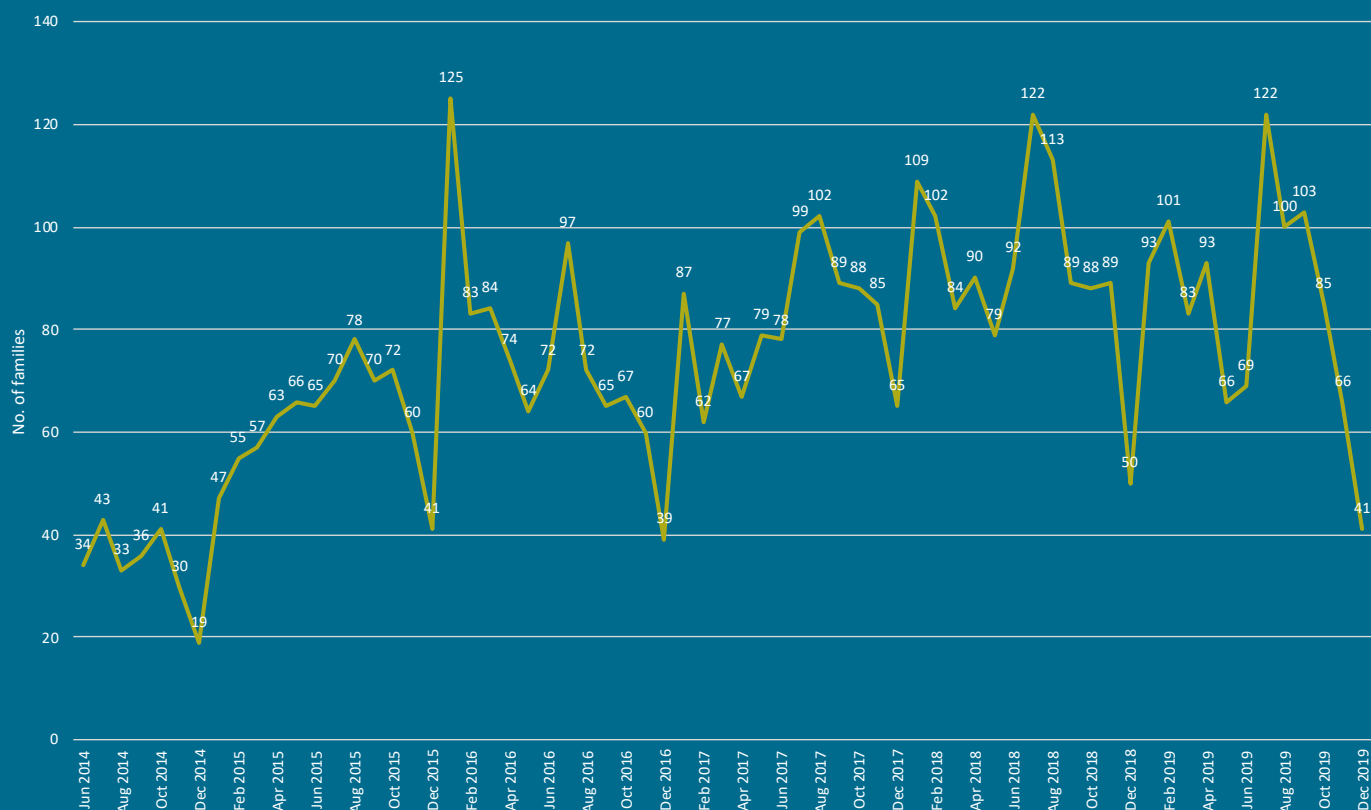

Table 2.2: Number of families newly entering emergency accommodation, 2014-2019

Year	No. of families	Highest month	Lowest month	Monthly average[1]
2014[2]	236	July (43)	December (19)	34
2015	744	August (78)	December (41)	64
2016	902	January (125)	December (39)	72
2017	976	August (102)	February (62)	82
2018	1,112	July (122)	December (50)	90
2019	1,022	July (122)	December (42)	89
Total	**4,992**			

[1] Median value was used for monthly average, as opposed to arithmetic mean.

[2] Data for 2014 is from June only, resulting in a lower number of families and a lower median value.

As seen in previous DRHE research, Figure 2.2 also highlights a degree of seasonality in the levels of new family presentations between 2014 and 2019[5]. Each year, the number of new family presentations are lowest in December, which is always immediately followed by a surge in January once the Christmas period is finished. There are also increases in the number of new presentations in the summer months, most notably in July and August across all years. There is also a noticeable downward trend in the number of new presentations in the final quarter of each year, between October and December.

5 Source: "A Report on the 2016 and 2017 families who experienced homelessness in the Dublin Region", April 2018.

2.3 Tenancies and prevention

As noted previously, there has been a rising trend in the number of families presenting to homeless services year on year. However, the year 2019 saw the first overall decrease in the number of new families presenting to Emergency Accommodation services since before 2014. A high number of preventative tenancies in recent years can be linked to such decrease in new presentations[6].

In 2017, a total of 1,675 tenancies were created for families[7]. Almost half (817, or 48.7%) of these tenancies were preventative, while the remaining 858 families (51.2%) departed from homeless accommodation to tenancies (exits). This increased to a total of 1,960 tenancies in 2018 (of which 1,180 were preventative and 780 were exits from homeless services). By the end of 2019, there were a record total of 2,146 new family tenancies established, of which 1,137 were preventative and the remaining 1,009 were families exiting from emergency accommodation services.
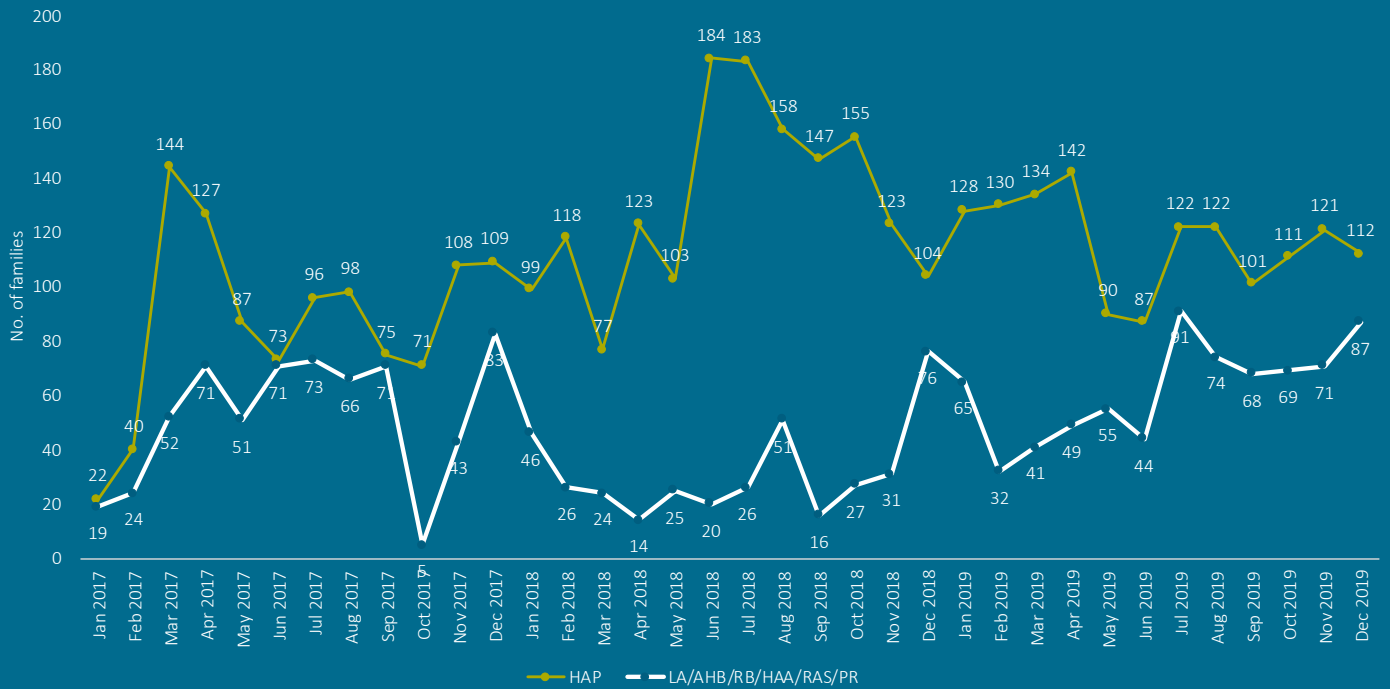
Table 2.3: Family moves to a tenancy by exit from emergency accommodation and preventative tenancies, 2017-2019

	2017		2018		2019	
	No. of new tenancies	%	No. of new tenancies	%	No. of new tenancies	%
Families departing emergency accommodation to tenancy	858	51.2	780	40.0	1,009	47.0
Families moving directly to prevention tenancies	817	48.8	1,180	60.0	1,137	53.0
Total	**1,675**	**100.0**	**1,960**	**100.0**	**2,146**	**100.0**

6 Prevention tenancies are those when the family never enters emergency accommodation. They present to services at risk of imminent homelessness but they are directly rehoused, usually through the Homeless Housing Assistance Payment scheme.

7 The DRHE have been recording exits to tenancy since 2014, however this data can only be disaggregated into singles and families from 2017 onwards.

Figure 2.3: Family moves to tenancy by tenancy type, 2017-2019

2.4 Summary

The Homeless Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) has played a major role in family households both exiting from emergency accommodation to a tenancy, as well as being prevented from entering homeless services. From 2017 to 2019 inclusive, a total of 4,042 new HAP tenancies were created for families[8]. HAP has been utilised in combination with other schemes (Local Authority housing, Approved Housing Bodies, Rental Accommodation Scheme, Rapid Build housing and Housing Agency acquisitions) for both prevention and exits from emergency accommodation. Figure 2.3 illustrates the total number of family moves to tenancy from 2017 to 2019. The highest recorded number of HAP tenancies occurred in May 2018, at 184 tenancies in the month, while the lowest was in October 2017, at 5 tenancies. Figure 2.3 also shows that HAP has been the primary driver for both family exits and preventions from homelessness.
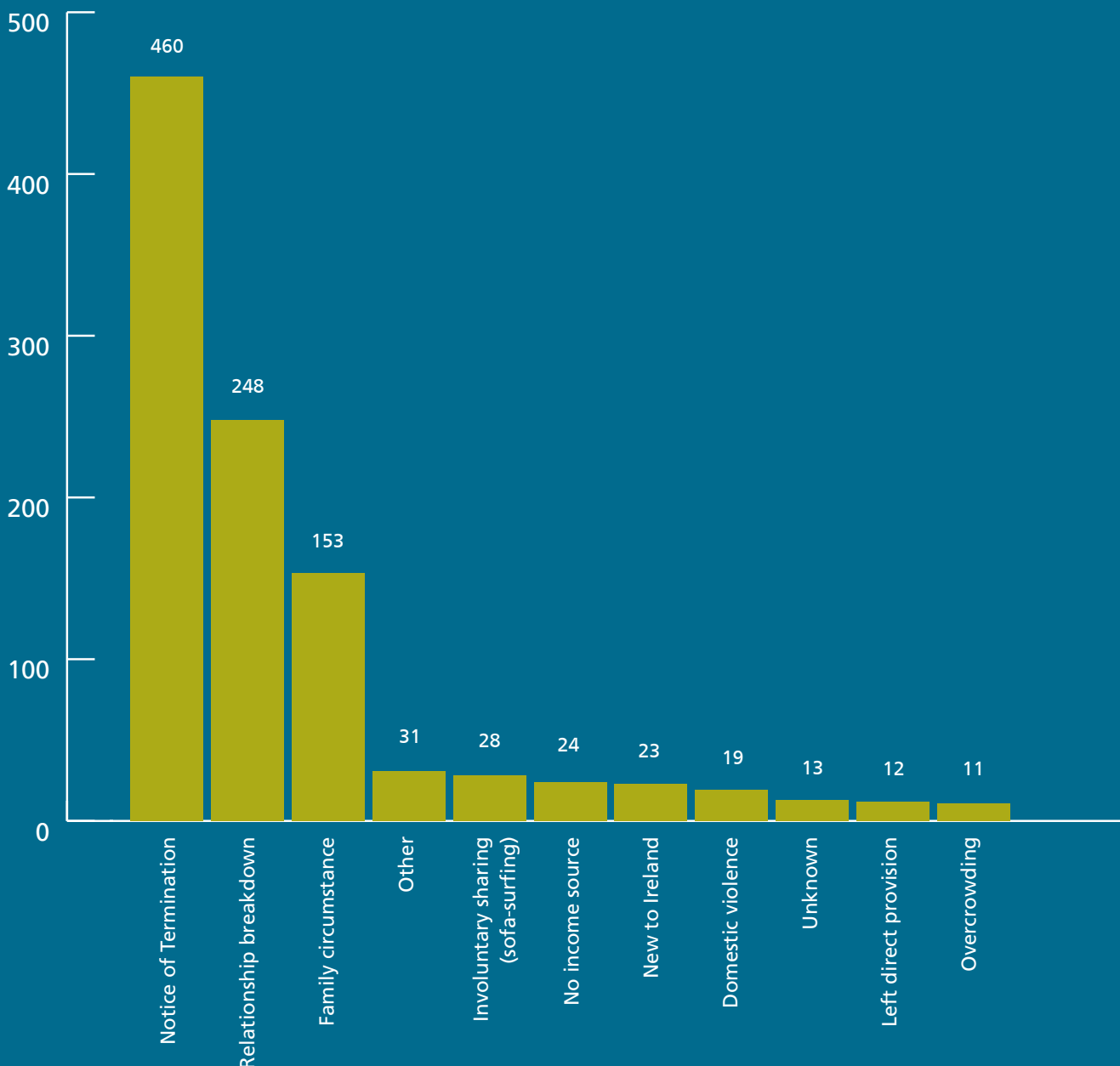
From 2014 to 2018 there has been a steady increase in the number of new families experiencing homelessness, with clear seasonal patterns of presentations present. Despite this upward trend, the year 2019 saw a decrease in the number of new presentations. A total of 1,022 families accessed emergency accommodation for the first time in 2019, with a monthly average of 85 families. The rate of increase in new family presentations accelerated in mid-2015, and did not even off until late 2016/early 2017 when moves to tenancies began to increase. The exit and prevention figures show that HAP has played a crucial role in families exiting emergency accommodation to tenancies, with a total of 4,042 HAP tenancies having been established between 2017 and 2019. While the number of families presenting each month remains high, significant progress has been made in terms of preventions and exits from homeless accommodation.

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8 Includes both prevention tenancies and families exiting emergency accommodation.

3. Reasons for homelessness

This section outlines the reasons for homelessness as reported by the 1,022 families newly presenting to homeless services from January to December 2019. It aims to highlight key trends and common causes for family homelessness in the Dublin Region.

Figure 3.1: New family presentation by reason for homelessness, 2019

A review of PASS data reveals two primary causes for homelessness in the Dublin Region for families in 2019: loss of a tenancy in private rented accommodation and family circumstances (such as a relationship breakdown and overcrowding).

Table 3.1: Reasons for homelessness reported at initial assessment for new family presentations in the Dublin Region, 2019

Reason for presentation	No. of families	%
I. Private rented sector		
Notice of Termination (NOT)		
Property to be sold	149	
Landlord's own/family use	48	
Substantial renovations	40	
Breach of tenant responsibilities	36	
Rent arrears	36	
Unsuitable accommodation	14	
Other[1]	28	
Insufficient information on NOT	109	
Subtotal	460	45.6%
II. Family/partner circumstance		
Relationship breakdown		
Parent	143	
Partner	31	
Other relationship breakdown (extended family, friends)	74	
Overcrowding	61	
Domestic violence	19	
Other family circumstance	103	
Subtotal	431	42.7%
III. Other reasons		
Involuntary sharing ('sofa-surfing')	28	
No income source	24	
Release from facility (prison/care/hospital/direct provision)	24	
Recently arrived in Ireland	23	
Other[2]	19	
Subtotal	118	11.7%
Unknown reasons for presentation	13	
Total new family presentations, 2019	**1,022**	

[1,2]In line with the Irish Statistical System Code of Practice (ISSCOP) and GDPR, wherever fewer than 10 cases are found in any given reason the data are aggregated. For Notice of Termination, the 'Other' refers to the combined reasons of: Landlord bankrupt, surrendered Local Authority housing, invalid/illegal NOT, antisocial behaviour, insufficient funds, first six months of tenancy, and leaving the property without an NOT. In the case of Other reasons (note 2), the combined total is composed of the following: Mental illness, substance abuse, repossession of property, victim of antisocial behaviour, and family reunification.
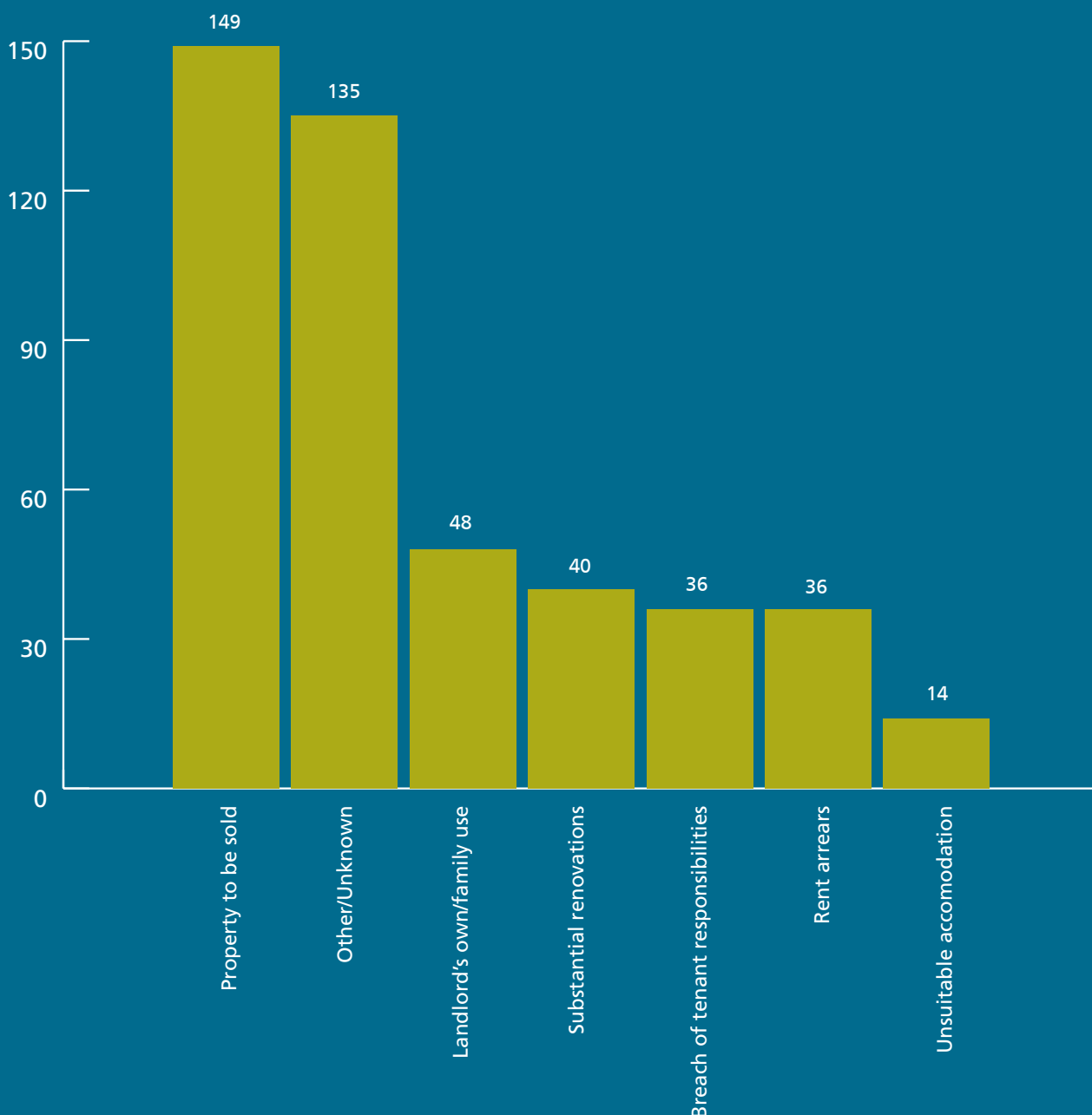
3.1 Private rented sector – Notice of Termination

Less than half (45.6%) of all new family household presentations to homeless services in the Dublin region in 2019 were as a result of issues stemming from the private rented sector. This was an absolute decrease of 4.4% on 2018, where 50.0% of new family presentations were due to Notice of Termination (NOT).

Of the known reasons for NOT, the most common cause of new families presenting to homeless services in 2019 was due to the landlord selling their property (see Figure 3.1). This accounted for 149 cases, or 34.6% of all NOT cases in 2019 (if we are to exclude all unknown NOT reasons, this figure rises to 46.0%). There were a further 48 NOTs issued to tenants for landlord's own/family use, as well as 40 NOTs issued on the grounds of substantial renovations due to be undertaken on the property. Furthermore, there were a total of 36 families each who were issued NOTs by their landlord on the grounds of breaching tenant responsibilities, as well as for rent arrears.

Figure 3.2: Notice of Termination presentations by subgroup, 2019

3.2 Family and partnership circumstances

A similar proportion of new family households entering homelessness in 2019 were due to either family or partnership circumstances (431 households, or 42.7%). These circumstances cover a series of issues such as relationship breakdowns, family conflict, overcrowding in the family home and domestic violence. As evidenced by previous qualitative research undertaken by the DRHE on family homelessness, it is expected that some of these families will have moved in with family or friends following a loss of private rented accommodation, and that this return to such households was unsustainable.[9] This, however, could not be determined from the information obtained on the initial assessment form used to collect data on the reason for new family presentations.

3.2.1 Relationship breakdown

A breakdown in relationship within the family accounted for more than half of all family/partnership circumstances in the Dublin Region in 2019 (248 family households, or 57.5%). Of these 248 families, 143 (or 57.6%) were with parents, 31 (12.5%) were with partners, while the remaining 74 (29.8%) cited general relationship breakdown as the primary reason for presenting as homeless (this includes relationship breakdown between siblings, extended family, friends etc.).

3.2.2 Overcrowding

A total of 61 family households cited living in overcrowded accommodation as their primary cause for presenting as homeless in 2019. This accounted for 14.2% of the 431 family circumstance cases cited in Table 3.1, and 6.0% of all new families presenting as homeless in the Dublin Region in 2019.

3.2.3 Domestic violence

Of the 431 family/partnership circumstance cases cited in Table 3.1, a total of 19 families (4.4%) reported entering homeless services due to domestic violence. The majority of such families entering Emergency Accommodation are female lone-parents who were the victims of domestic abuse from their partners. However, a small minority[10] of the 19 domestic violence cases were couples who were facing abuse in other family household situations (i.e. the abuse was not coming from their partner). A number of the domestic violence cases were referred to Emergency Accommodation services from domestic violence refuge centres.

3.2.4 Other family circumstances

There were a total of 103 families (or 23.9%) of newly presenting families in this category in 2019, a decrease of 4 families on 2018. In such cases, these families presented as homeless due to changing family circumstances, which may include the illness/death of a family member, or another family member requiring care (the exact circumstances are not recorded in this category on PASS).

3.3 Other reasons for homelessness

A total of 118 families had various other reasons for newly presenting to homeless services. This was broken down as follows:

- Twenty-eight (23.7%) of these families were involuntarily sharing across multiple addresses (i.e. were 'sofa-surfing').

- Twenty-four (20.3%) cited having no income source as their primary reason for homelessness.

- A further 24 families (20.3%) also had recently left various facilities, including prison, hospital, or care. Of these 24 families, 12 had been released from direct provision centres, and had been granted permission to remain in the state[11].

- Twenty-three families (19.5%) had newly arrived

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9 S, Stamp (2017), "The Experiences of Newly Homeless Families Accommodated by Dublin's Homeless Services in August 2015." Dublin Region Homeless Executive.

10 Due to GDPR and in line with ISSCOP best practices, the exact number of couples who entered Emergency Accommodation due to domestic violence cannot be stated.

11 A person who has been refused a refugee or subsidiary protection declaration may be granted permission to remain in the State http:// www.ipo.gov.ie/en/ipo/pages/permissiontoremain

to Ireland without securing accommodation.

- The remaining 19 families had other various reasons for homelessness, as outlined in the footnote in Table 3.1.
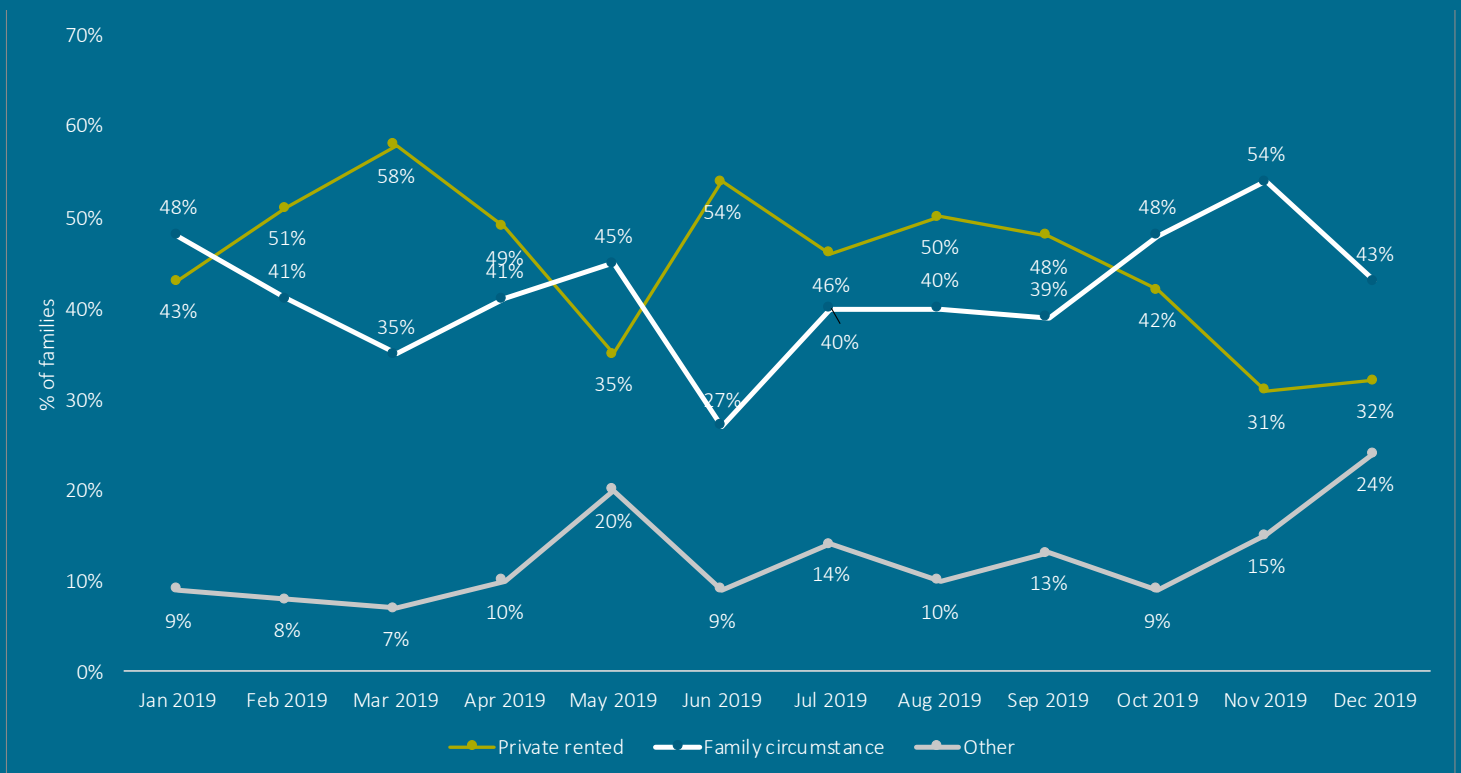
3.4 Insufficient information

Insufficient information on the reason for presenting to homeless services was available for 13 families. This is a decrease from 2018, where there was insufficient information on 43 families (giving a relative decrease of 74.4% on unknown cases). In some such cases, no initial assessment was completed as the family may have only accessed Emergency Accommodation for one night. For the purpose of analysis this cohort of families was not included in the calculation of the percentages included throughout this section of the report.

3.5 Reasons for homelessness by month, 2019

Figure 3.3 outlines the reasons for families presenting as homeless in the Dublin region on a monthly basis for 2019. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the total number of new families presenting as homeless varies each month. Similarly, the reasons also vary over the twelve month period. In January 2019, family circumstances accounted for the majority of reasons, at 48%, while private rented accounted for 43% (and "other" accounting for the remaining 9%). However, from February to September (with the exception of May), issues within the private rented sector were the primary reasons for family presentation. Family circumstances then became the primary reason towards the final quarter in 2019.

Figure 3.3: Primary reasons for homelessness by month 2019

3.6 Reasons for homelessness, 2016-2019

This section compares the reasons for new family presentations in the Dublin Region since the DRHE began collecting this information in January 2016. There were a total of 4,012 families who presented to homeless service in the three year period between 2016 and 2019. Table 3.2 gives the percentage breakdown of reasons for homelessness in this time period. In 2016 and 2017, family circumstances were the primary reason for families newly presenting to Emergency Accommodation, while in 2018 and 2019, issues relating to the private rented sector were the primary reason for homelessness.

The private rented sector accounted for 45% of all family reasons for homelessness in 2016. This increased by 5% to 50% by 2018, before decreasing to 46% in 2019. Table 2.2 shows an overall decrease in the number of families presenting due to relationship breakdown, family conflict and/or some form of overcrowding. In 2016, the proportion of such households was 51%. It then decreased each year down to 43% in 2019, an absolute decrease of 12%.

Table 3.2: Reasons for homelessness, 2016-2019[1]

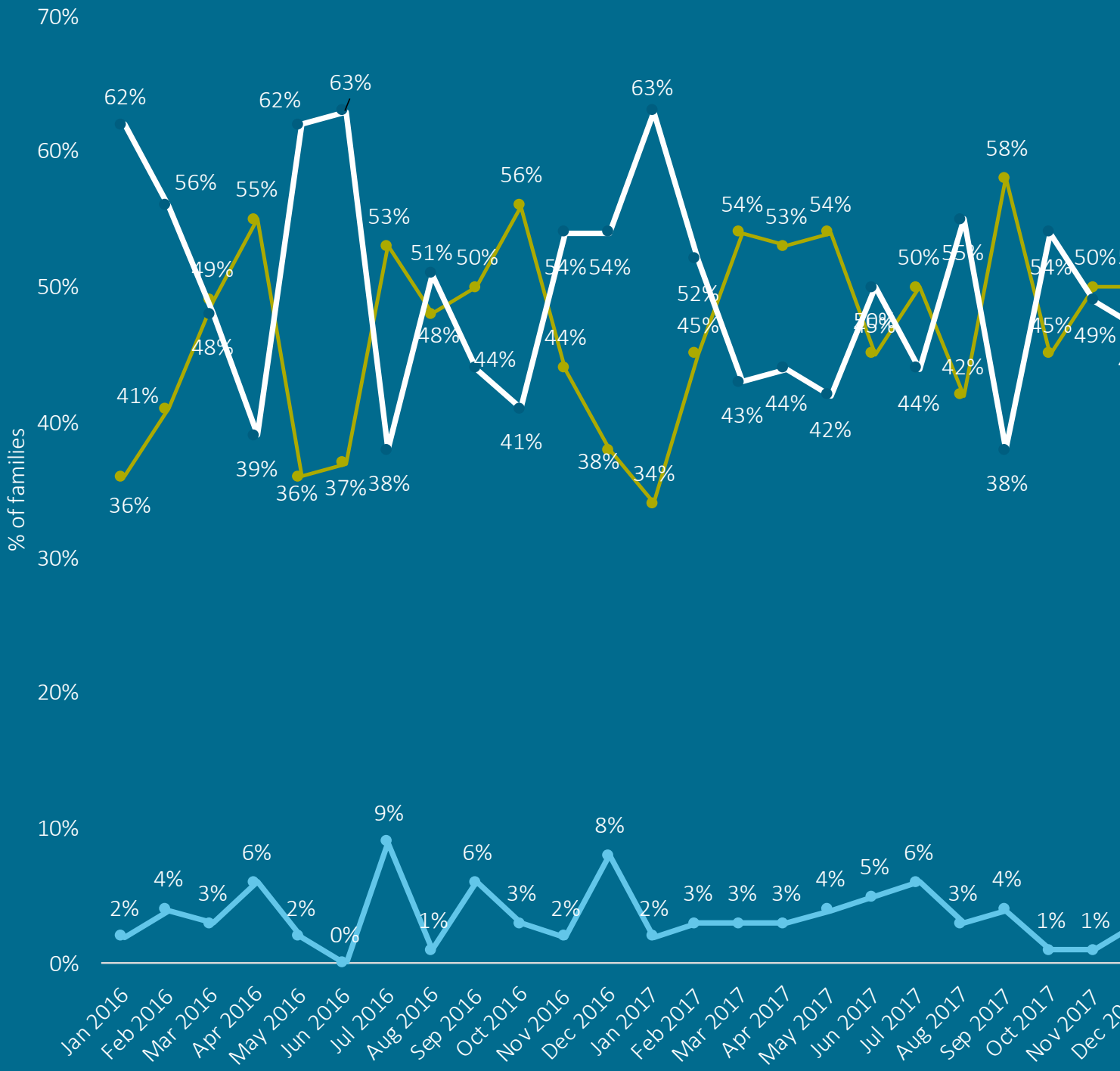| Reason for presentation	2016	2017	2018	2019
Private rented sector	45%	48%	50%	46%
Family circumstance	51%	49%	42%	43%
Other	4%	3%	8%	12%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

[1]Excludes unknown reasons for presentation.
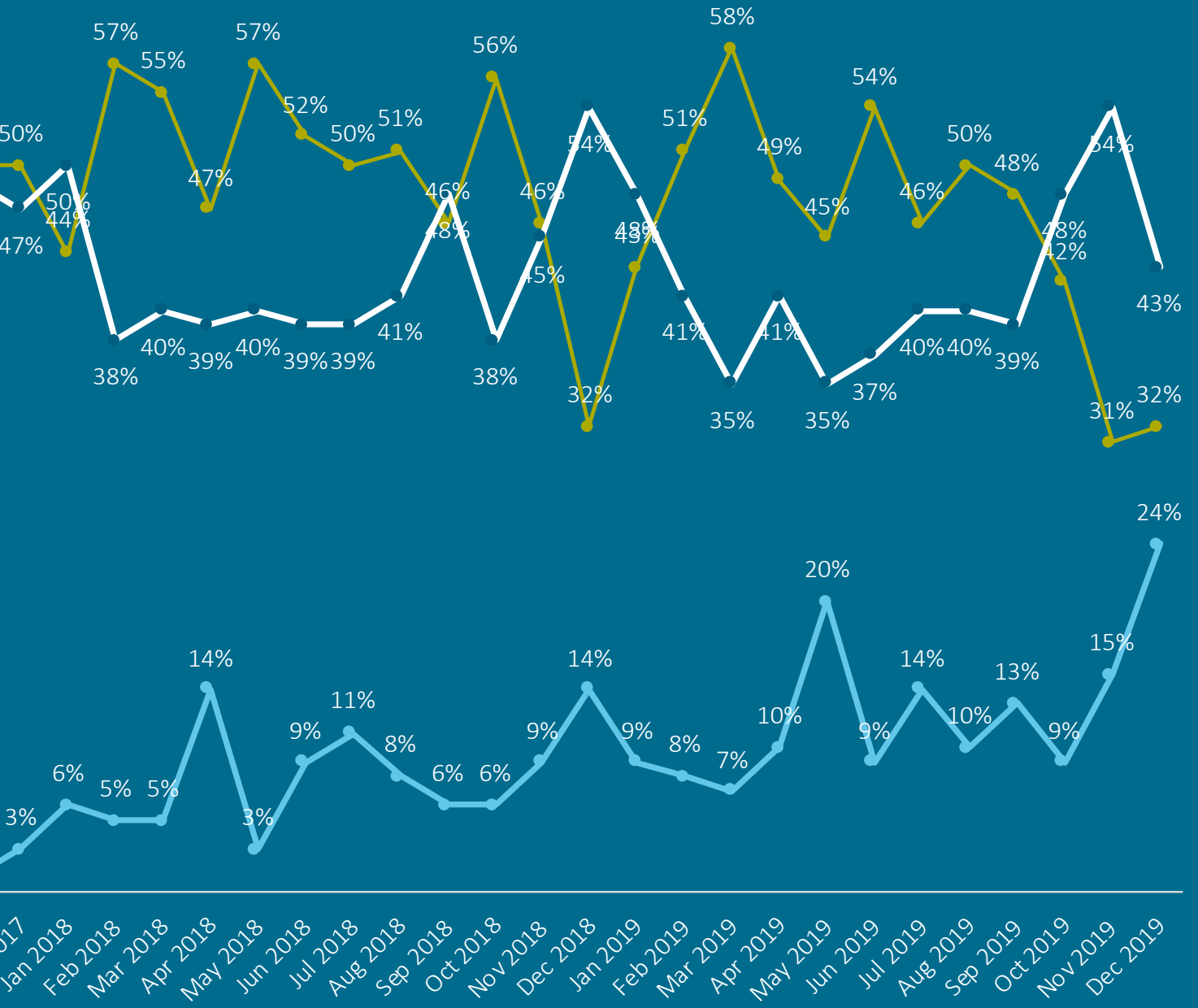
Figure 3.4 provides a similar breakdown in reasons for family presentations, from 2016 to 2019 inclusive. There exists a lot of variance between families entering from the private rented sector and families presenting due to family circumstances. However, Figure 3.4 also shows that families presenting from the private rented sector have been more prominent in both 2018 and 2019.

Figure 3.4: Primary reasons for homelessness, 2016 - 2019

% of families

Jan 2016, Feb 2016, Mar 2016, Apr 2016, May 2016, Jun 2016, Jul 2016, Aug 2016, Sep 2016, Oct 2016, Nov 2016, Dec 2016, Jan 2017, Feb 2017, Mar 2017, Apr 2017, May 2017, Jun 2017, Jul 2017, Aug 2017, Sep 2017, Oct 2017, Nov 2017, Dec 20

Yellow line: 50% 44% 57% 55% 47% 57% 52% 50% 51% 46% 56% 46% 32% 48% 43% 58% 49% 45% 54% 46% 50% 48% 42% 31% 32%

White line: 47% 50% 50% 38% 40% 39% 40% 39% 39% 41% 48% 45% 54% 46% 41% 35% 41% 35% 37% 40% 40% 39% 42% 54% 43%

Light blue line: 3% 6% 5% 5% 14% 3% 9% 11% 8% 6% 6% 9% 14% 9% 8% 7% 10% 20% 9% 14% 10% 13% 9% 15% 24%

X-axis: 017 | Jan 2018 | Feb 2018 | Mar 2018 | Apr 2018 | May 2018 | Jun 2018 | Jul 2018 | Aug 2018 | Sep 2018 | Oct 2018 | Nov 2018 | Dec 2018 | Jan 2019 | Feb 2019 | Mar 2019 | Apr 2019 | May 2019 | Jun 2019 | Jul 2019 | Aug 2019 | Sep 2019 | Oct 2019 | Nov 2019 | Dec 2019

3.7 Summary

The methods used in this chapter examines the primary reason for family homelessness in the Dublin Region in 2019. It was found that less than half of families (46%) presented directly from private rented accommodation, while 43% of the remaining families presented due to family circumstances such as relationship breakdown, domestic violence and overcrowding in family homes (however it is acknowledged that some of such cases may have moved out of private rented accommodation prior to residing with family/friends). It is important to note that the reasons for anyone presenting as homeless can be very multi-faceted, and the nature of administrative data makes it difficult to fully track the ancillary and compounding factors which may coagulate the resulting experience of homelessness for each family newly accessing Emergency Accommodation.

The data presented in this chapter provides valuable insights into the key trends and common causes for family homelessness between 2016 and 2019. While the breakdown in presentation reasons vary month on month when taken together, there is an increase in the number of families presenting to homeless services in the Dublin Region due to a loss of or inability to secure private rented accommodation.
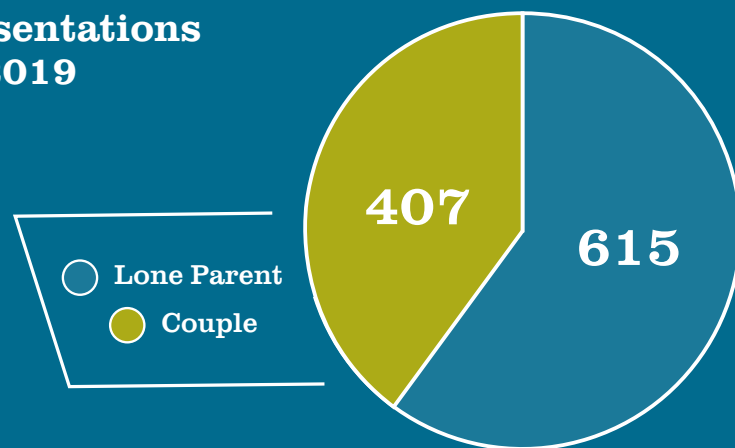
4. Family demographics

This section reviews demographic data for the 1,022 families who newly accessed Emergency Accommodation in the Dublin Region in 2019. It includes details on both household composition as well as details on individual adults in families. Where available, data from 2016, 2017 and 2018 is compared to build a more representative profile of family homelessness in the Dublin Region.

Figure 4.1: New family presentations by household compistion, 2019

- Lone Parent: 615
- Couple: 407

4.1 Family household overview

Figure 4.1 illustrates the family composition of new family presentations in 2019. The majority of new family presentations in 2019 were lone-parents, at 615 households (or 60.2%), while couples accounted for the remaining 407 (39.8%) households. This is consistent with the previous year, with lone-parents accounting for 60.0% of new family presentations in 2018. However, it is a decrease on both 2016 and 2017, where the percentage of lone-parents newly presenting as homeless were 66.0% and 65.0% respectively.[12]

A total of 2,110 dependents accompanied the 1,022 new family presentations in 2019. Of these, 1,904 were child dependents under 18 years, while the remaining 206 were adult dependents. Table 4.1 shows that the majority (458 families, or 44.8%) had one dependent, while 149 families (14.6%) had four or more dependents. The higher proportion of lone-parents is reflected in each family household containing three or less dependents. However, a higher proportion of couples had four or more dependents (90 families, or 60.4% of those with 4 or more dependents).

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12 Source: "A Report on the 2016 and 2017 families who experienced homelessness in the Dublin Region" , April 2018

Table 4.1 – Number of dependents present by household type

No. of dependents	Couples	Lone parents	Total families	%	Total dependents*
1	141	317	458	44.8	458
2	117	166	282	27.6	564
3	59	74	133	13.0	399
4+	90	59	149	14.6	689
Total	**407**	**615**	**1,022**	**100.0**	**2,110**

*(Includes both adult and child dependents)

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the citizenship breakdown of the 1,022 new family household presentations in the Dublin Region in 2019. The majority of couples shared the same citizenship (317 families, or 77.9% of all couples). More than one-fifth of new family presentations (90 families, or 22.1%) were mixed-citizenship couples. The most common mixed-citizenship type was Irish with Non-EU, which accounted for more than half of all mixed-citizenship couples entering Emergency Accommodation for the first time in 2019 (47 couples, or 52.2% of mixed-citizenship couples). The majority of lone-parents were Irish (398 families, 64.7%), followed by Non-EU (128 families, 20.8%) and EU (89 families, 14.5%).

Table 4.2 – Citizenship breakdown of new family presentations, 2019

Citizenship	No. of families
Same-citizenship couples	
Irish	167
EU (Other EEA)	96
Non-EU (Non EEA)	54
Total same-citizenship households	**317**
Mixed-citizenship couples	
Irish-EU	20
Irish-Non-EU	47
EU-Non-EU	23
Total mixed-citizenship households	**90**
Lone-parent households	
Irish	398
EU (Other EEA)	89
Non-EU (Non EEA)	128
Total lone-parent households	**615**
Total family households	**1,022**

4.2 Adults in families

This section examines demographic data on individual adults in families. In 2019, there were a total of 1,635 adults in families newly presenting to Emergency Accommodation in the Dublin Region (which included a total of 1,429 parents and 206 adult dependents. In order to draw comparisons with the previous section, the following analysis does not outline any specific details on these adult dependents, and instead only examines the 1,429 parents (615 lone-parents and 407 couples).

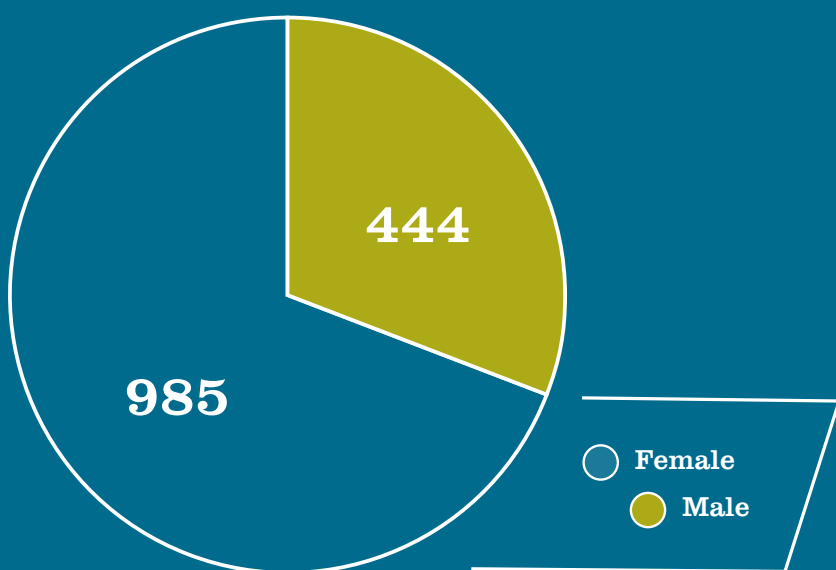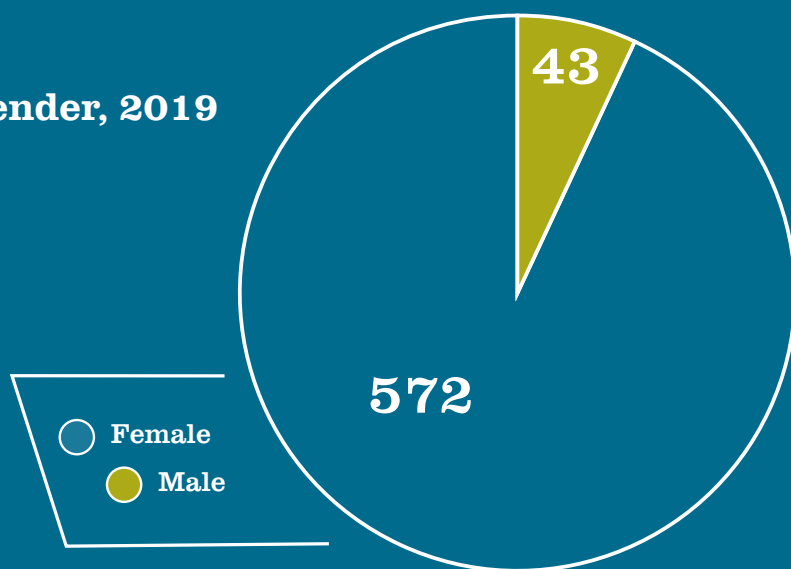## Figure 4.2: Parents in new family presentations by gender, 2019

Figure 4.3: Lone parents by gender, 2019

4.2.1 Gender

Of the parents in families who experienced homelessness in 2019, a higher proportion were female (985 parents, or 68.9%). This can be attributed to the f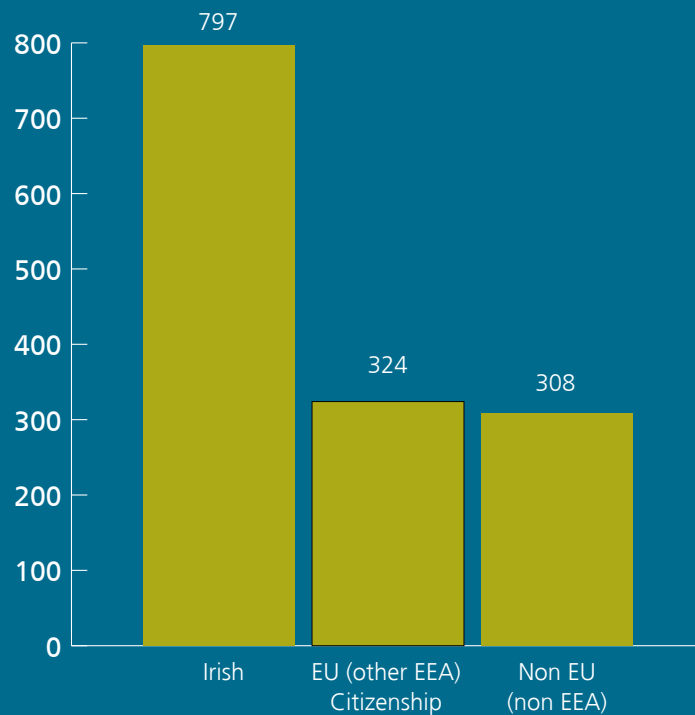indings in Figure 4.3, which shows a clear disparity in gender where lone parent families are concerned, as 93.0% of lone-parents were female (572 parents) while the remaining 43 lone-parents (7.0%) were male.

4.2.2 Citizenship

Figure 4.4 provides the citizenship breakdown of the 1,429 newly presenting parents in 2019. While the majority (797 parents, 55.8%) of parents were Irish, the percentage breakdown of EU and Non-EU citizens are similar (324 EU parents, or 22.6% and 308 Non-EU parents, or 21.5%). Combined, EU and Non-EU citizens accounted for less than half of all new presentation cases in 2019 (44.2%, or 632 parents).

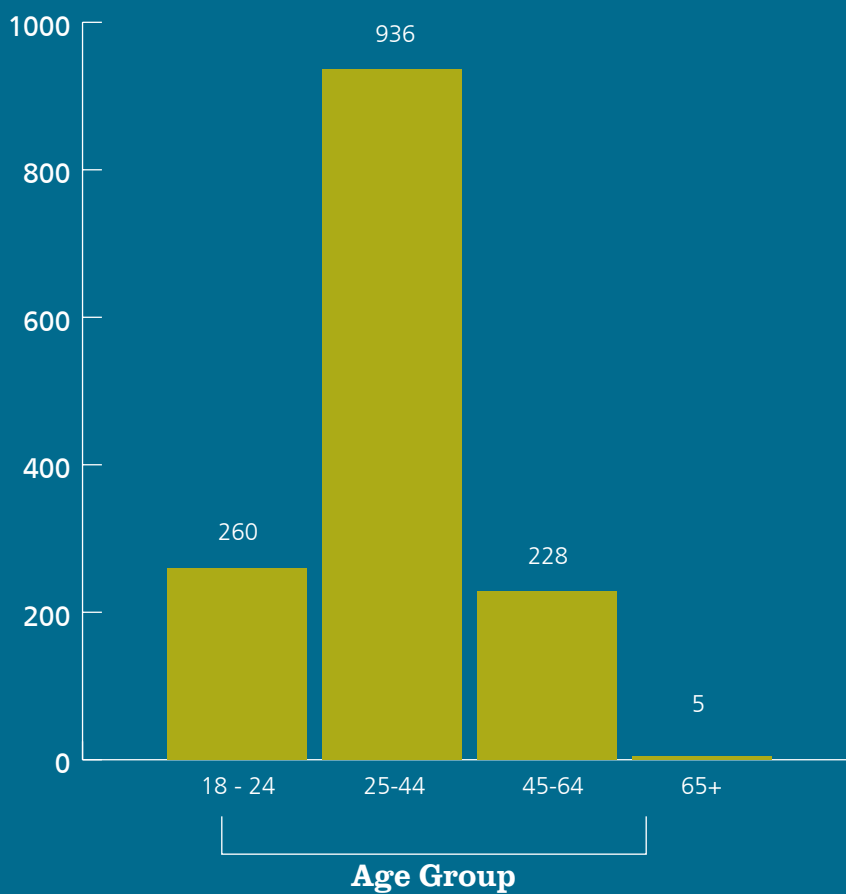**Figure 4.4 Parents in new family presentations by citizenship, 2019**

4.2.3 Age

The average age of parents in this cohort of families was 34.2 years (median 34 years). This is consistent with previous findings, where the mean age of adults in families in 2018 was 34.5 years. Figure 4.5 illustrat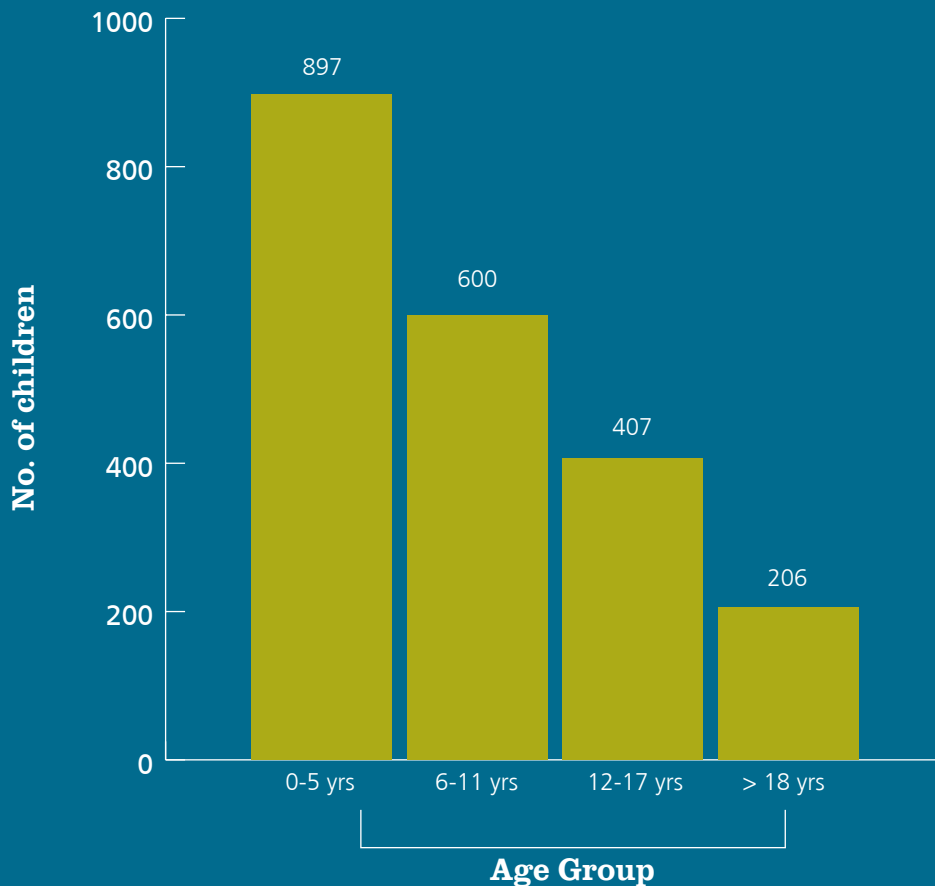es that 18.2% of parents were aged 18 to 24 (260 parents), while the majority of parents (936, or 65.5%) were aged 25-44. A notable percentage of parents were over the age of 45, at 16.3% (or 233 parents).

Figure 4.5: Age distribution of parents in new family presentations, 2019

Of the 1,904 child dependents, the majority (897, or 47.1%) were aged 5 or under. A further 600 child dependents (31.5%) were aged between 6 and 11 years, while 407 (21.3%) were aged between 12 and 17 years. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, there were a total of 206 adult dependents.

Figure 4.6: Age groups of dependants in new family presentations, 2019

No. of children (y-axis)

- 0-5 yrs: 897
- 6-11 yrs: 600
- 12-17 yrs: 407
- > 18 yrs: 206

Age Group (x-axis)

4.3 Trends in family demographics, 2016-2019

From January 2016 to December 2019 a total of 4,012 families newly accessed Emergency Accommodation in the Dublin Region. The tables in this section compare the findings from 2019 with that of the preceding three years. Note that due to data limitations, demographic information was not available on all families from 2016 to 2018. Therefore, the total number of families listed is not a reflection on the total number of families newly presenting as homeless for these three years.

Table 4.3 – Family composition of families newly accessing Emergency Accommodation, 2016-2019

Family composition	2016	2017	2018	2019
Couples	34%	35%	40%	40%
Lone-parents	66%	65%	60%	60%
Total	**100% (878)**	**100% (971)**	**100% (1,110)**	**100% (1,022)**

Table 4.3 shows that on average, two-thirds of families newly presenting as homeless in the Dublin Region between 2016 and 2019 were lone-parents. However, there has been an absolute decrease of 6% in lone-parents newly accessing Emergency Accommodation from 2016 to 2019, demonstrating an increase in couples newly presenting as homeless in recent years.

Table 4.4 – Gender of parents in families newly accessing Emergency Accommodation, 2016-2019

Family composition	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	76%	73%	70%	69%
Male	24%	27%	30%	31%
Total	**100% (1,170)**	**100% (1,315)**	**100% (1,110)**	**100% (1,429)**

While a disproportionately higher number of mothers have newly presented as homelessness, there has been a gradual change in the gender profile of adults in families. In 2016, more than three quarters of adults in families were female (76%). This has decreased each year since, where the percentage of females newly accessing emergency accommodation was 69% in 2019. This can be attributed in part to the increase in couples accessing Emergency Accommodation for the first time.

Table 4.5: Number of dependents in family units newly accessing Emergency Accommodation, 2016-2019

No. of dependents	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	46%	45%	43%	45%
2	28%	28%	26%	28%
3	12%	16%	17%	13%
4+	14%	11%	14%	14%
Total (families)	**100% (878)**	**100% (971)**	**100% (1,110)**	**100% (1,022)**

The available data from 2016 to 2018 show a similar percentage breakdown to 2019 in terms of the number of dependents in each newly presenting family household. In 2016, 46% of new family household presentations had one dependent. This decreased to 45% in 2017, then to 43% in 2018, before increasing again to 45% by 2019.

Table 4.6: Citizenship of parents in families newly accessing Emergency Accommodation, 2016-2019

Citizenship	2016	2017	2018	2019
Irish	75%	72%	61%	55%
EU	10%	13%	20%	22%
Non-EU	15%	15%	19%	23%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

The number of Irish citizens accessing Emergency Accommodation has decreased significantly between 2016 and 2019. In 2016, 75% of adults in families newly accessing Emergency Accommodation were Irish, which decreased each year down to 55% in 2019. This shows that in more recent years, there has been an increasing representation of migrant families among those who have newly accessed homeless services.

The percentage of EU citizens newly presenting to Emergency Accommodation has more than doubled from 10% in 2016 to 22% in 2019. Furthermore, the percentage of Non-EU citizens has increased from 15% in 2016 to 23% in 2019, an absolute increase of 8%. This rise in Non-EU citizens is higher than the CSO's migration estimates in recent years, where the estimated percentage of immigrants in Ireland coming from Non-EU countries has increased from 28.7% in 2016 to 34.5% in 2019, an absolute increase of 6%[13].

4.4 Summary

This section examined the demographic data available for all 1,022 family households who newly presented to homeless services in 2019. It also detailed the demographic data on the 1,429 parents amongst these family households. It was found that in 2019, the majority of parents newly accessing Emergency Accommodation were female, exemplified by a disproportionately higher rate of lone-parents also entering homeless services. It was also found that the majority of parents were aged between 25 and 44. While the majority of parents in Emergency Accommodation have historically been Irish, there has been a rising representation of migrants newly presenting to such services in recent years. It was found that Irish citizens accounted for just over half of new family presentations, while just under half were either EU or Non-EU citizens. The number of EU citizens newly accessing homeless services have more than doubled between 2016 and 2019.

13 Source: **CSO: Population and Migration Estimates, April 2020**

5. Exit to tenancy

This section briefly outlines the details of all families who newly presented to Emergency Accommodation in 2019, who also exited from homelessness into a tenancy within a year of first presenting. Out of the 1,022 families who newly presented to Emergency Accommodation in 2019, just over half (52.7%, or 539 families) exited to a tenancy within one year of presenting as homeless. This equated to 732 out of the 1,429 parents (or 51.2% of parents).

5.1 Tenancy type

Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 both corroborate the findings in Chapter 2 that HAP has been a key driver in helping families exit from homelessness in the Dublin Region. The majority of families who newly presented to Emergency Accommodation in 2019 who exited to tenancy within one year exited to HAP tenancies (378 families, or 70.1%). A further 14.5% (or 78 families) exited to a Local Authority (LA) letting, 8.9% (48 families) to an Approved Housing Body (AHB) letting, and 4.6% to a long-term, on-site supported letting. The remaining 10 families exited to various other tenancy types, such as the private rented market, tenancies under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), or secured a tenancy procured through Housing Agency Acquisition (HAA).

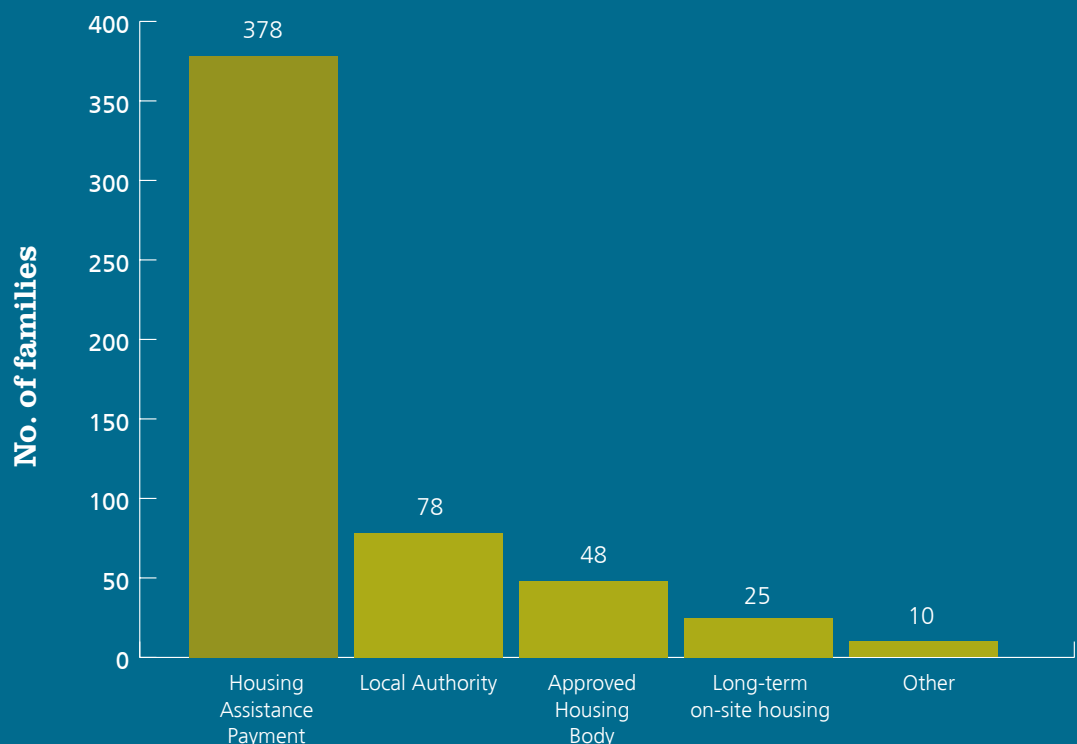**Figure 5.1: New family households who exited to tenancy within a year of presentation, 2019**

Table 5.1: Families who newly presented to Emergency Accommodation who exited to tenancy within a year or presentation, 2019
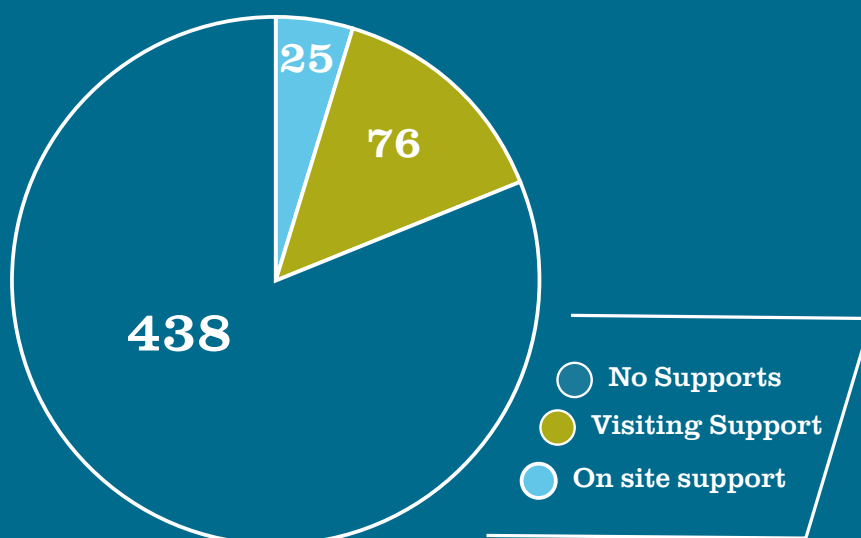
Tenancy type	No. of families
Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)	378
Local Authority lettings	78
Approved Housing Body (AHB)	48
Long-term on-site supported housing	25
Other: Private rented/RAS/HAA	10
Total	**539**

5.2 Visiting supports

Less than one in five of the above families (18.7%, or 101 families) accessed some form of visiting supports during their tenancy. Of these 101 families, 76 were provided access to visiting supports while the remaining 25 families accessed on-site support.

Figure 5.2: Visiting supports for families who exited to tenancy, 2019

5.3 Number of dependents

For families newly presenting to Emergency Accommodation services in 2019, the likelihood of exiting to a secured tenancy within twelve months is significantly affected by the number of dependents in the household. For example, Table 5.4 and Figure 5.3 shows that the estimated probability of exiting for a family with one dependent is just over 56%, while the estimated pro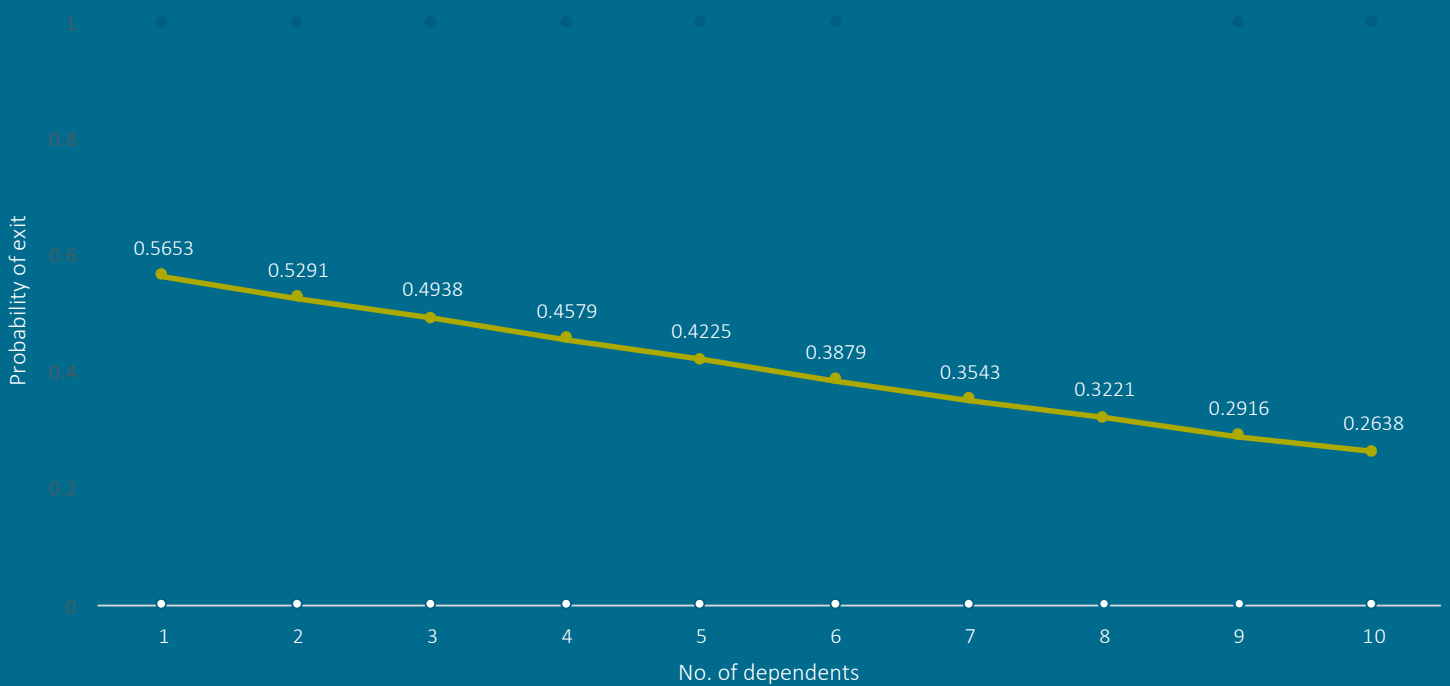bability of a family with ten dependents is more than halved, to just over 26%. The analysis resulting in Figure 5.3 were found to be statistically significant[14]. Furthermore, for each additional dependent in a family household newly presenting to homeless services in 2019, the estimated odds of the household exiting within one year decreases by a factor of 0.866 (Table 5.3).

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14 A simple binary logistic regression model was fitted with Exit status as the response variable and the number of dependents as a predictor. The results were statistically significant, meaning that the number of dependents in a new family presentation related to the odds of a family exiting to tenancy. The model also results in the binary fitted plot in Figure 5.3.

Table 5.3: Simple logistic regression model on Exit VS Number of dependents

Parameter	Estimate	Est. Odds ratio	OR 95% CI	p-value
(Intercept)	0.4065	1.502	(1.19, 1.89)	< 0.01
Number of dependents	-0.1438	0.866	(0.79, 0.95)	< 0.01

Figure 5.3: Probability of family exit by number of dependents, 2019
(Includes adult dependents)

Model: $\eta = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1}$ (where x_{i1} is the number of dependents).

Table 5.3: Estimated probability of family exiting to tenancy by number of dependents

Number of dependents	(logit function)	(probability of exit)
1	0.2627	0.5653
2	0.1189	0.5291
3	-0.0249	0.4938
4	-0.1687	0.4579
5	-0.3125	0.4225
6	-0.4563	0.3879
7	-0.6001	0.3543
8	-0.7439	0.3221
9	-0.8877	0.2916
10	-1.0315	0.2638

5.4 Household composition

Table 5.4: Families exiting to tenancy by household composition, 2019

Household composition	Exit	No exit	Total
Lone-parents	346	269	**615**
Couples	193	214	**407**
Total	**539**	**483**	**1,022**

A higher proportion of lone-parents exited to tenancy within a year of presentation in 2019. A total of 346 household exits (or 64.2%) were lone-parent families, while the remaining 193 (or 35.8%) were couples. The odds ratio of a lone parent exiting to tenancy over a coupled household was found to be 1.43 (i.e. the odds of lone parents exiting are 43% higher than the odds of couples exiting). These results were found to be statistically significant[15]. As mentioned in Table 4.1 in the previous chapter, a high proportion of lone parents have between one and three dependents when compared to couples. This, combined with the findings in Section 5.3 may also contribute to the higher rate of exits within lone-parent households.

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15 A 95% confidence interval produced for the odds ratio of lone-parents relative to couples was (1.12, 1.83) and a chi-squared independence test gave a test statistic of $\chi^2 = 7.328, p = 0.01$

5.5 Summary

Out of the 1,022 families who presented to Emergency Accommodation for the first time in 2019, 539 exited to a tenancy within the first twelve months of their first presentation to homeless services. An analysis of the tenancy type of these households shows that HAP continues to be a key driver in aiding families in exiting from Emergency Accommodation (with more than 70% of family household tenancies being HAP tenancies). Furthermore, 101 of these families had access to some form of tenancy supports (with 76 having visiting support and 25 with on-site support). The size of a family household was shown to have an impact on the likelihood of the family exiting to a tenancy. For each one-person increase in the number of dependents in a family household, the estimated odds of exiting decrease by a factor of 0.87. Furthermore, it was also found that lone-parents were more likely to exit Emergency Accommodation compared to couples. A simple binary logistic regression analysis showed that these findings were statistically significant.

6. Conclusion

This report follows on from previous DRHE family homelessness reports[16,17] and adds to the research into family homelessness in the Dublin Region. It also extends the scope of previous research by providing additional statistical analysis into families exiting into a secure tenancy. The objective of this research was to increase knowledge about family homelessness in the Dublin Region by highlighting the primary reasons for homelessness among the cohort of families who presented and accessed Emergency Accommodation between June 2014 and December 2019 (4,992 families in total). Demographic profiles were also reviewed to provide a clearer insight of the dynamics of family homelessness. The findings aim to inform operational and policy developments relating to homeless families in the Dublin region.

Since 2014, there has been a considerable increase in the number of families accessing Emergency Accommodation in the Dublin Region, with a high of 1,112 new families in 2018. The year 2019 saw its first decrease in new family presentations since before 2014, at 1,022 families. Distinct seasonal patterns have also been observed each year, with a decrease in presentations occurring in the final quarter of every year, followed by a peak in presentations in January each year. There are also increases in the number of new family presentations during the summer months, with July and/or August showing the highest number of presentations each summer. More noticeable is the distinct upward trend in the average number of new presentations occurring each month, with an increase

from 34 in 2014 to an average of 85 per month in 2019. Despite this upward trend, there has been a considerable slowdown in the rate of growth as the number of families departing from services has also increased. The number of families exiting EA into a secured tenancy began to accelerate in late 2016 with the take-off of the HAP scheme. From 2017 to 2019, a total of 5,781 new tenancies were created for families exiting EA and for those at risk of homelessness. Of these, 70% (4,042) were HAP tenancies. The exit and prevention data show that HAP continues to play a crucial role in both preventing family homelessness, in addition to aiding families in exiting from homelessness into a tenancy.

The methods used throughout this report captured a single reason for homelessness and demonstrates that in 2019, less than half (45.6%) of families presented to homeless services directly from the private rented sector, while 42.7% presented from staying with family or friends. Comparing this to previous years, there is a small decrease in the percentage of families presenting from the private rented sector (an absolute decrease of 4.4% on 2018 and 2.4% on 2017, although an absolute increase of 1.6% on 2016).

However, it is important to note that the reasons for homelessness are often more complex in reality. The nature of administrative data makes it difficult to fully track the ancillary and compounding factors which may contribute to bring about an experience of homelessness for each new family presenting to Emergency Accommodation. Some families defer presenting to homeless services by moving in with

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16 H, Morrin (2019), A profile of families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region: 2016-2018 families. Dublin Region Homeless Executive

17 H, Morrin & B, O'Donoghue Hynes (2018), A report on the 2016 and 2017 families who experienced homelessness in the Dublin Region. Dublin Region Homeless Executive

family or friends following the loss of private rented accommodation. Therefore, factors pertaining to the private rented sector may be understated. Notwithstanding this limitation, the data presents key insights into the primary reasons why families presented to homeless services across this four year period. Overall the report highlights that difficulties in finding and sustaining tenancies in the private rented sector is a key driver for homelessness among families in the Dublin Region.

This research reviewed the demographic features for the families new to homelessness in the Dublin Region in 2019. Comparisons were also made to families who presented between 2016 and 2018, to present a more comprehensive profile of the families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region over time. A shift in the profile of families emerged in 2018 as well as a higher average of both adults and children when compared with previous years. However, what is consistent is the profile of families identified as being more vulnerable to homelessness – lone parent families, families with three or more children, and migrant families. The 2016 Census revealed that 24% of families in Ireland were lone-parent families, compared with 60.2% in the cohort of new families experiencing homelessness in 2019. There was also a higher percentage of families with four or more children (13%) compared with family units in the general population (7%).

It is not possible to compare citizenship data with the 2016 Census. However, the CSO's population and migration statistics estimate that the percentage of non-EU migrants in Ireland increased by 6% between 2016 and 2019, compared to an increase of 8% in the same time period of non-EU citizens accessing emergency accommodation. In addition to this, the average percentage of non-Irish citizens (34%) newly presenting to EA across the four years further highlights the high representation of migrant families among those experiencing homelessness.

This report also provided a statistical breakdown of families exiting to tenancy within twelve months of their first presentation in 2019. It was found that out of the 1,022 families who presented to homeless services for the first time in 2019, just over half (539 families) exited to a secured tenancy within twelve months of their first presentation. A statistically significant association was found between the size of a family household and their likelihood of exiting Emergency Accommodation to tenancy. Furthermore, lone-parents were more likely to exit Emergency Accommodation compared to couples.

Overall, this report provides valuable insights into the most common causes of family homelessness in the Dublin Region, in addition to a profile of the families most likely to access homeless services. It also provides an interesting profile on families who were more likely to exit out of homelessness within a year of first presenting to Emergency Accommodation. The report can assist in focusing policy on the effective management of services in the Dublin Region and the development of a regional and national response to the ongoing issue of family homelessness and housing supply.